Fraulein Else

**Interior monologues (dreams)**

* Unfiltered access to Else’s thoughts; share in these thoughts as they are ‘born’.
* Narrative strategy- reader must work hard to follow textual clues ie. Who is talking, what and where is the character/ doing? Use of italics for direct speech that is then mediated through Else’s thoughts is a useful marker. Use of character’s names is also useful.
* (…) and dashes – interruptions/ trailing thoughts and text reproduces fragments as well. All of this can help the reader to feel that they are accessing an ‘authentic’ stream of consciousness.
* **Schnitzler offers us a supposedly unfiltered insight into the psyche of a young woman who finds herself helpless in a dilemma that had its roots in a centuries**- long tradition. In this sense, the interior monologue can be understood as the successor to the dramatic dialogue that has become impossible**, the stage for drama of the psyche can be nothing other than the psyche itself.**
* **‘the prevailing code of sexual morality, which smothered and repressed natural sexual desires’-** aesthetic portrayal accomplished through formal structure of inner monologue, through which Else’s psyche is layered, exposing her conscious, preconscious and unconscious activity.
* **Inner monologue underscores the elevated psychical conflict in relation to the inability for dialogue and discussion in what Bettina Mathias calls an ‘egocentric society’.** This literary form reflects the social and intellectual context of fin-de-siecle Vienna but allows the respective conflicts to be situated around and within one particular psyche.
* **The inner monologue lends itself to psychoanalysis because Else’s latent content becomes accessible through her preconscious thoughts-** inner monologue is a translation.
* **Fleeting preconscious thoughts are a translation of latent, metaphorical representations of desires, such as the content presented in Else’s dreams.**
* **Inner monologue exposes Else’s desires by underscoring contradictory thoughts, or by showing the contradiction between thoughts and spoken dialogue-** hidden desires, which are concealed in the psyche, become apparent in the inner monologue, thus Schnitzler establishes a social dialogue on external reality, established by the symptomatic monologue of internal reality.

**Gender roles**

* In these three categories; **female body ie. Daughter’s body** is main site of attention over which individual, family, and society negotiate their relationships.
* Status of female body as subject to male gaze and **woman’s self-positioning within power structure** will help to show how bourgeois tragedy has developed/ ended by 1924 which was the year novel was published.
* In every play, virginal body becomes the site or fetish over which the men in her life fight over.
* **The complete fusion of body and image, subject and object seems like the perfect state for Else, as it frees her from her social existence as the passive object of other people's gazes and participant in social games that she is not willing to play**

**Performance**

* For it is not the idea of exposing herself naked to a man that leads to Else's crisis. In her many daydreams and fantasies about herself as a "**femme fatale,"** she repeatedly imagines herself "lying naked on marble steps," exposed to the gaze of young desiring men that she controls. 23 Conscious of her beauty**, Else enjoys the idea of being seen and desired in a way** that would have been improper for Emilia Galotti.
* **Yet her rather "modern" enjoyment of her own body is conflicted.** For one, the narcissistic pleasure of excluding the other from her body while inviting his gaze shows how much Else has internalized the traditional taboo of premarital physical contact for women. Instead, when she admires herself in the mirror, she seeks to reunify her inner self with her social, outer appearance, to overcome the split and object:
* In order to protect her integrity, protect herself from male gaze, must resort to positing her beautiful body a dead body.
* Highly aware of her powerlessness in the face of the male gaze that objectifies her- her response is that of withdrawal. Symbolically and rhetorically, ultimately in the suicide following her revolutionary act of self-exposure.
* Whereas Emilia’s suicide is equally warranted by a need to withdraw from the threatening male gaze, **Else’s act is more emancipatory, even if self-destructive.**

**Space/ place**

* All manipulations and transactions occur behind closed doors- thus social reputation of daughter remains untouched, a major factor in her marketability as the potential wife of an ‘honourable’ man, parents can continue to claim their innocence.
* **In bourgeois tragedy**, **power** no longer emanates from a public position or title but merely from **money.** Schnitzler alluding to this. No accident that Else’s father is a lawyer- someone who negotiates conflicts for other people, commits a crime by speculating with money from a trust.
* All these subtle details paint a picture of a society that has lost its immediacy and grown use to a degree of alienation that allows the individual to pursue his egotistical, often sexual goals in the sheltered realm of agreed- upon conventions. Eg. Dorsay can approach Else with his chauvinist request under the pretext of a pleasant pre- dinner chat.
* When Else decided to withdraw from the symbolic fashionable tennis game with her cousin, she shows herself unwilling or unable to continue participating in the game of social interaction, consequently, makes herself vulnerable to society’s attacks on her integrity
* The fact that Dorsday's offer triggers a major crisis in Else thus points to more than simply this young woman's shock at being treated like a slave or a prostitute**. What becomes clear at this point is that there is a major difference in values between the daughter and other, especially male, characters in this tale**. This difference can be described as a paradigm shift from a middle-class society that is governed by moral and subject-cantered concerns to a new society in **which nothing but economic, that is capitalist interests (accumulation of wealth and pleasure) determine social interactions**. This shift leaves the young unmarried woman in complete limbo as it does not offer a new or active role for her, at least not as long as she is still the naive, loving daughter as defined by a century-old tradition.
* Else’s perception of her own body is guided mainly by ideals of the male gaze: red lips, breasts, white shoulders, neck and long legs- desirable attributes for men.
* Yet, she is existentially uneasy as the result is a completely fragmented female body that points to the fragmented, mutilated body of a young woman in a society that places a price tag on everything.

**Pathological behaviour vs. Normal reaction**

* In one blow, Else devalues her beautiful female body as potential ‘prey’ for individual males, only logical that her aunt and cousin think that she has gone mad. **After all, the entire drama takes place in Else’s mind,** the only person who could reveal her existential crisis is Dorsday, who will never speak up.
* In this regard, one could question validity or success of the rebellious act, some critics even go as far as calling Else’s suicide a failure as it could easily be read as an **act of madness or shame by her family.**

**Mirror, Father- daughter, Father- Dorsay**

* The tragic conflict has changed in nature-the tension between morals and drives is no longer there, **father and seducer have become almost identical.** The real conflict is for Else to reconcile her desire to obey and help her parents (inherited role of the daughter) and her refusal to let herself be subjected to the soulless laws of a business deal by both Dorsay and her parents.

**Illness/ social ‘demise’**

**Wish fulfilment**

**Fraulein Else and the End of the Bourgeois Tragedy:**

* *‘The noble daughter sells herself for the sake of her beloved father and ends up finding great joy in it*. – Arthur Schnitzler.
* Fraulein Else is Schnitzler’s variation of the themes: - **Female sexuality, the place of the daughter in the early twentieth- century family, impact of modern socio- economic realities, especially capitalism, on the private sphere and the family.**
* View novella in context of bourgeois society. (As a ‘late bourgeois tragedy, yet does not fill all expectations of one)
* ‘bourgeois tragedy in prose’: **main character constellation (father- daughter- seducer), distribution of power in constellation, ideological institution of the bourgeois family as the ‘stage’ on which the tragedy is acted out.**
* In these three categories; **female body ie. Daughter’s body** is main site of attention over which individual, family, and society negotiate their relationships.
* Status of female body as subject to male gaze and **woman’s self-positioning within power structure** will help to show how bourgeois tragedy has developed/ ended by 1924 which was the year novel was published.
* Else written in the form of a ‘LATE bourgeois tragedy’, rather than a drama as he answers it was better suited for the form of the interior monologue. Features key aspects of bourgeois tragedy, thus set up for a specific literary experience.
* **Bourgeois tragedy-** tragic hero (typically female) in situation that challenges her loyalty and emotional bond to her family (father in particular), challenged by potentially sexual attraction to someone who is from a socially superior group and is therefore taboo, both socially and morally.
* Conflict between love and duty, class and human emotions, family and outer world puts heroine in a dilemma that ends fatally.
* In every play, virginal body becomes the site or fetish over which the men in her life fight over.
* Feminist criticism recognized the almost ironic self- destructive tendencies of the male- dominated bourgeoisie that would prefer to enslave or destroy the female body before handing it to ‘the enemy’.
* TWO MAIN CHARACTERSITICS: **‘The threat to the preservation of female virtue’** (threatened by socially more privileged seducer figure) (featured in Else). Bourgeois duty to **‘recognize and preserve the class- difference as natural and god- given’**. Female has little say in both instances.
* ***Emilia Galotti***- best known/ first important bourgeois tragedy. Her ‘existence is defined by aesthetic criteria, and whose beauty is posited as the signifier for her moral integrity and conformity to her father’s ideals of virtue an autonomy’. ‘Owning’ perfect daughter is biggest advantage father has.
* **Fraulein Else as a response-** Conflict in Else is different in comparison to *Emilia Gotti*: Emilia’s body was the symbol of power by which the father (bourgeois morals) and seducer (corrupted upper class) fight over, yet in Else, she is the object with high erotic value; father tries to sell/ trade daughter for the loan, seducer can openly bid for the possession of her body.
* Neither father/ mother provides her with the ideologically motivated protection that Odoardo (emilia father) guarantees his daughter.
* Both parents know the danger to which they expose their daughter: p.254. Parents have redefined the ‘rules of engagement’ in this bourgeois family. They exploit the traditionally vulnerable position of the loving daughter in order to capitalize on her beautiful body, thus realizing its erotic potential, which fathers like Odoardo Galotti tried to keep under lock.
* All manipulations and transactions occur behind closed doors- thus social reputation of daughter remains untouched, a major factor in her marketability as the potential wife of an ‘honourable’ man, parents can continue to claim their innocence.
* **In bourgeois tragedy**, **power** no longer emanates from a public position or title but merely from **money.** Schnitzler alluding to this. No accident that Else’s father is a lawyer- someone who negotiates conflicts for other people, commits a crime by speculating with money from a trust.
* All these subtle details paint a picture of a society that has lost its immediacy and grown use to a degree of alienation that allows the individual to pursue his egotistical, often sexual goals in the sheltered realm of agreed- upon conventions. Eg. Dorsay can approach Else with his chauvinist request under the pretext of a pleasant pre- dinner chat.
* When Else decided to withdraw from the symbolic fashionable tennis game with her cousin, she shows herself unwilling or unable to continue participating in the game of social interaction, consequently, makes herself vulnerable to society’s attacks on her integrity.
* The fact that Dorsday's offer triggers a major crisis in Else thus points to more than simply this young woman's shock at being treated like a slave or a prostitute**. What becomes clear at this point is that there is a major difference in values between the daughter and other, especially male, characters in this tale**. This difference can be described as a paradigm shift from a middle-class society that is governed by moral and subject-cantered concerns to a new society in **which nothing but economic, that is capitalist interests (accumulation of wealth and pleasure) determine social interactions. This shift leaves the young unmarried woman in complete limbo as it does not offer a new or active role for her**, at least not as long as she is still the naive, loving daughter as defined by a century-old tradition.
* The tragic conflict has changed in nature-the tension between morals and drives is no longer there, **father and seducer have become almost identical.** The real conflict is for Else to reconcile her desire to obey and help her parents (inherited role of the daughter) and her refusal to let herself be subjected to the soulless laws of a business deal by both Dorsay and her parents.
* For it is not the idea of exposing herself naked to a man that leads to Else's crisis. In her many daydreams and fantasies about herself as a "femme fatale," she repeatedly imagines herself "lying naked on marble steps," exposed to the gaze of young desiring men that she controls. 23 Conscious of her beauty, Else enjoys the idea of being seen and desired in a way that would have been improper for Emilia Galotti.
* **Yet her rather "modern" enjoyment of her own body is conflicted.** For one, the narcissistic pleasure of excluding the other from her body while inviting his gaze shows how much Else has internalized the traditional taboo of premarital physical contact for women. Instead, when she admires herself in the mirror, she seeks to reunify her inner self with her social, outer appearance, to overcome the split and object: p.255
* **The complete fusion of body and image, subject and object seems like the perfect state for Else, as it frees her from her social existence as the passive object of other people's gazes and participant in social games that she is not willing to play.**
* Else’s perception of her own body is guided mainly by ideals of the male gaze: red lips, breasts, white shoulders, neck and long legs- desirable attributes for men.
* Yet, she is existentially uneasy as the result is a completely fragmented female body that points to the fragmented, mutilated body of a young woman in a society that places a price tag on everything.
* Aestheticizing the female body- strategy got Odoardo handling his daughter’s body- no longer suffices in the early twentieth century in order to protect woman from male environment.
* In order to protect her integrity, protect herself from male gaze, must resort to positing her beautiful body a dead body.
* Highly aware of her powerlessness in the face of the male gaze that objectifies her- her response is that of **withdrawal.** Symbolically and rhetorically, ultimately in the suicide following her revolutionary act of self-exposure.
* Whereas Emilia’s suicide is equally warranted by a need to withdraw from the threatening male gaze, **Else’s act is more emancipatory, even if self-destructive.**
* **Direct connection between nakedness and money, being treated as a commodity and thus powerless that fuels her crisis.**
* By exposing herself naked to a group of people, she is undermining Dorsay’s position of power as the one who dictates the situation.
* She is transformed into a public spectacle, and thus withdraws the power of the gaze from the individual and reassigns it to a group, by which a man’s individual pleasure would be deemed inappropriate.
* In one blow, Else devalues her beautiful female body as potential ‘prey’ for individual males, only logical that her aunt and cousin think that she has gone mad. **After all, the entire drama takes place in Else’s mind**, the only person who could reveal her existential crisis is Dorsday, who will never speak up.
* In this regard, one could question validity or success of the rebellious act, some critics even go as far as calling Else’s suicide a failure as it could easily be read as an **act of madness or shame by her family.**
* On the other hand, in context of bourgeois society/ tragedies, her dropping of the cloak marks a moment of no return in the literary history of the bourgeois daughter. She exposes the body over which fathers, seducers, families, societies have fought for centuries- she dismisses the cultural construct of the enigmatic, dangerous and symbolic female body that needs protection and against which society needs to be protected.
* Once exposed, trying to cover up is nothing but a pitiful effort to repair the damage that this act has done to the male ego of society.
* **By neither sacrificing nor prostituting herself, Else has created a space for the female body that resists male domination and allows the fragmented body to become whole again.**
* Notion of ‘home’ is lost; family is nothing but an accidental blood relation. Major shifts in the daughter’s position within the family, society.
* Any communication is limited to social small talk, most of which has no content, merely serves to provide an agreeable atmosphere in which more physical or substantial interests can be pursued.
* **People do not really talk to each other anymore in the society portrayed in the novella**. Without this human interaction there can be no drama.
* **Schnitzler offers us a supposedly unfiltered insight into the psyche of a young woman who finds herself helpless in a dilemma that had its roots in a centuries**- long tradition. In this sense, the interior monologue can be understood as the successor to the dramatic dialogue that has become impossible**, the stage for drama of the psyche can be nothing other than the psyche itself.**
* **‘the prevailing code of sexual morality, which smothered and repressed natural sexual desires’-** aesthetic portrayal accomplished through formal structure of inner monologue, through which Else’s psyche is layered, exposing her conscious, preconscious and unconscious activity.
* **Inner monologue underscores the elevated psychical conflict in relation to the inability for dialogue and discussion in what Bettina Mathias calls an ‘egocentric society’.** This literary form reflects the social and intellectual context of fin-de-siecle Vienna but allows the respective conflicts to be situated around and within one particular psyche.
* **The inner monologue lends itself to psychoanalysis because Else’s latent content becomes accessible through her preconscious thoughts-** inner monologue is a translation.
* **Fleeting preconscious thoughts are a translation of latent, metaphorical representations of desires, such as the content presented in Else’s dreams.**
* **Inner monologue exposes Else’s desires by underscoring contradictory thoughts, or by showing the contradiction between thoughts and spoken dialogue-** hidden desires, which are concealed in the psyche, become apparent in the inner monologue, thus Schnitzler establishes a social dialogue on external reality, established by the symptomatic monologue of internal reality.

Q:

1. According to Marianne Knoben-Wauben: “Die Protagonistin **Schnitzlers verkörpert nicht einen psychologischen Krankheitsfall, sondern einen sozialen.”** Discuss this with reference to the portrayal of Else in Schnitzler’s Fräulein Else. To what extent could both readings be possible?
2. Dreams, **in Freud’s view**, were all forms of **“wish fulfilment”** by which the unconscious tries to resolve some form of conflict which may be recent or from the recesses of the past. Discuss the role of dreams in two of the following texts: Schnitzler’s Fräulein Else, Walser’s Jakob von Gunten, Mann’s Der Tod in Venedig.
3. Focusing **on interior monologue**, analyse the following passage from Schnitzler’s Fräulein Else and its significance for the novella as a whole. To what extent does this passage exemplify **Freud’s** notion of “**Wunscherfüllung”?**
4. Modern literature challenges **conventional gender roles.** Compare and contrast the representation of gender roles in two of the following texts: Kafka’s Die Verwandlung; Schnitzler’s Fräulein Else, Mann’s Der Tod in Venedig, Walser’s Jakob von Gunten . You must base your argument on examples from the texts.

CONTEXT

* **Bourgeois tragedy:** tragic hero (female), loyalty and emotional bond to family (father) will be challenged. Potential sexual attraction to someone from a socially superior group (taboo)
* **Characteristics**: threat to preservation of female virtue (threatened by socially more privileged seducer). Preserve the class difference as naturally god given.
* **Virginal body of the female becomes the site of fetish by which the men in her life fight over**.
* **Power no longer emanates from a public position but from money**.
* **As a response, FE written in the form of a ‘late**’ bourgeois tragedy in order to show how the genre has developed, ended with FE in 1924 when it was published. Thus, FE does not fulfil all genre expectations.

Gender roles.

* Parents have redefined the rules of engagement in this bourgeois family. Whereby they exploit the traditionally vulnerable position of the daughter in order to capitalize on her body. Typically, the female virtue would be protected by the father – not fulfil genre expectations.
* Dorsay’s offer to pay in order to see Else naked is indicative of the distinct differences in values between woman and the other males- difference can be described as a paradigm shift from a middle- class society governed by moral and subject- cantered concerns to a new society, by which nothing but economic, that is capitalist interests eg .wealth determine social interactions. Both men, Dorsay and her father have essentially assumed the same role in wanting to exploit Else in order to fulfil their needs.
* As a result, Else is left in a state of limbo as her situation does not offer her a new active role.
* Else’s main conflict: to reconcile her desire to obey and help her parents/ refusal to be subjected by the soulless laws of a business deal by both Dorsay and her father.
* NOT the idea of exposing herself to a man that is the cause of her dilemma. Thus, her exposing herself to a group of people is not an episode of hysteria as the story would intend us to believe.
* Through her daydreams/ fantasies/ interior monologue, we as the reader are given access to her pre-conscious thoughts and desires. In which, she imagines herself lying on marble steps, exposed to a desiring man who she controls.
* Yet, her ‘modern’ enjoyment of her body is conflicted: the narcissistic pleasure of excluding the other whilst inviting his gaze shows how much Else has internalized the traditional taboo of premarital physical contact with men.
* Although her interaction with the mirror could be interpreted as a narcissistic episode- actually her seeking to reunify her inner self and her social, outer appearance to overcome the split between object and subject.
* Complete fusion of image and body, subject and image= perfect state for Else, frees her from her social existence as the passive object of other people’s gaze and participant in social games she is not willing to play.
* In order to protect her integrity, must resort to exposing herself to a group of people, by doing so she is undermining Dorsay’s position as the one who dictates the situation.
* She is transformed into a public spectacle, thus withdraws the power of the gaze from the individual and assigns it to a group.
* Instantly devalues her body, and in context of bourgeois society, marks a moment of no return in literary history for the ‘bourgeois daughter’. Exposes the body by which father/ seducers/ society has fought over/ tried to protect- EMACIPATORY.

Interior monologue

* Permits the reader to share the heroine’s thoughts, emotions, unconscious wishes- nevertheless, still question her personality.
* **On the one hand,** Else was, even before Dorsay incident a fatally morbid personality, doomed to suicide.
* Many have assigned Else with the ‘Oepidus complex’, by assigning this to Else, Dorsay assumes the role of paternal authority through his wealth be becomes the surrogate father through whom Else can consummate her repressed desires- dominant physical framework.
* Additionally, within text itself, hysteria mentioned to be the likely explanation of Else’s bizarre conduct of exposing herself.
* Product of the sickness of ‘late bourgeois society’. Limbo state, governed by capitalist interests, role of the bourgeois daughter left in a dilemma.
* **On the other hand,** seen as normal. – challenge gender roles.
* Her exposing herself as a result of reconciling her desire to obey and help her family/ refusal to be subject to soulless business deal involving her father and Dorsay.
* In light of the interaction with mirror, could be considered as an narcissistic/ pathological episode. Actually her seeking to reunify her inner self/ w her social outer appearance to overcome the split between subject and object.
* ‘modern’ enjoyment of herself is conflicted.
* Merging of body and image is a perfect state, frees her
* Exposing herself in order to protect her integrity. Undermines Dorsay’s position. Public spectacle. Withdraws power of gaze from individual and assigns it to a group.
* Devalues her body. Marks a point of no return for ‘bourgeois daughter’ in literary bourgeois context. Exposes body in which father/ seducers/ society has fought over, tried to protect.