

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

The evolution of a person's love-life from childhood into adulthood requires both attachments and separations. To evolve into a mature and developed adult who is able to give and receive love, a person have to master both attaching to and separating from people whom he/she loves.

The most common difficulty in an adult child's inability is to separate from an over-attachment to his/her own mother. When mothers are possessive, they hold onto their children beyond the point when separation is required to mature them as people.

The possessive mother discourages most of all of her child's efforts to separate from her. In some cases, possessive mothers become jealous, and in some extreme cases, they might have a "sexualized" interest in their developing child.

In *The Piano Teacher*, Elfriede Jelinek describes the character of Erika's mother as a possessive mother who wants to utilize the child's life herself. She shows an excessive desire to possess, control, and dominate Erika. She wishes and imagines her daughter as a famous concert pianist without considering her daughter's feeling.

Erika's mother possessive character gives bad effects on Erika's character. Erika's mother possessiveness, the causes of Erika's mother possessiveness, and the effects of Erika's mother possessiveness on Erika's character will be discussed in the following sub-sub chapters.

### 3.1 Erika's Mother Possessiveness

Without question, in *The Piano Teacher* the main player in Erika Kohut's life is her mother, a housewife who has always harbored great dreams and high aspirations for her daughter's career, but none of them have come true. In the novel, Erika seems to be a caricature of a woman and her life is a case-study of someone who is trapped in a neurotic mother-daughter relationship, like in the quotation below:

“She puts Erika against the wall, under interrogation – inquisitor and executioner in one, unanimously recognized as Mother by the State and the Family. She investigates: Why has Erika come home so late?..... (Jelinek, 1983: 3).”

“Even here, in this dump, which is slowly falling to pieces, Erika already has her own realm, her own roost, which she rules and is ruled in. It is only a provisional realm; Mother can walk in at any time. There is no lock on Erika's door. A child has no secrets from her mother (Jelinek, 1983: 5).”

“Mother is against Erika's marrying later on, because “my daughter could never fit in or submit anywhere.” That's the way she is. She's no sapling anymore. She's unyielding. So she shouldn't marry (Jelinek, 1983: 13).”

“Her mother can ring her up there in an emergency. Or else Erika enjoys performing with congenial colleagues, exuberantly playing chamber music. Her mother can telephone her at such times too (Jelinek, 1983: 6).”

“Tonight, when they're watching TV, she'll give Erika the silent treatment. And if Mother does break the silence, she'll tell Erika that everything Mother does is motivated by Love. Mother will declare her love for Erika, which should excuse any possible mistakes that Mother might make (Jelinek, 1983: 210).”

From the quotations above, we can see that every aspect of Erika's existence is ruled by the nagging, physically abusive input of Erika's mother. Erika must account for every minute of her time, and every cent of her wages. She is allowed no privacy, no dignity, no external interests. She is disturbed with phone calls

when out, and interrogated when she returns home. She is physically and mentally abused by her mother who uses "love" as her main weapon.

The first glimpse of Erika and her mother is not one of a mother and daughter but more like Erika as a woman in her thirties living with her elderly mother. She is first pictured as a really energetic woman who burst like a whirlwind when she comes into the apartment she shares with her mother. Even her mother calls her as Mother's speed demon, like in the following quotation:

“Mama likes calling Erika her little whirlwind, for the child can be an absolute speed demon (Jelinek, 1983: 3).”

From the quotation above, we can see that Erika's mother still considers that Erika is her baby who still needs her mother to decide every action that she must take.

Erika's world revolves around her mother. She controls every aspect of her daughter's life. It is the mother who stays at home and prepares their meals and take care maintaining the apartment while Erika is at work. It is also the mother who controls what Erika wears. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Mother can't always prevent Erika from buying something, but she can dictate what Erika puts on (Jelinek, 1983: 9).”

The above quotation shows that Erika's mother instead of being a caring mother, unconsciously being “the absolute ruler”. She decides what Erika will wear outside the house. She has become a tyrant and dictator. Erika on the other hand has ceased being a daughter and become an object or property controlled and owned by her mother, the proprietor. As the proprietor, her mother keeps a vigilant eye on her property, strives at all costs and never lets it out of her sight. As the proprietor her mother believes that she has made an investment in her

property, and the best way to ensure lasting returns on an investment would be to ensure that her property does not stay out of her control, as written in the novel:

“Mother worries a lot, for the first thing a proprietor learns, and painfully at that, is: Trust is fine, but control is better. Her greatest anxiety is to keep her property immovable, tie it down, so it won’t run away. That’s why they have the TV set, which prefabricates, packages, and home-delivers lovely images, lovely actions (Jelinek, 1983: 5).”

From the quotation above we can see that Erika’s mother has sought to keep her child, her property, as far from the influences of the outside world as possible. Erika has not been properly weaned from her mother, and as a result she has been denied a life of independence.

Mother prefers to inflict her own child rather than to see her daughter to be injured by another thing, her child’s own doing for example. Mother keeps her eye on Erika as she feels bound to her daughter to such an extent. She makes sure every aspect of her daughter’s life becomes as she expected. Thus, she makes sure that Erika is never out of her sight, not to be out of control, and remains immovable. Erika on the other hand is unable to act on her own wishes as she is always under her mother supervision.

Erika’s mother makes various prohibitions to Erika such as buying flirtatious bright or even simply dress or putting make up that her mother pictures Erika as a clown. Mother does it as a reason of protecting her from dangerous of the world and to prevent Erika to enter strange homes with strange men in them. She gives Erika such glorious, yet lonely reality that seem to suit her daughter but to be more specific to suit Mother.

Mother's actions for Erika though signifies other things, this kind of act signifies reluctance to give up the possession, which in this case her daughter, and impulse to retain the dominating position which she has occupied on her own house. Mother indeed dominates over Erika's life even though she is the one who stays home, prepares their meal, and takes care of the maintenance of the apartment while Erika is at work, making the money they need. Mother is both mother and father to Erika since her father has ceased to exist in Erika's life since she was born to this life. So Mother is a king in her apartment as she gains power over it and her child is as one of her property. Thus, everything she says should become rules that must be followed by her child.

Calvin S. Hall in *The Theory of Personality* states that there are 17 characteristics of possessiveness, and some of them are related to Erika's mother character, which are:

1. Making her daughter's decision.

Erika's mother always takes control of every decision that she makes. The protagonist's mother willfully forced her daughter to be a world-famous concert pianist, that was her mother's ideal for her. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Mother makes a cutting remark: if SHE were left to her own devices, SHE would show more enthusiasm for some young man than for her piano-playing (Jelinek, 1983: 35).”

It seems that whether Erika likes it or not, her life's path has been laid out for her since she was born. Since then, Erika's life has been governed by the pursuit of her mother's aspiration.

2. Love is the reason of possessiveness.

Erika's mother always claims that everything she does to Erika is based on how much she loves and cares her. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Out of breath, Mother sinks into a kitchen chair, surrounded by the ruins of the meal. No lesser person than she must now pick everything up. At least it'll take her mind off her problems. Tonight, when they're watching TV, she'll give Erika the silent treatment. And if Mother does break the silence, she'll tell Erika that everything Mother does is motivated by Love. Mother will declare her love for Erika, which should excuse any possible mistakes that Mother might make (Jelinek, 1983: 210).”

Erika's mother resumes all aspects of Erika's possible wishes and needs. She bases their relationship on a distorted understanding of love and duty.

3. Inquisitive.

Erika's mother was extremely inquisitive about everything that goes in her daughter's life. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“She puts Erika against the wall, under interrogation – inquisitor and executioner in one, unanimously recognized as Mother by the State and the Family. She investigates: Why has Erika come home so late? (Jelinek, 1983: 3).”

Although Erika is not a young woman, the mother expects her to be at home in time. Mother keeps her eye on Erika as she feels bound to her daughter to such an extent. She makes sure that every aspect of her daughter's life becomes as she has expected. Thus, she makes sure that Erika never out of her sight, ensures her not to be out of control, and remains immovable.

4. There is no secret between them.

Erika's mother wants to know all about her daughter's life, even if it is a secret thing. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Even here, in this dump, which is slowly falling to pieces, Erika already has her own realm, her own roost, which she rules and is ruled in. It is only a provosional realm; Mother can walk in at any time. There is no lock on Erika’s door. A child has no secrets from her mother (Jelinek, 1983: 5).”

It can be seen clearly that even though Erika has her own room, she is not allowed to lock her room. Her mother wants to fully take control of her daughter’s life. She does not want Erika to hide a secret behind her.

#### 5. When Erika is out.

Everytime Erika goes out, her mother always calls her up and makes her go home. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Time around Erika is slowly turning into a plaster cast..... Mother has called her up, making her a laughingstock, and Erika is forced to admit: I have to go home now. Home..... Mother says: Erika suits me just fine the way she is. Nothing more will come of her (Jelinek, 1983: 6).”

The mother feels that everything she does to Erika is for her goodness and she says that Erika suits her just fine as a proof that she is proud to see her daughter always follows her will.

#### 6. Her friends are flawed.

Erika is managed to never have a relationship. Mother never lets her to have any other relationship. Her relationship with other people is very limited. The mother does this to prevent Erika from temptation. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Mother also controls the general demand for her daughter, so that ultimately fewer and fewer people wish to see Erika, or even speak to her. Erika’s vocation is her avocation: the celestial power known as music. Music fills her time completely. Her time has no room for anything else (Jelinek, 1983: 6).”

Erika is deprived of the contacts with other people, because her mother thinks that she is too sophisticated and talented to mingle with them and might get influenced into doing ordinary things and forget about her practicing piano playing. Erika must dedicate all her time only to music.

7. No space.

Erika's mother hates space. Even in Erika's fortyish, she still shares the same bed with her mother. There is an almost complete lack of private external space for Erika. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Erika's living space consists of her own small room, where she can do as she pleases. No one may interfere; this room is her property (Jelinek, 1983: 5).”

Actually Erika has her own room but the reason why she shares the same bed with her mother is because her mother never lets her child out of her sight. Her mother keeps Erika as her property and as the proprietor her mother believes that she has made an investment in her property, and the best way to ensure the lasting returns on an investment would be to ensure that her property does not stay out of her control.

8. Her world revolves around her daughter's.

Erika's mother wants to be the center of her daughter's life. She forces her daughter to give her preferential attention over everyone else. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“But Mother, who doesn't dare do what she'd like to do, sticks to Erika infectiously, like a burr or a leech. Mother is sucking the marrow from Erika's bones. What Erika knows from her secret observations, Mama knows; and what Erika is in reality, a genius – why, no one knows that better than her mama, who knows the child inside and out (Jelinek, 1983: 99).”



The above quotation shows that Erika's mother expressly wants her child to stay tied to her mother. She knows all about her daughter and also what is the best for her daughter to prevent the loss of the daughter's loyalty.

#### 9. No having fun.

Erika does not have time for having fun. Her mother rejects it. Mother controls and demands Erika to continuously practice playing piano to help her to be a famous concert pianist. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Instead, she sits at her piano, pounding away at her long-discarded career as a concert pianist. Or else she's an evil spirit, haunting some rehearsal with her students. Her mother can ring her up there in an emergency. Or else Erika enjoys performing with congenial colleagues, exuberantly playing chamber music. Her mother can telephone her at such times too. Erika pulls against apron strings, she repeatedly begs her mother not to telephone. But mother ignores her pleas, for she alone dictates the shalts and shalt-nots (Jelinek, 1983: 6).”

Erika's mother uses her authorization as a mother and also a father for her to make Erika follow everything that she demands. Her mother thinks that she knows what is the best for her and having fun is a waste of time and does not help her to be a success concert pianist.

### **3.2 The Causes of Erika's Mother Possessiveness**

There are three causes of Erika's mother possessiveness. The first cause of Erika's mother possessiveness is she being a single-parent. Erika's mother has been a single parent since Erika was born. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“The baby was born after long and difficult years of marriage. Her father promptly left, passing the torch to his daughter. Erika entered, her father exited (Jelinek, 1983: 3).”

The above quote is an evidence that Erika’s mother has been left alone with only baby Erika because the father has been assigned in asylum. This signifies that the marriage life of Erika’s mother is not satisfying and she probably gets traumatic since never in the story Mother shows any interest in other people except Erika. In fact she sorts whomever to be near Erika. She excludes everybody.

Mother feels insecure and really fears that Erika will come to other people and leave her alone so she uses her power as a mother to control her daughter’s life. She probably also does not want Erika to be detached from her by making Erika as miserable as her life in term of romantic relationship and has no one else except Mother. She makes Erika emotionally depend on her because she feels lonely without her husband and she thinks that Erika is the only one who she has and she needs. She wants to prevent Erika from being reshaped by a man. She intends to utilize Erika’s life for her own satisfaction, to use her to fulfill her dreams for glories, and to keep this “property” all to herself.

The second cause of Erika’s mother possessiveness is her ambition to get rich. In the novel, it is described that Erika’s mother is old enough to be Erika’s grandmother so she does not have any job and only gets a tiny pension. That is why the mother takes a central place as a caretaker who nourishes the daughter, but at the same time makes her indebted for the care and takes her advantage in control over the daughter and denies her separation. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Mother screams: You’ve squandered your future! We could have had a new apartment someday, but you couldn’t wait. All you’ve got now is a rag..... Mother wants everything someday (Jelinek, 1983: 4).”

The above quote explains that the mother has her own interest in Erika’s success. She plans to buy a new apartment and rigorously controls her daughter’s spending. Even she is mad if Erika buys a dress. Erika’s mother is fear that if Erika is well-dressed, Erika will run the risk of attracting male attention, which she does not like. For this reason, although Erika’s wardrobe consists of many attractive and flattering items, Erika has never worn them, and her existing dress sense caters to her mother’s dictates.

“Mother chose a career for Erika when her daughter was still young. It had to be an artistic profession, so she could squeeze money out of the arduously achieved perfection, while average types would stand around the artist, admiring her, applauding her. Now, Erika has at least been patted into perfection. Such a girl was not meant to do crude things, heavy manual labor, housework. She was destined, congenitally, for the subtleties of classical dance, song, music (Jelinek, 1983: 24).”

The above quotation shows that Erika’s mother just thinks about her ambition to buy a large condominium without care about her daughter’s feelings or needs. Erika’s mother values money above all things, even above Erika’s dignity and her individuality. Mother decides that there should be no holidays for Erika and art should pursue Erika everywhere. All the demands made by her mother indicates that Erika’s happiness is not included in the plan of her purpose. By using violence as a means of disciplining and subordinating, the mother requires the daughter to keep climbing up the ladder of success, even if it means that Erika has to repress her feelings and forsake her autonomy.

Finally, old age is also one of the causes why Erika's mother becomes possessive. An old person usually has a high self-esteem that he/she knows what is good and what is bad because he/she already has more experiences than the younger. That is why, an old person usually forces his/her will to make someone to do what he/she wants. This also happens to Erika's mother, as quoted below:

“She's so gifted, she could have easily become a nationally renowned pianist – if only she'd left everything to me, her mother (Jelinek, 1983: 7).”

From the quotation above it can be seen that she feels that she knows the best for her daughter, even she has never permitted Erika to do the housework because dusttrags and cleansers can ruin a pianist's hands. She wants Erika to be a famous pianist so she could squeeze money out to buy a new apartment. Erika's mother confines her daughter's laughter and joy to exclusively playing the piano virtuously. Erika is deprived of any activities that normal girls engage in. Erika does not play with boys or girls, does not dress like the others girls, and never reads books or has a hobby other than playing on the piano for hours.

### **3.3 The Effects of Erika's Mother Possessiveness on Erika's Character**

Erika has developed a very complicated and intermixed relationship to her mother. She hates the omnipresent control of the mother but she is so well trained for the submissive daughter's role that she cannot think of her life without her mother.

She is driven and continually disciplined by her dominating mother who regards Erika, the potential “genius”. She was caught between the extremes of desperate pretension and self-adulation and a total lack of confidence and self-

awareness. The mother, as the person of absolute authority who pulls all the strings, is omni-present in Erika's thoughts. The mother's life revolves around her daughter, whom she shields from daily activities unworthy of an artist, like doing housework and spending money on new clothes. There is an almost complete lack of private external space for Erika, who even shares the matrimonial bed with her mother.

Erika's life has been governed by the pursuit of her mother's aspiration, as her mother relentlessly trains what she sees as her ticket to out of the lower economic class. Unfortunately, Erika fails to play her way into people's hearts and endear herself via music. She fails in her musical career as in life and in her interpersonal relationship. She fails because she is disconnected with common human feelings, because her emotional expression has been destroyed and perverted.

Mother has always used music as a mechanism of control. It was through such a violent and suppressive control that Erika becomes estranged from her own feelings and incapable of emotional expressions. Her personality is so distorted by rules and restrictions that she could only act against her real wishes. It is seen in the following quotation:

“Those five lines have been controlling her ever since she first began to think. She mustn't think of anything but those five black lines. [...] She struggles for air, experiencing something like an asthma attack—then she doesn't know what to do with all this air. Her throat rattles, she can't drive a peep out of it. [...] The teacher coughs convulsively. She coughs herself free from something far worse than a tickle in her throat. She cannot express her feelings vocally, only pianistically (Jelinek, 1983: 190).”

The above quotation shows clearly that Erika has lost her ability to express her feelings. She is inhibited from getting what she desires.

Erika has been perverted in such a thorough way that she is not capable of normal, open relationships, instead she develops a passion to maniacally observe other people's sexual behavior, going to peep shows and pornmovie theaters, or secretly watch a man and a woman making love in a park. She has been deprived of everything a normal girl has while growing up. No clothing, no games, no friends, and no loving tender family. Thus she constantly has to suppress her feelings and sexual drives. This abuse forms her into a person with confused, hurt psyche, cut from the world, and totally disconnected from her own emotional world as well. And because she does not understand her own feeling, she has no empathy for other people at times as well.

She torments her students and Klemmer, a man who happens to step into her life. Since her relationship with her mother is based on love and hate at the same time, she is used to being tortured by someone she loves. She has an anomalous and confused understanding of a relationship. She expects to be hurt on one hand, and on the other hand she is terrified of being hurt.

Erika wants a life of her own but has no idea of how to go about getting it. She is repulsed by the fact of her aging and by her femaleness. Love and suffering are inextricably linked. She wanders through Vienna after work and lies to her mother in order to indulge herself occasionally in excursions to peep shows and furtive shopping trips to buy a beautiful, well-made clothes which she takes home stuffed in her briefcase so that Mom will not see.

Most women of forty would simply leave and pursue a life of their own, but Erika is far too damaged and tormented for that. She finds some solace in voyeurism and in the sleazy video booths that show very badly made pornographic films. Mother, of course, knows nothing about Erika's more kinky side. She lives under the illusion that her daughter is a fine, upstanding member of Viennese society and that her dignity and scholarship would never come into question.

From the facts above it can be concluded that there are eight effects of Erika's mother possessiveness that influenced Erika's character, which are:

1. Plunged into psychosexual disorder.

Erika is a voyeur whose urge to urinate is substituted for the urge to have sex. The compulsion to pass water happened another time while she was spying a couple making love on the meadow, also during a very untimely moment. It is seen in the following quotation:

"The effect on the spectator is devastating. Her hands itch to take an active part; but if she's not allowed, she'll hold back. She waits for a resolute prohibition. She needs to act within a solid framework, she needs to be stretched on it. The twosome, without realizing it, is turned into a threesome. Suddenly, certain organs labor in the spectator, and she can't control them: they work double-time or even faster. Strong pressure on her bladder, an irksome disturbance that overcomes her whenever she gets excited. [...] Her need is stronger. She gingerly lets down her panties and pisses on the ground (Jelinek, 1983: 144)."

The above quotation describes that Erika suffers voyeurism. She urinates outside a parked car while a couple has sex inside.

Erika also has some sexual hang-ups by her actions while she visits an adult store and watches porn in a private booth while inhaling a semen-stained tissue. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Erika lifts up a tissue from the floor; it is encrusted with sperm. She holds it to her nose. She deeply inhales the aroma, the fruits of someone else’s hard labor. She breathes and looks, using up a wee bit of her life (Jelinek, 1983: 52).”

The above quotation shows that Erika is indeed a voyeur, because if a person is normal, he/she will not do the thing that Erika does. It is disgusting to pick up the tissue from the floor, and the worst thing is inhales the aroma.

To fulfill her voyeuristic desire, she would even pinch on her coffee-break money just to pay for the peep shows to be able to watch attentively at the girls on display feign sexual pleasure. Watching pornographic shows is another form of her compulsions. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Erika watches very closely. Not in order to learn. Nothing stirs or moves within her. But she has to watch all the same. For her own pleasure. Whenever she feels like leaving, something above her energetically presses her well-groomed head back to the pane, and she has to keep looking. The turntable on which the beautiful woman is perched keeps revolving. Erika can’t help it. She has to keep looking. She is off-limits to herself (Jelinek, 1983: 54).”

The above quotation shows that Erika doesn’t enjoy the shows. She is “forced” to watch the naked sex workers stretch and sprawl and perform sexual postures. She is dictated by a force that is even unknown to herself.



It is reasonable to assume that Erika has developed a dislike or fear toward sex since she has been taught that sex is the worst of all evils. She is expected to guarantee her independence from sexual passion, from the dangers of male seduction and enslavement, and allow her to protect her virtue and remain attached to her mother.

She has internalized what her mother has always warned her about: “Better the peak of art than the slough of sex (Jelinek, 1983: 197).” So it is justifiable to assume that she has an anxiety over becoming sexually dominated, just like one of the prostitutes who has to feign sexual pleasures. Thus the act of forcing herself through the pornographic show may be prompted as an attempt to overcome her anxiety.

Erika also suffers self-mutilation. She has engaged in various kinds of self-mutilating behaviors. From a very young age Erika has had the “hobby” of cutting her own body. She always waits for the moment when she can cut herself unobserved. She even slices open her own vagina. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Four slits, oozing nonstop. [...] A small puddle forms. And the blood keeps running. On and on. It runs and runs and runs and runs (Jelinek, 1983: 44).”

“No sooner does the sound of the closing door die down than she takes out her little talisman, the paternal all-purpose razor (Jelinek, 1983: 86).”

The above quotations shows that whenever she felt sad and lonely, she made cuts on herself.

Erika is also suffers sadomasochism. The term masochism originally referred to sexual perversions and fantasies in which sexual satisfaction is obtained through suffering, being beaten, tortured, raped, enslaved and humiliated (Horney, 1937: 260). According to Mark Edmundson (1999: 134), in the economy of sadomasochistic sex, pleasure and guilt enter into a satisfying reciprocal relationship. For the masochist, pleasure is paid for immediately and fully with pain. Erika's inability to express her feelings of rage, hate, sadness, loneliness and sexual desires causes Erika to enact her frustration on her own body. She yearns for love, but it appears to be an invitation for a rape. Erika reinforces her suppressed emotional and sexual desires on the straightforward, easy to handle young man, Walter Klemmer, who clings to her even though he feels disgusted and repelled by her. She wants to experience brutality and pain through him. Erika's attempts to be recognised by him culminate in her writing. She writes down her masochistic fantasies in a letter in order to tell Klemmer what she wants him to do to her. The inventory of pain written in her letter includes not only inflicted physical pain but also psychological humiliation. It can be seen in the following quotations:

“Erika asks Herr Klemmer to come closer while she will be dressed only in a black nylon slip and stockings! She'd like that. Her most haunting wish—the adored Herr Klemmer reads—is for you to punish me..... Hogtie her, bind her up as thoroughly as he can—solidly, intensely, artfully, cruelly, tormentingly, cunningly. He should bore his knees into her abdomen, if you'll be so kind (Jelinek, 1983: 215).”

“Mock me and call me a “stupid slave” and even worse names, Erika asks in the letter. Please tell me loudly what you’re about to do to me, and describe the degrees of intensification—without, however, getting any crueler (Jelinek, 1983: 218).”

The above quotations shows that in her letter she wants to be the groveling, smeared, or bound “stupid slave”, a lifeless “package” and a plank to be sat upon (Jelinek, 1983: 221). In all of Erika’s requests she stresses that pain and punishment are the satisfactions she is seeking, but she never once hints that these acts of bondage and sadomasochism are to be understood as preliminaries before progressing to orgasm.

## 2. She become bridled.

Erika has never had a chance to come out from behind the bars of maternal protection and never has a chance to stretch itself fully, in the light. Erika is treated like a prisoner and kept in the torture chamber of music. No one has ever cared about how she feels, and her feelings are always neglected and denied by her mother. Under her mother’s strict surveillance, Erika is made to live an asexual and puritanical life. She cannot even masturbate because her mother sleeps right next to her. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Erika feels nothing, and has no chance to caress herself. Her mother sleeps next to her and guards Erika’s hands. These hands are supposed to practice, not scoot under the blanket like ants and scurry over to the jam jar (Jelinek, 1983: 52).”

The above quotation shows that not only Erika become bridled because she must sleep in the same bed with her mother but also her mother guards her hands while she is sleeping.

### 3. Depressed.

Erika is often fear of her mother. Erika's fear has been aroused directly by her mother's threats, prohibitions and punishments. Whenever she comes home late, she has to confront her mother's outbursts of anger and violent interrogation. Her mother would even torn apart her favorite clothes or hit her as punishment.

Her fear is also aroused by indirect intimidation, her mother constantly impresses her with the great dangers of life. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Mother always warns Erika about precipitous paths. If Mother is not beckoning with the ladder of success, which goes upward, then she depicts the horror of the primrose path, which leads downward (Jelinek, 1983: 193).”

The above quotation describe that Erika's mother wants Erika to be affraid of losing her mother's affection. Instead of genuine affection, her mother often gives a great verbal emphasis on how much she loves Erika and how she had sacrificed for her up to the last drop of her blood. Erika may cling to this substitute for love and fear to be rebellious.

### 4. Unindependent.

It is difficult for Erika to escape the grip of her mother with whom she is in constantly shifting position of power domination. Erika is used to her domain of harshness and love and so is her mother, the two are a team fully dependent on each other. For Erika, the dependence is purely psychological. She does not need her mother in order to exist on a daily basis, but she cannot see this because she has never lived without her

mother and her mother has convinced her in her irreplaceable functions and benefits for the daughter's life. The mother has worked on her psyche since birth and shaped her view of life, love and fulfillment.

She is dead for a long time, even since birth. She lives the life her mother wants her to have and there is no one else who really cares about her or wants her as much as her mother. Erika does not revolt against her despotic mother because her present life is determined by her thoughts and inactions in the past, in the long gone unhappy and controlled childhood. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Erika knows the direction she has to take. She heads home, gradually quickening her step (Jelinek, 1983: 280).”

The above quotation shows that Erika is unable to push the limits of her barren existence and she knows who will give protection to her. She knows that home is the direction she has to take and that is where she hurriedly heads to. She cannot be separated from her mother because she has been brought up in an atmosphere of constant control, and exaggerated proves of her mother's love, care and irreplaceable presence that she has to respect unquestionably and to make an eternal part of her life.

##### 5. Easy to get stressed.

Erika's mother constantly admonished Erika to be a world famous concert pianist. In order to make sure the child would someday get to the top of the world, she does everything she could to keep the child from

being distracted, especially from men. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“A world-famous pianist – that is Mother’s ideal. And to make sure the child finds her way through every entanglement, Mother sets up guideposts along the way, smacking Erika if she refuses to practice (Jelinek, 1983: 24).”

The above quotation shows that Erika could never rest at any level she reached. She has to keep climbing to the next level. The mother wants the child to enjoy international fame and fortune someday, that is why she held back the child, keeping her away from the world, so that someday she will not belong to her mother anymore but to the whole world.

Her mother sets up a standard of perfection for her, but Erika cannot meet her mother’s standard. The expectation of perfection has tormented her, and that leaves her no choice but to keep punishing herself, physically and mentally. This creates self-hate, depression, and aggressiveness which find their outlet in masochistic fantasies.

#### 6. Lack of confidence.

Erika’s life is usually governed by various rules and authoritative principles, and so she often has great difficulty in making decisions that rest on personal preference. She is thrown into anxiety by even inconsequential decisions when there is no rule or authority to refer to. Precisely at the moment that she becomes aware of leaning toward a choice, she experiences anxiety. This probably explains why Erika often says, “I don’t know what I want!” It also explains the phenomenon that although on the outside Erika is used to being in control, on the inside,

she pines to obey commands from someone significant. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“When she teaches, she breaks one will after another. Yet deep inside, she feels an intense desire to obey. That’s why she’s got her mother at home. But the old woman keeps getting older and older. What will happen when she falls apart and becomes a dismal creature in need of care herself, when she has to obey Erika? Erika pines for difficult tasks, which she then carries out badly. She has to be punished for that. ... Anyone who could get her to obey a command (there must be a commander aside from her mother, who cuts glowing furrows into Erika’s will) could get *anything* and *everything* from Erika. Erika needs to lean against a hard wall that won’t give. Something pulls at her, tugs at her elbow, weighs down the hem of her skirt: a small lead ball, a tiny concentrated weight. ... She is waiting for that one command! (Jelinek, 1983: 101-102).”

The above quotation shows that she needs someone who constantly orders what she should do because she is accustomed to whatever she should decide or she would do was regulated by her mother.

#### 7. Sadist.

Erika’s habit of hurting people on purpose shows that she has an enormous hostility toward the “masses”. For example, when she takes the trolley, she would bang into people’s backs and fronts with musical instruments and her heavy musical scores. Sometimes when the car is crowded, she would insidiously thrust her fist into someone, viciously pinch or kick someone’s shin, or step on people’s feet.

Because of her mother possessiveness, Erika cannot feel nor respond to conventional expressions of tenderness and love. She is overwhelmed by herself. And it takes Erika to become sadist, even with her student. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“She wants to teach people how to be afraid, how to shudder. Such feelings run rampant through the playbills of Philharmonic Concerts (Jelinek, 1983: 19).”

The above quotation shows that as an impingement of her mother’s action, she wants to make her student to fear and respect her. When she teaches, she breaks one will after another. When she corrects her students, she talks sternly and eyes her pupils with a glare that could cut a glass. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“For a fleeting instant, she needs to grab the student’s hair and smash his head against the inside of the piano until the bloody bowels of strings and wires screech and spurt (Jelinek, 1983: 105).”

The above quotation shows that she has to act with such vengeance toward people around her because of horrible injustice that has been done to her. Judging from the life she has, it is probably reasonable to say that part of her anger results from her mother’s way of treating her. Mother is the main catalyst that brought about Erika’s twisted character and her later problems.

#### 8. Suffered.

Erika cannot articulate her love and anger toward her mother. She remembers her childhood and it is barren of emotions and sweet memories. Erika has no stamina. She does not fight for her happiness. She is taught not to look for it by her mother. Erika does not stand up for her right of individual fulfillment of happiness because she is an individual already created by her mother.



It is impossible for her to become any happier in an outside reality that is not her mother's controlled environment. It is a long and painful string of events in Erika's existence that have eradicated her instinctive desires to disobey. She lives and thrives in the dominant atmosphere of her mother's world. She is a very important part of this establishment. She was born and trained to replace the money earner of the family and to care exclusively of the mother till she die. It can be seen in the following quotation:

“Why make Mother's dreams come true if Erika can't even take care of her own dreams? Erika doesn't dare follow her own dreams through, she always just stupidly gazes up at them (Jelinek, 1983: 152).”

The above quotation states that even she knows that her own dreams are more important than her mother's dreams, she cannot do anything because her mother takes a fully control of her decisions.