ARTHUR SCHNITZLER’S OUTSIDER-INSIDERS IN FIN DE SIÈCLE VIENNA

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the role of outsiders in fin de siècle Viennese society and how these roles are portrayed in the works of Arthur Schnitzler. The focus is specifically on those characters in Schnitzler’s texts who can be considered outsider-insiders, that is, characters who have elements in common with both members of the reference group as well as those individuals who fall somewhere outside of the group they are attempting to integrate with. In this study I primarily examine the characters of Gustl and Else from Schnitzler’s novellas Leutnant Gustl and Fräulein Else, respectively, as well as that of Fridolin, the protagonist of Traumnovelle.

I make use of Sander Gilman’s explanation of the phenomenon of self-hatred and the double bind, and examine where it applies to Jewish characters, such as Else and Felix von Dorsday, as well as gentile characters such as Gustl. I also investigate how both social and economic status, as well as gender and ethnicity, can affect a character’s role as an outsider-insider. In the case of Gustl, one finds a character who is able to take advantage of the upward social mobility offered by the Austro-Hungarian army, but still suffers from his lower class origins and a bleak economic reality, and must face the double bind placed upon him by the traditional honor code of the Austro-Hungarian officer corps. Else faces the double bind of a middle-class Jewish daughter who is expected to
follow the wishes of her parents, but to do so would require her to do something that no good bourgeois daughter would do, namely, expose her body to Felix von Dorsday in order to save her father from financial ruin.

By taking an interdisciplinary approach to Schnitzler’s texts, utilizing both literary analysis and socio-historical methodologies, this work examines the difficulties faced by these characters who find themselves in double binds based on their social, economic, and cultural status, and the experience of self-hatred that accompanies their attempts to engage with fin de siècle Austrian society.
To my four parents
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I. INTRODUCTION

The fin de siècle was a unique time in Austrian history, particularly in Vienna, the cultural center of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the home of such famous Austrian Jewish writers as Sigmund Freud and Stefan Zweig, as well as Arthur Schnitzler, on whose works this study draws its focus. Hillary Hope Herzog describes the relationship that writers such as Schnitzler had with the city of Vienna as “fraught with contradictions and ambiguity,” and that while some of them enjoyed relatively privileged professions in academia or the medical field (as was the case with Schnitzler), “their presence among the cultural elite hardly afforded them a secure and self-evident position in Viennese society. The Jewish experience in Vienna across the twentieth century reflected a century-long pattern of living in tension with the city and its culture” (1).

While the experience of writers like Schnitzler should not be seen as a representative example of the Jewish population as a whole, they did occupy what Herzog describes as a “unique insider-outsider position in Viennese society” (2). Herzog further writes: “Jewish intellectuals experienced the world differently from their non-Jewish counterparts, in spite of assimilation, and thus cannot be subsumed into the bourgeoisie” and that “the far-reaching assimilation of Jews into middle-class culture at the turn of the twentieth century did not make their Jewishness irrelevant” (3). While it is certainly true that the Jewishness of assimilated middle-class Jews was far from irrelevant, they should not be seen as completely separate from the bourgeoisie. Rather, their bourgeois status must
be considered along with their Jewish heritage when examining their experience during the *fin de siècle*, for it is the combination of these two things that gave them the unique position of both outsider and insider that Herzog describes.

As a Jewish medical doctor in Vienna, Arthur Schnitzler had first-hand knowledge of this mixed status of both outsider and insider. While he had the privilege of having both a medical and literary career, the latter was, as Elizabeth Loentz describes it, “plagued by negative criticism and scandal, which he attributed in large part to his Jewishness” (87). Schnitzler undoubtedly understood the intricacies of this precarious position in society, and this understanding is given life in the experiences of the characters that populate his writings.

This thesis examines the role of the outsider-insider in Schnitzler’s works, focusing primarily on the novellas *Leutnant Gustl* and *Fräulein Else*. These two works are ideal for comparison, as they are both written in an inner monologue, stream-of-consciousness style. *Leutnant Gustl* was the first novella in which Schnitzler explored this style of writing, and demonstrates his early prowess with the inner monologue, while in *Fräulein Else*, completed over twenty years later, the reader can witness his further mastery of the technique.

The stream-of-consciousness style employed in these novellas is optimal for this exploration of the outsider-insider role, because it allows the reader to see in detail the inner workings of the respective protagonists’ minds, as well as providing a glimpse into how the protagonists are treated and viewed by others.
Gustl’s womanizing and crude anti-Semitic thoughts can be compared to Else’s fantasies of multiple lovers and happiness that she can hide her own Jewishness, and the private demands Dorsday places on Else can be examined against the baker who challenges Gustl’s authority in a public setting.

As a young Jewish woman from a bourgeois family, the relatively privileged existence of the vacationing Else can be juxtaposed against Gustl’s last-ditch effort to increase his social capital as a commissioned officer in the Imperial and Royal Army. Neither Gustl nor Else are financially independent themselves. However, Else’s father deals in large sums of money, allowing Else to enjoy a more leisurely bourgeois lifestyle, while Gustl earns a more modest income as a junior officer.

Comparing the male Gustl and the female Else also allows one to examine the varying effect of the Austrian code of honor. Gustl is constrained by it, while Else could more easily manipulate the code to work in her favor if she chose to, although doing so would require her to take on the role of a woman who must rely on a man to protect her honor. Additionally, while the contrasting aspects of gentile masculinity and Jewish femininity differentiate the two characters, the shared themes of self-hatred and suicide, and the varying manifestations and results of those themes can be examined. While the reasons for Gustl and Else’s outsider-insider status vary, this variation only increases the insight that can be gained into the culture of fin de siècle Vienna by exploring the examples Schnitzler offers.
II. LEUTNANT GUSTL’S DOUBLE BIND

The title character of Arthur Schnitzler’s novella Leutnant Gustl is often interpreted as an unsympathetic member of the Austrian establishment during the fin de siècle in Vienna. Gustl is a young officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, an institution that offered members of the Kleinbürgertum or lower middle-class some opportunity for upward mobility in Austrian society. This is particularly advantageous for people like Gustl, a Kleinbürger who comes from a modest background. Gustl has raised his social standing by earning a commission as a Leutnant in the army of Austria-Hungary, a junior commissioned officer’s rank equivalent to a lieutenant. However, despite his improved position in society, Gustl suffers from financial difficulties, made worse by his gambling habits, and he struggles to fit in among Vienna’s upper middle-class bourgeois society, or Großbürgertum. Brenda Keiser quotes Manfred Jäger’s description of Gustl as “durchschnittlich”, and without individuality, and Keiser claims that his life and all of his opinions come from the military (Keiser 105).

Gustl is an uncultured, prejudiced and anti-Semitic Austrian officer from Graz who is not particularly bright and spends much of his free time gambling and womanizing. He goes to an oratorio not because he is interested in music, but because Steffi, the woman he is currently chasing, has no time for him and he has no more money to gamble with. Luckily for Gustl, his companion Kopetzky has given him a free ticket. Going to the oratorio gives him another

1 Jäger writes: “Die Durchschnittlichkeit der Figur mit ihren typischen, von Herkunft und Bildung geprägten Denkstrukturen ermöglicht die Erzähleneit. Da Gustl nichts Außergewöhnliches an sich hat, bedarf er auch keiner weiteren Erklärung” (Keiser 105).
opportunity to gawk at women and most importantly, it gives him a chance to be seen in public wearing his uniform, an integral part of the lifestyle that he is expected to maintain as an officer. He complains about the number of Jews in the officer corps, the conduct of *einjährige Freiwillige*, academics, and socialists, and is prepared to challenge someone to a duel if he feels he has been insulted (as long as his opponent is *satisfaktionsfähig*, of course) (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 337-343). Imke Meyer describes Gustl as “a bourgeois protagonist who, while not rich, nevertheless has the position of officer and can thus exert a certain amount of power over others” and counts him among a number of “bourgeois protagonists who cast themselves as underdogs in the face of various and often imaginary threats” (Meyer 7-8). However, Meyer’s description underestimates the instability of Gustl’s newly increased social status. While Gustl has the ambition, as well as the opportunity, to rise above the social standing of his birth, in the diegesis of the novella he is still very much an underdog clinging to the lower rungs of the bourgeois social ladder.

In the novella, there are characters in conflict with Gustl who could be identified with Schnitzler. A. Clive Roberts suggests:

Being a reserve officer, Schnitzler must have identified quite strongly with his reserve lieutenant in *Leutnant Gustl*. The fact that he produced the short story in only six days, most uncharacteristic for an author who otherwise spent years writing and rewriting his works, indicates his strong
personal commitment to the issues of anti-Semitism and militarism which he attacks in *Leutnant Gustl.* (34)

Another possible character with whom Schnitzler might have identified is that of the liberal doctor who Gustl challenges to a duel. Both of these figures can be cast as outsiders compared to Gustl, the young officer inside the power group of the Austrian military (Appelbaum 104).

When one considers the character of Gustl and the experiences of Schnitzler within the cultural context of Austrian society in 1900 however, a different interpretation can be explored. Specifically, in spite of the limited authority Gustl exercises within the military and the increased status granted him by society due to his officer’s commission and uniform, his behavior and self-hatred betray him as an outsider among the social circles he attempts to become a part of, namely the Viennese *Großbürgertum* and the social elite of the army’s officer corps. In the course of the text, Schnitzler not only implicitly criticizes Gustl and the military, but also depicts the difficulties and double binds faced by members of Austrian society whose social or economic advancement outpaces that of the class they were born into.

Although Gustl has earned a commission in the Austro-Hungarian army, the extent of the power and influence he can exert over others is still rather limited, even within the military, his primary social group. He is an officer, rather than an enlisted or conscripted soldier, and that gives him some authority within the military hierarchy, but as a *Leutnant,* he is one of the lowest ranking
members of the officer corps. In his inner monologue, Gustl does not go into much detail about his specific duties, but we know that he commands a platoon ("Wer wird denn meinen Zug kriegen?" [Schnitzler, "Leutnant Gustl" 359]).

Command of a platoon, normally made up of between 30 and 50 men, is a level of responsibility that would be commensurate with his rank, and would be one of the first assignments for a low-ranking, inexperienced officer. Within the officer corps, only a Kadet-Offiziers-Stellvertreter had less authority (Deák 15-16, 102).

Outside of the officer corps, among the enlisted men and the noncommissioned officers (that is, the men who Gustl outranks and has authority over), he can only exercise his status in the context of his military profession. They are not part of his social group, and as an officer he is forbidden to socialize with them. Otto Bauer, an Austrian socialist, illustrates this separation with the words of his commanding officer in reserve officer training school:

> The noncommissioned officers are peasants; an educated person has no social contact with a peasant. If I should learn that one of you talks to a noncommissioned officer outside of military duty, shakes hands with him or even joins him in a pub, he will lose eligibility to become an officer!

(Deák 103)

As a junior officer, Gustl’s social capital has been increased, but it is still limited. He rides the line between classes: he is too well off to be considered lower class, but he is not privileged enough to fit in fully among the bourgeoisie. In fact, his place at the lower edge of the bourgeoisie is almost purely one of
social perceptions; economically, he is not self-sufficient. Gustl’s immediate family is not able to help support him financially, and he wishes that his rich uncle ("der hat Geld wie Mist,"”) would give him a regular allowance (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 339). As an officer, Gustl is expected to maintain a certain lifestyle, referred to ”in propagandistic military literature as Die schöne, wilde (or goldene) Leutnantszeit” (Deák 97). Unfortunately for Gustl and many other junior officers of the Kleinbürgertum, the pay they received was often not enough to support this lifestyle. Even without an allowance, Gustl is forced to beg his uncle for money just to cover his gambling debts: he mentions that he owes Ballert 160 gulden after only one game (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 339).

To put that amount in perspective, unmarried Austrian lieutenants in 1899 made 66 gulden per month, but that was before required expenses that could often be over 50 or 60 gulden for officers stationed in Austria, and officers in Hungary had even higher expenditures (Déak 120-121). To make matters more difficult, the pressure on young officers to enjoy the lifestyle that was expected of their social standing often led to large debts, as is the case with Gustl. It is possible that Gustl would have received higher than average pay for being stationed in Vienna (up to 104 gulden, according to one military source) but his expenses would have also been higher as Vienna was one of the most expensive cities to live in (Deák 120-121).

According to Keiser, the stream of consciousness narrative that Schnitzler employs completely separates his voice as an author from the thoughts and
actions of Gustl (105). However, Gustl and Schnitzler both benefited from opportunities in the military that they might not have enjoyed had they been born elsewhere, due to their social class or ethnicity, respectively. Austria first began to allow Jews to become officers during the Napoleonic Wars (Deák 173). At the turn of the century, the army of the Dual Monarchy was quite multicultural compared to other European armies of the time, and there were more opportunities available to Jews in the Austrian army than in the militaries of other countries. The army of Austria-Hungary boasted more Jewish officers than any other army in the world, and no other country had as many Jewish officers until the founding of the Israeli Defense Forces. Jews made up only 4.5 percent of the population of Austria-Hungary in 1900, but were actually overrepresented in the army’s officer corps compared to the general population, with 8 percent of officers and 19 percent of reserve officers being Jewish (Pauley 62-63). In contrast, Jews in Prussia could not be granted officers’ commissions at all (Deák 133). Schnitzler himself held the rank of Oberarzt in the reserves, before he was stripped of his commission after the publication of Leutnant Gustl (Keiser 102).

There were Jewish career officers in the Austrian military as well, and some had the opportunity to attend the prestigious general staff school, were assigned to the general staff, and eventually reached the general officer ranks (Deák 175-178). In the Austrian census, Jews were not seen as a separate nationality, but rather reported as the ethnic group into which they most easily integrated. For example, Jews in Galicia and Hungary would mark themselves as
Polish or Magyar respectively, and Jews from Bohemia or Moravia as Czech or German (Deák 13). The Habsburg army itself tended to be antinationalist, as it drew soldiers and officers from all parts of the Empire. Although the army kept detailed information on every officer, including his religion, they did not record the officer’s ethnic origins. In addition, the languages an officer could speak were recorded, but the officer’s native language was not indicated (Deák 19-21).

Although (and from Gustl’s perspective, perhaps because) there was a significant percentage of Jews in the army, in all branches and even among the general staff, there were still problems with anti-Semitism in the Austrian military (Deák 174-178). Schnitzler illustrates this in Gustl’s inner monologue, for example during the oratorio: “Überhaupt, dass sie immer noch so viel Juden zu Offizieren machen – da pfeif’ ich auf’n ganzen Antisemitismus!” and in front of the coatroom, “O ja, mein Fräulein, ich möcht’ schon! ... O, die Nase! – Jüdin ... Noch eine ... Es ist doch fabelhaft, da sind auch die Hälfte Juden ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 338-339, 342).

These anti-Semitic thoughts could be taken as support for Meyer’s description of Gustl as a bourgeois casting himself as an underdog in the face of imaginary threats, but that underestimates the actual vulnerability of his social position. His anti-Semitism for the most part seems quite superficial, to the extent that he does not seem to completely understand what the term Antisemitismus even means, and his conduct stems more from an imitation of others rather than any deep conviction on the matter. As a low-ranking officer,
Gustl could easily be relieved of command and replaced by another lieutenant if his performance was found to be inadequate.

Felix Tweraser writes of Gustl’s criticism of the Jewish reserve lieutenant: Gustl’s thought process shows that he is not averse to employing stereotypes in his assessment of others. This trait prevents him from acknowledging his own financial dependence and the nature of economic relations in the society, which tolerated the new reserve officer corps as recognition of the rise of a powerful middle class; the potential of common ground among officers based on shared economic status runs aground on the facile stereotype that Gustl applies to another individual. (155)

While it is true that Gustl is perfectly willing to utilize stereotypes, and that Gustl’s anti-Semitism prevents him from focusing on the common ground he has with Jewish officers, that common ground is based on social status, rather than economic status. In addition, the fact that the Jewish lieutenant is a reservist, rather than a full-time soldier, indicates that he has more options than Gustl: the Jewish reserve officer has a civilian career, and it is certain that he has a larger income than Gustl, who notes: “Freilich, in einer Bank ist er,” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 338). As a reserve officer, it is likely that the Jewish lieutenant has attended university (or at the very least completed Gymnasium), granting him a higher level of education than Gustl, who was expelled from Gymnasium and gained his commission in a Kadettenschule. Gustl is envious of the Jewish officer who is a part of the higher strata of the powerful middle class that
Tweraser describes. It is a level that, economically, Gustl is far from reaching, and the fact that the Jewish officer is not of the normative, supposedly privileged German-Austrian ethnicity that Gustl identifies as makes the situation even more vexing for Gustl.

In addition, while Gustl has many anti-Semitic thoughts, he does not make his opinion about Jewish officers known publicly, and for good reason. Historically, Jewish men were not allowed to fight for their own honor, that is, they would have been considered *satisfaktionsunfähig*. Like women and members of the clergy, they had to rely on the authorities for defense (Deák 138). However, now that some Jewish men were granted commissions and served in the military as officers, the situation had changed. Jewish officers were *satisfaktionsfähig* in the view of the Austrian army, even if not always in the opinion of a particular individual, and because of that could rightfully challenge and accept a challenge to duel.

To make matters more complex, many Jewish university students, from whom many of the *einjährige Freiwillige* were drawn, and who thus held commissions in the reserve, became skilled swordsmen. This came about as a form of resistance against violent anti-Semitism at the universities on the part of Pan-German dueling fraternities who would instigate fights with Jewish students. The students of the dueling fraternities would also insult Austrian army officers,
and in many cases this resulted in a duel in which the officer performed poorly against the student who was often a more experienced duelist.²

Some Jewish students became so proficient at swordsmanship that the nationalist dueling fraternities, rather than risk facing increasingly dangerous opponents in a fair fight, released the *Waidhofener Beschluß*, which declared Jews once again to be *satisfaktionsunfähig* and “completely void of honor according to our German concepts” (Roberts 30, Deák 133). This caused a problem for German nationalist students who were affiliated with the army, however. The declarations of the dueling fraternities had no impact on army policy, which considered all commissioned officers, regardless of religion or ethnic background, as *satisfaktionsfähig*. Students who insulted the honor of Jewish officers and refused to answer a challenge to duel could lose their commissions (Deák 133). The 1915 “Guide for Reserve Officers” shows an example of this, in which a nationalist student who was a reserve officer hit a Jewish student on the head, and then, citing the *Waidhofener Beschluß*, refused to meet the Jewish student in a duel. Even though the Jewish student had instigated the conflict by insulting the nationalist student first, the honor commission ruled against the nationalist student, stating in the guide: “It is against the army’s notion of honor to refuse chivalrous satisfaction to a person

² These duels became such a problem that the army created fencing schools to help improve its officers’ skills with the sword, and eventually the army simply insisted that officers use pistols as a dueling weapon when fighting students. This decree was significant because pistol duels tended to result in more fatalities and were not normally permitted in the army. The intent was to give the officers a more equal chance against the students. Since the dueling pistols of the time were rather inaccurate, it was assumed the duel would be fairer to the officers who were not able swordsmen (Deák 134).
simply because he belongs to another nation or religious community” (Deák 133-134).

In light of the army’s insistence that Jewish officers were *satisfaktionsfähig*, going so far as to rule against non-Jewish officers in disputes, it would appear that Gustl’s anti-Semitism actually conflicts with the Austrian army’s code of honor. Deák goes so far as to call the ease with which the officer corps accepted the idea that a Jew could have honor “miraculous” (138). That is not to say, of course, that anti-Semitism did not exist in the army, but rather that it occurred among individuals, rather than at an institutional level. As a multinational organization operating in all corners of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it stands to reason that the army would be strongly opposed to anything that could divide or cause dissension among the ranks, particularly in regard to those in the officer corps who held leadership positions. According to Elizabeth Loentz, “Schnitzler reports having experienced far less anti-Semitism in the military than at the university,” even though he describes most of the high-ranking doctors as anti-Semites (86). However, Loentz also indicates that some branches, such as the cavalry, were “less accommodating to Jews” (86).

Taking the results of Deák’s study into consideration, Schnitzler’s portrayal of Gustl’s anti-Semitism is better interpreted as legitimate criticism of individual anti-Semitic officers, who most certainly existed⁵, rather than an overall indictment of a military code of honor that condoned or encouraged anti-

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⁵ Deák writes: “In contrast to official policy, many officers viewed the Jews as a separate, alien, and less than attractive race” (181).
Semitism, which would seem to conflict with the historical reality that the fin de siècle Austrian army, at least on a policy level, generally considered its Jewish officers to be just as honorable as officers of other confessions. Gustl internalizes his anti-Semitic views and does not vocalize them, because he knows if a Jew who happens to be an officer hears him, he risks facing a choice between a duel he might very well lose, and being stripped of his commission if he refuses to fight. This reinforces the precariousness of Gustl’s actual situation, rather than painting him as a self-styled bourgeois underdog who purposely overestimates the social difficulties he faces.

The policies and ethnic, social, and religious makeup of the Austro-Hungarian army also conflict with the interpretation of A. Clive Roberts that “Gustl represented the new Austro-Hungarian officer at the turn of the century” who “uses his status as a lieutenant to engage in duels and vent his aggression on civilians” (35). In fact, the Austrian army at the time was diverse enough that it would be difficult to point to one specific individual as being representative of the officer corps as a whole. While Germans made up the largest group, there were officers recruited from every nation in the Empire, who spoke a diverse array of languages and claimed a variety of different confessions and ethnicities (Deák 169-187).

Using the example of Gustl’s upcoming duel with the doctor, Roberts writes:
In keeping with the code of honor Gustl believes that his rank elevates him to the same social level as the doctor. He is unaware, however, that he is being manipulated by the state. Gustl never understands that it is the honor code of the military, supported by a militarist government, which are to blame for his dilemma. He blames civilians, against whom, he believes, soldiers are defenseless. He does not see that civilians of certain social classes (here the doctor) are bound by similar rules to which they have never consented, unlike the soldier, who, by enlisting, accepts the obligations of the army. (35)

The suggestion that Gustl is being manipulated by the state comes across as somewhat simplistic, and seems to imply a sort of deliberate conspiracy on the part of the government. The reality seems to have been more complicated. In Gustl’s time, dueling was technically a felony for which one could receive harsh penalties, although this was not often enforced, and the military itself had no tolerance for any opposition to dueling (Deák 132). Deák describes the Habsburg rulers’ attitude towards dueling as “a farrago of contradictions” (131). The assertion that civilians like the doctor were bound to a similar code of honor should be understood in the context that most Austrians who attended university were either reserve officer candidates or held commissions as reserve officers (Deák 133). Civilians without military affiliations did not risk losing their military careers for refusing to duel, as an officer such as Gustl would.
How strictly the code would affect a civilian could also vary based on individual discretion. In Schnitzler’s *Traumnovelle*, we see an example of a civilian doctor walking away from a potential challenge. After a fraternity student rudely elbows Fridolin on the street at night, he comes close to challenging the student, but as Schnitzler writes: “nein, er war wirklich nicht verpflichtet, auf solch eine alberne Studentenrempelei zu reagieren” ("Traumnovelle" 447-448). This interaction between Fridolin and the fraternity student suggests that what qualified as challenge-worthy was somewhat open to an individual’s own interpretation of the honor code. While it would be difficult to imagine Gustl backing down in Fridolin’s place, Gustl’s eagerness to duel stems more from a desperation to prove himself worthy of maintaining his newly acquired social status, rather than a wish to simply inflict violence on others.

In addition, Roberts’s claim that “Gustl is the type of person who enlists in the army to find an outlet for his aggressions” ignores the fact that the military was not Gustl’s first career path, but rather his final opportunity for social advancement (36). Gustl had intended to study economics and work for his uncle, and the reason Gustl is in the army at all is because he was expelled from Gymnasium and sent to a *Kadettenschule* (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 341, 353). Gustl has no viable alternate option to turn to if his military career fails, because the military was a secondary option to begin with. The fact that Gustl specifically completed his military education at a *Kadettenschule* only reinforces Gustl’s *Kleinbürger* origin. The most prestigious military schools were the two
military academies at Wiener Neustadt and Vienna, which offered students a commission as a lieutenant after three years. Students who attended one of the academies had faster promotion rates and were more likely to be accepted to the Kriegsschule (or general staff school) (Deák 187). Gustl however, like most students, attended one of the Kadettenschulen. There was one such school each for cavalry, artillery, and engineers; Gustl most likely attended one of the fifteen Kadettenschulen for the infantry, which would have entailed a four-year course of study followed by entering the army with the rank of Kadet-Offiziers-Stellvertreter. Gustl was a Stellvertreter at the age of eighteen and was promoted to Leutnant after two years, which seems normal but not overly ambitious, as promotion to Leutnant usually occurred after one or two years of service (Deák 86; Schnitzler “Leutnant Gustl” 351). If Gustl is representative of the new fin de siècle Austro-Hungarian officer at all, it is as a member of the lower middle-class seeking social advancement, not as someone seeking a military career to sate his aggression and lust for violence. The interpretation of Gustl as aggressive also conflicts with the fact that Gustl’s predicament arises because he fails to immediately challenge the baker to a duel when confronted.

In his book Jewish Self-Hatred, the American Germanist Sander Gilman asserts that the power group (in Gustl’s case, Vienna’s high society and the branch of the officer corps that he is a member of) appears to be homogenous to the outsider (2). Someone outside of the Austrian military might not be able to tell the difference between individual members and their place within the
hierarchy. Notice Gustl’s perception of the army’s *einzährige Freiwillige*; at first he takes them for full-fledged commissioned officers: “Sind das Freiwillige da drüben? ... Ekelhaft, bei der Nacht schau’n sie aus, wie Offiziere ... sie salutieren! – Wenn die wüssten – wenn die würsten! ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 345).

We see here that Gustl is against any public behavior that doesn’t fit the model of an honorable, *satisfaktionsfähig* officer, although he seems to make exceptions of his own private imperfections, since he does not take issue with his excessive gambling or womanizing. He makes a point of noticing other soldiers or officers, and his reaction to them varies based on his prejudices. Gustl’s general anti-Semitism and criticism of those in the military that clash with his notions of what a good officer should be are ugly and distracting, but they do not indicate that the threats to his social advancement are imaginary. Rather, they demonstrate that Gustl is unable to recognize himself as the actual source of his own social and economic vulnerability, and that the primary threat to his social and economic advancement (and even his life) is his own behavior. As a junior officer, Gustl would know, for example, that many of the *einzährige Freiwillige*, conscripts with a high-school education who qualified for reserve officer training, would already be better educated and financially better off than he is, and could reach the same rank that he has relatively quickly (Deák 87).

He grants: “Manchmal sind’s ganz nette Burschen, die Einjährigen,” but his further comment implies that he sees the *einzährige Freiwillige* as a threat: “Wir müssen uns jahrelang plagen, und so ein Kerl dient ein Jahr und hat genau
dieselbe Distinktion wie wir ... es ist eine Ungerechtigkeit!” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 349). Gustl had to attend a four-year Kadettenschule to earn his commission, but it is clear that he resents the educated Einjährige who have the opportunity to become officers in the reserve in a shorter amount of time. On the other hand, Gustl does not criticize the major that he meets at the oratorio. The major significantly outranks Gustl, so it is likely that Gustl sees the major as more of a model to emulate rather than a threat. The major has been promoted several times and is a career officer, so there is no reason for Gustl to see him as a potential usurper who could overtake his position like one of the einjährige Freiwillige could.

Gilman also writes of “the liberal fantasy that anyone is welcome to share in the power of the reference group if he abides by the rules that define that group” (Jewish Self-Hatred 2). Although Gustl tries to be an elitist and would not likely claim to subscribe to a “liberal fantasy,” he certainly does believe in the possibility of social mobility granted by such a fantasy, as that is one of the very reasons he has joined the military. He strives to follow the officer’s code of honor and scorns everything that does not mesh with his specific concept of what an officer should be, in an attempt to gain power by abiding by the code of the Austrian military.

Another important indication of Gustl’s status as an outsider is his self-hatred. Gilman quotes Otto Weininger’s 1903 description of the process of self-hatred among Jews:
[W]hoever detests the Jewish disposition detests it first of all in himself; that he should persecute it in others is merely his endeavor to separate himself from Jewishness; he strives to shake it off and to localise it in his fellow-creatures, and so for a moment to dream himself free of it. Hatred, like love, is a projected phenomenon; that person alone is hated who reminds one unpleasantly of oneself.

(Jewish Self-Hatred 294)

Gustl is of course not Jewish, but his process of self-hatred is similar psychologically to the one that Weininger describes. He despises and persecutes civilians and those in the military who remind him of his own self-doubt. The einjährige Freiwillige who salute each other and are mistaken for “actual” officers remind Gustl of his own insecurities and his need to perform his own role as an officer, a role that he fears he does not live up to. Gustl projects his hatred on the people he encounters who simply remind him of his own shortcomings, and challenges to duels those who actually imply publicly that he might have such shortcomings, such as the doctor who comments: “Herr Leutnant, Sie werden mir doch zugeben, daß nicht alle Ihre Kameraden zum Militär gegangen sind, ausschließlich um das Vaterland zu verteidigen!” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 341). Even though Gustl does not recognize it himself, his loud, public attempts to live up to what he believes are the standards of the officer corps and his aggressive criticism of those who he believes do not meet those standards, combined with his projected self-hatred, stemming from the double bind thrust
upon him by his understanding (or lack thereof) of the behavior expected of an officer, lend support to the claim that Gustl is an outsider.

While at the oratorio, Gustl attempts to integrate with Vienna’s high society and behave as he believes an officer should behave, even if in reality he is not wealthy and is only a low-ranking member of the officer corps. Gustl strives to follow the officer’s code of honor, or at least to maintain the appearance that he follows the code, and it is because of this very code that he gets into trouble. He attempts to shove his way to the front of the line in the coatroom. Due to his military status he is not expecting to be challenged, but he behaves so rudely that the baker, whom Gustl recognizes from the coffee house, finally confronts him (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 343-344). The more Gustl behaves like he thinks an officer should, the more those around him know he does not belong, and in the case of the baker, even feel compelled to challenge him. This is an example of what Gilman calls the “double bind”:

[T]he more one attempts to identify with those who have labeled one as different, the more one accepts the values, social structures, and attitudes of this determining group, the farther away from true acceptability one seems to be. (Jewish Self-Hatred 2-3)

Finding himself in this double bind, Gustl tries so hard to use his power and social position to show that he belongs to the power group that those around him realize that he is an outsider. The concern that Gustl shows for how he is perceived by others and his attempts to control that perception by acting in what
he believes is an officer-like manner contribute to Gustl’s difficulty in dealing with this double bind.

There are several reasons why Gustl reacts so aggressively at the oratorio, and in the course of the narrative, these elements develop and eventually manifest as self-hatred. For example, the majority of the audience at the oratorio is made up of Vienna’s upper class, with whom Gustl does not fit in. He meets only one other officer while there, the “Major von Fünfundneunzig” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 342). In comparison to the military archetypes that Gustl looks down on, such as Jewish reserve officers and the einjährige Freiwillige, Gustl reacts much more warmly to the major: “Sehr liebenswürdig hat er gedankt” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 342). It is noteworthy that the major, who is mentioned very briefly in the text, exhibits behavior that is exactly the opposite of Gustl’s. The major is very polite, and Gustl’s lack of criticism shows that he believes the major is a proper officer. The major is not an outsider in this environment, and as such does not find himself stuck in a double bind as Gustl does. The presence of another, higher-ranking officer could also contribute to Gustl’s desire to perform his role in a more dramatic manner.

Gustl already feels out of his element at this sort of event, and this feeling of being an outsider increases when a girl he is pursuing in the coatroom laughs at him: “Laßt sich da von einem Herrn abholen, und jetzt lacht sie noch auf mich herüber!” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 343). In that light, it does not seem particularly strange that Gustl would want to leave so quickly, or that he would
behave so aggressively when the baker confronts him immediately afterwards. When the baker does confront him, Gustl is very impolite, and tells the baker: “Sie, halten Sie das Maul!” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 343). Gustl recognizes both his rudeness and his mistake immediately, however: “Das hätt’ ich nicht sagen sollen, ich war zu grob…” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 343).

Unfortunately, he does nothing to rectify this mistake, because he believes that he must continue to play the role of an officer, and offering an apology to a baker would compromise that. Caught in the double bind, Gustl feels that he must put on an aggressive front in order to prove to himself and those around him that he is worthy of both his military and social rank. However, his overly aggressive manner indicates to his audience, such as the baker, that his behavior is closer to that of a dummer Bub than a proper k.u.k. officer.

As a consequence of the encounter with the baker, Gustl contemplates suicide, and for several hours he truly believes that the end of his life is at hand. Gustl certainly knows that suicide is a real possibility for him⁴. He mentions one of his acquaintances who committed suicide: “Den Max Lippay haben sie auch erst am Nachmittag gefunden, und in der Früh’ hat er sich erschossen” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 352). As the night goes on Gustl becomes more and more nervous and even experiences physical reactions: “Mir scheint gar, ich

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⁴ Suicide was a serious problem in the Austrian army of Schnitzler’s time. In the late 19th Century, the Austrian army had the highest number of suicides compared to other European armies. Suicide was the cause of one fifth of the fatalities in the army, and non-commissioned and commissioned officers (like Gustl) were statistically even more likely to commit suicide than enlisted soldiers (Emery 387-388).
fröstel’? – Es wird halt doch die Aufregung sein ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 351). Later, he almost begins to cry: “Nein, da wird mir zum Weinen ... es beißt mich ja schon in den Augen, wenn ich d’ran denk’ ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 363). The contemplation of suicide could be seen as an indication of self-hatred manifested in the ultimate double bind: Gustl wishes to prove so badly to the reference group that he meets the standard of the officer’s code of honor and is *satisfaktionsfähig* that he is willing to kill himself to do it.

There are still more examples the phenomenon of self-hatred as the plot progresses. When Gustl considers his family, he thinks: “Ich weiß, daß ich Euch allen manche Sorge gemacht habe und manchen Schmerz bereitet,” and his thoughts become self-loathing: “Viel wert bist du ja nie gewesen, so benimm dich wenigstens anständig zu guter Letzt, das verlang’ ich von dir!” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 363, 360). He also has thoughts of Steffi: “Na, Gustl, hätt’st schon noch warten können – war doch die einzige, die dich gern gehabt hat ...” and he admits: “Daß mich manchmal selber vor mir graust” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 357). All of these thoughts illustrate that Gustl has developed a feeling of self-hatred, and they provide another indication that Gustl functions as an outsider in certain respects, despite nominally being part of the power group. Specifically, while Gustl is an officer in the *k.u.k.* army, his status has increased more quickly than he is able to adapt to both financially and socially. He is not yet truly comfortable in his role, as it is a role that he was not born into, and he must consciously struggle to live up to the expectations placed upon him. Gustl
is forced to clumsily utilize the social conventions of the military; they do not come naturally to him as they would an officer who had grown up in a military family and had the privilege to attend one of the academies, for example.

The similarities between Gustl and Schnitzler himself must also be considered. Both men were officers in the Austrian military and both of them experienced difficulties in their relationships with their fathers. More specifically, both Gustl and Schnitzler wanted certain things that their fathers prevented. Gustl notes: “Schad’, dass ich nicht zur Kavallerie gegangen bin ... aber das hat der Alte nicht wollen – wär’ ein zu teurer Spaß gewesen – jetzt ist es ja doch alles eins ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 355). Keiser writes that Schnitzler had similar difficulties while his father was alive:

“Schnitzler suffered from his father’s insistence that he pursue a medical career rather than a literary career, but when his father died in 1893, he finally felt free to quit his work at the Polyklinik, and to open a private practice, which provided him with more time to devote to his writing.” (1)

Gustl has many short and superficial relationships with women, including Steffi, Etelka, Anna, and others whose names he cannot even remember. Schnitzler also had many relationships with women, and according to Andrew Wisely, he doubted that he would ever truly know himself or someone else (148). Schnitzler’s own fears manifest themselves in the uncultured, poorly educated Gustl, particularly the fear that Schnitzler has not lived up to his potential. Wisely comments on the writings in Schnitzler’s own diary: “He claims
to have failed the task of Bildung – liberal education – and fears that nothing will ever come of him” (148). There are differences as well, of course: Schnitzler, as the son of a successful doctor and a doctor himself, was an educated member of the upper middle-class, while Gustl is a poorly educated member of the lower middle-class; Schnitzler was Jewish, while Gustl is anti-Semitic. Gustl is not a direct representation of Schnitzler himself, but he can be seen as an expression of certain difficult aspects of Schnitzler’s life.

When interacting with the bourgeoisie of Vienna or higher-ranking military officers who are able to see him for the Kleinbürger that he is, Gustl finds himself in a social double bind, and takes on the characteristics of an outsider, such as self-hatred and psychological projection. On the other hand, enlisted soldiers and members of the lower class would likely see him as a member of the reference group. Gustl’s intent with both groups is the same, however: convincing others that he belongs to the social class granted by his uniform. This places Gustl in a double bind in which he strives to maintain the behavior and lifestyle expected of a member the officer corps, but the harder he tries to emulate officers from a more privileged background, the easier people like the baker are able to recognize him for the outsider-insider that he is.
III. FRÄULEIN ELSE: SELF-HATRED, SUICIDE, AND MENTAL ILLNESS

In the 1924 novella *Fräulein Else*, Arthur Schnitzler once again employs the first-person stream-of-consciousness narrative form that he first used in *Leutnant Gustl*. The story follows the nineteen-year-old Else T. as she is vacationing at a hotel in San Martino di Castrozza. Else is the daughter of a lawyer and comes from a bourgeois, assimilated Jewish family in Vienna. Due to her father’s chronic mishandling of money, he must repay a certain Dr. Fiala 30,000 gulden in short order or face arrest and prison time. In an attempt to rescue Else’s father from this fate, Else’s mother sends her a letter begging Else to ask Herr Felix von Dorsday, a Jewish art dealer and minor noble who is staying in the same hotel, to loan her father the 30,000 gulden. Else approaches Dorsday with the request, and he agrees to arrange for the funds to be transferred to Dr. Fiala on one condition: Dorsday wishes to see Else nude.

This spurs an intense psychological dilemma for Else. Although she has fantasized about having multiple lovers, the thought of displaying herself while disrobed for Dorsday sickens her. The lovers that Else dreams of are exclusively young and attractive. As an older man, Dorsday is the exact opposite of what she desires, which only increases her disgust for him and the double bind she now finds herself in: in order to be a good bourgeois daughter (by obeying the wishes of her parents), she must do something that no good bourgeois daughter would do (that is, display her naked body to a man to whom she is not married). Dorsday gives her the choice of visiting his room, or walking with him into the
woods outside the hotel, so that they can be somewhat discreet. Deeply disturbed, Else returns to her room to consider her options and read a second letter from her mother, who informs her that her father now requires 20,000 more gulden than originally expected, bringing the total to 50,000. Although Else does not expect the increased amount to be a problem for Dorsday, she imagines him asking more of her: “Für fünfzig müßte ich jedesfalls entsprechend mehr fordern, Fräulein” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 361).

Else eventually selects a third option: clad only in a robe, she goes to the music salon where Dorsday is sitting with the other hotel guests. She bares herself in front of everyone in the room, then faints, falling into a semi-conscious, hysterical state while some of the guests, including Else’s Aunt, her cousin Paul, and his lover Cissy carry her back to her hotel room and put her in bed. As soon as the others look away, Else drinks a glass of water with a large dose of Veronal, intending to commit suicide. With the sound of Paul’s voice calling her name growing ever more distant, the novella ends as Else slips into unconsciousness.

Susan C. Anderson compares the behavior of Else to that of Schnitzler’s Leutnant Gustl:

Similar to Gustl, Else embodies both the observing subject and the observed, but the struggle is different. While Gustl strove to assert his role as subject of the gaze, Else looks at others only to check if her visual effect on them corresponds to that of her internalized, objectifying eye.
They serve her as mirrors. She uses others to confirm her own status as object. As the unmarried daughter of an assimilated Jewish bourgeois family, she takes pains to appear desirable and to keep her Jewish heritage unnoticeable. (314)

Else does measure herself against the reactions of others, but at the same time, she exhibits a degree of self-confidence. She knows that she is attractive, and is not afraid to use her physical attributes to her advantage. Specifically, she is aware that she can use her attractiveness to assert power over others.

Anderson continues:

While Else surveys herself in relation to her surroundings, she still operates under the illusion that she can manipulate her objectification to achieve a kind of passive control over those gazing at her, for she can see her beauty confirmed only in the appreciative glances of men whom she finds attractive. (315)

This power to influence others with her physical beauty forms the basis of her self-confidence, and is linked with her fantasies of having multiple young, attractive lovers. That is, the attractive male lovers that she longs for are the objects of her desire, and she sees her own beauty as a tool to employ to get what she wants; her physical attractiveness allows her to become the object of her lovers’ desire, and this self-objectification in turn grants her access to them.

Unfortunately for Else, the self-confidence that she normally exercises thanks to her physical attractiveness is sapped by the situation with her parents
and Dorsday. Else’s attractiveness can only function as an asset to her when it allows her to further her own desires. She is not inherently opposed to being objectified, as long as it happens in accordance with her own terms. Dorsday’s request reflects the advantages of Else’s beauty back on her: it is because of her beauty that Dorsday wishes to see Else nude. In this case, the thing that normally allows Else to further her own desires, namely her beauty, is the very reason that she is pressured by Dorsday to do something that she despises the thought of.

The reason for Else’s disgust for Dorsday is rooted not only in Dorsday’s age and lack of physical attractiveness, but also in the visibility of his Jewish background. She thinks to herself: “Nein, Herr Dorsday, ich glaube Ihnen Ihre Eleganz nicht und nicht Ihr Monokel und nicht Ihre Noblesse. Sie könnten ebensogut mit alten Kleidern handlen wie mit alten Bildern” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 333). This disgust can be seen as a projected form of self-hatred on the part of Else. She goes to great pains to hide her Jewish ethnicity, but her interactions with Dorsday are a constant reminder of her own Jewishness. There is a sort of cognitive dissonance in that Else does not begrudge herself her own Jewish identity⁵, since she is able to keep it hidden from others, but has anti-Semitic reactions towards Dorsday’s, whose background is clear to her.

Lorenz writes:

Else’s dislike of von Dorsday derives from anti-Semitic as well as age-related antipathies. She is repulsed by his aging body, but she also speculates that he may have changed his name to avoid the odium of Jewishness and considers it mere chance that he can deal in art rather than old clothes. (“Personality and Character,” 140)

The changing of Dorsday’s name adds another level to Else’s perception of him and his status in bourgeois society. Ritchie Robinson discusses discrimination and the changing of Jewish names in his book on the “Jewish Question” in German literature:

A less visible but equally lasting means of discrimination was based on names that were (not always correctly) recognized as characteristically Jewish. From an early stage in the history of emancipation, Jews often discarded conspicuously Jewish names. (245)

Else’s suspicion regarding Dorsday’s name shows that she is not above noting and subscribing to the stereotypes of her own background, so long as these stereotypes are not being applied to her. According to Robinson, “[t]o discard a recognizably Jewish name was a way of distancing oneself from the Jewish community” (246). Ironically, Else’s realization that Dorsday may have changed his name is for her an uncomfortable reminder of her own Jewish background. Even though Else has herself done everything she can to distance herself from her Jewishness, when she sees evidence of someone else, in this
case Dorsday, doing the same thing, she scorns him for it. This functions as an indication of Else’s struggle in the double bind of Jewish self-hatred.

According to Gilman, “[s]elf-hatred arises when the mirages of stereotypes are confused with the realities within the world, when the desire for acceptance forces the acknowledgment of one’s difference” (Jewish Self-Hatred 4).

Else desires to be accepted in society, but she views Dorsday as a stereotype of her own ethnicity, and she has come to see the stereotype as a reality. Gilman continues:

The sense that there are “good” qualities as well as “bad” ones in the projections that are concretized into the Other means that these qualities will also be found within the newly formed self-definition of the Other. If I am “good,” I will be accepted; those who are “bad” deserve being rejected. The qualities ascribed to the “good” and “bad” aspects of the Other are perceived as real. (Jewish Self-Hatred 5)

It is quite clear that Else sees in herself the “good” qualities of the Other (such as her ability to hide her Jewish background, while at the same time claiming that she does not deny it), and sees Dorsday as the embodiment of what she considers to be all the “bad” qualities of their shared ethnicity, such as the alteration of his name and his business pursuits. Else is able to enjoy the benefits of not being immediately recognizable as Jewish among other Austrians, while asserting a sense of moral superiority by claiming that she does not deny
her conveniently invisible heritage, as opposed to someone like Dorsday who actively tries and fails to hide his background. In light of Dorsday’s ennoblement and name changing, it becomes apparent that he is also suffering from the impact of Gilman’s model of the double bind:

For as one approaches the norms set by the reference group, the approbation of the group recedes. In one’s own eyes, one becomes identical with the definition of acceptability and yet one is still not accepted. For the ideal state is never to have been the Other, a state that cannot be achieved. (Jewish Self-Hatred 3)

Else is the one who is the most critical of Dorsday’s attempts at concealing his background, while she prides herself on her almost completely successful assimilation. She suffers from neither Dorsday’s visible Jewishness, nor her mother’s flawed German, but at the same time, interacting with Dorsday and her mother requires that she be confronted with her own, normally hidden Jewishness.

Else’s parents also contribute to the disabling of her beauty-fueled self-confidence: Else’s position as their daughter allows them to exert social pressure on her to assist them. They use Else as a tool to further their own needs, without much more than superficial concern for the difficult situation it puts Else in. This further ensures that Else cannot use her own attributes to improve the situation: although Else certainly could simply deny Dorsday directly, if she did so
there is no guarantee that he would still help her father, who is the reason that she has approached Dorsday in the first place.

The underpinnings of the honor code that plays such a critical role in *Leutnant Gustl* can also be seen in *Fräulein Else*, and Else explores the option of using it to create an alternate solution to her problem. As a woman, Else is very aware of how she could use the influence that the honor code has on Austrian males during the *fin de siècle* to achieve her own goals, and considers explaining her dilemma to Paul in order to spur a duel between Paul and Dorsday that the older Dorsday would likely lose:

> Wenn ich wollte, morgen abend wären Sie ein toter Mann. - Ich bin überzeugt, Paul würde ihn fordern, wenn ich ihm die Sache erzählte. Ich schenke Ihnen das Leben, Herr von Dorsday. (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 352)

While Else does not choose to go through with telling Paul, it is not because the idea is unworkable. Of course on the one hand, if Paul were to kill Dorsday in a duel, it would be difficult for Else to get the money for her father. On the other hand, Else could just as easily go to Dorsday, refuse to put herself on display for him, and explain that if he does not help her father, she will tell Paul of Dorsday’s indecent request and therefore force a duel between the two men. This idea comes across as somewhat extreme, as Else would essentially be blackmailing Dorsday and threatening his life, but when compared to the option that Else actually goes through with, that is, publicly disrobing herself and
subsequently attempting suicide, on a practical level it could be seen as the lesser of two evils, at least in the sense that if Else were able to successfully cow Dorsday with the threat of Paul’s wrath, there would be no loss of life and no one would be the wiser. As an additional incentive, Else would be alive to ensure that her father receives Dorsday’s loan. In this case, the honor code that nearly costs Gustl his life has the potential to save the life of Else. However, if Else were to use Paul as her agent in such a way, it would simply be an example of the traditional bourgeois standard of women requiring men to protect them, and would deny Else the personal agency that her public disrobing allows her.

The option that Else settles on, namely suicide, is a thematic element that both Leutnant Gustl and Fräulein Else share. Both characters argue with themselves about the necessity of the act, and at times both try to talk themselves out of going through with it. Else considers throwing herself from the window, as well as venturing out into the mountains to let herself freeze to death, but settles on drinking an overdose of Veronal, a drug she has been using as a sleeping aid. In contrast, as an officer Gustl would be expected to go out in a soldierly fashion, most likely by shooting himself with a pistol. Another significant difference to consider is that the private, yet violent form of suicide that Gustl proposes would actual salvage his honor and social standing, but in Else’s case, the hysterics that take place before her more tranquil act of suicide would be extremely damaging to her reputation. Else’s public disrobing could also be seen as a form of social suicide, easing the act of physical suicide that
she attempts shortly afterwards. In addition, while Gustl’s double bind revolves around him trying to increase (and salvage) his social capital, Else’s status as a bourgeois daughter is based on that fact that she *is* capital. Else and her beauty (as well as her purity) are resources that belong to her parents, who attempt to utilize Else to suit their own needs. Else’s display of public nudity destroys her purity and negates Else’s societal value to her parents, removing their ability to use her as a resource.

Eva Kuttenberg writes of suicide in Schnitzler’s works:

In contrast to existing cultural readings of suicide as a symbolic act in the context of gender, ethnicity, nationality, or a historical period, Schnitzler prefers an all-encompassing larger perspective that invites multiple interpretations. The approach that stands out as his most provocative and sophisticated is that of plotting suicide as performance[.]

(326) According to Kuttenberg, this performance of suicide:

follows a three-part structure that consists of an audition, rehearsals, and an opening night arranged as public, semiprivate, and private affairs. Auditions take place in a variety of public spaces and casually introduce characters who quickly engage in a variety of verbal or visual rehearsals for their meticulously planned opening night. (326)

In *Leutnant Gustl*, we see the beginning of this three-part structure, but as Gustl does not go through with his suicide, he only reaches the second act, the rehearsal: “um vier in der Reiterkasern’ ... ich soll mich ja morgen um vier Uhr
schlagen ...” (Schnitzler, “Leutnant Gustl” 346). Else, on the other hand, continues on to the third act, at least symbolically, when she drinks the Veronal. By announcing and internally rehearsing their suicide, both figures are in effect delaying the act. Gustl is able to turn away from it at the end after hearing the news that the baker is dead, but Else receives no news that could sway her from her chosen course of action. However, like Gustl, she illustrates many times throughout the novella that she still has the will to live. Shortly before Else begins to hallucinate and lose consciousness, she tries and fails to communicate with Paul: “Ich hab’ es nicht tun wollen. Ich war verrückt. Ich will nicht sterben. Du sollst mich retten Paul. Du bist ja Doktor. Rette mich!” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 379).

Kuttenberg claims that Schnitzler saw suicide as an act of speech, with both the body and language used “as preeminent tools to stage a performance” (329). This is significant in the context of Else’s inability to communicate verbally with Paul as she slips into a drug-induced sleep. Her performance of suicide sends a message that she set into motion when she took the Veronal, but it is not the message she is desperately trying to communicate to Paul: specifically, that she wants to live and wishes Paul would save her.

Kuttenberg and Dagmar Lorenz suggest that Else’s suicide attempt at the end of the novella is successful. Lorenz writes: “the inappropriateness of the melodramatic suicidal impulse is expressed in the dying protagonist’s regrets over having taken a fatal overdose” (133). However, a close analysis of the text
suggests that Schnitzler left Else’s fate up to interpretation. As she is rehearsing her suicide attempt, Else asks herself: “Wieviel Pulver braucht man denn? Sechs glaube ich, aber zehn ist sicherer” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 359). When she arrives back at her hotel room, she finds she has six doses of Veronal remaining, and as she pours the powder in a glass, one packet at a time, she counts only to five: “Eins, zwei, - aber ich bringe mich ja sicher nicht um. Fällt mir gar nicht ein. Drei, vier, fünf – davon stirbt man auch noch lange nicht” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 363). Whether or not she pours the sixth dose of Veronal into the glass is not clear, and even so, it is possible that six doses would not be sufficient to end her life. This further supports the view of suicide as a performance. Else is not carrying out the act of suicide in order to end her own life; she is crafting a performance of suicide in order to communicate a cry for help, a cry that she can not convey verbally, so instead she must attempt to send a message as a purposefully unsuccessful suicide attempt that takes place in the wake of the successful social suicide she commits when she publicly displays her naked body.

Anderson asserts that if Else grants Dorsday his request, she “risks losing her sense of control,” because “Dorsday, not Else, would be the one setting the stage for her display of beauty” and that “she feels her only recourse to self-expression is in the visual realm by publicly exposing herself” (315). She further contends that
Else’s decision to deprive Dorsday of his private viewing yet to fulfill his request to “see” her anyway is her way of managing her status as beautiful spectacle. What she does not perceive, however, is that she is caught up in a social structure that prevents her from breaking out of her role as a voyeuristic object. (315)

Else’s public disrobing is an act of assertion on her part, and it is not the case that Else is unaware of the social structures that cast her as a voyeuristic object. Else seems to be quite aware that such structures are constricting her choices, as shown by her comment: “Bin nicht geschaffen für eine bürgerliche Existenz, und Talent habe ich auch keines” (Schnitzler, “Fräulein Else” 358). The fact that Else considers utilizing the honor code to encourage Paul to challenge Dorsday lends support to the fact that she is able to not only recognize, but also understand the potential ability that she has to manipulate certain social structures in her favor. Unfortunately, her growing hysteria prevents her from going through with any of her other options. However, even in a state of growing hysteria, Else recognizes the impact of what she is doing as she acknowledges the gazes of those in the music salon: “Sie schauen mich an, als wenn ich Ihre Sklavin wäre. Ich bin nicht Ihre Sklavin” (Schnittzler, “Fräulein Else” 372). Her public disrobing allows her to exercise her own agency, rather than succumb to the expectations of her parents, of Dorsday, or of everyone else who views her in the music salon.
In Gilman’s book *Freud, Race, and Gender*, he writes that during Freud’s time teaching in the Medical Faculty of Vienna, “the idea that Jews were predisposed to specific forms of mental illness was commonplace” (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 94-95). Gilman goes on to quote Georg Burgle’s claim from a 1912 medical handbook: “the Jewish race has a special predisposition for hysteria” (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 95). As a medical doctor, Schnitzler would almost certainly be aware of these ideas, and it seems quite plausible that a portion of Else’s character could be seen as a representation of this stereotype of Jewish hysteria. Gilman writes of Theodor Lessing’s claim that “the rejection of Jewish racial identity” led to mental illness (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 110). Else’s view of herself as an assimilated Jew who can easily hide her Jewishness reinforces this idea, and also points to her own self-hatred as the cause of her hysteria. The disgust that Else has for Dorsday can also be examined through this lens of hysteria brought on by self-hatred. Gilman asserts, “[t]he sexuality of the Other is always threatening” (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 110). Else, the assimilated Jew, views Dorsday as the other because of his obvious Jewish ethnicity. Her brief glimpse of his sexuality traumatizes her. According to Gilman, the cause of hysteria was sometimes seen as linked to a traumatic event (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 123). In the case of Else, the trauma that she suffers is brought on by the double bind that she is placed in by the wishes of her parents and Dorsday: that to remain a good, marriageable daughter, she must do something that such a daughter should never do. The pressure of this traumatic double bind
eventually leads to her asserting her own agency through a hysterical public disrobing, attempted physical suicide and completed social suicide. In comparison, although Gustl does not have a hysterical outburst as extreme as Else’s, one could see his brief obsession with an honor-bound suicide as the result of temporary hysteria brought on by the crisis of his public encounter with the baker.

The double binds faced by Gustl and Else reveal themselves in different ways. In Gustl’s case, his double bind is driven by the expectations placed on him by the honor code and culture of the Austro-Hungarian officer corps. Else’s double bind is fueled primarily by her parents’ expectation (and by extension, the expectation of fin de siècle Viennese society) that she play the role of a good middle-class daughter. In both cases, the pressures of their individual experience of the double bind contribute to their self-hatred, which, when viewed alongside the more privileged aspects of their identity, namely Gustl’s military and social rank, and Else’s bourgeois upbringing, serves as an indication of their status as outsider-insiders.
IV. CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on demonstrating how Gustl and Else are portrayed as outsider-insiders in Schnitzler’s fiction. However, they are not the only characters in his texts with complex social, economic, and cultural identities. On the contrary, there is evidence of the outsider-insider pattern that can be seen in other works of Schnitzler’s as well.

In Fräulein Else, in addition to Else herself, Dorsday can also be seen in the role of an outsider-insider, although for reasons somewhat different than Else and Gustl. While Dorsday and Else both enjoy relatively high social status (certainly higher than that of Gustl), as a male minor noble, Dorsday’s social standing would likely be seen as the higher of the three. Dorsday is also wealthier than both Else and Gustl. However, his obvious Jewishness gives him at least a partial outsider identity in fin de siècle culture.

Fridolin, the protagonist in Schnitzler’s 1926 novella Traumnovelle, can be seen as a further example of the outsider-insider dynamic. Like Schnitzler himself, Fridolin is a medical doctor. Fridolin has a successful career and enjoys the social, economic, and cultural status of the Viennese bourgeoisie. However, Fridolin suffers in his marriage, because his wife, Albertine, admits to him that she has dreamt of another man (Schnitzler, “Traumnovelle” 436-437). This threatens Fridolin’s masculinity and leads to jealousy on his part. As a bourgeois husband, Fridolin would ideally hold the most power within the marriage, but he realizes he is unable to control Albertine’s dreams, which leads him to experience
the crisis of being an outsider in his own marriage. In addition, when he sets
foot uninvited in a private party filled with masked and costumed guests, even
though he is clad in the same accoutrements as the other male masqueraders,
he is identified as not belonging. Although he is part of the privileged class in
Vienna, he is not of high enough status to be invited to this secret party.
Fridolin’s experience could be seen as an analogue to the experiences of the
double bind that middle-class Jews in Vienna might find themselves in.
Specifically, Gilman’s model that posits:

...as one approaches the norms set by the reference group, the
approbation of the group recedes. In one’s own eyes, one becomes
identical with the definition of acceptability and yet one is still not
accepted. For the ideal state is never to have been the Other, a state that
cannot be achieved. (Jewish Self-Hatred 3)

Fridolin has become almost identical to the reference group (in his case,
the guests at the private masquerade), going so far as to dress just like them,
but even so, he is quickly discovered and labeled an outsider, which is symbolic
of his perception of himself as an outsider within his own marriage. His attempt
to appear more like the reference group brings him even more trouble than if he
had not tried to join the group at all. Fridolin was already an outsider when
compared to this group, but the fact that he attempted to assimilate and join the
group brings their ire down upon him and his associates, such as the piano
player Nachtigall. Had he not tried to join the group, they would have likely left
him to his own devices. It should be noted that relative to the group at the
masquerade, Fridolin is such an outsider that he did not even know that the
group he attempts to join even existed before learning of the party from
Nachtigall (another outsider), even though the group is able to identify Fridolin.
Much like the episode with his wife’s dreams, this chips away at Fridolin’s
conception of himself as a successful bourgeois male with significant social
capital.

While the sources of otherness and the outsider status that it brings with
it vary among Schnitzler’s characters, they all share an inability to completely
free themselves of it and integrate seamlessly into the group they are trying to
join. Gustl survives his ordeal, but prepares to duel with his next opponent,
having learned little or nothing from his experience. Else’s fate is ambiguous,
but if she survives, her hysterical public breakdown all but ensures a loss of
social standing for her. Fridolin is traumatized by his experiences, and seems
unlikely to attempt to associate with such an exclusive group again. Ultimately,
the all too real experiences of Schnitzler and other members of the Jewish
community in fin de siècle Austria is echoed in the difficulty faced by Schnitzler’s
outsider-insider characters in their attempts to completely integrate into
Viennese society.
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