

**ERIKA'S MOTHER POSSESSIVENESS IN ELFRIEDE
JELINEK'S *THE PIANO TEACHER***

A THESIS

**Presented in a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Completing the Sarjana Degree in Departement of English
Language and Literature**



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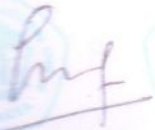
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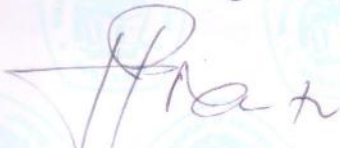
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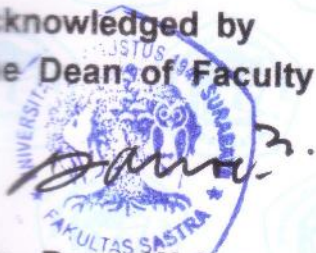
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Surabaya, 9 Februari 2015

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Elfriede Jelinek is an Austrian novelist, poet and playwright, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 2004. Elfriede Jelinek's most famous novels include *Wonderful, Wonderful Times* (1980), *The Piano Teacher* (1983), and *Lust* (1989). Due to her themes of dominance and submission she has often been regarded essentially as a feminist writer, although in Jelinek's work women's subordination basically illuminate the relations of power, control, and manipulation in class societies.

Elfriede Jelinek was born in the alpine resort of Mürzzuschlag, but she grew up in Vienna. Jelinek's father, Friedrich Jelinek, a chemist, was of Czech-Jewish origin. He died in 1969 in a mental hospital. Jelinek's mother, Olga, was from a well to do Catholic family, she died in 2000. Jelinek was the only child of her parents, who relatively old when he was born, her father being 46 and her mother being 42.

From 1960 Jelinek studied piano and organ at the famous Music Conservatory. After graduating from high school, she studied theatre and art history for a few months at the university. Jelinek collapsed mentally, and left her studies. The strick training toward perfection added to a self-consciousness of the body; her characters are constantly at odds with their physical organs.

In 1967 Jelinek devoted herself entirely to writing. Her first book, *Lisas Schatten* (1967, Lisa's Shadow), was a collection of poems. Jelinek's early works were written under the influence of Dadaism, Expressionism and the so-called Vienna group, established by the writer H. C. Artmann. In 1974, Jelinek married

Gottfried Hüngsberg, who worked in several films with German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Between the years 1974 and 1991 she was a member the Austrian Communist Party. However, she never adopted the standard aesthetic doctrines of the Socialist Realism.

Mental and sexual problems are intertwined in the lives of Jelinek's characters. The themes of sex, sadism, and authoritarianism in modern day Austria were further developed in *Die Klavierspielerin* (1983, The Piano Teacher), partly autobiographical novel about the love-hate relationship of mother and daughter. In the story Erika Kohut, a piano teacher, lives with her tyrannical Mother (with capital "M") and entangles one of her students, Walter, in her secret, manipulative and self-destructive way of life. Walter rapes her and she returns to her mother, unable to kill Walter or commit suicide. Jelinek has described Erika as "a phallic woman who appropriates the male right to watch, and therefore pays for it with her life."

The film version of the novel, directed by Michael Haneke and starring Isabelle Huppert, won in 2001 three major prizes at the Cannes Film Festival. *Lust* (1989), in which insatiable sexual hunger of a paper plant director is paralleled with capitalistic greed, provoked accusations of pornographic sadism. Jelinek's argument was, that sexual relationships in class societies are power structures. Jelinek regards fashion as tool of power. In the 1990s, she adopted the "Heidi-look" with braids, red cap, and quasi-folkloristic dress as an ironic statement and for an interview with *Stern* magazine he had herself photographed tied-up in kinky fashion.

Jelinek's dramas continue the anti-theater tradition created by Bertolt Brecht, which rejects illusions to create distance between the audience and the actors. "Ich will kein Theater," Jelinek once said. *Totenauberg* (1991), which premiered in Vienna, dealt with the legacy of the Nazi era through the famous relationship of Martin Heidegger, who joined the Nazi party in 1933, and Hannah Arendt, his student, who was of Jewish origin. In her most acclaimed play of the 1990s, *Ein Sportstück*, Jelinek associated sports with mass movements, war, and death. *Der Tod und das Mädchen IV: Jackie* (2003, Death and the Maiden IV: Jackie) resuscitated Jacqueline Kennedy from death and presented her as a vampire. Also the play *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (1987, Illness; or, Modern Women) featured women as the undead.

Jelinek has also written an opera libretto for Olga Neuwirth's *Lost Highway*, based on David Lynch's script and film. Two of her plays, *Bambiland*, partly inspired by Aeschylus' *The Persians*, and the sequel, *Babel*, have dealt with the Iraq war; in the latter its media reality is associated with porn. One of Jelinek's favorite playwrights is Georges Feydeau (1862-1921), whose comedies she has translated into German.

In addition to the Nobel Prize, Jelinek had received numerous awards, including Heinrich Böll Prize (1986) for her contribution to the German literature, the Büchner Prize (1998), Germany's most important distinction for letters, and Lessing Prize for Criticism (2004). Jelinek has also translated works by Goethe and Botho Strauss. Confessing she suffers from a "social phobia", Jelinek

decided not attend the Nobel Prize ceremony. She also moved from the house her father bought because its address was too well-known.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is aimed at identifying how Erika's mother possessiveness is reflected in the novel, analyzing the causes of Erika's mother possessiveness and the effects of Erika's mother possessiveness on Erika's character. The object of this study is Elfriede Jelinek's novel *The Piano Teacher*. The data of the study are words, phrases, or sentences from the novel that express the topic. The data were collected by reading the novel several times, identifying some parts of the story that were dealt with the topic, inventorizing the data and classifying the inventorized data and selecting the data to be analyzed using relevant quotes. The relevant theories and concepts applied in this study are character, psychology of literature and the concept of possessiveness. Based on the analysis, the writer can conclude that Erika's mother is a possessive person. She is controlling every aspect of her daughter's life. There are three causes of Erika's mother possessiveness. They are Erika's mother background, Erika's mother motivation, and Erika's mother action. Erika's mother possessiveness gives some negative impacts to her daughter, Erika. Because of her mother possessive character, Erika suffers psychosexual disorder, becomes bridled, etc. From the analysis, the writer learned that parents should not be too possessive in raising their children because children are not parent's possession. And parents should raise and educate their children in a right way so that they will grow healthyly and are able to develop good characters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval Sheet	i
Acknowledgement	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi
Chapter I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	2
1.3 Objective of the Study	3
1.4 Significance of the Study	3
1.5 Scope and Limitation	3
1.6 Research Method	4
1.7 Organization of the Study	4
Chapter II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	6
2.1 Character	6
2.2 Psychology of Literature	9
2.3 The Concept of Possessiveness	10
Chapter III ANALYSIS	18
3.1 Erika's Mother Possessiveness	19
3.2 The Causes of Erika's Mother Possessiveness	26
3.3 The Effects of Erika's Mother Possessiveness on Erika's Character	29
Chapter IV CONCLUSION	43
Bibliography	45
Synopsis	47
Author's Biography	50

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