

INTRODUCTION



Carlotta von Maltzan was born in Bogota, Columbia, in 1956, but her first memories date back to Vancouver, Canada, where her parents moved three years later. However, she grew up in Germany, where she attended several schools in Bremen and later Munich. When her parents immigrated to South Africa in 1972, she went to a German boarding school in the Natal Midlands which was founded by missionaries in the late 19th century and where she matriculated in 1975. Afterwards she spent a year in Windhoek in South West Africa, now Namibia, to do her *Abitur*. She has particularly vivid memories of 16 June 1976 as her interview with SWAPO leader Daniel Tjongarero for the school magazine was interrupted by a telephone call from a German journalist, who related the first news of the Soweto uprisings. Her increasing interest in South Africa made the decision to study German, Philosophy and History at the University of the Witwatersrand an easy one. There

she discovered the writings of playwright Heiner Müller, who became the subject of research for her MA and of her first book. After working as junior lecturer first at her *alma mater* and then at the University of Cape Town, she finally gave up the idea of returning to Germany when she met her South African husband and settled in Johannesburg. She worked as lecturer and later associate professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, where she received her PhD on Klaus Mann. Her primary interest in German literature did not prevent her from pursuing her fascination with life in South Africa and its literatures. Among other things, she edited a collection of essays on *Africa and Europe: En/Countering Myths*. While her research focuses on 20th century and contemporary German literature, she is equally drawn to the South African context and her publications in both German and English reflect her somewhat eclectic research interests. When she spent one semester as Humanities fellow at Lafayette College in the USA, she decided to apply for the professorship in German at Stellenbosch, where she moved with her husband Paul and her two teenage children, Yolande and Kai-Julian, in July 2004.

REGARDING THE CASE OF ELFRIEDE JELINEK

To write about the current Nobel laureate for literature, the Austrian Elfriede Jelinek, means wading through her work and getting lost in space. Not only did she start writing on a computer in 1984,¹ probably a frontrunner in this respect as in so many others, but in 1996 she also started her own home page.² By now, it has reached the sizable volume of approximately 1300 printable pages and, together with roundabout 700 images, this makes it in all likelihood the largest site of any European, or perhaps any, author – if that matters. Most writers go out of their way to protect their work on the World Wide Web through write-protecting mechanisms like formatting their documents as PDF Files or publishing their work in print version first, mainly for fear of plagiarism. Not so 58-year-old Jelinek. Virtually every week she adds a new essay, an excerpt of a work in progress, a commentary on an event, just a short note (all meticulously dated) or another image to her home page, which she has named ‘Elfriede’s photo album’, thus inviting any visitor to look at her or his leisure.

The title of my inaugural lecture alludes to the works of two other women authors. They are Susan Sontag’s book *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), the last one published before her death in December 2004, and her essay *Regarding the Torture of Others* (2004),³ as well as Ingeborg Bachmann’s unfinished novel *Der Fall Franza* (1978),⁴ published posthumously after her untimely and tragic death in 1973. What do these texts have to do with Jelinek? In her sensitively rendered and thought-provoking accounts of the contemporary (Western) gaze on (images of) pain and atrocities and war, Sontag revisits assumptions she made 25 years earlier on the link of the image to reality in arguably her best known book *On Photography* (1978). It might be true, Sontag maintains, that ‘our capacity to respond to our experiences with emotional freshness and ethical pertinence is being sapped by the relentless diffusion of vulgar and appalling images’,⁵ and that our (Western) culture has become a ‘culture of spectatorship’⁶ and sees ‘war itself as a spectacle’.⁷ Yet she still bemoans the rhetoric that claims ‘that reality has abdicated’⁸ and with it the death of the intellectual, of reason and of literature itself. It is not the reality of wars and of atrocities, she argues, that has ceased to be, but rather our ‘sense of reality that is eroded’.⁹ *Der Fall Franza* by Austrian writer Ingeborg Bachmann is part of a comprehensive project started in 1955, which she called ‘ways of dying’ (*Todesarten*). Here Bachmann, through her protagonist Franza, seeks to explore experiences of (social) violence that become visible through the marginalisation and subjugation of the other. These become apparent both in the relationship of men and women as well as in the confrontation of Western culture with the so-called third world within a historical context that had not come to confront the open wound of National Socialism. These are all topics that Jelinek explores as well and that have contributed towards making her a controversial public figure in Austria.

Reference to these texts in connection with Elfriede Jelinek is deliberate for two more reasons. Aside from the fact that both Jelinek, in her last two plays *Bambiland* (2003/4) and *Babel*, (2005) and Sontag in the *New York Times* essay thematise the US-led invasion of Iraq around the mediation of images of torture from Abu Ghraib prison through their global distribution, Sontag also poses a question that finds strong resonance in Jelinek’s and Bachmann’s works. She asks, ‘Is there an antidote to the perennial seductiveness of war? And is this a question a woman is more

¹ Jelinek mentions this when interviewed by Jolita Venckute (correspondent of the daily newspaper *Lietuvos rytas*) in 1998, ‘Lust: Elfriede Jelinek im Zenit des Ruhms? Ein Interview aus Wien’. <http://www.hagalil.com/archiv/98/12/jelinek.htm>.

² See <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/elfriede/>.

³ Susan Sontag: *Regarding the Pain of Others*. (New York: Picador, 2004); see also her essay ‘Regarding the Torture of Others’. *New York Times*, May 23, 2004.

⁴ Originally published as *Der Fall Franza* in Ingeborg Bachmann, *Werke 4*, eds. Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, Clemens Münster (München, Zürich: Piper, 1978). A revised version now called *Das Buch Franza* was published in Ingeborg Bachmann, *Das Buch Franza. Das ‘Todesarten’-Projekt in Einzelausgaben*, eds. Monika Albrecht and Dirk Götsche (München, Zürich: Piper, 1998).

⁵ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*. (New York: Picador, 2004) pp. 108-109.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁹ *Ibid.*

likely to pose than a man? (Probably yes.)¹⁰ Clearly Sontag refers to and implies a different sensitivity that women arguably have compared to men when it comes to dealing with war and violence. She does not expand on this statement in any way as far as a woman's point of view in exploring the nature of violence and mobilising against it is concerned, but the fact that she does mention it at all brings to the fore a gender awareness that she shares with both Bachmann and Jelinek. The second reason why Sontag's texts come to mind when writing about Jelinek as author has to do with Jelinek's controversial role in the media that have stylised her into an icon.

The question therefore is: how do we or can we regard Jelinek? Her work defies categorisation, her topics do not coalesce around a finite set of themes, her writing is not limited to particular genres and the body of work produced on her provides no easy access. There is no consensus on Elfriede Jelinek or her writing. To characterise the investigation in this paper, the image of a circle comes to mind. I will look at the case of Elfriede Jelinek from five vantage points, namely in terms of her presence on the web, her production or body of work, her image, the Nobel Prize and Jelinek's reaction to the award, which is linked to her role as public intellectual. I will end by suggesting some reasons for the ongoing controversy surrounding Elfriede Jelinek.

THE WEB

For Elfriede Jelinek updating her home page does not mean removing out-of-date information, but either moving a text or image to another link or adding more material. She literally pastes her latest 'photo' into her album and we can watch her creative process and progress. If we wish, we can become daily participants in her activities. The illusion created is the image of 'the author at work', where the writing process is a craft if judged by the speed of production and the writer as artisan. In that sense, her home page is a *Literaturwerkstatt*, a literature workshop, where the visitor can enter into a dialogue with the writer and can be part of her *Werkstattgespräche*, workshop conversations.¹¹ However, as we all know, the web is a virtual realm. What we see in the first instance is not the author at work or her writing or an image, but the computer screen. What we feel is not the pages of a book, which would at least create a haptic link to the word on the page, but the mouse in our hand. When reading a book one can at least pretend that it is real in the sense that one is alone with the one who has written it. When looking at *Elfriedes Fotoalbum* one does so simultaneously with numerous other users. Walter Benjamin observed that 'the adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception'.¹² The solitary process of thinking may have remained unchanged over time. However, the mutual adjustment between reality and reader/viewer in the perceptual realm found its unlimited scope in the appropriation, reproduction and dematerialisation of 'reality' through a process of engineering 'vision' or our way of 'seeing' an image or word through the 'eye' of the computer that leads into the World Wide Web.

When we 'leaf through' Jelinek's photo album we can find two frames, a navigation window with a contents summary on the left and a main window on the right that shows the selected text. The content of the home page is divided into thirteen categories. Under the heading *Aktuelles*, again subdivided into the years 2000 to 2005, she publishes what she considers topical material, both fictional and non-fictional. One can find anything, from lectures she gave at award ceremonies (e.g. *Im Abseits*) to a contemplation on (together with its reproduction) a document that was issued to her Jewish father by an SS Untersturmführer in 1939 (*oh mein Papa*, 2002), her latest play *Bambiland* (2003/4) and even some remarks on her dog (*Floppy 2*, 2004). Under the headings *Theater* and *Prosa*, one can view her recent plays and prose. In addition, Jelinek provides commentaries on theatre, for example on Brecht, or on her own aesthetic programme (*I want to be shallow*). She writes about Franz Schubert or about *Musik und Furcht* (Music and fear), about art and fashion (see *zur Kunst*) or about one of her favourite films, Herk Harvey's *Carnival of Souls* (1962) in the section on cinema (*zum Kino*). Equally important are her observations on politics and society (*zu Politik und Gesellschaft*), on topics such as *Islam* or about Austrian ultra-right-wing leader Jörg Haider (*In den Waldheimen und auf den Haidern*). Even Austria gets a special column (*zu Österreich*) where, for example, a speech is published under the heading *16.3.2001* that she gave on that date in Vienna on the Stephansplatz on an anti-racism demonstration that was

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹¹ I borrow the term from a book by Horst Bienek, *Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern*. (München: DTV, 1962).

¹² Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', collected in *Illuminations*, (London: Fontana/Collins, 1973) p. 225.

organised by the 'Demokratische Offensive'. Apart from the miscellaneous section (*Vermischtes*), which includes her own work with that of her critics (e.g. *Nachwort zu Bambiland und Babel*), there is one section called *Claire Felsenburg*, which is not directly available through a simple mouse click. Here Jelinek introduces the book by her Jewish aunt, Claire Felsenburg, of which an excerpt is put onto the Net. Claire, who together with her husband, managed to flee Vienna via Switzerland and the UK, until she finally emigrated to the USA, dedicated the book to her mother, who was murdered in Auschwitz. On the one hand, this is probably Jelinek's most revealing comment as she allows the viewer a small, if indirect, window into her personal history. On the other hand, she only recently (in May) made available on the Net her *Closing Words to 'Tears are not Enough'*, a book by Zacharias Zweig and his son Stefan Jerzy Zweig that 'had to appear privately because no publisher could be found for it'. By writing the after-word to the book by the youngest child survivor of Buchenwald concentration camp and publishing it on her home page together with the book's cover page and links to the websites of both Stefan Jerzy Zweig and Buchenwald, Jelinek ensures that the book receives publicity.¹³ In addition, the reader finds out more about Nazi atrocities of which particularly Austrian readers, in Jelinek's opinion, still have much to learn.¹⁴

Finally, brief mention needs to be made of the section in Jelinek's home page simply named *Fotoalbum*, which contains six links.¹⁵ Three have to do with the brutal murders of four Roma men killed by an explosive device on 4 February 1995 in a small Austrian village by the name of Oberwart. Jelinek wrote about this event and the (non-)reactions it received in the Austrian press and public sphere in her play *Stecken, Stab und Stangl* (1996). It had its premiere in Hamburg and not Vienna, as Jelinek forbade all productions of her work in Austria as long as Haider and the right wing formed part of the government. In an interview with Stefanie Carp, Jelinek explains that her play was motivated by her 'emotional involvement' in the event, by the 'rage' she felt when confronted with the 'cackle' (*Gegeifere*) of the press and she believes that 'the demoralisation and decrepitude of the Austrian public' is largely due to 'the depravity of the Austrian press'. Furthermore, she wanted to give a voice to an oppressed minority and she explains: 'To speak for those who are deprived of speech and whose language we do not understand, was very important to me'.¹⁶ Therefore, in addition to writing about the four murdered Roma men in her play, Jelinek provides a special link on her website with the heading *Oberwart*. When opened, the page displays photos of the four men together with their birth date and the date of their death. Three more links enable the reader to navigate to sites that explain what actually happened;¹⁷ a second one is called 'Voices on Oberwart' (*Stimmen zu Oberwart*), which provides further links grouped together in terms of commentaries by Roma representatives, by politicians and the church, by the academy or that deal with social politics. The third link opens the page to an article by literary critic Sigrid Löffler, published in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Here she attacks Jörg Haider's so-called Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei*) and shows how the ultra-right wing had systematically eroded the cultural climate through hate speech and intimidation. One of their election posters (also displayed on the web page) posed the demagogic question: 'Do you love Scholten, Jelinek, Peymann, Pasterk... or art and culture? Freedom of art instead of socialist state artists'.¹⁸ By including

¹³ On 22 June 2005, 3 pm, Jelinek's website had a visitor count of 338 174.

¹⁴ According to Jelinek, Austria – in contrast to Germany – is more reluctant to confront and come to terms with its participation in the Nazi regime. As an Austrian and as a writer Jelinek feels obliged to remind Austrians of this. In an interview she explains: 'Österreich tut sich im Umgang mit seiner Geschichte schwerer als Deutschland – vielleicht weil es schon in den vierziger Jahren unabhängig wurde und als unschuldig galt, obwohl es sich als erstes schuldig gemacht hatte.' Jolita Venckute (correspondent of the daily newspaper *Lietuvos rytas*): 'Lust: Elfriede Jelinek im Zenit des Ruhms? Ein Interview aus Wien' 7.12.1998, <http://www.hagalil.com/archiv/98/12/jelinek.htm>.

¹⁵ For a more technical description of Elfriede Jelinek's website see Andrea Rosenauer, 'Einige Beispiele für den Umgang von AutorInnen mit neuen Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten in elektronischen Medien.' *Trans. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, Nr. 7, September 1999. <http://www.inst.at/trans/7Nr/rosenauer7.htm>.

¹⁶ "'Ich bin im Grunde ständig tobsüchtig über die Verharmlosung". Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek' (mit Stefanie Carp), <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/elfriede/stb.htm>. Originally published in *Theater der Zeit*, Mai/Juni 1996. In this paper, all translations from the German are mine unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁷ Here an article is displayed, 'Schweigen der Attentäter. Warum entlastet Jörg Haider die "Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee" vom vierfachen Roma-Mord?' *Profil* (Wien), Nr. 34, 21.8.1995.

¹⁸ In German the text reads: 'Lieben Sie Scholten, Jelinek, Peymann, Pasterk . . . oder Kunst und Kultur? Freiheit der Kunst statt sozialistischer Staatskünstler.' See Sigrid Löffler, 'Bomben und Plakate. Zur Verharmlosung des österreichischen Kulturklimas'. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* vom 25.10.1995, Feuilleton, p. 13. At the time Rudolf Scholten was minister of culture, Claus Peymann the director of Vienna's *Burgtheater* and Ursula Pasterk Vienna's city councillor for culture.

Löffler's article and a photo of the election poster on her website, Jelinek manages to present a comprehensive picture not only of right-wing extremism in the late 1990s in Austria, but also of the fact that because of her outspokenness she herself very often was a target of public attack, especially by right-wing *Kronen-Zeitung* columnist Staberl. 'Constantly it is written that Turrini or I or other writing colleagues are facilitators of left-wing terror, and are accused of crimes. I will now defend myself by the only means that I have.'¹⁹ She means the banning of performances of her plays in Austria.

It is, however, not coincidental that Jelinek created her website soon after these events, namely on 4 May 1996. The material on Jelinek's website creates a forum for public debate that invites the reader to form an opinion independent of or in conjunction with the press coverage of topical events. For Jelinek, her home page is a site for making public interventions. 'I reserve the right to voice my opinions like any other citizen, when something disgusting (*Schweinerei*) happens'.²⁰ Two things are noteworthy about Jelinek's website. She puts texts into the public domain that have not yet appeared in print. While the majority of her texts are in German, a few English translations accompany the original German text, notably *Bambiland*, her 2003 play about the war in Iraq. One might say that she is a fearless woman who invites plagiarists and critics alike to 'take her apart'. The Internet as a writing or publishing medium is particularly attractive for her as she reiterates in a recent interview:

I do not want to have the feeling of writing for 'eternity', so to speak. The fleetingness of the Internet has therefore become very attractive to me. At some point, I set up a heading in my home page called 'Notizen', or 'Notes', in which I try to capture the fleetingness of jotting things down, similar to emails, which on the one hand acknowledges current events but on the other hand is not carved in stone. Instead it is more like something you write in wet sand with your finger. You can remove it at any time, whereas a book is more an object that 'remains', as it were, something you hold in your hand.²¹

JELINEK'S PRODUCTION – HER BODY OF WORK

Born in 1946, Jelinek started writing as a twenty-year-old. To date she has published 10 novels, 17 plays and radio-plays, numerous pieces of short prose, essays, commentaries in the press, reports and several film scripts. She is author of several libretti, worked as editor, and translated into German a variety of works by authors such as Thomas Pynchon, Oscar Wilde, Georges Feydeau and Onelio Jorge Cardoso. It is almost impossible to keep track of Jelinek's countless publications, her numerous public statements and her interviews, even for herself it seems. When Pia Hanke's 600-page bibliography²² of Jelinek's published work appeared last year, Jelinek commented: 'One is buried under a huge rubble heap – like an animal that is squashed down below. I never knew how much came together during the course of my life'.²³

Jelinek published her first novel *wir sind lockvögel, baby!* (*we are decoys, baby*) in 1970. It is an ambivalent text, in that it comes across as a potpourri of language registers, with sentences that seem lifted from the so-called *Dorf-* and *Heimatroman*, from the vocabulary of pornography, of the comic strip and of James Bond novels.²⁴ In contrast to the trivial novel, which Jelinek continuously refers to by citing clichés derived from it, Jelinek's satirical novel does not provide any causal links that form a coherent text that can be easily consumed. Instead, it works like a language collage that uses reality as its referent, but ultimately produces empty images. Through the de-contextualisation of otherwise familiar language elements Jelinek creates a 'text labyrinth'²⁵ that achieves a critique of consumer-oriented society through the rejection of a falsified life based on the tyranny of advertising that promises women a 'good life'.

¹⁹ "'Ich bin im Grunde ständig tobsüchtig über die Verharmlosung". Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek' (mit Stefanie Carp), <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/elfriede/stb.htm>.

²⁰ 'Elfriede Jelinek über eine "furchtbare Schwere". Interview mit APA-Kulturredakteur Wolfgang Huber-Lang', 2.12.2004, <http://derstandard.at/?url=/?ressort=Literaturnobelpreis>.

²¹ 'Elfriede Jelinek – Interview'. Interview with Elfriede Jelinek by freelance journalist Marika Griehsel, November 2004. Translation by Allison Brown. http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/2004/jelinek-interview_mail.html.

²² Pia Hanke, *Werkverzeichnis Elfriede Jelinek*. (Wien: Edition Praesens, 2004).

²³ 'Elfriede Jelinek über eine "furchtbare Schwere". Interview mit APA-Kulturredakteur Wolfgang Huber-Lang', 2.12.2004, <http://derstandard.at/?url=/?ressort=Literaturnobelpreis>.

²⁴ See Marlis Gerhardt, 'Bond auf dem Dorfe'. In Kurt Bartsch and Günther Höfler (ed.), *Elfriede Jelinek*. (Graz/Wien: Literaturverlag Droschl, 1991) pp.181-182.

²⁵ Sybille Späth, 'Im Anfang war das Medium... Medien- und Sprachkritik in Jelineks frühen Prosatexten'. In Bartsch and Höfler, *Ibid.*, p. 100.

This novel can certainly be read as a precursor to Jelinek's literary production in the years to follow, not so much in terms of its thematic focus, but rather in terms of her predisposition for entering into a game with language, which simultaneously is tool, medium and object of critique.

It is not surprising that Jelinek, who is a voracious reader, is familiar with literary theory and has read and indeed cites, uses or reworks texts from authors ranging from Martin Heidegger to Roland Barthes, from Johann Gottlieb Fichte to Michel Foucault, from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel to Heinrich von Kleist and most recently Friedrich von Schiller, to name but a few. It could be said that Jelinek's literary style and her texts are weavings that can be unravelled only to be rewoven into a new texture. In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Roland Barthes has provided a description of the text in terms of how we should approach it as readers, which in my opinion captures what Jelinek does when she writes:

Text means Tissue; but whereas hitherto we have always taken the tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasising, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue – this texture – the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of the web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an *hyphology* (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider's web).²⁶

In search of suitable and unused – that is, new – aesthetic forms of expression for her political messages, Jelinek turns her back on traditional styles and writing modes. However, she does not create a unified or specifically identifiable aesthetic. She deconstructs and fragments language by drawing on techniques employed in more traditional dramatic or prose texts. The resultant collapse of genres in her work makes up both the political and aesthetic resistance which characterises her work. Her mistrust of language in its general usage as an instrument of power leads her to dissect it into its components that she rearranges. Relations of meaning are taken apart by means of *Verfremdung*, through unusual syntax, and the employment of neologisms, through intertextual references, montage and exaggeration. For example, while she still uses a dialogic structure in earlier plays such as *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (1987), and includes stage directions, her play or perhaps one should say text for the theatre *Wolken.Heim* (1990) gives up the distinction between prose and drama altogether. It consists of a single 'monologue', which has no assigned roles or characters and no plot. The entire text is written in the first person plural. It consists of a montage of quotations by Hölderlin, Hegel, Kleist, Heidegger and excerpts of letters from the RAF (Red Army Fraction),²⁷ among others. The 'we' speaks about the German fatherland, heroism, *Geist* and about victims/perpetrators and power. *Wolken.Heim* is an uncanny incantation of (German) identity, which in the very act of incantation contains suicidal and murderous reflections of the disintegration of identity by exposing the discourse of German idealism as both powerless and meaningless.²⁸ Similarly, Jelinek's latest plays *Bambiland* (2003/4) and *Babel* (2005) comment on the US-led invasion of Iraq and on the reproduction of war through the images of torture (the photos from Abu Ghraib prison that were circulated globally). Although, for example, Lynndie England or Charles Grainer, George Bush, Dick Cheney or Tony Blair are mentioned, they appear as bodiless voices and counter voices. The voices surpass the process of individuation, as indicated already in the title of the play – *Bambiland*. This obvious reference is to Baudrillard's critique of America as Disneyland and as an infantile society that experiences the second Gulf war as a media spectacle and entertainment. Through the disappearance of the referent and life as simulation, the war might as well not have happened.²⁹ Jelinek's recent plays dissolve traditional theatre as metaphysical mimesis based on reason, and instead replaces it with plural voices within polylogic language surfaces (*polyloge Sprachflächen*) that in its many interwoven elements form a language carpet.³⁰

²⁶ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975) p. 64.

²⁷ The *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF) was a left-wing terrorist group operating mainly in Germany between 1968 and 1977, often also referred to as the 'Baader-Meinhof Gang'. Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan Carl Raspe were the intellectual leaders of the group. Currently Jelinek is reworking Schiller's play *Maria Stuart* by amalgamating the characters Ulrike Meinhof/Maria and Gudrun Ensslin/Elizabeth. The first monologues were published on her website this year.

²⁸ See Burkhard Lindner, 'Deutschland: Ein erhabener Abgesang. Elfriede Jelineks Spiegel-Verzerrung zur Selbsterkenntnis: "Wolken.Heim"'. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 7. 4.1990.

²⁹ See Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations'. In Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (ed.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. (Malden/ Oxford/ Victoria, Blackwell Publishing, 2004) pp. 305-377.

³⁰ For a detailed analysis of the aesthetic techniques employed by Jelinek in her two recent plays", see Bärbel Lücke, 'Der Krieg im Irak als literarisches Ereignis: Vom Freudschen Vatermord über das Mutterrecht zum islamistischen Märtyrer. Elfriede

THE IMAGE

The reaction to Jelinek's work – from the media and literary critics alike – is generally twofold.³¹ On the one hand, no one disputes her extraordinary stylistic and creative talent; consensus prevails on her analytic, precise and 'astounding' command of language, with which she dissects contemporary social, political and 'intimate' reality. On the other hand, critics reject or at least question her apparently negative attitude towards this reality. The controversial reaction to her novel *Lust* (1989)³² indicates that Jelinek's writing does not leave the reader cold: Jelinek – or is it her text? – is seen as 'merciless'³³ and relentless in her pursuit of employing the 'dissecting evil gaze'.³⁴ Her 'song of hate' may be 'astounding',³⁵ but how do we assess it? How do we read it? Her text *Lust* produces the opposite effect in the reader: not 'lust' or pleasure, but a lack thereof, i.e. 'unlust' or 'unpleasure', decidedly a feeling of uneasiness and dejection.

Elfriede Jelinek's emotive effect on the reading public suggests that the author and her work have been conflated to such an extent that an assessment of the one with reference to the other has become the norm rather than the exception.³⁶ Elfriede Jelinek has become a media personality in her own right, unlikely and unusual as this may seem. Numerous photos, interviews, and journalistic portraits have helped to create the image of a fashionable woman who ironically does not disclose much else about herself. When probed to unveil intimate details of her life, Jelinek might admit to the presence of autobiographical material in her texts. Simultaneously, however, she claims that her self is erased in her writing. When she speaks, she stylises: 'I carry sentences in front of me like posters (*Ich trage die Sätze vor mir her wie Plakate*)'.³⁷

The tendency to extrapolate the identity of Elfriede Jelinek from her texts, or vice versa, is traceable to the publication of *The Piano Teacher* (1983),³⁸ probably her best known text (partly due to Michael Haneke's film adaptation of 2001 starring Isabelle Huppert, which achieved international acclaim). There the scenes of the protagonist Erika's self-violation and self-mutilation drew the attention of the readership to the author and her biography for the first time. Her free admission – not confession – that *The Piano Teacher* is partly autobiographical seemed to explain her penchant for 'degenerate' sexual fantasies.³⁹ Conversely, one could argue that the label

Jelineks *Bambiland und zwei Monologe*. Eine dekonstruktivistisch-psychoanalytische Analyse.' *Weimarer Beiträge. Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, Ästhetik und Kulturwissenschaften*, (ed.) Peter Engelmann (Wien: Passagen Verlag), Heft 3, 2004, 50. Jahrgang, pp. 362-381.

³¹ Some of the following comments on Jelinek's public image were published in an earlier article of mine. See Carlotta von Maltzan, 'Voyeurism and film in Elfriede Jelinek's *The Piano Teacher* in Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger (ed.), *Literature, Film, and the Culture Industry in Contemporary Austria*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2002) pp. 98-108.

³² See the comprehensive account on the controversy surrounding *Lust* in Jutta Schlich, *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung von Literatur. Am Beispiel von Elfriede Jelineks 'Lust'*. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994), esp. pp. 7-32.

³³ See Sigrid Löffler, 'Elegant und gnadenlos. Porträt Elfriede Jelinek', *Brigitte* 14 (1989), pp. 95-97.

³⁴ See Christa Gürtler, 'Der böse Blick der Elfriede Jelinek: Dürfen Frauen so schreiben?', *Frauenbilder – Frauenrollen – Frauenforschung*, ed. Gürtler et al. (Wien, Salzburg: Geyer Edition, 1987), pp. 50-60; see also Günther A. Höfler, 'Sexualität und Macht in der Prosa Elfriede Jelineks', *Modern Austrian Literature*, Vol. 23, Nos. 3/4 (1990), pp. 99-110, esp. p. 101; Hans H. Hiebel, 'Elfriede Jelinek's Satirical Prose-Poem "Lust"', *Elfriede Jelinek: Framed by Language*, ed. Jorun B. Johns / Katherine Arens (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1994) pp. 48-72, esp. p. 59, note 46; Rudolf Burger, 'Der böse Blick der Elfriede Jelinek', *Gegen den schönen Schein: Texte zu Elfriede Jelinek*, ed. Christa Gürtler (Frankfurt/Main: Verlag neue Kritik, 1990), pp. 17-29; Brigitte Lehmann, 'Oh Kälte, oh Schutz vor ihr. Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek. – "Es geht nur um Sprache, es geht nicht um Erlebnisse"', *Lesezirkel* 15 (Wien, 1985), p. 3.

³⁵ See Jürgen Drews, 'Staunenswerter Haßgesang – aber auf wen? Elfriede Jelinek und die Gewalt der Lust', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (15/16.04.1989).

³⁶ See Schlich, pp. 13-22.

³⁷ André Müller, "'Ich lebe nicht". André Müller spricht mit der Schriftstellerin Elfriede Jelinek', *Die Zeit* 26 (22. Juni 1990).

³⁸ Elfriede Jelinek: *Die Klavierspielerin. Roman* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983); *The Piano Teacher*. Translated by Joachim Neugroschel. (New York: Serpent's Tail, 1988).

³⁹ See, for example, Juliane Vogel, 'Oh Bildnis, oh Schutz vor ihm', *Gegen den schönen Schein: Texte zu Elfriede Jelinek*, ed. Christa Gürtler (Frankfurt/Main: Verlag neue Kritik, 1990), pp. 142-156, esp. 148f.

'degenerate' is a pure projection of the readership onto Jelinek as person.⁴⁰ The concentration of critics on Jelinek's biography and person, and the conflation of these with her texts, creates for the public an empty image, albeit one overlaid with stereotypes carefully constructed by Jelinek.⁴¹ These are coined in a language in which self-reference is careful and deliberate. The stereotypical constructions serve not to reflect Jelinek's self, but rather to deflect our ability to constitute that self. Furthermore, the stereotypes refract back onto the reader/viewer. Jelinek answers all questions, freely admits to anything that the interviewer wants to hear, and thereby stages herself / her 'self', thus refusing the intimacy of disclosure for which the readership yearns. Ironically, however, Jelinek nevertheless became for the press and for some critics the provocative and radical feminist and Marxist who never seemed to hesitate to break taboos.⁴² Their insistence on referring to her, first as a woman and to a lesser degree as a Marxist, was taken up by Jelinek and twisted ironically in such a manner that she managed to distance herself from a seemingly authentic position as an author. Jelinek's knowledge of Barthes's works makes one suspect that she consciously staged her own version of 'the death of the author'.⁴³ She thus used and exposed a self-representational system, which combines bits from life, body and text, and that refuses to be a location of/for feminine truth. Instead, she utilised this ironic mode of speech to such an extent that its marketability in the service of a radical feminist or Marxist cause became questionable. Readers soon realised that, by agreeing with everything, she agreed with everyone.⁴⁴ As a result, appropriating her for a feminist, Marxist or any other cause proved to be difficult and ultimately impossible. Jelinek has always made it clear that she is equally absent or present, regardless of whether she speaks in an interview or writes a fictional text. It is therefore impossible to identify her comments in an interview as stemming from the more usual identifiable position of a writer speaking about her or his work.

Jelinek's consciously employed and flexible procedure of direct address allows an opening towards the political. In her later texts, e.g. *Lust*, she explains, 'people are addressed directly, or I talk about myself in the plural, it changes constantly, and one has to find out who is speaking at any given time, which I or which you. In those cases I leave the illusory plane and present a political commentary that brings out the truth behind the matter, but one has to find out

⁴⁰ Jelinek argues this herself when she claims: 'Da ich inzwischen weiß, daß alles, was man sagt, gegen einen verwendet wird, wünsche ich, ich hätte nie etwas gesagt. Es gibt ja schon Aufsätze, die sich nur damit beschäftigen, in welcher Weise ich mich über mich geäußert habe, was ja wirklich der Gipfel der Persersion ist.' Riki Winter, 'Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek', *Elfriede Jelinek*, ed. Kurt Bartsch & Günther Höfler (Graz/Wien: Literaturverlag Droschl, 1991) pp. 9-19, here p. 11.

⁴¹ Jelinek has realised this when she says: 'Offenbar können meine Kritiker oft nicht mich als Person von dem, was ich in meinen Texten beschreibe, also meiner 'Botschaft' trennen. Sie prügeln sozusagen den Boten, anstatt über die Botschaft wenigstens einmal nachzudenken.' Alexandr W. Belobratow, 'Ein E-mail Interview mit Elfriede Jelinek (1997)', *Österreichische Literatur: Interpretationen, Materialien und Rezeption*, Vol. 3 (1997/1998) *Jahrbuch der Österreich-Bibliothek in St. Petersburg*, ed. Alexandr W. Belobratow (St. Petersburg: Verlag Peterburg. XXI VEK, 1999), pp. 134-139, here p. 134. As a result Jelinek feels compelled to provide her own interpretation of *Die Klavierspielerin*, even as recently as 1997, which, however, ultimately refracts back onto the reader: '... "Die Klavierspielerin", die wahrscheinlich mein "autobiographischstes" Buch ist, zumindest was einige Aspekte des Textes, vor allem die Mutterbindung und die Erziehung (eigentlich der Drill) zur Musik, betrifft. Die meisten Autorinnen und Autoren fangen ja mit etwas Autobiographischem an und entwickeln sich davon weg, ich habe ein paar Bücher gebraucht, um sozusagen "zu mir zu kommen", um überhaupt über mich selbst sprechen zu können. Entscheidend in "Die Klavierspielerin" ist die in diesem Fall mütterliche Instanz, die die Vergesellschaftung übernimmt, also das Einpassen in das väterliche Ordnungssystem, dessen äußerste Instanz der Vater ist. Da in dieser Familie kein Vater (mehr) existiert, übernimmt die Mutter diese Rolle und erzieht die Tochter, unter Verleugnung ihrer Sexualität und Individualität, zum Genie. Da die Tochter aber nicht genial ist, muß sie scheitern. Im übertragenen Sinn ist das natürlich auch ein Paradigma auf eine (österreichische) Gesellschaft, die vom Ruf ihrer großen Komponisten, also der Vergangenheit, lebt, der aber durch den Triebverzicht (den Genialitätsverzicht) von Tausenden von Klavierlehrerinnen erkaufte ist. Das ist gleichzeitig sozusagen eine bittere Parodie auf die Freud'sche Lehre von der Sublimation.' Alexandr W. Belobratow, 'Ein E-mail Interview mit Elfriede Jelinek (1997)', p. 138.

⁴² See, for example, Linda C. DeMeritt, 'A "Healthier Marriage": Elfriede Jelinek's Marxist Feminism in "Die Klavierspielerin" and "Lust"', *Elfriede Jelinek: Framed by Language*, ed. Jorun B. Johns and Katherine Arens (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1994), pp. 107-128.

⁴³ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in Roland Barthes: *Image – Music – Text*. Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath. (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1979) pp. 142-148; see also Foucault's response 'What is an author?', which Jelinek is equally aware of by accepting the author function. Michel Foucault: *Schriften zur Literatur*. Translated by Karin von Hofer. (Frankfurt/M, Berlin: Ullstein, 1979) pp. 7-31.

⁴⁴ 'Warum muß sie es allen recht machen, der kommunistischen Partei und dem feministischen Zentralorgan, den Männern und am liebsten der Bundestagspräsidentin', Annette Meyerhöfer, 'Nein, sie kennt auch diesmal keine Gnade: Elfriede Jelineks "Lust"', *Der Spiegel*, 3 April 1989, pp. 243-250, here p. 247.

who, which who is speaking'.⁴⁵ Because of this narrative technique, a healthy dose of scepticism is needed whenever Jelinek says 'I'. Similarly, the coherence of this system of self-reference undermines the conventional separation of authorial comment and fictional writing. The creation of an oeuvre includes the work involved in creating a public image for the author, an image that is fiction in as much as the primary text is fiction.

THE NOBEL PRIZE

When it became known in October 2004 that Elfriede Jelinek was to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, unsurprisingly reactions from the German-speaking press were as varied as one could possibly imagine. Her reputation as *Nestbeschmutzerin* (one who besmirches her own nest⁴⁶) through daring continuously to raise the topics of Austria's Nazi past and its continuation in everyday fascism (*Alltagsfaschismus*), as radical feminist, as one-time Marxist was of course firmly entrenched. However, the local and international press agreed that the decision by the Swedish Academy was surprising, at the very least. As the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* put it: 'Who is this Elfriede Jelinek?'⁴⁷ This question of course reflects the yearly ritual of speculation about how this particular decision came about or whether it was justified. It also highlights the ensuing media circus that inevitably surrounds an author receiving the Nobel Prize. It is still considered the most prestigious literature prize worldwide, since its inception in 1901. Moreover, since so much was made of it in the press, it is worth mentioning that Elfriede Jelinek is only the tenth woman author to have received the Nobel Prize, leading some critics to observe that the award was one based on political correctness. Jelinek was well aware of this, despite assurances by Stockholm publicist Per Wästberg⁴⁸ that her gender had not played a role in the academy's decision. Jelinek commented: 'When you receive the prize as a woman, then you get it as a woman, and therefore you cannot feel undiluted joy. If Peter Handke, who would be much more deserving of the prize, were to receive it, then he would receive it just as Peter Handke'.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Jelinek was also quick to point out that she did not regard the prize as 'a flower in the button hole for Austria'.⁵⁰ Both statements reiterate Jelinek's image as feminist author and relentless critic of her country's history and political climate. However, this assessment would not have been obvious to readers outside of German-speaking countries, where hitherto she had been relatively unknown. Although Elfriede Jelinek's work was available in 27 languages from Chinese to Turkish by October 2004,⁵¹ a substantial number of texts appeared only in France, Italy and the Netherlands, with only five in Great Britain followed by four in the USA. It is unsurprising that the French press had the most to say about her. *Liberation* saw her prize as a 'correction of the male-dominated list of laureates'. According to *Liberation*, her choice was significant as, contrary to most of her predecessors, she is 'an active and even militant feminist' with 'a sharp tongue who refuses to become an integrated public persona'.⁵² In contrast, she is virtually unknown in Great Britain, where various newspapers reported only that her work criticises sexual violence, subjugation and right-wing extremism. The consensus was that she is one of the most significant German women writers in Europe.

This assessment is highly debatable as far as Marcel Reich-Ranicki is concerned, who is arguably the best-known German literary critic and often referred to as the 'pope of literature' (*Literaturpapst*):

This author, Elfriede Jelinek, is exceptional, this case is incomparable. All her texts are enraged provocations; she has been called names for years and decades. However, she has received 23 or 24 literary prizes [...]. The literary talent of Elfriede Jelinek is, to put it cautiously, rather modest. She has not succeeded in writing one good novel; most of them are more or

⁴⁵ Elfriede Jelinek quoted in Ulrike Haß, 'Elfriede Jelinek', *Kritisches Lexikon der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur*, 59. Nlg. (1998), pp. 1-14, here p. 3.

⁴⁶ Pia Janke (ed.), *Die Nestbeschmutzerin. Jelinek & Österreich*. (Salzburg: Jung und Jung 2002).

⁴⁷ Matthias Matussek, 'Alle Macht den Wortequirlen!' *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 42, 11.10. 2004, p. 178.

⁴⁸ 'Elfriede Jelinek hat Angst vor der Auszeichnung.' *Spiegel Online* – 07. Oktober 2004. <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/0,1518,321965,00.html>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Rudolf Maresch, 'Elfriede Jelinek erhielt den Nobelpreis für Literatur.' 08.10.2004. <http://www.heise.de/tp/deutsch/inhalt/buch/18514/1.html>.

⁵¹ See Jelinek's home page <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/elfriede/> under the column "Fremdsprachige Ausgaben".

⁵² See Internationale Pressestimmen zum Nobelpreis für Literatur. <http://www.nachrichten.at/kultur/11.10.2004>.

less banal or superficial. Simultaneously one cannot overlook her noteworthy stylistic skill here and there in some of them – and occasionally even astounding virtuosity.⁵³

According to Reich-Ranicki, her work denounces 'sexuality in a simple and sometimes suggestive manner as something disgusting – for women, of course' and as a 'disgusting and repulsive instrument of male dominance'. For him, her plays are unreadable, best suited for ambitious and ruthless directors with lots of imagination as they can do with them what they like. He concludes his diatribe with the statement: 'It is possible that her talent is superseded only by her (imposing) character. Whatever the case may be: she is a formidable (*dolle*) woman, this Elfriede Jelinek'.⁵⁴

Reich-Ranicki's condemnation of Jelinek as a writer might seem extreme, but certainly is representative of many responses to the announcement of her prize. However, what is perplexing is his barely disguised insinuation that the quality of her writing is in question. As he does not explain what he means by 'quality', one can only speculate. I would agree with Andrea Geier⁵⁵ that prizes or award ceremonies, and commemoration celebrations in honour of an author, do not solely serve the purpose of extending an honour. They are equally important in terms of a display of self-importance. Furthermore, they afford the critics the opportunity to show off their ability to evaluate, interpret, to categorise, in other words to supply the 'correct' perspective on an author, for example, through the laudation. What is in question, in other words, is not Elfriede Jelinek's quality as a writer, but who is awarded the power of interpretation. Jelinek knows this when she says that language is a male domain. When asked whether her language is characterised by a strong, even male gesture (*Gestus*), she replies:

Yes, it is this presumptuousness that carries one over. I would call it phallic presumptuousness, but that still does not make me a man. Of course, it also involves a revolt against the fact, that as a woman you cannot write yourself into the text (*einschreiben*). You run with your head against a wall. You disappear. But you cannot write yourself into it. Yet I still presume to do this repeatedly and what carries me is my fury about Austria. Perhaps my passion makes me different from others. However, it is not the position of authority (*autoritär*), that [Thomas] Bernhard has. This subject status, this security of speaking – only a male author can have that.⁵⁶

JELINEK'S RESPONSE

It was Jelinek's language that the Swedish Academy acknowledged. She received the Nobel Prize 'for her musical flow of voices and counter-voices in novels and plays that with extraordinary linguistic zeal reveal the absurdity of society's clichés and their subjugating power'.⁵⁷ In other words, it was her aesthetic programme and her linguistic creativity that were valued. Jelinek took this appreciation seriously when, in her Nobel lecture, she explored language in relation to or against reality, writing that excludes life and speaking which leads to emptiness, seeing that is sightless, and finally the inadequacy of being there in the world, since being there already foreshadows its own absence. It is ironic that, at the height of her fame, Jelinek called her Nobel lecture *Im Abseits*, translated as 'Sidelined' in the published version.⁵⁸ While it is impossible to capture multiple meanings of the original language in a translation, another translation of the title comes to mind, namely 'Offside'. Both meanings point to Jelinek's dissecting social gaze that rejects all metanarratives and thereby highlights the postmodern condition, dispersed as Lyotard states, 'in clouds of narrative language elements'.⁵⁹ The repeated and endlessly repeatable experience of marginalisation, of being a player on the field who has not obeyed the rules, has increasingly become a central metaphor for Jelinek's recent

⁵³ Marcel Reich-Ranicki, 'Die missbrauchte Frau.' *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 42, 11.10.2004, p. 180.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Andrea Geier, 'Lob mit Fußtritten. Über den Nobelpreis für Elfriede Jelinek.' http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=7608&ausgabe=200411.

⁵⁶ Elfriede Jelinek, 'Ich renne mit dem Kopf gegen die Wand und verschwinde.' Das Gespräch führten Rose-Maria Gropp und Hubert Spiegel. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 08.11.2004, Nr. 261, p. 35.

⁵⁷ <http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/2004/index.html>.

⁵⁸ Elfriede Jelinek – Nobel lecture, *Sidelined*, Translation from German by Martin Chalmers.© The Nobel Foundation 2004. <http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/2004/jelinek-lecture-e.html>.

⁵⁹ Jean-Francois Lyotard, 'The Postmodern Condition'. In Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (ed.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. (Malden/ Oxford/ Victoria, Blackwell Publishing, 2004) p. 354.

writing. Her exploration of language as a literary means in contrast to language as a public tool finally leads to the obliteration of language as such. Jelinek concludes her Nobel lecture with the following observation:

I am the prisoner of my language, which is my prison warden. Funny – it's not even keeping an eye on me! Because it is so certain of me? Because it is so certain that I won't run away, is that why it believes, it can leave me? Here comes someone, who has already died, and he talks to me, although that is not planned for him. He's allowed to, many dead are speaking now in their choked voices, now they dare to, because my own language is not keeping any eye on me. Because it knows, it isn't necessary. Even if it runs away from me, I won't slip through its hands. I am at hand for it, but it has slipped through my hands. But I remain. But what remains, the writers do not make. What remains is gone. The flight of fancy was cut. Nothing and no one has come. And if nevertheless, against all reason, something that has not come at all, a little would like to remain, then what does remain, language, the most fleeting of all, has disappeared. It has replied to a new situations vacant advert. What should remain, is always gone. It is at any rate not there. So what is left to one.⁶⁰

Jelinek did not deliver her lecture in person. As she suffers from agoraphobia and cannot bear to be looked at, it was videotaped and projected on three screens in Stockholm. She interprets her lecture as personal and private, in which she reflected on her position as a writer, who observes but is excluded from life.⁶¹ Comments like these yet again obfuscate the distinction between her existence as a person and as public figure. What is interesting is the fact that Jelinek's comments serve to direct the public's way to read her. In this sense she only plays with the public's perception of her as image and an icon. Pia Janke, the founder of the 'Elfriede Jelinek Forschungszentrum' in Vienna, recognises this when she expresses the fear that the clichéd image of 'Netzbeschmutzerin Jelinek' will soon be replaced by the image 'Austrian Nobel Laureate'. She regrets this because, though Jelinek is well known, her texts are not.⁶²

Why then, I would like to ask in conclusion, is Jelinek such a controversial figure? She herself provides a clue when she says:

I write about the destructive [...]. People blather (*sülzen*) about their romantic experiences when the sun goes down in Mallorca. But who does the dirty work? I have to do the dirty work. I clean up the dirt of feelings (*Gefühlsdreck*). That is my task. In literature I am the *Trümmerfrau*, the woman with the rubbish bin, I am the rubbish love dispenser (*Liebesmüllabfuhr*).⁶³

Precisely because Jelinek does *not* keep quiet, because she intervenes with her writing where in the opinion of her adversaries she should not, she attracts and inspires criticism. In this, however, she fulfils the role of what Sartre calls a true intellectual. In his essay *A Plea for Intellectuals*, Sartre observed that intellectuals from varied backgrounds and with different interests and occupations often face one fundamental reproach. By his critics the intellectual is regarded as someone 'who meddles in what is not his business and claims to question both received truths and the accepted behaviour inspired by them, in the name of a global conception of man and society'.⁶⁴ The writer as intellectual, as Sartre elaborates, does his meddling in matters that apparently do not concern him in a different manner, with the only tool available – namely language. What Sartre says about the writer's commitment is especially true of Jelinek's writing project. She communicates what Sartre refers to as 'the incommunicable (being-in-the-world as lived experience) by exploiting the misinformation contained in ordinary language, and maintaining the tension between the whole and the part, totality and totalisation, the world and being-in-the-world, as the *significance* of [her] work'.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Elfriede Jelinek – Nobel lecture, *Sidelined*, Translation from German by Martin Chalmers. © The Nobel Foundation 2004. <http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/2004/jelinek-lecture-e.html>.

⁶¹ See 'Elfriede Jelinek über eine "furchtbare Schwere"'. Interview mit APA-Kulturredakteur Wolfgang Huber-Lang, 2.12.2004, <http://derstandard.at/?url=/?ressort=Literaturnobelpreis>.

⁶² 'Wild umstritten, kaum gelesen: Elfriede Jelinek'. Simone Kreamsberger interviews Pia Janke. http://www.dieuniversitaet-online.at/Beitr_ge.70+M53d9dfd8e26.0.html.

⁶³ "'Ich bin die Liebesmüllabfuhr". Elfriede Jelinek führt Krieg gegen die Bequemen, macht sich selber herunter und bittet um Gnade.' Von André Müller. *Berliner Zeitung. Magazin*. (27.11.2004) p. 4.

⁶⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Between Existentialism and Marxism*. Translated from the French by John Matthews. (London: Verso 1983) p. 230.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 284.