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*VERSCHWEIGEN, VERSAGEN, VERKÖRPERN –*  
SILENCE, SPEECHLESSNESS AND BODY LANGUAGE IN FONTANE'S *EFFI BRIEST*,  
SCHNITZLER'S *FRÄULEIN ELSE* AND WEDEKIND'S *LULU* PLAYS

By

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

*Verschweigen, Versagen, Verkörpern –*

Silence, Speechlessness and Body Language in Fontane's *Effi Briest*, Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else* and Wedekind's *Lulu* Plays

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My dissertation investigates the representation of silences surrounding and affecting various female protagonists in works written by male authors between the years 1894 and 1924. The three works discussed in this project, Fontane's novel *Effi Briest*, Wedekind's diptych *Lulu*, combining his two plays *Erdegeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, and Schnitzler's novella *Fräulein Else*, all bear their female protagonist's name in their respective titles, suggesting that the authors have given these female characters a voice in these texts that enables the audience to experience their story from a female perspective. My analysis of the three texts reevaluates this notion of "giving a voice to someone" by shedding light on the different ways in which expression is influenced, manipulated and hindered through the superimposed voices of the society, the parents and the men in these protagonists' stories.

Originality and authorship are two related aspects that inform my reading of the protagonists' silence and their use of quotations and literary references when creating their own narratives. As my analysis shows, they struggle less to find a voice of their own than to piece together a story in the form of a collage composed of different quotations and voices. In doing so, a new realm of possibilities emerges, one that is located between passive repetition and quoting and active formulation of ideas, namely that of the middle voice. Reading these three texts in terms of their representation of (female) silence, silencing and body language, my project uncovers intricate connections between all three texts and all three protagonists, illuminating their respective involuntary as well as strategic uses of both verbal and non-verbal communication.

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Last but definitely not least, I want to thank my mother, who simultaneously manages to be my role model and my biggest fan, no matter where life takes me.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Hans-Joachim Jeltsch.

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## Introduction

My dissertation investigates the representation of silences surrounding and affecting various female protagonists in works written by male authors between the years 1894 and 1924. The three works discussed in this project, Fontane's novel *Effi Briest*, Wedekind's diptych *Lulu*, combining his two plays *Erdegeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, and Schnitzler's novella *Fräulein Else*, all bear their female protagonist's name in their respective titles, suggesting that the authors have given these female characters a voice in these texts that enables the audience to experience their story from a female perspective. My analysis of the three texts reevaluates this notion of "giving a voice to someone" by shedding light on the different ways in which expression is influenced, manipulated and hindered through the superimposed voices of the society, the parents and the men in these protagonists' stories. Originality and authorship are two related aspects that inform my reading of the protagonists' silence and their use of quotations and literary references when creating their own narratives. As my analysis shows, they struggle less to find a voice of their own than to piece together a story in the form of a collage composed of different quotations and voices. In doing so, a new realm of possibilities emerges, one that is located between passive repetition and quoting and active formulation of ideas, namely that of the middle voice.

Despite their popularity and canonical character, as well as the time frame of their origin, *Fräulein Else* and *Lulu* have not yet been analyzed in conjunction with *Effi Briest*. Reading these texts in terms of their representation of (female) silence, silencing and body language, my project uncovers intricate connections between all

three texts and all three protagonists, illuminating their respective involuntary as well as strategic uses of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Those connections exist primarily in the ways the three protagonists lead, to varying degrees, scripted lives based on the idea of a life story that is not their own. As my project shows, there is, however, a progression from Effi, living a life based on parental concepts and wishes, to Else, living one predetermined by both parental and male solicitation, to Lulu, whose existence no longer constitutes an individual life insofar as it is constructed entirely on the basis of male fantasies and projections. As my reading shows, Lulu's story is one in which lineage and parental influence no longer play a role at all, as they have been replaced entirely by the desires of men who direct female behavior and voice. It is crucial to note, however, that the characters' voices have not been drowned out completely in the process. Instead, all three protagonists re-use and re-arrange bits and pieces of literature and previous conversations in their utterances and thoughts. These fragments blend in with their own voices, opening up an in-between space for a middle voice that is located between speaking and being spoken through, between silence and prescribed speech, passivity and activity.

### Language and Silence

In literature and linguistics, there has been a long tradition to define silence in negative terms - as an absence of speech or noise - in short, as a failure to formulate thoughts and responses (cf. Saville-Troike 3, Bruneau 18). In his 1902 prose text "Ein Brief", Hugo von Hofmannsthal depicts the fictional lament of Lord Chandos who, by his own account, has lost the ability "über irgend etwas

zusammenhängend zu denken oder zu sprechen" (B 50)<sup>1</sup>, linking the inability to formulate coherent speech to his inability to formulate coherent thoughts. While this influential text of the fin-de-siècle *Sprachkrise* addresses the fear of decomposition and decay commonly associated with turn-of-the-century thought and speech, it also offers the idea of a new form of language: "eine Sprache, von deren Worten mir auch nicht eines bekannt ist, eine Sprache, in welcher die stummen Dinge zu mir sprechen" (B 59). Similar to Chandos, the protagonists in the three works examined in this dissertation attempt to find a "Sprache jenseits der Sprache" (Caspari 19)<sup>2</sup>, a mode of expression that goes beyond words. To locate a message where nothing or little is being said, written or articulated means, on the one hand, to shed a light on the margins of (verbal) communication, to examine the gestures and looks accompanying silence. On the other hand, silence cannot simply be understood as an absence of something (speech, sound), but also as a means of communication in its own right, a way to exercise control and to counteract the spoken or written word. Thus, silence in everyday speech as well as in literary texts is just as multifaceted as language, if not more, and consists of different dimensions which, first and foremost, require definition.

On a linguistic level, Saville-Troike distinguishes between "silences which carry meaning, but no propositional content," such as pauses and hesitations, and "silent communicative acts, which are entirely dependent on adjacent vocalizations

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation B refers to the following edition of the text: Hofmannsthal, Hugo von. *Der Brief Des Lord Chandos: Schriften Zur Literatur, Kultur Und Geschichte*. Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 2000. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Caspari, Martina Elisabeth. "Durchkreuzungen des Zeitgenössischen Hysterie-Diskurses: Fräulein Else von Arthur Schnitzler und Freuds Dora-Nicht nur zwischen den Zeilen Gelesen." *Germanic Notes and Reviews* 37.1 (2006): 5-28. Print.

for interpretation, and which carry their own illocutionary force (...) which may include gestures, but may also consist of silence unaccompanied by any visual clues” (Saville-Troike 6).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, just as spoken or written words can be interpreted in many different ways, so too can the absence thereof, namely by becoming a communicative presence: “Silence may be used to question, promise, deny, warn, threaten, insult, request, or command” (Saville-Troike 6). Entering the literary realm, it is noticeable that the characters in the primary texts discussed in this dissertation employ both silence and body language in these various ways and express a multitude of feelings and fears. Linguistically, the different silences and utterances employed throughout the texts can be defined in terms of “Code” (verbal vs. nonverbal) and “Channel” (vocal vs. nonvocal) (cf. Saville-Troike 5). According to those terms, spoken language can be defined as both verbal and vocal, while written language is classified as verbal but nonvocal. Paralinguistic and prosodic features are vocal, but nonverbal, whereas kinesics and eye behavior, but also images are both nonverbal and nonvocal (cf. Saville-Troike 5). These various aspects of silence have to be taken into consideration when reading these works as they represent different (involuntary) ways and (voluntary) strategies in which silence is used. The realm of speaking vs. not speaking is thus just as important as the role of written documents, contracts (both verbal and vocal ones, as well as those in writing), vocal yet nonverbal utterances (such as laughter), and of course gestures and facial expressions that either accompany or replace verbal and vocal communication throughout the texts.

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<sup>3</sup> Tannen, Deborah, and Muriel Saville-Troike. *Perspectives on Silence*. Norwood, N.J: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1985. Print.

These linguistic differentiations inform my readings of *Effi Briest*, *Fräulein Else* and *Lulu* just as much as the notion of silence as a verb indicating “to silence somebody”, and its connection to the act of giving a voice to somebody, both of which are not necessarily two sides of the same coin, but may as well be the same. As I argue in the following chapters, the female protagonists in particular are often silenced by having a voice—or multiple voices—superimposed upon them, which does not necessarily result in a complete absence of speech or thought, but rather in a drowning out of the possibility of another original voice. Thus, silencing in these texts goes beyond a mere means to exert authority by determining “what can or cannot be said; when one should appropriately maintain silent restraint, or the manner in which utterance appropriately breaks silence” (Bruneau 38f)<sup>4</sup>. Rather, silences are also created by one voice replacing another through quotations, literary references and ventriloquial attempts to speak through another figure’s voice. This is at stake, to varying degrees, in all three texts, as the following chapters will show.

#### Body Language and the Gaze

Within the context of silence as an absence of speech, the importance of nonvocal communication by means of body language, gestures, the gaze and other physical forms of expression also has to be explored. These physical means of expression enter the text through their verbalization, the way in which the narrator describes them within the narrative. Harald Burger calls these verbalizations of

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<sup>4</sup> Bruneau, Thomas J. "Communicative Silences: Forms and Functions." *Journal of Communication* 23 (1973): 17-46. Print.

nonverbal behavior “Kinegramme” (cf. Burger 313)<sup>5</sup>, a term picked up by Källström in her analysis of semantic indeterminacy in *Effi Briest* (cf. Källström 69)<sup>6</sup>. Kinegrammes can be both one-word lexemes describing a physical action, such as nodding or shivering, and phrases like “to shake hands” or “to shake one’s head” (cf. Burger 316). Burger also addresses “freie, lexikalisch nicht gebundene [V]erbalisierungen von NV [nicht-sprachlichem Verhalten]” (Burger 316f), a category which is of particular interest to Källström and her reading of *Effi Briest* as it includes ambiguous descriptions of nonverbal acts, such as “to touch her hand *quietly*” (cf. Källström 70), which add another dimension of meaning to an action or gesture already open to interpretation. The following chapters focus on instances in which Kinegrammes are employed to illuminate but also often to further ambiguate a character’s thoughts and words, or a lack thereof. By consciously choosing to replace speech with a verbalized description of a nonverbal act, the authors deliberately add another dimension of silence to their works and it is this dimension that the following chapters seek to analyze.

Bearing this in mind, an analysis of the characters’ body language further adds to the question of control and the ways in which it can be exerted through the silencing of another character. By exploring particularly the spatial relations among characters, such as the postures of sitting, standing, crouching or kneeling and the respective positioning of characters to one another (in front of, behind, above etc.), exertion of power and control as well as shifts in power can be traced and connected

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<sup>5</sup> Burger, Harald. “Die Achseln Zucken. Zur Sprachlichen Kodierung Nicht-Sprachlicher Kommunikation.” *Wirkendes Wort: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur in Forschung und Lehre* 26 (1976): 311-34. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Källström, Sofia. *‘Das Eigentliche Bleibt Doch Zurück’: Zum Problem der Semantischen Unbestimmtheit am Beispiel von Theodor Fontanes Effi Briest*. Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 2002. Print.

to the accompanying thoughts and dialogue, if there are any. Not only verbal language and expression are controlled here, but so are the characters' bodies and their body language. In connection to that, the frequent instances of falling, tripping and fainting in all three texts touch on yet another issue connected to the failing of speech, namely that of "Ohnmacht", both as a physical reaction of losing consciousness and as an expression indicating a lack of power or control ("ohne Macht"). The term itself lends itself to a multitude of interpretations but also to the question of its counterparts – consciousness and control – and the distribution of all of these characteristics within the texts. But what is of even more interest to me is the space in between power and powerlessness, between control and the lack thereof, the space of "Scheinmacht," or, in other words, the illusion of power and control the protagonists experience to varying degrees: Does it really remain an illusion or is there something in between agency and passivity, between having a voice superimposed upon them and having no voice at all? Clearly, the protagonists in the texts I have chosen are as multifaceted as their interpretations have been, which will be acknowledged below.

In addition to body language and physical expression, yet another dimension of nonverbal expression has to be taken into consideration, which further underlines the power relations within all three texts, namely that of vision, more specifically the gaze. Vision is an important element in all three texts to varying degrees, in so far as it determines the success, reputation and value of the protagonists, but also since it is intrinsically linked to the realm of silence and silencing. In *Effi Briest*, Innstetten employs his gaze to constantly evaluate Effi's

words, behavior and body language and in doing so, attempts to control her (cf. Krause "Affinities")<sup>7</sup>, but fails to see what is right in front of him when it comes to her affair (cf. Brunner)<sup>8</sup>. At the same time, the narrator's observing gaze leads the reader through the texts by similarly hiding essential parts of Effi's life in Kessin from him/her, but at the same time providing him/her with both visual clues and an auctorial insight into her thoughts and feeling of guilt and fear. In *Fräulein Else*, the gaze has an essential function in the forms of voyeurism and the male desire to view the female naked body, which is located at the core of Else's dilemma and conflict. Furthermore, Else's view(ing) of herself and her body reflects the issue of the female splitting into two, as John Berger puts it, by treating herself as a sight (cf J. Berger 46, 51)<sup>9</sup> and addressing herself in ways a man would (cf. Anderson 19)<sup>10</sup>. This split parallels the issues of speaking in foreign voices (or allowing other voices to speak through her) on a visual level, both being elements that are threatening to Else and her perception of herself. For Lulu, on the other hand, gazes are an essential means of survival as she can only exist when she is being seen or being presented to an audience, even if it is just an audience of one. As a personified projection of male fantasies, Lulu is created by both looks and words, by the way in which men see her and produce her verbally. She reflects and embodies the male gaze which not only

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<sup>7</sup> Krause, Edith H. "Eclectic Affinities: Fontane's Effi and Freud's Dora." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 32.4 (2003): 431-54. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Brunner, Maria E. "Sehen und Erkennen in Effi Briest: Ist Wahrnehmung 'ein zu Weites Feld'?" *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 36.4 (2000): 418-35. Print.

<sup>9</sup> Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing; A Book Made by John Berger [and Others]*. London; Harmondsworth: British Broadcasting Corporation; Penguin, 1972. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Anderson, Susan C. "Seeing Blindly: Voyeurism in Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else* and Andreas-Salome's *Fenitschka*." *Die Seele ... Ist ein Weites Land: Kritische Beiträge zum Werk Arthur Schnitzlers*. Ed. Joseph P. Strelka. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1996. 13-27. Print.



controls but also creates her (cf. Gutjahr "Bild" 222)<sup>11</sup> and, in doing so, reflects the misogynist fantasies of a society obsessed with the categorization of women into the dichotomous roles of wife and whore.

### Feminist Approaches

Just as the prevalent image of the female was split into two extremes in late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany and Austria, so too is the feminist scholarship on the roles of the female protagonists within the texts covered. The two tendencies particularly noticeable consist of, on the one hand, scholars granting these protagonists moments of deliberation by arguing that they succeed to free themselves from patriarchic rules, misogynist expectations and their respective oppression, and on the other hand, scholars stressing the futility of the protagonists' attempts at emancipation through foregrounding their victimhood and the lack of opportunity to lead an autonomous life independent of their parents and husbands or lovers.

The scholarship on *Effi Briest* generally does not grant the female protagonist much autonomy in her life, though some scholars see her character as the "point[...] of possible rupture" (Evans 38)<sup>12</sup> associated with the chaos threatening the social order (cf. Evans 38) i.e. in the form of an extramarital affair. Gross argues that the affair can be read as an act of rebellion against the mother on three different levels: first, as a sabotage of the arranged marriage; second, by choosing a lover who shows

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<sup>11</sup> Gutjahr, Ortrud. "Lulus Bild: Vom Schauder des Schauens in Frank Wedekinds Monstrettragödie." *Der Bildhunger der Literatur*. Eds. Dieter Heimböckel and Uwe Werlein. Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005. 211-227. Print.

<sup>12</sup> Evans, Christine Ann. "New Wine in Old Bottles: On Appropriating Male Speech in Effi Briest." *Germanic Notes* 19.3 (1988): 38-41. Print.

similar qualities as her father whom her mother only reluctantly married; and third, as a reactivation of an oedipal formula (“daughter and father vs. mother”) (cf. Gross 125)<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, she reads Effi’s holding on to the letters as a hidden wish of hers for them to be found by Innstetten in order to accuse him (and through him: her mother) of directing her life against her wishes, and as a testament to her own personal life beyond their heteronomy (cf. Gross 126). Losada makes a similar point regarding the role of the affair by arguing that Effi “attempts to create an alternative life as a rejection of her social enclosure – in the form of the Crampas affair – and in the outburst of self-expression in the letters she writes” (Losada 37)<sup>14</sup> and regards the letters as Effi’s only tool for self-affirmation (cf. Losada 42)<sup>15</sup>. Earle, Berman and Evans further stress the role of Effi’s character as a “child of nature” (Evans 38) who “call[s] the repressive moderation of her mother into question” (Berman 352)<sup>16</sup>, as well as an “explosion of creative action” (Earle 242)<sup>17</sup>, thereby stressing her lack of integration into the role of a domesticated wife and mother.

On the other hand, scholars such as Bindokat, Krause and Swales, focus on Effi’s position as an “Abbild” of her mother, an effigy, as her name suggests, (cf. Bindokat 28), a stand-in and proxy (Krause “Endgame” 181, Rapaport in Krause “Affinities” 436), call her “her mother’s not-too adequate understudy” (Swales 116),

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<sup>13</sup> Gross, Gabrielle. *Der Neid der Mutter auf die Tochter: Ein Weibliches Konfliktfeld bei Fontane, Schnitzler, Keyserling und Thomas Mann*. Bern; New York: P. Lang, 2002. Print.

<sup>14</sup> Losada, María. "A Jakobsonian Reading of the Epistolary Strategies of Communication in Fontane's Effi Briest." *Focus on Literatur: A Journal for German-Language Literature* 1.1 (1994): 36-43. Print.

<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Losada does justice to the opposite interpretation of Effi as a character who “only presents facts, but does rebel against them. She surrenders to the situation as she bows to the ‘established system’” (Losada 42)

<sup>16</sup> Berman, Russell A. "Effi Briest and the End of Realism." *A Companion to German Realism 1848-1900*. Ed. Todd Kontje, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002. 339-64. Print.

<sup>17</sup> Earle, Bo. "Negotiating the 'Weites Feld': Realism and Discursive Performance in Nietzsche and Effi Briest." *Germanic Review* 77.3 (2002): 233-53. Print.

and describe “Fügsamkeit” as one of her most essential qualities (cf. Choluj 13), in particular with regard to her marriage. In doing so, they focus on Effi’s marriage to Innstetten as a sign of her heteronomy which causes her to marry a man who once was in love with her mother, who would have made a much better match for him than the daughter, as Effi readily admits at multiple points in the novel. Heteronomy and following prescribed patterns are further reflected in Effi’s ways of speaking and acting within the social fabric. Helmstetter and Krause both point to Effi’s tendency to speak in the “tongue of her father” (Krause “Affinities” 446) as well as quotations in general, thus following an established patriarchal hierarchy without ever developing thoughts and opinions of her own. Following specific patterns of action without questioning them, such as the marriage to Innstetten, is yet another indication of her dependency on prescribed ways of thinking as discussed by various critics (cf. Helmstetter 290f, Radcliffe 155, Thum 117).

Both these approaches are taken into consideration in my analysis of *Effi Briest*, however, the main difference between my reading and that of the existing scholarship is that I regard Effi’s affair less as a rebellion against her mother than as a disguised continuation of her mother’s own love story. Effi is more than just a stand-in for her mother, and while she fulfills her mother’s dreams of marrying Innstetten, she simultaneously creates another love triangle when she begins her extramarital relationship with Crampas. By quietly entering into this affair with Crampas, Effi repeats not only her silent agreement to the marriage, but also recreates the triangular constellation of her mother, Innstetten and Briest, thereby redefining Innstetten’s role within it. Her mother’s love life is thus even more of a

blueprint for Effi's story than previously explored in the existing scholarship, thus shedding new light on the degree to which Effi's life is scripted and predetermined by her mother, but also on the ways in which she manages to manipulate these prescribed patterns.

Among Schnitzler scholars, there is a strong tendency to argue that by granting his female protagonist a voice in *Fräulein Else*, the author provides unfiltered access to her psyche, her true thoughts and feelings leading up to her public disrobing (cf. Mainland, Faletti, Morris, Bronfen, Sandberg). While some critics, such as Aurnhammer, have recognized Else's tendency to speak and think in (literary) quotations, the scholarship so far has largely ignored the extent of Else's quoting and reusing of bits and pieces of dialogue and literature in her thoughts in favor of claiming that it is precisely Else's voice that never falls silent throughout the novella (cf. Bronfen 283)<sup>18</sup>. The degree to which Else employs quotations and is used as a mouthpiece, however, significantly alters the notion of the interior monologue as a means to show a character's true emotions and thoughts. My analysis shows that instead of a unilateral stream of consciousness, the reader witnesses a collage of different voices, all of which are filtered through Else's thoughts and utterances. My goal in this project is not so much to argue that Else either completely loses her "own" voice or finds a voice of her own and has it heard, but rather to explore the notion of a voice located somewhere in the middle, between the two extremes explored by the scholarship so far.

Else's climactic disrobing is frequently regarded as an act of (attempted)

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<sup>18</sup> Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.

rebellion against the parents and Dorsday, but also against the restrictive oppressive misogynist society Else lives in. Critics such as Mainland claim that

[t]he more nuanced, psychological portrayal[...] of Else [...] also involve[s] an internal and impenetrable aspect, elevating [her] 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. (Mainland 135)<sup>19</sup>

She further argues that Else takes control of her body by exposing it in the manner she does (cf. Mainland 177). Kronberger reads the hysterical paroxysm as “ein Versuch, von der Passivität zur Aktivität zu kommen, vom Objekt zum Subjekt” (Kronberger 178)<sup>20</sup>. Comfort points out that “[v]iewing disrobing as a performance allows Else to transcend the notion of commodification.” (Comfort 200)<sup>21</sup> but, on the other hand, also stresses that while Else’s staging of her performance can be viewed as her actively managing the transformation from an economic exchange into an aesthetic act, this agency only exists in her own mind as she quickly turns from art object into a corpse (cf. Comfort 203f). My reading of Else’s paroxysm differs from this established notion insofar as I read the disrobing scene as a continuation of Else being scripted and enacting a given text, in this case, a musical score, which is less an act of rebellion or instance of agency, but a performance *directed* by the piano play, and not *accompanied* by it. This ties in with my overall approach to Else’s interior monologue, reading it largely as scripted and penetrated by a multitude of voices and subtexts, as it shows the extent to which

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<sup>19</sup> Mainland, Catherine. *Dora and Her Sisters: Control and Rebellion in Hermann and Schnitzler*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2007. Print.

<sup>20</sup> Kronberger, Silvia. *Die Unerhörten Töchter: Fräulein Else und Elektra und die Gesellschaftliche Funktion der Hysterie*. Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2002. Print.

<sup>21</sup> Comfort, Kelly. "Artist for Art's Sake Or Artist for Sale: Lulu's and Else's Failed Attempts at Aesthetic Self-Fashioning." *Women in German Yearbook: Feminist Studies in German Literature and Culture* 22 (2006): 189-210. Print.

prescribed texts influence her thoughts and actions throughout the novella.

The existing scholarship on Wedekind's *Lulu* plays offers a broad spectrum of interpretations of her character. These range from reading her as a male fantasy, and projection of male desire to a "mythic persona in an archetypal mode" (Harris quoted in Comfort 191), i.e. as a reflection of Pandora, Eve, Lilith, Dionysus, Zarathustra. She is further described as an incarnation of a masochistic female principle, some natural, lustful drive, as an intrinsically destructive force, or *femme fatale* par excellence, as a deviant degenerate, or a pathological figure, an actress, a construct, a multivalent character, and even a dandy-like figure (cf. Comfort 192). Like Effi and Else, *Lulu* is a character as multifaceted as her interpretations, a character who invites a multitude of different points of view without ever offering a satisfying answer to the many questions her character raises. My attempt is less to argue with existing interpretations of *Lulu*, in particular since my research is very much indebted to those scholars reading her as a mere male fantasy, a projection without a core, a succession of clothes, roles and names (such as Barnes-Pietsch, Comfort, Hofmann, Behrmann, Boa, Hallamore Caesar), than to regard *Lulu* in relation to Effi and Else and the issue of scripting common to all three. As a figure who is not only created and destroyed by her author, but also recreated and destroyed over and over again within the play by the various men who, in their role-creating and directing capacity, stand in for both the author of the play and the parents *Lulu* never had, *Lulu* takes questions of scripting and role-playing to a whole different level. Unlike Effi's and Else's tragic stories that evolve through the process of imitation and their respective attempts to revolt against their parents'

narratives (or the narratives their parents have in mind for them), both Lulu and her story lack a genealogy: She is not born, but created and continues to be recreated throughout the play, until she is cut out of it as brutally as her uterus is at the hands of Jack the Ripper.

In her essay “Artist for Art's Sake Or Artist for Sale: Lulu's and Else's Failed Attempts at Aesthetic Self-Fashioning,” Kelly Comfort compares Else's and Lulu's fates under the aspect of their artistic aspirations, thereby acknowledging the inherent connection between the two characters as well as the two texts. While the affinities between Else and Lulu may be more obvious than those between, say, Effi and Lulu, including *Effi Briest* in my analysis of silence, speechlessness and body language extends the established interpretations of all three texts. By reading Lulu as an extreme, possibly even future version of Effi and Else, a tendency emerges, specifically a departure from living a scripted life based on parental ideals (Effi) to one lead by both parental (and male) demands (Else). Ultimately, the parental influence ceases to exist completely and is replaced by male fantasies and conceptions of roles (Lulu) that are so detached from the actual woman that they create a fantastic version of her. In doing so, a figure like Lulu becomes nothing more than a palimpsest of preconceived notions. This palimpsest does not even offer the illusion of emancipatory potential.

#### The Notion of the ‘Self’

An argument prevalent in the feminist literature on Effi, Else and Lulu is that each of them struggles, in varying degrees, to express herself, fails to do so or attempts to do so by expressing her so-called rebellion in a non-vocal manner. This

argument, however, is based on the assumption that the protagonists have a stable “self” to begin with, something of their own to defend or to express. The fact that these protagonists are all so multifaceted and conflict ridden, however, makes it impossible to speak of a “kohäsives Kernselbst” (Caspari 15).

In Lulu’s case in particular, the scholarship has partially acknowledged the fact that she performs not just “her gendered identity, but also “woman”, “self”, or in her case, “*selves*” (Comfort 193, my emphasis). Yet, in general, it still tends to fall back on an obsolete idea of a “self” existing in the first place, which becomes apparent in phrases such as “self-fashioning”, “self-formation” or “self-poeticization” (cf. Comfort 194). Similarly, Hallamore Caesar speaks of Lulu being “only truly alive when dancing; it is her body’s only means of self-assertion” (Hallamore Caesar 204)<sup>22</sup> and Hibberd argues that “[h]er self-centeredness represents an ethic based on fundamental honesty” (Hibberd 353)<sup>23</sup>. Even if these terms are negated, they nevertheless presume the existence of a self. However, they employ the term in a reflexive, passive fashion. This stresses Lulu’s position in-between activity and passivity by highlighting the struggle between the internalization of outside forces and voices and any form of agency. The so-called “self” does not fashion or affirm itself, but is affirmed or negated by outside forces, forces beyond Lulu’s control. In Else’s case, scholars like Anderson, Bronfen, Dangel, Lange-Kirchheim and Comfort

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<sup>22</sup> Hallamore Caesar, Ann. “Changing Costume, Changing Identity: Women in the Theatre of Pirandello, Bontempelli and Wedekind.” *Luigi Pirandello: The Theatre of Paradox*. Ed. Julie Dashwood. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1996. 197-209. Print.

<sup>23</sup> Hibberd, J. L. “The Spirit of the Flesh: Wedekind’s Lulu.” *The Modern Language Review* 79.2 (1984): 336-55. Print.



also stress the protagonist's falling victim to the male gaze<sup>24</sup> and its role in undermining her potential for developing a "kohäsives Kernselbst" (Caspari 15), or any form of self-esteem and self-awareness for that matter. Lange-Kirchheim points out that "Selbstfindung und Entwicklung von Selbstwertgefühl (...) werden systematisch unterbunden" (Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 279)<sup>25</sup> and that "Selbstinszenierung wird zur Fremdinszenierung" (Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 281), again presenting an argument based on a diametrical opposition self and other. However, as Else's interior monologue shows, there are many more facets to her ways of thinking, which render the idea of a unilateral "Selbst" highly questionable. The fact that Else's thinking is highly influenced by a variety of outside factors and that she actively rearranges and reinterprets foreign voices speaking through her rather shows a character that is constantly evolving and growing while actively editing her role. Furthermore, *Effi Briest* scholars like Earle, Hardy and Losada also address the notion of a "self" by arguing that Effi can find redemption only through "self-negation," i.e. by becoming a martyr-figure (cf. Earle 250f), that her initial resistance to Crampas' advances is a sign of her "self-awareness" (cf. Hardy 127)<sup>26</sup> and that she dies because she has lost her "one tool (...) for self-affirmation - letters as a possibility to communicate" which makes "defense (...) impossible" (Losada 42). Reading Effi's story, in particular her affair with Crampas,

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<sup>24</sup> In doing so, the follow John Berger's line of reasoning in "Ways of Seeing", i.e. the fact that women see themselves through the male perspective which is imposed upon them and thus split themselves into a watcher and the one being watched.

<sup>25</sup> Lange-Kirchheim, Astrid. "Adoleszenz, Hysterie und Autorschaft in Arthur Schnitzler's Novelle *Fräulein Else*." *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft: Internationales Organ für Neuere Deutsche Literatur* 42 (1998): 265-300. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Hardy, Barbara. "Tellers and Listeners in *Effi Briest*." *Theodor Fontane and the European Context: Literature, Culture and Society in Prussia and Europe*. Eds. Patricia Howe and Helen Chambers. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2001. 119-135. Print.

as her living an alternate version of her mother's love story, however, challenges the concept of Effi's "self" in this text as well. Her tendency to follow prescribed patterns of living and playing the roles of wife, mother and mistress can hardly be regarded a form of "self-expression" to begin with. Therefore, with the concept of the "self" being in flux and blurred in all three texts, the question arises whether the term is still a valid choice to describe these characters or to relate their conflicts to such a questionable concept.

While the scholarship has partially acknowledged the fact that these characters cannot be polarized or reduced to either the rebellious proto-feminist or the obedient, adjusted daughter/wife, I argue that these female figures personify much more than a bipolar "either/or" opposition, but rather a conflict-ridden, multifaceted collage of voices, thoughts and ideas hovering between the poles of activity and passivity, speech and silence. This complexity connects all three protagonists and warrants further development and discussion.

#### Finding a Middle Voice

Inextricably linked to the notion of internalized conflict and a precarious, embattled sense of self is the question of the protagonists' voices. These voices, I argue, are to be located in an intermediate region somewhere between active and passive, self- and remote control. In linguistics, the term "middle voice" is primarily used to describe verbs which "denote[...] an action performed by the subject whose effect is limited to the subject rather than directed outwards to another person or thing (active) or received from another source (passive)" (Barry 115). As such, this concept of the middle voice, linguistically, includes both the passive voice as well as

reflexive verbs in German, such as “sich anziehen”, “sich setzen” or “sich entscheiden.” In German, the majority of these verbs furthermore refer to bodily actions, i.e. “[a]ctions that are performed by the body on itself, or express or serve its physical imperatives” (Barry 117)<sup>27</sup>, which is of particular interest to me as it establishes a connection between utterance and physical expression. The state in-between passivity and activity and the blurring of subject and object is further intensified by considering the notion a combination of the reflexive verbs with the verb “lassen”. This notion of letting or allowing a reflexive action being executed on/to oneself adds an additional dimension to the idea of a middle voice, one that underlines the increasing conflict between external as well as internalized outside forces and one’s own agency. This is particularly present in Effi’s and Lulu’s stories, in the notions of “sich verheiraten lassen”, “sich anziehen (lassen)” and, simultaneously, “sich ausziehen lassen” for Lulu and Else who both experience different shades of “being undressed by someone’s eyes”.

With regard to Effi, Else and Lulu, it is noticeable that all three characters’ voices are located in this space between activity and passivity. Aside from their usage of reflexive verbs and phrases, which are rather common in German, their frequent quoting of literary works or previous pieces of conversation, as well as their ways of speaking according to prescribed patterns or roles/role models blend with their own thoughts and ideas to create a conglomeration of different voices coming from different sources. Therefore, this project seeks to reinvigorate the discussion of these canonical texts by examining a multitude of conflict-ridden

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<sup>27</sup> Barry, Elizabeth. "One's Own Company: Agency, Identity and the Middle Voice in the Work of Samuel Beckett." *Journal of Modern Literature* 31.2 (2008): 115-32. Print.

voices through a close reading of each text, and by taking into consideration the deep connections between verbal and non-verbal, vocal and non-vocal forms of expression.

### Organization of the Project

The organization of texts discussed here does not quite follow their chronological order, insofar as *Fräulein Else* (1924) will be examined prior to the *Lulu* (1895/1905) plays, following the chapter on *Effi Briest* (1894). Beginning with Fontane's text, I trace the degree of scripting and the ways in which the protagonists of these texts live prescribed lives. My goal is to demonstrate a progression in this regard from one text to another. In *Lulu*, the conflict between activity and passivity find its strongest, most brutal expression through a character who, despite being a projection of male fantasies (i.e. inhabiting a much more passive role than Effi and Else), wreaks havoc over those around her. More so than Effi and Else, Lulu only exists within the roles scripted for her by her various lovers. These roles are based entirely on her physicality. Instead of reciting lines and quoting literature, Lulu is reduced to speaking in rather meaningless phrases or not speaking at all while she puts her body on display. Thus, her body does all the talking for her.

Therefore, the expressibility of body language, the chance to reveal something one is not able or allowed to put into words, and the ability of either expressing true feelings behind words contradictory to them or hiding them are fundamentally undermined here. As such, Lulu represents an extreme development of a female character, a development that can already be traced in its onset in a figure like Effi. And yet another progression is noticeable, which is discussed in the

final portion of the Lulu chapter, namely the shift from a paternal *Bevormundung* (patronization) to one that is executed by Lulu's lovers who take it upon themselves to script her life (or rather: lives) for her, including a renaming of hers every time she enters into a new role. This lack of a lineage of Lulus is one of the most distinguishing factors between her and Effi and Else. Because of it, the question is raised whether Lulu's story can be regarded a possible (literary) fate for characters such as Effi and Else, one to be faced post-alienation from their parents as the puppet masters behind their respective stories.

## Chapter I

### Impeded Communication in Theodor Fontane's *Effi Briest*

At first glance, it might appear ludicrous to speak about silence and silencing in *Effi Briest*, especially given the lengthy descriptions of the world surrounding Effi as well as the large amount of dialogue between the characters. If anything, neither the narrator nor the characters appears to be short on words. Looking at the text as a novel about adultery, which has been a popular reading among scholars in the past, one might, however, be disappointed by the complete absence of the affair throughout the majority of the novel. Indeed, large amounts of the story remain hidden in the blank spaces of the novel behind a wall of silence. This silence manifests itself in the many breaks and interruptions, on the level of narration as well as dialogue, in the ambiguities in the characters' speech, and the tendency to cite literature and voices foreign to one's own.

Yet, it is only through a close examination of these gaps that Effi's actual story emerges. It is a story she never gets to tell and one that goes beyond simply being the tale of a secret affair. Instead, it develops between the lines, in the blank spaces between chapters, hidden behind semantic ambiguity and ghost stories, behind regurgitating prescribed lessons and living a socially exemplary life. Most importantly, this story goes beyond plain repetition of her mother's love story in her marriage to Innstetten and beyond rebellion against it through the affair with Crampas. What emerges through an analysis of the between-spaces of the novel, what is "told" in a necessarily muted and oblique manner is Effi's reinterpretation of her mother's love triangle and renegotiation of her marriage contract. In this

renegotiation Effi assumes a stance that can be best described as hovering between active rebellion and passive submission.

### **I. Narrative Silence and Ruptures in the Novel**

On a narrative level, breaks, interruptions and ambiguous statements pervade the novel. While they often seem to create unwelcome pauses within the narrative, these gaps actually constitute a space of development and progression, a space in which the plot moves forward without the witnessing eye of the reader. Therefore, one of the main elements of the plot - the affair and all its aspects - are broached only between the lines of the novel – a novel which otherwise depicts Effi's essential boredom with her life in Kessin (and later in Berlin) at length. Providing the reader with such blank spaces is an invitation to fill in the gaps and actively trace Effi's development through them. Here, silence is an active narratological means that hides the development of the plot and propels the story simultaneously.

Throughout the novel, the narrator employs a variety of techniques to establish these pregnant silences, including a large amount of ellipses, unanswered questions and outside interruptions during conversations. These create the blank spaces of indeterminacy within the text and at times even all occur at once, thereby intensifying the narratological effect they have. The following conversation between Effi and her mother is one example of this narrative structure and its impact on the plot:

„Nicht so wild, Effi, nicht so leidenschaftlich. Ich beunruhige mich immer, wenn ich dich so sehe ...“ Und die Mama schien ernstlich willens, in Äußerung ihrer Sorgen und Ängste fortzufahren. Aber sie kam nicht weit damit, weil in eben diesem Augenblick drei junge Mädchen aus der kleinen,

in der Kirchhofsmauer angebrachten Eisentür in den Garten eintraten und einen Kiesweg entlang auf das Rondell und die Sonnenuhr zuschritten. (EB 6f)

The mother's worries here foreshadow things to come at the very beginning of the novel already, but the way this is depicted in the text also sets up the way in which these worries are dealt with throughout: by not talking about them, either voluntarily or because of outside interferences. The same goes for the actual marriage proposal: It is only narrated by the mother, who technically proposes to Effi on Innstetten's behalf. He never proposes to Effi directly as their first encounter is interrupted by the famous "Effi, komm". In turn, the reader never witnesses Effi say yes (or no) to his proposal either.<sup>28</sup> Instead, the next chapter opens with the announcement that Effi and Innstetten have gotten engaged and thus suggests that Effi did say "yes", but this response is not depicted in the text. Therefore, it is impossible to decide whether Effi has, in fact, said yes to marrying Innstetten, or whether she has remained quiet and her silence is interpreted as a positive, accepting answer to his proposal by both her parents and Innstetten.<sup>29</sup>

If Effi has remained silent, the question arises whether this is just because of her surprise at the proposal or whether her silence is "kein "harmloses" Schweigen, sondern vielsagendes strategisches, das den inneren Kampf zwischen den [sic] von der Mutter erwarteten "Ja" und dem selbst gewollten "Nein" spiegelt" (Källström

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<sup>28</sup> The commentary, however, that "Effi schwieg und suchte nach einer Antwort" (EB 14) suggests that it is hard for Effi to find a suitable response here, but that she is nevertheless attempting to give one.

<sup>29</sup> Similarly, another silence of Effi's is later interpreted as approval by her husband: "»(...) Aber Edelmann! Meine liebe Effi, ein Edelmann sieht anders aus. Hast du schon etwas Edles an ihm bemerkt? Ich nicht.« Effi sah vor sich hin und schwieg. »Es scheint, wir sind gleicher Meinung. (...)«" (EB 137) Seeing that the topic of this conversation is Crampas, Effi's silence could have a multitude of implications that do not necessarily include approval.



76). When the text explicitly shifts focus from Effi to the twins exclaiming “Effi, komm” (EB 14), it is this deliberate break and concealment that creates ambiguity and uncertainty. Effi’s reaction is moved into a middle space between an active response to the question and a passive submission to the mother’s and Innstetten’s wishes, a space that is never explicitly explored in the chapters to come. In doing so, the narrator deprives Effi of actively negotiating her response as well as her feelings regarding the proposal and her mother’s involvement in it. In this particular instance, Effi is prevented from expressing her true feelings, first by the sight of Innstetten and her father entering the room and then by Hertha and Bertha showing up at the window, exclaiming the infamous “Effi, komm.” This technique of shifting the focus away from Effi to something or someone else is employed throughout the novel, as I will argue in the next part of this chapter. It is no coincidence that this first instance concurs with the beginning of her marriage to Innstetten, a moment where Effi embarks on a life set up and controlled by others. Rather this initial moment of distraction from Effi’s thoughts and feeling sets up her tale of subordination to the will of her parents and her husband, and later on, her lover - a tale in which she is not granted the opportunity to actively express her side of the story.

In the passage discussed above as well as in many other instances throughout the novel, the text itself enacts the ellipses and the interruptions taking place within it. In doing so, it creates a blank space in which a meta-narrative unfolds, one that is based on the questions the constant gaps create: What response did Effi give to Innstetten, if any? And if she did, in fact, respond, what were the

motivating factors for this response – her own ambitions or that of her mother?<sup>30</sup> Even more of these questions are raised when conversations are interrupted mid-sentence and when chapters end in interruptions. Such is the case at the end of chapter four when Effi expresses her fear of her future husband to her mother, a fear which is not discussed any further but rather silenced by the subsequent chapter beginning with a recap of Effi's and Innstetten's wedding festivities.<sup>31</sup> A statement like that certainly warrants either clarification on Effi's part, or at least a reaction from her mother. Instead, the text breaks off and continues in a kind of flash forward to the days following the wedding day, after a gap of almost an entire month. Here another significant part of Effi's attitude towards Innstetten is left unexplored, just as her answer to his proposal was. Furthermore, this narrative technique creates the impression of Effi leading a rather passive life. Narratively, the (presumed) highlights of this life are only presented in a reflecting manner and as something that happens *to* her but in which she does not play an active role. Emotions such as joy, fear or tension are presented in rather subdued manner, by putting them in proverbial parentheses and hiding them behind ellipses, breaks and ambiguous word choices.

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<sup>30</sup> Effi later tells Innstetten: „Ich habe dich eigentlich bloß aus Ehrgeiz geheiratet.“ (EB 69) but whether she refers to her own or that of her mother's here remains questionable as well.

<sup>31</sup> The conversation between mother and daughter evolves as follows:

»Gewiß. Und ich glaube, Niemeyer sagte nachher sogar, [Innstetten] sei auch ein Mann von Grundsätzen. Und das ist, glaub ich, noch etwas mehr. Ach, und ich... ich habe keine. Sieh, Mama, da liegt etwas, was mich quält und ängstigt. Er ist so lieb und gut gegen mich und so nachsichtig, aber ... ich fürchte mich vor ihm.«

*Fünftes Kapitel*

Die Hohen-Cremmer Festtage lagen zurück; alles war abgereist, auch das junge Paar, noch am Abend des Hochzeitstages. (EB 28f, italics in the original)

In the same fashion, conversations between the couple – Effi and Innstetten – are cut short by chapter endings right at the point where something remains unsaid. In this respect, the narrative strategy to avoid an active exploration of both marital bliss and marital problems continues throughout the novel and thus moves the development of the marriage in a similarly blank space as the affair.<sup>32</sup> Such narrative techniques render it impossible for the reader to follow a conversation held within the text. Even more so, the characters also fail to understand each other because of these frequent interruptions. This is intensified even more when narrative gaps occur in combination with an ambiguous choice of words and vague references, which is the case during the following conversation between Effi and Innstetten where she, again, avoids sharing her feelings – both with him and the reader:

Effi war sehr glücklich, so wenig Schwierigkeiten zu begegnen, und sagte: »Nun wird es gehen. Ich fürchte mich jetzt nicht mehr.« »Um was, Effi?« »Ach, du weißt ja ... Aber Einbildungen sind *das schlimmste*, mitunter schlimmer als *alles*.«

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(EB 96) (my emphasis)

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<sup>32</sup> Thus, when Innstetten tells Effi not to kiss his hand since he is not her superior, he refuses to tell her what he actually is for her, leaving it up to her and the reader, to fill in the blank here:

»Nein, Effi, um Himmels willen nicht, nicht so. Mir liegt nicht daran, die Respektsperson zu sein, das bin ich für die Kessiner. Für dich bin ich ...« »Nun was?« »Ach laß. Ich werde mich hüten, es zu sagen.«

*Siebentes Kapitel* (EB 43, italics in the original)

On the one hand, Innstetten's awkward avoiding of a response points to the fact that the newlyweds still barely know each other, making an intimate conversation almost impossible. But besides that, this conversation also addresses a general communication issue between the two as they hardly ever speak their mind, even when they are alone with each other.

Again, a subdivision ends this conversation at a point where Effi's vague choice of words referring to "the worst" and "everything" warrants further definition. In combination with the ellipsis, this clearly indicates an absence in the text in more ways than one. Effi is afraid to put into words what actually scares her, be it the haunted house or her illicit affair.<sup>33</sup> It is precisely this tendency to avoid further development of the marital conversations which widens the gap between Effi and Innstetten. This ever-growing gap of unspoken words, as a result, makes room for the affair and for Effi to develop an alternative life with Crampas. Within these gaps, she can express herself physically as well as verbally, i.e. through their letters. Yet, this expression remains largely silent and hidden and is only traceable through an active exploration of these openings within the story.

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<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, conversations between the couple are also often not straightforward and to the point but rather characterized by a hesitation to respond right away, requiring the other person to motivate a response through a question. Such is the case for both Innstetten and Effi in the following passage:

"(...) Ich weiß es recht gut, Geert ... Eigentlich bist du ..." *"Nun, was?"* *"Nun, ich will es lieber nicht sagen. Aber ich kenne dich recht gut; du bist eigentlich, wie der Schwantikower Onkel mal sagte, ein Zärtlichkeitsmensch und unterm Liebesstern geboren, und Onkel Belling hatte ganz recht, als er das sagte. Du willst es bloß nicht zeigen und denkst, es schickt sich nicht und verdirbt einem die Karriere. Hab ich's getroffen?"* Innstetten lachte. *"Ein bißchen getroffen hast du's. Weißt du was, Effi, du kommst mir ganz anders vor. Bis Anniechen da war, warst du ein Kind. Aber mit einemmal ..."* *"Nun?"* *"Mit einemmal bist du wie vertauscht. Aber es steht dir, du gefällst mir sehr, Effi. Weißt du was?"* *"Nun?"* *"Du hast was Verführerisches."* (EB 103, my emphasis)

Both parties are hesitant to open up and just come out with it which is particularly important since this is yet another conversation with circles around intimacy between the two. At the same time, this conversation and moment of closeness is interrupted by Crampas appearing just as Innstetten talks about a "Don Juan oder Herzensbrecher" (EB 103). Crampas showing up at this precise moment is, first of all, an ironic narrative means alluding to his seductive character. Furthermore, it stands for an interruption of intimacy between Effi and Innstetten by a character that, unlike Innstetten, benefits from and appreciates Effi's seductive being. Effi later reflects on this moment as significant as well when she recapitulates: „Das war der erste Tag; da fing es an.“ (EB 184) This moment of recollection is then – again – interrupted by an outside influence right at a moment of revelation. This prevents the reader from a full understanding of Effi's feelings and even Effi from fully realizing what drives her crazy: „Ich kann es nicht loswerden“, sagte sie. „Und was das schlimmste ist und mich ganz irre macht an mir selbst ...“ In diesem Augenblick setzte die Turmuhr drüben ein, und Effi zählte die Schläge. „Zehn ... Und morgen um diese Stunde bin ich in Berlin (...)“ (EB 184).

The frequent narrative gaps thus not only assist in hiding the affair between the lines but open up a space in which a development occurs, the results of which are witnessed by the reader, but not, however, the progression behind it. They function as an active form of silence which is more than an empty space. It is instead a canvas onto which the reader can project his/her assumptions about the progression of the plot which he/she is not allowed to witness. In a similar manner, pauses in dialogue also occur in conjunction with rather expressive physical gestures. These often illuminate true motivations behind what is being said and what is being kept silent. The next part of this chapter discusses these occurrences of expressive body language and gestures and the ways in which they connect to unspoken truths and hidden feelings.

## **II. Body Language in the Novel**

The ambiguity and indeterminacy that is created by the narrative style of the novel certainly makes it difficult to pinpoint the moments in which the affair begins, evolves and ends. This is where the characters' body language and gestures become particularly illuminating as they are often more telling than the spoken word in this novel. It is important to note that body language in *Effi Briest* is not entirely an involuntary means of presenting an underlying truth. In the same way that verbal expression can be used in manipulative ways, so too can certain gestures and body language be employed as strategic means. Both factors are essential for the examination of body language in this novel as they represent two poles of the spectrum of passivity, i.e. involuntary, reactive body language, and activity, i.e. planned, strategic use of body language.

Strategic and reactive body language are not always easy to distinguish in this text, thus creating additional ambiguities and raising additional questions about a character's thoughts and motivations. Such is the case in the only obvious instance of a passionate encounter between Effi and Crampas: Namely the moment in Chapter 19 where they share a carriage after the Christmas dinner and he covers her with kisses. Here, Effi's and Crampas' body language paint an illuminating, yet multilayered picture. Specifically Effi's "Ohnmacht", her fainting, in this scene is so much more than simply an involuntary reaction that halts both Crampas' advances and the novel at a rather climactic point. Here, Effi appears to be afraid of being alone with Crampas, especially once her carriage enters the dark surroundings of the forest which hide everything that is happening – from the other characters as well as from the reader:

"Effi", klang es jetzt leise an ihr Ohr, und sie hörte, daß seine Stimme zitterte. Dann nahm er ihre Hand und löste die Finger, die sie noch immer geschlossen hielt, und überdeckte sie mit heißen Küssen. Es war ihr, als wandle sie eine Ohnmacht an. (EB 136)

Effi's physical reaction to Crampas' kisses is certainly interesting here and warrants further discussion: She faints, only to open her eyes again when the sleigh leaves the protection of the forest, returning them back to society: "Als sie die Augen wieder öffnete, war man aus dem Wald heraus, und in geringer Entfernung vor sich hörte sie das Geläut der vorauseilenden Schlitten" (EB 136).<sup>34</sup> Effi remains (verbally) silent here but her body physically responds to Crampas' transgression as she faints, or appears to be fainting. Out of a multitude of possible reactions, Fontane here

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<sup>34</sup> Just as Effi faints, the text pauses as well. Therefore, what happens in the sleigh remains hidden from society by the shielding forest and from the reader by the interruption that coincides with Effi's fainting.

chooses the most passive, and quietest, one, which may have a variety of reasons: For one, the reader can assume that Effi's fainting is her coping mechanism, employed to deal with Crampas' transgression, or rather to avoid dealing with it. This seemingly passive reaction is thus rather active, namely a way to avoid having to face Crampas' behavior and any notion of guilt or participation. If Effi were actually "ohnmächtig", i.e. "ohne Macht", she could claim that she was unresponsive to Crampas' kisses and advances and had no chance to defend herself against them, just like Kleist's Marquise von O...

Another plausible explanation is that Effi is simply overwhelmed by the situation and that therefore, her body shuts down. After all, she has just been confronted with the eeriness of the "Schloon" and the prospect of being alone with Crampas, which "hätte vielleicht missdeutet werden können" (EB 136). However, it can also be argued that Effi never actually fainted. The text only expresses that "[e]s war ihr, als *wandle* sie eine Ohnmacht an" (EB 136, my emphasis), using the subjunctive, which makes it impossible to tell whether Effi's unconsciousness is actually happening or not. Moreover, the paragraph ends there, and the next one starts out by stating "Als sie die Augen wieder öffnete, (...) " (EB 136), which suggests that she, in fact, did faint. Yet, this may also point to her merely closing her eyes to avoid Crampas' advances or taking responsibility for partaking in his actions. It remains thus unresolved whether an actual physical reaction took place between the lines here and if it did, whether Effi strategically used this physical reaction as a means to an end. For as much as Effi is a child of nature, she clearly is also a product of her environment: She is familiar with the female register of physical reactions to

unpleasant or scary situations and knows how to use them – including faking an “Ohnmacht”.

In the sleigh scene, Effi is certainly fearful, as can be seen by her praying for divine protection (cf. EB 136). This fear is related to the one spreading throughout the novel, which keeps haunting her and motivates her verbal as well as physical expression. The initial fear of her husband, which was unspecified and remained unexamined, is gradually replaced by the fear of the ghost and ultimately by the fear of discovery of the affair. Wertheimer argues that “[i]hre ganz spezifische Angst entspricht dem (...) Phänomen, für das weder eine Grammatik, um es zu beschreiben, noch Kategorien, um seine Ursachen zu bestimmen, zur Verfügung stehen“ (Wertheimer 136).<sup>35</sup> Based on that argument, he diagnoses a “nahezu sprachlose[s] Ausgeliefertsein an den Affekt“ (Wertheimer 136) when it comes to Effi and her reactions to certain emotions throughout the text. Here, it is implied that Effi can control neither her verbal nor her physical expression and only (re-)acts instinctively.

Considering Effi as a spontaneous child of nature who cannot but follow her emotions, her character would seem to be truly genuine indeed. Keeping in mind, however, that “[l]ebensweltlich gefordert sind offensichtliche Artefakte von Affekten, gleichsam Gefühls-Kopien“ (Wertheimer 136) which require an “Entwicklung einer Tarnsprache der Gefühle“ (Wertheimer 136), Effi’s fainting appears in a different light, especially looking at the sleigh scene in hindsight: Based on the knowledge of the affair and her success at hiding it while it was still

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<sup>35</sup> Wertheimer, Jürgen. "Effis Zittern: Ein Affektsignal Und Seine Bedeutung." *LiLi: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 26.102 (1996): 134-40. Print.



happening, it is indeed plausible that she used a fake “Ohnmacht” strategically. Developing a “Tarnsprache der Gefühle” (Wertheimer 136) is thus closely connected to the field of verbal as well as non-verbal expression, the realm of body language in particular. As argued above, Effi’s fainting conforms to an established register of physical actions that replace verbal communication. And fainting in particular is often considered a rather typical female reaction to unpleasant or overwhelming situations.

Simultaneously, the strategic use of a fake “Ohnmacht” does show a certain amount of control and power on her part. “Ohnmacht”, in and of itself, constitutes a state of powerlessness in which Effi relinquishes control over her body. Pretending to be in a powerless state, however, grants Effi some agency. Ironically though, this agency expresses itself in a state of passivity. “Ohnmacht” and false “Ohnmacht” turn into a “Scheinmacht” here, an illusion of power attained through a gesture of powerlessness. Pretending to faint as a result of Crampas advances (and fear of their consequences) functions as an active way to (passively) avoid dealing with these consequences as well as her emotions. Yet, it is far from a thoroughly active engagement with his advances, i.e. to either reject them categorically or reciprocate them completely. Thus, another between space opens up here behind an ostensibly passive (non-)reaction.

Physical reactions such as the one discussed above become part of the tactics Effi uses to hide the affair, but also point to hidden emotions and tacit thoughts at various instances in the novel. They both hide and reveal unspoken truths and feelings and establish a character’s role within the society. In this context, the notion

of posture – “Haltung” – is of great importance, especially for men in public positions, such as Innstetten and Crampas, but also for Effi. When Effi and Innstetten first meet, he is described as “schlank, brünett und von militärischer Haltung” (EB 14), pointing to his established position within society, to discipline and order, but also to a certain stiffness.<sup>36</sup> Effi on the other hand, a “jugendlich reizende[s] Geschöpf, (...) noch erhitzt von der Aufregung des Spiels, (...) ein Bild frischesten Lebens” (EB 14), is perceived as his exact opposite from the start. While he appears stiff and solid, Effi is “immer Tochter der Luft” (EB 6), always in motion, and lacking a certain “Haltung” and elegance.<sup>37</sup> Upon marrying Innstetten, however, this has to change immediately, as she now becomes the “gnädige Frau” (cf. EB 44) at his side. Herr von Briest addresses this change in his toast to the newly engaged couple when he interprets their names as follows: “Geert, wenn er nicht irre, habe die Bedeutung von einem schlank aufgeschossenen Stamm, und Effi sei dann also der Efeu, der sich darumzuranken habe” (EB 15). Not only is Innstetten’s stiffness and masculinity confirmed in Briest’s words, but so is Effi’s role as wife at his side. She now depends on him and his posture, to which she has to adapt and which now becomes the solid (and sole) basis for her existence and growth.

Moreover, the description of Effi as ranking ivy implies flexibility, not only physical flexibility but also flexibility of morals, which Innstetten, “ein Mann von Grundsätzen” (EB 28), is lacking. Effi’s physical flexibility is one of the first characteristics of hers that the reader gets a glimpse of. In the first chapter, her

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<sup>36</sup> This is confirmed by the mother’s description of him as a “Mann von Charakter, von Stellung und guten Sitten” (EB 14).

<sup>37</sup> As she points out, her mother has not turned her into a lady yet: “Warum machst du keine Dame aus mir?” (EB 6)

gymnastic movements are described, which she performs to distract herself from her boring needlework (cf. EB 5f). Unlike Effi's wild game of hide and seek with her friends, these gymnastics follow a prescribed pattern of movement. They are described as "kunstgerecht", following a "ganzen Kursus" and thus not her own instincts. According to Helmstetter, partaking in these gymnastic exercises "demonstrate[s] her will power and her participation to 'discipline.' [sic]" (Helmstetter 282)<sup>38</sup> and constitute "the enactment of an inscribed text, of a text (and perhaps an image) inscribed into the body of the main character" (Helmstetter 282).<sup>39</sup> In a similar fashion as speech, body language thus conforms to prescribed patterns as well. However, Effi puts her own ironic little spin on her movements, by ridiculing the exercises and thus proving that she struggles with discipline from the start. Just as the flexible ivy points to her bending the rules of appropriate behavior, her ridiculing of the gymnastics also shows her attempt at revolting against order and structure. Thus, the description of Effi's character and her physical actions locates her in a space between bending the rules and bowing to them. Those two poles of the spectrum of social interaction also represent Crampas and Innstetten respectively – one morally flexible and the other stiff and assimilated. Effi's position within this love triangle is thus deeply rooted in her character and her struggles between conforming to her society's standards and following her instincts and feelings.

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<sup>38</sup> Helmstetter, Rudolf. "How to do Man with Words: The Human Sacrifice of Sociology, the Anthropology of Gymnastics, and Fontane's Effi Briest." *REAL: The Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 12 (1996): 275-99. Print.

<sup>39</sup> The notion of Effi enacting a prescribed text with regard to her mother's love story and her marrying Innstetten that is addressed here as well will be further discussed in Pt. III of this chapter.

It is noticeable that after her wedding, Effi ceases to do any kind of gymnastics. Her preferred forms of exercising become horseback riding and walking, both of which are directly connected to her affair with Crampas.<sup>40</sup> Establishing herself as a proper wife to Innstetten, i.e. a wife who fulfills all social functions and requirements with grace, becomes more important than any sort of flexibility. Since this comes unnaturally to Effi, who still is no lady at heart, she has to constantly pretend that she is leading a “Musterehe”<sup>41</sup> (cf. EB 26), first to establish herself as Baronin von Innstetten and later to hide her affair. Keeping her composure in various situations during which Innstetten seems to suspect betrayal is now more important than ever, especially since verbal and physical expression hardly go together, which further underlines the ambiguous structure of the text. Thus, when Innstetten announces the move to Berlin, Effi’s spontaneous reaction is to exclaim “Gott sei Dank!” (EB 153) as she “glitt (...) von ihrem Sitze vor Innstetten nieder [und] umklammerte seine Knie” (EB 153). Her physical reaction clearly shows her relief and gratitude, but it also threatens to reveal her secret, as Innstetten again becomes suspicious when witnessing her reaction. Effi knows she has lost control for a moment (cf. EB 153) by putting herself into a submissive position. She appears like a prayer thanking God but also like a sinner asking for

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<sup>40</sup> Effi and Crampas first bond during their joint horseback rides, and later on, Effi uses the walks prescribed to her by her doctor as a cover for her rendezvous with Crampas.

<sup>41</sup> The term, of course, not only means “model marriage” here, but also includes the notion of husband and wife following a certain pattern (“Muster”) without being too involved in the marriage emotionally – a marriage which looks right on paper but is not based on love and affection.

absolution.<sup>42</sup> Thus, she has to fix her revealing body language by verbally explaining herself to Innstetten. In doing so, “Effi war unter diesen Worten allmählich ruhiger geworden, und das Gefühl, aus einer selbstgeschaffenen Gefahr sich glücklich befreit zu haben, gab ihr die *Spannkraft* und *gute Haltung* wieder zurück“ (EB 155, my emphasis). It is noticeable that Effi talks herself out of danger here, and regains her posture as a result of her use of words that not only fool Innstetten but also guide her body back to its unrevealing state. Regaining her posture and avoiding spontaneous emotional outbursts, which were an essential part of her pre-marital character, have become two of her main strategies to cover up her guilt. Her body language thus provides an accurate account of her emotions, which have to be hidden verbally.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> A similar relationship of body language and control appears in both *Fräulein Else* and *Lulu* respectively. In both cases power relationships are challenged and put into question as well, through the emphasis on standing vs. sitting or kneeling, and the importance of physically being “the bigger person”.

<sup>43</sup> Her lover, Crampas, is similarly affected in his posture when he later sees her off from afar as she is leaving for Berlin by ship: “Er seinerseits, in seiner *ganzen Haltung verändert*, war sichtlich *bewegt*” (EB 161, my emphasis) Being emotionally moved is yet again another distinguishing factor between him and Effi’s husband. Innstetten barely seems moved by anything during his marriage (until he discovers the affair much later) and always capable of maintaining his professional status (and stature) – even around his wife. Thus, his reaction to Effi’s fear of the ghost after her first night alone in Kessin is entirely motivated by professional reasons: “Meine liebe Effi, ich lasse dich ja nicht allein aus Rücksichtslosigkeit oder Laune, sondern weil es so sein muß; ich habe keine Wahl, ich bin ein Mann im Dienst” (EB 65f) Innstetten’s words and actions are clearly predetermined by his status and show that he is a slave to his profession from the start (“ich habe keine Wahl”), just like he becomes a slave to his honor later when insisting on a duel with Crampas. In addition to that, his social standing and reputation are another motivating factor for his refusal to respond to Effi on an emotional level:

Und dann, Effi, kann ich hier nicht gut fort (...) Ich kann hier in der Stadt die Leute nicht sagen lassen, Landrat Innstetten verkauft sein Haus, weil seine Frau den aufgeklebten kleinen Chinesen als Spuk an ihrem Bett gesehen hat. Dann bin ich verloren, Effi. Von solcher Lächerlichkeit kann man sich nie wieder erholen. (EB 67)

Just like Effi often feels trapped in Kessin and in her marriage, Innstetten is equally trapped by his principles and social standing.

As important as “Haltung”, both in the sense of posture and composure, and the maintenance of it is Effi’s trembling, or “Zittern.” It usually stands in for vocal expression whenever fear or unease overcome her, and first befalls her upon meeting Innstetten. After just having learned that he has asked for her hand in marriage, Effi “schwie und suchte nach einer Antwort” (EB 14). But before Effi can find an answer, her thoughts are interrupted by her father and Innstetten entering the room. Upon seeing her husband to be, Effi “kam in ein nervöses Zittern” (EB 14). Clearly the young girl is overwhelmed by the situation: Only moments ago she was joking around with her friends and now she is facing a surprising engagement to a man she has not even met – an engagement which, according to her mother, she should not refuse. Her verbal as well as her physical response, however, are prevented from unfolding by both being interrupted. Effi does not verbally respond to the proposal, but her trembling suggests a rather negative response. However, even this trembling does not last long, not because Innstetten makes her feel at ease, but rather because her friends show up at the window, exclaiming: “Effi, komm” (EB 14).<sup>44</sup> Based on the way the narrator describes the situation, it is not Innstetten’s friendly bow to her that distracts her from her nervous trembling but rather the familiar faces of Hertha and Bertha, pulling her back to a childhood she is just about to leave behind. All these life changing details happen almost within a blink of an eye, not only to Effi but also to the reader. Just as she is looking for an answer to his proposal, the reader is looking for a clue to what she could be thinking. Moreover,

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<sup>44</sup> „Effi, als sie seiner ansichtig wurde, kam in ein nervöses Zittern; aber nicht auf lange, denn im selben Augenblick fast, wo sich Innstetten unter freundlicher Verneigung ihr näherte, wurden an dem mittleren der weit offenstehenden und von wildem Wein halb überwachsenen Fenster die rotblonden Köpfe der Zwillinge sichtbar, und Hertha, die Ausgelassenste, rief in den Saal hinein: »Effi, komm«“ (EB 14).

just when a physical reaction is displayed that could illuminate her emotional state, the text takes yet another turn by throwing in the distraction of Bertha and Hertha at the window. Not only does the narrator not allow for an answer from Effi, she is also not allowed to let her body language further express her feelings. Here, she is silenced twice, both verbally and physically.<sup>45</sup>

The scene in which Effi meets her new husband for the first time is, moreover, connected to the passionate encounter between Effi and Crampas discussed above in multiple ways: On the level of Effi's lack of verbal response, on the one hand, and on the other hand, in the description of her body language. In both cases, her body language is interrupted or interfered with by an external force. While the appearance of her friends in the first scene distracts from Effi's reaction and shifts the focus away from her giving a response (to being addressed instead), Crampas intervenes in the second one.<sup>46</sup> Again, there is an addressing of Effi, yet she

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<sup>45</sup> The act of marrying Innstetten is therefore another instance in which Effi is situated between activity and passivity. More specifically, her passivity is of verbal nature here, since her trembling certainly counts as a reaction. As the next chapter of the novel shows, Effi and Innstetten have gotten married, but whether this marriage is based on Effi's (active) agreement and acceptance of the proposal or rather a passive submission, a "sich verheiraten lassen", remains unspecified. Once more, a vital part of the plot is obscured and moved into the realm of an in-between space. The reader can make an educated guess regarding Effi's involvement in the decision to marry Innstetten: Namely that she neither agreed nor disagreed to it, but rather resigned herself to the parental wish for this societally promising marriage. This suspicion recalls the notion of Effi neither simply marrying Innstetten out of her own free will, nor being married off to him by her parents, but rather allowing her parents to marry her off. In German, this distinction can be expressed as "sich verheiraten" vs. "verheiratet werden" vs. "sich verheiraten lassen". Linguistically, "sich verheiraten" and "verheiratet werden" represent reflexive and passive structures respectively, and are thus both forms of the middle voice. However, "sich verheiraten lassen" adds the dimension of agreement, or at least permission to both the reflexive and passive structure. The linguistic application of the middle voice is thus extended, which simultaneously allows for an extension of its meaning. Within the context of silence and passivity, and the notions of silent agreement and disagreement in particular, this is an important distinction that sheds new light on Effi's involvement in this decision. It shows that Effi is not just one or the other, neither passive nor active, but a much more multifaceted combination of both.

<sup>46</sup> The seduction scene discussed above is yet another instance in which Effi's trembling coincides with her speechlessness and a physical reaction. When Effi and Crampas share a sleigh and enter the forest

appears to have little control over the situation or her response. It is Crampas who takes her hands and begins to kiss them, thus directing this intimate and transgressive moment between them. Effi's reaction however is limited to either feeling like she is fainting, actually fainting or pretending to faint, as discussed above. Here, the reader is kept in the dark about her actual reaction once again, leaving an empty space to be filled which remains silent within the novel as well as on the narrative level. Effi thus enters into the affair in a similar fashion as she has entered into her marriage: Quietly, neither active nor passive, and on a (moral) middle ground.

As noted above, Effi's frequent shivers and trembling often occur in combination with her attempts at regaining her posture – "Haltung" – as well as with her explicitly mentioned silence. Thus, it is no surprise that, when she slides off the chair as Innstetten tells her that they will be moving to Berlin (quoted above), her reaction is first described as follows: "Effi sagte kein Wort, und nur ihre Augen wurden immer größer; um ihre Mundwinkel war ein nervöses Zucken, und ihr ganzer zarter Körper zitterte" (EB 153). Again, Effi's body here speaks first before she does. When she ultimately exclaims "Gott sei Dank!" (EB 153), this appears to be a seemingly empty phrase, not expressing anything in particular but at the same

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together, Effi's reaction is described as follows: "Ein Zittern überkam sie, und sie schob die Finger fest ineinander, um sich einen Halt zu geben" (EB 136). While her motion to fold her hands points to her prayer for protection it is also mentioned that she is looking for "Halt", stability or something to hold on to, which relates back to the importance of "Haltung" discussed above. While Effi's trembling seems to point to fear, unease, or a fearful anticipation of things to come, the trembling in Crampas voice in the following quote suggests more of a sexual excitement and desire: "„Effi“, klang es jetzt leis an ihr Ohr, und sie hörte, dass seine Stimme zitterte. Dann nahm er ihre Hand und löste die Finger, die sie noch immer geschlossen hielt, und überdeckte sie mit heißen Küssen" (EB 136). In addition to that, her interlocked fingers come undone when he covers them with kisses, thus directly linking Crampas to Effi's loss of "Halt(ung)" – both in the physical and moral sense.



time expressing everything. Because of its cryptic character, it also awakens suspicions again in both Innstetten and the reader. Effi pretends to refer to her fear of the haunting Chinese here<sup>47</sup>, but her initial physical reaction points to the other hidden fear of hers, namely that of the affair coming to light. As with so many other references and hints to the underlying story, this one is hidden in plain sight. Her reaction also displays her gratefulness: Not knowing how to end the affair herself, Effi appreciates the outside forces that end it for her, a factor that will be discussed further in the final part of this chapter.

Leaving the affair behind, her fear, however, never leaves Effi completely. When moving to Berlin, Effi once more “zitterte vor Erregung und atmete hoch auf. Dann (...) erhob [sie] den Blick und faltete die Hände. „Nun, mit Gott, ein neues Leben! Es soll anders werden.“ (EB 171). Even though this shivering is a more positive one denoting a sense of relief, it is still directly connected to her adulterous past. Again, it coincides with a folding of the hands and a prayer for a new and different life. Here, Effi attempts to close the chapter of the affair which – at least to the reader – began in the sleigh scene, where she also trembles and folds her hand to pray. The affair, just as the ghost story, is a chapter of Effi’s life that is never really closed though. Her occasional feelings of fear and/or guilt testify to that. However, her trembling does not threaten to expose her any longer, but rather “alles, was davon noch in ihr nachzitterte, gab ihrer Haltung einen eigenen Reiz” (EB 174). Here, her “Zittern” and “Haltung” appear united in a way in which one benefits from the other as opposed to the two working in an antagonistic fashion. Effi has

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<sup>47</sup> The importance of the ghost story and its function as a stand in for the affair will be discussed in detail in the next part of this chapter.

managed to make the “Zittern” a part of her “Haltung”, to incorporate and, to a certain degree, embrace it as a part of her character. Just like the haunting adds a certain “charm” to the house in Kessin and is employed by Innstetten to make him more interesting, Effi’s adulterous past and her fear of discovery shape her character and make her more appealing as well.

Thus, the effects of the affair are not merely of a negative nature (such as the divorce, public scorn and the duel resulting in Crampas’ death), but for Effi, also have positive implications: The experience of the affair and more so the feelings and fears surrounding it have helped to shape her and develop a more rounded character. She has evolved from the girl who was merely following in her mother’s footsteps – both through her marriage and through creating her own love triangle mimicking that of her mother.<sup>48</sup> The difference between the mother’s and the daughter’s love stories is clearly their respective outcome: Luise von Briest is a thoroughly assimilated member of society who has sacrificed much of her personality to gain status and prestige, while Effi becomes an outcast, divorced, separated from her child and, for the most part, renounced by her parents. Yet Effi first comes out of this tragedy a much stronger character who, albeit briefly, questions and criticizes the behavior of those around her, most of all Innstetten’s (cf. EB 232f), before she falls back into a previous role: The role of a daughter who needs her parents to take care of her in her final days, and who admits to her former husband having “in allem recht gehandelt” (EB 249).

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<sup>48</sup> The ways in which Effi follows in her mother’s footsteps/strays from them will be discussed in the final part of this chapter.

In summary, it is noticeable that expressive body language and gestures in *Effi Briest* primarily occur in overwhelming situations, involving emotions that either cannot be put into words or find an appropriate addressee. As such, moments of extreme physical reactions motivate the progression of the story when words do not, and accompany a quiet, inner coming-to-terms with a register of feelings: “Haltung” and conformity are lost whenever emotional transgressions occur. In many instances, these physical expressions have a reactive nature, and yet, they play an active role in the development of the story. The narratological choice to depict these bodily actions and to describe them without granting the characters the option of expressing particular emotions verbally constitutes another conscious choice to silence them. Simultaneously, the non-verbal and non-vocal expressions, i.e. gestures and physical actions and reactions, offer insights into the emotional state of the characters, thus opening up a pregnant space for interpretation and analysis – both for the reader and for the characters within the novel. In doing so, body language, especially in conjunction with verbal expression, adds an additional dimension of ambiguity to an already ambiguous text that feeds off of the discrepancies between what is said and what is not.

### **III. Haunting Silence: The Ghost Story**

One prevailing interpretation of the ghost story in *Effi Briest* is that conversations about the ghost stand in for the affair with Crampas (cf. Thum, Evans, Jamison, Greenberg), another that the ghost symbolizes Innstetten’s haunting return from the past to the Briest’s life (cf. Berman, Greenberg). Both assessments are valid, however, one important aspect of Effi’s usage of the ghost story has not been

adequately addressed so far: Once Effi has overcome her fear of the ghost, she uses the story strategically to distract Innstetten from the actual story taking place under his nose. Within the context of Effi attempting to create her own story, this is of central importance because she here reinterprets a story that was designed to control her, and employs it as a means to manipulate her husband instead.

Clearly, the ghost story poses a communicative problem between Effi and Innstetten. In addition to that, it is also a tool that both spouses use to their respective advantage. Innstetten's vague references to the Chinese instill fear in Effi from the start while simultaneously ridiculing her for being scared of his ghost.<sup>49</sup> His ways of speaking about the Chinese are a constant to-and-fro – he brings him up yet does not fully explain his story or pretends that he does not want to tell it out of respect for his wife's feelings.<sup>50</sup> Toying with Effi's emotions like that by never revealing the full story only adds to the unease she is feeling towards the topic,

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<sup>49</sup> While Effi finds the Chinese spooky in the beginning, she still wants to hear more about him. Yet, she is hesitant in her request as she has "doch immer gleich Visionen und Träume und möchte doch nicht, wenn ich diese Nacht hoffentlich gut schlafe, gleich einen Chinesen an mein Bett treten sehen." (EB 38) Leaving the foreshadowing of events to come aside, Innstetten's way of introducing the topic of the Chinese already sets up the story to be "schauerlich". He tells Effi that he will show her the grave "wenn du nicht furchtsam bist" (EB 38), a formulation which, in its negativity "with the qualifier *if* implies that she *should* be frightened." (Gault 46, emphasis in the original) Similarly, when Innstetten tells Effi that the Chinese man will not be showing up at her bedside, he creates the impression "als ob es doch möglich wäre" (EB 38).

Gault, Rebecca S. "Education by the use of Ghosts: Strategies of Repetition in Effi Briest." *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, I & II*. Eds. Barbara Johnstone, Roy O. Freedle, and Annette Kirk. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1994. 139. Print.

<sup>50</sup> On their way to Kessin, he links Effi's nervousness to "die Geschichte von dem Chinesen" to which Effi retorts "Du hast mir ja gar keine erzählt" (EB 40). Later on when they both notice the picture of the Chinese in the upstairs room, "Innstetten selbst *schien* von dem Bildchen überrascht und versicherte, dass er es nicht wisse." (EB 51) while Effi "war nur verwundert, dass Innstetten alles so ernsthaft nahm, als ob es doch etwas sei" (EB 51). His mixed signals and ways of only partially revealing the story of the Chinese continue when he tells her "„(...)Und dann wird dir Johanna wohl gestern Abend was erzählt haben, von der Hochzeit hier oben.“ „Nein.“ „Desto besser.“ „Kein Wort hat sie mir erzählt“ (EB 66). Again, he alludes to there being more to the story without actually telling it just yet, which is not exactly comforting to Effi.

which supports Crampas argument that Innstetten is using the ghost story to educate Effi and keep her in line.

The Chinese becomes thus an important addition to their conversations as well as to their marriage, and he precedes Crampas in that way. When Innstetten finally reveals more of the story, both he and Effi refer to the Chinese as “unserer” (EB 70). This indicates their shared knowledge of him as well as the fact that he “is also something they in a sense ‘own’” (Gault 148). Yet, this shared knowledge is based on vague allusions and suspicions and therefore just as shallow as the basis of Innstetten’s and Effi’s marriage. Innstetten’s way of finally revealing the story to Effi is just as ambiguous as his previous remarks on the subject. He begins by stating “Bravo, Effi Ich wollte nicht davon sprechen. Aber nun macht es sich so von selbst, und das ist gut. Übrigens ist es eigentlich gar nichts” (EB 70). A number of things are at work simultaneously in this statement: First of all, Innstetten starts out by complimenting Effi sententiously, as if to give her credit for wanting to face her fears. Here, the notion of him being “der große Erzieher” is rather obvious. He further points out that he did not want to talk about the story, yet he keeps bringing it up, contradicting himself the very next moment when he states that it is a good thing that they are talking about it. Nevertheless, he claims that it really is nothing. Given Innstetten’s instructional character, this back and forth can hardly be interpreted as natural hesitation to worry his wife. Rather, it functions as part of a strategy to subconsciously instill fear in Effi while at the same time pretending to be above such fears himself. This indecisiveness is rather atypical for a man like Innstetten who values strong principles and a clear stand on things above all else. It

therefore suggests that his version of the ghost story is a means to manipulate Effi and ultimately, control her and their shared narrative.

As noted above, the ghost intrudes in the marriage of Effi and Innstetten similarly to Crampas, and both are equally important to her development. Effi's feelings about the ghost story, in fact, resemble her feelings about her affair to the point where they merge and the ghost and Crampas become almost interchangeable in her narratives.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the ghost story shifts from a means to educate and control Effi to a narrative controlled and manipulated by her. As such, it relates to the larger narrative, i.e. her mother's love story, which originally determines and restricts her path as well, but which she eventually alters through her affair with Crampas. Effi's treatment of the ghost story is therefore closely connected to her manipulation of her mother's narrative as she is taking over her husband's story and using it as her own to deceive him. This only works because Innstetten underestimates her ability to do so. Despite him being the one to constantly educate and evaluate her, he fails to see that Crampas has a similar effect on Effi. Crampas has taught her that there is more to the ghost story than just a haunting of a dead Chinese man. Thus, Effi learns from Innstetten's strategy, not from the content of his words, and employs it as her own to cover up her affair.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The ghost story and the affair are two topics Effi cannot openly talk about. But since the ghost story is the lesser of two evils to address, Effi often chooses it when she is hiding her feelings regarding her affair.

<sup>52</sup> Crampas, on the other hand, who attempts to educate Effi for his own purposes when he badmouths her husband,

fails to realize that he has replaced the Chinaman as the object of Effi's fear. (...) Effi exchanged physiological fear for a psychological one, and now she replaces the latter with a fear that functions at a social level: the fear of being exposed as an adulteress. (Jamison 26)

At the same time, the affair also becomes a ghost haunting Innstetten – yet another way in which Effi turns the ghost story back onto him. Innstetten himself being a ghost from the past who comes back into the Briest's life is haunted by the feeling that there is more to his wife's relationship with Crampas. And just as he has come back from the past, so do the affair and Crampas when Innstetten discovers the letters years after it had taken place. Similarly to Effi's fears turning into fears that have been conditioned by society, so are Innstetten's worries: "Innstetten is frightened of the ridicule that he could experience even from a close and trusted friend like Wüllersdorf as he is of appearing ridiculous in Bismarck's or the townspeople's eyes" (Jamison 29). This contains another connection between the ghost story of the Chinese and Crampas as a ghost from the past: Innstetten's worries about being ridiculed by the townspeople were his initial reason for dismissing Effi's fears of the ghost. Now these fears come back to haunt him in a different shape. Finally, this connection is also addressed when Innstetten is on his way to the duel and mentions the "Spukhaus" to Wüllersdorf, but does not provide details because "Es *spukt* einem doch allerhand anderes im Kopf rum" (EB 204, my

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However, while she uses one fear and one story to cover up the other, Effi associates different emotions with the two narratives. The Chinese ghost makes her feel uneasy because he is uncanny, whereas her affair, and more so her lack of remorse, make her rather unhappy. Effi even alludes to this important differentiation when she compares Crampas' wife's unhappiness to Frau Kruse's uncanniness and states that she would prefer unhappiness over uncanniness: "'Ich wüßt es schon; es ist doch ein Unterschied zwischen den beiden. Die arme Majorin ist unglücklich, die Kruse ist unheimlich.' ,Und da bist du doch mehr für das Unglückliche?' ,Ganz entschieden'" (EB 123). Effi thus deliberately chooses the haunting of the affair to replace the haunting of the ghost, while her guilt, but lack of remorse slowly become the ghost she is afraid of. At one point, Effi feels "(...) als sähe ihr wer über die Schulter. Aber sie besann sich rasch. „Ich weiß schon, was es ist; es war nicht *der*“, und sie wies mit dem Finger nach dem Spukzimmer oben. „Es war was anderes ... mein Gewissen ... Effi, du bist verloren“ (EB 143, emphasis in the original). Here, fear of the Chinese is clearly replaced with fear of her own conscience looking over her shoulder.

Jamison, Robert L. "The Fearful Education of Effi Briest." *Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 74.1 (1982): 20-32. Print.

emphasis). Here, “spuken” no longer points to the original ghost story but rather the thoughts of the affair haunting Innstetten and the duel with Crampas preoccupying his mind. The ghost story is thus a story that is constantly being reinterpreted and used as a tool to haunt, educate, control and manipulate by all three members of the love triangle.

The ghost story thus turns from Innstetten’s educational method to Effi’s means of distraction from her very own haunting secret. The same way in which she only hints at it, the text only hints at the affair between Effi and Crampas. Like the ghost, the affair is something that is present between the lines while not being apparent, thus showing a similarly elusive characteristic. It is the nature of a ghost to occupy a space without itself being seen and heard clearly, hence rendering it an entity that is simultaneously a non-entity and that only shows itself on its own terms. It is present without being present, thus occupying a realm between reality and fear/fantasy, and Effi can never be certain of its existence (just as Innstetten is never certain of the existence of the affair). And while a ghost often needs a human medium to speak and express itself in an almost ventriloquial fashion, Effi, in turn, uses the idea of the ghost as a container for her fears, her uneasiness, loneliness, and ultimately for her secret affair. She therefore uses the ghost story as a way to express these feelings without actually articulating them.

Moreover, the affair with Crampas (and Crampas himself) becomes the ghost of Effi’s and Innstetten’s failed marriage. This becomes apparent in the beginning stages of the affair already, when Crampas’ words begin to haunt Effi while she is with her husband:



Aber ganz konnte sie das, was Crampas gesagt hatte, doch nicht verwinden, und inmitten ihrer Zärtlichkeiten und während sie mit anscheinendem Interesse zuhörte, *klang es in ihr immer wieder*: „Also Spuk aus Berechnung, Spuk, um dich in Ordnung zu halten.“ (EB 113, my emphasis)

While Effi regurgitates words and phrases taught to her throughout the novel, Crampas words here echo within her and take hold of her. The conversation about a haunting becomes haunting itself. Later on, thoughts of the affair also begin to haunt her and eventually weigh heavily on her conscience.<sup>53</sup> The constant fear of discovery even makes her feel “als ob ihr ein Schatten nachginge” (EB 187), which not only points to the notion of being haunted, but being haunted by an ill, dark spirit. At the same time, this dark shadow is one cast by her and her actions and thus a part of her existence. However, eventually “alles löste sich wie ein Nebelbild und wurde Traum” (EB 188). Whether the unbearable memory is turning into a dream or a nightmare is not specified further at this point, but at the same time, it appears as if a chapter is closing for Effi (or so she believes at this point) the same way it began: with a dream/nightmare and the feeling of being haunted.

As I have shown, the ghost story can be seen as an element that connects Effi and Innstetten and, at the same time, keeps working against both of them. Another factor comes into play, however, when Effi uses the ghost story to turn it back onto Innstetten to haunt him: Here, Effi is opposing a story meant for her. She plays a part in a story that was meant for her mother (i.e. her marriage to Innstetten) to which Innstetten adds the additional ghost story. But by using this story to her advantage,

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<sup>53</sup> cf. EB 177: “‘Und ich habe die Schuld auf meiner Seele’, wiederholte sie. ‚Ja, da hab ich sie. Aber lastet sie auch auf meiner Seele? Nein. Und das ist es, warum ich vor mir selbst erschrecke. Was da lastet, das ist etwas ganz anderes - Angst, Todesangst und die ewige Furcht: Es kommt doch am Ende noch an den Tag. Und dann außer der Angst ... Scham. Ich schäme mich.(...)’”

it becomes her way of reinterpreting her role within both the marriage and the ghost story as two narratives she previously had no control over. From the start, Effi is expected to continue living her mother's love story with Innstetten, a love story of the past. Through Innstetten's return, as Berman argues, "the past reaches into the present. [Innstetten] is (...) a ghost who himself cannot escape the past" (Berman 256). Although Innstetten and Effi are called a "Musterpaar", they are no more than that – the real "Muster", the pattern behind it, is the love story between Frau von Briest and Innstetten. Effi finds herself forced to follow this pattern, but attempts to break out of it when entering the relationship with Crampas. In doing so, however, Effi rather lives her own variation of her mother's love story "mit Entsagung", thereby replacing Innstetten with Crampas - both as a lover and a ghost from the past. The final part of this chapter will discuss how Effi's life is predetermined by the story imagined for her by her mother and by her mother's history with Innstetten, and how the affair is an extension of that story less than rebellion against it.

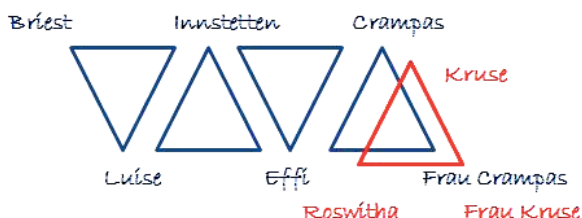
#### **IV. Implications of Storytelling and Literature**

From the very start, dialogue and storytelling as well as literary citations are important elements and themes of the text, but on the flipside, so are interruptions and silencing of the other person. As I pointed out in my introductory remarks, I am looking at (female) silence in relation to (male) authorship and, in particular, at the way in which men's words are repeated by and spoken through female characters. In Effi's case, numerous male voices have an impact on her as she constantly quotes her father, her husband, even her lover and the various paternal figures in her life, such as Gieshübler or Niemeyer. However, the role she has internalized is not

entirely scripted by male figures. In fact, it is a role she takes over from her mother. As she is a “Tochter aus gutem Hause,” she has to play the role of a well-behaved product of her upbringing every day. When marrying Innstetten, her role shifts from daughter to wife, but what remains the same is the fact that she leads a life prescribed by her husband and her society. The only way Effi does act or strays from her prescribed role is through the affair with Crampas, thus a physical and emotional, non-vocal<sup>54</sup> reaction to her unhappiness with Innstetten. But this affair is not simply an act of rebellion against living a life based on her mother’s blueprint. Instead, I propose that the love triangle between Effi, Innstetten and Crampas repeats the love triangle of Luise, Briest and Innstetten<sup>55</sup>. Thus, Effi partially

<sup>54</sup> Effi does articulate her unhappiness verbally in her letters to Crampas. However, these letters are never quoted within the text, thus leaving the extent of her feelings and thoughts regarding the affair in yet another blank space between the lines of the main text.

<sup>55</sup> The notion of triangular relationships and communication is constantly being alluded to throughout the novel on a motivic level, namely by the frequent usage of the number three. First of all, there are the many love triangles in the story, between Luise von Briest, Innstetten and Briest, between Luise, Effi and Innstetten, and between Effi, Innstetten and Crampas. They are further paralleled in the affairs of the servants, such as “Inspektor Pink und die Gärtnersfrau” (EB 20) and Roswitha’s flirtation with Kruse (cf. EB 148), whose wife also serves as a mirroring character of Crampas’ wife (cf. EB 88, 123). Multiple triangular relationships overlap because of the key love triangle namely that between Innstetten, Luise and Effi, and Effi herself is at the center of three of them. Things get even more complicated when the flirtatious relationship between Roswitha and Kruse is added to the mix, which mirrors the love triangle between Effi, Crampas and his wife:



Second, the novel’s main plot takes place in three different places: Hohen-Cremmen, Kessin and Berlin, which further underlines the importance of the triangular construct the novel is built on. Apart from those structural elements, the number three is mentioned throughout the novel with an obtrusiveness that is hard to ignore: Effi and Innstetten are wed on October 3<sup>rd</sup> (EB 21), their daughter Annie is born on July 3<sup>rd</sup> (EB 97) (exactly nine months after the wedding day/night, which could not make the conception of the child any more clichéd and artificially constructed), Effi has three girlfriends at home, Innstetten has been in office for three years (EB 17), and there are three chairs in the attic of Innstetten’s house (one with the

recreates her mother's love story, once with Innstetten and once with Crampas, but in doing so, she reinterprets it and turns it into her own narrative.

From the moment the reader learns that Innstetten has asked for Effi's hand in marriage, it is obvious that she has become a stand-in for her mother, who passed up her chance with Innstetten two decades ago. Luise von Briest is now living vicariously through her daughter, telling her that she will "mit zwanzig Jahren da [stehen], wo andere mit vierzig stehen" (EB 14). This prediction points to Effi only being three years short of twenty and her mother two years short of forty, just like Innstetten. Therefore, she will "surpass" her mother by far (cf. EB 14). Throughout the text, various references are made to the fact that Frau von Briest "hätte[...] (...) besser zu Innstetten gepaßt als Effi" (EB 31), that "Wenn's die Mutter nicht sein konnte, muss es eben die Tochter sein" (EB 16) and that "Die Mama, ja, die hätte hierhergepaßt (...)" (EB 60). Her mother seems much more excited about the marriage from the start, yet another sign of her living vicariously through Effi.<sup>56</sup> As

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picture of the Chinese attached to it, pointing to yet another love triangle between the Chinese, Nina and her husband) (EB 51). Effi rings the bell three times when she awakes in panic from her nightmare (EB 63, 64), and she spends three weeks in Ems. Three years pass after her divorce and are not accounted for in the novel (EB 219), Crampas has barely three minutes to live after being shot in the duel (EB 204) and his letters were found in the third drawer of Effi's sewing table (EB 193). In addition to that, the text frequently mentions three days or weeks having passed between events that are narrated in the story. And last but not least, the day on which Crampas appears during Effi's and Innstetten's conversation when Innstetten mentions the "Don Juan" – a day which is later referred to as the day where it all started by Effi (cf. EB 184) – is September 27<sup>th</sup> (EB 104), or 9/27, both multiples of three:  $3 \times 3 = 9$ ,  $3 \times 9 = 27$ , again pointing to the multiplying love triangles in the novel.

<sup>56</sup> When Effi receives a letter from Innstetten prior to their marriage, she is barely concerned with reading it, even almost forgets about it and only begins reading when her mother reminds her (cf. EB 25). After Effi has done so quietly, her mother quizzes her about the content of the letter until Effi begins reading it to her, but not without interrupting herself a few times. These interruptions seem to annoy her mother as she impatiently tells her "Lies, lies." and "Lies, lies ... Du sollst ja lesen." (EB 27) as if she cannot wait to her Innstetten's words herself. Here, Effi becomes a mere medium to convey Innstetten's message to her mother, a message that, on the surface is directed at Effi but really seems to speak more to the mother who comments "Das ist ein sehr hübscher Brief" (EB 27). Effi, however, does not seem to care much for the content of the letter, especially since it shows that her fiancée does not know her at all: "Er will mir ja

Effi is supposed to fulfill her mother's love story with Innstetten, this indicates that she is not just "das andere, was sonst noch kam" (EB 9) in her parents' marriage, but also "das andere" that is supposed to alter the ending to the love story of Luise and Innstetten by continuing it on her mother's behalf. As previously noted in this chapter, Effi never explicitly agrees to this role she is supposed to play. She obeys but never says "yes" to Innstetten's proposal – a proposal which is narrated by Effi's mother, who functions as the main agent in arranging the marriage.

Interestingly enough, she is also the one to inform Effi of its ending (cf. EB 214), proving her involvement in her daughter's marriage to come full circle. And moreover, it is the mother's intervention in her daughter's marriage that brings about the events leading up to the divorce. Throughout her marriage, Effi is also constantly patronized by her mother, especially when it comes to her trouble conceiving more children: "als aber eine lange, lange Zeit (...) vergangen war, wurde der alte Rummschüttel, der auf dem Gebiet der Gynäkologie nicht ganz ohne Ruf war, *durch Frau von Briest* doch schließlich zu Rate gezogen" (EB 188, my emphasis). Here it is her mother who is concerned about Effi not having more children, not Effi herself. It seems as if the mother wants her daughter to be more successful in this aspect of her life as well, i.e. by having more than one child and possibly even having a son. It is this attempt to meddle in her daughter's marriage that leads Effi to leave for Ems and during this absence, her daughter Annie's fall happens which then leads to the discovery of the Crampas letters – something that probably would have been avoided, had Effi been there. Thus, the mother is not just

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schon Schmuck schenken in Venedig. Er hat keine Ahnung davon, daß ich mir nichts aus Schmuck mache" (EB 28).

merely *involved* in the commencement and ending of Effi's marriage, but rather the puppet master behind it, pulling the strings that motivate the changes from daughter to wife, and from wife to divorcee and outcast, both actively and indirectly.<sup>57</sup>

If Effi is attempting to free herself from enacting her mother's love story and from Innstetten's educational efforts, then this happens less through breaking out of the arranged marriage with the affair, than by using Innstetten's ghost story as a concealment for it. As mentioned above, she does so by reinterpreting both stories – the love story “mit Entsagung” as well as the haunting “Spuk,” thus connecting both of them with the act of insubordination. Effi attempts to create her own version of her mother's “Geschichte mit Entsagung” when she enters into the affair with Crampas, knowing that it can only have a dramatic ending for both of them and that there is no fulfillment to be found in it – hence the “Entsagung” at the end. If the affair is thus Effi's attempt to get back at her husband and her mother for trapping her in a loveless marriage, then we must wonder how successful this attempt at

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<sup>57</sup> The fact that Effi's mother patronizes her is particularly interesting given the German word for “patronize” – “bevormunden”. The German verb provides a clear connection to the mouth, and by extension to speech and being spoken for. Just like Effi's mother speaks on Innstetten's behalf when asking Effi to marry him, she also substitutes Effi's answer by leaving her no choice but to agree, takes over the role of worrying about Effi's reproductive problems (which not only patronizes her on the field of language, but also patronizes her body) and again delivers Innstetten's message that he is divorcing Effi. In connection to that, the fact that Innstetten and Effi barely talk prior to their marriage is also of vital importance. Innstetten continues the “Bevormundung” of Effi by looking at her as a child-bride more than a woman, which becomes apparent whenever he calls her his “kleine Frau” (cf. EB 122, 123, 138). The notion of Effi being a child-bride is also underlined by the fact that her mother and Innstetten are exactly the same age, and the fact that “er könnte ja beinah mein Vater sein” (EB 12). This connection adds yet another, almost incestuous aspect to Effi's relationship with Innstetten. Innstetten even admits to having regarded her as a child in the past: “Du hattest so was von einem verwöhnten Kind, mit einem Mal siehst du aus wie eine Frau” (EB 151). What Innstetten does not realize is that this change has been brought about by Effi's affair with Crampas. The affair has turned Effi into a woman, first and foremost in an erotic sense. In addition to that, I would like to argue, it has also turned her into a woman in the sense that she is no longer the patronized child who obeys her mother and husband in playing the role as “das andere”, the neuter child-bride, so to speak, and has come up with her own version of the story.

scripting her own version of her role actually is. After all, although Effi admits being the one guilty of the adultery (cf. EB 160), she also knows that she is not the one actively ending it. Therefore, there is no active “Entsagung” to begin with – Innstetten and Effi are simply being “abberufen” from Kessin, commanded by a higher authority, and this geographical separation is what puts an end to the affair – relocation replaces renunciation, so to speak.<sup>58</sup>

The term “Entsagung”, however, is more than just a renunciation of forbidden love. It also evokes the idea of “dem Teufel entsagen”<sup>59</sup> (to renounce the devil), which is essentially what Effi has to do: The name Fontane gives to her lover, Crampas, is reminiscent of the German figure of “Krampus”. According to folk belief, Krampus is a beast-like, devilish creature who is said to be the evil counterpart of St. Nicholas, and who punishes children if they misbehave instead of rewarding them. The idea of this awe-inspiring creature is closely connected to the haunting effect the affair has on Effi. Therefore, she feels like she has to renounce this evil that has entered her life and taken hold of her<sup>60</sup>:

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<sup>58</sup> Of course, her mother’s relationship with Innstetten was also ended by external forces, namely that of society and probably Luise’s parents, who might have deemed Briest a more appropriate husband than young Innstetten.

<sup>59</sup> “Ich entsage dem Teufel und allen seinen Werken und allem seinem Wesen und ergebe mich dir, du dreieiniger Gott, Vater, Sohn und Heiliger Geist, im Glauben und Gehorsam Dir treu zu sein bis an mein letztes Ende.” Luther, Martin. *Der kleine Katechismus*. Project Gutenberg-DE, 2014. Web. 25 October 2014. <<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/martin-luther-sonstige-texte-270/2>>

<sup>60</sup> Effi implies the connection between her affair and that “was man den Teufel nenne” (EB 185) herself when she reflects on her feelings of guilt and remembers the priest Niemeyer’s words:

Und das hat mir der alte Niemeyer in seinen guten Tagen noch, als ich noch ein halbes Kind war, mal gesagt: auf ein richtiges Gefühl, darauf käme es an, und wenn man das habe, dann könne einem das Schlimmste nicht passieren, und wenn man es nicht habe, dann sei man in einer ewigen Gefahr, und das, was man den Teufel nenne, das habe dann eine sichere Macht über uns. (EB 185)

Sie litt schwer darunter und wollte sich befreien. Aber wiewohl sie starker Empfindungen fähig war, so war sie doch keine starke Natur; ihr fehlte die Nachhaltigkeit, und alle guten Anwandlungen gingen wieder vorüber. So trieb sie denn weiter, heute, weil sie's nicht ändern konnte, morgen, weil sie's nicht ändern wollte. Das Verbotene, das Geheimnisvolle *hatte seine Macht über sie*. (EB 143, my emphasis)

Here it becomes clear that the affair does not just haunt Effi, but has power over her. The quote above also recalls my earlier discussion of “Macht”, “Ohnmacht” and “Scheinmacht”, as it shows the development Effi has undergone, from seemingly exercising power to resist Crampas in the sleigh scene (by potentially faking a state of powerlessness), to making a conscious decision not to fight her feelings any longer. However, Effi is still being controlled here – not by one of the men in her life, but rather by her fascination with the forbidden and the secretive – in other words: the devil. By the same token, it is also important to note that it is not a man she is attracted to here either, but rather the feeling of doing something forbidden and keeping it a secret.

Crampas, however, is not the only man in the novel associated with the devil. In fact, Luise von Briest had to swear off her own devil when she swore off her former lover, Innstetten, as well, which connects the two men in Effi's life and underlines the parallels between both love triangles. Innstetten's own devilish character shows in a quote from Goethe's *Faust* early on in the novel. During Effi's and Innstetten's honeymoon, a letter from Effi arrives in the Briest household in which Effi writes:

Hier in Padua (wo wir heute früh ankamen) sprach [Innstetten] im Hotelwagen etliche Male vor sich hin: 'Er liegt in Padua begraben', und war überrascht, als er von mir vernahm, daß ich diese Worte noch nie gehört hätte. Schließlich aber sagte er, es sei eigentlich ganz gut und ein Vorzug, daß ich nichts davon wüßte. (EB 34)



Here, Innstetten is quoting Mephisto who tells Gretchen's friend Marthe about her husband's death. Instead of quoting the entire verse though, Innstetten repeats its first line over and over again, almost as if it were a kind of spell. By leaving out part of the quote, Innstetten is actively hiding something from Effi and refuses to further explain the meaning or context of the quote. As Jürgen Nelles argues, the context of the quote is particularly important in connection with Effi and Innstetten. In interpreting the context of the complete quote and the names and places which are mentioned, Nelles argues that Mephisto's words to Marthe imply that her husband died of syphilis, which was a result of his adultery (cf. Nelles 198)<sup>61</sup>. Thus Innstetten's repetition of this devilish formula can be read as a curse on his own marriage which will be affected by adultery and ultimately death of both the adulteress and her lover. And like the affair, the context of the quote is not revealed within the novel but hidden between the lines, from Effi as well as the reader. Here, the notion of hiding something behind a silence which has a deeper meaning applies

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<sup>61</sup> Nelles, Jürgen. "Bedeutungsdimensionen Zwischen Dem Gesagten Und Dem Ungesagten: Intertextuelle Korrespondenzen in Fontanes Effi Briest Und Goethes Faust." *Wirkendes Wort: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur in Forschung und Lehre* 48.2 (1998): 192-214. Print.

Ironically however, her husband is buried next to the church of Saint Antony of Padua, who "gilt as Schutzpatron der Suchenden und Vermißten (Marthe vermißt ihren Mann), der Eheleute und Liebenden (...)" (Nelles 197), pointing to the fact that "der Heilige Antonius in all seinen oben aufgezählten Funktionen – als Schutzpatron der Reisenden und Vermißten, der Liebenden und Eheleute – ‚versagt‘ hat." (Nelles 198) Here,

Fontane legt [Innstetten] buchstäblich eine ‚teuflische‘ Formulierung in den Mund (...) [welche] ausgerechnet zur Vorbereitung einer Verführungsszene dien[t] [und durch die] (...) Innstetten gewissermaßen selbst eine Verbindung zu einem solchen Vorhaben und seinen genauen Umständen her[stellt]. (Nelles 200f)

The connection between Innstetten, Mephisto's devilish words and adultery (or sin in general) is also established by the fact that Innstetten calls Effi his "kleine Eva" (EB 27), thus connecting her to Adam and Eve, the original sin and the Fall of (Wo)Man associated with it and foreshadowing Effi's sin.

twice: Innstetten (successfully) hides the context of his quote from Effi by refusing to elaborate on it, and the narrator teases the reader by refusing to further elaborate on the quote as well, yet inviting him/her to apply his/her own interpretations.

In the context of silence, silencing and ventriloquism, the way in which this quote is embedded in the text is of further importance. First of all, Innstetten here quotes Mephisto, a literary character from a play. The quote is then repeated by Effi in her letter, which is read out loud by her mother to her father.<sup>62</sup> The quote thus travels from Innstetten through the medium Effi to her mother and through her to the father. A devilish Innstetten enters the marriage of the Briests yet again, recalling the past relationship with Luise and her renunciation of it. As Nelles further points out, “Mephistos Worte werden auch nicht von dem, der sie zuerst zitiert, *gesprochen*, sondern von derjenigen, die im Roman die Funktion der mit

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<sup>62</sup> The concept of privacy of correspondence is entirely skewed throughout, as the majority of letters is not only shared with the reader, but also at least one more person other than the sender and addressee. Letters in this novel fulfill more purposes than simple communication between two characters, they also inform the reader in hindsight (and often in quick motion) of important events and changes that have taken place, i.e. Effi's pregnancy, Crampas' arrival in Kessin, and, of course, the extent of the affair. They thus fill in the gaps created by the main narrative in order to provide the reader with information, but, at the same time, their arrival also frequently interrupts the flow of the narrative, and noticeably often, it interrupts conversations. The frequent use of letters throughout the novel is thus a prime example of how vocal communication is often interrupted and replaced by nonvocal communication, or, in other words, how oral dialogue is silenced by written documents - a silencing which is then negated by the frequent sharing of the letters. The reading out loud of letters, a vocalization of a nonvocal communication, is yet another form of speaking in foreign voices, by replacing one's own with that of the sender. Thus, whenever a character reads a letter out loud, the notion of sender/receiver switches: the receiver of the words adopts the role of their source while turning the new listener into the receiver of those words. In addition to that, these new recipients then often become the ones responding to the content of the letter, not in writing, but orally. The written response by the original recipient, however, is never shown in the novel – the reader always only gets to see one side of any written communication, which creates yet another gap. Communication between two characters is thus not only extended to include an additional figure, but in many cases becomes a dialogue between the original sender of the letter and the person it has been shared with. Communication is thus interrupted twice by means of letters – vocal communication comes to a halt whenever letters arrive, and communication within the letters is impeded by the addition of another person – and doubled by including an additional third person who is neither sender nor receiver of the letter.

kupplerischen Attributen ausgestatteten Mutter einnimmt (...)“ (Nelles 208, emphasis in the original). Thus, not only are Crampas and Innstetten associated with the devil here, but so is Effi’s mother, who can easily be seen as Innstetten’s devilish accomplice in this scheme to marry Effi off to him.<sup>63</sup> Effi on the other hand is turned into a mouthpiece when she quotes Innstetten in her letter and relays his words to her parents, to her mother in particular. Just as she earlier became the messenger for a conversation Innstetten and her mother could have had in the past, namely by reading his letter out loud to her mother, she here delivers his devilish message without understanding it.

However, while Effi is still naïve here, she later on displays that she has become a strategist who uses the conversation held between Innstetten and her mother but mediated by her to her advantage. When reading her mother’s letter to Innstetten, Effi finishes as follows:

Effi legte den Brief aus der Hand und sagte nichts. Was sie zu tun habe, das stand bei ihr fest; aber sie wollte es nicht selber aussprechen. Innstetten sollte damit kommen, und dann wollte sie zögernd ja sagen. Innstetten ging auch wirklich in die Falle. (EB 157)

Just as Effi has used Innstetten’s ghost story against him, so too does she here employ being used as a medium to her advantage. She does not simply pass on a message anymore but manipulates her reaction to it in a way that will elicit a particular response from her husband. She thereby hopes to achieve a certain outcome, namely her departure from Kessin to find an apartment in Berlin. This behavior of hers underlines Effi’s development from being a mouthpiece to a clever

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<sup>63</sup> The text also suggests that Luise von Briest can be read as Innstetten’s alter ego, given that they are both the exact same age (“Er ist gerade so alt wie die Mama, auf den Tag” (EB 9).) and that Luise frequently conveys Innstetten’s messages to Effi, such as the proposal or the notice of the divorce.

woman who uses these attempts at being patronized to further her own agenda and, in doing so, beats Innstetten at his own game.

Playing games and playing roles have been a central part of Effi's pre-marital education already, in the playful as well as the strategic sense. As a "Tochter aus gutem Hause," she has been trained to play the part of the well-behaved, assimilated daughter, one who suppresses her wild character and acts the way she is supposed to. This education is clearly meant as a preparation for the transition from daughter to wife. However, it has also equipped Effi with skills that make her an excellent actress when it comes to playing a different role in the comedy of hiding her affair from Innstetten and the rest of the world.<sup>64</sup> Just as she plays along in the comedy of the arranged marriage in the beginning, she later responds to this comedy by countering with her own (cf. Wertheimer 138) in a similar fashion, i.e. when she uses Innstetten's ghost story against him.<sup>65</sup>

Once begun, playing a role soon becomes a necessity for Effi (cf. EB 143) and is managed by her with ease, as can be seen from the passage quoted above where she manipulates Innstetten by carefully choosing her reaction to her mother's letter (cf. EB 157). A similar comedy takes place later on, during her stay in Berlin, when Effi is unwilling to go back to Kessin because she does not want to be faced with the

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<sup>64</sup> Effi even reflects on how easy it is for her to play such a role: "So kam es, daß sie sich, von Natur frei und offen, in ein verstecktes Komödienspiel mehr und mehr hineinlebte. Mitunter erschrak sie, wie leicht es ihr wurde" (EB 143).

<sup>65</sup> Again, her actions are a response to those of Innstetten, who is said to be putting on an act with his "Spukgeschichten" by Crampas: "Und kurz und gut, einmal kam es, daß ich ihm auf den Kopf zusagte: 'Ach was, Innstetten, das ist ja alles bloß Komödie. Mich täuschen Sie nicht. Sie treiben Ihr Spiel mit uns (...)' " (EB 110). In a way, both Effi and Crampas get back at Innstetten by putting on an act for him, but it is Effi who actively reflects on her role in this play: "Sie mußte des Tages gedenken, wo Crampas ihr zum erstenmal gesagt hatte, daß er mit dem Spuk und ihrer Furcht eine Komödie spiele. Der große Erzieher! Aber hatte er nicht Recht? War die Komödie nicht am Platz?" (EB 145)

origin of her comedy, namely the affair with Crampas. She achieves her goal by putting on yet another act: “Es gab also nur ein Mittel: Sie mußte wieder eine Komödie spielen, mußte krank werden” (EB 166). Here, one comedy leads to another in Effi’s life: the marriage to the affair and the affair to the feigned sickness.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Innstetten, Crampas and Effi all partake in the comedic love triangle in which Effi’s affair with Crampas is a response to Innstetten’s comedy of haunting and fear.

At the same time, Innstetten is caught in yet another comedy of his own, one that forces him to act the way he does. Throughout the marriage, he always puts his rank and career first. In combination with his reputation, they constantly come before him being a husband to Effi. This societal comedy in which his gaze is directed upwards to his superiors (cf. EB 16f), is certainly part of the reason why Effi begins an affair with Crampas and with that a comedy of her own. Again, one

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<sup>66</sup> Yet she realizes that she is not the only one acting in this play when she encounters Rummschüttel in Berlin, a “Damendoktor” (EB 170) who is obviously used to the ladies of the high society simulating sickness: “Was er aber still zu sich selber sagte, das lautete: ‘Schulkrank und mit Virtuosität gespielt; Evastochter comme il faut.’” (EB 168). Once more, Effi is associated with Eve and the original sin here, in combination with the notion of putting on an act. However, Rummschüttel being a “Damendoktor”, which implies his complicity in his patients’ plays, reacts with an act of his own:

Effi hatte sich wundervoll gehalten, ihre Rolle gut durchgespielt. Als sie wieder allein war - die Mama begleitete den Geheimrat -, schoß ihr trotzdem das Blut zu Kopf; sie hatte recht gut bemerkt, daß er ihrer Komödie mit einer Komödie begegnet war. (EB 169)

Here, it becomes quite clear that it takes one to know one, and that the doctor, who seems used to writing prescriptions for placebo medications, is one of the few to interpret Effi’s actions (and acting) correctly. And while she is aware of his complicity, she appreciates it as it aids her plans and provides her with emotional support even after she has been caught playing a role. When Effi writes to her husband: “Er gilt ärztlich nicht für ersten Ranges, ‘Damendoktor’, sagen seine Gegner und Neider. Aber dies Wort umschließt doch auch ein Lob; *es kann eben nicht jeder mit uns umgehen.*” (EB 170, my emphasis), this description also implies an accusation towards her husband, who does not know how to handle Effi.

comedy is leading to another, one story warrants the next.<sup>67</sup> This is also the case when it comes to Innstetten's reaction to the discovery of Crampas' love letters to Effi. While he still loves Effi and does not seek revenge, he still feels he has to take a stand publicly on the adultery: "So aber war alles einer Vorstellung, einem Begriff zuliebe, war eine gemachte Geschichte, halbe Komödie. Und diese Komödie muß ich nun fortsetzen und muß Effi wegschicken und sie ruinieren und mich mit..." (EB 206). His concerns regarding his image and reputation once again outweigh his continuing love for Effi and his willingness to forget about her transgression. Furthermore, this progression from the comedy of marriage to the comedy of the affair (and the concealment thereof) to the comedy of the divorce and the duel underlines just how much these characters all play parts in a larger societal comedy, one that is directed by the sum of its members and that ruins them in the process.

Looking at all these different comedies being performed in response to one another, the question of authorship and staging arises. While the comedy of marriage and of ending the marriage can be attributed to societal paradigms, the comedy of the affair and of hiding it are more complicated. At first, it appears as if Crampas were the one pulling the strings and seducing Effi. However, it is Effi who directs her double life of lies and who gradually becomes more and more strategic in hiding her involvement with him. She cleverly sets up a system covering up her traces when she goes for her daily walks, pretending that she is following doctor's orders: "Es verging kein Tag, wo sie nicht ihren *vorgeschriebenen* Spaziergang

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<sup>67</sup> Thus, Effi's comedy is as much a reaction to Innstetten's as her own version of the ghost story is one to his as well. Effi actively uses these narratological and theatrical means to lead her husband astray from his suspicions and to manipulate him just like he manipulates her.

gemacht hätte, meist nachmittags, wenn sich Innstetten in seine Zeitungen zu vertiefen begann" (EB 144, my emphasis).<sup>68</sup> As the quote points out, the walks were prescribed to her, indicating yet again how Effi follows a prescribed path while simultaneously using it to cover up her actual, secret activities. She manipulates the prescription to her own advantage, while Innstetten is blinded by his interest in current affairs and politics which outweigh the interest in his own wife. This is represented in the newspaper which quite literally blocks his view and directs his gaze away from Effi. When he takes his eyes off of her, she goes astray.

At the same time, Crampas plays a major role as the initiator of the affair as well, especially with regard to his own attempts at educating Effi through poems and other references to literature. He also directs the Wichert comedy "Ein Schritt vom Wege" within the novel. The title of the play clearly hints at Effi's own "Schritt vom Wege," namely the "stepping out" of her marriage. During the production of the play, Effi also makes an interesting observation about Crampas' character: "[D]er Major hat so was Gewaltsames, er nimmt einem die Dinge gern über den Kopf fort. Und man muss dann spielen, wie er will, und nicht, wie man selber will" (EB 121). Crampas is portrayed as a puppeteer directing everything from above, as if he were

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<sup>68</sup> The notion of Effi leaving to meet with Crampas whenever her husband begins reading his newspapers, thus informing himself of current events and, in a way, educating himself through reading, is of further interest in connection to his earlier attempts at educating her. Now she is no longer requiring his teachings and rather follows those of Crampas who recites poetry not history and politics, and satisfies her physical needs rather than her intellectual ones. However, even he appears to begin to bore Effi as she comments on his departure: "Es ist recht gut so. (...) Daß er fort ist. Er sagt eigentlich immer dasselbe. Wenn er wieder da ist, wird er wenigstens vorübergehend was Neues zu sagen haben" (EB 145). Moreover, the text suggests that Effi's walks are clearly connected to Crampas presence in Kessin: "Die Spaziergänge nach dem Strand und der Plantage, die sie, während Crampas in Stettin war, aufgegeben hatte, nahm sie nach seiner Rückkehr wieder auf und ließ sich auch durch ungünstige Witterung nicht davon abhalten" (EB 146). Effi even sets up an alibi system with Roswitha, who is supposed to meet her on her way back though they almost never meet up, something for which Effi blames Roswitha in order to hide her exact whereabouts.

literally pulling the strings in a puppet play, both as a director of the Wichert play and in his affair with Effi. If Crampas thus determines the course of the affair, Effi's response to it – putting on an act in front of her husband, staff and society – becomes a comedy of its own, despite its connection to Crampas' directing of the comedy of the affair. This comedy is one that she herself is directing, for example by turning her prescribed walks into meetings with her lover and by setting up an alibi system with Roswitha (cf. footnote 68 above). While her participation in the affair might follow Crampas' lead, the comedy of hiding it is entirely her own. Moreover, she attempts to take over control of the affair as can be seen from the letters Innstetten later discovers. As one of them states, Effi even suggested running away together; an ending to her comedy which would clearly require a conscious choice to end both marriages, something Crampas is not ready to do.

Effi's authorship and her involvement in directing the course of the affair as well as her own comedy of covering it up raises the question whether she is truly rebelling against living her mother's "Geschichte mit Entsagung" or is rather creating her own version of the love story. After all, as noted above, her own affair with Crampas is connected by her mother's love story with Innstetten and the notion of "Entsagung", although neither love story truly deserves this term: In the case of Luise von Briest and Innstetten "gab [es] sehr prosaische, gesellschaftlich zwingende Gründe für die Aufgabe des Liebesverhältnisses" (Schwarz 249)<sup>69</sup>, and with regard to Effi and Crampas, external circumstances also end the affair. As Crampas reflects in one letter: "(...) wir müssen schließlich doch die Hand segnen,

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<sup>69</sup> Schwarz, Peter Paul. "'Tragische Analysis' Und Schicksalsvorausdeutungen in Fontanes Roman Effi Briest." *Sprachkunst: Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft* 7 (1976): 247-60. Print.



die diese Trennung über uns verhängt“ (EB 197). Thus, Effi's attempt to piece together her own story, be it a comedy or drama, is ultimately affected by external factors, and the relationship to Crampas is not actively ended by either one of them, but determined by her husband's social advancement. Therefore, her attempt to create her own "Geschichte mit Entsagung" with Crampas is less an act of rebellion, than an alternate version of her mother's love story with Innstetten, a recreation and reinterpretation of the original love triangle. Yet, it is a story Effi never even gets to tell (cf. Greenberg 774).<sup>70</sup> Instead, her story is being told by the newspapers and gossip, by third parties not directly involved in her marriage. Again, society discusses and evaluates individual fate, and Effi's story becomes breaking news.

Telling stories other than one's own is a prominent feature in this novel from the start. While it begins with Effi doing quite a bit of storytelling in the company of her girlfriends, here she tells a story that is not her own, but her mother's. From the start we have the sense that Effi's life is based largely on the path sketched out by her mother. "Entsagung", thus, is not just a renunciation of the love story/affair, but also an abdication of speaking and of telling her own story. Reinterpreting her mother's love triangle and making it her own, Effi enters a path which departs from that of her mother. Her mother's love story preceded her marriage to Briest, a marriage which is not based on love but reason. Thus, Luise von Briest ends up in a loveless marriage leading to underlying frustrations and longing for her lost love. She remains trapped in this marriage while Effi finds a way out of it, first through the affair and second through its consequences. The divorce and public scorn may

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<sup>70</sup> Greenberg, Valerie D. "The Resistance of Effi Briest: An (Un)Told Tale." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 103.5 (1988): 770-82. Print.

not seem very appealing to a girl in Effi's position. However, they ultimately are the only way for her to break out of the predetermined patterns of a loveless marriage and the only way in which she can find her own path. The fact that this path is cut short by her illness and premature death is a logical narratological consequence: The punishment of her social death is followed by the even greater punishment of the actual death. Within the context of the time in which the novel was written, Effi's story can only evolve in an in-between space, one that remains open and leaves room for interpretation. But it can never come to full fruition since that would imply an acceptance and approval of her adulterous path.

In conclusion, the multiplying love triangles, the perennial presence of a third person intruding a relationship or conversation between two people as well as ghosts from the past haunting the living all bring up the notion of an "other" constantly being present, even in otherwise two-sided relationships and conversations. Life and love stories are repeated, doubled, varied and reinterpreted by the characters in *Effi Briest*, but it is precisely through this doubling and reworking that a space for alternative endings to these stories opens up. Effi may not succeed in living a life and creating a story entirely independently of her mother's predetermined path, but she nevertheless creates her own version of it. This version is located between a passive following of her mother's path and actively straying from it, and thus has to be located in this in-between space. Effi is thus more than a mere parrot repeating lessons told to her, and while she may not always actively question them, they are called into question in the process of her reiterations. Not only is she the "point [...] of possible rupture" (Evans 38), but

simultaneously, she is also the connective tissue between activity and passivity, between silence and expression and the various facets of both. Ultimately, she has to be regarded a character who, through her middle position, calls into question the established polarization of (passive) silent agreement and (active) vocal and verbal rebellion.

## Chapter II

### Prescribed Silence and Ways of Speaking in Arthur Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*

It is the nature of the interior monologue to grant the reader access to the thoughts and reflections of the protagonist, such as Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*. These thoughts are said to be impulsive, spontaneous and unfiltered, thus granting the reader an insight into Else's mind which otherwise remains hidden from the characters with whom she interacts. In the case of Else, it is noticeable how much the content of her thoughts differs from the content of her actual conversations and how this reveals the underlying discrepancy between her feelings and the expectations of her society, as well as the contradictions among her own feelings. Existing scholarship seems to agree that the reader has uninterrupted access to Else's thoughts and thus her voice: Elizabeth Bronfen argues that her "voice is precisely what never falls silent." (Bronfen 283) Craig Morris adds that the interior monologue is an "Erzählform, die den Leser möglichst nahe an die Psyche des Monologisierenden heranläßt" (Morris 30),<sup>71</sup> and Catherine Mainland claims that "before [Else's] public act of rebellion, internal processes are at work, to which society has no access, and over which it has no control" (Mainland 135).

A closer examination of Else's choice of words reveals, however, that her thoughts are largely influenced by a variety of different voices, which include those of society, her acquaintances, family members and even literary references. As Else's inner conflict increases throughout the novella, those voices begin to haunt her and take over her voice in a ventriloquial fashion. Her interior monologue is thus much

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<sup>71</sup> Morris, Craig. "Der Vollständige Innere Monolog: Eine Erzählerlose Erzählung? Eine Untersuchung Am Beispiel Von Leutnant Gustl Und Fräulein Else." *Modern Austrian Literature* 31.2 (1998): 30-51. Print.

more of a dialogue, a constant battle to unify these various voices, which, ultimately, is futile. At times, Else is silenced through all the different voices that speak through her, and while she reflects on these foreign utterances and reacts to them, she hardly ever acts (out) verbally. The things she wants to verbalize remain silent, only audible (or rather: visible) to the reader, they emerge from the space between quotation and ventriloquism and through the way in which Else rearranges the different voices speaking through her. She thereby creates a collage of voices which influence and blend with her ways of speaking and thinking.

Silence and speechlessness can occur for a variety of reasons. According to Charles Berger, "dictionary definitions of the term speechlessness emphasize that this temporary state of voicelessness generally arises from shock and other strong emotional states" (Ch. Berger 148).<sup>72</sup> While he mentions that in some cases positive feelings might cause temporary speechlessness, his findings show that in the majority of cases "becoming speechless precipitated a wide range of feelings, most of them negative" (Ch. Berger 155). These emotions include anxiousness, nervousness, feeling uncomfortable, weak, powerless, inferior, helpless, incompetent, embarrassed, confused, angry, shocked, and stunned (cf. Ch. Berger 155, Table 6). Many of these feelings can be attributed to Else throughout the novella, in particular in those instances where her voice and words fail her. As Berger further points out,

the temporary inability to speak might emanate from a variety of different loci in the message production system. For example, some individuals might know what they want to say at the conceptual level but be physically

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<sup>72</sup> Berger, Charles R. "Speechlessness: Causal Attributions, Emotional Features and Social Consequences." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 23.2 (2004): 147-79. Print.

incapable of producing speech sounds, whereas others might be physically able to produce speech sounds but be unable to 'find the right words' to express the conceptual propositions they have successfully formulated. (Ch. Berger 149)

Both phenomena appear in Schnitzler's text as Else reflects on being unable to speak her mind and to formulate certain responses. In addition to that, however, there are also moments when Else deliberately chooses silence over speech. In those moments she employs silence as "an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies" (Foucault 27).<sup>73</sup> As Foucault points out, "[t]here is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses" (Foucault 27). Thus, silence is not just a negatively coded phenomenon in *Fräulein Else*. Instead, it is both a complex means of control imposed upon her and something reflected on and employed by her strategically.

### **I. Voices of Society and Censorship**

Throughout the novella, the reader witnesses a discrepancy between the things Else says and the things she wants to say, as she constantly censors her spoken words by conforming to the rules of her society. While these discrepancies are relatively small at the beginning of the novella, and nothing out of the ordinary, they get increasingly worse throughout the course of the text and the course of Else's day staying at the hotel. At the same time, they are proportional to the increasing conflict within her, as well as to the pressure coming first from the mother's letter, next from the conversation with Dorsday and finally from the subsequent telegram.

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<sup>73</sup> Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

The majority of dialogue in the novella displays Else's discomfort and disagreement with the spoken word between the lines. Yet, her critical voice remains unheard by her society. This occurs, for example, when she remains silent in response to Dorsday's attempts at flattery but reflects on his words by thinking: "Esel, darauf antworte ich gar nicht" (FE 8).<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Else's small talk with Paul and Cissy is pervaded by her thoughts centering on her impending conversation with Dorsday regarding the money for her father, leaving her distracted and barely able to keep up appearances. Again Else prefers to choose silence over responding to Paul: "Ich antworte gar nichts. Ich kann ihn jetzt nicht brauchen. Ich mache mein unausstehlichstes Gesicht. Nur keine Konversation jetzt" (FE 25). It is important to note here that Else employs facial expressions instead of words to respond to Paul, first by smiling at him coquettishly, then by appearing "unausstehlich" to make him go away.<sup>75</sup> Unable to respond verbally and vocally in an acceptable manner, Else falls back on using her body language instead. Most importantly, she deliberately chooses silence in these instances as opposed to later moments in the novella when she finds herself incapable of uttering responses and the choice whether to speak or remain silent and use gestures instead is no longer hers. Thus, prior to her central conversation with Dorsday, Else still has a feeling of control over her responses, both physically and verbally, and the direction of her conversations which is later taken away by Dorsday and his request addressed to her.

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<sup>74</sup> The abbreviation FE refers to the following edition of the text: Schnitzler, Arthur. *Fräulein Else: Novelle*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. Print.

<sup>75</sup> "Warum lächle ich ihn so kokett an?" (FE 24)

Read in connection with the immediately following conversation with Dorsday, Else's talk with Paul appears as mere practice for the actual conversation about to take place. During this conversation, Else not only employs a similar register of facial expressions but is also guided by her aversion to Dorsday which she is trying to suppress by resorting to conventional patterns of communication. However, the difficulty that presents itself to Else here consists in the fact that, on the one hand, there is no prescribed pattern for a conversation like that, no arsenal of polite clichés ("Floskeln") she could employ to bargain with Dorsday. On the other hand, Dorsday himself is not adhering to conventions and tact here either. He is clearly crossing the line with his flirtations and request to see Else naked. As Else points out toward the beginning of the dialogue at the core of the novella: "Er weiß offenbar nicht recht, was er mit mir reden soll. Mit einer verheirateten Frau wäre es einfacher. Man sagt eine kleine Unanständigkeit und die Konversation geht weiter" (FE 26). As the quote shows, there are certain unspoken rules in place determining what is appropriate and what is not. Both Else and Dorsday transgress these rules here: Else because she is forced to and Dorsday because he sees a chance to take advantage of her desperate situation. On multiple occasions during their dialogue, Else fails to speak, looking for the right words for a conversation she does not want to have but that has to happen. Prior to the conversation with Dorsday, when Else reads her mother's letter, her immediate reaction to the letter was a dismissal of the request she is presented with ("Ich *soll* mit Dorsday *sprechen*? Zu Tod würde ich mich schämen" (FE 16, my emphasis).). Gradually, however, this task becomes a requirement ("Ich *muß* ja doch mit Dorsday *sprechen*" (FE 24, my emphasis).), as is



indicated by the verb “müssen”. It is important to note the usage of the modal verbs in conjunction with words related to the field of speaking throughout the entire novella, but particularly during Else’s conversation with Dorsday. During this conversation she frequently states that she has to speak but doesn’t want to or that she cannot speak but has to: “Wenn ich nur nicht *weiterreden müßte*. (...) *Soll ich ihm antworten?* Nun, ich *muß* ja” (FE 28, my emphasis). Here the choice between speaking and remaining silent is clearly out of Else’s hands. And while the exact choice of words is still somewhat up to her, she nevertheless has to stick with the general script her mother laid out for her in her letter to achieve the outcome desired by her parents (i.e. Dorsday loaning them the money), regardless of the consequences for Else.

The pressure to speak often coincides with Else’s description of changes in her body language or facial expression, showing how her body speaks when she is unable to. The aforementioned quote follows Else’s realization that she is suddenly sitting on a bench, while Dorsday is still standing tall.<sup>76</sup> Here her body seems to fail her together with her voice, putting her in a submissive position.<sup>77</sup> In this situation, Else not only loses control physically, but also feels alienated from her own voice while she is forced to continue speaking: “Wie merkwürdig meine Stimme klingt. Bin ich das, die da redet? (...) Ich habe gewiß jetzt auch ein ganz anderes Gesicht als sonst” (FE 28). Both her voice and her face – or facial expression – seem to change here, at least that is how Else perceives it. Clearly, the pressure to continue a

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<sup>76</sup> “So, da sitze ich nun plötzlich auf der Bank” (FE 28).

<sup>77</sup> „»Aber um Gottes Willen, Else, was ist Ihnen denn? Wollen Sie sich nicht lieber ... hier ist eine Bank. (...)«“ (FE 28)

conversation that feels foreign to Else is connected to those changes in her face and voice here: Else becomes a different person altogether, taking over the role of an intercessor asking for charity from an unwelcome source. Quietly listening to Dorsday, Else finds herself performing the ultimate submissive gesture which is that of a beggar, looking up at him beseechingly.<sup>78</sup>

Realizing the changes in her body language and facial expression, Else reflects “Ich *will* anders zu ihm *reden* und nicht lächeln. Ich *muß* mich würdiger benehmen” (FE 28, my emphasis). Else here attempts to gain control, first over her voice (“Gott sei Dank, ich habe meine alte Stimme wieder” (FE 29).) then over her body: “Ich sitze da wie eine arme Sünderin. Er steht vor mir und bohrt mir das Monokel in die Stirn und schweigt. Ich werde jetzt aufstehen, das ist das beste” (FE 32). Through the reiteration of the imbalanced vertical relations – Dorsday standing and her sitting, “like a poor sinner” – Else realizes that she is in a very vulnerable situation which makes it easy for Dorsday to invade and penetrate her personal space, as can be seen from her statement that his monocle is piercing through her forehead, as well as from her earlier thoughts about his knees pressing against her.<sup>79</sup> The realization occurs at a point where Else is at a loss for words and refuses to be humiliated any further: “Ich weiß nicht, was ich weiter *sagen soll*. Ich *kann* ihn doch nicht geradezu *anbetteln*” (FE 32, my emphasis). Else does not know what else she is supposed to say because she has already brought forward every argument she can think of, in addition to her restatements of her mother’s instructions given in the letter. Prior to her thoughts quoted above, she even breaks off in the middle of

<sup>78</sup> “Warum sehe ich denn so flehentlich zu ihm auf? Lächeln, lächeln. Geht schon” (FE 28).

<sup>79</sup> “Ja, ja, drück die Knie nur an, du darfst es dir ja erlauben” (FE 30).

the preceding sentence, unable to finish her argument. The only other option she can think of, begging for the money, is out of the question for her as it would mean humiliating herself even further.

Once standing up, Else refuses to sit back down again, showing her intention to – literally – stand up to Dorsday and retain what is left of her dignity: “Aber ich setze mich nicht noch einmal nieder. Ich bleibe stehen, als wär es nur für eine halbe Sekunde. Ich bin ein bißchen größer als er“ (FE 33). In stressing her refusal to (sit) back down as well as the fact that she is taller than him, Else attempts to gain control over the situation by insuring herself that she is the bigger person of the two. Thus, while she, for the most part, fails to be assertive in her words, Else here tries to gain dominance through her posture and height, again choosing body language over verbal expression.<sup>80</sup> Noticing the shift in Else’s posture, Dorsday now addresses his “request” to her and thereby regains control over her. Even though she is still standing taller, he demeans her with his wish to see her naked, literally degrading and breaking her down: “ich bin zerbrochen, ich bin erniedrigt” (FE 34). While Else earlier refused to sit down (“nieder”), i.e. physically putting herself in a lower position, she is now emotionally and mentally forced down (“erniedrigt”<sup>81</sup>) into that position by Dorsday, who is beginning to gain control over her.

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<sup>80</sup> Else perceives this conversation not only as a bargaining for money but also a bargaining for her own voice that turns into a battle between the two, a battle which Else is fighting on the inside: “Wir schauen uns in die Augen wie Todfeinde. Ich möchte ihm Schuft sagen, aber ich kann nicht” (FE 35).

<sup>81</sup> The term “erniedrigt” further connects to the constant emotional up and down Else undergoes, which is furthermore reflected in the spatial relations implied in the novella. Thus, whenever Else is upstairs in her room, she can let her thoughts flow more freely since she enjoys the privacy of her own little chamber. Isolated from the rest of the world, convention and tact no longer matter. Her room also offers safety and protection, at least to a certain degree. However, when her mother’s letter and telegram arrive, both of which Else picks up downstairs, this sense of safety is threatened by the demands now imposed on her. They threaten Else in particular because she knows she will have to take this request downstairs, where

The result of this physical battle is that the dialogue now turns into a monologue for Dorsday, yet still a dialogue for the reader who witnesses Else's reactions to his words. She is unable to respond to him to his face though, and her body feels paralyzed by his words.<sup>82</sup> Physical inability to move, as Else perceives it, coincides with her inability to formulate responses to Dorsday. In contrast to Else's earlier choosing whether to respond to him or not, she is now incapable of doing so. The fact that she has completely lost control over her body is reflected in her frequent questions, such as "Ich bleibe wirklich stehen. Warum denn? (...) Hätte ich ihm nicht einfach ins Gesicht schlagen sollen? (...) Warum tu ich es denn nicht?" (FE 34). Else cannot tell why she does not react or respond to Dorsday's request. Again, the modal verbs used in connection with terms for speaking point to the struggle she is going through: "Ich *möchte* ihm Schuft *sagen*, aber ich *kann* nicht. Oder *will* ich nicht?" (FE 35, my emphasis). While Else had been censoring her utterances before, her mental state now has changed to a point where she is not sure anymore whether she is doing the censoring or not. Just like her body, her tongue is paralyzed. Indeed,

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Dorsday is, and simultaneously, this "going down" also corresponds to her "erniedrigen" herself when talking to him. In Else's own words, the people downstairs are all "Gesindel" (FE 22) that she does not want to be associated with. When the time comes for her to go downstairs to speak to Dorsday again and to disrobe herself, Else reflects on this notion of "hinunter" as having negative implications. She is well aware that she has reached a, if not *the*, low point in her young life by being exploited by both her parents and Dorsday: "Aber ich muß ja hinunter. Tief hinunter." (FE 56) Again, she uses the modal verb "muss" multiple times, further stressing her unwillingness to leave her safe space and enter a world which is threatening to her: "Hinunter muß ich ja jedenfalls. (...) Auch wegen der Tante muß ich hinunter." (FE 58) By not staying upstairs, in her own world, Else thus also conforms to the wishes of her aunt, the representative of a society in which people act the way it is expected of them. At the same time, the downstairs space is to become the location of her social descent as she introduces the socially completely unacceptable act of disrobing to this public sphere. The social descent and the personal degradation thus both coincide in the term "Erniedrigung".

<sup>82</sup> "Ich bin gelähmt." (FE 36); „Regungslos stehe ich da“ (FE 36).

her verbal abilities and her body language are both silenced and negated completely throughout this conversation.

Else's self-censorship culminates in her conversation with her aunt just prior to her disrobing, during which she is desperately trying to lie about her actual thoughts and about the sacrifice she is about to make for her father. Apart from feeling forced to speak and react, Else here also feels forced to lie to her aunt, who is a perfectly assimilated member of society: "Ich *muß* etwas *reden*. (...) Kein Wort ist wahr. Ich *muß* *weiterreden*. Was sag ich nur?" (FE 67, my emphasis). This conversation is Else's last effort to keep up appearances and adhere to the social conventions by participating in silly small talk which is particularly important because her aunt is constantly worried about her reputation. Noticing that something is wrong with Else, even though she tries to hide it, this scares her<sup>83</sup> but not because she is worried about Else, but rather about her social standing. The conversation between the two further illustrates Else's relationship to a society of which her aunt is a prime example of an assimilated member. In trying to find a way to communicate with her, Else has to bridge an almost insurmountable gap between her individual fears and her society's expectations of proper behavior. This has been a struggle for Else all along, which finds its strongest expression in this dialogue as it precedes the moment of her greatest crisis, the disrobing and subsequent paroxysm.

The conversation between Else and her aunt is the last conversation between Else and another character within the novella, just prior to her disrobing. It is the last time Else expresses something verbally, and what she expresses in her

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<sup>83</sup> "Das Gesicht von der Tante ist angstverzerrt. Die Sache ist ihr unheimlich" (FE 67).

conversation with her aunt could not be any further from expressing her true thoughts. During the disrobing, Else does not speak; however, she is not quiet either. Her laughter, as a vocal but nonverbal utterance, depicts yet another instance in which she has lost control of her voice. She cannot stop laughing even though she wants to: “Wer lacht denn da? Ich selber? (...) Ich *will* nicht lachen, ich *will* nicht” (FE 70, my emphasis). During her paroxysm of both grief and laughter<sup>84</sup>, there is also an increased usage of the modal verb “muss”, reflecting both Else’s inner compulsion and the pressure put on her by her parents. But while the usage of modal verbs in her previous thoughts indicated different ways of censoring her verbal utterances to conform to the social rules, they now point to an inner compulsion she cannot control: “Ich muß immer nur lachen. (...) Ich *will* nicht schreien, ich *muß* immer schreien. Warum muß ich denn schreien” (FE 71). Her attempts to control this compulsion, of course, show that she is still aware of her society’s judgment. She does not want to laugh or scream because she knows it would make her look crazy and she would be regarded as a hysteric. As Caspari points out, this laughter expresses “[d]as, was sie nicht mehr in Sprache fassen kann, weil es dafür keine Sprache gibt” and is an expression “des Schmerzes und zugleich der Befreiung. (...) [Else] gibt dem von den anderen verdrängten Schmerz einen Laut, eine Sprache jenseits der Sprache” (Caspari 18f).

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<sup>84</sup> Paul refers to Else’s paroxysm as “Ein – Anfall.” (FE 72) initially. The dash here indicates a pause or hesitation, suggesting that Paul is not entirely sure what kind of “Anfall” Else is suffering from. The dash can take on a multitude of meanings: ein hysterischer Anfall, ein Lachanfall, ein Verzweiflungsanfall, ein Wutanfall, all of which express aspects of Else’s state of mind at the moment of her disrobing. Society here cannot find words for the many different aspects of Else’s character and actions which all collide in the moment of her disrobing and subsequent fainting.

However, her laughter does not just express pain and relief. Looking at the instances of laughter throughout the novella, it shows Else's ironic commentary on her situation and is thus not only linked to her heightened state of despair, but can be regarded as an utterance of attempted criticism. It is also the only one of her defiant utterances that ever enters the realm of actual vocalization, the only one her surroundings ever get to hear. Prior to her disrobing, the "haha" is always uttered in response to a certain cliché Else recalls, usually about herself, for example when she thinks about Fred telling her that ">(…) es ist Ihnen immer zu gut gegangen.< Zu gut gegangen. Haha" (FE 20). Similarly, when she reflects about the guests in the hotel all being "Lauter Leute, denen es gut geht und die keine Sorgen haben. Ich zum Beispiel. Haha!" (FE 7), it is obvious how ironic Else is being here, even before she hears about her father's troubles. What kind of worries she has at this point remains unmentioned. Continuing to read the novella, one can assume she is alluding to her father's problems here already. However, the fact that Else does not further describe her worries leaves the reader wondering what she is hiding from him/her.<sup>85</sup>

Choosing laughter as a form of response to her problems shows Else's inability to formulate appropriate verbal responses – not only to the outside world but also within her own thoughts. Therefore, the frequency of her (silent) laughter increases dramatically after receiving her mother's telegram which informs her that

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<sup>85</sup> Further along in the text, Else thinks about her education and everything she has learned, and again the laughter appears, showing the reader that she is fully aware of the uselessness of this education: "O, ich habe was gelernt! Wer darf sagen, daß ich nichts gelernt habe? Ich spiele Klavier, ich kann französisch, englisch, auch ein bißl italienisch, habe kunstgeschichtliche Vorlesungen besucht – Haha!" (FE 16).<sup>85</sup> Her ironic assessment of her situation soon turns into bitterness when she states " – haha, ich werde Herrn Dorsday behandeln, als wenn es eine Ehre für ihn wäre, uns Geld zu leihen. Es ist ja auch eine" (FE 16). Else is very well aware that it is anything but an honor for Dorsday to lend her money and that she rather has to assume the position of a seductive beggar when speaking to him. Her bitter "haha" shows that she already knows how desperate her situation is, even before speaking to Dorsday.

the amount of money has changed. Else can only guess what Dorsday will ask of her under these new circumstances, which increases her inner conflict all the more. The laughter also turns into an uncontrollable impulse that Else can no longer keep inside and that bursts out, first during her conversation with her aunt and then during her disrobing: “Das Lachen hier bedeutet nicht-sprachlichen Widerstand, Raum einer neuen Ordnung. Dieser entgleitet Else aber fast im Moment seiner Entstehung. Sie muß lachen, dann schreien” (Caspari 18). But yet another factor is important here: Whenever Else chooses laughter instead of a verbal response, she also chooses (ironic) laughter over silence. Even though it is a nonverbal utterance, it is still a vocal one, thus expressing a middle ground between complete silence and speaking, one that is easily misunderstood and yet, it is representative for Else finding a middle voice, a way of expression that does not adhere to the established norms. The default interpretation of Else’s behavior by the society is labeling her a crazy hysteric. Else’s aunt immediately wants her to be brought to a mental hospital (“*Sie muß natürlich in eine Anstalt.*” (FE 73)) and arrange for a wardress for Else (cf. 75)<sup>86</sup>. Labeling Else crazy and hysteric is certainly the easy way out for a family and a society that both refuse to claim any responsibility for Else’s fate: “By placing the label “hysteric” on [Else], society can at once silence [her] expression, be it vocal or physical, and deny the need to understand it at all” (Mainland 182). Else has thus managed to develop a way of expression which is misunderstood by her society, or which her society refuses to understand respectively. In using her laughter as a

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<sup>86</sup> Cissy confirms this when she whispers into Else’s ear: “*Ein hysterischer Anfall wird behauptet.*” (FE 76) and Else herself predicts that everyone will think that she is crazy when she thinks, prior to her disrobing, “*Da unten werden sie meinen, ich bin verrückt geworden*” (FE 58).



container for her fears, anger and pain, Else opens up a middle space between verbal expression and complete silence, the space of vocalization without verbalization. While being considered passive in her laughter and her fainting, she nevertheless actively expresses all her bottled-up feelings in her laughter, feelings so complex that there are no words for them.

Going back to Else's choice of words prior to her disrobing, it is noticeable that in addition, and contrast, to her usage of modal verbs, Else frequently utters (verbally, not vocally) thoughts using the verb "werden". These utterances usually describe things she imagines she will do in the future (or that others will do for her in the future). These are mostly positively connoted and thus contradicting to her actual situation and to the things she has to do and that are expected of her. While she is using modal verbs when referring to her present situation, indicating that she is either forced to do something, not allowed to do something, or unable to do something, she develops illusions of her future using "werden" instead. Thus, when thinking about her future, Else expresses thoughts such as "Ich werde nicht treu sein" (FE 20), "Ich werde auf dem Land leben. Einen Gutsbesitzer werde ich heiraten und Kinder werde ich haben" (FE 21)<sup>87</sup>, "Ich werde kein gemeinsames Schlafzimmer haben mit meinem Mann und meinen tausend Geliebten" (FE 22), or "Wenn ich meine Villa am italienischen See haben werde, dann werde ich in meinem Park immer nackt herumspazieren" (FE 60f). It is interesting to note that these wishes and imaginations are barely expressed using the modal verbs "wollen" or "möchten" but rather the future with "werden", as if they were definitely going to happen.

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<sup>87</sup> This thought almost immediately follows Else's statement "Aber Kind will ich keins haben." (FE 21), indicating that the future she wants and the future she knows she might face are not always the same.

While these fantasies serve as an escape mechanism for Else, a way to forget about her situation for a while, there are also those thoughts of hers using the verb “werden” which depict how she is attempting to comfort herself (“sich Mut zusprechen”) when it comes to facing Dorsday in order to rescue her father: “Ich werde ihn retten. Ja, Papa, ich werde dich retten” (FE 16), “Ich werde mit Herrn Dorsday aus Eperies sprechen, werde ihn anpumpen (...)” (FE 18), or “Ich werde ihm sagen, daß er nicht der erste ist, der mich so sieht. Ich werde ihm sagen, daß ich einen Geliebten habe. (...) Dann werde ich ihm sagen, daß er ein Narr war, daß er mich auch hätte haben können um dasselbe Geld” (FE 49). Again, Else is trying to gain the upper hand by outwitting Dorsday any way possible, but deep inside she knows she will not: “Aber das wird er mir ja alles nicht glauben” (FE 49). Her usage of the verb “werden” here also expresses her intention to play a much more active role in her parent’s scheme, one that she knows to be an illusion. Her imagined future, her envisioned reality in which she has an empowered role, and her actual reality all connect and collide in her usage of the verb “werden”, showing the many different meanings it takes on for her and her view of her future.

Else’s frequent usage of modal verbs not only expresses her ways of modifying verbs from the realm of speaking, but also a degree of distancing herself from this realm. Furthermore, the ways in which she evaluates and comments on her own utterances show her attitude to her ways of speaking (as opposed to the content of her utterances). Else constantly reflects on her utterances, the way she (and her counterpart) speaks and sounds, and analyzes them subsequently. This creates the impression of Else, and everyone around her, playing a role which is

perpetually re-evaluated by her. In the next part of my chapter, I take a closer look at Else's self-commentary and her role playing, and how it relates to the usage of literary quotes and references throughout the novella.

## II. Literary Quotations and Theatricality

Throughout the novella there are various instances in which Else either imagines and stages future conversations and their possible outcomes as well as multiple times when she reflects on her utterances and behavior and that of others around her. This often creates the impression of Else behaving like an actress who reflects on her performance and its success. In doing so, Else's reflecting self distances itself from her speaking and (inter-)acting self, causing an effect of self-alienation and a split into speaker and the one who is spoken about (cf. Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 282). At various moments, Else even has interior conversations with herself, often even addressing herself in the third person as if she were having a dialogue with herself. Not only do her self-commentaries make her appear rather unnatural, they also reflect the artificiality of the society around her in which one's actions and words are constantly evaluated according to the standards which determine what is acceptable and what is inappropriate, what is beneficial to one's own situation and what is not.

The scholarship on *Fräulein Else* has often pointed out how the initial sentence of the novella - "»Du willst wirklich nicht mehr weiterspielen, Else?«" (FE 5) - already indicates that Else is and has been playing a role her entire life and is unwilling to continue to do so. As her response - "»Nein, Paul, ich *kann* nicht mehr. Adieu.«" (FE 5, my emphasis) - shows, it is not just unwillingness on Else's part, but

rather inability to continue playing the role expected of her. Just as she is physically exhausted from the game of tennis, she is mentally (but also physically) exhausted from acting out her part, which will become obvious during her paroxysm later on. After the short conversation with Cissy and Paul, Else leaves, reflecting on her departure - "Das war ein ganz guter Abgang." (FE 5) - as if she were leaving a stage on which she refuses to continue playing. In addition to reflecting on her behavior, she also comments on it as she acts, almost as if she were giving herself stage directions, such as: "Nun wende ich mich noch einmal um und winke ihnen zu. Winke und lächle" (FE 5). Commentaries like these pervade the entire text and appear usually right before, after or during a dialogue. They even appear during dialogues with minor characters, such as the concierge who hands her the letter from her mother: "Ich wende mich ganz unbefangen um" (FE 9). The central part of the novella being the conversation between Else and Dorsday, during which Else feels like she needs to choose her words particularly carefully, also shows an accumulation of self-reflexive thoughts. Right before she speaks to him, Else reflects on the way she greeted him by noting "Ich habe höflich zurückgegrüßt. Ja, ganz anders als sonst" (FE 24). Else is fully aware that she will have to treat Dorsday differently now that she needs him. In doing so, she frequently seems to lose her own voice and take on one that is foreign to her (cf. quotes above).

At the same time, the way she speaks to him now matters more than ever. In connection to that, the question whether she can successfully play the role assigned to her by her mother's letter also arises. Thus, Else realizes that her transitioning into the topic "war nicht sehr geschickt" (FE 27) and that she "rede[t] so blöd daher

wie eine Kuh" (FE 27).<sup>88</sup> Once Else sits down and finds herself in the position of a beggar, which surely is part of the role description, she takes over the foreign voice of the role and subsequently, her utterances improve, at least by the standard of the role description: "Das habe ich sehr gut gesagt" (FE 28). As she continues to speak, Else however realizes how demeaning this role is and reflects on it by breaking character, so to speak: "O, Gott, wie ich mich erniedrige. (...) Soll ich mich auf die Knie werfen? O Gott! O Gott!" (FE 30). Once her thoughts contradict her role, her ways of speaking also become unprofessional again - "Warum habe ich das gesagt? Wie dumm" (FE 30) - and her speech less coherent: "Ach Gott, ich verhasple mich ja schon wieder" (FE 31).<sup>89</sup> While she attempts to control the direction of the conversation at first, Dorsday changes the script by bringing up his demand to see her naked, which degrades her and leaves both her body and tongue paralyzed. As Dorsday gains control over Else, the dialogue between the two turns into a monologue of his, depriving her of her voice and any possible verbal reaction. Thus, in a play that Dorsday directs, Else does not speak but only displays her naked body.

Just as Else constantly reflects on the way she is speaking and behaving toward others, she also comments on the performances and words of those around her, especially Dorsday's. In connection to Else's own theatricality, this is of particular importance as she frequently uses terms related to literature and theater

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<sup>88</sup> This realization follows an utterance of hers in which she quotes her mother's letter, underlining her impression of her mother being "dumm" and her criticism of her mother's horrible style of writing, which Else quotes here.

<sup>89</sup> As Dorsday starts bringing up his request to her, she makes one more attempt to direct the conversation by interrupting him and stating "»O, ich habe Sie wirklich allzu lange in Anspruch genommen, Herr von Dorsday.« (FE 34) which is followed by another "Das habe ich gut gesagt" (FE 34). She even tries to reprimand him by saying "»Sie haben schon zu viel gesagt, Herr von Dorsday«" (FE 34).

when describing the way he speaks and acts: "Warum sagt er »in der Tat«? Das ist abgeschmackt. Das sagt man doch nur im Burgtheater" (FE 32). She even describes him as a "schlechter Schauspieler" (FE 36) and wonders "Wo hat er so reden gelernt? Es klingt wie aus einem Buch" (FE 35). Here, Else calls Dorsday out on his artificial choice of words and theatrical role playing, while she is doing the same thing. The main difference between both forms of acting is that Dorsday has a choice in this manner while Else does not. While Else mentions that the career of an actress would have been suitable for her, she never reflects on her own role playing in everyday situations, suggesting that she is not entirely aware of her own performance.

At the same time, her criticism of Dorsday also serves the purpose of distinguishing herself from him, which is important to her and for her image of herself.<sup>90</sup> Else frequently defines herself in terms of what she is not, primarily by criticizing others around her for their life choices (i.e. Cissy or her mother). While figuring out who or what she does not want to be is certainly a big part of one's self-discovery, it also hinders Else's figuring out who she actually is. To establish an idea of herself is even more difficult for Else because of the conflicting roles she finds herself playing and her many contradictory ideas of what she would like her life to be.

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<sup>90</sup> This distinction also takes place on the level of ethnic and racial belonging, as Else is constantly careful to note that her Jewishness is hard to spot ("Mir sieht's niemand an. Ich bin sogar blond, rötlichblond (...)." (FE 17), while she criticizes Dorsday for changing his name ("Dorsday! Sie haben sicher einmal anders geheißen." (FE 8)) and makes a mocking remark about his profession: "Nein, Herr Dorsday, ich glaube Ihnen Ihre Eleganz nicht und nicht Ihr Monokel und nicht Ihre Noblesse. Sie könnten ebensogut mit alten Kleidern handeln wie mit alten Bildern" (FE 17). By ridiculing Dorsday for hiding his Jewishness in this manner, Else attempts to distinguish herself from him even further, implying that she is above him and "kann [sich] das erlauben" (FE 17).

In addition to connecting Dorsday's choice of words and ways of speaking to the realm of theater and literature, Else also criticizes the way his voice sounds when speaking to her, using the verb "klingen": "Wie seine Stimme klingt, ganz anders, merkwürdig" (FE 31). While at first Else still describes the way his voice sounds, she later only uses the verb "klingen" by itself, in observations such as "Seine Stimme klingt schon wieder. Wie zuwider ist mir das, wenn es so zu klingen anfängt bei den Männern" (FE 32). Else does not further define the term "klingen", but according to Schnitzler, "Else meint damit einen gewissen unnatürlichen, unangenehmen, wohl durch die sinnliche Erregung Dorsdays zu erklärenden Ton seiner Stimme" (Schnitzler, quoted in Raymond 181).<sup>91</sup> Raymond adds to this explanation: "When a voice "klingt", it is conforming to social expectations of shallowness and the power of materialism" (Raymond 181). As noted above, Else notices the changes in her voice as well as Dorsday's throughout the entire conversation, pointing to the fact that Else, for a limited time at least, plays along and acts out the role scripted for her. When bargaining for the money, her voice and body language first adapt to the situation in an effort to charm Dorsday into lending her the money. This, of course, backfires as Dorsday expects more than just flirtation on Else's part. The way Dorsday's voice sounds (and the fact that it "klingt"), moreover, is closely connected to his gaze and the way he looks at Else: "Seine Stimme ›klingt‹ nicht mehr. Oder anders! Wie sieht er mich denn an!" (FE 33); "Seine Stimme klingt schon wieder. Nie hat mich ein Mensch so angeschaut" (FE 33). Visuality, body language and voice are thus closely connected in this novella, and the

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<sup>91</sup> Raymond, Cathy. "Masked in Music: Hidden Meaning in Schnitzler's Fräulein Else." *Monatshefte für Deutschen Unterricht, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 85.2 (1993): 170-88. Print.

changes in Dorsday's voice in connection with the way he looks at Else are forebodings of his impending request to "see" her.

As noted above, Else's conversation with Dorsday can be viewed as a bargain for money, but also as Else's negotiation for her own voice. Besides that, it is, of course, also a bargaining for the rights to see her naked body. Even before Dorsday addresses his request to her, Else already knows she will be walking a fine line in this conversation, especially with regard to the degree of flirtation involved. She knows she will have to use her feminine charms to manipulate Dorsday but at the same time, she is scared of his response to them: "Jedenfalls muss ich berückend aussehen, wenn ich mit Dorsday rede. (...) Seine Augen werden sich in meinen Ausschnitt bohren. Widerlicher Kerl" (FE 17). Else is thus aware that her physical appearance will elicit a certain reaction from Dorsday, one that, in turn, threatens her physically as she describes his gaze as piercing ("bohren") into her décolleté. The rather violent choice of words underlines how invasive and threatening the male gaze is to the female body. This notion is only intensified later during the actual conversation when, as discussed above, Else is sitting down while Dorsday is standing upright and "bohrt mir das Monokel in die Stirn" (FE 32). Using the same verb here - "bohren" - in connection with the monocle, a device used to improve vision, the connection between visibility and physical invasiveness is stressed even further.<sup>92</sup> And while Dorsday's words surely frighten her, his way of looking at her

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<sup>92</sup> The same verb appears later during Else's disrobing when she sees Dorsday: "Da bin ich, Herr von Dorsday. Was für Augen er macht. Seine Lippen zittern. Er bohrt seine Augen in meine Stirn." (FE 69), here in conjunction with his lips twitching, but him not speaking. His eyes here speak a clearer language than his words do: "Sein Auge spricht zu mir: komm! Sein Auge spricht: ich will dich nackt sehen" (FE 69).



and the fact she wants to “see her” are far more threatening to Else and the image of her pure, naked body, which she tries to preserve.

The nonverbal communication between Dorsday and Else via the exchange and interpretation of looks and gazes is also interesting from Else’s perspective. Commenting on her own words and behavior as well as the way others look, she also reflects on her own gaze. As with Dorsday and his ways of looking at her, her looks are often employed instead of words to express something words could not, at least not in an acceptable manner. Elsbeth Dangel points out, “[d]iese Sprache [der Blicke] hat eine eigene Semantik, die sich nicht an die Regeln der sozialen Umgangs halt. Die Blickbotschaften bilden einen Subtext zur verbalen Kommunikation zwischen den Menschen, der den Aussagen der Rede oft genug widerspricht“ (Dangel 107). Else knows about the manipulative quality of the female gaze and employs it strategically, however not voluntarily but as part of the larger role she is playing. Therefore, she wonders why she is smiling at Paul in a certain way while Dorsday is looking at her: “Warum lächle ich ihn so kokett an? Ich mein ihn ja gar nicht. Dorsday schielt herüber” (FE 24f). Just as Else is questioning the tone of her own voice, she questions the implications of her gaze, both of which exacerbate her inner crisis and increase her self-alienation. This can be seen in the quote immediately following the lines quoted above, where Else asks herself “Wo bin ich? Wo bin ich?” (FE 25) as if she had lost herself by participating in the flirtatious exchange of looks.

Whenever Else is using these coquettish gazes with Dorsday, she enacts what is expected of her and dictated by her parents asking for a “Liebesdienst” (FE 13).

Thus, during the conversation with Dorsday, she asks herself again “Warum schau ich ihn so kokett an? Und schon lächelt er in der gewissen Weise. Nein, wie dumm die Männer sind” (FE 26). Her assessment of the situation shows that, at this point, Else believes she has the upper hand over the stupid man who is so easily manipulated by the way she looks at him. This impression, however, is fleeting, insofar as the flirtatious look is only partially a sign of autonomy and control:

Der kokette Blick ist der Augenblick, den die Frau noch in aller Unverbindlichkeit werfen kann, der noch keine Zusage bedeute. Es ist der Augenblick, in dem in ihrem zweideutigen Widerstreben der „kurze Triumph des Nein“ zur Geltung kommt. Aber so selbstbewußt, daß er diesen Moment auskosten könnte, ist der kokette Blick gar nicht. Denn er ist oft gar nicht auf ein männliches Objekt gerichtet, das die Frau in eigener Wahl erkoren hat (...), sondern er ist meist in seinem Ursprung nur eine Reaktion auf einen fremden Willen. Der kokette Blick drückt kein eigenes Begehren aus, er wird vielmehr durch ein von außen an ihn herangetragenes Begehren provoziert. (Dangel 109)

The coquettish gaze is thus less an expression of female self-esteem, but rather a reaction to a foreign, male desire by which it is provoked. The fact that Else keeps questioning her motives for looking at Dorsday in this manner further underlines that her words and actions are directed by someone other than herself. In addition to fulfilling her parents’ request, she also responds to Dorsday’s desire by means of the gaze – first coquettishly to lure him in, but once she realizes his motives, they look at each other “wie Todfeinde” (FE 35). Else here wonders “Bannt mich sein Blick?” (FE 35), again stressing the power of the gaze to manipulate the other person to a point where he/she cannot physically move anymore. Thus, gazes are not only used as part of a flirtation or to express a desire, but, similar to *Effi Briest*, as a means to control and directing of another person, in particular a woman. In the same fashion, the idea of Dorsday looking at Else’s naked body expresses a similar

way of controlling her by putting her in one of the most vulnerable, exposed positions for an extended period of time. Once Dorsday sees Else in this exposed manner, she cannot be unseen by him, he will forever own that mental image of her naked body, an image Else is not ready to share, at least not with him.<sup>93</sup>

Prior to her conversation with Dorsday, Else already expresses how much she dislikes the way he looks at her (cf. FE 16). But at the same time, she knows that she will have to try to exploit his interest in her and that the best way to do so is by looking the part: "Heute wär vielleicht das Schwarze richtiger. Zu dekolliert? Toilette de circonstance heißt es in den französischen Romanen" (FE 17). The reference to French novels not only underlines Else's tendency to adapt literature and theatricality to her own life but more so shows that she is consciously dressing up for the "circumstances" in a fashion that displays her feminine charms in the best way possible: "Der Ausschnitt ist nicht tief genug; wenn ich verheiratet wäre, dürfte er tiefer sein" (FE 18). In doing so, she responds to the male desire of seeing her naked by "treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight" (J. Berger 51). As J. Berger argues, "Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (J. Berger 47), and therefore "a woman's self [is] split into two. A woman must constantly watch herself. She is almost continually accompanied by her own image of herself" (J. Berger 46). Else's image of herself is clearly predetermined by the way men look at her, as she reflects on her beauty as something by means of which she "könnte einen Mann sehr glücklich machen" (FE 21). The phrase itself comes back to haunt

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<sup>93</sup> This notion comes also into play when Else looks at herself in the mirror and bids goodbye to her mirror image prior to her disrobing, as she is aware that she is about to share something with the world which, up to this point, has been her own.

her later when Dorsday expresses “» (...) *das schwöre ich Ihnen, Else, bei ... bei all den Reizen, durch deren Enthüllung Sie mich beglücken würden.*«” (FE 35) and states that he is a man who “*ziemlich einsam und nicht besonders glücklich ist*” (FE 36). Male happiness appears to be brought about by the sight of the female body. Interestingly enough, Else also feels happiness after her disrobing because she has been seen naked by the “Filou”: “Ich bin glücklich. Der Filou hat mich nackt gesehen” (FE 71). Here, Else seems to gain her happiness, and validation of her beauty, from the male happiness she has caused in the “Filou”. She has thus internalized the relationship between her physicality and the male gaze and follows a pattern described by Berger as follows:

[Woman] has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplemented by a sense of being appreciated by herself by another. (J. Berger 46)

This sheds light on Else’s frequent fantasies of nakedness and the fact that she seems to enjoy being seen naked, or almost naked: “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” (FE 38). Else acts as if she wants to be seen but this wish is nothing more than an “embrace of the so-called male gaze [which] leads to her narcissistic fantasy of her beauty. She even addresses herself as a man would by uttering »schönes Fräulein«” (Anderson 19).

Anderson here refers to the moment when Else, just prior to her disrobing, parades around naked in her room and looks at herself in the mirror. As Berger

argues, the mirror plays a central role in making women treat themselves as a sight (cf. J. Berger 51), as can be seen in Else, who not only speaks to herself (and others) in foreign tongues but whose image of herself has also been predetermined by others' desires. Else however does not realize that, looking at herself in the mirror, her gaze has been compromised by the male gaze already. The mirror aids in letting Else see what others see, which leads her to address herself as others would. As Bronfen points out, "she splits herself into the surveyed sight and the surveyor" just as she splits herself into "actress and commentator" (Bronfen 282) by constantly staging her dialogues and her appearance. In doing so, she attempts to take control and become the director, or "author" as Bronfen puts it, of her story and her performance. However, the success of this attempt is called into question as Else only directs and acts out a version of prescribed patterns and expected roles, determined by her parents and Dorsday. One prevailing argument is that, even though Else puts her own spin on Dorsday's request to see her naked, she ultimately still succumbs to it, and by staging her disrobing publicly she transforms from the role of an actress to the role of an art object (cf. Comfort 203). Both roles threaten Else's subjectivity, one by turning her into a medium through which dialogue is passed on, and the other to a mere object of artistic value.

As Else points out early on in the novella, she has to embody multiple roles, switching from one to the other depending on her current situation: "ich die Hochgemute, die Aristokratin, die Marchesa, die Bettlerin, die Tochter des Defraudanten" (FE 18). These roles constantly accompany Else while she is struggling to reconcile them with one another. Playing different roles has become

such an essential part of her life that she continues to do so, even when she is by herself “Else’s entire performance combines language-for-oneself and being-for others, a combination that often requires her to double as the other or to invent an imagined interlocutor in order to ensure that there is always an audience to watch her display” (Comfort 195). If Else, and woman in general, as Berger points out, “is almost continually accompanied by her own image” (J. Berger 46), the question arises: What happens to her ‘self’, if there is such a thing? Clearly, there is no stable self to be found in Else’s case to begin with, and based on her many internal struggles and outside expectations, as well as outside influences on her thinking and speaking, it seems superfluous to presume any form of a “kohäsives Kernselbst” (Caspari 15). Instead, Else displays a multifacetedness that goes beyond the roles that she is playing and that cannot be pinpointed or summed up in just one term.

Moreover, even when Else is by herself, without those around her watching her, she is still being watched from the inside, by the reader surveying her thoughts (cf. Anderson 26). However, the reader only sees Else from within and not from the outside as her monologue “kehrt sozusagen die Blickrichtung um und erzählt das Schauspiel der Nacktheit von innen, als ein Schauspiel, das der Leser ›nicht sehen‹ kann, weil sich seine Augen mit Elses Augen auf die Gesichter im Publikum richten“ (Koschorke 335).<sup>94</sup> When Else looks at herself in the mirror though, she becomes performer and audience simultaneously. At the same time, the reader now, figuratively speaking, gets to see Else from the outside but still from within for the

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<sup>94</sup> Koschorke, Albrecht. "Blick Und Macht: Das Imaginäre Der Geschlechter Im 19. Jahrhundert Und Bei Arthur Schnitzler." *Das Imaginäre Des Fin De Siècle*. Eds. Christine Lubkoll and Inge Steutzger. Freiburg, Germany: Rombach, 2002. 313-335. Print.

first time, through her eyes looking at herself in the mirror. The mirror creates two images of Else, looking at each other, but also the additional images of Else being looked at by the audience. Moreover, Else imagines an additional audience when she addresses the night, mountains and the sky, telling them to look at her (cf. 59). This audience, however, is almost immediately dismissed by her as these elements of nature are blind whereas the people downstairs have eyes (cf. 59). Else thus receives validation of her beauty from the looks of others but also from her own gazing upon herself in the mirror. Here she addresses herself as if she were addressing another person, a previous version of herself, as she points out “die frühere Else ist schon gestorben” (FE 60). This previous version of her is fixed within the frame of the mirror, almost as if it were a painting hanging on a wall (cf. Comfort 205)<sup>95</sup>. Therefore, no responses are imagined by Else either. All she notes about her other self in the mirror are the “Riesenaugen” (FE 62), which seem to be staring back at her, raising the question of who is the surveyor and who is the surveyed. Moreover,

the mirror-image becomes a medium for the reflexive operation of voyeuristic and exhibitionistic desires. Else is Narcissus, but only in as far as she can address herself in the voice and with the look of a desiring *alter ego* as “Fräulein im Spiegel. (...) The cold looking-glass is at once the instrument of identificatory pleasure in, and of separation from, the desired other self. (Webber 337)<sup>96</sup>

Keeping in mind that Else’s mirror image can be regarded her alter ego, it is important to note how protective Else seems of this image. In a way, it appears to fix

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<sup>95</sup> Else also makes this connection when she compares herself to artwork just before she leaves the room: “Florentinerinnen haben sich so malen lassen. In den Galerien hängen ihre Bilder und es ist eine Ehre” (FE 62).

<sup>96</sup> Webber, Andrew. *The Doppelgänger : Double Visions in German Literature*. Oxford England; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1996. Print.

a point in time at which Else still had the illusion of having options, other than going downstairs and disrobing: “Aber ich muß nicht. Ich muß überhaupt gar nichts. Wenn es mir beliebt, kann ich mich jetzt auch ins Bett legen und schlafen und mich um nichts mehr kümmern” (FE 61). Leaving her former self fixed within the mirror frame, it becomes an image she can later come back to to look at but also one she knows she will never become again after the scandal she is about to cause. When leaving her room, she tells the Veronal “auf Wiedersehen” (FE 62), knowing that she will have to encounter it again, but the goodbye she bids to her mirror image is a rather final one: “Leb wohl, mein heißgeliebtes Spiegelbild” (FE 62). Later, after her disrobing, when Cissy stands in front of the mirror, Else stresses “*Mein Spiegel ist es. Ist nicht mein Bild noch drin?*” (FE 76, my emphasis). Not only is Else thinking of her image as fixed and framed on the wall, depicting a lost version of herself, it also appears as if this image is threatened by Cissy and her reflection trying to replace it. Thus, Else is not simply jealous of Cissy here, but rather concerned that the preserved image of her, the pre-scandal version of herself, so to speak, could be forever lost because it is being pushed out of the mirror by Cissy.

Apart from the underlying jealousy between Else and her, Cissy Mohr can be regarded as “eine Verkörperung der Repräsentanz der »bösen Mutter«, vergleichbar mit der Stiefmutter im Märchen” (Lange-Kirchheim “Adoleszenz” 286).<sup>97</sup> In connection with her position in front of the mirror, this evokes the association of the evil stepmother in the Snow White fairytale who is jealous of her step-daughter’s

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<sup>97</sup> Else criticizes Cissy’s ignorance of her daughter: “Ich kann die Cissy nicht leiden. Um ihr Mädel kümmert sie sich überhaupt nicht.” (FE 17), which connects Cissy to Else’s own mother who also does not seem to care about Else or her feelings.



beauty: "Sie ärgert sich, daß ich so hübsch aussehe" (FE 24). The Snow White association is further underlined when Else looks at her "blutroten Lippen" (FE 60) in the mirror, and, of course, by the fact that she is laying on a bier both in her dream and after her paroxysm, in a state between sleep, palsy and death. Here Else's close connection to the literary realm is further stressed by evoking the world of fairytales. But in addition to that, Else's thoughts also point to an affinity between herself and Cissy: Regardless of how much Else dislikes Cissy, she also embodies some of Else's imaginings of her own future – being married to a rich man while taking the liberty of having an affair with Paul. Moreover, the names of both women suggest that Cissy could be read as an alter ego of Else: "Schnitzler gives her the name of "Cissy," which, aurally at least, suggests "Sissi," the diminutive of "Elisabeth", from which "Else" is similarly derived" (Yeo 20).<sup>98</sup> Thus, when Cissy looks at Else's mirror, and her gaze is reflected and reflected back on the unconscious Else ("Ich fühle Cissys Blick. Vom Spiegel aus sieht sie zu mir her" (FE 76).), it is hard to tell whether Cissy is looking directly at the unconscious Else, whether she is looking at her being reflected in the mirror from a certain angle, whether she is looking at Else's previous self that is fixed in the mirror, or whether the reflections of both women blend into one another, uniting Else with her alter ego. Here, vision in general, and the reliability of the different points-of-view more specifically, are called into question through the multiplying gazes, through reflection and splitting into two. In a way, this prism of gazes relates to the many

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<sup>98</sup> Yeo, Siew Lian. "'Entweder Oder': Dualism in Schnitzler's Fräulein Else." *Modern Austrian Literature* 32.2 (1999): 15-26. Print.

facets of Else's (and even Cissy's) character, and the way an assessment of her character has to change based on one's vantage point.

Else's ultimate disrobing scene is particularly illuminating within the context of silence and body language, as well as performance and theatricality. During this climactic scene, various means of nonverbal communication are at work simultaneously. As noted above, Else does not speak, and her final utterances are reduced to uncontrollable laughter even after her body has shut down and she has fainted. Instead of speaking, she lets her naked body do the talking. The way in which she is staging her disrobing functions as a response to Dorsday's request, on the one hand, but also as a response to the expectations of her parents as well as the society around her. It is certainly no coincidence that Else passes through the "Spielzimmer" (FE 67) on her way to her final performance, a room pointing to games, as well as musical and theatrical performances. In the sense of game playing, the "Spielzimmer" not only points to the root of Else's problems (her father has "Mündelgelder (...) an der Börse *verspielt*" (FE 20, my emphasis), but also to her desperate game of hide and seek prior to her disrobing when she is looking for Dorsday but cannot find him. The "Spielzimmer", moreover, connects to the music being played in the next room which Else's enters, not only through the notion of playing the piano but also through a subtle hint at Schumann's own comment on his *Carnaval*: "In a letter to Moscheles, Schumann [wrote] (...): 'Den Maskentanz (*Carnaval*) zu entziffern, wird Ihnen ein *Spiel* sein'" (Green 146, my emphasis).<sup>99</sup> Deciphering the composition Schnitzler inserted in his text indeed illuminates Else's

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<sup>99</sup> Green, Jon D. "Music in Literature: Arthur Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*." *New York Literary Forum* 10-11 (1983): 141-52. Print.

disrobing scene, or more concretely, the moments leading up to it. Throughout her search for Dorsday Else keeps hearing the music being played which eventually leads her to the music room. Else's reflections on the music and the person playing it keep interrupting her thoughts about finding Dorsday, and it is ultimately her curiosity about the identity of the piano player that leads her to the room he is in.

Once Else opens the door to the "Musikzimmer" and finds Dorsday, the music of Schumann's *Carnaval* accompanies her thoughts and actions, which is shown by parts of the actual sheet music being included in the text. While Else hears the actual music, the reader only gets to experience the visual impression of the notes, which point to the parts of Schumann's *Carnaval* being performed parallel to Else' thoughts and actions. As Raymond shows in her essay "Masked in Music: Hidden Meaning in Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*.", the choice of these particular passages as well as the passages not displayed in the novella (but which follow the ones that are shown and thus can be assumed to be performed before the music stops) establish a connection between "Else's conflict, her psychological state, and the characters in Schumann's piece" (Raymond 171). The first part quoted in Schnitzler's novella is the character piece of "Florestan," a character who embodies a "double nature" in Schumann's work (cf. Raymond 174) and is related to Else insofar as she has split herself in two just prior to this part when standing in front of her mirror and communicating with the other version of herself. The notion of a "double nature" further relates to Else's conflicting feelings throughout the novella, mostly towards her father's role in her dilemma, but also regarding her visions of her future. As Raymond shows, within the "Florestan" piece, another musical quote is hidden: It is another Schumann

composition entitled "Papillions," which "Schumann based (...) on the "Larventanz" in Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*, explaining (...) 'daß die Papillons diesen Larventanz eigentlich in Töne umsetzen sollten...'" (Raymond 175).<sup>100</sup> The motif of butterflies and their emergence from their pupa is clearly linked to Else's disrobing, her shedding of her cover and showing herself in all her beauty. In addition to that, however, Else not only "entlarvt" herself, but also the society around her in which she constantly has to wear a mask that she is now finally drops. Moreover, emerging from a pupa ("Puppe") also related to Else's role of a puppet in her father's ploy to elicit money from Dorsday, as well as her functioning as both a stooge and ventriloquist's dummy for her father and his negotiations.<sup>101</sup> If her disrobing is thus read as an emergence from this pupa, Else here shows that she refuses to be a puppet any longer but rather takes action to manipulate the terms of the contract between herself and Dorsday. She neither succumbs to it completely, nor rejects Dorsday's request categorically, but rather locates herself in the middle: showing herself naked, but on her own terms.

As the music continues, Schnitzler quotes another piece from "Florestan," pointing to the increasing conflict of Else's double nature. Followed by that is her visual communication with Dorsday which is not accompanied by any quotations of sheet music in the novella. However, the next piece to follow "Florestan" is called "Coquette" (cf. Raymond 177) which is the part being played while Else uses her

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<sup>100</sup> The notion of a dance being turned into sound by those performing it is also strongly connected to Else's own dance of emergence (but also death) which is only accompanied by her laughter, thus "Töne" which express her heightened state of inner conflict.

<sup>101</sup> The notion of Else being a "Bauchrednerpuppe" as well as puppet on a string for her father will be further discussed in the next part of this chapter.

eyes again to communicate with Dorsday: "Ich will ihm nur ein Zeichen mit den Augen geben (...)" (FE 69). Falling back on her coquettish gaze, Else again tries to get Dorsday's attention. When he, at first, does not respond to those looks, Else decides to leave. Just when she thinks of the words "Adieu, adieu!" (FE 69), Dorsday looks up as if he could feel her pulling back. Now his gaze again paralyzes her and will not let her move: "Lassen Sie mich fort, lassen Sie mich fort!" (FE 69). This communication of gazes is still accompanied by the music (as Else points out, "Die Dame spielt weiter" (FE 69)), and according to Raymond, the "Coquette" piece, during which Else "makes eyes" (Raymond 177) at Dorsday is followed by the performance of "Replique" and visually accompanied by Dorsday's response: "Sein Auge spricht zu mir: komm! Sein Auge spricht: ich will dich nackt sehen" (FE 69). Verbal communication is replaced by visual communication throughout the scene, which is further accompanied by the music playing in the background. Here, both Dorsday and Else fall back on using their gazes to communicate the terms of a contract which is otherwise considered unacceptable and could not be communicated verbally in public.

The last piece of Schumann's composition, "Reconnaissance", displayed in the text also coincides with looks being exchanged, not only between Else and Dorsday, but also between the Filou and her. It is only after Else sees him that she makes the final decision to disrobe right where she is instead of undressing for Dorsday in private. Raymond interprets the quotation of "Reconnaissance" at the point of Else's disrobing as ironic, given the fact that Schumann referred to the piece as a "lover's meeting". Else, however, does not have a lover and her sexuality has

been commodified (cf. Raymond 179). However, looking at her visual communication with the Filou and her thoughts about him, I argue that the actual "lover's meeting" is taking place between the two: "Herrgott, im Fauteuil - da ist ja der Filou! Himmel, ich danke dir. Er ist wieder da, er ist wieder da. (...) Der Römerkopf ist wieder da. Mein Bräutigam, mein Geliebter" (FE 69). Thus, at the moment of her disrobing, Else also addresses the Filou first in her thoughts<sup>102</sup>, instead of Dorsday, suggesting that she is viewing her disrobing more as a treat for him than as a capitulation to Dorsday's request. Again, Else manipulates the terms of Dorsday's request, not to a degree where she is in control completely, but nevertheless to a point where she manages to find a space for her own desires to be addressed, however briefly and fleetingly.

Given the close connection between Schumann's music and Else's thoughts, critics, such as Schneider and Green (cf. Green 143, 148 and Schneider 17<sup>103</sup>), have argued that the music serves to illuminate Else's actions by shedding new light on her thought process prior to her disrobing. However, looking at Else's tendency to internalize literary texts and to enact roles scripted for her, I propose the opposite - namely, that Else enacts the content of the musical piece and thus follows yet another scripted work. Else appears to know the Schumann composition, as she not only recognizes it, but also points out: "Schumann? Ja, Karneval ... Hab ich auch einmal studiert" (FE 68). The fact that Else has studied the piece, as opposed to simply being familiar with it, shows her in-depth knowledge of it. As noted above, it

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<sup>102</sup> "Keiner noch sieht mich. Filou, Filou! Nackt stehe ich da. Dorsday reißt die Augen auf" (FE 70).

<sup>103</sup> Schneider, Gerd K. "Ton- Und Schriftsprache in Schnitzlers Fräulein Else Und Schumanns Carnaval." *Modern Austrian Literature: Journal of the International Arthur Schnitzler Research Association* 2.3 (1969): 17-20. Print.

is the music that draws Else to the room in the first place and lets her find Dorsday: “Ich will einen Blick in den Musiksalon tun. Da ist ja die Tür. - - Dorsday!” (FE 68). Her interest in the music and in the person performing it guides her and allows her to enact her own version of *Carnaval* by playing her disrobing off against it. Thus, when Else drops her robe, the music stops, and with it Else’s performance: “Ich falle um. Alles ist vorbei. Warum ist denn keine Musik mehr?” (FE 70). No longer having a guiding script behind her actions, Else has nothing to fall back on but her laughter. Her body fails her and she faints, only able to utter screams and laughter but no verbal content.

The notion that Else is enacting the musical composition in the same way she is enacting different roles throughout the novella is further stressed by another characteristic of Schumann’s *Carnaval*. The piece is subtitled “*Scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes*” (Little Scenes on Four Notes) which refers to Schumann composing this work using the notes A flat, E flat, B and C, which in German correspond to As, Es or “S”, H and C (cf. Green 144). These four notes “spell out in musical notation an abbreviation of Schumann’s name (...) and the birthplace (AsCH) of a young lady, Ernestine von Frickens, to whom Schumann up to then had been strongly attached” (Green 144). However, Schumann is not the only one inscribing himself as well as his lover into this musical piece. By including it in his text, Schnitzler inscribes himself through Schumann’s inscription as well: The letters A S C H correspond to the initial of Schnitzler’s first name, Arthur, as well as the first three letters of his last name (cf. Lange-Kirchheim “Adoleszenz” 295). As Lange-Kirchheim has argued, the names Ernestine and Else can be regarded as corresponding, based on their

sharing the same initial letter as well. Furthermore, the four letters around which the musical piece is constructed point to the four letters of Else's name (cf. Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 295). If Schnitzler is thus inscribing himself in Else's performance, the motif of the "double nature" of the character pieces previously quoted could further point to a male/female double nature:

Indem er die Autorenreferentialität des Schumannschen Musik-Textes radikalisiert (...) ermöglicht sich Schnitzler eine kryptonimische Selbst-*einschreibung* und eine *Umschreibung* seinerseits zur Frau, ist doch ASCH weiblich konnotiert: *in* dieser musikalischen Schrift kann er selbst als Else lesen und *mit* ihr die Frauenfigur dazu bewegen, um ihn selbst kreisend, zu und in seinem Namen einen Tanz aufzuführen. (Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 295, emphasis in original)

The notion of a male/female double nature is also related to Else's tendency to see herself as an object of sexual desire predetermined by the male gaze which she adopts and applies to herself, as noted above. Multiple aspects of the novella thus come into play during Else's disrobing, making this scene the climactic moment of the novella for this very reason as well.

The notion of Schnitzler inscribing himself into the text, and by extension: into his protagonist, in this vital scene also has climactic character in the sense that author and protagonist merge and blend into one here. At the same time, this is the moment of Else's greatest crisis, a moment in which all the outside pressure and her own wishes and desires clash and lead to, first, her public disrobing, and second, her fainting and subsequent "Ohnmacht". Her moment of partial empowerment is thus followed by a state of powerlessness, or apparent powerlessness. Since Else appears unconscious to those around her but still perceives everything that is happening, as is testified in her continuing interior monologue, she is now located between



conscious and unconsciousness, in a space between activity and passivity: “Die Leute halten mich für ohnmächtig. Nein, ich bin nicht ohnmächtig. Ich bin bei vollem Bewußtsein” (FE 70).<sup>104</sup> Later on, however, Else decides that she, in fact is “ohnmächtig” or rather, plays along with everyone’s idea of her being unconscious: “Ja, Gott sei Dank, für Euch bin ich ohnmächtig. Und ich bleibe auch ohnmächtig” (FE 71). Else here uses her apparent unconsciousness as a protective shield against the criticism and judgment of those around her. In addition to that, she also points out an important distinction between “Ohnmacht” and “Bewusstlosigkeit” in the quote above. While she appears powerless, she is still conscious enough to use this pretend unconsciousness to her advantage, thus making this an empowered moment after all. Therefore, the scene also links Else and Effi, and the latter’s “Ohnmacht” in the sleigh scene with Crampas. The important differentiation is that in Schnitzler’s text, the reader witnesses the ongoing thought process of Else and thus gains an important advantage over the characters within the novella. Thus, we here bear witness to a strategic, active use of a seemingly passive moment, yet another way in which Else reinterprets the terms of her role. By turning herself into a silent witness to the reactions to her disrobing, she buys herself time to decide what her reaction and response to the scandal she has caused will be, instead of delegating this decision to those in charge of her, i.e. her aunt who wants to send her off to a mental hospital immediately.

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<sup>104</sup> Similarly to Effi, Else may well pretend to be unconscious here as she is fully aware of everything that is happening around her and manages to move and take the Veronal once she is in her room alone. If this is the case, it adds yet another dimension of actively using a state of passivity to this in-between moment.

In addition to Else's frequent role-playing, her transformation from actress to art object, and her pondering about both roles, she also stages conversations in her interior monologue by imagining the way she wants them to take place. The role she envisions herself playing in these fantasies usually differs greatly from the actual part she is playing, or is forced to play. Over and over she imagines the central dialogue of the novella, her conversation with Dorsday, playing through the different outcomes, picturing her choice of words and his reaction to them: "- Herr von Dorsday, haben Sie vielleicht einen Moment Zeit für mich? Ich bekomme da eben einen Brief von Mama, sie ist in augenblicklicher Verlegenheit, - vielmehr der Papa - - Aber selbstverständlich, mein Fräulein, mit dem größten Vergnügen. Um wieviel handelt es sich denn? - " (FE 16). These bits of imagined conversations pervade Else's thoughts, just as much as the actual conversation she remembers. They range from short repetitions and variations of her imagined opening - "Gut, daß ich Sie treffe, Herr von Dorsday, ich bekomme da eben einen Brief aus Wien... " (FE 18) - to a complete staging of the outcome desired her, where references to her mother's letter blend in seamlessly with Dorsday's imagined response, showing how much foreign voices have taken over Else's thinking:

- Eben erhalte ich einen Brief, Herr von Dorsday. - Aber es ist doch gar nicht der Rede wert, Fräulein Else, gestern erst habe ich einen Rembrandt verkauft, Sie beschämen mich, Fräulein Else. Und jetzt reißt er ein Blatt aus seinem Scheckbuch und unterschreibt mit seiner goldenen Füllfeder; und morgen früh fahr' ich mit dem Scheck nach Wien. (FE 19)

The actual conversation, of course, plays out very differently from anything Else imagined. Following this conversation, her imagined dialogues and staging of them concentrate on possible ways out of her dilemma, but always cite Dorsday's

request by implying that, no matter what, there will always be a sexual quid pro quo required of Else:

Ich fahre zu Fiala. Ich komme noch zurecht. Gnade, Gnade, Herr Doktor Fiala. Mit Vergnügen, mein Fräulein. Bemühen Sie sich in mein Schlafzimmer. - Tu mir doch den Gefallen, Paul, verlange dreißigtausend Gulden von deinem Vater. Sage, du hast Spielschulden, du mußt dich sonst erschießen. Gern, liebe Kusine. Ich habe Zimmer Nummer soundsoviel, um Mitternacht erwarte ich dich. (FE 37)

In addition to those alternatives, Else imagines further conversations with Dorsday in which she tells him what she could not tell him face to face, such as „Beruhigen Sie sich, Herr von Dorsday, es wird Ihnen nichts geschehen. Ich verachte Sie ja so sehr.“ (FE 42) or “Nein, Herr von Dorsday, kurz und gut, nein. Sie haben gescherzt, Herr von Dorsday, selbstverständlich“ (FE 45). Again, her thoughts switch to bitterness after receiving the telegram from her mother informing her that the actual sum required is now 50,000 and accordingly, her imagined conversations with Dorsday become more and more unrealistic and ironic.<sup>105</sup> While her previous attempts at imagining the possible outcome of her conversation (prior to the actual conversation) were driven by the hope that its success were not going to be at her expense, at least none other than her pride, her emotions are now marked by hopelessness, disappointment, despair, and bitterness. She can no longer imagine a positive outcome of this situation or a positive turn of her life in general. The only

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<sup>105</sup> “Zu meinem lebhaften Bedauern sind es nun fünfzigtausend geworden, Herr von Dorsday, das kann Ihnen ja ganz egal sein. Und ich bin überzeugt, Ihre Gegenforderung war gar nicht ernst gemeint. Denn Sie sind ein Vicomte und ein Gentleman. Morgen früh werden Sie die fünfzigtausend, an denen das Leben meines Vaters hängt, ohne weiters an Fiala senden. Ich rechne darauf. - Selbstverständlich, mein Fräulein, ich sende für alle Fälle gleich hunderttausend, ohne jede Gegenleistung und verpflichte mich überdies, von heute an für den Lebensunterhalt Ihrer ganzen Familie zu sorgen, die Börsenschulden Ihres Herrn Papas zu zahlen und sämtliche veruntreute Mündelgelder zu ersetzen.“ (FE 56)

option Else can see for herself is selling herself and never be taken seriously for anything other than her body.

Else's attempts at finding her own voice and directing her own life are moreover accompanied by the frequent quotations that can be found within her interior monologue. These range from bits and pieces from spoken dialogues between her and her friends or acquaintances, to quotations of written words, such as her mother's letter or literary texts she has read. While the quotations from Else's acquaintances are mainly important for the notion of ventriloquism that will be discussed in the next part of this chapter, Else's references to literature and theatre are closely connected to her role-playing and staging of conversations. By referencing and comparing her own life to the lives of literary figures, Else again splits herself into two different characters. Just as she had mirrored herself in the male gaze so too is she now mirroring and doubling herself in literature. Her literary references begin early in the novella - on Else's way back from the game of tennis, as Aurnhammer has pointed out (cf. Aurnhammer "Träumen" 501).<sup>106</sup> Here she connects a memory of a visit to the theatre where she saw Shakespeare's Coriolanus with a quote from her acquaintance Fred, who calls her "hochgemut" (FE 6), a term which she will frequently repeat throughout the novella as well. Literary reference and quotes of a past conversation blend with one another, showing how important both the literary world and foreign words are to her.<sup>107</sup> When getting ready for her

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<sup>106</sup> Aurnhammer, Achim. "'Selig, Wer in Träumen Stirbt': Das Literarisierte Leben Und Sterben Von Fräulein Else." *Euphorion: Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 77.4 (1983): 500-10.

<sup>107</sup> Moreover, Else links her first infatuation to the theatrical world as well: "Mit dreizehn war ich vielleicht das einzige Mal wirklich verliebt. In den Van Dyck – oder vielmehr in den Abbé Des Grieux, und in die Renard auch" (FE 7). As Aurnhammer notes, "[g]emeint sind der berühmte Tenor Ernest von Dyck und die

conversation with Dorsday, Else also reflects on the “toilette de circonstance” she has read about in French novels (cf. FE 17) thus applying her literary knowledge to her own life. Similarly, she reflects on her options by thinking „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“ (FE 17).<sup>108</sup> The borders between literary world and reality become blurry for Else, especially when she is later faced with the reality of having to sell herself to Dorsday. Knowing about the responsibility that is resting on her shoulders, reality and (imagined) fiction also blend when Else imagines her family’s future:

Einstimmig schuldig. Verurteilt auf fünf Jahre. Stein, Sträflingskleid, geschorene Haare. Einmal im Monat darf man ihn besuchen. Ich fahre mit Mama hinaus, dritter Klasse. Wir haben ja kein Geld. Keiner leiht uns was. Kleine Wohnung in der Lerchenfelderstraße, so wie die, wo ich die Näherin besucht habe vor zehn Jahren. Wir bringen ihm etwas zu essen mit. Woher denn? Wir haben ja selber nichts. Onkel Viktor wird uns eine Rente aussetzen. Dreihundert Gulden monatlich. Rudi wird in Holland sein bei Vanderhulst - wenn man noch auf ihn reflektiert. *Die Kinder des Sträflings! Roman von Temme in drei Bänden.* Der Papa empfängt uns im gestreiften Sträflingsanzug. Er schaut nicht böß drein, nur traurig. Er kann ja gar nicht böß dreinschauen. (FE 40, my emphasis)

Even though Else seems to use the reference to the author ironically here, this still underlines her tendency to imagine a literalized version of her life and playing her role subsequently. Simultaneously, this is also a mechanism to escape her reality: By

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Mezzosopranistin Marie Renard, die die Aufführung von Massenets Oper *Manon* am Wiener Burgtheater 1890 zum großen Erfolg werden ließen.“ (Aurnhammer “Träumen” 502) As Else points out in the quote above though, she was more in love with the tenor’s character within the opera than with the actual person. Falling in love with a fictional character while constantly imagining fictional lifestyles for herself show Else’s disposition to behaving like an actress in a play.

<sup>108</sup> However, Else dismisses this option as well, though she knows that she will have to sell herself in some form eventually, even if it is through marriage: “Wenn ich einmal heirate, werde ich es wahrscheinlich billiger tun” (FE 18).

imagining the worst possible outcome, Else attempts to work through her fears and gain temporary control over her situation. She is also trying to come to terms with a possibly tragic ending for her family's story, but struggles to do so. Here, it becomes painfully obvious to Else that she is neither director nor author of her own or her family's narrative and that she will never fully gain control over either.

How much Else's thoughts are influenced by literary quotations and variations of them, from Goethe to Brentano and Hölderlin, has been shown by Aurnhammer in his essay "Selig wer in Träumen stirbt," where he argues that Else uses these references as well as her imagined roles as part of literature to escape a reality she is not ready to face. In addition to that, however, her quoting of canonical texts also reflects another instance of Else talking in foreign tongues and her voice being affected by them. Even Else's last words are, according to Aurnhammer, a variation of two romantic songs, "Guten Abend, Gute Nacht" (Des Knaben Wunderhorn) and a song from Brentano's "Mirtenfräulein" showing that Else "selbst sterbend ihrer romantischen Traumwelt verhaftet bleibt" (Aurnhammer "Träumen" 510). According to that, Else is unsuccessful at writing, directing and performing her own role and is instead forced to play one prescribed for her which she no longer wants to play:

Die Unzahl literarischer Zitate und Kryptozitate in Elses Monolog berechtigen zu der Frage, ob die Figur überhaupt etwas anderes sei als Literatur. Sie rückt damit in die Nähe der Allegorie und verkörpert Beruf und Berufung ihres Autors, seine literarische Existenzweise. (...) Die Differenz zu seinem weiblichen Doppel hat Schnitzler jedoch entschieden dadurch markiert, daß Else nicht zum aktiven Schriftsteller taugt. Sie ist quasi ein

*artiste manqué*. Else kann nur zitieren oder Kunst reproduzieren (...). (Lange-Kirchheim "Adoleszenz" 292f)<sup>109</sup>

However, even though Else does not produce literature or art herself, she does attempt to produce herself as art. And even more importantly, by reusing literary references and imagining a plot for her own life, she does attempt to find a creative (and creating) voice of her own. While she might not be able to invent an entirely new and individual story for herself, she nevertheless reinvents the role her parents and Dorsday intend to prescribe for her.

Else's tendency to reenact literature is already implied in her name, which is an anagram of "lese" (cf. Allerkamp 97).<sup>110</sup> This points to her love of reading and internalizing fictional roles on the one hand, and her wish to be read about on the other. Whenever literary quotations or other words she has read take over Else's thoughts and voice, something other, or someone *else* – also a cognate of her name – is speaking through her. However, since Else recombines different literary quotes with one another, she creates a new role for herself, reinterpreting what has been written, just as she reinterprets Dorsday's request to see her naked. This reinterpretation of Else's can be seen as an attempt to "durch Zusammensetzen und Neuordnen der Fragmente neue Strukturen zu schaffen, die Ganzheit, Vollkommenheit, neuen Sinn besitzen" (Kohut, quoted in Caspari 7). Else wishes to be read about, to become literature herself, which also shows in her tendency to

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<sup>109</sup> Indeed, Else herself seems to dismiss literary production for herself from the start: „Wozu nachdenken, ich schreibe ja keine Memoiren. Nicht einmal Tagebuch wie die Bertha.“ (FE 7) The only artistic option Else considers for herself is the profession of an actress ("Zur Bühne hätte ich gehen sollen" (FE 18).), a profession requiring her to speak words written for her and enact a role designed for her.

<sup>110</sup> Allerkamp, Andrea. "'... Ich Schreibe Ja Keine Memoiren.' Über Die Ars Memoriae Als Spiel Zwischen Bild Und Text in Schnitzlers Fräulein Else." *Cahiers d'Etudes Germaniques* 29 (1995): 95-108. Print.

imagine reports being written about her. At the same time she refuses to write herself: "(...) ich schreibe ja keine Memoiren. Nicht einmal Tagebuch (...)" (FE 7). Yet, her thoughts between conversations or while reading her mother's letter often read as if they were meant for an audience instead of just reflections for herself. Thus, after reading her mother's letter, Else's thoughts circle around her family and their past, but in ways that seem to clarify the family's situation for an audience that has no prior knowledge of it.<sup>111</sup> Else therefore does tend to take over the role of the narrator of her own life, as opposed to her interior monologue only reflecting her spontaneous thoughts and associations. She may not become the author of her story, however, she actively edits and reinterprets it and thereby breaks away from her parents' script.

Apart from the roles literature and theatricality play for Else's thought processes, written communication in general takes up quite a bit of room within the novella and is of central importance to Else's crisis as well as her loss of voice. Within a short amount of time, Else receives a total of three pieces of mail from home, first a telegram announcing the "Expreßbrief" (FE 6), then the actual letter from her mother, and finally the telegram informing her of the increased sum and the urgency of the request. Else has a bad feeling about her mother writing her from the start: "Fürcht ich mich am Ende vor Mamas Brief? Nun, Angenehmes wird er wohl nicht enthalten. Expreß!" (FE 6). Knowing about her family's situation, Else instantly knows about the urgency of the matter and anticipates the worst. Once in

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<sup>111</sup> She even describes herself and her looks ("Ich bin sogar blond, rötlichblond (...)") (FE 17), which is information that would otherwise not be available to the reader as there is no narrator describing Else's looks.



her room, Else hesitates to open it, digressing into thoughts about what it could possibly contain in order to avoid dealing with its actual content: "Könnte es nicht auch etwas mit meinem Bruder sein?" (FE 10). While thinking about her relationship with her brother, Else reflects on "einer gewissen Lotte [von der] er mir viel erzählt [hat]. Dann hat er plötzlich aufgehört. Diese Lotte muß ihm irgend etwas angetan haben" (FE 11). Given Else's frequent literary references and her unreliability when it comes to recalling spoken conversations, it is questionable whether Else is actually referring to her brother's past love affair or blending fictional characters into her memories. The name "Lotte" immediately brings to mind Goethe's *Werther*<sup>112</sup>, and the fact that Else reminisces about this relationship while holding a letter further stresses the connection to Goethe's "Briefroman." Furthermore, after opening the letter and sitting down near the window, Else imagines what would happen if she were to fall in the style of a report in a newspaper:

Wie uns aus San Martino gemeldet wird, hat sich dort im Hotel Fratazza ein beklagenswerter 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. (FE 11)<sup>113</sup>

This introduces the theme of suicide, which continues to preoccupy her, as her first thought right after opening the letter and reading the last few lines is "Um Gottes willen, sie werden sich doch nicht umgebracht haben!" (FE 11) - yet another parallel

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<sup>112</sup> Else also points out that her brother's relationship to Lotte took place when he was 21 years old, thus bringing him close to Werther in age as well.

<sup>113</sup> Later on in the novella, else again imagines her death being reported on in a newspaper style: "Geheimnisvoller Selbstmord einer jungen Dame der Wiener Gesellschaft. Nur mit einem schwarzen Abendmantel bekleidet, wurde das schöne Mädchen an einer unzugänglichen Stelle des Cimone della Pala tot aufgefunden ... " (FE 65).

to Werther's suicide and foreshadowing her own (attempt). Both literary reference and memories of past events, which blend in with one another in this instance, are a mechanism to distract her from reality and to avoid having to deal with whatever problem the letter will address a bit longer. Thus, whenever Else lets her thoughts wander like that, she puts off having to deal with a potentially unpleasant situation.<sup>114</sup>

The fact that Else's first thought in relation to her imagined fall and death does not go to her family or friends but to a newspaper article reporting on it further shows her theatrical nature and again places emphasis on a written document as being something more valid and official, as opposed to spoken words. As Else points out, people would say that she has killed herself, thus anticipating rumors that could possibly follow her imagined accident. The notion of rumors being speculations who may or may not have their origin in a fact, but this fact being distorted by the rumor being passed on orally contrasts the nature of a letter or written document, which fixes words and makes them accessible over and over again without any changes to their content.<sup>115</sup> In Else's case, this is of particular importance when she receives the second telegram and the words in it start to haunt her, being repeated in her thoughts multiple times.<sup>116</sup> The telegram also keeps pulling her back to reality whenever her thoughts drift off: "Ja, das ist das

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<sup>114</sup> In situations like this, Else also again splits into the daydreaming young girl and the voice of reason which reprimands her instantly: "Nun, Fräulein Else, möchten Sie sich nicht doch entschließen, den Brief zu lesen?" (FE 10) and "Aber wenn ich auf den Plafond schaue, kann ich natürlich nicht lesen, was in der Depesche steht" (FE 54).

<sup>115</sup> In addition to that, "rumor" derives from Latin "rumorem", which, among other things, means "noise", stressing the orality of it, as opposed to a written document, as well as the distinction between vocal and nonvocal communication.

<sup>116</sup> The haunting effect of the telegram will be discussed further in the final part of this chapter.

Telegramm. Das ist ein Stück Papier und da stehen Worte darauf. Aufgegeben in Wien vier Uhr dreißig. Nein, ich träume nicht, es ist alles wahr" (FE 59). The telegram here functions as something tangible, an anchor to Else's reality, which keeps her from dreaming up an alternate version of her life but also proves that she is not trapped in a nightmare.<sup>117</sup>

Written communication also has its limitations, as the mother points out, when it comes to requests such as the one for money: "Also, ich bitte dich, Kind, sprich mit Dorsday. Ich versichere dich, es ist nichts dabei. Papa hätte ihm ja einfach telegraphieren können, wir haben es ernstlich überlegt, aber es ist doch etwas ganz anderes, Kind, wenn man mit einem Menschen persönlich spricht" (FE 13). The emphasis here, of course, is not placed on the fact that Else is *speaking* to Dorsday in person, but that she is supposed to charm him into sending the money, not using her voice and words, but her physical feminine charms. Since Else is aware that talking to Dorsday alone is not going to be enough, especially after her conversation with him and his request to her, the telegram in which her mother states "Wiederhole

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<sup>117</sup> Additionally, written communication is also associated with being more valid than oral communication, which is being reflected on when Else thinks "Soll ich's dir schriftlich geben, teure Tante, daß ich an Paul nicht im Traum denke?" (FE 6) What is ironic here, of course, is that Else does think about Paul and that he is quite often part of her sensual fantasies. But fantasies are non-binding, unlike a written document. Thus, Else here implies that, once written down, a statement like that would be an admission to her infatuation with Paul, and she is not ready to do that, as she does not even admit her crush to herself. By the same token, Else also expects Dorsday to hold up his end of the bargain by requesting, even if only in her thoughts, a form of written guarantee: "Vor allem aber, schreiben Sie die Depesche an Ihr Bankhaus, natürlich, sonst habe ich ja keine *Sicherheit*" (FE 55, my emphasis). Similarly, Else also has to perceive her mother's letter and telegrams and the request uttered in them as irrevocable. Yet when she reads her mother's letter, she attempts to enter a non-vocal dialogue with her, by responding to her in her thoughts. Two silent forms of communication are mixed with each other here, but the dialogue has to remain one-sided as Else can only respond to what her mother is writing, while the words in the letter are fixed. At the same time, her questions, which are raised by the letter, have to remain unanswered (i.e. "Warum hat sich Papa nicht einfach auf die Bahn gesetzt und ist hergefahren?" (FE 15)) Else is alone with her thoughts here, only in dialogue with herself, which exacerbates her constant anticipation of the worst (such as the father being imprisoned or committing suicide).

flehentliche Bitte mit Dorsday reden. (...)” (FE 54) increases her panic about the situation. Furthermore, her mother uses the same term “Bitte” as Dorsday, although both requests are in fact not requests but rather blackmail. In the case of Else’s parents it is emotional blackmail as the mother, in her letter, implies that the worst could happen if the money is not obtained, which is further stressed through the telegram where she states “Sonst alles vergeblich” (FE 55).<sup>118</sup> Dorsday, of course, exploits Else’s despair and worry about her father to get what he wants. Ultimately, both parents and Dorsday count on Else’s “kindliche Zärtlichkeit” (FE 39), thus exploiting her position of the loving daughter and obedient child.

Even though Dorsday promises Else secrecy, they both nevertheless treat his request as if it were part of a (written) contract. Dorsday states during their conversation “»Und ich schwöre Ihnen auch, daß ich – von der Situation keinen Gebrauch machen werde, der in unserem Vertrag nicht vorgesehen war.«“ (FE 35) and Else further emphasizes this notion when she thinks: “Daß ich noch lebendig sein muß, das steht nicht in unserem Kontrakt. Oh nein. Das steht nirgends geschrieben“ (FE 51). Again, Else stresses the importance of written documents as having binding character, whereas her oral contract with Dorsday (to which she never actually agrees)<sup>119</sup> is still negotiable. At the same time, the secrecy of this oral contract is also a disadvantage since Else could never prove that Dorsday had directly made this

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<sup>118</sup> The disturbing effect this telegram has on Else and her thoughts will be further discussed in the next part of this chapter.

<sup>119</sup> This is yet another instance in which Effi’s and Else’s stories connect: Both women find themselves part of a contract they did not sign off of. Therefore, they both manipulate the terms of their respective contracts – Effi by beginning an affair and Else by staging her disrobing publicly – and, in the process, develop a more individualized story for themselves, as opposed to following the rules imposed upon them.

request of her. This makes her situation even more desperate. Else cannot speak about her conversation with Dorsday just as she cannot vocally express what is going on inside her head.<sup>120</sup>

The only document indirectly testifying to Dorsday's request is the note Else writes to Dorsday right before she leaves her room for her final performance. But writing this note does not come easy to Else and again she feels forced to write to him, just as she felt forced to speak to him earlier: "Ich *muß* ihm etwas dazu *schreiben*. Nun ja, was *soll* ich ihm *schreiben*?" (FE 57, my emphasis) and "Aber ich *muß* ihm ja noch *schreiben*" (FE 60). Again, the modal verbs indicating pressure and duress are combined with verbs referring to verbal (but in this case nonvocal) expression. In the note that Else eventually writes, she refuses to include a form of address and signature. She cannot succumb to using a polite form of address for the man she despises so much so she decides "keine Aufschrift, weder hochverehrt, noch hochverachtet" (FE 61) almost as if she were trying to create distance between herself and Dorsday. Hence, she also does not include her signature: "Nein, nicht Else. Gar keine Unterschrift" (FE 61). The fact that Else refuses to sign the note is

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<sup>120</sup> When Else attempts to share her thoughts and feelings, she prefers written over oral forms of communication. Thus, she debates writing a testamentary letter expressing her will in which she allows Dorsday to let him see her naked body. Here she makes a reference to his request, a request that she otherwise cannot speak about. In this will Else also mentions a number of written documents, such as letters, books and her diary, which she decides to leave to Fred – the only man mentioned in her will who will receive something written and personal of hers.<sup>120</sup> Both Dorsday and Paul, the only other two men mentioned, are to receive a heritage that is linked to her body and sexuality - the viewing of her naked body for Dorsday and a kiss on her pale lips for Paul (cf. FE 51). It is questionable whether Else actually writes down her will or whether she just contemplates doing it, thus it is also questionable whether there is a possibility of anyone finding out the reasons behind her disrobing later on. The fact that Else desperately tries to communicate with Paul and Cissy during her final moments, however, suggests that the testament remains pure contemplation. Literary production, in the broadest sense, here again remains speculative, but the fact that Else contemplates writing her will gives her a chance to express her thoughts and allows for a verbalization of them, even if not for a vocalization.

interpreted by Bronfen as follows: “Naked, having undertaken her own social death, she has no name, can sign only with her body” (Bronfen 287). However, I would argue that Else rather refuses to sign this note with her name as her actions have been directed by outside forces, such as her parents, to such an extent that she is left too estranged from herself to sign off on her parents and Dorsday’s scheme using her own name. This feeling of estrangement from herself<sup>121</sup> is not only caused by Else’s conscious (and semi-conscious) quoting of literature, music and theatre, but further intensified by the instances of ventriloquism which will be discussed in the following part.

### III. Ventriloquism

In her book “Ventriloquized Voices”, Elizabeth D. Harvey discusses a phenomenon she calls “transvestite ventriloquism” (Harvey 1)<sup>122</sup>, referring to male authors speaking through the female voices of their fictional characters. As noted in the previous section of this chapter, Schnitzler not only creates a female fictional character and uses her voice instead of that of a narrator, he also inscribes himself in his text on multiple occasions. Choosing this feminine voice over that of a masculine one or an authorial narrative perspective can be interpreted as “Verweiblichung, genauer: Hysterisierung der männlichen Autorenschaft” (Koschorke 334), or as literary cross-dressing (cf. Harvey 6). The phenomenon of transvestite ventriloquism is doubled by the fact that the author not only employs

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<sup>121</sup> This estrangement becomes apparent whenever Else questions her words or actions, as in the following instances: “Wo bin ich? Wo bin ich?” (FE 25), “Bin ich das, die da redet?” (FE 28), “Warum sag ich das?” (FE 29), “Warum laufe ich denn so? (...) Was will ich denn? Wie heißt der Mann?” (FE 67)

<sup>122</sup> Harvey, Elizabeth D. *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts*. London: Routledge, 1992.

the feminine voice in the interior monologue of his heroine, but various characters (not exclusively, but mostly male ones) speak through Else as well. This impersonation of Else's voice, however, takes place in two different ways: In some cases, Else chooses to allow other voices to speak through her, and in doing so, gives them credit for their words. In other instances, however, such as her repetitions of her mother's telegram, these foreign voices take over her thoughts and silence her. Thus, Else develops both a hospitable and an inhospitable relationship towards this ventriloquism taking place within the novella. Ultimately, this allows for the emergence of a middle voice, one that blends the foreign voices with Else's own. It also involves Else being a hospitable medium for these voices which she lets pass through her and, in doing so, reinterprets them through her repetition and reorganization.

All the dialogue taking place around Else is filtered through her as she is the one character through whom any information is filtered and passed on to the reader of the novella. But apart from the conversations she participates in or witnesses as an auditor and which are displayed as direct quotations and in italics in the text, Else's interior monologue is in fact much more than that as she constantly quotes past conversations, spoken as well as written ones. Those quotes are visually distinguished from the rest of the text by quotation marks.<sup>123</sup> Yet, they are tied in so

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<sup>123</sup> During dialogues, the words of Else's counterparts are displayed in italics and quotation marks (double guillemets - »«), whereas Else's responses are only distinguished from her thoughts by quotation marks. During the dialogues, utterances are further separated by a single dash (or two when indicating longer pauses). Quotations of written documents as well as quotes from oral communication are framed by single guillemets (› ‹). Imagined conversations are for the most part framed by these markers as well, so are words or phrases that are being stressed during a conversation. Using the very same marker for all

closely with Else's memories and her thought process that it is often hard to tell when she is actually quoting someone and whom she is quoting. On her way back from playing tennis, Else reflects: "Köstlicher Abend. ›Die Luft ist wie Champagner‹, sagte gestern Doktor Waldberg. Vorgestern hat es auch einer gesagt" (FE 9) and shortly thereafter "Schade, daß der schöne Schwarze mit dem Römerkopf schon wieder fort ist. ›Er sieht aus wie ein Filou‹, sagte Paul. Ach Gott, ich hab' nichts gegen Filous, im Gegenteil" (FE 10). Here, the quotations are still clearly distinguished visually from the rest of the interior monologue by quotation marks and are followed by the phrases "sagte gestern Doktor Waldberg" and "sagte Paul" respectively. When they later reappear in the text, however, they blend in seamlessly with Else thoughts. The term "Filou" becomes Else's go-to classification for the men she is interested in, while the phrase "Die Luft ist wie Champagner" reappears multiple times as well. It almost becomes a formula for Else that she repeats to herself, for example on occasions where she needs to calm herself down: "Erschießen und Kriminal, all die Sachen gibt's ja gar nicht, die stehn nur in der Zeitung. Die Luft ist wie Champagner. In einer Stunde ist das Diner (...)" (FE 17). Here, Else's thoughts first drifted off to possible fates her father could face, but just when those thoughts become too unbearable, repeating the phrase brings her back to the here and now. At the same time, the phrase suggests something pleasant or soothing and thus contrasts Else's situation which is marked by despair and fear: "Himmlische Luft, wie Champagner. Gar nicht mehr kühl - dreißigtausend ... dreißigtausend" (FE 37), "Ja, da bin ich in Martino di Castrozza, sitze auf einer Bank

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these different ways of quoting as well as imaginary conversations creates the effect of all of them blending into each other, instead of working as distinguishing markers.



am Waldesrand und die Luft ist wie Champagner und mir scheint gar, ich weine“ (FE 42). The latter quote in particular shows the strong discrepancy between the beautiful setting Else finds herself in and her desperate situation in which, again, she has lost control over her body and her emotions as she only realizes that she is crying while she already is. Repeating the phrase here can also be read as a last desperate attempt to hold on to a more carefree time prior to the arrival of her mother's letter and Dorsday's request.

In contrast, the blending of different voices with Else's thoughts without any visual marker distinguishing them marks the actual instances of ventriloquism taking place in *Fräulein Else*, the moments when she utters or thinks in words and phrases that are not her own. These moments are mixed in with her actual quoting from the start, as can be seen from the examples above as well as from the following: “Wie sagte Fred auf dem Weg vom ›Coriolan‹ nach Hause? Frohgemut. Nein, hochgemut. Hochgemut sind Sie, nicht hochmütig, Else” (FE 6). While Else does give Fred credit for coming up with this word here (“Er findet immer schöne Worte” (FE 6).), it blends in with her own thoughts seamlessly and is not distinguished visually by quotation marks. Moreover, Else continues to use it when reflecting on herself as the novella progresses, as can be seen from the following: “Denn sinnlich bin ich gewiß. Aber auch hochgemut und ungnädig Gott sei Dank” (FE 6). Here, Else even quotes both Fred and Paul, who calls her “ungnädig.” Her repetition of the term “hochgemut” continues, in a similar fashion that she uses Paul's term “Filou” for her desired male counterpart, namely as a characterization of herself: “Ich werde mit Herrn Dorsday aus Eperies sprechen, werde ihn anpumpen, ich die Hochgemute, die

Aristokratin, die Marchesa, die Bettlerin, die Tochter des Defraudanten" (FE 18) or "Ich werde nicht treu sein. Ich bin hochgemut, aber ich werde nicht treu sein" (FE 20). Whenever Else uses this term, it is actually Fred speaking through her, since he is the one who coined the term to describe her demeanor. Not only does Else allow him to ventriloquize her, she also applies a characterization that someone else came up with for her and uses it as her own - which it is not, of course. Thus not only are her thoughts and utterances strongly predetermined by other people, but so too is her self-image, thus rendering the very term an oxymoron. Just as Else looks at herself through the filter of the male gaze, so too does she characterize herself in terms men have used to describe her. However, in the instances of Paul and Fred and their ways of describing her, Else embraces the ventriloquism and uses it in a positive way when defining herself. Thus, she is the one who chooses the foreign words which are passed on through her in these instances, while in other cases outlined below, she cannot help but being haunted by them if they are associated with something negative.

While the ventriloquism in the cases above only concerns one or two words, the more striking examples of it take place whenever Else's panic about her situation increases. Right after her conversation with Dorsday, during which he states "*»Sie werden möglicherweise ahnen, daß ein Mann zu Ihnen spricht, der ziemlich einsam und nicht besonders glücklich ist und der vielleicht einige Nachsicht verdient.«*" (FE 36), her thoughts read as follows: "Es ist noch Zeit bis zum Diner. Ein bißchen Spazierengehen und die Sache in Ruhe überlegen. Ich bin ein einsamer alter Mann, haha. Himmlische Luft, wie Champagner" (FE 37). Here her slightly rephrased

quote of Dorsday is ironically reflected on by her, but merely with the non-verbal utterance “Haha”, expressing her dismissal of his statement. After that, she goes right back to quoting the phrase of the air being like champagne, thus producing no real response to Dorsday whatsoever, not even in her thoughts. Moreover, there is no visual marker separating Dorsday’s words from her own thoughts, thus creating the effect of the two blending seamlessly together. After this conversation, Else’s thoughts primarily circle around Dorsday’s demands and she frequently imagines conversations to come which blend right into her thoughts just like the ventriloquism discussed earlier.

Since every quote is filtered through Else and her memories the reader can never be sure of the accuracy of these quotes as they are repeated back through her, thus making her an unreliable narrator when it comes to her account of words spoken to her in the past. As far as written documents are concerned, such as the mother’s letter and subsequent telegram, quotations from these documents are at first clearly distinguished from Else’s thoughts and interjections in the novella as well. Whenever Else responds (in her thoughts) to her mother, the response is distinguished from the words of the letter by a dash: “(...) Darum hab ich mir gedacht, ob du uns nicht die Liebe erweisen und mit Dorsday reden könntest.< - Was? - Dich hat er ja immer besonders gern gehabt. - Hab nichts davon gemerkt“ (FE 13). It is particularly striking in this regard how the mother’s later telegram is quoted. While the quotes from her letter are still visually distinguishable at any point in the novella (not just while Else is reading the letter), the telegram is only quoted in this fashion once - namely, at the moment when Else reads it for the first

time. After that, short bits and pieces from the telegram are woven indistinguishably into Else's thoughts and reflections, blending them into the text without any quotation marks or other visual markers, just as some of her imagined conversations have been before:

Aber wenn ich auf den Plafond schaue, kann ich natürlich nicht lesen, was in der Depesche steht. Trala, trala, Courage. Es muß ja sein. ›Wiederhole flehentliche Bitte mit Dorsday reden. Summe nicht dreißig, sondern fünfzig. Sonst alles vergeblich. Adresse bleibt Fiala. - *Sondern fünfzig. Sonst alles vergeblich.* Trala, trala. *Fünfzig. Adresse bleibt Fiala.* Aber gewiß, ob fünfzig oder dreißig, darauf kommt es ja nicht an. Auch dem Herrn von Dorsday nicht. Das Veronal liegt unter der Wäsche, für alle Fälle. Warum habe ich nicht gleich gesagt: fünfzig. Ich habe doch daran gedacht! *Sonst alles vergeblich.* Also hinunter, geschwind, nicht da auf dem Bett sitzen bleiben. Ein kleiner Irrtum, Herr von Dorsday, verzeihen Sie. *Nicht dreißig, sondern fünfzig, sonst alles vergeblich. Adresse bleibt Fiala.* (FE 54f, my emphasis)

The borders between the ventriloquist (in this case: the mother) and the dummy (Else) become increasingly blurred as Else's panic about her situation grows, making it difficult for the reader to distinguish between Else's voice and that of her mother. After receiving the telegram from her mother, Else becomes preoccupied with the words contained in it, thus becoming the ventriloquist's dummy for her mother whenever she utters phrases from her telegram, such as "Adresse bleibt Fiala." This particular phrase is repeated a total of 13 times within the last 25 pages of the novella, always without any visual markers such as quotation marks or italics. While the mother's earlier letter in which she instructed Else to speak to Dorsday dictated Else's conversation with him and while Else still referenced her mother's (written) words during her conversation with him, the phrase from the telegram takes hold of Else and haunts her thoughts, by being repeated over and over again like a curse. Else also repeatedly quotes the mother's

phrase “unter uns”. In her initial letter, the mother mentions that Dorsday “soll in ziemlich festen Banden sein – unter uns, nichts sehr Feines“ which Else counters by asking “warum ›unter uns?‹” (FE 12). Not only does Else dismiss any notion of comradery between herself and her mother, but she also questions the need for secrecy implied by her mother regarding the rumor she quotes. Furthermore, a rumor is something verbally and often orally passed on from one person to another, thus essentially linking it to the notion of ventriloquism.

Ultimately though, it is not actually the mother who ventriloquizes Else by speaking through her in her words and thoughts. It is rather another puppeteer who remains in the background throughout the novella, at least as a speaking agent, namely her father. The father as the source of Else’s dilemma is, interestingly enough, only quoted by her twice in the entire text, and both times she imagines what he would say, once about her writing style: “- ›Nein, wie gut das Mädel schreibt‹, möcht' der Papa sagen” (FE 61) and the other time about her conversation with Dorsday: “Ich höre ihn sprechen, wie er die Mama beruhigt. Verlaß dich darauf, Dorsday weist das Geld an. Bedenke doch, ich habe ihm heuer im Winter eine große Summe durch meine Intervention gerettet. Und dann kommt der Prozeß Erbesheimer ... - Wahrhaftig. - Ich höre ihn sprechen” (FE 41). Apart from these instances, whenever Else imagines conversations she wants to have with her father, it is only she who is speaking – the reader never sees a response, be it real or imagined. As Else points out, her father did not dare to write the letter himself but rather speaks through the mother who is writing it: “Und die Mama, dumm wie sie ist, setzt sich hin und schreibt den Brief. Der Papa hat sich nicht getraut. Da hätte ich

es ja gleich merken müssen“ (FE 39). Else is thus very well aware of her father’s role and his responsibility for her situation. Her accusatory questions directed at him “Warum tust du mir das an, Papa?” (FE 20) and “Wie konntest du das von mir verlangen, Papa? Das war nicht recht von dir, Papa”(FE 28) remain, however, unanswered. The fact that the father is the only important person in Else’s life whom she never quotes (except for two imaginary comments) while constantly quoting almost everybody else shows that he is the master puppeteer behind the scenes. He is the ventriloquist who has invaded her words and her thinking so completely that he never becomes audible (or visible, for that matter) as such.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, the actual (transvestite) ventriloquism is taking place between the father and Else but is doubled by and filtered through the mother. The actual bargaining for the money with Dorsday, thus, also takes place between Else’s father and him, using both the mother and Else, i.e. the female family members, not only as the objects of but also as the dummies (in the sense of both “Strohmann” - stooge and “Bauchrednerpuppe” (ventriloquist’s dummy) for their negotiations: “über das “Kind” Else wird ein Konflikt unter Männern ausgetragen. Dorsday (...) siegt schon zum zweiten Mal über [Elses Vater], der ihm allen Anschein nach schon die Frau überlassen musste” (Kronberger 173). In addition to both mother and daughter becoming the father’s stooges, the text suggests at multiple instances that Else’s mother might have played a key role in Dorsday lending Else’s father money before, possibly in a similar way that is now asked of Else (cf. Kronberger 169). This is

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<sup>124</sup> Else herself, on the other hand, refuses to ventriloquize another person and use them for her purposes, which becomes apparent when she reflects on writing Dorsday the note: “Ich kann doch nicht dem Herrn Dorsday durch das Stubenmädchen einen Brief schicken” (FE 58). Unlike her parents, Else will not ventriloquize or use other person for her communication.

suggested by the dream Else is having in which “Die Mama kommt die Treppe herunter und küßt [Dorsday] die Hand. Pfui, pfui. Jetzt flüstern sie miteinander” (FE 43). The intimate gesture of the kiss on the hand is turned around here as Else’s mother is kissing Dorsday’s hand, which is commented on by Else with “pfui, pfui”, indicating her disapproval, and combined with the whispering, suggesting secrecy.

The whispers between Dorsday and her mother further point to a comradeship between the two, which is rejected by Else, and relate to the rumors reported by the mother in her letter. Only this time, the notion of “unter uns” seems to refer to Dorsday and the mother who now keep secrets from Else. The fact that Dorsday appears to be very understanding when Else mentions how difficult the father’s situation is for both her and her mother further suggests that an exchange of money at the expense of the women in the family has taken place before: “»Sie können sich gar nicht denken, Herr von Dorsday, (...) wie furchtbar es für mich und besonders für Mama ist« (...) »O, ich kann mir schon denken, liebe Else.«” (FE 31). Dorsday’s comment following Else’s emphasizing of her mother in a tone that, as Else notes, “klingt”, indicates Dorsday’s awareness of the mother’s despair, and thus also her willingness to make another sacrifice to save her husband, only that this time, the sacrifice is her daughter. In combination with the sexualized undertone, it also points to his way of dealing with female despair, both Else’s and her mother’s.

Else reflects that her family problems started around seven years ago (“Immer diese Geschichten! Seit sieben Jahren! Nein – länger” (FE 15).), which coincides with the time frame during which Dorsday came to visit Else’s family as she recalls when reading her mother’s letter: “Die Wange hat er mir gestreichelt, wie

ich zwölf oder dreizehn Jahre alt war" (FE 13). The financial problems beginning around the time when Else was about twelve years old and her memory of Dorsday caressing her cheek during that time are hardly a coincidence. His comment on her being "[s]chon ein ganzes Fräulein" (FE 13) further underlines the sexual notion of his visit and foreshadows what would be expected of Fräulein Else one day. Moreover, the mother herself establishes the connection between the request for money and sexuality when she tells Else "(...)[Dorsday] ist schon früher einmal dem Vater beigesprungen (...) Und da Papa seit den achttausend nicht mehr an ihn herangetreten ist, so wird er ihm diesen *Liebesdienst* nicht verweigern. (...)" (FE 13, my emphasis). It is actually Else who has to fulfill the "Liebesdienst" here, and her parents seem very well aware of the implications of this request, since, as her mother points out, "(...)Papa hätte ihm ja einfach telegraphieren können, wir haben es ernstlich überlegt, aber es ist doch etwas ganz anderes, Kind, wenn man mit einem Menschen persönlich spricht" (FE 13). Also, the fact that the father has not asked Dorsday for money ever since he borrowed from the 8,000 from him the first time suggests that the price at which this bargain took place the first time was too high to ask him again - until this own daughter was grown up enough to now pay this price instead of her mother.

Else establishes this connection as well when she reflects on her father's agenda:

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. Er hat sich doch denken können, daß der Herr Dorsday nicht für nichts und wieder nichts.* - Sonst hätte



er doch telegraphieren oder selber herreisen können. (FE 39, my emphasis)<sup>125</sup>

However, as always, she ends up dismissing her suspicions by declaring her father insane, which, in her opinion, should be enough to acquit (“freisprechen”) him. This is exactly what she does next when she states: “Es ist ihm vielleicht gar nicht eingefallen, daß Dorsday die Gelegenheit benützen könnte, und so eine Gemeinheit von mir verlangen wird. Er ist ein guter Freund unseres Hauses, er hat dem Papa schon einmal achttausend Gulden geliehen. *Wie soll man so was von einem Menschen denken*” (FE 41, my emphasis). Here, Else completely negates her previous statement, showing how much she fluctuates between defending her father and accusing him. Ultimately, she always acquits him (“spricht ihn frei”) by allowing him to speak through her. Thus, her co-dependency on her father is not just determined by her love for him but also by her being dependent on his voice guiding her actions in the background.

Not only does Else function as a stooge or dummy for her father’s financial request to Dorsday, she is also turned into a commodified object of exchange between him and her father by Dorsday’s subsequent request to see her naked. Here Else’s naked body, her physical appearance is moved into the center of the negotiations. Else can say what she wants to say, all Dorsday is focused on is her physical appearance. Any attempts on her part to rationalize the situation, for example her promise to have a serious conversation with her father (cf. FE 32), are

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<sup>125</sup> Else’s choice of words, such as “sich verrechnen” and “spekulieren” (“Nein, du hast zu sicher auf meine kindliche Zärtlichkeit spekuliert, Papa, zu sicher darauf gerechnet, daß ich lieber jede Gemeinheit erdulden würde als dich die Folgen deines verbrecherischen Leichtsinns tragen zu lassen.” (FE 39) further underline the notion of a financial transaction being executed here – at Else’s expense, as she is nothing more than a variable in this calculation.

dismissed by Dorsday by him saying things such as “»*Sie sind ja ein rührendes, ein entzückendes Geschöpf, Fräulein Else.*«” (FE 32). By calling her a “Geschöpf”, a creature, he not only dismisses her as a serious negotiating partner but in doing so also dismisses her ability to have any reasonable influence on her father by talking to him. Her words and voice are irrelevant to Dorsday, who reduces her value to that of her physical appearance, her (naked) body, thus turning her into nothing more than a pretty doll that does not have a voice of its own. This is particularly important as the German word “Puppe” not only means “doll” but also ventriloquist’s dummy as in the word “Bauchrednerpuppe.” Else also becomes a puppet on a string when she is made to carry out her father’s scheme to ask Dorsday for money. Furthermore, the term “Puppe” is referenced in the text itself, at the very end during her (deadly) hallucinatory dream when we read the following: “Was hast du mir mitgebracht, Papa? Dreißigtausend Puppen” (FE 80). The puppet master here gives thirty thousand dolls to his child, his doll, his puppet, his dummy Else. In Else’s mind, becoming a puppet herself is mixed with the initial amount of money at stake during the negotiation with Dorsday. This hallucinatory image is created by a combination of two factors: On the one hand, by her position as an object, a puppet for the negotiations and transactions of her father, and a purely physical, commodified object of desire, a porcelain doll without a voice, and on the other hand, by the financial worth that is imposed upon her, the going rate for seeing her naked body, so to speak.

Else thus has some knowledge of her father’s role in her dilemma, even though this knowledge seems to remain beneath the surface and in the state of

dreams and hallucinations. It is this in-between state from which Else voice emerges, inaudible to those around her, but existent in her thoughts and reflections. In connection to this middle voice which is located between activity and passivity, Schnitzler's idea of a "Mittelbewusstsein" is of further interest, as he regarded it as clearly distinguished from the subconscious: "Das Mittelbewußtsein verhält sich zum Unterbewußtsein wie der Schlummer zum Scheintod. Der Schlummernde lässt sich immer ohne Mühe erwecken, der Scheintote nicht (wenigstens nicht immer)" (Schnitzler, quoted in Thomé 78).<sup>126</sup> Thus, the instances in which Else finds herself to be "ohnmächtig" but not "bewusstlos" are the moments in which her middle voice finds its greatest potential. Located between the conscious and the unconscious, in the realm of the "Mittelbewusstsein", the realm of a soft slumber and drowsiness, between active rebellion and passive "Ohnmacht", Else's conflict-ridden character (and voice) emerges: A voice that is both inhabited by and making use of a plurality of voices articulated through her in a process of reinterpretation and reorganization.

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<sup>126</sup> Thomé, Horst. "Kernlosigkeit Und Pose: Zur Rekonstruktion Von Schnitzlers Psychologie." *Text & Kontext* 20 (Supp.) (1984): 62-87. Print.

### Chapter III

#### Enacted Silence in Frank Wedekind's *Lulu* plays

The protagonist in Frank Wedekind's „Monstretragödie“ has often been referred to as the prototype of the *femme fatale*, a wild, sexual, untamable being who first brings joy but then destruction to those around her. As Delianidou and other scholars have pointed out, Lulu is a “Figur ohne Eigenschaften” (Delianidou 166), an “unbestimmbare Leerstelle” (Gutjahr, quoted after Delianidou 171) in the text, a blank canvas or empty box that is being filled with male projections. In return, her reactions and responses to those projections which are released from this (Pandora's) box bring death and destruction to those who come too close to her. In contrast to Effi and Else, however, Lulu does not simply play roles and enact narratives imposed on her. Rather, she has been created to embody nothing but the different roles scripted for her by the men in her life. These roles represent the respective image each one of her husbands and lovers has of femininity and their ideal woman, and include a new name for Lulu and a new costume. Both of these changes occur every time Lulu loses a husband and acquires a new one and indicate a change of identity that goes beyond simply playing a part.

As a projection of male fantasies, Lulu's life is thus even more scripted than those of Else or Effi. But in contrast to them, this is not determined by parental influence, but rather the complete lack thereof - a lack that is compensated for by the men in her life. Growing up as an orphan without parental guidance, Lulu is a blank canvas for any man she encounters who, in turn, molds her into the figure he envision her to be. However, she embraces this patronizing act of scripting a life for

her by becoming every role she takes on with absolute perfection. More than that, her capabilities as an actress exceed the expectations of her “authors” and turn back on them, ending fatally for almost every man (and woman) she encounters and who falls under her spell. Here, the creation turns back on its creators.

The female protagonist in Wedekind’s plays is therefore a character who comes into the world already silenced and spoken for. She is not silenced in the same sense as Effi and Else are, but is instead silent by birth, only expressing what her male counterparts want her to express. Being this blank slate that is given a new role every time she encounters a new suitor or husband, Lulu is a walking fiction turning into reality, a character that is being rewritten over and over again and always in flux. As such, the character of Lulu within the play also embodies the literary process of writing, in particular of the editing and rewriting, which occurred in the different versions of the play: Not only is Lulu, the character, being reinvented repeatedly, but so too is Lulu, the play, insofar as it rearticulates dialogue, character development and storyline.

### **I. Lulu as an Actress and Art Object**

Lulu’s silence, even more so than Effi’s and Else’s is constituted by the fact that she does not speak in her own words or utter her own thoughts or opinions, but instead gives voice to those scripted for her and her respective roles. Like an actress, she plays her designated part, and she plays it so well that it eventually turns on the author, in a “die Geister die ich rief” manner.<sup>127</sup> From the very beginning, Lulu is

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<sup>127</sup> This is only appropriate, given that Wedekind entitled the first play “Erdgeist”, referencing Goethe’s Faust, for one, but also bringing up the term “Geist” which translates not only to “ghost” or “phantom”, but also “mind”, “spirit”, “intellect”, and “wit”. The title evokes numerous associations – from “evil spirit”

regarded as an art object by the men around her and evaluated based on her artistic qualities. As such, she is introduced as an image in the first act of both the original and the final version of the *Erdegeist* play: “Schwarz (*setzt das Bild auf die Staffelei. Man sieht eine Dame als Pierrot gekleidet mit einem hohen Schäferstab in der Hand.*)“ (FV 1.1).<sup>128</sup> Before she even enters the stage, her persona is discussed by Schön and Schwarz, whose sole task is to describe Lulu’s visual appeal by calling her “Engelskind” (FV 1.1), “süße[s] Geschöpf” (FV 1.1), “Teufelsschönheit” (FV 1.1), “Feenkind” (OV 1.1), and “Zaubermährchen” (OV 1.1). Lulu is set up to be an alluring, enchanting figure. She embodies elements of the divine (“Engelskind”) as well as supernatural features mixed with a devilish beauty. The combination of all of these descriptions renders her almost as impossible as her costume (cf. FV 1.1). At the same time, she only appeals and speaks to men through her looks: “SCHÖN. Hier führt das Modell die Konversation. SCHWARZ. Sie hat den Mund noch nicht aufgetan.” (FV 1.1) Lulu is to be regarded as a “Stilleben” (FV 1.1) as Schön points out, a lifeless, quiet object, “[e]in Bild, vor dem die Kunst verzweifeln muß” (FV 1.2) and “[e]ine Sehenswürdigkeit!” (OV 1.2) Thus, she is not only introduced as an object within this dialogue, but specifically as an object of art. Since Lulu is only brought into the play as a still life, an unfinished painting without a voice of its own,

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to the elusive, but also haunting character of a ghost, to the dichotomy of mind or intellect, and body and nature (Geist vs. Körper/Geist vs. Natur), the former of which being attributed to men well into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the latter associated with the female, a dichotomy which is reflected in the contemporary works of Weininger, Kraus and Wedekind as well.

<sup>128</sup> The abbreviation FV refers to the final print version(s) of the plays in the following edition of the text: Wedekind, Frank. *Lulu*. Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1989. Print.

The abbreviation OV refers to the original version (handschriftliche Fassung) from 1892-1894 in the following edition of the text: Wedekind, Frank, and Hartmut Vinçon. *Die Büchse Der Pandora: Eine Monstretragödie: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe Der Urfassung Von 1894*. Darmstadt: Verlag Jürgen Häusser, 1990.

it is only appropriate that she is first announced before she can enter the stage. Thus, she is not only introduced through Schön's and Schwarz's conversation, but is actually created by it within the play. Lulu cannot exist without being invented and spoken about. In the same way, she cannot exist as a literary figure without her author, Wedekind, who occasionally slipped into the role of the animal tamer at the beginning of the play to introduce her to his audience. As such, he creates Lulu twice: By introducing her within the play as a character, and by creating her in the first place.

By the same token, Alwa's first address to Lulu aims at making her the protagonist of the play he is directing (cf. FV 1.3), thus further underlining Lulu's purpose as an object of artistic and theatrical performance. However, Lulu is already in another production at this point, as she is playing the role of Nellie, Goll's wife. As such, she responds to a name given to her by their "Ehekontrakt" (FV 1.2), which establishes her role within the marriage as would the script of a play. The different roles Lulu plays (within the marriage) are defined by her performance rather than the words she speaks. Therefore, even though her life is scripted in a much more straightforward manner than, for example, Else's and Effi's lives are, she is much less of a ventriloquized medium than her literary sisters. Instead, she and the role she is performing are being talked about by the respective author, i.e. the current husband or lover, and the other male figures in the play. Together, they constantly evaluate Lulu's looks, posture and performance. Therefore, she is already seen as an art object from the start, one that is discussed by her current and future husbands: as a work, not a woman. This distinguishes her from Else who gradually shows a

tendency to literalize her life by incorporating literary quotes and references into her thinking. As a literary figure, Lulu thus represents a more extreme stage of being scripted and created, a notion which will be discussed towards the end of this chapter.

Lulu's words, however, have little literary character. In fact, her contributions to the dialogue mostly consist of meaningless phrases to which her male counterparts often do not even respond. Lulu's performance, or rather her performability, takes precedence over her lines. In other words: "So important is the heroine's 'look' that it outweighs speech as signifier" (Hallamore Caesar 206). Lulu is thoroughly defined by her physique, by her appearance as an art object, dancer or seductress. Her performance rarely includes reciting lines or contributing something meaningful to the dialogue. Instead, her role is based on the way her looks can be staged by her husbands and lovers, and the way she can display her body. When she does utter verbal content, her responses are often hollow, such as the string of "Ich weiß es nicht" answers during her conversation with Schwarz (FV 1.7) right after her husband has died. Goll's death is connected to these meaningless answers expressing a lack of knowledge as it represents more than just the loss of a husband to Lulu: With Goll's death, her current author/director is eliminated as well, leaving her with nothing to say, no script to follow and no role to play until she is being married/directed again.

In return, Lulu needs the performance in order to function and survive, since it is all she has been created for. She exists only in her performance and constantly requires an audience. Thus, when she is changing her costume between



performances and laces her corset up too tightly, she struggles to breathe. She only manages to loosen the strings when the bell rings signaling that she has to make her return to the stage:

*Die elektrische Klingel tönt über der Tür.*

LULU (*hat die Schnüre ihres Korsetts etwas gelockert, holt tief Atem, mit den Absätzen klirrend*) Jetzt kann ich wieder atmen. Der Vorhang geht auf. (...) Ich muß tanzen. (FV 3.5)

Here, her survival is directly connected to her return to the stage where she has to perform her dance, again a non-vocal, physical performance. She struggles to breathe (i.e. live) until the bell rings and the curtain goes up. Because she can perform, she is able to breathe again. Thus, Lulu's existence essentially depends on being told what to do ("Ich *muß* tanzen.") and how to do it.<sup>129</sup>

Whenever she feels like she is not being controlled and directed Lulu appears lost and bored, as in her marriage to Schwarz. Her previous husband, Goll, kept Lulu on a short leash ("Er läßt mich sonst keine Minute allein" (OV 1.4).) and taught her how to dance for his private enjoyment ("Er kennt alle Tänze", "Er sagt mir nur, wie ich tanzen soll" (OV 1.4).). Schwarz's need for her, however, is limited to regarding her as his muse and art object that inspires him to create the best paintings of his career. Lulu considers this as a waste – "Du vergeudest mich" (FV 2.1) – since she is not doing anything other than "Ich liege und schlafe" (FV 2.2). The persona created for her by Goll (to be seductive and obscene while performing her dances in a variety of costumes) does not appeal to Schwarz: Much to Lulu's bewilderment, he falls asleep when she is trying to seduce him in the same manner as she did Goll: "In

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<sup>129</sup> In the same manner, when addressed by the name given to her by her respective husband, she responds by asking "Befehlen?" (FV 2.1), awaiting instructions on what to do and how to behave.

meiner Verzweiflung tanze ich Cancan. Er gähnt und faselt etwas von Obszönität” (FV 2.3). Lulu, whose existence is dependent upon being seen, admired and staged properly, cannot perform the way she is used to in this marriage since her husband is “banal. Er hat keine Erziehung. Er sieht nichts. Er sieht mich nicht und sich nicht. Er ist blind, blind, blind...” (FV 2.3).<sup>130</sup> Schwarz’s lack of „Erziehung“ is not just constituted by the fact that he does not have an education, but more so by his inability to “educate” Lulu, further directing and molding her into the person he wants her to be. He fails to recognize Lulu’s need to be controlled and ordered around, both of which are a prerequisite for her existence – hence her statement that he is wasting her (and her *raison d’être*).

Instead, Schwarz has fallen in love with the image he had of her, the “Stilleben” that he portrayed in his studio. He is in love with his (re-)production of Lulu, a painting he created which embodies the role he had envisioned for her.<sup>131</sup> This love is something that cannot be reciprocated or understood by Lulu: “Er liebt mich. ... (...) Er kennt mich nicht, aber er liebt mich! (...) Ich habe getanzt und Modell gestanden und war froh, meinen Lebensunterhalt damit verdienen zu können. Aber auf Kommando lieben, das kann ich nicht!” (FV 2.3). Being the loving wife of a husband who adores her as his muse and inspiration is not a role that is in Lulu’s

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<sup>130</sup> Here, Lulu establishes an important connection between “Erziehung” and blindness, one that is addressed in *Effi Briest*. For Effi, “Erziehung” largely happens through Innstetten controlling her gaze and simultaneously monitoring her with his. Just like Schwarz, however, he is blind and fails to recognize Effi’s development throughout the novel. But while Innstetten is deceived, Schwarz simply refuses to see Lulu for what she is, what she has been and what she can be. By the same token, he also refuses to recognize his own role in this marriage, which is that of a controlling force that directs Lulu’s every move. Lulu is not the only one playing an assigned role here: Since she is a projection, she requires for someone to provide the fantasy, otherwise her existence is wasted and negated.

<sup>131</sup> Similarly, Alwa is obsessed with the version of Lulu he has created in his literary work and on stage. Both men only love their own creation in a narcissistic fashion: By using Lulu as a screen for their artistic projections, they only mirror themselves in her and, essentially, fall in love with their own image.

repertoire and one that she cannot fulfill. Unlike Effi, she has never been raised to perform such a role. Instead she undergoes different stages of ownership by Schigolch, Schön and most recently Goll. All of these men teach her how to be a possession not a partner in a relationship, or, even more, stand on her own two feet. Her purpose lies in her physicality, not in her intellectual or emotional value. Schön hits the nail on the head when he tells Lulu: "Du sehnst dich nach der Peitsche zurück" (OV 2.5) and advises Schwarz "Laß sie Autorität fühlen! Sie verlangt nicht mehr, als unbedingt Gehorsam leisten zu dürfen. Bei Dr. Goll war sie wie im Himmel, und mit dem war nicht zu scherzen" (FV 2.4). In the original version, Schön expresses this even more strongly by telling Schwarz: "Sie ist dein Eigentum – laß sie das fühlen" (OV 2.6). Thus, when Schwarz strays from the established owner-possession relationship, Lulu starts looking for it elsewhere, i.e. in her affair with Schön, whom she regards as her primary owner throughout.<sup>132</sup> Her affair is thus even less of an expression of rebellion or finding fulfillment elsewhere than Effi's. On the contrary, in Lulu's case, it underlines her need to be possessed (i.e. owned) by someone who is equally possessed (i.e. haunted) by his obsession with her – or the version of her he has created.

Lulu's compliance with her position as a possession marks a striking difference between her and Else, who cannot bear the thought of selling herself and being owned by anyone. While Schnitzler's protagonist fights this objectification with every fiber of her being, Lulu states that she does not care what anyone thinks of her and that she "möchte um alles nicht besser sein als ich bin. (...) Ich wüßte

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<sup>132</sup> "Wenn ich einem Menschen auf dieser Welt angehöre, gehöre ich Ihnen" (FV 2.3).

nicht, daß ich je einen Funken Achtung vor mir gehabt hätte" (FV 3.10). This lack of respect for her own existence directly corresponds to the lack of respect Lulu receives from the men in her life who regard her solely as a vehicle to fulfill their artistic visions, be it as a dancer or a model and muse for artistic production. Lulu is thus unable to develop any self-respect since there is no "self" to respect, no substance behind the outer shell. Consequently, she loses her appeal when her looks start to fade and with that, she also loses her destructive effect. As Alwa points out toward the end of the play, the two are closely connected: "Gott sei Dank merkt man den fortschreitenden Verfall nicht, wenn man fortwährend miteinander verkehrt. (*Leicht hinwerfend.*) Das Weib *blüht* für uns in dem Moment, wo es den Menschen auf Lebenszeit ins *Verderben* stürzen soll. Das ist nun einmal so eine Naturbestimmung" (FV Pandora 3, my emphasis). Clearly, Lulu's best years are behind her at this point. Her blossoming youth is inextricably linked to her destructive side – without one, there cannot be the other.

At this point, Lulu has nothing left but the rags on her body when she tries to sell herself to the men on the street in order to become someone's possession once again. However, it is now no longer her body that is luring them in: "Wer um diese Zeit noch eine Bekanntschaft machen will, der sieht überhaupt mehr auf Herzenseigenschaften als auf körperliche Vorzüge. Er entscheidet sich für das Paar Augen, aus denen am wenigsten Diebsgelüste funkeln" (FV Pandora 3).<sup>133</sup> Rather than her body doing the talking for Lulu now, it is her eyes and heart that are supposed to enchant the clients. Being left on her own to do the talking with them

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<sup>133</sup> In the original version, this is stated even more drastically: "Er fragt nach der Seele. Er sieht nicht auf Fleisch" (OV 5.5).

though, Lulu is clearly lacking the skills to do so. Her conquests either do not speak her language, talk in a dialect or do not speak at all. While communication is not necessarily needed for those sexual encounters, it is quite apparent that Lulu attempts to speak with each of her clients as if she were trying to establish a connection with them. Being in a situation where the circumstances direct and determine her actions and force her into a role, Lulu is still searching for some human contact between herself and the men she is with. For the first time in her life, she has to convince them to stay with her and fails – both at keeping and destroying them as she had done in the past. Having faced the decline from a trophy wife, glorified art object and ravishing seductress, she now lacks direction in her life and turns back to the streets that raised her in the hopes of finding someone who can direct and provide for her, even if it is just temporarily. Her existence and survival are still based on being owned by someone, but now in a more drastic and desperate manner than ever.

## **II. Lulu's Body Language and Speaking Costumes**

As argued above, Lulu's artistic value within the play primarily lies in her physique and in the ways in which she can move her body. As she is moving from role to role while moving from marriage to marriage, Lulu's tasks do not include reciting lines or quoting literary works. Instead, her body does the talking for her in its performances, as if she were an actress in a silent movie. Lulu is thoroughly living these prescribed roles, including the changes in her name and costume that come with them. Throughout the play, Lulu thus appears as "a succession of clothes" (Hallamore Caesar 199), changing into a new costume every time she loses a

husband and acquires a new one. Interestingly, the focus on Lulu's change of clothing and the mention of it within the dramatic text is much stronger in the final version of the play than in the original text. Not only are Lulu's transformations emphasized on a visual level but her body is also displayed as a mere medium for wearing the clothes intended for each particular role. This distinguishes Lulu from Effi and Else whose bodies express something their voices cannot or dare not express. In Lulu's case, however, her costumes take over this function: Instead of her body language doing the talking for her, her costumes become one with her body and express whatever it is her current author/director wants them to express.

When Schwarz first describes Lulu, he points out that, wearing her Pierrot outfit, her body was "im Einklang mit dem unmöglichen Kostüm, als wäre er darin zur Welt gekommen" (FV 1.1). Indeed, Lulu has been born into (or at the very least been raised into wearing) her ever-changing clothes. While married to Dr. Goll, she owns "zwei Zimmer voll Kostüme" (OV 1.4) catering to her husband's every fantasy. Her chameleon-like abilities to slip into any role and her seductive appearance are the means by which she draws men in initially. In his conversation with Schön, Schwarz stresses Lulu's physical charms as well, painting the picture of an alluring, seductive creature. However, when Schwarz speaks to her, she shows a rather childlike nature, stating that her maid "bringt mich Abends zu Bett und kleidet mich Morgens an" (OV 1.4). This dichotomy between Lulu's seductive side and her childlike one is further stressed as the dialogue continues.<sup>134</sup> Here it becomes quite

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<sup>134</sup> The different aspects of her various roles are referenced when Alwa and Escerny discuss Lulu's costumes in FV 3.7:

clear that the assistance with dressing is not merely a service provided to Lulu because of her social standing as Goll's wife, but rather because she does not know how to dress herself:

*Lulu* – Ich bin nichts ohne sie. – Wer will mich zur Tanzstunde anziehen.  
*Schwarz* Das können Sie doch selber.  
*Lulu* Dazu kenne ich mich nicht genug. (OV 1.4)

At this early stage of the play, Lulu is incapable of dressing her body in the way that her husband desires it and needs assistance because she “does not know herself well enough,” meaning: she does not know her role well enough. After her flirtatious encounter with Schwarz, which is interrupted by Goll who drops dead upon entering the artist's studio, Lulu also does not know right away which costume she will have to wear next. With her husband, owner and director gone, Lulu has no concept of the role she has to play now and how to dress for it: “ich kann mich nicht anziehen --- mich ausziehen – das kann ich” (OV 1.6).

The notion of dressing herself addressed here is particularly important with regard to Lulu's degree of agency/passivity here. Grammatically, “sich umziehen”, “sich ausziehen” and “sich anziehen” all fall into the category of reflexive verbs

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ESCERNY. Ich finde, sie sieht in dem weißen Tüll zu körperlos aus.

ALWA. Ich finde, sie sieht in dem Rosatüll zu animalisch aus.

ESCERNY. Ich finde das nicht.

ALWA. Der weiße Tüll bringt mehr das Kindliche ihrer Natur zum Ausdruck!

ESCERNY. Der Rosatüll bringt mehr das Weibliche ihrer Natur zum Ausdruck! (FV 3.7)

The childlike aspects of her existence are associated with immaterialness here. This not only points to a lack of sexual appeal in the childlike state, but also to the fact that Lulu physically never existed as a child – her body has always been that of a sexualized female. The pink costume, on the other hand, is associated with her animalistic side which, for Escerny, is identical with his concept of the feminine. Here, it becomes clear again how interchangeable “weiblich” and “animalisch” are to these suitors of Lulu's. “Animalistic” is used both in the sense of wild, untamed and sexually attractive, but also refers to the notion of ownership and the animal/woman being a man's property that is spoken for because it cannot verbally express itself.

which, linguistically, makes them part of the middle voice. Thus, they denote a person who is both subject and object of the action it performs. In Lulu's case, this is of particular importance since she, initially, does not know how to dress herself. As the quote above shows, Lulu only knows how to undress in order to seduce her current husband, and, by the same token, how to shed her costumes. The part of every role where Lulu has to undress and offer her body to her current owner is thus never a problem for her – only grasping a new role is. Lulu thus requires others to dress her – “sich anziehen” turns into “sich anziehen lassen”. This gesture demonstrates that Lulu is only partially capable of performing a self-reflexive act – slipping into a new role requires outside assistance and is not something she can perform on her own.

With every new part she plays, Lulu adds to her repertoire of different roles. At the same time, her ability to dress herself undergoes a development as well. She is aware that with every change in her ownership, she will also have to change: “Ich muß mich umziehen” (OV/FV 1.7). After being left a widow for the first time, she still needs assistance when changing her clothes, because she is not quite capable of grasping her new role. Thus, she asks Schwarz at the end of the first act of the final version: “Würden Sie mich hier zuhaken. Meine Hand zittert” (FV 1.9), requiring his assistance in putting her in her new costume and her new role. During her subsequent marriage to Schwarz, Lulu attempts to use the same seductive techniques on him that worked for Goll by wearing similar costumes as she did when she was performing for her late husband (cf. OV 1.5). Thus, traces of her previous role still exist after she has acquired a new one. With Schwarz's suicide, yet



another change is brought about for Lulu, who, again responds to her husband's death by changing her clothes:

ALWA. (*von links kommend*). Sie zieht sich um.

SCHÖN. Sie ist fort?

ALWA. Auf ihr Zimmer. Sie zieht sich um. (FV 2.6)

Here, it is noticeable that Lulu requires no further assistance when changing her costume. She now has retained how to dress for the particular part she has to play, which is particularly noticeable in the added act of the final version which takes place in her wardrobe at the theater. Here, Lulu changes her costume multiple times, which Alwa comments on by stating: "Ich wußte doch, daß Sie sich darauf verstehen, Kostüme zu wechseln" (FV 3.3) and "Das Sichumkleiden hat sie schon als Kind gelernt" (FV 3.3). Even though she still requires minor assistance from Alwa and Escerny, Lulu argues that she does not need her wardrobe lady to change because "Ich kann das rascher allein" (FV 3.5). Having taken on different roles and worn different costumes in her previous marriages, Lulu can now fall back on these previous patterns when becoming a new character. Thus, after each role is discarded, the knowledge of dressing and undressing herself has remained with her. While she has no control or say over the kind of costume she has to wear (i.e. the kind of role she has to play), she is, within this passivity, able to actively slip into it without needing outside help to be recreated in that fashion. At this point in the play, Lulu is not married and thus not playing any roles at home. It is hardly a coincidence that this time in her life is occupied with her professional performances at the theatre: She still requires someone to direct these performances (and choose

her costumes), i.e. Alwa, while she is looking for a new engagement – in both a professional and personal sense.

Having enacted a variety of male fantasies, Lulu eventually accumulates a repertoire of role descriptions, all of which make her the main act in a husband's fantasy. When she sees this part threatened, her response is to get rid of her competition, in this case, Schön's fiancée. She manages to pressure Schön into breaking off his engagement to his fiancée by now directing his words when she tells him what to write to the fiancée:

LULU (*aufrecht hinter ihm stehend, auf die Lehne seines Sessels gestützt*). Schreiben Sie! – Sehr geehrtes Fräulein...  
 SCHÖN (*zögernd*). Ich nenne Sie Adelheid...  
 LULU (*mit Nachdruck*). Sehr geehrtes Fräulein... (FV 3.10)

Here, a brief role reversal takes place between director and actor, between puppet and puppeteer – Schön is losing control as Lulu appears to gain it. This is further signified by the fact that he has sunk into his chair while she is standing upright as she dictates to him while standing behind him, breathing down his neck. Schön realizes this role reversal and meets it with numerous attempts at silencing Lulu ("Schweig, Bestie! Schweig!" FV 3.10) but he has lost control over his creation/projection. Lulu here exceeds the expectations of her role as Schön's lover by turning them back onto him. Through this exaggeration of her role as his mistress, she briefly appears as the one directing the course of events by pressuring Schön into marrying her, which he eventually will, and she knows this all along<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>135</sup> This becomes apparent when Lulu states: "Sie heiraten mich ja doch." (FV 2.6) When they later discuss their marriage, Schön tells her "Deswegen habe ich dich ja geheiratet" (OV 3.3) to which she responds "Weil ich mich selber kleiden kann..." (OV 3.3) This further underlines the connection between Lulu's ability to dress herself, i.e. taking on new roles, and exceeding them. Subsequently, she states that "Du

While Lulu may not control the extent and content of her roles, she knows that she always has to be the main act. Thus, playing the role as Schön's mistress while he is otherwise engaged, is not suitable for her. Therefore, Lulu strives to achieve the role of his wife, which is the only acceptable part for her within their relationship. She has to be the center of attention as it is vital to her survival. Once she is no longer married (i.e. in the second play), Lulu's progressive decline becomes apparent, which inevitably ends in her death – a death that, in its violence, echoes and exceeds the deaths of her former husbands.

Beginning with her engagement to Schön, Lulu is no longer restricted to just one role, i.e. one author/lover, but rather a combination of multiple roles, simultaneously catering to the fantasies of multiple men, as the 4<sup>th</sup> act of the final version of the play shows. Here, Lulu has to juggle her different roles, playing off her husband and her lovers against each other and directing the men around her – by means of looks and body language.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Schön no longer has control over her during the 4<sup>th</sup> act when he is trying to force her to kill herself – to which she responds by shooting him. Lulu here clearly refuses to play the role (of the suicidal wife) that Schön tries to put her in. On the contrary: She becomes the homicidal widow who kills her husband in a furious rage. It is interesting to note how the original version of the play here differs from the final version: The original stretches

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hast *mich* ja gar nicht geheiratet. (...) Ich habe *dich* geheiratet." (FV 4.3, my emphasis), stressing her role in the marriage between them.

<sup>136</sup> cf: "Rodrigo (*steckt rechts den Kopf aus den Gardinen.*)

Lulu (*wirft ihm über Alwa hinweg einen wütenden Blick zu.*)" (FV 4.8)

and „Hugenberg (*lauscht vorn unter dem Saum der Tischdecke vor, für sich*) Er bleibt hoffentlich nicht – dann sind wir allein...

Lulu (*berührt ihn mit der Fußspitze.*)

Hugenberg *verschwindet.*" (FV 4.6)

the conversation and the struggle between Schön and Lulu much more and does not offer a clear explanation as to whether Schön's death is an accident or murder:

*Lulu* Ich will ... (*hebt den Kopf*)

*Schöning* Will's ...?

*Alwa* (*tritt über der Galerie-Treppe aus dem Vorhang, stumm die Hände ringend*)

*Rodrigo* (*stürzt unter dem Tisch vor, und packt Schöning am Arm*) Nehmen Sie sich in Acht ... (*Zwei Schüsse fallen.*)

*Schöning* (*vornübertaumelnd*) Ich ... (OV 3.6)

In contrast, the final version depicts the scene of Schön's death as follows:

SCHÖN (*wendet sich gegen Hugenberg, Lulu den Rücken kehrend*).

LULU (*feuert fünf Schüsse gegen Schön und hört nicht auf, den Revolver abzudrücken*). (FV 4.8)

The final version shows Lulu as having every intention of killing Schön, not simply in an act of self-defense, but as murder. She shoots him in the back, not stopping until he falls. Here, Wedekind puts the control over Schön's life in Lulu's hands as she takes control once again, and in a more drastic way. While she was indirectly responsible for her previous husband's deaths – Goll dies when he catches her and Schwarz in a compromising situation and Schwarz kills himself because he has learned of Lulu's past and her lying about it – she actively causes Schön's death by shooting him multiple times.<sup>137</sup> Prior to her shooting him, the two of them fight both verbally and physically, a struggle during which Lulu regains the upper hand multiple times and speaks "in entschiedenem selbstbewußten Ton" (FV 4.8). Here, Lulu is depicted as being much more assertive than she had been in the past and is actually trying to put Schön in his place, instead of being put in her place herself.

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<sup>137</sup> Here, Wedekind grants his protagonist a false agency, which is necessary for the further progression of the play: Lulu murdering Schön is the cause for her decline in the Pandora play, and for her ultimate death. While the first part of the play ends in her being the murderer of her creator and director, the second one ends in her being murdered by her creator (Wedekind) in the role of Jack the Ripper.

However, Lulu soon realizes that the sudden outburst has cost her the safety net of her marriage and that she now has to find a new husband to save her and direct her life. Thus, she beseeches Alwa immediately after his father's death to look after and protect her: "Alwa, verlang, was du willst. Laß mich nicht der Gerechtigkeit in die Hände fallen. Es ist schade um mich! Ich bin noch jung. Ich will dir treu sein mein Leben lang. Ich will nur dir allein *gehören*" (FV 4.8, my emphasis). Here, Lulu is more than ready to become another man's property as she realizes that her role as Schön's wife and property has come to an end because of something she did. While Lulu still mentions the necessity of changing her costume (and thus: her role) again after Schön dies in the original version of the play (cf. OV 3.6), no mention of her adopting a new role is made in the final version. It appears inevitable that Lulu has to face legal consequences for her actions this time, which is yet another addition and edit made by Wedekind: In the original version of the play, the act ends in Lulu's and Alwa's plan to take the train to escape to Paris, while the final version shows Alwa opening the door for the police.

As the second play begins with the absence of Lulu, who is imprisoned for the murder of Schön, it becomes clear that Alwa has either failed to protect Lulu or decided not to listen to her plea for his protection. The latter is supported by the fact that he is the one to let the police into their home after Schön's death. However, as it turns out, being imprisoned has not meddled with the fantasies surrounding her too much. On the contrary, her return is impatiently awaited by Rodrigo, who plans on marrying her, and the Geschwitz has come up with an elaborate plan to free Lulu from imprisonment – at the expense of her getting sick and being imprisoned

instead. The main objective of this plan is that the Geschwitz will now dress up as Lulu and change her appearance so that the two of them will look alike. Therefore, it becomes clear that Lulu is no longer the one wearing the costume but has rather found someone else to wear it for her. But not wearing a costume/playing a role also indicates a change in Lulu's prospects for her future: No longer is she protected by a wealthy husband, and no longer is she playing a role for one. Gutjahr points out that the "Spiegelstruktur" of the play reflects "die gängige Aufspaltung des Frauenbildes in keusche Ehefrau und Hure" (Gutjahr "Prinzip" 62), both of which, in Lulu's case, merge into one. As a wife, she still performs a variety of opposing parts, as sultry seductress, or innocent child-bride, always depending on the fantasies of her husband. Granted, Rodrigo has plans to marry her, as long as he can "sie vor einem anständigen Publikum produzieren" (FV Pandora 1) but upon seeing her, he changes his mind as Lulu has lost her looks and general appeal. This, however, is no coincidence. Lulu explains to Alwa that she had to appear as wretched as possible in order to get rid of Rodrigo (cf. FV Pandora 1). Thus, Lulu is able to use her looks both ways: to enchant and seduce but also to repel those she refuses to be around. She is the one deciding who owns her, which is also why she refuses to prostitute herself for Casti-Piani, who plans on selling her to the highest bidder (cf. FV Pandora 2). At the same time, it becomes increasingly clear that Lulu owns the Geschwitz who voluntarily aims to please and save Lulu throughout the play. The Geschwitz is thus twice possessed by Lulu, both owned and haunted by her affection for her. A different form of ownership is at work here, as Lulu had no part in planning her escape from prison but was more than happy to comply with the Geschwitz's plan to

rescue her. The Geschwitz thus becomes a martyr figure who sacrifices her health, social standing and ultimately her life for Lulu, without ever getting anything in return.

While the first of the two plays showed a constant changing of clothes as Lulu slips into new roles and marriages, the second part shows Lulu in quite different attire. As Comfort points out, “Lulu no longer changes clothes, but rather exchanges them” (Comfort 200), as she does with the Geschwitz and later with her servant Bob – both times in order to flee, once from prison and the second time to avoid being found by the police. During the first act, she enters the stage in a simple black dress, which does not show off her physical charms but rather paints an image of a prisoner pinched from disease. Rodrigo describes her as “Vogelscheuche” and “Wolfsgesicht” (FV Pandora 1), Alwa as “schrecklich elend”(FV Pandora 1). Even though Lulu does not present herself in a visually appealing manner anymore, Alwa is still under her spell, replacing the earlier visual attraction to her (cf. FV 4.8) with a haptic one: “durch dieses Kleid empfinde ich deinen Wuchs wie eine Symphonie” (FV Pandora 1). This haptic discovery of Lulu’s body, however, is compared to an auditory experience by Alwa, which silences her twice: not only does her body take precedence over the words she speaks, it also turns into a musical experience for Alwa, thus drowning out her voice even more: “Diese schmalen Knöchel, dieses Cantabile; dieses entzückende Anschwellen; und diese Knie, dieses Capriccio; und das gewaltige Andante der Wollust” (FV Pandora 1). While Else enacts a piece of music when she disrobes to Schumann’s *Karnaval* and sheds her costume as the music progresses, Lulu’s body functions as a visual experience first, and turns into

an audiovisual one for Alwa second.<sup>138</sup> He continues to see her not only as a performer who moves her body to the music on stage, but an art object who becomes a musical work herself. Since he has turned Lulu's story into a work of literature already (cf. FV Pandora 1), Alwa regards her as an artwork at this point instead of merely the subject of a literary text. While Else performs art, Lulu *is* art. To Alwa, she is muse and musical piece at once, just as she was a muse and work of art for Schwarz. In contrast to Else, Lulu is created as an artwork that turns into a literary work and ultimately ends up as a musical piece for Alwa.

By constantly emphasizing Lulu's physical appearance while not addressing any potential for intelligent productivity, the plays further underline the contemporary view of a sharp mind and an alluring physical appearance being two mutually exclusive qualities. Clearly, any female intellectual output is of no interest

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<sup>138</sup> Considering the emphasis that is constantly placed on Lulu's physical appearance, the name of the first play, "Erdegeist", is particularly striking as it stresses a different aspect of the protagonist. On the one hand, the elusiveness of a ghost certainly corresponds to Lulu's character, but on the other, the notion of "Geist" in the sense of mind or intellect seems far-fetched for a figure like her. Moreover, "Erdegeist" evokes the concept of an (evil) spirit, a force to be reckoned with, much like the Earth Spirit in Goethe's *Faust*. The reference to Goethe's work and the concept of the Erdegeist introduced in it align Lulu with a force that is beyond human control (cf. Hibberd 337) and human comprehension. The Earth Spirit, who describes himself to Faust as incomprehensible ("Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst, nicht mir!" (Faust II. 512f)), shares that attribute with Lulu insofar as she always becomes what others want her to become while they cannot comprehend her actual being. Just as Faust invokes a spirit he envisions as his equal, Lulu's husbands invoke a fantasy version of her which they deem appropriate as their wife. Moreover, every character that comes in contact with Lulu appears to be haunted by her, as if she were an actual ghost or supernatural presence. Their fates intertwine and even secondary characters such as Hugenberg find their lives taking a turn for the worst after encountering Lulu, as if she put a curse on everyone who came too close to her. While Effi is haunted by invisible ghosts and uses the topic of ghosts in her house as a placeholder for her affair, Lulu's haunting (Spuk) stalks in plain sight. As such, it is created by those around her who project their concepts of possible roles for Lulu onto her until they turn back onto them and haunt them to their death. This resembles the "Spuk" in Effi Briest insofar as Innstetten also creates a ghost for his own purposes – a ghost which, ultimately, comes back to haunt him and thus turns back on him just as Lulu does on her creators.



to the male characters in the play<sup>139</sup>, not just with regard to Lulu: More so than she, the Geschwitz is not taken seriously by either Lulu or the men around her because of her dual nature: “Du bist im Leib deiner Mutter nicht fertig geworden, weder als Weib noch als Mann. (...) Für einen Mann war der Stoff nicht ausreichend und zum Weib hast du zu viel Hirn in deinen Schädel bekommen” (FV Pandora 2). This assertion clearly shows how deeply the dichotomy of male intellect and female body is rooted in Lulu’s character as well. It further points to the fact that the tragic figure of the play is actually the Geschwitz and not Lulu, as Wedekind points out in the “Vorwort” to *Die Büchse der Pandora*. She becomes the martyr for and victim of Lulu and her progressive decline. She dies alongside Lulu just when she attempts to turn her life around by separating herself from her:

Dies ist der letzte Abend, den ich mit diesem Volk verbringe. – Ich kehre nach Deutschland zurück. Meine Mutter schickt mir das Reisegeld. – Ich lasse mich immatrikulieren. – Ich muß für Frauenrechte kämpfen, Jurisprudenz studieren. (FV Pandora 3)

Wedekind thus offers a glimpse at a different time for women through the eyes of the Geschwitz, but kills her off before she can achieve any of her goals – in more than one sense, since he occasionally played Jack the Ripper in the original production of the play.<sup>140</sup> In killing Lulu, both author (Wedekind) and literary figure (Jack the Ripper) put an end to both representatives of the feminine in the play.

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<sup>139</sup> Rodrigo recites this dichotomy when he elaborates on his plans for a fruitful relationship with Lulu: “Bei ihrer praktischen Einrichtung kostet es die Frau nicht halb soviel Mühe, ihren Mann zu ernähren, wie umgekehrt. Wenn ihr der Mann nur die geistige Arbeit besorgt und den Familiensinn nicht in die Puppen gehen läßt” (FV Pandora 1).

<sup>140</sup> This negation of the female that has the option of growth and development is less an act of showing female potential, but rather a misogynist move by which both author and literary figure (Wedekind/Jack the Ripper) undermine the Geschwitz’s/the female’s attempt at emancipation and education.

Wedekind literally kills his protagonist twice and thus executes a “Beschneidung einer möglichen weiblichen Genealogie” (Behrmann 201).

Unlike Else and Effi, Lulu dies a violent death, being stabbed and having her uterus cut out by Jack in the end. “[S]he leaves the narrated world just as she entered it: barefoot, penniless, and in rags” (Comfort 206). And just as her (narrated) life began with different men taking her in and taking care of her, educating her to become an object of art and admiration, it is now ended by a man who not only kills her, but “kills her seriality” (Littau 902) as well. Ironically, this seriality is replaced by another, namely that of Jack’s serial killing. The unnatural death, however, also closes the circle of Lulu’s life which began rather factitious as her origins are a mystery to everyone involved with her. The lack of origin and genealogy is aptly reflected in her death which leaves her corpse without her reproductive organs, symbolizing the lack of lineage prior to and after her existence. The following part of this chapter will explore Lulu’s lack of origin and lineage in more detail, with an emphasis on the ways in which this absence is filled by male figures throughout Lulu’s life.

### **III. “Bevormundung” of the Female and Lack of a Lineage**

Part of the reason Lulu is such a puzzling and elusive figure is her mysterious origin, namely the fact that she does not have a mother or a father. Even her father figure, Schigolch, is more of a pimp and former lover than a parental character. Lulu’s lack of origin, of a family or bloodline, is also reflected in the lack of a proper name: The name “Lulu” is primarily reminiscent of baby talk for urine (cf. Barnes-Pietsch 41) or general baby babble. It is quite possibly not the name given to her by

her mother, but most likely one of the first combinations of sounds she could utter to refer to herself or that she uttered when being asked for her name. Consequently, the men in her life do not only take over the role of the author of her life, they also take it upon themselves to name her, thus assuming a parental function as well. At the same time, the possibility of a pregnancy is never mentioned for Lulu in the final version of the play, implying that it is simply not part of any role designed for her by her husbands. It also suggests that a figure like Lulu, whose life is scripted by the men around her, who produce and give birth to her, is incapable of giving birth to a child of her own. While she is pregnant with Schwarz's child in the original version of the play, she never gives birth to the child and it is never mentioned after Schwarz' death, suggesting that she either lost it or succeeded in aborting it<sup>141</sup>. At the same time, it is significant that Wedekind cut this part from the final version of the play in which he, playing the role of Jack the Ripper, also cuts out Lulu's uterus in the final scene. Lulu is thus a figure who is created by men and whose own (potential) "creation" or reproduction is clearly undermined by men as well. This includes the author and actor Wedekind, who first creates this literary character and then ends her existence in a brutal fashion – not only by finishing the play about her with her death, but by literally executing her murder on stage in the original production of the play. Her (initial) creator thus keeps his creation from

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<sup>141</sup> As she expresses to Schwarz, she "habe alles versucht" and "Es ist nicht mehr zu ändern" (OV 2.1), but she „hätte [s]ich so gern geduldet" (OV 2.1), indicating that Lulu is neither ready for a child (and especially not for a child with Schwarz) nor particularly excited about becoming a mother. She also claims that the child is his "Werk" and not hers, showing her disconnect at her pregnancy, but also suggesting that Lulu is incapable of producing anything of her own as she is trained to be produced herself.

(pro)creating in multiple ways: By cutting out the scene in which she is pregnant and by cutting out her uterus while playing Jack on stage.

In addition to being a “succession of clothes” (Hallamore Caesar 199), Wedekind’s protagonist is also a succession of names, changing from Nelli to Eva to Mignon to Katja<sup>142</sup>, while her real name remains unknown to most of them:

SCHWARZ Eva??  
 SCHÖN Ich nannte sie Mignon.  
 SCHWARZ Ich meinte, sie hieße Nelli?  
 SCHÖN So nannte sie Dr. Goll.  
 SCHWARZ Ich nannte sie Eva...  
 SCHÖN Wie sie eigentlich hieß, weiß ich nicht.  
 SCHWARZ (*geistesabwesend*). Sie weiß es vielleicht. (FV 2.4)

The concept of an original name never even occurred to Schön, who first took Lulu in and gave her her first name, or role. While Lulu does remember her own name, it is clear that she rarely identifies with it:

LULU Daß du mich Lulu nennst.  
 SCHIGOLCH Lulu, nicht? Habe ich dich jemals anders genannt?  
 LULU Ich heiße seit Menschengedenken nicht mehr Lulu.  
 SCHIGOLCH Eine andere Benennungsweise?  
 LULU Lulu klingt mir ganz vorsintflutlich. (FV 2.2)

Here, it becomes obvious that no concept of identity is attached to the name that is supposed to be hers. Individuality and identification, which are normally associated with a name, are two concepts that are in flux when it comes to Lulu. As argued above, her (presumably) real name appears to be an onomatopoetic formation of sounds, one that quite possibly was produced by her when she was still little, which then became her name. However, every man she encounters takes over the role of

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<sup>142</sup> In the original version, Alwa calls Lulu “Katja” in 3.6. The name, however, does not come up in the final version anymore and Alwa calls her by the same name his father does – Mignon (FV 4.8).

both parent and author by naming her according to his liking and in doing so, providing her with a new identity.

The only person calling her Lulu, other than Schigolch who presumably is the first of the characters ever to encounter her, is the Geschwitz. She also never tries to script a role for Lulu either. If the Geschwitz thus loves Lulu for being “Lulu” it is hard to tell what she sees in Lulu, as she is constantly playing different roles and becoming different characters. This love has no basis in Lulu’s character and is thus a caricature of true love, since there’s nothing to love to begin with. This is yet another misogynist move to render the Geschwitz a figure who has no chance of fulfilling her dreams and achieving any kind of happiness – both in her personal and professional life. The love the Geschwitz has for Lulu, however, appears to be rather unconditional, regardless of the current role and her past transgressions. While all the men eventually turn on Lulu or stop caring about her well-being, the Geschwitz continues to worry about her fate and is the only one who tries to stop her from prostituting herself and eventually from being killed. It is this type of unconditional love that puts her as close to a motherly figure as it gets in this play.<sup>143</sup>

The lack of a mother (and father) is one of the most striking differences between Lulu and Effi and Else, especially since the parents of both characters have

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<sup>143</sup> The fact that Lulu, in turn, takes the Geschwitz for granted and appears ungrateful towards her throughout the play also indicates that Lulu does understand the concept of unconditional love when it is directed at her, but (very likely because of the lack of a real mother) she does not know how to reciprocate those feelings. Oftentimes, she thus acts like an ungrateful teenage daughter around the Geschwitz, who meets this behavior with patience, worry and a degree of helplessness until the end – feelings a modern day mother would feel for her teenage daughter in similar situations as well. If their relationship thus parallels a mother-daughter-relationship at times, it foreshadows a modern day one, which stands in stark contrast to the mother-daughter-relationships of Effi and Else. It also contrasts the relationship between Kadidja and Magelone, which is based on motherly authority and unconditional love coming from the daughter who desperately searches for her mother’s protection in FV Pandora 1.

such a strong influence on their daughters' fate. While Else rebels against her mother and cannot fathom her as a role model by any means, Effi attempts to follow along the lines of her mother's (love) story and admires her completely. Lulu on the other hand has no mother to reflect on and to react to, no role model to follow or dismiss. Raised by father figures, pimps and lovers, Lulu has been brought up with the same goal as Else nevertheless, namely to sell herself off eventually. But while Else is fully aware of this and knows that even a lucrative marriage would essentially mean that she has to sell herself to the highest bidder, Lulu pretends that she herself could never be sold when Casti-Piani is attempting to ship her off to Cairo: "[I]ch kann mich nicht selbst verkaufen lassen! Das ist schlimmer als Gefängnis." and "Ich kann nicht das Einzige verkaufen, das je mein eigen war" (FV Pandora 2). It is open to debate whether Lulu has not already sold herself to Goll, Schwarz, Schön and Alwa, but what is at stake in her statements is the agency behind the sale: While she has played a role in each of her marriages, it is the role that she has sold to her husbands and lovers, but not herself. She still owns "Lulu", which is not a role she plays, but rather the screen behind the roles. It barely ever emerges, but yet, it is what identifies her when she is stripped of all her costumes and all her roles: "Mein Fleisch heißt Lulu." (OV 3.6) she tells Schön(ing) in the original version of the play. This raises the question whether her flesh is identical with the screen behind her roles and if it carries any potential for self-awareness. After all, Lulu identifies with it, calling it her own, the only thing, in fact, that she owns. While it is possible to read this sense of ownership as an illusion of identity and self-determination, it also renders Lulu's puzzling character even more complex

and indeterminable. It also sheds a light on the necessity of the screen, which is required for any kind of projection, just like the blank paper is required for literary production. Here, the focus extends from Lulu, the character, to Lulu, the play, which is equally written, rewritten and reinvented, just like Lulu, the character is. But at the core of both character and play remain their respective screens which form the basis for any kind of character and plot development. As such, they deserve recognition, which is granted in these brief moments in which ownership and reflexivity are expressed.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the assertive quote above – “Mein Fleisch heißt Lulu” – is yet another line not retained in the final version. “Lulu” is once more edited out of the text in a gesture of cutting, here in the sense of cutting the quote out of the play. In the final version, she refers to herself as Lulu when Schwarz first kisses her and calls her Nelli, to which she responds “Ich heiße Lulu.” (FV 1.4), which he ignores by saying “Ich werde dich Eva nennen” (FV 1.4). It is the only time (in both versions) that Lulu fully identifies with the name and accepts it as her own. But names are interchangeable for the roles she plays, and so are identities. When Rodrigo pretends that she has died in order to get rid of Hugenberg, he tells him: “Sie liegt seit drei Wochen auf dem Kirchhof. In der Ecke links hinten, hinter den Müllhaufen, wo die kleinen Kreuze sind, an denen keine Name steht, da liegt sie unter dem ersten” (FV Pandora 1). Thus, he imagines, just as Lulu has never known her mother or her mother’s grave (cf. FV 2.4), her grave will be unknown as well, without a name to remind anyone of her. If Lulu is the only one (other than Schigolch and Geschwitz) who sees herself as “Lulu”, then this identity

will die with her and them and she will be buried in a grave without a name, if she is to be buried at all. Lulu's life thus ends in the same anonymity in which it has begun, without a name or heritage and without either to be remembered by.

Without a mother or a father, Lulu has been left to the mercy of men such as Schigolch and Schön all her life. The lines between lover and father figure are almost always blurry in these relationships, especially between her and Goll, her and Schön and of course her and Schigolch. While the characters and audience are led to believe that he is her biological father, he explains that she refuses to be his child ("Fällt ihr nicht ein" (FV 4.6).) and that she never had a father (cf. FV 4.6). Their relationship often appears to be similar to a father-daughter relationship, until he reveals that "Bald sind es zehn Jahre, daß wir uns nicht mehr kennen" (FV Pandora 2). This surely implies "knowing" her in the biblical sense, since Lulu replies "Aber du hast doch eine Geliebte" (FV Pandora 2). Similarly, her first husband Goll clearly has a sexual relationship with her and yet points out when the topic of having children comes up "Ich wünsche mir keine. (...) Ich habe an dem einen vollkommen genug" (FV 1.2), which hints at him regarding Lulu ("Nelli") as his child. The conversation comes about when Schön and Goll discuss naming Lulu (Nelli vs. Mignon) and Goll mentions that he has no children to name, which accounts for his lack of an opinion when Schön asks "Glauben sie, daß der Name soviel dabei ausmacht?" (FV 1.2). This dialogue sets up the connection between Lulu's lack of a father and a proper name and connects it to Goll's lack of children and him feeling the need to name Lulu instead. Thus, they equally fill a void in each other's lives – she takes the place of his child (-bride) and he takes over the role of a father by



naming and feeding her, buying clothes/costumes for her, and providing her with a housekeeper/nanny who assists her in dressing herself.

The fact that Lulu is (re-)named by every single one of her husbands not only underlines her infantility but also links her further to the realm of animals, in particular to the way she is introduced in the prologue. Here, she is described as a “Raubtier”, the “wahre, wilde, schöne Tier” (cf. FV Prolog) as opposed to the “Haustier” that is “wohlgesittet” (FV Prolog). However, Lulu becomes a pet throughout the play whenever she is passed on to the next husband who names her as if she were either a child or a pet. And while Lulu is supposed to embody the “Urgestalt des Weibes” (FV Prolog), treating her like an animal also puts her in the realm of the gender neutral, non-human.<sup>144</sup> Thus, when she talks to Schigolch about her new name while being married to Schwarz, the choice of pronouns and their reference is particularly interesting:

LULU. Ich heiße jetzt...

SCHIGOLCH. Als bliebe das Prinzip nicht immer das gleiche!

LULU. Du meinst?

SCHIGOLCH. Wie heißt es jetzt?

LULU. Eva.

SCHIGOLCH. Gehupft wie gesprungen!

LULU. Ich höre darauf. (FV 2.2)<sup>145</sup>

As Schigolch points out, the principle of Lulu's existence and her role remains essentially the same regardless of the name she has been given. However, his

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<sup>144</sup> Referring to Lulu as “das Tier”, be it Raub- or Haustier, links her to the gender-neutral realm on a grammatical and contextual level since animals are not primarily defined by their gender, but first and foremost by their status as non-human. Gender plays a secondary role in their categorization, just like it takes a backseat here in this introduction of Lulu as an animalistic being. It also connects to a variety of other gender-neutral terms used for female characters, such as “das Wesen” and “das Geschöpf”.

<sup>145</sup> In the original version, the “principle” is referred to as “das Honigtöpfchen”, which presumably refers to Lulu's genitalia. This adds yet another dimension to the renaming of Lulu, as this statement essentially reduces her to her sexual function altogether and implies that her identity does not extend beyond it.

question “Wie heißt es jetzt?” in conjunction with Lulu’s response “Eva” not only refers back to the principle, but defines Lulu as an “es”, an animal or pet which has been renamed by its current owner, and moreover, equates “the principle” with Lulu herself. Lulu is introduced as an animal from the start, a wild one at that, which needs to be tamed. She thus presents a challenge to those around her: the challenge of controlling her. While she is domesticated by Goll, Schwarz fails to control and tame her, allowing her to run wild and turn on him like an animal when she kills him in a wild rage. Thus, Lulu only remains a child/domesticated pet for a limited time. Eventually, the uncontrollable part of her always breaks through and destroys those around her and, ultimately, Lulu herself.

While Lulu’s husbands and lovers are anything but her true partners, but rather a mix of parent, owner and author of the respective chapters or acts of her life, she eventually breaks out of being controlled by them like an animal that cannot be tamed or a child that has grown up. To a certain extent, Lulu needs to be controlled and directed, as can be seen from her submissive relationship with Goll, and her boredom with Schwarz, who fails to control her. It is for that very reason that she wants to belong to Schön again: “Wenn ich einem Menschen auf dieser Welt angehöre, gehöre ich Ihnen” (FV 2.3). She needs to be controlled and directed, and once that control has faded, she gets bored. Thus, when he loses control and succumbs to her pressuring him to break off the engagement with his fiancé, which makes him appear weak and submissive, she immediately loses interest in him:

LULU. Er weint wie ein Kind – der furchtbare Gewaltmensch! – Jetzt gehen Sie so zu Ihrer Braut und erzählen Sie ihr, was ich für eine Seele von einem Mädchen bin – keine Spur eifersüchtig!  
SCHÖN. (*schluchzend*) Das Kind! Das schuldlose Kind!

LULU. Wie kann der eingefleischte Teufel plötzlich so weich werden? – – Jetzt gehen Sie aber bitte. *Jetzt sind Sie nichts mehr für mich.*

SCHÖN. Ich kann nicht zu ihr.

LULU. Hinaus mit Ihnen! *Kommen Sie zu mir zurück, wenn Sie wieder zu Kräften gelangt sind.*

SCHÖN. Sag' mir um Gottes willen, was ich tun soll. (FV 3.10, my emphasis)

Lulu thus needs a controlling force in her life. When she speaks to Casti-Piani, she tells him that she always recognizes the right man for her, “den Mann, für den ich geschaffen bin und der für mich geschaffen ist” (FV Pandora 2). Judging from this statement, it appears as if the relationship between her and her lovers were always symbiotic: Not only has she been created for her lovers to seduce them but in return, they offer her protection and a framework within which she has to function. As long as she is with the right man, she accepts being patronized and directed, but she is the one who chooses whom she allows to control her. She embraces embodying a new role, as long as she gets to pick her director. The relationship between creator and creation is thus problematized as the creation (Lulu) chooses the creator, who then determines the details of the part she plays.

Throughout the plays, Lulu is always fully aware of the role she has to play and the exclusiveness of each of her roles: “Ich habe nie in der Welt etwas anderes scheinen wollen, als wofür man mich genommen hat, und man hat mich nie in der Welt für etwas anderes genommen, als ich bin” (FV 4.8) she tells Schön right before murdering him. It is implied here, that Lulu is always aware who she is or has become, which is exactly what her current lover/husband wants her to be. Thus, for Lulu, the “Selbstverständlichkeit” which is proclaimed in the prologue not only points to the aspect of naturalness, the fact that she wears every new role like a costume she has been born into, but also evokes the notion of “understanding

oneself". For Lulu, understanding herself means understanding her 'self' as being in flux, and accepting the fact that, essentially, she will always remain an ever changing projection of male fantasies. While Effi and Else struggle to reconcile their impulses and desires with the expectations of their families and society, Lulu has been stripped of all desires and instincts that are not part of her role. She thus does not suffer from the same conflicts as her literary sisters but rather represents a figure stripped of any individuality who is no longer aware of the conflicts accompanying her existence. She understands what she can and cannot do, and is not equipped with any kind of desire to learn or evolve. Therefore, despite her ever changing roles, Lulu as a principle remains a constant within the text.

Both Lulu's and Else's "Selbstverständlichkeit" (cf. FV Prolog)<sup>146</sup>, their own perception of themselves, is also closely linked to the way they look at their own image – in Else's case her reflection in the mirror, and with regard to Lulu, the painting of her in her Pierrot costume which accompanies and frames the action on stage (cf. Gutjahr 211). Like Dorian Gray's picture, the painting accompanies her throughout the play but while she withers and dies, the picture continues to show her at one of her most beautiful moments. At the same time, the picture changes its framing and position in every act, always corresponding to Lulu's current role and living arrangement, and eventually haunting her in the same way that Dorian Gray's portrait haunts him. As mentioned above, the audience first encounters Lulu's portrait as it is still a work in progress before Lulu herself comes on stage. Both Lulu

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<sup>146</sup> The term "Selbstverständlichkeit" is usually translated as "self-evidence" or "naturalness", but it also evokes a second resonance, namely that of "understanding" or "recognizing (of) oneself", which is what I am referring to here.

and her painting are still in a stage of becoming at this point. Together with Lulu's portrait, the audience encounters that of Schön's bride, which is, however, not a permanent presence in the play, and neither is his bride. Both her portrait and her character are only treated very briefly, showing the lack of importance this figure holds in the realm of a play that is named after a different female character. And it is indeed Lulu who destroys her twice, first literally, then figuratively: In Schwarz's studio, she throws the bride's portrait at Schwarz, only to then stomp on it and ruin it completely (cv. FV 1.4) and later on, she dictates the letter Schön writes to his fiancée to break up with her to marry Lulu. One event foreshadows the other when Lulu destroys the painting in the first act, which also marks the starting point of her destructive path. Since Lulu's portrait is the one that remains, she effectively replaces Schön's bride as well, just as she will later do in the play. Moreover, Lulu's actions reflect her character in yet another way. After she stomps on the painting of Schön's bride, she trips and falls: "*(springt auf, stapft durch den Pastellrahmen und fällt)*" (OV 1.4). While the wording slightly changes in the final version<sup>147</sup>, the notion remains the same here: Lulu, quite literally, "fällt aus dem Rahmen", she is anything but ordinary. Schwarz then tumbles over her, indicating that Lulu is not only a fallen creature herself, but also takes down with her those that get too close to her, thus starting a domino effect or chain reaction. At the same time, the fact that the frame cannot possibly contain an art object like Lulu points to the image of Pandora's Box which first contains all the evil that is in the world, but once opened releases them all. Similarly, Lulu cannot be stopped or contained once she is set free. Her husbands

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<sup>147</sup> "*(Stapft durch das Brustbild.) (...) (Fällt vornüber.)*" (FV 1.4)

and lovers may attempt to restrict her by creating different roles for her, roles that try to establish her limitations in the same way a frame delimits a work of art. However, Lulu breaks through every role description like an art object trying to escape the restrictions of its frame.

As Lulu's roles change throughout the play, so does her portrait. The audience first encounters it in a raw and unfinished version which mirrors a stage in Lulu's life where she was somewhat "unfinished" herself, needing tutelage and direction. During her brief marriage with Schwarz, the painting is displayed "*über dem Kamin in prachtvollem Brokatrahmen*" (FV 2.1), showing that Lulu is the lady of the house and Schwarz's muse, who he has put on quite the pedestal. During her marriage to Schön, the portrait has moved down: "*Vor dem Fußpfeiler des freien Treppengeländers auf einer dekorativen Staffelei Lulus Bild als Pierrot in antiquisiertem Goldrahmen*" (FV 4.1). Lulu's portrait no longer sits enthroned above the fireplace, but rather at eye level, bringing Lulu further down to earth. The antiquated golden frame points to the aging process the portrait has undergone: to the Geschwitz, it is almost reminiscent of a fairytale, a magical, long lost time (cf. FV 4.1) Lulu's absence at the beginning of the Pandora play, however, is marked by an absence of the painting as well, showing how one cannot exist without the other. At the beginning of Pandora, Act 1, the audience sees "*eine leere decorative Staffelei*", the actual painting only enters the stage when Lulu does:

LULU. Wie angstvoll einem ums Herz wird, wenn man monatelang sich selbst nicht mehr gesehen hat! (...) – Hol das Bild aus deinem Zimmer. Soll ich mitkommen?

ALWA. Um Gottes willen, du mußt dich schonen!

LULU. Ich habe mich jetzt lang genug geschont.

ALWA. *geht durch die Türe rechts ab, um das Bild zu holen.*

(...)

ALWA. *kommt zurück mit Lulus Bild im Pierrotkostüm* Es ist ganz verstaubt.  
Ich hatte es mit der Vorderseite gegen den Kamin gelehnt. (FV Pandora 1)

During Lulu's unglamorous time in prison, the portrait has faced a rather dingy existence as well, leaning against the fireplace (as opposed to being mounted above it) and showing the first signs of decay – just like Lulu. However, Lulu still receives validation of her beauty from the painting, as if it were a never-aging mirror to her. During Lulu's time in Paris, an act that begins by depicting a false sense of safety and wealth, the painting is back on the wall, in a small golden frame, overlooking the events as they progress. When the audience (and Lulu) encounter it next, it is unframed and starting to lose the paint at the edges when the Geschwitz brings it to Lulu's abode in London.<sup>148</sup> Here, Lulu's reaction to the portrait is anything but affectionate: When she sees it, she screams as if it were cursed: "LULU. (*aufschreiend*) Und das bringst du Ungeheuer hierher? Schafft mir das Bild aus den Augen! Werft es zum Fenster hinaus!" (FV Pandora 3).<sup>149</sup> Lulu's panic upon seeing the picture points to the fact that the portrait reminds her of her better days and – like a mirror – reflects her state of decay in its own decaying format, being nailed to a wall, without a frame and losing its color. In the original text, Alwa and Schigolch reflect on Lulu's lost beauty while looking at the painting on the wall, while Lulu simply interjects by laughing at their comments (cf. OV 5.5). Regardless of whether

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<sup>148</sup> As the Geschwitz points out, she had to cut the painting out of the wall, a phrase that foreshadows Lulu's fate of being cut open and having a piece of herself taken out of her by Jack.

<sup>149</sup> Once she has calmed down, she looks at it and engages in a conversation about the artist, her former husband Schwarz, which is equally haunting, as he was brought up during a previous conversation between her and the Geschwitz when she was still married to Schön. Not only does the depicted version of Lulu continue to haunt her, but so does the artist whose death is inextricably linked to the painting and its history.

this is a cynical or hysterical laughter, it points to Lulu's increasing state of despair, leading her straight to her prostitution in the London streets.<sup>150</sup> Seeing the portrait reminds Lulu where she came from and painfully makes her aware of where she is now. At the same time, the persistence of the picture and its constant reappearance also show its (and Lulu's) resilience and ability to resurface even after rather hopeless situations. However, just as she has led the other characters down a path of destruction, beginning with the destruction of Schön's bride's portrait (and ultimately her, as well as him), her own existence is destroyed at the hands of Jack. Just as her portrait has been cut out of its frame, so too has her uterus been cut out of her (cf. Gutjahr 227).

#### IV. The Threat of Lulu's Existence

The violent gesture of cutting open Lulu's body, of destroying it by cutting it into pieces, is symptomatic of the ongoing disintegration of the self (and language) explored in a number of turn-of-the-century literary works, such as Hofmannsthal's *Ein Brief*. Both Lulu's and Else's speech are affected by this dissociation as well, and in Lulu's case, even her body falls victim to this dissection. Having spent her life portraying an accumulation of different characters, Lulu has been a puzzle from the very start. For one, her puzzling character and origin are a mystery. In addition to that, she embodies a collection of different roles, of different women she has portrayed over the years, which piece together the literary figure as well as the play "Lulu" like a puzzle. Her persona that has been assembled by men is now disassembled by one too, in a way that emphasizes the impossibility of Lulu ever

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<sup>150</sup> Her first utterance after her repeated laughter is "Ich bin gleich zurück" (OV 5.5) as she gets ready to leave the house to find herself a paying customer.



creating a new life herself. In contrast to Effi, who does give birth to a child, and a daughter at that, Else and Lulu are not equipped with any maternal attributes. Else rejects the option for herself and Lulu attempts to end her pregnancy in the original version of the play, apparently successfully since she never gives birth to a child. While the men around her keep reproducing by creating fantasies that Lulu will embody, her own (natural) reproduction is undermined by them. And while Effi does become a mother, she does not get to perform her maternal role all that much as her child is taken away from her during her divorce and is now raised by Innstetten, who trains her like a parrot. Again, a female life is being scripted by a man, just as Else's and Lulu's are, and procreation becomes a male-dominated phenomenon, dominated by paternity (of both children and poetic/artistic "children", i.e. roles directed by men) and not maternity.

The lack of a mother also means the lack of a mother tongue for Lulu who talks in the language of her substitute fathers, i.e. her creators and authors. Instead of having a mother or motherly figure in her life that could function as a role model (or cautionary tale, alternatively) and could aid Lulu in formulating her story, she depends on the male voices scripting her. This constitutes one of the main differences between Lulu and Effi and Else: While Effi embodies the opposite extreme, i.e. living her mother's love story and its variations, Else makes every effort to distinguish herself from her mother and every other female character within the novella. Both protagonists, despite their different attitudes toward their mothers, share the ability to define themselves in relation to their mothers and motherly figures. Lulu, however, barely has any interaction with other females and thus, even

more so than Effi and Else, only defines herself in relation men. Instead of the realm of the mother(s), there is only the dominion of the other(s), the male-dominated society in which her existence is created artificially instead of organically. And while she (can only) exist(s) in this dominion, she never fully belongs to it.

The main difference between the three protagonists is, therefore, that their mere existence within the literary realm is created differently. While Else and Effi are actual characters with a history, family and mind of their own, however prescribed and influenced by outside sources it may be, Lulu remains a "Kopfgeburt" through and through. She only exists in the minds of her suitors as well as her author, who ends her literary existence just as abruptly as he has started it, without allowing her a lineage or any chance of reproduction. Thus, while there is room for development and progression for Effi and Else, Lulu cannot evolve within a play in which her presence is only granted to satisfy and destroy male fantasies. Both Effi and Else follow scripted roles to a degree but at the same time, they also manipulate them and piece together variations of their prescribed path. Lulu on the other hand has little influence on the part she is playing. While her roles change and accumulate over time, there is no room for her to create a blueprint for a role that could possibly deviate from those created for her. Her entire being is a collage or puzzle of different roles, different pieces of a character designed to please the men around her. These pieces do not replace each other, they add to one another every time she enters into a new role, as Lulu retains her memories and experiences from each. In doing so, they combine to create a deadly accumulation of male fantasies

which can only be destroyed/disassembled by her original scripter, Wedekind himself.

The idea of Lulu as a product of fantasy, a projection whose actions are either part of the spectrum of her current role or mere reactions to those expected from her, not only distinguishes her from Effi and Else. It also presents her as a threat to figures like them because (as a literary character) she represents a more radical version of both Effi and Else, in the sense that she has been completely reduced to a projection, lacking both substance and voice to create an individual story. This, however, does make her any less of a complex character since she displays signs of rebellion and resistance, as argued above, that exceed the projected role description. In contrast to that, Effi, while submitting to a continuation of her mother's love story, pursues an alternate version of it. Else envisions a life based on literary figures and storylines to which she reacts and responds positively while rejecting the expectations of her society and family. At the same time, given how their stories start, a possible trajectory for both of them could be similar to Lulu's story. Reading Effi, Else and Lulu in that order shows how the prescribing of preset and pre-lived storylines gradually increases and switches agents: Effi's options are more or less restricted to living the life her parents, especially her mother, envision for her, and living her mother's story on her behalf. Else's fate is similarly determined by the family she is born into and the society that reduces her to an object of artistic and sexual value. In both instances, their narratives are not only prescribed by their author, but through an additional agency, by their parents as well. While this additional agency is still present in Wedekind's plays in the form of Lulu's husbands

and lovers, he – more than Schnitzler and Fontane – influences Lulu’s literary life without the additional medium of a character. The paternal instance of authority is abandoned altogether and replaced by male characters, indicating that ownership and control over the female protagonist are no longer in the hands of her lineage, but rather in those entering into a sexual relationship with her.

It is this shift that moves Lulu and her story even further into the realm of prostitution than her literary sisters. Unlike Else though, she is not (forced to) selling her body, but rather a fantasy. Since she is nothing more than a projection, there is nothing for Lulu to sell, nothing that is hers and that she has control over. She only exists for those around her, but not for herself. For Else, much more is at stake here though. The thought of prostitution, of selling her body, her image, herself to Dorsday or the highest bidder accompanies her throughout the novella. While she is willing to give herself to a man, she refuses to become an object of economic exchange. Lulu on the other hand already is such an object – a fantastic art piece which is, at one point, worth half a million, as Schön tells Schwarz. As noted above, Lulu can be read as a progression of Effi’s and Else’s story, not just with regard to the progressive amount of scripting and being spoken for/through, but also in particular with regard to the threat of having to sell one’s body to the highest bidder, which affects Else especially.

A recent text written by Austrian author Stephan Lack explores the idea of Else having survived her suicide attempt and returning to the hotel decades after her disrobing. It is based on an idea by actress Maresa Hörbiger and entitled “Welcome back, Fräulein Else”. In this “Fortschreibung” of the original novella, Else

reminisces about her life following the scandalous disrobing, which resulted in a flight to America.<sup>151</sup> Faced with the ruins of the former Hotel Fratazza, an aged Else points out that this is the place where her life stopped: “Es ist ja schon vor langer Zeit stehen geblieben. Genau hier hat es halt gemacht. Das Leben danach, das *neue* Leben, das ist alles im Grunde doch nichts anderes als ein makabrer, dekadenter Epilog“ (WB 5, emphasis in the original).<sup>152</sup> A disillusioned version of Schnitzler’s young protagonist thus arrives at this point in her life by turning herself into her own business overseas<sup>153</sup>:

An mir klebte gerade noch ein Hauch Schönheit der sterbenden Kleopatra, die gerade von der Schlange gebissen wurde. Und das hat sie alle wahnsinnig gemacht, erst die Zollbeamten, dann die höheren Beamten und schließlich die Politiker und die Bankiers. (...) Obwohl mein Körper immer noch sehr herzeigbar ist, wie du siehst. Und alle wollten sie ihn mir schmücken. Ich habe sie gelassen. Ich habe mich von ihnen mit Schmuck überschütten lassen. Ich habe Reichtum kennengelernt, wie er mir in Wien nie widerfahren wäre. Was mir entgangen wäre! (WB 10)

Clearly, this continuation of Else’s story sees her selling herself eventually since it is the only option for a woman in her situation. The quote also illuminates the fact that Else continues to compare her (young) self to a historical figure, Cleopatra, which has survived as an iconic art object. In aligning herself with these mythological figures, this Else continues to create a life based on literary and historical predecessors who she employs as models for her own story. However, the aged Else also embraces the fate of becoming an object of art and sexual desires, since it has

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<sup>151</sup> Of course, this text only explores one possible outcome of Else’s story, albeit a rather likely one.

<sup>152</sup> The abbreviation WB refers to: Lack, Stephan. *Welcome back, Fräulein Else. Eine Fortschreibung nach Schnitzler, nach einer Idee von Maresa Hörbiger*. Wien. Thomas Sessler Verlag. 2012. PDF e-book.

<sup>153</sup> “Eine Frau ohne Beziehungen. In dieser peinlichen Lage. So habe ich mich selbst zu meinem eigenen Unternehmen gemacht“ (WB 6).

allowed her a life of luxury. The fact that this life proves to be a lonely one is secondary to her:

Liebschaften habe ich keine, nie gehabt. Wie gesagt: alles rein professionell. Die sogenannten Zärtlichkeiten, sie haben mich schon immer gelangweilt. Die Liebkosungen sind mir ein Graus. Das ist doch eigentlich nichts Wahres. Wenn ich in der Nacht aufwache, liegt da keines dieser entsetzlichen Gesichter auf dem anderen Polster. Schon aus Prinzip nicht. Die Männer können immer nur begehren und verachten. Eine Dirne! Ja. Ich habe ihnen immer gegeben, was sie wollten. Tagtäglich habe ich mein Bett für sie zerwühlt, *aber nie meine Seele*. Keinem habe [ich] mich wirklich hingegeben. (WB 11, my emphasis)

Thus, Else seems to have made her peace with her life here, and more than that: she has finally gained control over herself and her body, and, as she puts it, her soul. Having learned how to read and treat men and how to use them to her advantage, she has made the sacrifice of giving her body to them, without selling herself completely. She is no longer an object of economic exchange that her parents and Dorsday have control over, but rather herself: *“Du [Dorsday] hast deinen Rubens und deinen Rembrandt nach Amerika verkauft, aber ich habe mich selbst nach Amerika verkauft... in Amerika verkauft”* (WB 13).

The independence of this modern version of an aged Else has come at a price though. She has had to shed her former self, “das kleine Dummchen” (WB 9) as she puts it, who did not survive the Veronal.<sup>154</sup> With this part of herself being gone, Else has also cut any other ties to her previous life. She does not hold on to any old

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<sup>154</sup> The notion of Else regarding her young self as a silly little thing is further stressed when she reflects on the insignificance of her actions at the Hotel. As it turns out, her father did not kill himself in this version although Dorsday never sent him the money. Instead, he was rescued by a wealthy client of his who he married after the death of Else’s mother, something Else comments on by saying: “Und ich habe gedacht, dass mein Handeln über sein Schicksal bestimmt!” (WB 10) Here, the futility of Else’s efforts and her agonizing over her father’s fate throughout the novella becomes painfully obvious. While she was made to believe that Dorsday’s money was the only way to rescue her father from either prison or suicide, this was not the case. In the end, both her and her mother became collateral damage of her father’s crimes, who gets away with his crimes by finding yet another woman willing to save him.

memorabilia or maintain friendships<sup>155</sup>, as if she were shedding her history to make room for a new, reinvented self, born out of necessity. The only way memories of her “jugendliche(...) Eskapade” (WB 5) are brought back to her is upon seeing a Rubens painting, *Das Pelzchen*, at a gallery, which depicts a red-headed young woman, naked, wearing a fur. Not only does she associate the painting with Dorsday and his profession, but further with the moment of her own disrobing and becoming an art object. Standing in the gallery, looking at the picture, present and past merge and evoke Else’s memories:

Alle Augenpaare sind auf mich gerichtet, mich: das Bild, der Akt im Pelz. (...) Mein Untergang. Mein Triumph. Ich bin das Gemälde inmitten einer Auktion. Ich bin der jugendliche Leib, der niemals altert, das unschätzbare Kunstwerk. Ich bin das Bild, das sie nach Amerika verkauft haben. (WB7f)

Interestingly enough, Else continues to identify her moment of disrobing and her naked body as a work of art, one that was first to be sold by her parents, but evolved to become autonomous and sell itself (“*ich habe mich selbst nach Amerika verkauft*” WB 13). She consciously cuts all family ties as if to erase her own personal history and lineage. This connects the aged Else to Lulu and her lack of origin but with the important distinction of Else having gained the agency to do so, while Lulu was never granted any to begin with. And while Effi and Else have a personal and family history to reflect on, protest and rebel against, and be influenced by, Lulu remains a concept, created and developed by men, both author and characters within the play, and in the same manner dismissed by them.

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<sup>155</sup> cf. WB 6: “Ich besitze auch keine alten Briefe, in denen ich blättern könnte, geschweige denn Photographien, also keine Gefahr aus dieser Richtung.” and WB 11: “Cissy. Ja, Cissy hat mir tatsächlich noch ein paarmal geschrieben. (...) Sie schrieb mir, sie wolle in Kontakt mit mir bleiben. Aber ich wollte nicht, nicht schreiben, geschweige denn sie wiedersehen. Ja, Cissy war die letzte, danach waren alle Verbindungen gekappt.”

Wedekind introduces his concept of a female character to the audience by playing the animal tamer, i.e. the only one who can tame and control Lulu, and takes her away through the violent gesture of killing her and cutting her open. In contrast to Effi, the child of nature (who is buried in her parents' garden, surrounded by and reunited with the landscape she felt so connected to) and Else, whose fate is open-ended at the end of Schnitzler's novella as the author leaves room for interpretation and even continuation of his protagonist's story, Lulu's literary life begins and ends abruptly and brutally, leaving no room for growth or evolution. Thus, her character and the way it has been written poses a threat to literary figures, female ones in particular, and the way they are viewed by their author and their audience. Created as a figure entirely at the mercy of her male companions on the one hand, and her author (within the literary text as well as in its theatrical performance) on the other hand, Lulu ultimately has no voice or story of her own. This proposes a thoroughly misogynist male perspective on female characters which irrevocably ends in mutual destruction.

Attempting to turn a fantasy, a "Hirngespinnst" of male desires into a real woman thus must ultimately fail since Lulu is designed to remain a fantasy, put in place (and into play) by her author without the option of evolving into an actual female protagonist. Created as a reflection of male fantasies to which Lulu can merely react but never act on her own account, she functions as a mirroring surface of the male egos around her. Her character thereby raises questions about them without ever providing answers. Rather it destroys them by holding up a mirror to the flaws in their imagination which are too manifold to survive, for both genders.



## Conclusion

This project has investigated the potentiality of the different silences, pauses and ways in which the female protagonists are silenced in *Effi Briest*, *Fräulein Else* and the *Lulu* plays. Despite their different representations, these silences function as active spaces in which plot and character development occurs, rather than representing empty gaps or the absence of speech and meaningful content. Instead, they constitute pregnant pauses through which the female protagonists renegotiate their prescribed roles as daughters, wives, lovers and objects of male desire. They do so by embracing the various voices that speak through them, by allowing these literary, societal and private voices to be filtered through them and altered by them. Therefore, Effi, Else and Lulu all also redefine their position as mediums for the messages of others, and as containers and blank canvases for projections of primarily male characters. As such, they are to be located in an evolving space between activity and passivity, one that is constantly renegotiated, not only through their development but also through the development of the audiences and readership. Just as these characters reinterpret their own paths by rearranging and recombining the pieces of their stories, the reader is invited to do the same. The puzzles that are Effi, Else and Lulu may be assembled in a variety of ways, and they may be missing a few pieces, but it is those missing pieces that render them interesting, multifaceted characters who continue to ask for (re-)interpretation.

As these female protagonists (and many of their literary sisters) are located in a realm between being not yet in control but no longer controlled completely, this reinterpretation has to acknowledge that these characters are captured in a state of

flux. Their conflicts are a result of their hovering between “Macht” and “Ohnmacht”, between empowerment and powerlessness, both toying with and escaping such categorizations. But out of these conflicts emerges the possibility of manipulation - a manipulation of the terms of the contracts between daughters and parents, husbands and wives, and between male and female characters in general. This realm of possibility has to be granted by the author, however, and as my reading of Wedekind’s *Lulu* plays shows, it is a space that is both given and taken away by the author who ultimately defines the parameters of a characters evolution.

Given the essential role of the authors of these silences and the spaces opened up by them, I regard this dissertation to be an invitation to and stepping stone for further discussion and research on the topic of silence as a powerful means of expression. Especially works by female authors creating female protagonists, such as Irmgard Keun and Lou Andreas-Salomé, warrant further discussion in this respect, both in their own right and as responses to male authors creating female protagonists. Additionally, the different movie adaptations of the texts discussed here should be taken into consideration in future projects, both the 1929 silent films by Pabst and Czinner and more recent adaptations, such as Uwe Janson’s 2006 TV film “Lulu” or Anna Martinez’ 2014 adaptation “Fräulein Else”. Through the medium of film and visualization, the silences, breaks and interruptions of the literary works are filled with even more potential, thereby adding yet another dimension to these complex, multifaceted works.

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