ANNIE RING

11 Cool Critique Versus Hot Spectatorship: Jelinek/Haneke's Voyeur Around Vienna, a Return

Some months after Elfriede Jelinek won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004, a member of the Swedish Academy that awards the prize resigned. The quality for which the prize was granted, Jelinek's skill in 'revealing the absurdity of society's clichés and their subjugating power',[1] was also the criterion upon which Knut Ahnlund resigned, writing to the Svenska Dagbladet that Jelinek's uncompromisingly explicit prose represented no less than 'violent pornography'.[2] As inaccurate as Ahnlund's comment was, his reference to pornography – that most notorious medium of 'making-visible' – nonetheless earns it a critical return in this chapter, which is concerned with the representation of voyeurism in Jelinek's novel of 1983, *Die Klavierspielerin* (*The Piano Teacher*), and in Michael Haneke's prize-winning movie adaptation of the novel, *La Pianiste* (*The Piano Teacher*) of 2001. Taking my lead from episodes where pornography proper features as an object of the attention of their shared protagonist, Erika Kohut, I revisit these core works of recent Austrian literary and visual culture in the company of some of the most respected scholarship on pornography from the 1980s to the present day. My aim here is to demonstrate how pornography's powerful visuals – and the range of responses, both hot and cool, they can elicit – offer a challenging resource for reflection on broader contemporary practices of spectatorship, and of critique.

1 'The Nobel Prize in Literature 2004', *Nobelprize.org*. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2004/> accessed 25 June 2013.

2 Luke Harding, 'Nobel winner's work is violent porn, says juror', *The Guardian* (12 October 2005). <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/oct/12/books.booksnews> accessed 25 June 2013.

In Angela Carter's definition, pornography is 'art with work to do'.[3] One of the most instrumental visual genres, pornography is pornography when it elicits from its viewer a bodily response of pleasure. Though far from pornography – indeed Jelinek has responded to critics that her novel is 'the opposite of pornographic'[4] – the text's key events are harrowing, and include a borderline incestuous mother-daughter relationship, the daughter's genital self-mutilation and a rape. Haneke's visual rendition of her plot undoubtedly moves viewers psychically, and perhaps indeed corporeally. Meanwhile both works include, respectively, narrative descriptions or short clips of pornography. Yet these samplings of pornography, and the texts' other explicit episodes, have work to do that is quite other than that identified by Carter. Soon after the film was released, Jelinek compared herself and Haneke to 'scientists studying the life of insects'.[5] More recently still, Haneke has stated: 'Ich möchte immer das Misstrauen des Zuschauers in das filmisch Gezeigte nähren' [I wish always to nourish the spectator's mistrust in what a film shows].[6] These, then, are artist-scientists, who make visible the taboo phenomena of modernity in order to encourage not pleasurable voyeurism, but the unpleasurable affect that can facilitate a critical agency.

A single woman in her late thirties, teaching at a Vienna conservatoire and living at home with her mother, Professor Erika Kohut presents as both performer and teacher of a cool, distanced critique. The 'souveräne Leistung' [sovereign achievement],[7] which her student Walter Klemmer identifies in her musical performances, also extends into a performance of

3 Cited in Victoria Best and Martin Crowley, *The New Pornographies: Explicit Sex in Recent French Fiction and Film* (New York and Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 5.

4 Elfriede Jelinek, 'Interview: *The Piano Teacher*' <http://www.afc.at/jart/prj3/afc/main.jart?rel=de&reserve-mode=active&content-id=1164272180506&tid=1158748423955&artikel_id=3817> accessed 10 July 2013.

5 Ibid.

6 Karin Schiefer and Michael Haneke, 'Über *Das Weisse Band*', in Karin Schiefer, ed., *Filmgespräche zum Österreichischen Kino* (Vienna: Synema, 2012), 8.

7 Stefan Grissemann, ed., *Die Klavierspielerin: Drehbuch, Gespräche, Essays* (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 2001), 46.

persona that Erika executes: a persona that is deliberately sovereign and separate. Yet the novel's closely focalised third-person narrative, and the film's sustained visuals of Erika's (Isabelle Huppert's) facial expressions and gestures, betray her giving herself over to the consuming pleasures of video pornography and live striptease. These challenging works show Erika's self-styled sovereignty at war with a concurrent drive to participate in the visual and sexual cultures around her. The limits and the potential of such contained collaboration – in particular, Erika's efforts to maintain critical distance while being moved by strong voyeuristic pleasures – are at stake in the following pages. Following Erika, we begin on the streets of Vienna.

Critical Spectatorship: *Die Klavierspielerin*

In Jelinek's novel, Erika represents a lone spy among a mass of consumers who feast on the video and live visual pleasures on offer around the city. Erika's self-image, by contrast, is that of a tightly contoured subject, upon whom only 'das Flaumgewicht der Kunst' [the featherweight of art] may settle.[8] It is claimed that she detests '[d]as Kreatürlich-Körperliche' [the creaturely corporeal],[9] an experience of animal fleshiness that characterises the bodies of others. Yet Erika is concurrently drawn to the attractions of the Prater leisure park, of Vienna's shopping precincts, and of the movie theatres, all sites where the body's creaturely activities are clearly on display. In the first half of the novel, Erika successfully maintains her separation from other human creatures by remaining unmoved by what she sees. At first, she observes the viewing behaviour of visitors to X-rated cinemas, including among them one of her students from the conservatory. Erika's posture of disciplinary supervision in these sites is compatible with the

8 Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2005), 95/*The Piano Teacher*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (London: Serpent's Tail, 1999), 90.

9 Ibid., 94/90; translation amended.

ethos of the conservatory, whose high culture is reproduced in strict musical forms and educational routines. At their next meeting, Erika punishes (or rewards?) the student she spotted in the cinema with an especially harsh lesson on Bach.

Not only observing the behaviour of others, Erika also turns her gaze upon the technologies of viewing to which the subjects of her surveillance have access. Thus she watches the technical process of a live peepshow in the Turkish area of Vienna, where customers pay to view women stripping under the arches of a railway viaduct: 'Der Münzschlitz wird beschickt, das Fenster klickt, und rosiges Fleisch erscheint' [The coin goes in, the window goes up, and rosy flesh comes out].[10] Erika's observation captures the fleshiness of the *Schlitz* [slit] into which the consumer's coins are *beschickt*, or loaded, all the while maintaining a cool curiosity, one that equally characterises her visit to the adult cinema. Here, Erika does not give herself over to watching a film that, we learn, she has in any case seen before, at an out-of-the-way venue where she would be recognised as a regular customer. Instead her attention lingers upon the city-centre cinema's all-male audience, before focussing on the women actors on screen, whose faces are 'vor Schmerz' and 'vor Freude gezogen' [twisted in pain/in joy], and one who 'zuckt, um kein gutes Ziel zu bieten' [jerks around to avoid offering a good target].[11] Erika observes the participation of certain actresses, and the attempt made by one to separate herself from the performance of which she forms a part.

There is something scholarly in Erika's observations of the city's pornographic processes. Readers learn that: 'sie, sich in die einander verkrallten Leute verbeißend, ergründen will, was nun dahintersteckt' [Erika, absorbed in these ensnarled people, would like to get at the bottom of this business].[12] Thus, through her Professor of the piano, Jelinek pre-empted the analyses of pornography that would develop in the late 1980s out of feminist and film criticism, beginning with Linda Williams' identification of a 'frenzy of the visible' by which hard-core heteroporn revealed sexual acts and experiences

10 Ibid., 52/48.
11 Ibid., 109/106.
12 Ibid., 111/107.

that were lacking from other cinematic genres.[13] In Williams' argument, the extreme screening of the body that hard-core pornography performs is accompanied by another kind of screening, namely concealment. Part of the remit of this Carterian 'art with work to do' is to render invisible the labour behind the images. Accordingly, as Williams stressed in 2004, one of the roles of academic work on pornographic cinema has been to draw attention to 'the choreography of performing and labouring bodies' that the onscreen event of pornography hides from view.[14]

Erika, as proto-pornography theorist, discerns the labour behind the film's hard choreography. Hence her insight in the adult cinema that: 'In den Pornofilmen wird allgemein mehr gearbeitet als im Film über die Welt der Arbeit' [In porno flicks, people work harder than in movies about the workaday world].[15] Articulating the Marxist sensibility of her reading of the pornography, the male actor is described as a 'gelernte Mechaniker, [der] bearbeitet das kaputte Auto, das Werkstück Frau' [trained mechanic, [who] works on the woman, a damaged car].[16] Erika's critical eye captures the unequal distribution of gender roles, as the man works actively upon a feminine body that waits passively to be penetrated or, in the S&M flick on show that evening, struck by the repetitive blows of whip or crop. Erika observes the labouring and gendering of these bodies, and she conjectures that the 'ausgefransten Laienschauspieler' [frazzled amateur actors] must dream of appearing on other screens in quite other genres.[17]

In these passages, Jelinek makes Erika a critical participant in the visual pleasures of pornography and striptease, a voyeur who can maintain an analysis of what she sees. Moreover, this distanced surveillance is revealed as something that Erika has learned at home and transferred onto the city streets. Tellingly, she carries her deceased father's binoculars with her. Meanwhile,

13 Cf. Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

14 Linda Williams, ed., *Porn Studies* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 5.

15 Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin*/*The Piano Teacher*, 110/106.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 110/107.

analeptic subchapters uncover a childhood in which adolescent sexual curiosity was suppressed in favour of a strict routine of musical diligence. These flashbacks frame Erika's viewings not only as supervisory missions, but as opportunities to indulge a curiosity prohibited at home. Perhaps therefore, despite their problematic gender politics, pornography and striptease can offer Erika some sexual agency and enjoyment. In his film of the novel, Haneke stresses these hotter aspects, those of curiosity and enjoyment, in Erika's voyeurism. Moreover, in line with Haneke's own critical project, the focus moves in the film to the risks that accompany such affective states.

Mimetic Spectatorship? Haneke's Collaborative Voyeurs

Haneke's French-language film of Jelinek's novel was released in 2001, and awarded the Grand Prix du Jury in Cannes, along with Best Actor Awards for Isabelle Huppert as Erika and Benoît Magimel as Walter. The peepshow episode is absent from the screenplay, and Erika's regular visits to pornography cinemas are condensed into a single visit to an adult store that offers single-occupancy video booths with a choice of pornography clips. The repetitive quality of Erika's city walks is nonetheless captured in a recurrent straight-on angle shot of her exiting the conservatory's glass doors. On the other hand, the element of supervision so prominent in the novel is reduced, so that Erika's espionage around Vienna's streets is transformed into private viewing. Thus in her trip to the adult store, while Erika has an eye upon the other shoppers, it is she who draws more attention, as a rare female visitor to this male-occupied space. Admittedly, Erika's surveillance of live sex from the bushes of the Prater is not removed, but only translated into a tour on foot of a drive-in cinema where she can watch a couple having sex in a car. Yet the film downplays Erika's supervisory role overall, repositioning her instead as a consumer of sexual spectacles. In this way, Haneke can emphasise a concern central to his cinematic project, that of a troublingly mimetic quality to visual consumerism.

Haneke's feature film of 1992, *Benny's Video*, showed the eponymous character killing a young girl after watching a rental video in which a pig is slaughtered. The concern that spectators might mimic the violence that they observe on screens around them aligns Haneke with the second-wave feminist critique of pornography, pioneered by the legal theorist Catharine MacKinnon, who claimed that pornography 'contributes causally to attitudes and behaviors of violence and discrimination'.[18] MacKinnon advocated banning pornographic images in order to prevent their reproduction in the everyday sexual practices of uncritical consumers. Lacking communication with their families and peers, both Benny and Erika seem at especially high risk of uncritical viewing, a behaviour that surely recurs with most frequency where pornography's images and scenarios do not represent a pleasurable entertainment or perverse exception within sexual life, but instead the central, or even only, image of what sex is and can be.

Fig. 11.1: *Benny's Video*: Cool spectatorship.
Credit: WEGAfilm © 1992.

18 Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 196.

In 2009, the British film scholar Catherine Wheatley praised *La Pianiste* as the most successful yet of Haneke's film projects that have sought to 'position [...] the spectator as an ethical subject'.[19] She describes the cool detachment with which Erika watches the pornography clip in her video booth. Even as she breathes in the smell from a previous user's discarded tissue, Erika's face is 'impassive, her very reaction an inversion of the excesses of masturbation'.[20] Wheatley's reading finds in Erika a role-model for how critical cinemagoers might approach the images that Haneke screens. Yet Erika's later behaviour suggests that her cool spectatorship – perhaps like the still, calculating gaze of Benny in the earlier film – gives way to certain forms of mimicry of what she has seen.

In her booth, Erika selects a short clip in which a woman performs oral sex on a man. The camera alights three times upon the video screen, taking in the actress's throat as she lies in a prone position, and a partial view of the male genitals. The intervening reverse-shots show Erika's face, onto which the screen's cold light flickers. Her eyes and mouth twitch in what might be impassivity, or perhaps an unconscious immersion in the images on screen. Before she has picked up the tissue, the first reverse-shot shows Erika watching with her lips slightly parted, as if she were viewing with thirsty curiosity an act whose execution she wishes to mimic. Accordingly, for Mark Chapman, Erika watches the pornography 'like a student engaged in research' and later makes use of its 'pedagogical content'.[21] Indeed, Haneke's introduction of this clip, replacing the whipping and stripping scenes described in the novel, enables him to suggest a mimetic reproduction in the episodes taken from the novel wherein Erika performs oral sex on Walter, and to relate these acts to what she has seen in the video booth. All subsequent sex in which Erika consensually engages in the film includes fellatio. This is a slight adaptation when it comes to Erika and

19 Catherine Wheatley, *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2009), 9.

20 Ibid., 133.

21 Mark Chapman, '*La Pianiste*: Michael Haneke's Aesthetic of Disavowal', *Bright Lights Film Journal* 74 (2011), <http://brightlightsfilm.com/74/74piano_chapman.php> accessed 22 February 2013.

Walter's first sexual encounter, in the bathroom, where in the novel Erika applies hands, nails, and briefly her teeth to Walter's penis, and only in the later cleaning-cupboard scene engages in sustained oral sex. The film's repetition and extension of oral sex in Erika's live sex-life works to signal that a pornographic 'lesson' has been transmitted.

Figure 11.2: *Die Klavierspielerin*. Does Erika mimic the prone pose of the pornography actress?
Credit: WEGAfilm © 2001.

On the other hand, pornography is not the only medium through which Erika learns to conduct herself. More powerful than the television that blares constantly in the Kohuts' apartment is the relationship that plays out in armchairs before it. Haneke's concern with the mimicry of violence continued into *The White Ribbon* of 2009, which depicts a series of violent acts as the results of social learning in pre-World War One rural Germany. Here it is not screen images but sexual abuse and sadistic punishment that are transmitted into the children's treatment of animals, adults, and one another. In this sense, the critical message of Haneke's œuvre surpasses a social-learning theory of screen media, to suggest that violent images do

not generate, but instead make visible and perhaps release from latency, behaviours that are already being learned in homes, schools, and churches far from the X-rated cinema. By the same token, the pig-slaughter clip might influence the earlier character Benny's behaviour, but his parents' willingness to help in the concealment of his crime suggests a culture of violence that pre-exists his trip to the video store, and which Benny indicts by finally framing his parents for the original act as well as its cover-up.

Pornography proper occupies only a very brief segment of the running time of *La Pianiste*, and it plays a rather unexceptional role in Erika's routine. Instead, more shock is generated by her sadistic teaching at the conservatoire, her relationships with Walter and her mother, and the acts of self-harm that leave blood running down the side of a bathtub or seeping into her pale clothing. Rather than a central cause, pornography appears here as only one of many symptoms of a sick society – and one that is perhaps less harmful, for its visibility, than other abuses. On the other hand, the repetitions and re-iterations through which mainstream pornography functions, and its resultant affective power, make it a powerful cipher through which both novel and film can depict the precarious balancing acts that their protagonist plays, between positions of domination and submission, and between hot immersion and cool critique.

Critical Repetitions? Pornography's Reproduction and the (Re)turns of Drive

For Sarah Schaschek, pornography's defining generic feature is its seriality, the repetition of the stock sex acts and plot events that keep its users coming back for more.[22] Repetition is also a modernist aesthetic technique, for instance in Jelinek's compelling repetition of verbs of touch and spectatorship

22 Cf. Sarah Schaschek, *Pornography and Seriality: The Culture of Producing Pleasure* (New York: Palgrave, forthcoming 2014).

such as 'bohren' [boring] and 'sehen' [seeing] that create a furious and heady prose,[23] and the traumatic revisiting of violent or self-destructive acts in her plot. Themes and figures recur across her œuvre, too, including the controlling S/Mother and the Jewish father who survived the Holocaust and was committed to an asylum late in life. Haneke, meanwhile, has made repeated use of actors Ulrich Mühe, Susanne Lothar, and Huppert, who in *Amour* (2012) is shown gazing out of a window beside a piano in a rear-angle shot almost identical to one of Erika at the conservatory. The extreme case of self-referential repetition comes in Haneke's shot-for-shot US remake in 2008 of his suspense thriller *Funny Games* (1997). Such repetitions set Jelinek's readers and Haneke's viewers to tasks of interpretation that contrast starkly with the repeat-enjoyment of the canonical pornography viewer.

Yet, it is in their representation of pornography that both the novel and the film engage in their most telling repetitions. The Erika of the novel visits an adult cinema that she has attended before in order to catch the screening of a film that has been screened before in another cinema across the city. In Haneke's film, though condensed, a kind of repetition can be found in the video clips from which Erika must choose in her booth, which uniformly depict straight couples in acts of either oral or vaginal penetration, the former an act that Erika then chooses to repeat in her own sex life. Such plot and screen repetitions are reflected in the imagery of hoops, loops and ties that structure Erika's S&M fantasy that she communicates in a letter to Walter, imagery that is particularly pronounced in the novel. The destructive loops of experience become visceral metaphor in her request, for instance, that Walter bind her in spools of wet rope that will tighten as they dry, and gag her with the looping shapes of a 'Gummischlauch' [rubber hose] and with 'Strumpfhosen' [panty hose], while wearing a 'Dreieckbadehose' [bikini].[24] The bikini itself would reproduce her male cousin's 'Minibadehose' [mini-swimsuit],[25] a looping construction that barely concealed the body it was designed to bind.

23 Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin/The Piano Teacher*, 109–10/105–6.
24 Ibid., 227/223.
25 Ibid., 42/39.

Erika adorns herself with 'Ketten, mit Manschetten, mit Gürteln, mit Schnürungen' [chains, cuffs, belts, cordings],[26] looping props that evoke the circling structure of the repetition-compulsion that Freud discovered in the late years of his practice, and which Žižek updates for his post-Freudian readings of contemporary life as 'the endless repetitive cycle of wandering around in guilt and pain'.[27] The repetition-compulsion's cyclical form offers a geometric template for Erika's evening perambulations, and for the obsessive return, in her instructions to Walter, to the circular props of her subjugation. Yet the post-Freudian reinterpretation, by Žižek and others, of the death drive as an excess of painful-pleasurable *jouissance*, may endow such compulsive repetition with a liberatory potential. *Jouissance* refers to a destructive pleasure that might be read as surpassing the duller repetitions of the pleasure principle as conservative love story. Hence the potential that Jennifer Moorman has located in online queer pornography, to re-appropriate the gestural language and media forms of mainstream heteroporn for a 'diversity of sexual expression' that may effect pornography's resignification.[28]

Admittedly, the pornography that Erika views is not queer, but instead fits Gubar's description during the 1980s debates of most pornography as a 'gender-specific genre produced primarily for men but focused obsessively on the female figure'.[29] However, there is a re-gendering of the gaze in Jelinek/Haneke's vision, one which could ally itself with Gertrud Koch's description of a feminine watching that can identify in pornography's repetitive images a 'flickering [...] shadow world of bodies' that varies from

26 Ibid., 205/202.

27 Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 2000), 292.

28 Jennifer Moorman, 'Gay for Pay, Gay For(e)play: The Politics of Taxonomy and Authenticity in LGBTQ Online Porn', in Feona Attwood, ed., *Porn.com: Making Sense of Online Pornography* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 155.

29 Susan Gubar, 'Representing Pornography: Feminism, Criticism, and Depictions of Female Violation', in Susan Gubar and Joan Huff, eds, *For Adult Users Only: The Dilemma of Violent Pornography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 48.

its originally phallic instrumentality.[30] Koch advocates a feminine spectatorship whose political effectiveness in looking anew at the instrumental imagery of pornography is enhanced by a playful, pleasurable element to the viewing encounter. Such an element is invoked by the original French and German titles of the two works considered here, which set up Erika as the *Pianiste* or *Spielerin* for whom play dominates all areas of life.

In her rebuttal of MacKinnon's pro-censorship approach to hard-core pornography, Judith Butler has considered how certain rhetorical gestures that communicate violence might be subject to 'reverse citation [...] the repetition of an originary subordination for another purpose, one whose future is partially open'.[31] On this model, if Erika's spectatorship of pornography does involve the mimesis that Haneke aims to emphasise in his œuvre, her oral-sexual copying can be read not only as a disempowering re-quotation of what she sees on screen. Like Butler's drag queen, or Žižek's pervert, Erika might be role-playing a 'too-literal identification' with a social code of domination and submission,[32] mimicking it so precisely that her performance renders it ridiculous. This would explain Walter's reaction of disgust at her letter. Erika's assertive request has not only surprised him by issuing from her expected feminine role of passivity. It has also exposed a hidden violence that underpins the culture of romance, a violence not usually rendered as explicit as in Erika's letter and in the jarring visual evidence of her S&M prop box.

Trapped in loops of domination at home and work, Erika practices a citational play that may potentially break the death-drive repetitions that it mimics. The risks of such play, however, are great. Walter rejects Erika, and readers learn that 'als Mensch kann er sie jetzt nicht mehr recht sehen' [he can no longer see her as a human being].[33] The rejection is only partial, however, as Walter later carries out certain of the acts that her letter

30 Gertrud Koch, 'On Pornographic Cinema: The Body's Shadow Realm', trans. Jan-Christopher Horak, *Jump Cut* 35 (1990), 28.

31 Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 37–8.

32 Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 2007), 14.

33 Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin/The Piano Teacher*, 218/215.

requested. Erika is unable to call the play to a halt when Walter breaks her nose and ribs and rapes her. It might appear that this is precisely what Erika was asking for. Readers of the novel are aware, however, of the vulnerability and the reverse-request underlying the letter, which she hopes will *not* be taken at its word: 'Bitte tu mir nicht weh, steht unleserlich zwischen den Zeilen' [Please don't hurt me; that's what's written illegibly between the lines].[34] Erika's rape articulates the limits of parodically re-playing the violent codes of conduct around her. It makes clear that, as long as it persists in citing anew the object of its critique, *détournement* remains a further turn of reproduction. Thus in the case of pornographic viewing, even Koch's non-phallic women who watch pornography will continue to encounter ever new iterations of their gender's degradation. The same problem concerns queer pornography's appropriation of heterosexual mainstream genres and gestures. Niels van Dorn has shown how even amateur queer pornography, free to represent whichever bodies and sexual acts it likes, continues to screen conservative scenarios.[35]

A practitioner of controlled *détournement*, Erika feels the limits of critical perversion in her body. For instance, when spying on the couples having sex outdoors, she urgently needs to empty her bladder. Her body is revealed here as one that precisely does not do what its sovereign 'owner' commands it to do, and while she pees against the side of the car in the film version, she is spotted by the objects of her surveillance, who turn their gaze upon her and chase her away. Her attempts to train her piano pupil Walter in her critical S/M project are riskier still. Walter is willing to repeat the cool conduct that Erika has taught him in his piano lessons and the didactic text of the letter: thus before the rape, he observes himself waiting 'ruhig und diszipliniert' [calm and disciplined] outside the Kohuts' apartment,[36] even as inside 'treten ihn seine Sinne in den Leib' [his senses are kicking him in the belly].[37] Erika's most diligent pupil, Walter learns

34 Ibid., 230/226.

35 Cf. Niels van Doorn, 'Keeping it Real: User-Generated Pornography, Gender Reification, and Visual Pleasure', *Convergence* 16 (2010), 411–30.

36 Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin/The Piano Teacher*, 265/260.

37 Ibid.

better than she could have imagined, and grievously applies to her the cool sadism that she set out to teach him in her erotic text. Cool conduct has switched here to uncontrolled repetition, and Erika's role turned from that of critical spectator to victim.

Conclusion: Hot Critique

As the Nobel committee identified, Jelinek's intransigent prose reveals patterns of personal and societal domination that would otherwise remain concealed. If her character Erika is a pervert – a sadist, masochist, or voyeur – she is one in millions in her society, whose hidden violence she repeats with a perverse clarity that makes everyday phenomena of sadism and submission visible. This clarity is especially pronounced in Jelinek's novel, where Erika represents a rare and relatively sovereign spectator of her society, safe until she picks a lover who fails to collaborate in her critical play. The Erika of the novel differs from the more collaborative watcher of Haneke's film, whose self-controlled surveillance is overtaken by mimetic reproduction of pornography's forceful images. Yet the works also bear witness to a viewpoint that can shift, as Erika encounters the different sexual spectacles on offer around the city. The ambulant repetition of her spectatorship permits Erika, in her two iterations, to reposition herself in relation to the images and acts that she observes, allowing these to appeal to her at times as objects of cool interest and at others as vehicles for her own drives. Admittedly these drives prevent her from fully resisting a visual medium that she might ethically or politically reject – and from protecting herself when pornography's images are reproduced live in Walter's drive to abuse her.

The problem of critical resistance also pertains to the form of these works of literature and cinema which, if they are to critique the phenomena of mediatised modernity, must also necessarily re-produce them. *Die Klavierspielerin* does not go so far as Jelinek's anti-porno of 1989, *Lust*, whose erotic prose eviscerates the factory-like productions that the author

finds in the sexual relationships between men and women. Yet many of Erika's focalised sections, and above all the letter, which occupies thirteen pages, produce an S/M-erotic prose that might yet interpellate a body-response on the part of the reader. Equally, there is no guarantee that the sections of the novel focalised on Walter (which are few but powerful) will not elicit empathy among readers, the presentation of his inner thoughts possibly provoking a reaction in which his actions are perceived as justified by frustration.

Such a risk pertains perhaps more urgently to Haneke's use of diegetic pornographic footage in the video-booth, and the sex and rape scenes in the film. As well as wishing to nourish the suspicious viewer of his films, Haneke has also stated the less gentle aim, that his work 'vergewaltig[e] den Zuschauer zur Selbstständigkeit' [rape the viewer into autonomy],[38] a critical self-reliance that he hopes will arise from the shock effect of the images that he screens. The idea of autonomy resulting from violation is proven tenuous here by his chosen text, as Erika's self-mutilation at the close of both novel and film works at most as a desperate attempt to assert control amidst ongoing heteronomy. Meanwhile it is not clear whether cool camera-work and editing can prevent the rape scene from arousing Haneke's viewers – a risk that is especially urgent in his cinema that has devoted itself to criticising the mimetic danger of behaviours and images. As Best and Crowley have observed in their study of recent French-language texts, the inclusion of explicit sex in fiction and film can potentially breach 'aesthetic boundaries, contaminating its host with its base, bodily instrumentality'.[39] The risk for both novel and film is that their consumers will be contaminated, and begin to collaborate corporeally or phantasmatically with their explicit passages and images.

Yet the inclusion of pornography and other sexual voyeurism in these works itself fulfills a critical function: by including pornography, Jelinek

38 Stefan Grissemann and Michael Omaste, 'Herr Haneke, wo bleibt das Positive? Ein Gespräch mit dem Regisseur', in Alexander Horwarth, ed., *Der Siebente Kontinent: Michael Haneke und seine Filme* (Vienna and Zurich: Europaverlag, 1991), 205.

39 Best and Crowley, *The New Pornographies*, 3.

and Haneke acknowledge it as a vital medium of modernity, one that contemporary literature and cinema must therefore engage if they are to resonate with the reality of mass sensual life – and to critique it. Moreover, in her spectatorship that shifts from sovereignty to immersion, Erika offers a model for a spectatorship that can be critical *and* moved. A further model for such a moved spectatorship is provided once more by contemporary pornography theory. Recording her analysis of a project on unsolicited X-rated email, Paasonen describes not only the textual operations of the pornographic spam images, their modes of address, pictorial assembly, and inbuilt ideological and plot structures – but also the way in which the images operate upon her as their recipient. Together with the explicit images and passages from the *Piano Teacher* text and film, such insights from the most contemporary studies of pornography exemplify a mode of critique that does not protect or separate itself, but instead consents to be affected by what it encounters, to experience the range of (hot or cool) states that are made available by a text or image, and to allow them to reveal fantasies and behaviours that may be invisibly violent, or indeed counterintuitively pleasurable.

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