

**In the Trap of Disvalue.
The loss of money, love,
and self-esteem as a narrative matrix***

ROBERTA PATALANO

Parthenope University of Naples

Abstract

Through Schnitzler's short stories Night Games and Fräulein Else I will address the role of loss – in gambling, affect and self-esteem – as a narrative matrix. In both stories, money can be interpreted as a symbol of unresolved psychic dynamics and the central theme appears to be the process of attributing value: to money, but also to relationships with others and even to oneself. The "loss of value" becomes ruinous and brings the main characters to suicide.

Keywords: loss; guilt; self-narrative; conflict; choice.

* I thank Marina Bianchi and Bruna Ingrao for their useful comments on a first draft of the paper.