

Figuring Austria's Repressed Violence: Artistic Labour of the Body  
in the Work of Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Abstract

Figuring Austria's Repressed Violence, Artistic Labour of the Body in the Work of Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT operates on three levels. It functions as a historical and political project, wherein the work of EXPORT and Jelinek is read in the context of the formation and unprocessed historical memory of the Second Republic of Austria. It analyses how, in these works, the body is figured in relation to theories found in Theodor Adorno and Sigmund Freud and it also contributes original research to interpretations of EXPORT and Jelinek. More precisely, this thesis attempts to theorise a concept of artistic labour which includes the categories of the body, instinct, sublimation, repression and history. It brings the question of gender and the body into relation with Theodor Adorno's concept of artistic labour in *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), where an artwork is understood as the congelation of useless social labour. It shows that on the one hand, the analysis of the body in this art is undertaken as a critique of women's reduction to reproductive function or sexual-object. On the other, this art reflects on and works against the reduction of the human-body to material, in both the economic-process and in relation to the past. It enquires into the meaning of artistic use of the body, within language, image and action, under racial-patriarchal-capitalism in postwar art. Moreover, it articulates the necessity of a feminism beyond 'innocence' and pure Otherness.

The approach that I take attempts to move dialectically between critical interpretation, historical analysis and speculation. The works in question carry forward a historical response and proximity to the legacy of Nazism and its latent and pronounced continuity within the founding of the postwar nation state: The Second Republic of Austria. 'Figuring Austria's Repressed Violence' is structured into five chapters which work through the following categories: identity, and the body as material; the limit of the body, expressed in relation to repression and shame and the *Leib-Körper* distinction; the concept of thinking-praxis in Feminist Actionism; the role of 'woman' and the uses of gender by fascism; the gendered dialectic of the sub-history of film and the 'subterranean history of the body' and lastly, on the concepts of history, fate and abstraction in relation to the politics of *Heimat* and nativism.

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## Translation and Style

Where stated, already existing translations are used, sometimes modified. All other translations are my own, therefore all errors related to these are my own. Where authors and artists have used unconventional and idiosyncratic grammar and orthography, I have sought to maintain this as far as possible.

A communication that is the bearer of hatred is opposed by a behaviour of vulnerability. When dreams and sleep, when the storage basin of the unconscious thought become the sight of battle, signalling the tearing up of all existing pictures, we shall see the real picture through the tear, the drama of self-realisation. On the search for home, the noose slid around the neck.

- VALIE EXPORT

Fetishism gravitates towards mythology.

- Theodor Adorno

Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today. Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress is one of its elements, is not prepared to absorb the mind entirely.

- Theodor Adorno

There will be no poetry after Auschwitz, unless it is on the grounds of Auschwitz.

- Peter Szondi

If one picks up German soil, it turns to ashes in one's hand. That is my eternal theme. It is completely compulsive. I have the feeling that when one lives here — that is this Adorno quote — of course poetry after Auschwitz is possible, but no poetry without Auschwitz is possible. [...] I have the feeling I actually have to speak about it always.

- Elfriede Jelinek

...what hope clings to [...] is the transfigured body [*verklärter Leib*].

- Theodor Adorno

## Introduction

The first word in the title of this thesis: ‘figuring’ implies its opposite, disfiguring. Repressed violence implies the protection of a perpetrator. ‘Artistic labour’ refers to the kind of useless social labour that the making of art participates in. Here this is focussed on the body. In this thesis, I explore how the body is expressed in the work of Austrian author Elfriede Jelinek and artist VALIE EXPORT.<sup>1</sup> By closely analysing their works, I attempt to deepen our understanding of the meaning of the (gendered) body in art in the postwar period, while also asking how this bears on the present. I do this by identifying a set of concepts in the works, and placing these in relation to historical-philosophical, political and aesthetic traditions. I explore the relationships between sexuality and labour, the family and authoritarianism, the role of ‘woman’ within Nazism, and the (gendered) body, including the *Leib-Körper* distinction. Through a study of Expanded Cinema works and film, I analyse the way the body is figured and disfigured through media. I extend this to an analysis of both the ‘subterranean history of the body’, and the role of the body and instinct within mass culture. I consider the gendering of repression and its relation to the concepts of artistic labour and expression articulated by Theodor Adorno. Lastly, this thesis explores the idea of nature and technology through Jelinek’s critique of Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt in relation to the politics of *Heimat* and nativism and history and fate, or repetition.

I am wary to use the word ‘history’ without a caveat. Here, history is treated as something that has happened, to be engaged with or lived with, or worked through. History is not to be accepted as a given, since, as in Walter Benjamin’s formulation, it has been written by the victors.<sup>2</sup> There is a small power that can be gained by excavating, or feeling through the rubble of history. This is what tethers Jelinek to the names, *die Nestbeschmutzerin* and *Trümmerfrau* (of language). *Die Nestbeschmutzerin* refers to Jelinek as desecrating her ‘nest’: her *Heimat*, or homeland. This name was given by the Austrian media. *Trümmerfrau* refers to Jelinek as working through the rubble of language. In turn, this is a reference to the women who cleaned up the rubble during postwar reconstruction.

Here, history is the inheritance or transmission of memory, loss and culture; it moves in multiple directions and can emerge from the past into the present in a flash.<sup>3</sup> It can also be

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<sup>1</sup> VALIE EXPORT is the result of an invented artist name, it is ‘an artistic concept and logo to be written in capital letters only’. This is explained further in chapter 1. VALIE EXPORT, ‘Biography’, *VALIEEXPORT.At*, 2018 <<http://www.valieexport.at/en/biografie/>> [accessed 17 August 2018].

<sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘On the Concept of History’, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 4: 1938–1940*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings (Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 389–400 (p. 391).

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin, ‘On the Concept of History’, p. 390.

rejected, satirised or revoked. Time is understood as Ernst Bloch formulated it, as non-contemporaneous.<sup>4</sup>

My thesis draws on the specificity of a context: postwar Vienna, a city shrouded in guilt, denial and disavowal. To treat the art of Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT in its particularity adds a dimension to this thesis, where the art in question carries forward a historical response: it also sifts through the rubble, in its proximity it zooms in and focusses on to the legacy and danger of authoritarianism, racism, nativism, chauvinism and fascism and its latent and pronounced continuity, with the emergence of the newly formed nation state: The Second Republic of Austria. This legacy and danger is central to Adorno's concerns, and forms a central element of his aesthetics through categories such as 'history' and 'experience'.

There are two defining moments upon which this thesis draws. These moments manifest as opposites in terms of political events. The first 'moment' is the year 1968, and the events accompanying its momentum in Vienna. 1968 was the year that EXPORT first performed *Tapp und Tastkino* (Plate 0.1); it was also the year of *Kunst und Revolution*, an event which preceded the publication of Elfriede Jelinek's *wir sind lockvögel baby* (1970, *we are decoys baby*), the first of her 'active' novels. Without a huge social movement, in Vienna, the energy of 1968 spread through the field of art. Artists and writers incorporated protest into their work; art moved from the canvas to the body, and from the gallery to the streets.<sup>5</sup> The event which elicited the strongest public response was the Action organised by the SÖS, a left-wing student association. *Kunst und Revolution* took place in a newly built faculty building belonging to the University of Vienna

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<sup>4</sup> I thank Larne Abse Gogarty for bringing some lines from Ernst Bloch's *The Heritage of Our Times* to my attention during the immediate aftermath of the October 2017 Austrian election. In 1935 Bloch writes about non-synchronous attitudes to time: 'Youth mostly turns away from the day which it has. Which it does not have today, yet its dreams do not merely come from an empty stomach. They are just as corporeally supported by a hollow being-young which is not present. Young people without work can easily be paid and seduced from the right. Young people of bourgeois origin, yet without bourgeois prospects go to the right in any case, where they are promised some. [...] The keen air of youth causes left-wing fire, when it burns, to burn even more strongly; but when there is 'renewal' on the right, then the youth of bourgeois and seduced circles is all the more seducible: the blood-based, the organically young is a good soil for Nazis.' This youth is of course different in every context, but in Austria and arguably more broadly, if we resort to analogy, Bloch can help us understand renewal. Ernst Bloch, *The Heritage of Our Times*, trans. by Neville Plaice and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge: Polity, 2009). p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> The small student movement in Vienna was ignited by protests against the professor of Economic History (and former Nazi), Taras Borodajkewycz. Between the years 1962-5 Borodajkewycz, a Catholic pan-German was publicly challenged by then student, Heinz Fischer for glorifying National Socialism in his lectures. A prominent debate ensued, which resulted in Fischer being convicted of defamation of character, and fined. See: Andreas Stadler, 'Disturbing Creativity: Phantom Pains, Arts, and Cultural Policies in Postwar Austria' in *The Schlüssel Era in Austria*, vol. 18 eds. by Günter Bischof and Fritz Plasser, (University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 353. Incidentally, it was also Taras Borodajkewycz who edited *Der Verlust der Mitte* (*The Loss of the Centre*) by art historian Hans Sedlmayr in 1948. In German speaking countries this was hugely popular, selling 150,000 copies. See: Oliver Rathkolb, *The Paradoxical Republic: Austria 1945-2005* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 197. Marjorie Perloff notes that even a decade before the Anschluss took place, the University of Vienna became a sanctioned combat zone where Nazi students beat up Jews on its grounds, and where socialist 'Aryans' failed to attempt put an end to such events. Professors and teachers turned away. See, Marjorie Perloff, *The Vienna Paradox* (New York; New Directions Books, 2004) p. 76.

(Plates 0.2, 0.2a, 0.2b).<sup>6</sup> This Action ended in arrests, trials and prison sentences. Newspapers such as *Kronen Zeitung* (a right-wing tabloid) published the names and addresses of the Actionists, who received death threats and their homes were attacked.

Importantly, 1968 also marks fifty-years after the end of World War I and the fall of the Empire of Austria Hungary. The public outrage against *Kunst und Revolution* occurred concurrently with patriotic celebrations taking place in Vienna's *Stadthalle* marking the half centenary since the inauguration of the First Republic of Austria in 1918. A recurring slogan in the postwar decades declared: 'Austria is free'. Austria narrowly avoided being swallowed into the Soviet Union in 1955 and was 'freed' from the Third Reich. Austria was 'free' from the necessity to address its perpetrating role in the Nazi Holocaust.

The second defining moment occurred eighteen years later: 1986 was the year when Austria was forced by the international community to begin to acknowledge its active role in World War II and the Nazi Holocaust, catalysed by the election of ex-Wehrmacht first-lieutenant Kurt Waldheim as President, known as the 'Waldheim Scandal'.

I was drawn to the works included in this thesis for the ways in which they articulate aesthetics and politics; through their form and content they seek to analyse and throw light on structures and mechanisms of oppression, and on the role that fantasy plays within this. But this judgement was preceded by a question: why, in times of crisis, is there a tendency not only towards collective struggles for bettering conditions, for social emancipation, but also towards political reaction, with all its forms of racism, xenophobia and chauvinism? In the relatively recent present, both prior to and since the financial crisis of 2008, we have seen re-energised forms of political resistance. Riots have taken place in the Parisian banlieues in 2005, in Greece in 2010 and the UK in 2011. Student demonstrations and occupations took place across the world. Occupy and the squares movements in Greece, Spain and Turkey and the Arab Spring were all responses to social immiseration and increasingly authoritarian or technocratic governance. We can add to this list the Movement for Black Lives, anti-racist struggles such as Rhodes Must Fall at Oxford University, struggles for free education in South Africa (Fees Must Fall) and the tearing down of Confederate statues of former slave-owners in the USA. These radical movements have surged in the face of their oppositions. But in the last years, and during the writing of this thesis, smouldering beneath these newly energised social movements, a revived reactionary traditionalism emerged, with a temporality geared towards the past,

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<sup>6</sup> Gerald Raunig argues that *Kunst und Revolution* remains as a 'negative form of concatenation' a 'static caricature of political action and communication'. Gerald Raunig, "'Art and Revolution,'" 1968: Viennese Actionism and the Negative Concatenation', in *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, Semiotext(e) Active Agents Series (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2007), pp. 187-202 (pp. 196-201). See also Fritz Keller, *Wien, Mai 68 - eine heiße Viertelstunde* (Wien: Junius, 1983); Andrew Weiner, 'Times of the Event: On the Aesthetico-Political in West Germany and Austria circa 1968' (unpublished PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 2011).

towards nativism (most often expressed as nineteenth-century white-nationalism). We have seen the closing of borders against the ‘threat’ posed by refugees, as well as ramped up security. This is paired, or competing with a dystopian futurism organised by libertarian techno-capitalists. We see the delusional fantasy of the so-called ‘threat’ to so-called Western Civilisation directed towards Islam. State sanctioned racism, which is far from exceptional is extended to incorporate ideas of ‘ethno-nationalism’, now at the core of the current Austrian government, among others.

In the work of Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT we find an ongoing critique of many of these *old* ideas, ideas which are resorted to and repurposed for their advocates, old-for-the-new, which I will explore throughout the thesis. I suggest that on one level both artists practice a kind of working through of the past, but one which doesn’t regress into a therapeutic, which merely offers consolation. This is to say that it doesn’t merely gloss over the wounds. It doesn’t offer appeasement. In the case of both artists, even when there is a therapeutic moment in the art, the art is not understood as therapy. Rather it attempts to sharpen social contradictions and conflicts. Through an analysis of the form and idea of the works, my thesis attempts to provide a textured reading of what I would describe as Jelinek’s and EXPORT’s protest against ‘reality’. It investigates how they figure both the body and action, and how this relates to the Modernist idea of the hermetic artwork. It asks how might this (gendered) body transform the concept of autonomous art? The thesis also asks how this work helps us to understand the relationship between the body, the reproduction of the species and social reproduction, and mechanical reproducibility, as well as history and repetition, reaction and compulsion. This thesis ultimately poses the question: what role does history play in art?

VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek are brought together in two interconnected ways. First, very simply: they live in the same city; they share an immediate context. The second is broader: both artists have been and continue to be highly engaged both artistically and politically; although they ostensibly work in different media, they share larger intellectual artistic and political commitments. EXPORT and Jelinek have collaborated on several projects throughout their lives, including two exhibitions organised by EXPORT, which contributed to the feminist movement in Austria in the 1970s and 80s. The first, *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*, took place between 7 March and 5 April 1975 at Galerie nächst St. Stephan (Plates 0.3, 0.3a, 0.3b).<sup>7</sup> The second, *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, took place in 1985 in the Museum for

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<sup>7</sup> For lack of space it remains impossible to delve deeply into the history of these exhibitions. However, I will include a brief account of who exhibited and presented, thus providing an insight into the milieu. The *Internationales Kunstgespräch ‘Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität’* took place on April 2-5, 1975, with the following contributions: ‘Valie Export, Wien: Frau und Kreativität; Karin Thomas, Köln: Kunst und Künstler heute im Kontext der gesellschaftlichen Mechanismen; Antje Kunstmann, München: Frauenemanzipation und Erziehung. Äußerungen zur Ideologie; Rose Richter, Wien: Die proletarische Frauenbewegung im Spiegel der Literatur; Christian Feest, Wien: Frauen in Stammesgesellschaften; Therese Panoutsopoulos-Schulmeister, Aktionsanalytische Organisation, Wien: Die Frau in der AA-Kommune; Gisliind Nabakowski, Düsseldorf:



Modern Art and the Museum of the twentieth-century (Plate 0.4).<sup>8</sup> Both were group exhibitions of women artists who used a variety of media. Both hosted a symposium element engaging feminist politics and discourses. In 1986 EXPORT developed a screenplay for Jelinek's *Die Klavierspielerin*, which was consequently censored by the Austrian State.<sup>9</sup> In 1988, EXPORT made *Elfriede Jelinek: News from Home 18.8.88* (Plate 0.5), a thirty-minute film in which Jelinek gives a meta-commentary on ORF's *Zeit Im Bild* on three separate occasions throughout one day. Television is taken as an object of study and critiqued. EXPORT's film, *I turn over the pictures of my voices in my head* (Plate 0.6), was made in 2008 using images from her *The Voice as Performance, Act and Body* from 2007; Jelinek's text, *Its Non-tolerated, Ardent Closing Off (Ob, Voice)* was overlaid. Jelinek has commented on EXPORT's work in articles such as: 'Valie Export, Der Tod und das Mädchenmögliche' ('VALIE EXPORT, Death and the Girl-possible') and 'Sich vom Raum eine Spalte abscheiden' ('To Cut a Gap from Space'). These artists also share concerns regarding the place of 'woman' within Western society, historically and in the present, especially in relation to political praxis. The work of both artists illuminates the multifarious ways in which people come to be complicit with the reproduction of gendered and racist, fascist violence and capitalist exploitation. Their practices share a concern with language and the media of photography, television and film: they are concerned with ideas of reproduction and reality. While I do not want to conflate these practices, I am interested in how they use their respective media to address similar concerns. I will highlight where they overlap and where they are distinct.

Thus, we begin to see that the thesis crosses three areas. It functions as a historical and political project, wherein the work of EXPORT and Jelinek is read in the context of the formation and unprocessed historical memory of the Second Republic of Austria. It analyses the work, in particular, how the body is figured, in relation to specific concepts and theories

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Feminismus und Kunst: 1. Bürgerliche Rezeption der Frauenkunst 2. Was ist mit den Frauen los? 3. Feminismus und Kunst; Alfred Baader, Lausanne: Weibliche Leitbilder aus männlicher Sicht; Dorothy Iannone, St. Jeannet: Aus der Sicht der Künstlerin; Elisabeth Dessai, Duisburg: Wörter mit Widerhaken - Anmerkungen zum patriarchalischen Sprachgebrauch; Peter Gorsen, Wien: Frauen in der Kunst.' The exhibition participants were: 'Hilde Absalon, Renate Bertlmann, Friedl Bondy, Valie Export, Birgit Jürgenssen, Maria Lassnig, Friederike Pezold, Cora Pongracz, Meina Schellander, Karin Schöffbauer, Barbara Frischmuth, Elfriede Gerstl, Elfriede Jelinek, Friederike Mayröcker, Heidi Pataki, Waltraud Seidlhofer, Iannone, Sacchi, Horn, Olesen, Rosenbach, Sieverding, Ambrose, la lotta non é finita, Diddens, Euzykmann, Justensen, Meter, Amerika, Oppenheim, Petersen, Perinciole, Rex, Runge, Schneemann, Aktion unabhängiger Frauen.' For a history of this gallery, see: Robert Fleck, *Avantgarde in Wien: Die Geschichte der Galerie nächst St. Stephan Wien 1954-1982, Kunst und Kunstbetrieb in Österreich* (Wien: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1982), pp. 327-329 (p. 329); see also: *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*, ed. by VALIE EXPORT (Wien: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, 'Art with its Own Sense' is a play on words. If the dash is removed this becomes 'Art with Obstinance'. A nod to Alexander Kluge's and Oskar Negt's *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (1981) is made in the catalogue. See: Silvia Eiblmayr, VALIE EXPORT, and Monika Prischl-Maier, *Kunst Mit Eigen-Sinn: Aktuelle Kunst von Frauen, Texte Und Dokumentation* (Wien: Löcker, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> EXPORT LEXIKON: *Chronologie der bewegten Bilder bei VALIE EXPORT*, ed. by Sylvia Szely (Wien: Sonderzahl, 2007), p. 221.

concerning expression, sublimation and fetishism found in Theodor Adorno and Sigmund Freud. The third aspect of the project, which I have begun to outline above consists of the *what*, the art and culture produced by EXPORT and Jelinek during this moment.

Adorno's theoretical work is brought into contact with these practices in the following productive ways: Adorno's concept of the artwork's autonomy is outlined in relation to a less familiar notion of artistic expression as non-sublimated instinct. The theorisation of subject and object, the 'I' and the 'we' are brought into relation with this notion. Adorno's *interest* in the body, through concepts of repression and a para-history of the body in relation to both fascism and mass-culture also feature. I aim to bring Jelinek's and EXPORT's work into a challenging, and sometimes conflictual, relation with Adorno's work. But, I also show how both artists — with a politics of opening the wound, of staying with the negative — propel a thought process resonant with Adorno's own.

On the level of factual connection there are direct links to Adorno's theorisations in many of Jelinek's texts, including *Die Klavierspielerin*. The theorists Elizabeth Lenk and Peter Gorsen, who were both important for EXPORT and Jelinek and influential in the Viennese milieu, wrote their doctoral theses under Adorno in the 1960s. These thinkers also pushed against the limits of Adorno's thinking on modernist art and aesthetics: Lenk in terms of surrealism and Gorsen in terms of sexuality, Actionism, obscenity and pornography, in what he came to call a *Sexualästhetik*.<sup>10</sup> Both Lenk and Gorsen contributed to symposiums organised by EXPORT and both published on gender and art and literature. With Helka Sander and Gisland Nabakowski, Gorsen published an important two-volume edition *Frauen in der Kunst (Women in Art)* in 1980, which included EXPORT's essay, 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism' among many other important contributions. My analysis of these artists' practices contributes to a philosophical understanding of their works. It undertakes a reading of Adorno's concept of artistic labour, and thus the autonomy of the artwork, brought into proximity with the social and political shifts that occurred a generation later than his own.

Sigmund Freud and the development of psychoanalysis permeated the Viennese artistic milieu in which EXPORT and Jelinek practiced and each used his work in their own way. I try to bring this to light and to appreciate the impact of the psychoanalytic community including Freud (who were overwhelmingly Jewish) being driven out of Vienna following the Anschluss, leading to psychoanalysis being banned.

For EXPORT the studies on hysteria and *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930) are crucial to her theorisation of the gendered body and her media practice. For Jelinek, there is an ambient

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<sup>10</sup> An interesting dialogue plays out in: Theodor W. Adorno and Elisabeth Lenk, *The Challenge of Surrealism: the correspondence of Theodor W. Adorno and Elisabeth Lenk*, trans. by Susan H Gillespie (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015). For Gorsen's early concept of sexual aesthetics see: Peter Gorsen, *Sexualästhetik, Zur Bürgerlichen Rezeption von Obszönität und Pornographie* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1972).

presence of psychoanalytic concepts throughout her work.<sup>11</sup> These concepts are not explained but emerge manifest in her language. While both figures pursue a psychoanalytic method in their own work, in terms of working through or figuring the past, and in incorporating difficulty into their work, they do not treat art as a therapeutic arena and they both challenge unreconstructed Freudian notions of femininity as passivity. Most important for the thesis are the way in which the concepts of sublimation and fetishism figure as contested.

Where other theoretical frameworks are used — often from figures in or surrounding the Frankfurt School — it is as I have understood that they best relate to the artworks. In this sense, I have adopted an imminent approach. Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT are both essayists; I refer to their own theorisations, though I do not solely rely on them. This means that a vast array of artists, philosophers, psychoanalysts, and theorists enter the scene.<sup>12</sup> The last chapter closely focusses on reading Jelinek's own engagement with Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger in her play *Totenauferberg*, yet the theorisation of memoryless thought, which Jelinek figures explicitly through her work on Heidegger also appears as a sub-category within the totality of the thesis, through the analysis of cultural forms in postwar Austria.

The method I adopt attempts to move between historical and contextual analyses, critical interpretation and speculation. It is worth mentioning that the artworks discussed in this thesis are not discrete objects. Both EXPORT and Jelinek employ their own method of intertextuality, which is to say that they incorporate citations and concepts into their works. The works are not made in isolation. Although they inculcate their own laws, I argue that reading these works necessitates the use of concepts developed in Marxism, psychoanalysis, philosophy, feminisms, film, media and literary theories. This work also necessitates a contextual history. On one level, we might go as far as to say the works are provincial, in that they speak directly to Vienna and Austria.

For the reasons I have laid out, I argue that it is necessary to employ an interdisciplinary method. This means that I work with concepts from the above disciplines, while maintaining the tensions and contradictions between them. I would go as far as to claim that this interdisciplinary method is the only method one can bring to these works, since they themselves characterise an historical attack on artistic, filmic and literary boundaries and are asynchronous in their form and media. Moreover, I try to read the works out of their location of making. Postwar Vienna, and by extension Austria, provides a background, a context of guilt, denial,

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<sup>11</sup> In a rare interview from 2017 Jelinek goes as far as to say, 'if I had not become a writer, I would be a psychoanalyst, I am sure, because I have an instinctive understanding of it. Psychoanalysis has always interested me and not only because I am Viennese [*laughs*] and anyway [*points to bookshelves and tables*], there's Freud, lying around everywhere.' Elfriede Jelinek and Gitta Honegger, 'The Terror of the Cute: Elfriede Jelinek in Conversation with Gitta Honegger', *Theater*, 47.3 (2017), 37-45 (p. 41).

<sup>12</sup> In addition to Adorno and Freud, we find Ingeborg Bachmann, Silvia Federici, Hannah Arendt, Elizabeth Lenk, Rebecca Comay, Gillian Rose, Helke Sander, Peter Weibel, Otto Muehl, Wilhelm Reich, Max Horkheimer, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Peter Gorsen to name a few.

disavowal and protection of perpetrators: an unresolved relation to World War II and by extension to the Holocaust, which other places in Europe, including France, the Netherlands and Poland do not.

The contribution this thesis makes occurs on the following levels. It brings together VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek and reveals — through a close examination of their works, essays and notes, as well as their specific historical context — how the concept of, and the politics of the body, operates in their practices. It is both a comparative study and it aims to go beyond comparative study. EXPORT and Jelinek are not case studies, but rather two cases. This thesis shows how the figuration and disfiguration of the body, the uses of technologies in art (as the arts: actions, performance, video, film and literature), relates to the concept of art within the historical era of the culture industry (prior to and in the wake of World War II to the present). It enquires into the meaning of the artistic use of the body between 1968-1989, in relation to the concepts of repression, sublimation and fetishism under patriarchal capitalism. This thesis analyses what emerges in art in postwar Austria in the wake of Austro- and Nazi fascism, where artists critique both a society ruled by exchange, and a society dominated by repression of the past; where State repression and instinctual repression co-exist. I acknowledge that this *is* a general point and not limited to Austria. I argue that the artistic practices in postwar Austria bring these mediations to the fore.

The thesis works outwards, from the specific location, to the constraint and the body, to the family and society, to media: film and photography and the body; and finally to history, fate and abstraction.

The first chapter introduces the historical context of postwar Vienna in relation to the meaning of ‘the body as material’ taken up by the Actionists and EXPORT’s performance-films *Remote... Remote...* and *Mann & Fran & Animal* (1973). It also gives a broader introduction to the direction of the thesis and introduces the main concepts such as the body, sublimation, artistic labour and the autonomy of the artwork, which are developed throughout the thesis.

The second chapter explores the possibility of the ‘subject’ and the idea of the body through the distinction *Leib* and *Körper* in both EXPORT’s and Jelinek’s works. Focussing on EXPORT’s *Hyperbulie* (1973) and Jelinek’s *Die Klavierspielerin* (1983) this chapter explores the limit of the ‘subject’ through the limit(s) of the body. For example, repression, or a perversion of drive provides the focus for EXPORT’s *Hyperbulie*. Whereas for Jelinek posits a transition in her work, where after *Die Klavierspielerin* she claims to stop writing ‘subjects’ into her texts. *Die Klavierspielerin* is the last text which could be said to figure the inner life of a character. For EXPORT the ‘subject’ is made possible through a confrontation with the rigidity of the bourgeois subject. Jelinek explores the absent subject by working with the mechanisms and

procedures of language, so that her characters become historical; through her language work these characters carry ‘history’ on their bodies. By working through commodity-language, Jelinek seeks to reveal its latent ideology.

The chapter also turns to the body and theorises how the gendered body is expressed in EXPORT’s works and texts, in many contradictory ways. ‘The body as material’, introduced in the first chapter, is an assertion that can be taken in many directions from within her oeuvre. This chapter also explores how the body can be biological matter. It can be the organs that enable humans to live. It can also be denaturalised with technologies. It can be an unending labouring commodity within the home, such as the exhibition *MAGNA* (mentioned above) exemplified. It can be a means of experiencing pleasure and pain. It can be expressed through the German distinction of *Leib*, active, like a live force moving through the body, and *Körper*, object-like, like the trunk of a human, the aspect of the human that can be controlled and dominated. And finally, it is always mediated.

The focus of the third chapter lies on Jelinek’s *Lust* (1989). More specifically, it asks how the notion of dominated sexuality appears. In *Lust*, there is no such thing as sexual freedom. Sexuality and familial relations are expressed through exchange and society is depicted as structured sado-masochistically. In this chapter I draw on Marxist feminist, critical theoretical and psychoanalytic analyses of authoritarianism and the family, to put Jelinek’s text in a tradition. I then read Jelinek’s own essays on the uses of ‘woman’ for fascism back onto *Lust*.

The fourth chapter analyses EXPORT’s Expanded Cinema actions *Tapp und Tastkino* (1968) and *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (1969) as works which form part of a sub-history of film. More specifically, they are works which evoke the concept of the ‘fetish’ in both sexuality and reification in mass culture. The second part of the chapter reads EXPORT’s *Unsichtbare Gegner* (1976) through the lenses of mediality, humanism and history, as Expanded Cinema’s return to the cinema. Finally, this chapter is resolved through an analysis of the instinctual body in relation to media in Adorno’s work, with the aim to show the exigent contradictions between EXPORT’s media works and Adorno’s theorisation.

The fifth and final chapter draws on two of Jelinek’s texts. It compares the theatre text *Totenaufer* (1991) to *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975, *Women as Lovers*). In different ways both texts focus on the body of the ‘Volk’ or people, and the concept of ‘Heimat’ or homeland. This chapter reads *Totenaufer* as an artistic response to the production of the afterlife of fascism in the arena of epistemology, foremost in relation to Martin Heidegger’s questioning of technology. In response to this I read *Die Liebhaberinnen* against the grain. In this novel, in which one also finds a critique *Heimat*, I examine the concept of fate [*Schicksal*] contra destining [*Geschick*], as in Jelinek’s work on Heidegger. I read this concept both as a gendered concept, and as one which is made abstract.

## Chapter 1 - Perspectives on the Body

### *1.1: Pain and Pleasure*

In 1973, using the mediums of her own body and performance VALIE EXPORT produced what we might call a study of pleasure and pain. ...*Remote...Remote...* (1973) is a 12-minute film made in EXPORT's studio; it is a performance that was impressed onto celluloid. ...*Remote...Remote...* begins with EXPORT seated on a chair with a bowl of milk in her lap. She is framed by a blown up black-and-white photograph of two children. From information surrounding the film it can be ascertained that one of the children was wrenched from their parents due to abuse allegations. EXPORT expropriated the image from a police station. In all its moments, this performance film works on identity, explores identity in its formation, asking what does identity mean, and where does identity happen (Plates 1.0, 1.0a).

One approach to the current nexus of identity construction says that: in the age of 'identitarianism', after 'class' there is a tendency to 'identify' as a category including but not limited to: 'woman', 'non-binary', 'trans', and people are also identified and interpolated due to their skin colour, appearance or religious symbols. Class, as a unifying category, which has privileged the struggle of workers against bosses and employers, has always related to other identity categories. Most often this occurred through a relation of exclusion. Thus, for political reasons, in this assessment one cannot understand 'class' solely in terms of economics, even if the original use of the category demands it.

One way to understand identity-based politics is through the tendency to build solidarity across different categories, while recognising the differences in modes of societal oppression incurred. This approach tends to be recognised in the term 'intersectionality,' where analysis of race, class, gender and religion are all incorporated into a diagnosis. Intersectionality plays an important diagnostic role in our understanding of oppression, and can be helpful to assuage the perpetuation of privilege among certain groups or figures. On the other hand, identity-based politics (of minority oppressed groups) has highlighted the identity of the white male (and female) and promulgated their resentments leading to the revivification and emboldenment of chauvinistic and white supremacist movements. While marginalised identity-based politics are not the cause of the rise of far-right, white 'ethno-nationalism', this reactionary form of identity-politics perverts its logic, advocating a cycle of victimhood and protectionism. Like Nazism, or any other form of explicit white supremacy that exceeds the structural white supremacy that orders the world, this violent form of identitarianism relies on

obfuscation, dehumanisation, conspiracy, mystification and the channelling of what is given to fear.<sup>1</sup>

In Austria, the renewed far-right youth movements have been successful. The October 2017 election shows surprising results. The first relates specifically to *youth*: the highest quantity of under 29s voted FPÖ (the far-right Austrian Freedom Party) at 30%, next was ÖVP (the conservative Austrian Peoples Party) at 28%. 17% voted SPÖ (Austrian Social Democratic Party). The second relates to ‘class’: of all blue-collar workers, 59% voted FPÖ.<sup>2</sup> In the presidential election where Norbert Hofer was narrowly defeated, 80% of blue-collar workers voted FPÖ.<sup>3</sup> Alberto Toscano has recently argued against recourse to the ‘false totality’ which he pairs with the renaissance of the class politics of the forgotten white working class, because when mobilised through populist discourses it becomes difficult to separate from ‘fascistic fantasies and policies of “national rebirth”,’ it ‘risks becoming in its turn a supplement (of both racism and nationalism), stuck in the echo chambers of serialising propaganda.’<sup>4</sup> I think it is apposite to mention his final argument:

Rather than thinking that an existing working class needs to be won away from the lures of fascism, we may fare better by turning away from that false totality, and rethinking the making or composition of a class that could refuse becoming the bearer of a racial, or national predicate, as one of the antibodies to fascism.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I take this idea from Elfriede Jelinek’s speech: ‘What is given to fear’ at an anti-racism demonstration in 1999: Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Was zu fürchten vorgegeben wird’, *ElfriedeJelinek.Com*, (1999) <<http://www.elfriedejelinek.com/f12nov.htm>> [accessed 21 April 2018].

<sup>2</sup> ‘Analyse: wer wen gewählt hat - Wahlergebnisse 2017’, *Der Standard* (Vienna, 15 October 2017), <<https://derstandard.at/2000065824253/Wen-Menschen-wie-Sie-gewaehlt-haben>> [accessed 15 October 2017].

<sup>3</sup> On Mayday 2018, the FPÖ celebrated in Tracht, calling themselves ‘The Party of the Workers’. Their location was smothered in the red-white-red Austrian flag combined with that of their so-called Social Homeland Party. The pro-worker sentiment is a fatuous lie, they are economically neo-liberal. In their efforts to catch up with the rest of the austerity-stricken world they are introducing the 12-hour working-day, deregulation and cutting health services. They rely on racism, xenophobia and chauvinism for success, meaning they affirm a nativist, misogynist, racial fantasy. Where does this come from? Jörg Haider’s ‘Ausländer-Volksbegehren’ from 1993 (after the borders between old USSR and Western Europe opened) laid the foundations for the mainstream sentiment expressed towards migrants. Every single point of his campaign, which faced significant protests, is now mainstream. Alberto Toscano argues that: ‘it is incumbent on a critical, or indeed anti-fascist, Left to stop indulging in the ambient rhetoric of the white working class voter as the subject-supposed-to-have-voted for the fascist-populist option. ... because, politically speaking, the working class as a collective, rather than as a manipulated seriality, does not (*yet*) exist.’ Alberto Toscano, ‘Notes on Late Fascism’, *Historical Materialism* <<http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/blog/notes-late-fascism>> [accessed 30 June 2018].

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Toscano.

In the postwar decades, after the Marshall Plan funded reconstruction of Europe, EXPORT says, ‘I have no singular identity. There is also no single, clear feminist expression’.<sup>6</sup> In this quotation we find a voice against a doctrinaire feminism and against a fixed notion of feminist expression. In my reading, this is not against politics expressed by a particular group, but rather a plea against the ossification of positions from such a group, in this case: women.

This thesis asks: what is a body? This question brings forth a body of people; a corporate entity vis-à-vis a nation state, formed or incorporated into a collective body politic, constrained by the law of the sovereign. This could be an individual, gendered, racialised, marked, the physical and psychological body, a person within a group, class or mass, though we may also challenge the notion of the bourgeois individual, identified as ‘body’/ ‘self’. Reading the concept of the body in Adorno, in conjunction with works by EXPORT and Jelinek, provokes a reading of his theory that goes against the grain. My aim is to relate this understanding of the body in art, to Adorno’s concept of artistic labour. In turn, I hope to offer a radical re-reading of Adorno’s concept elaborated in *Aesthetic Theory*, while attending to the notions of gender and history.

In this chapter, I will work outwards from two of EXPORT’s performance films, both of which are concerned with the gendered body and the notion of identity. In EXPORT’s ...*Remote...Remote...* identity is understood as emergent from severance — gestured towards in the two figures behind the artist — and embedded in self-mutilation.<sup>7</sup> The act of self-mutilation is constructed around the cut. This act begins as the camera, and the cinematographer Didi behind it, identifies these three figures — an image of two children and the performer — by moving between each of their pupils. Each character is connected to the next by manoeuvring between each eye. With an Exacto Knife EXPORT cuts into her cuticles. The knife reminds us how to cut and splice film, how a film is made. The camera eye rests on this act of mutilation as the ends of her fingers collect blood. The hand that usually grasps or holds or gestures, that works, but also perceives and feels and touches, is by this act rendered useless. A continuous drum-roll scores the work, making audible the length of each cut.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> VALIE EXPORT and Scott MacDonald, ‘Valie Export (On Invisible Adversaries)’, in *A Critical Cinema 3: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (California: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 253-61 (p. 258).

<sup>7</sup> Post-Freudian theories of early child development argue that the infant develops out of an original state of oneness with the womb, and into a painful sense of their own separateness. Such theories assert that the infant is then faced with the paradoxical desire to return to that state of oneness and to become an autonomous person; to make the distinction between self and not-self and to individuate. See: Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Scheugl writes, ‘Remote (*Remote = fern*) looks for the cruel act of self mutilation, contrary to Brus, bringing it into relation with childhood. On the enlarged photo at the back, the child Waltraud looks unblinking into the camera, as if it already knew what would happen one day in front of him’. Hans Scheugl, *Erweitertes Kino: die Wiener Filme der 60er Jahre* (Wien: Triton, 2002), p. 180.



One reading of this act might suggest that the knife signifies language, as this work might attempt to persuade us that language is what is inscribed onto the human body through the person's entrance into the world: one is born into language. Another might suggest that the act of cutting the body's membrane, the skin around the nails, can also be read metaphorically: cutting film is an integral part of this material's construction. Cutting is a regular motif in EXPORT's work. This is evidenced literally in *Cutting*, an expanded cinema work from 1967-68 (Plate 1.1). Here, five distinct moments each delineate an element of cinema to be deconstructed and put back together in a literal manner by EXPORT and Peter Weibel: 'part one: opening, a documentary; part two: a talkie, homage to marshal McLuhan; part three: a comedy, homage to bazooka Joe; part four: a silent movie, homage to Greta Garbo; part five: fellatio, public action. body language'.<sup>9</sup> Cutting externalises what is hidden or internal. As self-mutilation, it registers the externalisation of inner mutilation. For EXPORT, being born into civilisation with its laws of renunciation and sacrifice, leads to a split self. The elements in this film: the photograph of the children, the performer, her fingers and the knife, the milk and the blood, the knife which cuts both the cuticles and celluloid, as well as the live audience and film theatre, create a constellation, which stages both this array of film elements, their constitution as a film and this very split self who is represented in it.

In her manifesto, 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism' first published in 1980, EXPORT brings into question the ways in which women have, via painful processes been oppressed and silenced. 'Women have long preserved and sealed off their damaged identity under the emblem of pain's deformations', she writes.<sup>10</sup> EXPORT recounts that what culminates from this repression is preserved as 'pain's deformations'. The tragic deaths and suicides of women such as Cornelia Schlosser (Goethe's sister), Dorothy Wordsworth, Jane Carlyle, Caitlin Thomas, Louise Bryant, Zelda Fitzgerald, Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf and Unica Zürn mount up as examples. Beyond reflecting on this tendency of women artists towards dissolution and death, this text discloses a utopian logic in her approach. She writes: '[t]o prevent submission from becoming women's eternal destiny, the wounds of actual historical submission to men must be unhesitatingly revealed. This avowal, this *confession publique*, will free women from the ills men have inflicted on them'.<sup>11</sup> In these words (and in her works) there seems to lie an inner catharsis. Through the logic of the expression of an oppressive history, the continuity of history — or fate — can somehow be prevented.

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<sup>9</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Afflicting Der Filme und Ordnungsbegriffe', Sammlung Generali Foundation.

<sup>10</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Feministischer Aktionismus. Aspekte', in *Frauen in der Kunst 1. Band*, ed. by Peter Gorsen, Gisliind Nabakowski, and Helke Sander (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 139-76 (p. 144); VALIE EXPORT, 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism', *New German Critique*, 47 (1989), 69-92 (p. 73). (Hereafter 'Aspekte'; 'Aspects').

<sup>11</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 144; 'Aspects', p. 73.

The construction of ...*Remote...Remote...* produces a jarring montage of images which present dualities: childhood/adulthood, milk/blood, immediacy/mediation, life/death. This jarring functions to cut through the quasi-religious images of the act itself, the act of self-injuring. The use of the natural material milk to bathe the bloodied fingers, speaks of a vitality of life, of need and of attachment, of cathexis, of warmth and nutrition, but it also returns us to the idea of severance: the first separation of an infant from their mother. The mixture of milk with blood from EXPORT's fingers, stands in as a joke metaphor for the substitute of those early needs: sexuality. This work depicts representations of suffering and pain, with reproductive technology. The camera records reality to reveal an absolute representation. The *fixation* of this event, as the result of light and chemicals on celluloid, might also be what makes the duration of the work of art obsolete. Fixation in photography makes the work of art timeless through its potential repetition. From this interpretation, I suggest that in her works EXPORT exposes the effects of systemic misogyny throughout history; as she writes: '*the wounds of actual historical submission to men must be unhesitatingly revealed*'. On the other hand, although these artworks appear as events from the past, through their construction they appear to us as wholly illusory. We do not see the event but its afterlife as an artwork.

...*Remote...Remote...* is paired with another film. *Mann & Frau & Animal* (1973) pounds upon the viewer affirmation of the female anatomy, a picture of genitivity (Plate 1.2, 1.2a). Beginning with a handheld mechanical eye investigating a faucet, a piece of technology which throughout the film is misused: the shower head is removed and the faucet is transformed into a moveable tap. The camera eye, intent on gaining all information from this contraption, with its pipes, taps and the flow of water, begins to render visible a woman, masturbating with the flow of water. She is presumed to be the artist, although we never see her face. The audience hears the female orgasm pressed through breath and image; the camera remains focussed on the woman's vulva. As the camera pans in and out, the viewer becomes aware of another set of hands and eyes, at the same level in between the legs, straining on an image of the genitalia and the woman in non-penetrative sex. The heaving, clumsy, exaggerated voice of a man is introduced. This voice remains as the image cuts between ejaculation and menstruation. The obvious *symbolic* reading of this film suggests that it explores the possibility of self-made pleasure, pleasure without a man. However, in both films there is another less obvious gesture, which concerns the idea of lyric and the commodity and the proximity of reproductive technology to the body.

*Mann & Frau & Animal* is structured so that the viewer sees the coming together of tap, flow of water, body, desire and technology into climactic state. The film is constructed in three

parts, which revolve around the tap, the orgasm and menstruation (Plate 1.2b).<sup>12</sup> Each cut, each suture is made through the triangle (of the trinity). We see a transition from the moving image to its frozen duplicate, an identical photograph is set in the chemical bath, which turns our attention from the whirring of frames to their construction and material. Both films emphasise an oscillation between the material of the image and its construction, and what the image depicts: a metaphorical reference to the constructed image, the representation and contortion of women by the camera, and in mass culture.

As the camera eye looks at the processing of these images, a bleeding hand hovers above the developing photograph. The blood mixes with the chemicals and so remains ingrained on the image, staining it, but also polluting the effectivity of the chemicals — their fixation. I suggest *Mann & Frau & Animal* explores the female genital zone as a point of fixation. A woman is depicted in orgasm, having produced her own sexual pleasure. This transitions into this same woman menstruating. Both films are concerned with women severing their experience and image from the hands of men, and with women representing themselves. The concept of ‘narcissism’ questions the *limits* of individual emancipation through self-representation, an idea prevalent in these practices. In this thesis, I want to look beyond this common question of body image, to what breaks open concretely in the artwork’s form. More specifically, to what the artworks say about the idea of expression and identity, that can lead us towards a fuller and more textured interpretation of their protest against ‘reality’. I will plot some of the debates concerning the body in art, to see how they relate to a critical framework of art and aesthetics.

### 1.1.1: Discourses

Postwar art’s broad trajectory can be understood as executing a gesture of submission to chance, relinquishing an inner aesthetic purposiveness. In relation to the idea of art’s periodisation, which in the postwar years is often aligned with its alleged ‘dematerialisation’ and abstraction, I want to explore gender and sexuality and the use of the body as material. The basis for much of the existing understanding of the body in Anglo-American literature is structured by intersections between post-structuralism, post-Freudian and post-Lacanian psychoanalysis, and phenomenology. The literature on embodiment, particularly in a feminist context after the 1980s is extensive and there is not space to review all of it here. Important contributions range from writings by Elizabeth Grosz, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, Rosi

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<sup>12</sup> ‘Instead of the holy trinity: father, son, holy spirit, instead of the profane trinity: mother, family, state, instead of the social trinity: father, mother, children the film treats the real trilogy in 3 sections. What unites man and woman (not uniquely for sure, but what is being concealed) is the history of nature.’ VALIE EXPORT, ‘Synopsis’, *SixPack Film* <[http://www.sixpackfilmdata.com/filmdb\\_display.php?id=70&len=en](http://www.sixpackfilmdata.com/filmdb_display.php?id=70&len=en)> [accessed 5 January 2015].

Braidotti, Teresa de Lauretis, Susan Bordo, Jane Gallop, Gertrud Koch, Elaine Scarry, Lisa Yun Lee, Sabine Wilke, Amelia Jones and many more, through to VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek's own writings and theories of the body, which I will address in this thesis. During the late 1980s and 90s, an academic industry emerged around studies concerned with the body.<sup>13</sup> Several edited readers published in this period link ideas of the body to discourses of feminism, post-structuralism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, identity-politics, cyber-feminism and technology studies. These texts have varying concerns with gender and the body and engage with different theoretical frameworks to say how the body can be described, what its role is and why it has been such a concern; how 'woman' has been reduced to her body, to her immanence; reduced to her maternal biological and reproductive role and produced from her very absence or her lack.<sup>14</sup>

Here I want to emphasize the various valences of different feminisms contributing to the movement. The psychoanalytical feminisms are invested in the idea that the body is a psychically produced effect: gender identities are produced via the Oedipus complex, through the Oedipal system. Some of these feminisms are represented by authors mentioned above and emerged after critical engagement with Freud and Lacan. Often, they were also involved in the Women's Liberation Movement in the United States and in Europe. These theories are averse to essentialism and sometimes deny that the anatomical distinction exists at all.<sup>15</sup>

A major influence on recent discourses of the body is philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. For Foucault, this discourse extends from his disquisition on power and the body titled *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). Foucault's study of the body in the penal system leads from gruesome levels of physical torture undertaken in public, to the

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<sup>13</sup> For example see: Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Teresa De Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987); Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gertrud Koch, 'The Body's Shadow Realm', in *October 50* (October 1, 1989); Jane Gallop, *Thinking through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Judith Butler, *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of 'sex'* (London: Routledge, 1993); E. A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body* (London: University of California Press 1995); Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). In *Dialectics of the Body* Lisa Yun Lee makes an interesting point about much of this literature turned away from the labouring body and towards the erotic/libidinal and identified body, thereby reproducing the mind/body dualism. For Lee this meant that as the body is (re)severed from the mind, the 'rational' mind or rationality is shunned. Lisa Yun Lee, *Dialectics of the Body: Corporeality in the Philosophy of Theodor Adorno* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 124. Lee's position is elaborated on later in this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Attention is paid to the category 'woman' in chapters 1, 4 and 5 where Lacan develops the idea whereby 'Woman', as a possible Universal subject, does not exist. Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, trans. by Bruce Fink (London; New York: Norton, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> See: Sigmund Freud, 'Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIX*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Classics, 2001), pp 248-260; Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

supposed humanisation of punishment with the prison and its development.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in the three volumes of *History of Sexuality* (1976-84) Foucault addresses the institutional need to discuss sexuality as well as societal and institutional power over the body through psychiatry and medicine. In *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979* (2004), Foucault develops a notion of sovereign power reigning over human life, and increasingly, the biological body. These forensic texts, with their genealogical methodology have been highly influential on post-structuralist discourses of the body.

For materialist feminists, ‘woman’, has also been in some sense reduced to her body in its reproductive role, in that she reproduces (gives birth) to the future labour force/the species. This is paired with her sphere of work, her enactment of the *reproductive* labour which feeds and provides for the various other essential *needs* of the working class.<sup>17</sup> ‘Woman’ in this capacity, has occupied a pivotal structural role within capitalist social relations and has been endowed with, in the case of the autonomist Marxist-feminist Silvia Federici, a revolutionary potential. The campaign best known by the slogan: “Wages for Housework” was theorised in Silvia Federici’s essay ‘Wages Against Housework’ (1975); it was key to the proliferation of this movement which invested women with a certain power in the context of class struggle. The call for the de-naturalisation of housework was a revolutionary activity because it proposed reproductive labour as a limit case. If housework could be integrated into the wage relation rather than being the invisible activity, as ‘an act of love’ belonging to women in the home, housework would have the power to destabilise capital and patriarchy by revealing the ways in which each relation is constituted through the other and thus reliant on the other. This potential was contained in the possibility for women to withdraw this indirect ‘value producing’ reproductive labour. The 1970s feminist debates were dominated by accounts of what may or may not produce value, in the domain of ‘women’s work’ or the home. This would come to be recognised as the currently growing field of social reproduction theory.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Foucault offers a train of thought, pointing the reader to what can be described as the ‘humanisation of the penal system’, a process, he argues is consolidated by 1848. Foucault suggests that the transition from feudalism to capitalism, expressed the shift from violence-against-the-body (the body being the only ‘property’ the law could access in order to inflict pain upon) to a softer punishment, namely incarceration. He suggests that the prison merely reproduces mechanisms already found in the social body. Incarceration is then echoed by the enclosed spaces of the institutions of school, hospital and factory. See: Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Christine Delphy, *The Main Enemy: A Materialist Analysis of Women’s Oppression* (Women’s Research and Resources Centre Publications, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> See: Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012); *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, ed. by Tithi Bhattacharya (London: Pluto Press, 2017); ‘Issue 5: Social Reproduction’, *Viewpoint Magazine*, 2015 <<https://www.viewpointmag.com/2015/11/02/issue-5-social-reproduction/>> [accessed 7 January 2015]; Angela Dimitrakaki and Kirsten Lloyd, ‘Social Reproduction Struggles and Art History’, *Third Text*, (2017), 1-14; Marina Vishmidt, ‘The Two Reproductions in (Feminist) Art and Theory since the 1970s’, *Third Text*, (2017), 49-66.

Later, in *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) Silvia Federici writes about the long history of the struggle over the human body, specifically bodies of women, where the body is a battleground of the person. She doesn't give up on the body. She writes:

[T]he body has been for women in capitalist society what the factory has been for male waged workers; the primary ground of their exploitation and resistance, as the female body has been appropriated by the state and men and forced to function as a means for the reproduction and accumulation of labour. Thus, the importance of the body which in all its aspects — maternity, childbirth, sexuality — has acquired in feminist theory and women's history has not been misplaced.<sup>19</sup>

Federici argues against purely negative notions of 'woman' or the female body, which she wants to politicise and make into a terrain for struggle — against post-Lacanian feminism where 'woman' is also marked out as a negative space built around the lack of symbolic power. In this thesis, I am interested in how EXPORT and Jelinek relate to these 'negative' and 'affirmative' notions of the body and develop their own, and in turn how this is formulated in their art.

### 1.1.2: *Art and the Body*

This thesis explores Theodor Adorno's theorisation of art in relation to EXPORT and Jelinek. I want to ask what remains pertinent to us today in Adorno's concept of autonomous art, and why it might still be radical for thinking about contemporary art. According to Adorno, the artwork, rebelliously asocial, enters society only to cut itself off from society. We can take this characterisation of art to describe in part what Adorno came to mean with the concept of art's autonomy (self-made law) being contingent on art's entanglement with the social process, with heteronomy (law imposed from outside). In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno writes that, 'the artwork's autonomy is, indeed, not a priori but the sedimentation of a historical process that constitutes its concept.'<sup>20</sup> Here, art is qualified by a historical claim in that it is created under the conditions of bourgeois capitalist society. However, there is ambiguity for Adorno: there is no other art than autonomous art, and this is modern art. In other words, more than a historically determined argument is being made here. Art's double character allows for, first, the claim that art comes into its own, that it becomes art in the long passage to modernity and second, a structural claim about art itself: Adorno entertains a logic about what can and cannot be considered art. Art must keep attempting to escape its own concept in order to remain as art:

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<sup>19</sup> Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014). p. 25. (Hereafter AT).

‘...art is what it has become, its concept refers to what it does not contain.’<sup>21</sup> This is the movement of art’s de-aestheticisation or de-arting [*Entkunstung*], known also as the dialectic of art and anti-art.<sup>22</sup> This de-aestheticisation pertains to art’s expanding idea of itself. I posit that central to the question of ‘action’ and the ‘body’ in art, the merging of the artwork and the artist, is this notion of de-aestheticisation: the artwork becomes less and less like art or art as it was known. Here, by speculating upon gender and sexuality, reproduction and the use of the body as material, literally and linguistically, I will examine how the art in question can be understood as part of, and in relation to art’s larger transformations.

During the 1960s when Adorno wrote most of *Aesthetic Theory*, Actionism also came to life in Austria and West Germany, developing out of and responding to various artistic movements, namely Dada, Surrealism, Tachism, Informel, Abstract Expressionism, Happenings and Fluxus. Actionism (and Expanded Cinema, which for EXPORT was part of Actionism), in its first instantiation was precisely a movement of anti-art.

Adorno’s concept of autonomous art retains three moments from the history of ideas: Kant’s concept of formal autonomy, Hegel’s world-spirit, and Marx’s historical materialism. In Adorno’s view, the Kantian concept of human reason grants autonomy to the subject as free will, meaning the subject can self-legislate. Here, the subject of bourgeois society is posited with a subjective claim to autonomy.<sup>23</sup> Autonomy, set out in this way, poses a problem for Adorno: it remains idealist. Freedom, justice and equality remain relative, contingent on social processes such as race, class and gender, and in the relationship to the laws of capital and the State. It is in accordance with this principle, that the artwork as a field of forces makes a corollary but different, *objective* claim to autonomy. I propose to ask *how* this idea of artistic autonomy is put at stake in these practices. What is the contribution that these works make to the transforming status of art? What in these works, if anything, remains alive to us today? Moreover, artistic labour under capitalism is a central concern of Adorno’s aesthetic theory for it brings into focus the limits of the commodity and of exchange society.<sup>24</sup>

In what follows, I propose that there is a contradiction, or a gap, in Adorno’s concept of artistic labour, between an idea (posited in *Minima Moralia* (1951), in the aphorism ‘Exhibitionist’), and the more commonly understood idea explicated in his *Aesthetic Theory*. This aphorism provides a concept of expression (though inauthentic) that is elided in Adorno’s later

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<sup>21</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed reading of this concept, see: Kerstin Stakemeier, ‘*Entkunstung*: Artistic Models for the End of Art’ (unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University College London, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Macmillan, 1969), p. 59.

<sup>24</sup> See: Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 1984); Stewart Martin, ‘The Absolute Artwork Meets The Absolute Commodity’, in *Radical Philosophy*, no. 146, Nov/Dec 2007, pp. 15-25; Marina Vishmidt and Kirsten Stakemeier, *Reproducing Autonomy, Work, Money, Crisis and Contemporary Art* (London: Mute Books, 2016); Gail Day, ‘The Fear of Heteronomy’, *Third Text* 23 (2009), pp. 393-406; Peter Osborne, ‘Theorem 4. Autonomy: Can It Be True of Art and Politics at the Same Time?’ in *The Postconceptual Condition: Critical Essays* (London: Verso, 2018). pp. 61-72.

work. This aphorism also marks out divergent approaches to expression and sublimation in the work of Adorno and Freud. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno argues that for Aristotle, sublimation is the ‘ideal function’ of art.<sup>25</sup> Aristotle’s idealised version of sublimation consigns to art, ‘[t]he task of providing aesthetic semblance as a substitute satisfaction for the bodily satisfaction of the targeted public’s instincts and needs’, he continues: ‘[c]atharsis is a purging action directed against the affects and an ally of repression.’<sup>26</sup> Catharsis, or purging of the emotions, is implied to be part of the now obsolete mythology of art, and so inadequate to Adorno’s concept of autonomous art. If one is permitted to leap from Aristotle to Freud then one learns more about what Adorno means. The Freudian notion of sublimation, as Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis point out, most commonly occurs in activities where the sublimated force of sexual instinct is intellectual and artistic: ‘[t]he instinct is said to be sublimated in so far as it is diverted towards a new non-sexual aim and in so far as its objects are socially valued ones’.<sup>27</sup> This form of sublimation is fully entwined with the self-preservation of the subject, describing a process whereby sexual energy (instinct), or, libidinal desire is severed from its goal or object and diverted to another one, of invariably moral, aesthetic or socially acceptable use, and thus an ‘ally of repression’. These activities involving sublimation would supply contented and conforming commodities for the development of culture and its industries. Artistic activity in the literal sense *conforms* to the world. In doing so, artistic activity partakes in civilising processes; the objects of such activity adapt themselves to the world and are desired by its groups. In *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930), Freud alludes that labour itself is a process of sublimation.<sup>28</sup>

In *Minima Moralia*, by contrast, Adorno characterises art-making as the display of violent instincts ‘free floating and yet colliding with reality, marked by neurosis.’<sup>29</sup> Here, there is concern with the artwork being at once expressed as part of the artist and as existing in the world at the same time.<sup>30</sup> I want to show that this significant shift in Adorno’s thought allows us to build on our understanding of the difficult concept of expression. Here a notion of expression as artistic labour is presented to us, one which is linked to ‘instinct’ in a complex way. I will use this notion to shed new light on artistic practices in postwar Austria, in particular those of EXPORT and Jelinek. As we have already seen in the work of EXPORT, there is a

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<sup>25</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 324.

<sup>26</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 324.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Laplanche and B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1988), p. 384.

<sup>28</sup> Sigmund Freud, ‘Civilisation and its Discontents’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XXI (1927-1931)* (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 64-148 (p. 97).

<sup>29</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on Damaged Life*, trans. by E. F. N. Jephcott (London; New York: Verso Books, 2005). p. 213. (Hereafter: MM).

<sup>30</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the distinction between instinct [*Instinkt*] and drive [*Trieb*] in Freud see the translators’ commentary in Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality The 1905 Edition*, trans. by Ulrike Kistner (London: Verso, 2017).



tendency towards addressing the long history of the oppression of women by showing, or revealing, their historical suffering, scars, or ‘traces of ideas inscribed onto the body’.<sup>31</sup> There is a turn towards the body as a site, which can be explored as the site of both exploitation, and resistance. It thus brings us closer to a notion of labour that might be understood in its inverse, as the opposite of Freud’s idea that all labour is a form of sublimation.

### 1.2: *Austria*

Both VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek emerged within a social context dominated by a generational conflict and deep political discord. The broader struggles of the 1960s include the anti-war movement (against the war in Vietnam), the Prague Spring, the Women’s Liberation Movement, the students and workers strikes in Paris and Berlin, the Black Panthers and Civil Rights movements, Black Nationalism, Pan Africanism, anti-colonial wars in Algeria and struggles for power and against colonialism, from South America to Palestine. In Austria and Germany, the anti-war movement was additionally informed by antifascism, its gaze also aimed backwards towards World War II and National Socialism, which supplemented the generational divide. Yet, even these two countries differed in many respects. In Germany accountability was demanded, both from the Allies and from the postwar generation (the children of Nazis), regarding Hitler and the Holocaust and a process, however insufficient, of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, working through the events of the past was fostered as an intellectual and cultural duty. Austria, however, faced a different dilemma and therefore a different future trajectory. What precisely happened in the years following the 1945 ‘liberation’? What kind of authoritarian, fascist society was this? Why should we look at it singularly? What about this is being worked through in the work of EXPORT and Jelinek? How does this bear on the philosophical meaning of the body in art in the 1960s onwards?

I want to plot some of the events, which not only stand behind the political context of the postwar decades, but which never ceased to be important and which now stretch into our contemporary situation. In Austria, *Hitler Zeit*, or ‘Hitler Time’ began on 11 March 1938, and was completed just two days later, with almost total acceptance of the Anschluss (meaning ‘annexation’) by the Austrian people (Plate 1.3).

The history of this acceptance can be understood to thread back to 1815, when during the Vienna Congress, after the fall of the Holy Roman Empire, the German Confederation was formalised and included Austria. The German Confederation, monarchist and anti-liberal, suffered from the liberal and nationalist revolutions of 1848 and was finally dissolved as a result of the 1866 Austro-Prussian War (The Fraternal War, War of Brothers), when power was

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<sup>31</sup> ‘Aspekte’, p. 144; ‘Aspects’, p. 73.

shifted from the Austrian Empire towards the Kingdom of Prussia. After 1866 Austria was excluded from Germany, and the Empire of Austria-Hungary was formed.

We see a continuity in the question of unification, and not only after the fall of the German Confederation. An attempted Anschluss movement took place at the end of World War I, with the collapse of the Habsburg Empire. Between 1918-1919, the Austro-Marxist, Social Democrats, Karl Renner and Victor Adler, lead the first Republic of German-Austria [*Deutschösterreich*] in an attempt to unify with Germany. The ‘threat’ of Bolshevik revolution was looming in the background. This attempted Anschluss was premised on a firmly held belief that Austria, previously Austria-Hungary (and the list of imperial transitions goes on) had *never* been a sovereign nation — a rhetoric which is still widely used today, not by social democrats but by far-right Austrian German-nationalists.<sup>32</sup> This attempted Anschluss was forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles.

In September 1919, under Karl Renner, German-Austria was renamed the First Republic of Austria and was consequently shrunk to the size of modern Austria. In principle and practice, Karl Renner supported Austria’s unification with Germany until the successful Anschluss in 1938. For him this brought a positive alternative to Austro-fascism.<sup>33</sup> All other forms of official politics had been outlawed. We should not ignore the fact that it was Karl Renner who retook the role of chancellor for just over half a year in 1945, after which he took over the presidency.<sup>34</sup>

If we stay with the moment of the Anschluss, on March 9, 1938, Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg called a plebiscite hoping to affirm among the populace national independence from external powers in the region such as Germany and Italy. This was conveniently forestalled by Hitler’s arrival, aided by Hitler’s *Wehrmacht*, who were in turn assisted by the local Nazi party and supporters.<sup>35</sup> The plebiscite was due to take place on 13 March. On his arrival in Austria on 11 March, Hitler forced its postponement. While every city, town and village in Austria was draped in Swastikas and anti-Semitic propaganda intensified, on 10 April 1938,

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<sup>32</sup> In 2017, the constitution of the FPÖ shows 40% of parliamentary candidates belonging to German-national *Burschenschaften*, they often deny the legitimacy (and sometimes existence) of the Second Republic of Austria. One reason for this, very different from the Social Democrats is that they continue to believe in the National Socialist idea of the supremacy of *das Volk*. See Hans-Henning Scharlach, *Stille Machtgreifung: Hofer, Strache und die Burschenschaften* (Wien, Kremayr & Scheriau, 2017). For a detailed history of pan-Germanism in Austria see: Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State: 1933-38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> In her introduction to the volume: *Culture and Politics in Red Vienna*, Judith Beniston argues that socialists did not resist the Nazi Anschluss in 1938 because it was also a move towards destroying the Austro-Fascist dictatorship that had ruined so much of the left in Vienna, and towards lowering levels of unemployment. Because of the degree to which Catholicism played a part in Austro-Fascism, socialists also welcomed anti-clericalism of the Nazi Anschluss. Judith Beniston, ‘Introduction’, in *Culture and Politics in Red Vienna*, ed. by Judith Beniston (Leeds: Maney, 2006), p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), p. 261.

<sup>35</sup> Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 245.

more than 99% voted Yes to the question: '[a]re you for a free, German, independent and social, Christian and united Austria, for peace and work, for the equality of all those who affirm themselves for the people and Fatherland?' meaning, unification with the German Reich and transferral of power to the Nazis.<sup>36</sup>

The historian Adam Tooze argues that the material benefits of the Anschluss for the Germans not only lay in expansion, and their ability to expropriate property and wealth, but that they would also benefit from a large supply of underemployed, thus available workers, who would increase the Reich's labour force by 30 – 40%.<sup>37</sup> The Nazi's reasoning was also strategic. Vienna had been the fifth largest city in the world during the *fin de siècle*. Until 1918 it was the centre of trade between East and South-East Europe. Tooze claims that another reason for widespread acceptance was that the Anschluss would elevate Vienna to become the German Reich's second city and its capital in the South East.<sup>38</sup> New trade deals would be possible between Germany and Hungary. With this, Austria was peaceful.

### 1.2.1: Moments of Resistance

We might be prompted to ask, where was the resistance? How could 99% of a population ascend to this apparent choice? Part of the answer, as we have heard, lies in Austria's first dose of fascism. An early notable struggle between Austrian socialists and nationalists (and police) known as the 'July Revolt' took place on July 15, 1927. The acquittal of nationalists who had killed a war veteran and a child, known as the 'Schattendorf Verdict' led to a general strike and mass demonstrations, which aimed to overthrow the chancellor of the Christian Social Party, Ignaz Seipel. Demonstrators entered the *Justizpalast* (Palace of Justice) and threw books and files out the windows, set fire to files, and then to the building itself (Plate 1.4). The police slaughtered 89 protestors, hundreds more were injured. This event was transformative for figures including Wilhelm Reich and Elias Canetti. Karl Kraus published a poster across Vienna calling for the resignation of the police chief Johann Schober.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 233.

<sup>37</sup> Tooze, p. 246. Tooze argues that the expropriation of wealth and the destruction of the Jewish economy is often exaggerated: it would have changed the 'complexion of various shopping streets' in large cities, as well as the 'structure of property ownership in some highly visible residential neighbourhoods.' This did not amount to a deeper structural change: 'In general, the idea that the tiny Jewish minority had ever occupied a "dominant position" in the economy and that Aryanisation could therefore constitute a major turning point in national economic life, should be seen for what it always was - an absurd anti-Semitic myth.' *Ibid.*, p. 277. For more on the political economy of the Third Reich see: Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *The Economy and Class Structure of German Fascism*, trans. Martin Sohn-Rethel (London: Free Association Books, 1987).

<sup>38</sup> Tooze, p. 247.

<sup>39</sup> Incidentally it was this occasion that convinced Wilhelm Reich of the need for proletarian sexual revolution and led to his disagreements with Sigmund Freud. Anson Rabinbach writes: '[h]e saw in the actions of the crowd and the response of the police a clear refutation of Freud's theory of crowd psychology developed in his *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* some six years earlier. [...] Reich saw in the Viennese demonstrators not a herdlike mass, seeking an authority figure but a diffuse and directionless crowd acting justifiably against the unjust authoritarian forces of the state.' Anson Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism: From Red Vienna to*

Years later, during the grey mid-February of 1934, tensions heightened again so that 20,000 workers took up arms against clerical fascist Engelbert Dollfuß, his *Vaterländische Front* and eventually the army. In an international context of authoritarian entrenchment, Dollfuß had secured his dictatorship in 1933. He gave the order to open fire on the workers, in their newly constructed and well-fortified so-called workers palaces, including Karl Marx-Hof (Plate 1.5). In the pamphlet, *A Soviet Writer looks at Vienna*, distributed in London, Moscow and Vienna in July 1934, Ilya Ehrenburg reports on the Vienna Uprising, often known as the Austrian Civil War. Ehrenburg showed sympathy and solidarity with the workers taking action, yet he remained a stern critic of their 'leaders', the Viennese socialists. For him they formed part of a long line of bureaucrats who quickly gave up radical positions when put under minuscule strain, always lying in wait they failed to take up a position of attack, which led to their entrapment in a kind of looping fatalism.<sup>40</sup>

After the crushing defeat of the labour movement by Dollfuß' forces, including thousands of dead and homes ruined, the decree banning Communists, Social Democrats and print publications such as the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, as well as the Austrian Nazis, was ratified with the new constitution leaving only the *Vaterländische Front* (the political organisation of Austro-fascism) remaining. It was these efforts to destroy the labour movement, measures taken by Dollfuß and the Christian Social Party, which arguably led to the Austrian civil war. Along with these prohibitions, in 1934 Dollfuß implemented Austro-fascism in his new *Ständestaat* (Corporate State of Austria).

Shortly after this uprising, Dollfuß was assassinated in his office by Nazis. In 1934, Karl Kraus wrote 'Let No One Ask'.<sup>41</sup> For the satirist Kraus, this assassination was a warning that Hitler's Nazis would arrive in Austria. Hitler's rise to power in Germany marked Kraus' turn towards silence. Kraus gave up on language. Words became powerless. Kraus' satire also became powerless. Progress outstripped satire. For many the warning came too late.<sup>42</sup>

If we recall, on March 12, 1938, the streets thronged with crowds celebrating the arrival of Hitler in Vienna and his announcement of the Anschluss. This would prove to be the initial stage of Nazi German expansion. Hitler inaugurated this event to one hundred thousand cheering men and women, from the balcony of what is now Austria's National Library,

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*Civil War, 1927-1934* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 66. See also: Gerald Stieg, *Frucht des Feuers: Canetti, Doderer, Kraus und der Justizpalastbrand* (Wien: Edition Falter im ÖBV, 1990).

<sup>40</sup> Ilya Ehrenburg, *A Soviet Writer Looks at Vienna* (London: Lawrence, 1934).

<sup>41</sup> Let no one ask what I've been doing since I spoke. / I have nothing to say / and won't say why. / And there's stillness since the earth broke. / No word was right; / a man speaks only from his sleep at night. / And dreams of a sun that joked. / It passes; and later / it didn't matter. / The Word went under when that world awoke. Karl Kraus, 'Let No One Ask', in Jonathan Franzen, *The Kraus Project* (London: Harper Collins, 2014), p. 311.

<sup>42</sup> We could say that Kraus also turned reactionary. After this moment he supported Dollfuß. Bertolt Brecht's 1941 play, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* dramatises the path that leads from the death of Dollfuß by the Nazi's to Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938.

overlooking Heldenplatz in Vienna. What followed: Austria, renamed *Ostmark*, was broken up into seven parts, and each part was integrated into the German Reich. The annexation was accepted by the Austrian people, not as an invasion, but rather as the inevitable unification of Austria with the German fatherland. The majority of Austrians did not ‘surrender’ to Hitler’s soldiers as the ‘official’ history says, but rather cheered them on and indeed voted for them, as we have established. For most healthy, compliant, ethnic-Austrians, life continued as before but with a changed administration. This was not the case for Jews, communists, Roma, or anyone else considered, unhealthy, unproductive or ‘degenerate’.

Immediately following these events, a process of Aryanisation meant that Jews were forced into exile first by gangs and then by the state. On 9 November 1938, *Die Kristallnacht* (known as the Night of Broken Glass or November pogrom) took place. In Austria, this has been described as ‘opening of hell’s gates’, a ‘storm of “envy, malevolence, hatred, a blind malevolent desire for revenge”’, so that, ‘even the Germans were concerned about the torrent of popular anti-Semitism they had unleashed in Austria. Within weeks, virtually every Jewish business in Austria was under the control of a self-appointed Nazi commissioner.’<sup>43</sup> SS paramilitary forces, German and new *Ostmark* citizens attacked and looted Jewish owned shops and synagogues. In Vienna, 95 synagogues were burned. Jews were murdered though the estimated numbers vary. Tooze argues that the Nazi planned attacks can be explained by SS fears of an internal war against hundreds of thousands of Jews who had not yet left Germany. Emigration had slowed to 20,000 per annum in part because of restrictions around taking assets and fees. Thus, in October 1938, 70,000 Polish Jews were expelled from Germany; if ‘the SS could not make emigrating easier, it could at least increase the incentive, through a wave of physical terror and discrimination that rendered Jewish life in Germany impossible’ writes Tooze.<sup>44</sup>

### 1.2.2: *Continuities*

For our understanding of *postwar* Austria, it should be mentioned that more than half of the SS, as well as a disproportionate number of leaders in the Third Reich were Austrian nationals.<sup>45</sup> If one is to follow through on a grotesque train of thought in proportionality, Steven Beller argues that Austrians in the service of the Third Reich were responsible for killing more than three million Jews.<sup>46</sup> One cannot separate these two nations at this point. Yet,

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<sup>43</sup> Tooze, p. 276.

<sup>44</sup> Tooze, p. 275.

<sup>45</sup> This was not acknowledged until 1986, when the Waldheim scandal broke out, causing a public investigation into Austria’s complicity with and activity during World War II. It should be obvious that this is not an argument for proportionality, but rather one that stresses Austrian complicity. This is also not singular to Austria, except perhaps in the sense of its scale.

<sup>46</sup> Beller, p. 236.

according to official history, until the 1990s, Austria was the first country to be ‘liberated’ from Nazi occupation, by the Allies.

During the Moscow Conference which took place on October 30, 1943, allied forces produced the ‘Declarations’ on Italy, Austria and The Atrocities. In the ‘Declaration on Austria’ delegates from the UK, USA and USSR agreed to proclaim Austria, ‘the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression’ and it ‘shall be liberated from German domination.’<sup>47</sup> On this date, with the end of the war in sight, they declared the Anschluss to be null and void. But we should also pay attention to the next lines of the declaration: ‘Austria is reminded, however that she has a responsibility, which she cannot evade, for participation in the war at the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.’<sup>48</sup> Austria had to invent a narrative of resistance and anti-fascist struggle, or find it in the clerical authoritarianism of Dollfuß. The scholar of Austrian history, Günther Bischof shows how following the ‘Declaration on Austria’ during the first moments of the Second Republic, a legal doctrine called the *Okkupationsdoktrin* was set up. He writes:

This ‘Okkupationsdoktrin’ maintained that Austria had been invaded and occupied by Germany from March 1938 to May 1945. It posited that an Austria whose statehood lay dormant, could not be held liable for the crimes committed by its Nazi occupiers. In this ‘externalisation’ of responsibility, the Austrians were hapless victims — the Germans were guilty perpetrators. With the acceptance of this legal doctrine by the international community, Austria could not be forced to pay reparations or restitution. Once the Austrian Foreign Ministry had persuaded the international community to accept its perspective, everything else fell into place. The Allied ‘Austria-as-first-victim-of-Hitler-Germany’ of the 1943 Moscow Declaration was a principal pillar upon which Austria’s ‘victim’s doctrine’ rested. Oliver Rathkolb has rightly bemoaned the long-lasting legacy of the official occupation doctrine: ‘The problem of the mental consequences of the occupation theory in Austrian society was that any form of political responsibility was skirted and the confrontation with fascism became obsolete and directed against the basic *raison d’etat*.’<sup>49</sup>

Bischof argues that the goal of the Moscow Declaration had been to ignite resistance within the *Ostmark* (on a huge scale), following the previous resistance to the Nazi regime that had

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<sup>47</sup> Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, ‘Moscow Conference: Joint Four-Nation Declaration’, 1943 <<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1943/431000a.html>> [accessed 4 October 2017].

<sup>48</sup> Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, ‘Moscow Conference: Joint Four-Nation Declaration’.

<sup>49</sup> Günther Bischof, ‘Victims? Perpetrators? “Punching Bags” of European Historical Memory? The Austrians and Their World War II Legacies’, *German Studies Review*, 27.1 (2004), 17-32 (p. 18). (Hereafter ‘Victims’).

taken place in the years prior to and during the Anschluss.<sup>50</sup> However, unsurprisingly, the overall reaction to the declaration was muted, and Vienna lacked the uprisings on the scale that had taken place in Warsaw or Paris. Yet the leaders of the Second Republic had to meet the conditions set by the declaration, in order to prove the ‘first victim’ claim.<sup>51</sup> As Bischof asserts, this narrative, invented in 1943, led to the Second Republic of Austria being publicly absolved of culpability: it was not held to account on any level, for what it had perpetrated and participated in. The suspension of Austria as a nation state for the Hitler-years and this consequent repression of the past (of war crimes and the Holocaust) from social and cultural memory might also be why, as Beller argues in 2006, in many English language books written about Austrian history — and in cultural memory in general — these years remain unaccounted for.

In *Postwar, a History of Europe since 1945* (2005), Tony Judt gives another inflection to the account of Austria’s postwar years. Perhaps strangely, he argues that the narrative of Austria as Hitler’s first victim best suited the views of Winston Churchill who held that the origins of Nazism were Prussian.<sup>52</sup> I want to briefly alight on Judt’s statistical response in *Postwar* to highlight the magnitude of the Party and the problem of denazification in Austria. This should provide a helpful social context for understanding the world that EXPORT and Jelinek inhabited, and perhaps something of the politics of the art of this generation. I should stress that while I do not want to make a restrictive argument for social contextual readings of these figures, it is necessary to approach this subject with this in mind. Judt writes:

In a country of under 7 million inhabitants there had been 700,000 NSDAP members: at the war’s end there were still 536,000 registered Nazis in Austria; 1.2 million Austrians had served in German units during the war. Austrians had been disproportionately represented in the SS and in concentration camp administrations. Austrian public life and high culture were saturated with Nazi sympathisers — 45 out of 117 members of the Viennese Philharmonic Orchestra were Nazis (whereas the Berlin Philharmonic had just 8 Nazi Party members out of 110 musicians). [...] In the circumstances, Austria got off lightly, astonishingly so. 130,000 Austrians were investigated for war crimes, of whom 23,000 were tried, 13,600 condemned, 43 sentences to death and just 30 executed. Some 70,000 civil servants were dismissed. The four occupying Allied powers agreed in the Autumn of 1946 to let Austria thenceforth handle its own criminals and ‘denazification’. The education system, particularly infested, was duly denazified: 2943 primary school

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<sup>50</sup> See: Radomír Luža, *The Resistance in Austria 1938-1945* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>51</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> Judt, p. 52.

teachers were dismissed and 477 secondary school teachers, but just 27 university professors—despite the notoriously pro-Nazi sympathies of many senior academics.<sup>53</sup>

On the question of denazification Bischof narrates that, ‘Austrian war criminals were also hanged after the Nuremberg and numerous Dachau trials. The Nazi elite, if apprehended, was locked up in internment camps such as Glasenbach and Wolfsberg.’<sup>54</sup> As I mentioned in reference to the comment on his own grandfather, Bischof’s article stages the argument in such a way as to try to ask the question: were Austrians victims or perpetrators?, or victims and perpetrators? He continues to include both his father and his uncle who, also active Nazi soldiers, met with quite different endings. His father was sent to Camp Carson; his uncle was captured, never fully recovered from his experience as a prisoner of war in Yugoslavia, becoming a lifelong Hitler fan and an alcoholic.<sup>55</sup> We notice something unavoidable in the response from scholars, writers and artists of this generation: many of these figures are addressing the crimes of their fathers or grandfathers, mothers or grandmothers. Something similar might be said of Ingeborg Bachmann, VALIE EXPORT and Günter Brus. The postwar generation, especially in Germany was directed towards the ‘kill the father’ rationale. Klaus Theweleit addresses his father’s Nazism in his preface of *Männerphantasien* (1977, *Male Fantasies*), two volumes which investigate desire through the example of the German *Freikorps* through the prism of their language.<sup>56</sup>

If we return to the few years of ‘denazification’, Bischof argues that with the success of the Prague coup in 1948, conservative Austrians began to perceive a new existential threat looming ahead, a threat from the Soviet Union. This immediately wrenched attention away from the very recent Nazism and Austro-fascism. One can argue that the re-emergence of this threat functioned as a route into the disavowal of the fascist, murderous past. This helped to produce a whole culture of disavowal and protection. Disavowal is important in this study. The supposed threat of Communism so nearby is read by Bischof as producing a collective displacement of guilt by fear. The Red Army were already one quarter of the four-nation occupation of Austria that took place between 1945 and 1955. All this meant that in 1948, the Austrian government strategically ended denazification. As we have seen, the soldiers who had ‘just done their duty’ were sanctioned to have been victims too.<sup>57</sup> This position and slogan: ‘just done their duty’, was bolstered and became hegemonic with the construction of war memorials

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<sup>53</sup> Judt, p. 52.

<sup>54</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup> See: Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, Vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Chris Turner, Stephen Conway, and Erica Carter, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. xx. This tendency is theorised in: Alexander Mitscherlich, *Society Without the Father: A Contribution to Social Psychology*, trans. by Eric Mosbacher (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969).

<sup>57</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 20.



stating *this* course of events in every village across Austria. The effect of this, Bischof says, is that the ‘true victims of the war — resistance fighters and above all the Jewish community — were marginalised, their suffering forgotten in the *Opfernation* Austria. The crimes against Roma and Sinti and Slovenes, euthanasia victims and homosexuals were repressed as well’.<sup>58</sup> I would add communists and leftists to this list. By 1955 and the end of the allied occupation of Austria, the Declaration was edited and the third clause that stated that Austria should both be recognised as a victim *and* take responsibility for its participation in the war/Holocaust, was deleted. By the mid 1950s the People’s Courts gradually stopped their trials. This is how, as Beller argues, modern Austria was compelled to imagine an unbroken thread of time, which leapt over World War II, back to the age of Habsburg imperialism.

For the benefit of looking closely at *what* is disavowed, or perhaps just protected, the case of Heinrich Gross offers another more proximate object lesson. Gross is crudely but not inaccurately known as Austria’s answer to Josef Mengele. He was the Nazi doctor allegedly responsible for some 800 deaths of children at Am Spiegelgrund between 1941 and 1945 in his child ‘euthanasia’ programme.<sup>59</sup> When they lived, these children were brutally experimented on, and after their deaths their brains were preserved in jars. During the process of denazification, Gross was convicted of manslaughter (the law at the time stated that killing ‘disabled’ people did not amount to murder), but for this he never served his two-year sentence. He was permitted to continue his career, becoming the chief psychiatrist of the courts, and the leading prison doctor at Am Steinhof Psychiatric Hospital (of which, the clinic Am Spiegelgrund was a part). Throughout this time, he continued his experiments on the brains of the children killed under his orders. Gross is an example of a murderer who by way of the systematic forgetting, protection and covering up of history, was not successfully held accountable for any of his crimes. But what would accountability look like here? What would justice consist of? Gross’ career was propped up and nudged along by his friends who were the lawyers and the judges, who empathised with him most likely because they shared his plight. Moreover, his entire career rested on the fact that his medical institution could quantify the number of brains it held in its facilities, though none of these brains included their cause of death. The number of brain

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<sup>58</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> The trial was documented by press at the time. Andrew Purvis, ‘Suffer the Children’, *Time*, 3 April 2000 <<http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2050469,00.html>> [accessed 5 September 2017]. See also: Herwig Czech, ‘Dr. Heinrich Gross - Die Wissenschaftliche Verwertung Des NS-Euthanasie in Österreich’, *Jahrbuch 1999 Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes*, (1999), 53-70. The Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance produced a permanent exhibition titled: ‘The War Against the “Inferior”’: A Centre of Nazi Medical Crimes, Steinhof, Vienna’, *Gedenkstaettesteinhof.At* <<http://gedenkstaettesteinhof.at/en/exhibition/steinhof-vienna>> [accessed 5 September 2017].

specimens exceeded that of any other hospital in the world, and thus, in this case, research output was also part of the reason for the silence.<sup>60</sup>

In the aftermath of the war, like many former Nazis, Gross handily joined the Social Democrats who were then one pillar of the ruling coalition, and who would continue to dominate Austrian politics until the late 1980s. In the late 1990s poison was found in one of the preserved brain specimens and a criminal case was brought against Gross. Apparently too old and thus unfit for trial, he was absolved of his crimes: ‘Gross has denied responsibility for the children’s deaths and claims not to remember anything about the period.’<sup>61</sup> This was the third and final attempt at justice through tribunal for Gross’ crimes in the half century since the end of the war. This should contribute to how we understand postwar Vienna, as a city full of open secrets of brutal crimes, which very quickly would become dominated by denial, disavowal and protection.<sup>62</sup> A coincidental encounter took place when Günter Brus was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for six months for his role in the action *Kunst und Revolution* in 1968, he was interviewed by psychiatrist Heinrich Gross. In an excerpt from the psychiatric report, written together with a Dr Quatember, Gross describes Brus’ personality as ‘revealing a psychopathia’ with a readiness to ‘enter into conflict with his surroundings, the milieu and society’.<sup>63</sup>

### 1.2.3: *Waldheim and the Palimpsest of 1989*

On April 21, 1970, the Social Democrats were elected into power as a minority government, with support from the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ). The socialist pair, Bruno Kreisky and Franz Olah, lenient and reliant on the then so-called liberal FPÖ, made policy changes that would allow smaller political parties a greater number of powers, which, in the short term allowed Kreisky to continue developing and implementing left-wing policies. In due course this meant that the extreme-right FPÖ would come to spend time in government, while this

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<sup>60</sup> Herwig Czech, ‘Abusive Medical Practices on “Euthanasia” Victims in Austria during and after World War II’, in *Human Subjects Research after the Holocaust*, ed. by Sheldon Rubinfeld and Susan Benedict (Cham: Springer, 2014), pp. 109-125 (p. 119).

<sup>61</sup> After the failed trial, a documentary film entitled *Gray Matter* (2004) was made that chronicled what Heinrich Gross had participated in, and the aftermath leading up to the burial of the remaining brains in 2002. Gross had based his lifelong research on the brains of his victims killed during the 1940s. The film includes interviews with figures connected to *Am Steinhof* Hospital and the city of Vienna. One could say that the film is somewhat naïve with regards to its questions, it asks about guilt and remorse from a position of apparent disbelief. One can empathise with this impulse. But does it help us gain perspective on *how* the case of Gross offers itself as an object lesson in postwar Austrian society, where the crimes of the Nazi period were covered up? *Gray Matter* was directed by Joe Berlinger.

<sup>62</sup> Another case in point would be that of Franz Murer, an SS officer responsible for killing c. 80,000 Jews in Vilnius, Lithuania. Although he was taken to trial in 1963 in Graz, and after the trial of Eichmann, he was acquitted after one week. Murer continued to live with his family in Styria until his death in 1994. A film depicting the mechanics of this trial titled, *Murer: Anatomie eines Prozesses* was released in 2018, directed by Christian Frosch.

<sup>63</sup> Günter Brus, ‘Günter Brus, Gespräche’ (unpublished discussion, Depot, Wien, 2018); *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 64.

remained an opportunity for the left, liberal Green Party.<sup>64</sup> Bischof argues that, against a model of ‘consensus history’ that was taped together in the decades following the war, it was Austrian *writers* who sought to reveal the contradictions of this *Vergangenheit*, and war memories. Writers such as Ilse Aichinger and Ingeborg Bachmann were some of the first to address head on what mutated into postwar fascistic tendencies.<sup>65</sup> Bischof fails to mention EXPORT or Jelinek but this would also be part of their project. Art and the world these artists inhabited, is dominated by this shadow.

Bischof also claims that in the academy during the 1970s, historians in Austria worked to address this history and by the late 1980s and 1990s the *Opferdoktrin* should have been laid to rest. In this regard, the international Waldheim scandal of 1986 was not insignificant, but this was forced on Austria after much protest, from the outside. Bischof writes about Kurt Waldheim, who if we recall, refused to acknowledge his wartime crimes:

His timeworn defence of not having been involved, his seemingly blissful ignorance about how Austrian sensibilities about the war were changing, his stubborn insistence that *gewisse Kreise* abroad were spreading lies about his past, all combined to expose a prominent Austrian demonstrating the absurdity of Austria’s post-1945 *Opfer-Täter* reversal. Just ‘having done one’s duty’ was a limp excuse and no longer was accepted by everyone without questioning.<sup>66</sup>

In some ways, a generational conflict came into being in light of this event, since many of Waldheim’s contemporaries rallied around him; he was the same generation and symptom as Heinrich Gross.

Bischof terminates his article by applauding the changes that have occurred, but does so in a way that also alleviates some of the persisting contradictions. Bischof published this article in February 2004, when Jörg Haider was still alive, though just past his peak, and after huge demonstrations consisting of 250,000 people, against the Schüssel/Haider regime.<sup>67</sup> In his concluding lines there is a sense of resilience against historical amnesia, but also a sense of accomplishment: the war crimes are here to stay but the victim mythology has been laid to rest. The analysis and critique stops at that. This is the limit of positivist historical research which, while useful for reconstructing a timeline of events, and showing how at first a collective

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<sup>64</sup> Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, eds., *The Kreisky Era in Austria* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

<sup>65</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’ p. 22.

<sup>66</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’ p. 23.

<sup>67</sup> John Hooper and Kate Connolly, ‘Riots as Austria’s Crisis Deepens,’ *Guardian*, February 5, 2000, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/feb/05/austria.johnhooper1>> [Accessed 27 January 2018].

confrontation with fascism became obsolete, and was resurrected by the next generation, cannot tell us *why*.

This thesis focusses on Jelinek and EXPORT's works produced during the period spanning 1968 – 1989, with some spillages in both directions. Tony Judt writes, 'Vienna in 1989 was a palimpsest of Europe's complicated, overlapping pasts.'<sup>68</sup> Vienna is slotted between East and Western Europe, almost inhabiting the border. Judt's rationale for his book, *Postwar*, is derived from this Vienna which so successfully masked its past, and takes 1989 as the end of this interim postwar period.<sup>69</sup>

Towards the end of this period, some very explicit references to these events are made by these two artists. Jelinek's adaptation of Johann Nestroy's *Häuptling Abendwind* as *Präsident Abendwind* was in light of demands for Waldheim to resign, which she supported. *Präsident Abendwind* is a drama which revolves around a forgetful and cannibalistic president insinuated to be Kurt Waldheim.<sup>70</sup> It was premiered in Berlin in 1987 and published the following year. In 1996 and then later in 2000, Jelinek banned her works from being performed in Austria. In 1996 this was in response to both the reaction to her play *Raststätte* on the second stage of the Burgtheater in 1994 and the FPÖ's official campaign against her in 1995 (Plate 1.6).<sup>71</sup> As well as writing against neo-fascist politics Jelinek also took part in many demonstrations, and spoke publicly against racism and xenophobia.<sup>72</sup> She vocally supported European economic sanctions against Austria. In 2000, she banned Austrian premieres of her plays in its State Theatres, and

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<sup>68</sup> Judt, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> The next phases of this process appeared in 1991 when for the first time Austria's Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, admitted to Austria's role in the holocaust and collusion with the Nazis. This was the first time Austria 'officially' departed from the narrative of being 'Hitler's first victim.' It has also been argued that this was in part a PR procedure to reduce the harm of the Waldheim scandal on Austria's image and tourism industry. Austria would then go on to join the European Union in 1995 after a referendum which resulted in 66% voting affirmatively. *The Schlüssel Era in Austria*, ed. by Günter Bischof and Fritz Plasser (University of New Orleans Press, 2010), p. 208. In 1995 a *National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism* was set up. In 1998 an *Historikerkommission* was established, as well as the *International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims* (ICHEIC) which was established to provide survivors and the heirs of those who did not survive a way to make a claim against an insurance company 'at no extra cost.' See: <<https://icheic.ushmm.org>> [Accessed 28 January 2018]. In 1999 the far-right FPÖ entered into a coalition with the ÖVP. To this day, Austria doesn't have a holocaust museum. Hannah Arendt's report on Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem in 1961 describes how in 1938 Eichmann took over a Rothschild Palace in Vienna and turned it into his *Zentralstelle für Jüdische Auswanderung in Wien*. From here he issued the only exit permits for Jews in Austria. The Vienna agency was a blueprint for SS agencies in other major cities to manage to the deportation of Jews. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

<sup>70</sup> *Präsident Abendwind* (*President Evening Breeze*), was premiered in Berlin in 1987. Elfriede Jelinek, 'Präsident Abendwind', in *Anthropophagen Im Abendwind: Vier Theaterstücke Nach Johann Nepomuk Nestroys Operette 'Häuptling Abendwind'* (Berlin: Literaturhaus Berlin, 1988), pp. 19-35.

<sup>71</sup> Pia Janke, *Die Nestbeschrämterin: Jelinek & Österreich* (Wien: Jung und Jung, 2002), p. 113. Incidentally a production of *Raststätte* was staged in Vienna in 2018 at WERK X. It was staged as a response to the 2017 re-election of the FPÖ-ÖVP coalition.

<sup>72</sup> Janke, p. 124.

was again attacked in the press by Jörg Haider.<sup>73</sup> In the same year she wrote *Das Lebewohl*, a play which took Jörg Haider as one of its objects.

We can see from her archive that EXPORT began researching prominent themes in the Boulevard (tabloid) press, in particular in the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*. This research is now held at the VALIE EXPORT Center, contained in three folders, collected over more than a decade, but focussed on the months surrounding elections in 1986, 1990, 1994 and 1995. EXPORT traced the representation of first, the FPÖ and Jörg Haider, second, the main political parties, specifically paying attention to the FPÖ, and third, xenophobia and the representation of marginalised groups in this newspaper. This was research for an unrealised project on far-right extremism, called *Faschismus in Wort und Bild* which included newspaper clippings, CDs, studies, and a book about Haider (Plate 1.7). This project was seemingly aborted in 2000 after the FPÖ entered the government.<sup>74</sup> In 2000 EXPORT refused to collect her Oskar Kokoschka Prize from the Austrian coalition government of the ÖVP with Haider's FPÖ and though she accepted the award she used the occasion to discuss the politics at work in the FPÖ. She claimed she would use the money for the work referred to above: 'media analysis of fascist politics'.<sup>75</sup> She writes: '[t]he project will investigate political manipulation and the manipulative construction of lies and truths by the technologies which generate images and information, i.e., with the practice of the ritual of lies with which we are confronted everyday.'<sup>76</sup> I would contend that this idea underpins a central concern in her work from its beginning.

This history, though only briefly elucidated here, is important for understanding the inflections of postwar art in Austria: suffocation, nihilism, cynicism, the obsession with the body, sexuality and the instincts (in Viennese Actionism), as well as the valences of accusation towards Austrian society in the writings of Jelinek. It is also from this historical standpoint that we must understand the visceral hatred, which characterised much of the public reception these artists faced during their careers.<sup>77</sup> The notion of historical amnesia, historical repression and protection, reflects the importance of critiques of capitalism and fascism, nationalism, nativism and patriarchy.

In the wider German context, outside of the specificities of Austria, Thomas Elsaesser considers the postwar period through memory and identity. He describes the politics of

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<sup>73</sup> Janke, pp. 138-9.

<sup>74</sup> This material was displayed in the exhibition: *VALIE EXPORT: The Archive as a Place of Artistic Research* at Lentos Museum in Linz, 10 November 2017-28 January 2018. This exhibition displayed fragments from her archive, from the 1960s to the present. In Linz, the VALIE EXPORT Centre (and archive) was delayed in opening, because the FPÖ, powerful in the region since 2015, refused to sign off on part of the federal funding.

<sup>75</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Acceptance Speech for the Oskar Kokoschka Award March 1, 2000', *Discourse*, 22.2 (2000), 5-7.

<sup>76</sup> EXPORT, 'Acceptance Speech for the Oskar Kokoschka Award', p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> See: Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger, *Valie Export und Elfriede Jelinek im Spiegel der Presse. Zur Rezeption der feministischen Avantgarde Österreichs* (New York: P. Lang, 1992).

identity and memory in postwar Germany as a kind of equal opportunities victimhood. For Elsaesser, a shift in paradigm is exemplified in the mediation between a ‘people’ and a ‘nation’ through the phrase: ‘a perpetrator people mutated into a victim nation’.<sup>78</sup> The *Volk*, the people, could disavow their guilt through identification with the Nation State. Elsaesser makes this argument in relation to a similar reversal or mutation, depicted in film and literature since 1945. Citing a late text from Harald Welzer (who refers to Günter Grass), this reversal enacted a ‘doing’ that became ‘being done to’; ‘agency’ was swapped for ‘suffering’ and the focus on ‘other’ returned to the ‘self’ — ‘never again Auschwitz’ became ‘circumstance of my birth’.<sup>79</sup> For Elsaesser this cannot be articulated merely as a paradigm shift. Rather, it refers to a kind of ambivalence: ‘the shifts bring to the fore underlying ambivalences around perpetrators, accomplices and victims, about guilt, accountability and atonement that have been present in mastering the past throughout the period since 1945’.<sup>80</sup>

Here, I am interested in a notion of guilt management. This notion articulates a way of mastering the past so that it can be effectively organised, and victimhood becomes a desirable position to attain. On the level of the nation, coinciding with the founding of the EU, Elsaesser says that, ‘[b]eing a penitent perpetrator almost amounted to a badge of honor’.<sup>81</sup> This differs from the official victimhood of the *Opfernation* Austria, which was itself feigned.

In living with the guilt of the past, one is able to live. On renouncing guilt that all must live with, one is purged and purified at the expense of the object to which this is subjected. If one purely accepts the demands of the one who has suffered, one might also hinder their attempts to move beyond this suffering and rather further aid their attachment to it, since the one who has survived the suffering, who has lived beyond the event, cannot escape its shadow. My intention here is not to produce an argument for the artwork as merely a reflection or diagnosis of the historical moment in question, as a closed-off thing, rather it is to see what role history plays in the continuation of postwar art. How is history sedimented in these works? The task here is to attempt to write a historical content into the works that they are not able to speak themselves.

### 1.3: *The Body as Material*

Heinrich Gross and his assistants understood their humans, the children whom they experimented on, to be no more than material that they could push, prod, press, inject, starve

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<sup>78</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *German Cinema, Terror and Trauma: Cultural Memory Since 1945* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 263.

<sup>79</sup> Elsaesser, p. 263.

<sup>80</sup> Elsaesser, p. 264.

<sup>81</sup> Elsaesser, p. 266.

and eventually kill, in the name of the Nazi project. This was the case in ‘*Ostmark*’, now modern-day Austria, as death factories were set up across the Third Reich’s territories.

With the volume *Wien: Bildkompendium Wiener Aktionismus und Film* published in 1970, Peter Weibel, with VALIE EXPORT as co-editor, produce the first anthology of Viennese Actionism. Mechtild Widrich points out that in this publication *Wiener Aktionismus* (Viennese Actionism) was used as a broad term to describe the art movement of the 1960s in general, and EXPORT and Weibel included themselves within this (Plate 1.8).<sup>82</sup> For the most part *Wien* consists of photographs. It documents a trajectory, drawing a line from the painter Arnulf Rainer in the 1950s through the Wiener Gruppe and their literary cabarets to the final moments of Viennese Actionism in 1969. As well as photographs, it includes newspaper clippings documenting how Actionism was reported, and it reproduced documentation surrounding artworks, such as invitations, artist biographies and short descriptions of works, written either by the artists themselves or by Weibel and EXPORT. The book also landed EXPORT and Weibel with an obscenity trial (Plate 1.8a). Widrich’s interest in the book is as a document. She argues that it re-emphasises the document: it shows how Actionism lives on through photographs, films, police records and newspaper clippings, while the live audience remains somewhat irrelevant. In Widrich’s view, this weakens the meaning of the political insurgence which Actionism claims.<sup>83</sup>

What is understood as Viennese Actionism began in 1960 with Hermann Nitsch’s exhibition of action painting. By 1966 this group of artist-friends would become known as the Institute for Direct Art. In 1963, one week prior to the ‘Festival of Psychophysical Naturalism’, the Austrian artist Kiki Kogelnik met with Otto Muehl in Vienna while Kogelnik was visiting from New York. During this meeting, Muehl described the works he and Nitsch were making, and in turn Kogelnik told him about the Happenings in New York: ‘this and a subsequent article in the magazine *magnum* about fluxus etc. confirmed and reinforced the viennese actionists,’ write Weibel and EXPORT in *Wien*.<sup>84</sup> In 1964, Muehl developed the notion of material actions. These are defined in his ‘Material Action Manifesto’ as, when:

a person [*mensch*] is not treated [...] as a person but as a body [*körper*]. the body [*körper*], things are not viewed as objects for our purpose, but have all been radically removed

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<sup>82</sup> Mechtild Widrich, *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 54.

<sup>83</sup> Widrich, *Performative Monuments*, p. 60.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Weibel and VALIE EXPORT, *Wien Bildkompendium, Wiener Aktionismus und Film*, (Frankfurt: Kohlkunstverlag, 1970), p. 283. (Hereafter, *Wien*).

from them. everything is understood as form. the human being is not seen as a human being, a person, but as a body with certain properties. material action extends reality.<sup>85</sup>

This provokes the question: what does it mean to treat a human, not as a person but as a body, as form, in a non-instrumental way? What is the interplay between Muehl's words and the artwork? According to Muehl, this body is removed from a means-ends dynamic, but the artist still *uses* the body. How does this technique *extend* reality?

To answer these questions, it is insightful to look to Muehl's *Leda mit dem Schwan*, performed at his studio in the Perinet Celler in Vienna, August 20, 1964 (Plate 1.9). *Material Action 13: Leda and the Swan*, was filmed by Kurt Kren. It is this film that lets us see the Action unfold. Various things would happen between Leda and Leonardo. The body of the performer who plays the role of Leda is treated to salad oil, jam, flour or bed-feathers in erotically charged ways. According to Muehl, she is not viewed as a person with a consciousness, but merely as *form*, as the *extension* of the canvas with a heartbeat. These actions were meant to occur as if in dreams with a similar kind of spontaneity, which is the call for the *extension* of reality into a space beyond the status quo. Muehl later characterised material actions as arising from the destruction of easel painting: 'it is painting that has grown beyond the surface everything can be used as the material the material action's effect comes about through destruction. this destruction is directed against the slimy ideas with which we patch together our reality.'<sup>86</sup> Reality is patched together, glued together with 'slimy' ideas. On one, somewhat provincial level, for anyone who did not abide by the *Opferdoktrin*, the victim doctrine, Austria was premised on a lie. We could speculate that this is what Muehl means; what's at stake in the subtext here was both 'consensus history' and consensus reality. Muehl would leave Actionism in 1969 and turn towards realising his artistic aims in 'reality'. In 1970 he started the *Aktionsanalytische Kommune* at Praterstraße 32. In 1972, the commune was moved from Vienna to Friedrichshof. As a radical attempt to turn art, and indeed radical psychoanalysis into life, the commune ended up thwarted by its own structures of authoritarian anti-authoritarianism.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Otto Muehl cited in: BRUS, MUEHL, NITSCH, SCHWARZKOGLER: *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, ed. by Malcolm Green (London: ATLAS PRESS, 1999), p. 87. (Hereafter, *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*); The original text is found in: Otto Muehl, *Otto Mühl, 1960-2004* (Köln: König, 2004). p. 55.

<sup>86</sup> Muehl, cited in *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 8.

<sup>87</sup> The goal of Muehl's commune was to break the family structure. One prominent feature of the *Aktionsanalytische Kommune* was the decision that everyone would shave their heads. The reason was given as attempts to be rid of castration anxiety, but it also signalled differentiation from the counter culture and the hippy movements, but in the postwar decades, shaved heads also appeared as symbolic castration. Likewise, in the 1970s, there was a tendency for the extreme right to carry shoulder length hair. See, Robert Fleck, *Die Mühl-Kommune: Freie Sexualität und Aktionismus, Geschichte eines Experiments* (Köln: König, 2003), pp. 33-40; the Muehl commune replicated similar dynamics in childrearing (let the children do anything with no punishment or boundaries, and encourage child sexuality) among the New Left in Germany, many of whom understood Auschwitz to be the direct result sexual repression in childhood. Dagmar Herzog calls it 'neo-Rousseauian authoritarian antiauthoritarianism.' Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 165. The Communes in Germany and Austria took



In an essay from 1992 titled 'Persona, Proto-Performance, Politics: A Preface', EXPORT traces a history of what would become known as performance art. This essay retroactively describes Actionism as having been enabled by a formal change in art, thus differing from the account given in *Wien Bildkompendium*. This time EXPORT cites Kurt Schwitter's 1920s action events and Jackson Pollock's action paintings (which, as she notes, are described by Harold Rosenberg in 1952 not as pictures, but as an 'event'), as actions which formally entered the dynamic of art.<sup>88</sup> As well as Schwitters and Pollock, Yves Klein's experiments with what he called 'living brushes' in his *Anthropometry* from 1960 are included in this assessment. Klein invented a technique where nude women would execute his paintings. As his worker-muses, they covered parts of their bodies with blue paint. They were then instructed to leave the prints of their own bodies on a sheet of paper placed on the floor or on the wall, via a series of rotating movements. Each sheet contained the traces of the body's contours.

EXPORT also introduces 'play', inherited from the Situationist International (SI) as a concept for performance art. 'Play', as present in 'constructed situations', aimed to penetrate life. EXPORT writes, 'in accordance with the old claim of revolutionary art, art must invade life, [art] must play', it must do this in order to form a new reality.<sup>89</sup> The Japanese Gutai Group, the happenings of Allan Kaprow in the US and Wolf Vostell in Paris and Germany, as well as the Vienna Group's 'literary cabarets' were, for EXPORT manifestations of 'play'.<sup>90</sup>

In 1961, Piero Manzoni conceived of *Living Sculpture*, signing off women's bodies with different coloured receipts. Red would indicate the whole person as a work of art, yellow for a limb, and green for a body that could only be art temporarily.<sup>91</sup> In her argument EXPORT cites Viennese Actionism, Klein and Manzoni, as taking up the historical legacy of Antonin

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inspiration from the work of Wilhelm Reich. Reich's analysis of the work of Russian psychoanalyst Vera Schmidt shows that Schmidt founded a children's home and kindergarten based on sex-analytic principles in the Soviet Union, as detailed in: Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*, trans. by Therese Pol (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), p. 254. Muehl is recorded as saying that although he read Reich, Freud remained his main reference. Lacan's significance is attributed to Peter Weibel who studied under Lacan in France in 1965. For Muehl, Lacan's theory of signs was of interest. (Fleck., p. 22.) *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* and *Character Analysis* (both 1933) were also read widely in the commune from 1972. (Fleck, p. 32). For an account the relation between Muehl's art and the commune see: Eric Alliez, 'On (Non-)Painting Considered as a Communist (Non-)Art...: The Otto Muehl Case', *ISMS: Recuperating Political Radicality in Contemporary Art. 1. Constructing the Political in Contemporary Art, Verksted #8* (2007) <<https://www.oca.no/publications/verksted/82-92495-08-8/on-non-painting-considered-as-a-communist-non-art>> [accessed 1 June 2018].

<sup>88</sup> Harold Rosenberg, 'The American Action Painters', *ARTnews*, (1952), 22; VALIE EXPORT, 'Persona, Proto-Performance, Politics: A Preface', trans. by Jamie Owen Daniel, *Discourse*, 14.2 (1992) 26-35 (p. 26). (Hereafter 'Persona').

<sup>89</sup> 'In this new reality, the mute role of the public will decrease, while participation increases on the part of those who should not be referred to as actors, but rather as "bon vivants", in a new sense of the term, referring to the activity of their taking part in life.' EXPORT, 'Persona', p. 29. EXPORT also demonstrates the political stakes in the Situationist International, citing members of the German SI as leading the Strasbourg student revolts in 1966. EXPORT, 'Persona', p. 32.

<sup>90</sup> EXPORT, 'Persona', p. 29.

<sup>91</sup> RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since the 60s*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998), p. 100.

Artaud.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, she differentiates from their notion of both the body and reality which she claims ‘remained trapped in a state of nature [*Naturzustand*], it was ‘reduced to its natural functions’.<sup>93</sup> It remained *Körper*. In contrast EXPORT cites her own practice as giving rise to ‘the disintegration of the body as pure nature’ while simultaneously showing the material of the body in the performance.<sup>94</sup>

If we turn to where this began, we find that in 1967 Waltraud Lehner, née Höllinger, took her shortened name VALIE and stuck it alongside EXPORT, a name she appropriated from a cigarette packet. In the same year VALIE EXPORT formally became a member of the Institute for Direct Art.<sup>95</sup> The word ‘export’ points deictically towards both the commodity in its noun form, and the act of sending the commodity to market, in its verb form. To use ‘export’ as the name which replaces first, the paternal father and second, the name acquired through the marriage contract, is also to (perhaps unconsciously) recognise a new phase in the paternal dominance of capitalism over human lives. For women, the double burden of subjugation by capital through waged-labour and unwaged reproductive labour, is extended and increased to include the commodification of the ‘image’ of woman: woman as sexual object. Thus, I propose that ‘export’ works as a frame or a guide for what follows. As part of the legacy of Marcel Duchamp’s ‘Readymades’, VALIE EXPORT is a readymade artist, self-branded as commodity.<sup>96</sup> The woman artist is placed directly within commodity relations. Yet, there is a paradox at play. The idea of ‘export,’ also refers to the possibility of self-determination and transformation, to the potential of struggle, to action. EXPORT makes inhabiting this contradiction in an extreme way, into her art.

This first act of naming is depicted in a black-and-white photograph titled *SMART EXPORT: Selbstportrait mit Zigarette* (1968-70), in which we see the artist, her hand jutting forward holding the cigarette-box (Plate 1.10). The box is defaced except for the artist’s name imposed in the middle, replacing an image of the world. Inscribed around the edge, the words ‘*semper et ubique, immer und überall*,’ ‘always and everywhere’ appear in Latin and German. VALIE is written over Smart, as the top banner. A cigarette tips out of her mouth and her eyes gaze downwards. The image speaks of a second phase of the ‘new woman’ as women once again

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Weibel, *Kritik der Kunst - Kunst der Kritik*, (Wien: Jugend und Volk, 1973), p. 35.

<sup>93</sup> EXPORT, ‘Persona,’ p. 32.

<sup>94</sup> EXPORT, ‘Persona,’ p. 33.

<sup>95</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 290.

<sup>96</sup> Larne Abse-Gogarty pointed out to me that an artist like Judy Chicago is comparable here, though Chicago’s own renaming is a more affirmative gesture. Chicago takes the site of her birth as her chosen name against the name of father and husband. She asserts a claim to a place and heritage. While EXPORT chooses the blandness of the commodity, which is disarticulated from a particular place. I would add that this is symptomatic of her desire to cut out her Nazi heritage and embrace the freedom of exchange on the market. It is akin to Esther Leslie’s characterisation of Walter Benjamin’s writing on prostitutes in *The Arcades*. Women can gain a certain freedom by taking on the object-like qualities of commodities against the natural, biological idea of the Mother/Woman. See: Esther Leslie, ‘Ruin and Rubble in the Arcades,’ in *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, ed. Beatrice Hanssen (London; New York: Continuum, 2006). pp. 87-112.

entered the workplace en masse. It articulates (perhaps unconsciously) the self as entrepreneur, exporter for-herself.

If we consider further EXPORT's art in relation to the world of Actionism, we know that they worked alongside each other and shared the same object of concern: the body. Yet, in 1986 EXPORT retroactively describes her relationship (to the Actionists) as friendly but critical:

They had a disdainful attitude towards women, which expressed itself through their use of women's bodies. That was the first reason why I was never interested in collaborating, which however did not rule out performing together, but each with their own work. I was never interested in working together, because I found the ways in which woman, the female was treated, to be destructive, negative and exploitative. Women were used specifically as objects, like for example in 'Leda and the Swan'.<sup>97</sup>

What does this tell us about the art or one's ability to judge it? What does this tell us about art's trajectory, or the position of women within this trajectory? In a way, it says something very simple: on a basic level of parity, during the 1960s, it was very difficult for women to enter the art world (as in all institutions) as equal subjects to men.<sup>98</sup> In art, Linda Nochlin's famous essay 'Why Have There Been No Great Woman Artists' (1971) registers this problem. Many women protested against the category 'woman' artist rather than affirming a marginalised position.<sup>99</sup>

I want to pause on Actionism in order to consider it from the standpoint of its makers. 'Centred in the body [*Leib*] and in this world, the body [*Körper*] is the artistic medium. The human body itself is the work of art, the material.'<sup>100</sup> EXPORT cites this quotation from Peter Weibel in 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism' as epitomising the principle of Actionism. The passage is from the 1965 essay titled 'Von der Möglichkeiten einer nicht-affirmativen Kunst' ('Proposals on Non-Affirmative Art'). Yet there are some creative differences between the two passages. If we look closely at Weibel's passage in the published essay, we read:

When repression and violence advance to the material, the material experiences repression and terror, 'the material takes on the role of the victim' (Muehl). 'The

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<sup>97</sup> VALIE EXPORT, interviewed by Anita Prammer on the 8 January 1986. Anita Prammer, *Valie Export: Eine Multimediale Künstlerin* (Wien: Wiener Frauenverlag, 1988), p. 97.

<sup>98</sup> See: Carol Duncan, 'The MOMA's Hot Mamas', *Art Journal*, 48.2 (1989), 171-78.

<sup>99</sup> This debate is present across the publication: *MAGNA*. See EXPORT's interview with Meret Oppenheim in, *MAGNA*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>100</sup> It should be mentioned that EXPORT quotes either from a draft, or misquotes Weibel. She quotes: 'Im Horizont des Leibes und der Welt angesiedelt, ist das künstlerische Medium der Körper. Der menschliche Körper selbst ist das Kunstwerk, das Material'. The English translation is radically different from both Weibel's own text and EXPORT's abridged translation. See: EXPORT, 'Aspekte', p. 139; 'Aspects', p. 69. (See also below).

destruction is legible and comprehensible on the destroyed material (the so-called artwork)' (Muehl). The human body [*Körper*] itself is the artwork, the material. The destruction that the individual in the world experiences: repression and reduction, the body [*Körper*] experiences; it becomes legible on the body [*Körper*]. The universal is mediated through the particular; the abstract through the concrete. The reification to commodity [*Verdinglichung zur Ware*], which the human suffers as an economic subject in the production process, which is concealed by ideology and is demonstrated in the material action in concrete terms, through the packaging [*Empaquetage*] and alignment [*Alignement*] of the Human Body. The spectacle of maltreatment directly reaches the viewer's organism and does not spare his soul the cruelty of a reality that here can be neither escaped, nor denied.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to what we have seen so far, if we return to 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism' we find that this text contributes a counter-narrative and a corrective to the dominant understanding of Viennese Actionism and is especially responsive to the *use* of the female body as an objectified surface or canvas within these practices. For example, EXPORT writes, 'Feminist Actionism seeks to transform the object of male natural history, the material "woman" [*Weib*], subjugated and enslaved [*gekne(ch)tete*] by the male creator [*Schöpfungsvater*], into an independent [*selbstständigen*] actor and creator, subject of her own history.'<sup>102</sup> The principle of Feminist Actionism is to protest against the construction of the 'material "woman"' and in so doing it attempts to transform both the particular principles of Viennese Actionism, and the construction of 'woman' in general. How is this posed against Muehl's idea of the material taking on the role of the victim and taking repression into itself, where the human qua artwork, subject to repression and violence, makes legible such forces? It should be noted that for Weibel and EXPORT these forces include reification, as made explicit through EXPORT's name. My analysis of the body as material in EXPORT's work is developed further in chapters 2 and 4.

Another difference between the works of EXPORT and the Actionists lay in the use of reproductive technology: the photographic, film and video cameras. Weibel asserts that the Actionists were suspicious of reproductive technology, although evidently their actions were

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<sup>101</sup> Peter Weibel, 'Von der Möglichkeiten einer nicht-affirmativen Kunst', in *Kritik der Kunst - Kunst der Kritik* (Wien: Jugend und Volk, 1973), pp. 35-49 (p. 42). This text formed the basis of Weibel's 'Action Lecture' titled 'Peter Weibel, Film Division of Labour and Direct Art' at the Destruction in Art Symposium in London in 1966. See: Peter Weibel, *Peter Weibel - Das Offene Werk 1964-1979* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), p. 405. Mechtild Widrich notes in a footnote to her essay on ugliness and the avant-garde that Weibel's essay on Muehl and Brus was the result of his theorisation of Herbert Marcuse's 'non-affirmative art' and Antonin Artaud's 'anti-sociality'. Mechtild Widrich, 'The "Ugliness" of the Avant-Garde', in *Ugliness: The Non-Beautiful in Art and Theory*, ed. by Andrei Pop and Mechtild Widrich (I.B.Tauris, 2014), pp. 69-81 (n. 13. p. 238).

<sup>102</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 141; 'Aspects', p. 71.

photographed, and many of them were filmed. Weibel claims that they considered the recreation of a frame as emulating the medium of painting. It was the frame that with recourse of their actions they wanted to explode into life.<sup>103</sup> By 1969 this Viennese movement was all but coming to a tragic close. After interventions from the state and a prison sentence, Günter Brus fled Austria into exile in Berlin. Schwarzkogler jumped from his fourth-floor apartment window to his death.<sup>104</sup> Otto Muehl abandoned ‘art’ to pursue his commune. Only Hermann Nitsch continued along the same trajectory.

In an interview from 1991, EXPORT retrospectively described how she perceived the production from this moment spanning the 1960s and 1970s as ‘[art] not done to please society. In those days, this kind of activity was called anti-art, or, no-art. This was not art that bourgeois people could look at and feel satisfied with. [...] The goal was to build up an anti-aesthetic of art, an anti-ideological art.’<sup>105</sup> What I want to underpin here is a question: how does the particular art made in Vienna (and often under-examined when compared to corresponding developments in the USA), help us understand art’s broader trajectories?

### 1.3.1: *Ambiguity of the Body*

In order to deepen our understanding of the body in art, it is insightful to look to Sabine Wilke’s *Ambiguous Embodiment* (2000), in which the author focuses on the aporia of the body. As her title suggests, she raises the problem of the body’s ambiguity. She writes that, ‘[t]he body is the paradigmatic intersection of contingency and permanence, fact and ideology, sex and gender, or rather it is the entity that calls these oppositions into question.’<sup>106</sup> In Wilke’s analysis of gender, femininity is understood as a mask. She claims that there is no feminist iconographic tradition that represents the female body. Performance art, where the female

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<sup>103</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 288. Further to this resistance to, adapting to, or using new technology in their art, the Viennese Actionists’ primary motivation for using the medium of the human body (especially the older actionists Otto Muehl and Hermann Nitsch), was to achieve direct sensual experiences, both brutal and violent, that might produce a kind of collective catharsis in the audience and in themselves. Peter Tscherkassky, *Film Unframed: A History of Austrian Avant-Garde Cinema* (Vienna: Austrian Film Museum, 2012), p. 23. In 1968 EXPORT, together with Peter Weibel, Kurt Kren, Hans Scheufl, Gottfried Schlemmer and Ernst Schmidt Jr, founded the Austrian filmmakers coop in Vienna.

<sup>104</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 284.

<sup>105</sup> EXPORT in *Angry Women*, ed. by Andrea Juno and Vivian Vale (San Francisco: Juno Publishing, 1991), p. 187. This claim to anti-art is one premise of Actionism. On the invitation to *Kunst und Revolution* in 1968 Oswald Wiener writes: ‘assimilation democracy keeps art as a safety valve for enemies of the state. the schizoids it creates use art to keep their balance—they remain on this side of the norm. art is different from “art”. the state of consumers pushes a bow wave of “art” before itself; it seeks to bribe the “artist” and thus turn his revolting “art” into state-supporting art. But “art” is not art. “art” is politics, which has created new styles of communication.’ Wiener cited in Raunig, p. 197.

<sup>106</sup> Wilke’s aim with this text is to show the body is conceived as at once maimed by social and cultural processes and liberated from these processes. Prefacing her book with a concern about mainstream post-structuralist discourse of the body, Wilke attends to Judith Butler’s well known notion of ‘performativity’. She suggests that ‘performativity’ might be challenged by reaching back to Freud, and to an older idea of the masquerade. Sabine Wilke, *Ambiguous Embodiment: Construction and Destruction of Bodies in Modern German Literature and Culture* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2000), p. 1; see also: J. Rivière, ‘Womanliness as a Masquerade’, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 10 (1929), 303-13.

body became a medium and means of political expression, attempted to redress this and begin this history. Wilke claims that EXPORT historicises the constructedness of female representation in her works, especially in *Unsichtbare Gegner (Invisible Adversaries)* from 1976 (this will be discussed in depth in chapter 4). In a similar vein, Jelinek satirises the female body by means of critical mimesis, by producing a linguistic montage of the discourses *about* women.<sup>107</sup> Wilke's question, which highlights the aims of her argument, lies in the context of art history. It can be articulated thus: how can the female body be recovered if it owns no iconographic history?<sup>108</sup> In answer to this, using the work of Angelika Meiwald (who claims that the body becomes a means of artistic expression, with the aim of its liberation from male inscription and empowerment by other means), Wilke posits that, '[p]erformance art utilises the body, yet it also writes on the body and exhibits its state of alienation in the very act of performance.' This is close to how Weibel described Viennese Actionism, except that it is applied to women. Furthermore, Wilke doesn't press on the meaning of the body beyond this 'state of alienation' precisely enough. There is more to be said.

Continuing with the question of cultural inscription and representation, but asking for some of the mediations of this process, Wilke turns to the essay 'Stabat Mater' from 1977, in which Julia Kristeva writes: 'in speaking of a woman, it is impossible to say what she is — for to do so would risk abolishing her difference.'<sup>109</sup> For Kristeva, (who would be at risk of Federici's criticisms), 'woman' cannot be spoken of, she is condemned to her Otherness and to the space of the unknown. These ideas are intimately linked to the doctrine of the Christian image of the female body in the construction of patriarchal space, as represented by the virgin maternal. The Virgin Mary represents a crucial part of the symbolic economy of the West — 'as a symbol of humanism and suffering' — and is celebrated for her humility, passivity and purity.<sup>110</sup> Wilke takes from Kristeva that '[w]oman is thus surrounded by these doctrinally Christian images of power and powerlessness and the only image space available to her is that of the female masochist.'<sup>111</sup>

Interestingly, she contends that this instantiation of woman as 'doctrinally Christian image,' which, 'woman' finds herself occupying, 'has monopolised the iconographic construction of femininity to such a pervasive degree that the destruction and construction of it in contemporary artistic practices often remains mimetically bound to this very system itself.'<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Wilke asserts, via Jelinek, that the linguistic and cultural constructions of these figures predate other determinations in their process of identity formation. Wilke, p. 21.

<sup>108</sup> Wilke, p. 21; see also: Margret Eifler, 'Valie Export's Iconography: Visual Quest for Subject Discourse', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 29.1 (1996), 108-30.

<sup>109</sup> This essay was first published under the name: 'Hérétique de l'amour' in 1977, a revised version translated into English by Arthur Goldhammer is the one that I refer to here. Julia Kristeva 'Stabat Mater,' in *Poetics Today 6, no. 1/2, The Female Body in Western Culture: Semiotic Perspectives* (Duke University Press, 1985), p. 133.

<sup>110</sup> Wilke, p. 28.

<sup>111</sup> Wilke, p. 28.

<sup>112</sup> Wilke, p. 29.

Wilke implies that these performance and literary practices are still bound to this dichotomy of femininity/masculinity and power/powerlessness as constructed, she argues, through Christianity.<sup>113</sup> If we move away from Christianity and its suffering and powerless female body lacking in iconographical history, and towards EXPORT's essay (based on a lecture which she gave at the Art Museum in Bern in 1987 'Das Reale und sein Double: Der Körper'), 'The Real and its Double: The Body,' (1988) we find that EXPORT argues for the redefinition of the body through the notion of tools, this body is active, it works, it is brought out of the mute image space. Moreover, EXPORT begins this essay with a passage from Sigmund Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930):

With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning. Motor power places gigantic forces at his disposal, which, like his muscles, he can employ in any direction; thanks to ships and aircrafts neither water nor air can hinder his movements, by means of spectacles he corrects defects in the lens of his own eye; by means of the telescope he sees into the far distance; and by means of the microscope he overcomes the limits of visibility set by the structure of his retina. In the photographic camera, he has created an instrument which retains the fleeting visual impressions, just as the gramophone disc retains the equally fleeting auditory ones; both are at bottom materialisations of the power he possesses of recollection, his memory. With the help of the telephone he can hear at distances which would be respected as unattainable even in a fairy tale. Writing was in its origin the voice of an absent person; and the dwelling house was a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> I would add that EXPORT's relationship to Christianity, and to Christian iconography is played out perpetually from the very beginning of her work. In *Wien*, she writes: 'born on may 17 in year of the lord, in linz on the danube. father school principal, mother teacher, sister baroness. from 8-10 considered the communion as a sexual contact with the man jesus, visiting church only for the masculine figure of jesus christ. from 10-11 religious mania transferred to father, who died as a lieutenant in the africa war, turned him into a mythical figure and built altars for him. denial of the mother, spread talk in the neighbourhood, 'i'm the kid of someone else, my mother is not my real mother' (just to be the daughter of my father). with 13 built a [radio] detector in soapbox size. was blocked from studying electrical engineering. visited the school of arts and crafts, visited the catholic jungschar, as one of them, deflowered by our catechist josef hintersteiniger, new dome, with 14 1/2 years. at 15 wearing snakes around the body [*leib*], in the tram, at school, collected snakes, in the bedside table shelf, in school mags, raised between windows. first recording of the wochenschau as snake expert. leader-girl among the wolfpack, during the weekend trips on the motorcycles reached through the piled up trouser pockets and played with dicks. married for 2 years, daughter named perdita. in 1960, went to vienna. through ingrid schuppan, school friend from the textile technical college, got to know the viennese artist circles. 1963 together with schuppan start of the hundertwasser-gobelins. 1964 graduated with diploma. 1965 worked as script girl for ciné-film. between 1965-1968 extra for film and model.' Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 290. It is interesting to view texts such as this one, for the tone, which is obviously polemical, aggressive and humorous but also baffling. EXPORT brings to the fore characters in paradoxically a Catholic and Freudian drama.

<sup>114</sup> Freud, 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p. 90.

EXPORT sees in Freud's passage a contribution to the development of an apposite theory of media and technology and its intersection with the body. EXPORT's claim (which highlights, if we recall, the way she seeks to transfigure the body from its state of nature), is that the body can expand and when it does it incorporates these objects (tools) into itself. It practices a metonymical, a substitutive relation between itself and external object. Freud's suggestion that tools are indeed part of the expansion of the human body, revealing and confounding its limitations is pertinent to the idea that tools are both part of the natural organs and artificial prostheses. It can also be noted that Freud's own experience with prosthetics was twofold. It was social: after World War I, a huge amount of prosthetic limbs helped traumatised war veterans back into work in an albeit broken economy. And it was personal: after contracting cancer in 1923 Freud was forced to wear a prosthetic mouth piece, which replaced the top half of his removed upper jaw. It is Freud's insight into the ways that the human body becomes both natural and historical that EXPORT takes seriously in her investigation of the *meaning* of the female body and its relation to the reproduction of gender (and living labour) and reproductive technology (tools).<sup>115</sup> Working from the idea that the body is both natural and history as posited by Freud, means that EXPORT can de-naturalise the body's capacity for the reproduction of human life and therefore also woman's imbrication in its sexed determinations.

Yet, in attempting to sever this link EXPORT presents a paradox: on the one hand, Freud's ideas signify the body's sexed determinations; on the other, his theory of technology and the body allows for a broader shift towards a natural-historical argument. He undermines the certainty of anatomical difference. Freud reveals ways of understanding the uses of tools as belonging to, and as expanding bodily functions. Tools are understood as 'expansions,' 'perfections' and 'transgressions' of human sensory organs, thereby proposing that we do not need to understand the human body as an entity fixed by biology.<sup>116</sup> But the body is also taken over by technology.<sup>117</sup> If we follow EXPORT closely, she writes: '[t]he house *replaces* the mother's womb, not only because the embryo has become an adult, but because civilisation begins to replace and repress nature in the imposition of the reality principle.'<sup>118</sup> She thereby

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<sup>115</sup> Donna Haraway's 'A Cyborg Manifesto' was an early challenge to feminism which fixed 'woman' to the body. Donna Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth-Century', in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 127-49. (First published as 'Manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s' *Socialist Review*, no. 80 (1985), pp. 65-108). *Testo Junkie* (2008) is a recent manifesto which charts a way into thinking gender transitioning drugs. (This was published under Beatriz Preciado, who has since transitioned to Paul Preciado.) Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York City: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2016).

<sup>116</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'The Real and its Double: The Body' in *Discourse, Vol. 11, No. 1. BODY // MASQUERADE*, (Wayne State University Press: Fall-Winter, 1988-89) p. 4; VALIE EXPORT, *Das Reale und sein Double: Der Körper* (Bern: Benteli, 1987). (Hereafter, 'Real'.)

<sup>117</sup> There is an ambivalent relation to technology.

<sup>118</sup> EXPORT, 'Real,' p. 4.



indicates the dialectical nature of this progress: we cannot understand a simple notion of emancipation through our adaptation to, and adoption of these technological tools, as they are also imbricated in the subjugation and repression of peoples under the sign of ‘civilisation’.

Like Kristeva — and strengthening Wilke’s argument regarding the bound relation that the ideology of femininity has to Christianity in Western culture — EXPORT cites the crucifixion as an historical event that enforces a cultural submission to the law of the father, and thus also to the reality principle. In this sense, EXPORT writes: ‘[c]ulture [...] also always means the civilisation of the body, the technical extension and expansion of the body.’<sup>119</sup> For EXPORT it is through culture that the human body, with its penetration by technological processes, and the development of the ego, also becomes external to the self; the body becomes part of the external world, alienated from the subject. The triumph of technology *as* body is paradoxically for EXPORT also the triumph of technology *over* the body.<sup>120</sup> ‘With the formation of the self, the body ultimately becomes the outside world.’<sup>121</sup>

Similarly to Wilke’s supposition, but with a different inflection through an examination of the language work of Unica Zürn (a figure who continuously returns in EXPORT’s oeuvre), she writes:

Via her body, woman becomes an element of the social grammar of masculine desire. Through the social grammar of the body, where the female set pieces such as breasts, belly, bottom, legs, and the like are interchangeable linguistic elements, the woman herself becomes interchangeable, obliterated, and in this sense doesn’t exist, as Lacan says. Precisely through reference to the body, to the female characteristics of the body (e.g., the womb as opposed to the phallus), woman surrenders herself for her own extinction in the patriarchal structure of our civilisation. [...] Precisely because woman doesn’t exist, she must be constructed.<sup>122</sup>

This notion of construction comes about retroactively and is premised, ‘as Lacan says’ on the idea that woman is crossed out.

Whoever presumes to be able to found her determination of Self on the feminine physical characteristics and sexual functions only deepens the masculine determination. This is why the more phallogocratic and fascist in its male bonding a society is, the louder the hymn of praise for the woman as mother, as nature, as childbearer is sung. The hymn

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<sup>119</sup> EXPORT, ‘Real,’ p. 5.

<sup>120</sup> EXPORT, ‘Real,’ p. 5.

<sup>121</sup> EXPORT, ‘Real,’ p. 5.

<sup>122</sup> EXPORT, ‘Real,’ p. 10.

is sung to the female characteristics and bodily functions because it is praising the woman as negative of the man.<sup>123</sup>

Unica Zürn was an artist who jumped out of a sixth-floor window to her death in 1970.<sup>124</sup> In EXPORT's view, reproductive technologies are of central concern to her understanding of the female body. This is something she shares with Jelinek, as will become evident in this thesis. EXPORT considers two social determinants which construct the category 'woman' from its state of absence. First, in a phallographic culture it is the body that functions heteronomously. From this standpoint, EXPORT goes as far as to claim that the 'natural body of woman doesn't exist', in the same sense that, from the standpoint of patriarchy, only the natural body of woman exists.<sup>125</sup> This leaves EXPORT with the 'cultural prosthetic like quality of the body' and 'the gender determination of the body' which work to frame the image or the picture of woman. Secondly, EXPORT follows Freud's analysis of psychoanalysis as a method of ego-strengthening where the ego will claim independence from the superego, so that it can in turn appropriate more of the id.<sup>126</sup> In EXPORT's view, Freud understands ego strengthening, identity and the subject's sovereignty as yoked together with the technological extension of the body as the 'transformation of nature through prosthetic auxiliary organs'.<sup>127</sup> Yet, this does not bode well for women. In Freud's view, because of castration anxiety, woman is marked by lack, the lack of a phallus, 'lack of being', this means that EXPORT's position towards reproductive technologies is one of ambivalence, since they also perpetuate the masculine construction of the feminine:

The body of woman is thus the site where 'culture' manufactures the blockade of woman. [...] the 'work of culture' indeed contributes to the mutilation and the disappearance of woman, then it certainly can't at the same time be her forum.<sup>128</sup>

With Freud and via culture, the body is constructed through rationalisation and technological modernisation, so that it is the body that projects the logic of tools. Through EXPORT's text and her works, we can see the meaning of Wilke's thesis about spaces of representation and their histories, but we can also push beyond Wilke's position, which is locked to the idea of image-space and iconography. In EXPORT's text, there is a clear inquiry into metaphysics and

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<sup>123</sup> EXPORT, 'Real', p. 11.

<sup>124</sup> Unica Zürn, *The Man of Jasmine & Other Texts*, trans. Malcolm Green (London: ATLAS PRESS, 1994), p. 12.

<sup>125</sup> EXPORT, 'Real', p. 11.

<sup>126</sup> EXPORT, 'Real', p. 12.

<sup>127</sup> EXPORT, 'Real', p. 12.

<sup>128</sup> EXPORT, 'Real', pp. 12-13.

the transformation/transfiguration of the body and of ‘woman,’ with the assertion of a metonymical substitution of body parts with tools, and the extension and externalisation of the body, because if the body remains in a state of nature, from EXPORT’s position it follows the path of patriarchal society and obeys the laws of the Freudian construction: ‘where woman is a castrated man’.<sup>129</sup>

### 1.3.2: *Dialectics of the Body*

I began this chapter, setting up a relation between identity and the body, in order to show that EXPORT’s work on identity counters fixity; it rails against the body’s naturalisation. This thesis seeks to theorise the way in which VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek work with the body, in relation to Theodor Adorno’s formulation of artistic labour, but through a formulation which takes the body into itself, so that the artwork is both a part of the body and the external world at the same time. In *Dialectics of the Body, Corporeality in the Philosophy of T. W. Adorno* (2004) Lisa Yun Lee argues that ‘Adorno’s analysis of reified society emanates from and returns to the body’.<sup>130</sup> In Lee’s view, it is difficult to intuit Adorno as a philosopher of the body, one cannot read in his work a unified theory of the body, but a theory broken into fragments.<sup>131</sup> While acknowledging that Adorno’s idea of the body is often constructed through metaphors, Lee writes:

It becomes evident when looking at Adorno’s many invocations of the body that he is writing as a response to both the Nazi’s fetishisation of the body, and also to the commodification of the body by the forces of capitalism and the expanding influence of the American culture industry.<sup>132</sup>

Lee indicates two poles of this fetishisation of the body. First, in racist Aryan society, the body is given as physical perfection, health and cleanliness. This body is strong and able, it is idealised as the bodies in ancient Hellenic Greek legends. The body in Nazi ideology underpins Lee’s discussion of Adorno’s paradoxical body. Lee suggests that Nazi culture was ‘enchanted’ by the form of the human. However, the body itself was more of a ‘phantasmagorical’ ideal than a material reality fixed by its needs for oxygen, food and water. The obsession with the body in Nazi culture signified a ‘puerile longing’ for the eternal, the natural and the authentic, as we have seen with EXPORT’s prognoses of the fascist idea of woman: ‘the more phallogocratic and fascist in its male bonding a society is, the louder the hymn of praise for the

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<sup>129</sup> EXPORT, ‘Real’, p. 10.

<sup>130</sup> Lisa Yun Lee, *Dialectics of the Body*, p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> Lee, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> Lee, p. 2.

woman as mother, as nature, as childbearer is sung.<sup>133</sup> In Lee's view, this leads to the Nazi's rejection of the 'sensuous' body, rather employing the idea of its austere and puritan opposite, and art that was commissioned also reflected this, as is evidenced by 'degenerate' art.

Moreover, the Nazi idea of the body was about the containment of vital forces. Practices of *Lebensreform* inculcated physical discipline and control so that the polity would be easily malleable and all in the name of the regeneration of the race.<sup>134</sup> Lee argues that Adorno writes from the standpoint of Nazi body ideology, and this formed a large part of his concern with, and critique of bodily immediacy. Critique of bodily immediacy and idealisation is followed up with the critique of the commodified body, the physical body of the labourer: the substance of labour power, objectified by the mechanisms of capital, extended to the female body that accompanies, in images, 'things' to be exchanged. Though of a different generation, this can also be said to be the case for EXPORT and Jelinek (among other artists in Vienna). Yet, Adorno's conception of the body is more complicated than merely a protest against 'Nazi ideology' of the body. It extends to what precedes Nazism. It is contradictory. It enters theological territory. It can be read through psychoanalytic concepts such as repression. Lee proposes a third position beyond these two-forms of fetishisation, arguing that Adorno can help us to theorise a dialectical materialism and metaphysics of the body.<sup>135</sup> She suggests that in *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno arrives at a new moral imperative which 'emerges from the body'.<sup>136</sup> This new imperative is premised on arranging the 'thoughts and actions' of unfree people, so that 'Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen'.<sup>137</sup> Adorno writes that the 'new imperative gives us a bodily [*leibhaftig*] sensation of the moral addendum', if this is a moral imperative it includes within it bodily feelings and sensations.<sup>138</sup> Adorno writes: 'bodily [*leibhaftig*] because it is now the practical abhorrence of the unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed even with individuality about to vanish as a form of mental reflection'.<sup>139</sup> Later in *Negative Dialectics*, in reference to Franz Schubert's *Mignon's Song*, he writes

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<sup>133</sup> Lee, p. 58; EXPORT, 'Real', p. 11.

<sup>134</sup> Lee, p. 59.

<sup>135</sup> The structure of Lee's book is insightful, addressing the ways that Adorno writes about the body, through the psychoanalytic concept of 'repression,' as well as the concept of 'reification,' and through metaphor in his interpretation of the literature of Kafka. And while each chapter is dedicated to a study of his works in relation to the ideas of his contemporaries, between each chapter is also wedged what Lee calls a 'Feminist Interlude' where she aims to update Adorno's project with her more contemporary feminist concerns. In relation to Adorno's writings on Kafka, Lee also argues that, as opposed to thinkers such as Barthes, Bataille, Kristeva and Irigaray, who as proponents of French post-structuralism configure language in relation to the body, Adorno's use of language, instead of evoking *jouissance*, evokes a deep melancholy and sadness. I would add beyond that, that it is filled with a thickness of history, which I find to be somewhat absent in the writings of the above-mentioned authors. Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Lee, p. 124.

<sup>137</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 365; Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften. Band 6. Negative Dialektik; Jargon Der Eigentlichkeit*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), p. 358.

<sup>138</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 365.

<sup>139</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 365.

that, ‘...what hope clings to [...] is the transfigured body [*verklärter Leib*]’.<sup>140</sup> This idea of transfiguration is taken up in a section called ‘Only a Parable.’ In this fragment (and by way of a critique of Descartes’ mind and body severance and Hegel’s secularised idea of the absolute), Adorno begins to account for a utopian idea of the body, to which hope, in this sense attributed the status of an object, is tethered. It is useful to consider that the English word ‘body’ is derived from the Old English *bodig* meaning ‘trunk’ or ‘chest’ of a human or animal. In the German language the equivalent word *botah*, of Old High German died out and was replaced by *Leib* related to *Leben* ‘life’, while *Körper* was derived from Latin and takes us to *corpus*. I want to re-emphasise the German distinction of *Leib*, active, like a live force moving through the body and *Körper*, object-like, like the trunk of a human, the aspect of the human that can be controlled and dominated. The *Körper*, as we will see in chapter 2, often refers to the substratum of the human. *Leib* is more traditionally paired with the soul. Adorno’s utopian idea of the body links three problems: first, a question of the character of death (after Auschwitz) something which also concerns Jelinek, second, redemption and third, the understanding of materialism.<sup>141</sup> This body might be characterised in an anti-religious sense, as a secular union of spirit and body as an overcoming of the division of labour (as is also manifest in the constitution of knowledge). These ideas are important for understanding Adorno’s writings on the body and will be developed further, in order to then bring into question the idea of the gendered body (and the concept of gender) and the relationship of reality and representation in the artworks in question.

### 1.3.3: Conclusion: The Body as Transfigured Nature

In this chapter, the two films provided the problem through which the body would be addressed. We can return full circle to what is latent in VALIE EXPORT’s works and made explicit in her name: the ways in which the female body has been shaped and determined, contorted and configured by the dominant/external gaze (as well as in the division of labour), chronically over centuries that preceded the technology that she uses. This technology also participates in reducing her to an image. In her essay on performance art, EXPORT describes the aim of Feminist Actionism as to show how ‘the equation “material = body = nature” had been replaced by the equation “body = social construction = transfigured nature”’.<sup>142</sup>

One task of this thesis is to ascertain the meaning of the body in the work of EXPORT and Jelinek. How does EXPORT take the idea given by Weibel (as noted earlier) for whom:

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<sup>140</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 400.

<sup>141</sup> ‘The ideological untruth in the conception of transcendence is the separation of body and soul, a reflex of the division of labour. It leads to idolization of the *res cogitans* as the nature-controlling principle, and to the material denials that would founder on the concept of a transcendence beyond the context of guilt. But what hope clings to, as in Mignon’s song, is the transfigured body.’ Adorno, ND, p. 400.

<sup>142</sup> EXPORT, ‘Persona,’ p. 33.

‘Centred in the body [*Leib*] and in this world, the body [*Körper*] is the artistic medium. The human body itself is the work of art, the material’ and use it in Feminist Actionism and Expanded Cinema?<sup>143</sup> If we recall, Weibel’s characterisation of the body as material cites the way the body experiences repression and terror. How is this repression and terror articulated in the work of EXPORT and Jelinek?

Vienna in the period addressed in this thesis is a context dominated by figures like Nazi euthanasia doctor Heinrich Gross, who continued to use the brains, the human materials he collected from his victims. This thesis proposes that to use the body as artistic material was both to break out of the confines of the canvas or the screen, and to seek a way of being/using the body outside of ‘human’ purposes, both from the violence of the National Socialism and the violence of capitalist procedures. As we have seen in the case of Actionism, the body is treated as form. In relation to Weibel’s conception, EXPORT’s understanding of the body is different. It is used as material, commodified, fetishised, but it is marked as a new battlefield, a terrain where one might find a struggle for self-determination. This battlefield is a result of EXPORT’s historical situation, determined by the possibilities arising with feminism both in Austria, and as she observed internationally. It is also a territory marked by all social life and apparatuses, including the camera eye. It is a culturally gendered body, and a female body but not restricted to being female. In her words it is: ‘used [...] as a code or a sign, [used] in a semantic way—never used in a spiritual way or a biological way’.<sup>144</sup> It is ‘the main sign which enables us to experience the power of history, and history as a construction, making it [history] visible and consequently also changeable’.<sup>145</sup>

In EXPORT’s works, the body, by being present but mediated, also reveals its very absence as it is abstracted from its ‘owner’. Yet, the body has also been linked to feminist struggles against the procedures by which women become fixed by the body. Struggles over contraception, forced sterilisation, for the right to abortion and maternity rights, against rape and for self-defence; for body image and sex work, which all have their basis in the idea that the body is one’s ‘property’ and that one must have the right to choose what happens to it. These struggles also came about because, until them, women, differently to slaves and unlike men, had not had control over their bodies in the sense of ‘rights’ to the body. These struggles are part of the paradoxical nature of the ‘emancipation’ in, and subordination to, capital, and the double burden of women’s subjugation.

Moreover, in discussing the body, there is a requirement to consider capital’s expansion and its proximity to all aspects of human life. This consideration is also carried by EXPORT’s

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<sup>143</sup> Weibel quoted in: EXPORT, ‘Aspekte’, p. 139; ‘Aspects’ p. 69.

<sup>144</sup> EXPORT, *Angry Women*, p. 189.

<sup>145</sup> VALIE EXPORT in: *VALIE EXPORT: Archiv*, ed. by Yilmaz Dziewior, Jurgen Thaler, and Astrid Wege (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2012), p. 50.

name. Here, the emancipation of women in terms of their integration into the wage relation, is also their entanglement with the brutal and violent dehumanising procedures of capitalism. EXPORT's films appear to hover over the immanent space of corporeality with all of its overdetermined and prescribed problems (such as essentialism and biologism, ahistoricity, 'woman' or the feminine), but simultaneously they work to undo these problems. Adorno refuses to describe the body in affirmative terms because of his suspicion of immediacy, and the importance of dialectical mediation for his thought, yet he also gestures to an idea of a utopian, transfigured body. How is gender implicated in this? The next chapter will consider more deeply EXPORT's use of the body through her theorisation of repression. It will also provide an account of the way that Jelinek writes the *Leib-Körper* distinction of the body.

I would argue that ...*Remote...Remote...* and *Mann & Frau & Animal* — and with them the principles of Feminist Actionism — cut through any notion of pure immediacy of the body and go beyond it. These works emerge out of the Austrian context of disavowal and protection, include in their content, and speak to pain and pleasure by interrogating the effects of domination so that those affects and effects are revealed to us. The pain and pleasure that EXPORT inflicts upon herself and, by doing so, inflicts also on the audience, speaks this paradoxical understanding of the body and experience.

## Chapter 2 - The Limit of the Body

### 2.1: *Bearing Repression*

VALIE EXPORT's essay 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism' from 1980 is a text which takes the criterion of Direct Art and claims the human body as the primary material of the artwork. It is from this standpoint that EXPORT sets out to conceptualise her practice in a tradition of practices by women. This chapter will work through the way that the subject and the body manifest in art, through the relation between the body and the constraint. The constraint refers to a boundary within the artwork. As a figurative or literal boundary, it is that which confines action, which coerces, fetters and restricts, and which produces a rule or law. The constraint implies restraint within the subject, hindering spontaneity. In this chapter, the presence of the constraint foregrounds the relation between the subject and the world she inhabits, and between art and pain. I am interested in how, in both EXPORT's and Jelinek's artwork, there is a claim that the body can only be accessed through pain. What does this emblematic gesture mean in art?

We know from Silvia Federici that the female body has been a site of struggle, as it has also been used as the main site of control and oppression. In Direct Art, the artworks take the form of actions where humans use their bodies, or the bodies of others alongside extra-artistic substances: food, excrement, urine, electronic devices, fat, animal carcasses, and extra-artistic tools such as scissors, knives, screwdrivers, balloons and animals. The actions are most often documented with photographs, film or video. In relation to this expression of the body, I am interested in *how*, in the context of postwar Austria, these artists figure or give figuration to interiority, a quality or state which has a long history in Austrian modernism.<sup>1</sup> Do they index something historical when in a violent, and sometimes obscene way, they turn towards the body? Moving away from Direct Art, why do these (women) artists continually look to the body as the most urgent material to either figuratively write about, perform, film, photograph, fracture, draw upon, lick, suck, hit, arouse, bring to orgasm, injure, cut into, or make into a joke? What are the conditions of possibility for these practices? What are their internal laws? In the sense elaborated in chapter 1, can such artworks make an objective claim to autonomy?

The aim of this chapter is to set out how these works hold within themselves and then mediate, or express, through their own volition, tensions that also speak to dominant social and historical processes at work in their own time and, which persist today. First, I attempt to

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<sup>1</sup> See, Sherwin Simmons, 'Ornament, Gender, and Interiority in Viennese Expressionism', *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 8 no. 2, (2001): 245-276; David S Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) and Klaus Zeyringer, *Innerlichkeit und Öffentlichkeit: österreichische Literatur der achtziger Jahre* (Tübingen: Francke, 1992).



unpack the notion of ‘thinking-praxis’ in Viennese and Feminist Actionism, and the meaning of the body as a limit within the social process. theorise Jelinek’s historical body-analysis which traverses the limit of shame set out in her *Die Klavierspielerin* (1983, *The Piano Teacher*). I analyse the way the body is written through with shame and repression and how Jelinek mediates this body through both the *Leib* aspect, the active, lived-body, and the *Körper* aspect, trunk-like, the body as corpus. We see that in Jelinek’s writing the body is always split. Finally, this chapter concludes with an account how the artwork as body, as material, as thing-character, as limit of shame bears on Adorno’s concept of the hermetic artwork.

Beyond this, I introduce the discussion of motherhood and the uses of gender during and in the wake of National Socialism in Austria, as an historical account, which will thread through the thesis and which both figures reflect on. By raising the importance of history in my analysis I hope to show the changing meaning of the works discussed here, namely EXPORT’s *Hyperbulie*, and Jelinek’s *Die Klavierspielerin*.

### 2.1.1: Material Thinking

Peter Weibel coined the term *Wiener Aktionismus* for the first time on the cusp of the movement’s dissolution in 1970.<sup>2</sup> Actionism in its initial and prior form, was known as Direct Art or Total Art. Viennese Actionism follows in the footsteps of Marquis de Sade. It protests against what is often presented as culturally imposed morality, in a way that is akin to Adorno and Horkheimer’s presentation of Sade’s critique of Kant in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.<sup>3</sup> In ‘Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality’ Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the social transformation which paved the way for fascism, ‘human beings become mere material, as the whole of nature has become material for society.’<sup>4</sup> How does this notion of the human reduced to material *for* society relate to Weibel’s conception of the body as material in postwar art? If we recall, in chapter 1, Weibel’s description is itself indebted to Otto Muehl’s characterisation of the material as victim, subject to both repression and violence. ‘The destruction is legible and comprehensible on the destroyed material (the so-called artwork).’<sup>5</sup> The body ‘*Körper*’ as material is already destroyed. The individual [*Individuum*] and the body, placed squarely in the social-process, experiences reduction and repression: these experiences are made legible on the body.

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<sup>2</sup> *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Osborne argues this via the concept Cynicism, and the figure of the Cynic. Peter Osborne, ‘Disguised as a Dog, Cynical Occupy?’ *Radical Philosophy*, no. 174 (August 2012), <<https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/disguised-as-a-dog>> [accessed 1 February 2014].

<sup>4</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. by E. F. N. Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Weibel, ‘Von der Möglichkeiten einer nicht-affirmativen Kunst’, p. 42.

The reification to commodity [*Verdinglichung zur Ware*], which the human suffers as an economic subject in the production process, which is concealed by ideology and is demonstrated in the material action in concrete terms through the packaging [*Empaquetage*] and alignment [*Alignement*] of the Human Body.<sup>6</sup>

For Weibel, in the material-action where the body is used as the material of the artwork, the artwork mimics the destruction of the ‘economic subject’ in the production process. It makes visible Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s proposition that human beings are reduced to material for society. Weibel’s subject is reified to commodity, the person appears as a thing. In a thesis which emphasises the destruction of the human as the artwork, we should recall that the damaged body as material, experiences both repression and terror, when repression and violence encroach on the material (the body). Weibel’s text, which was first read as a performative lecture, and is both provocative and hyperbolic, states that for the viewer of the material-action, this enactment of violence and maltreatment should ‘not spare his [sic] soul the cruelty of a reality that here can be neither escaped, nor denied.’<sup>7</sup>

It bears repeating: the ‘body as material’ is both an effect of the process of capitalist exploitation which involves a violent reduction, a stripping away of life, and the site where psychical repression is made legible. Yet, in the essay, ‘Materialdenken als Befreiung der Produkte des Menschen von ihrem Dingcharakter’ (‘Material Thinking as the Liberation of the Human’s Products from their Thing-Character’) which EXPORT quotes, Weibel describes the counter-praxis of Actionism. He writes:

[A] way of thinking that sets material free and keeps it free and a use [*Praxis*] of artistic material that sets thoughts free and keeps them free, aims at creativity as the essential form of experiencing [*des Erlebens*] and thus life. The activity freed by the creation of new sign combinations in the artistic process is not only a self affirmation, but, what is more, a new self-creation [*Selbstschaffung*].<sup>8</sup>

In this sense, Actionism both mimics the violence, which the human is subject to under the sign of both capitalism and fascism, and it partakes in a *thinking*, a mental process. This thinking is also a praxis, which should liberate, set free, not just thoughts and materials, but also materials that can be both body and object. This thinking and praxis aims at ‘creativity’ and a vitalist notion of life. Its ends are, perhaps dubiously, in ‘new self-creation.’ EXPORT takes the

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<sup>6</sup> Weibel, ‘Von der Möglichkeiten einer nicht-affirmativen Kunst’, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> Weibel, ‘Von der Möglichkeiten einer nicht-affirmativen Kunst’, p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Weibel, ‘Materialdenken als Befreiung der Produkte des Menschen von ihrem Dingcharakter,’ cited in: EXPORT, ‘Aspekte’, p. 140; ‘Aspects,’ p. 70.

principle of this thinking-praxis and extends it in her formulation of the *idea* of Feminist Actionism, as a type of production. She claims that through this thinking praxis on artistic materials, which already aims to liberate human products from their thing-character [*Dingcharakter*], Feminist Actionism attempts to liberate ‘men’s products, that is women [*Frauen*], from their thing-character.’<sup>9</sup> In EXPORT’s formulation, human products become men’s products: women.<sup>10</sup>

We know that the ‘*Dingcharakter*’ refers to the process of reification occurring in capitalist society as well as in art, thus we see that EXPORT takes the capitalist social relation that produces reification and extends it onto the patriarchal social relation. Georg Lukács describes the process of reification as being based on the commodity-structure. It emanates out from the commodity so that relations between people appear as relations between things. The thing ‘acquires a “phantom objectivity”, an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people’.<sup>11</sup>

If we recall from chapter 1, EXPORT writes: ‘Feminist Actionism seeks to transform the object of male natural history, the material ‘woman’ [*Weib*], subjugated and enslaved [*gekne(ch)tete*] by the male creator [*Schöpfervater*], into an independent [*selbstständigen*] actor and creator, a subject of her own history’.<sup>12</sup> EXPORT’s material here is redefined as *Weib*, a female, who is both enslaved and subjugated, and ‘*geknetete*’, meaning modelled, worked or kneaded into his product by the father of creation. The oppression and subjugation, which is simultaneously a making and construction, takes place in the context of a Christian inflected patriarchal capitalism. The liberation of women from this simultaneous oppression and modelling is the utopian aspect of the *idea* of Feminist Actionism.

Like the literary works of Marquis de Sade, Actionism caused a social scandal. For Weibel, ‘the scandal exploded when the naked body appeared in social space.’<sup>13</sup> In this newly figured social space, Actionism, not without legal consequences, attempted to reconfigure the body in reality.<sup>14</sup> The Actionists staged painful, ritualistic, violent and sexual situations; they were set in houses, studios, cellars, universities, and on the streets. As Malcolm Green notes, the scandal wasn’t just that the body was placed in the social space, it was that the body, a non ‘factual’ body, was placed in the ‘wrong’ space.<sup>15</sup> A question we might pose to Actionism is: what is

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Aspekte’, p. 140; ‘Aspects’, p. 71.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Reification is essential to artworks and contradicts their essence as that which appears; their quality of being a thing [*Ding*] is no less dialectical than their intuitable element.’ Cf. Adorno, AT, p. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1990), p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Aspekte’, p. 141; ‘Aspects’, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> Weibel cited in: *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 15. Green notes that the courts had no way of dealing with the ‘crimes’ committed as the deeds of Actionism: obviously, there was no precedent. For details of arrests and periods of incarceration see: p. 224; Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> *Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, p. 15.

sexual reality? How much and what kind of violence are we faced with? With Gillian Rose can one ask what are the relations between configuration and meaning? Whose violence is encountered in the encounter with this work?<sup>16</sup>

Feminist Actionism appropriated the thinking-praxis towards the body adopted by Weibel, Brus, Nitsch, Schwarzkogler, Muehl and others. Operating on the level of action, will, and drive, as a technique of production it attempts to free women from their thing-character by means of accessing and articulating what is repressed. 'It is part of the pathology of female repression that female desire is still often expressed by the inhibition of travesty — this is true even for Feminist Actionism' writes EXPORT.<sup>17</sup> Following Bertolt Brecht, who writes, 'the repression of women makes itself invisible by assuming enormous proportions,' EXPORT makes showing this repression exigent for feminist praxis in art.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, the body as that which bears the signs of repression, is used for its own sake, laboured on for itself. Brecht adapted Maxim Gorky's *Die Mutter* (1907) for the stage, first performed on 17 January 1932, his incentive was his intense frustration with Communism.<sup>19</sup> Communism's failure to abolish family relations, in Brecht's view, contributed to its failures. In 'A Family Drama in the Epic Theater' (1932), Walter Benjamin responds to Brecht's play. He writes:

[T]he mother, among all family members, is the most unequivocally determined as to her social function: she produces the next generation. The question raised by Brecht's play is: Can this social function become a revolutionary one, and how? In a capitalist economic system, the more directly a person is engaged in production relations, the more he or she is subject to exploitation. Under today's conditions, the family is the organisation for the exploitation of the woman as mother.<sup>20</sup>

For EXPORT, if this over-determined social function is to become revolutionary, women must first work through the historical repression which leaves its scars and blood traces. If we turn to Freud, we learn that repression is the mechanism, which turns away intolerable desires in the service of the ego and the superego. The compression of these expelled desires become the unconscious and the 'id'. But this repressed material returns to reality, channelled as neurotic symptoms, dreams, incoherent and uncontrollable actions.

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<sup>16</sup> Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law: Philosophy and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). p. 48.

<sup>17</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 141; 'Aspects', p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> EXPORT cites Brecht: 'sich die Unterdrückung der Frau unsichtbar macht, indem sie ungeheure Ausmaße annimmt', but fails to provide a source. This sentiment can be found in Brecht's *The Mother*, but I have not found the exact source except as expressed in: 'Aspekte', p. 142; 'Aspects', p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> The opening of *The Mother* was timed to coincide with the anniversary of Rosa Luxemburg's murder. Bertolt Brecht, *The Mother*, trans. by Lee Baxandall (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol. 2: Part 2: 1931-1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass; London: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 559 (hereafter SW).

To deepen our understanding of what repression means and why revealing repression, as psychic process which yields physical symptoms, ‘scars and blood traces’ is so important for the thinking-praxis of Feminist Actionism, it is insightful to look to Freud’s ‘Notes on Repression’ from 1915. At first he characterises repression as, ‘a preliminary stage of condemnation, something between flight and condemnation; it is a concept which could not have been formulated before the time of psychoanalytic studies.’<sup>21</sup> The concept of repression exists as an early stage of condemnation, but it also exists on the cusp, *between* flight [*Flucht*] and condemnation [*Verurteilung*], thus producing a psychic conflict: flee or condemn. The concept of repression also relies on the method of psychoanalysis, specifically because it addresses the relation between the conscious and unconscious.

Freud arrived at this concept, by first addressing ‘pain’ and ‘hunger’ as examples of other instinctual situations, categorised as pseudo instincts. He argues that the *aim* of these pseudo-instincts can only be the cessation of the situation at hand, meaning: if you eat enough, you no longer feel hungry. Compared to this, repression is different.

Repression is not a defensive mechanism which is present from the very beginning [...] it cannot arise until a sharp cleavage has occurred between conscious and unconscious mental activity [...] the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance from the conscious.<sup>22</sup>

In Freud’s view repression necessarily occurs through a breach between conscious and unconscious mental activity; it is given a spatial dimension. It is maintained as the distance between conscious and unconscious mental processes. This breach is the space of psychoanalysis. In 1939, Freud would say, ‘all repressions take place in early childhood; they are primitive defensive measures taken by the immature, feeble ego’.<sup>23</sup> In the 1910s however, he developed this idea from observation of transference neurosis in psychoanalysis. He writes: ‘repression proper is actually an after-pressure’.<sup>24</sup> If repression has two sides of equal importance, they operate as the conscious repulsion from what is repressed, and attraction, which arises from what is primally repressed. This repressed material aims towards anything with which it can establish a connection. The strength of instinct (which is itself deceptive) is a result of ‘uninhibited development in phantasy — and of the damming up consequent on

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<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud, ‘Repression’, in *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Anna Freud, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 523-34 (p. 523). Sigmund Freud, ‘Die Verdrängung’, in *Gesammelte Werke, Band 10: 1913-1917*, ed. by Anna Freud (London: Imago, 1949), pp. 247-61 (p. 247).

<sup>22</sup> Freud, ‘Repression’, p. 524.

<sup>23</sup> Sigmund Freud, ‘Analysis, Terminable and Interminable’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXIII* (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 216–54 (p. 227).

<sup>24</sup> Freud, ‘Repression’, p. 525.

frustrated satisfaction'.<sup>25</sup> Freud concludes: '[r]epression acts therefore in a highly individual manner'.<sup>26</sup> It happens singularly. To repeat, Freud's psychoanalytic concept of repression is maintained by the space between conscious and unconscious mental processes. What EXPORT proposes is that one aspect of Feminist Actionism attempts to occupy this space. Following Surrealism, it claims access to the unconscious.

EXPORT describes female desire as being expressed through the 'inhibition of travesty' in relation to desire's own distortions and deformations. Moreover, the primary source for Feminist Actionism is named as the history of female experience, which is in turn a history of this great abundance of repression.<sup>27</sup> Yet, in EXPORT's thesis, this not a psychology of the sexes but rather refers to the forms of life made possible through education. In art, EXPORT resoundingly rejects the 'battle of the sexes' which has 'already been won by men', including the defeat in the home, 'the right of inheritance' and 'the right to a name'.<sup>28</sup> While male writers and poets dramatised their marital struggles, struggles outside of 'politics', since political battles (and the rise of fascism) are lost battles, in EXPORT's view women's power has been 'in bed,' and at best, a 'weak power of refusal'.<sup>29</sup> This attitude is profoundly different to what EXPORT actually practiced as an artist, filmmaker and theorist, who fiercely placed herself, her body, and her art in public space. Yet, she names Dorothy Wordsworth, Jane Carlyle, Caitlin Thomas, Louise Bryant, Zelda Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath and Unica Zürn as sacrificed to this logic.

The profusion of female repression, which is caused by social forms, is registered by, we are reminded, 'historical scars, traces of ideas inscribed on the body, stigmata to be exposed by actions with the body'. EXPORT adds:

If they are *interpreted* as pathologies of self-hatred, poor self-esteem, sorrow, subjugation, or even identification with the oppressor, then they are part of the truth of women's history. And the truth is such that only very few women are ready to scrape away the veneer concealing it. Many prefer the illusion of meaningless glamour to the sovereignty of fully exposed pain and to the *painful energy of resistance*.<sup>30</sup>

If we recall, in *The Mother*, Brecht diagnoses the enormity and extremity of the doubled exploitation of women with consequent repression, and he stages this as a drama in the theatre. Benjamin responds: '[i]f mothers are revolutionised, there is nothing left to

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<sup>25</sup> Freud, 'Repression', p. 526.

<sup>26</sup> Freud, 'Repression', p. 527.

<sup>27</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 142; 'Aspects', p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 142; 'Aspects', p. 72.

<sup>29</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 142; 'Aspects', p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> 'Aspekte', pp. 143-4; 'Aspects', p. 73.

revolutionise.<sup>31</sup> For EXPORT the question is posed: how does one begin? What have women already done to resist this?

Feminist Actionism delves into the recent history of women engaged in what it terms the 'painful energy of resistance' in art. EXPORT claims that with Surrealism, for which the unconscious is predominant, and 'understood as the historical as well as the individual locus of oppression and repression', the historical oppression of women is made visible.<sup>32</sup> In Art Informel, Maria Lassnig's introspective experience is expressed in her painting of the tension of the body.<sup>33</sup> Lassnig calls this body analysis a walking of the 'borders of the extended self', while EXPORT describes the body's 'reification [*Verdinglichung*] and objectification, its incorporation of the outside,' as expressing precisely an 'extreme and constantly self-challenging body awareness'.<sup>34</sup> Lassnig's body analyses painfully persist in their attempts to liberate women from their thing-character. EXPORT transfers this impulse to Simone Forti's kinesthesia, body-dances, and Niki de Saint Phalle's sexually aggressive works. Yayoi Kusama and Marina Abramovic are included, as well as Ann Halprin, Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown. Moreover, in this Mallarme's *écriture corporelle* is described as literally inscribed onto the bodies of Feminist Actionists.<sup>35</sup> Like feminism, which gathered women into a collectivity, EXPORT's Feminist Actionism brings different artistic practices into its remit of attempting to liberate women from their thing-character. Like feminism, perhaps its failure is in its unseeing of the differences between its subjects.

Yet, what we begin to see in EXPORT's formulation is a thinking-praxis on the history of female experience which might be revolutionary. To change the course of history one should acknowledge the *result* of pain's deformations, and explore the whole system of oppression, preceding and including capitalism. But what kind of resistance is being posed?

EXPORT proposes a kind of sovereignty through pain, which creates 'the painful energy of resistance.' Is the painful energy of resistance, itself a resistance? Could it resist the threat of Freud's resistances in a therapeutic process? EXPORT does not describe analysis, but art, or the process of art making. I propose that this resistance is a therapeutic resistance, but it is not resistance in the sense that Freud writes when he describes 'the resistances' which function to stop or plug the process of analysis. For Freud, the resistances stop the inevitability of 'the cure'.<sup>36</sup> They hinder the analysis. I propose that in principle this therapeutic does not ally with repression, since it does not include within itself, disavowal or protection from the cause. It is not merely a purging of the emotions, but rather, from the aim of taking in the whole of

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<sup>31</sup> Benjamin, SW, V2.2, p. 560.

<sup>32</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 147; 'Aspects', p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 147; 'Aspects', p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 147; 'Aspects', p. 77.

<sup>35</sup> 'Aspekte', pp. 147-52; 'Aspects', pp. 76-81.

<sup>36</sup> Freud, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable', p. 242.

patriarchal history, it seeks to found new energies of resistance. It is as if, for EXPORT this is the first stage *towards* a revolutionary feminist practice. It is not just that the task is to work on the past so the world will change. It is rather, as Brecht diagnosed, that the magnitude of the problem is invisible *because* it is so big. It is beyond comprehension. EXPORT writes:

Passive failure in all feminine roles in order to no longer be a woman necessitates the renunciation of life itself. If a woman no longer wants to live for men and the functions they assign her — sex machine, birth machine, cooking machine — then there is no life for her.<sup>37</sup>

This extreme response: to renounce life, means that it is irresolvable. From the perspective of EXPORT's claim, in order to rid oneself of the markings of being a woman, this 'necessitates the renunciation of life itself'. For EXPORT we can see that the concept of 'life' is aligned with simple progress and the status quo. To embrace the sovereignty of pain offers a way to an outside, if abstract, a way beyond renouncing life, or a way beyond life as it is assigned by men as 'sex machine, birth machine, cooking machine'. It is this kind of 'life' which is conceptualised negatively by Feminist Actionism: it is a life beyond the sublimated production and reproduction of bourgeois (hetero-patriarchal) capitalist society, and the species; but from within this formulation, for many of those whom EXPORT names, it has meant death.

### 2.1.2: *Hyperbulie*

A work which responds to this is *Hyperbulie*, a body-action filmed on video, made by EXPORT in her studio in Vienna in 1973 (Plates 2.0, 2.0a). Within a frame, or a corridor of wires, fed by battery power, a nude performer begins to navigate her boundary. The performer plots the route of these wires physically, moving rhythmically, repetitively and lightly from side to side, while continuously touching the wires, to receive small electric shocks to her face. The figure begins in an upright position, but after some time (7 minutes) with this painful material, she gradually slumps to her knees before managing to escape with the help of a manic or pathological act of will. Leaving behind Freud's 'civilisational defence' defined as the 'upright position' sustained through its *repression* of the sense of smell, EXPORT's slumping to her knees brings to mind the animals in Franz Kafka's stories: the mice and moles, the dogs and insects, which Rebecca Comay argues, exist distorted, 'beneath the surface of [Freud's defensive] upright subject'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> 'Aspekte', p. 155; 'Aspects', p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> Rebecca Comay, 'Adorno's Siren Song', in *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, ed. by Renée Heberle (PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 41–68 (p. 51).



*Hyperbulie*, is a body-action made as part of a trilogy. Before it came *Kausalgie* (1973, *Causalgia*) meaning a severe burning pain, after it, *Asemie* (1973, *Asemia*) meaning the loss of ability to understand or express signs or symbols, communicability (Plates 2.1, 2.1a).<sup>39</sup> These body-actions work with a relation between energy via electricity and the depleting and growing energy of the body. Here I will focus on *Hyperbulie*.

The live wires signify the constraining determinations of a closed society, connoting the history of the enclosures that paved the way for an increasingly ordered organisation of social life, and the prison.<sup>40</sup> The constraint in *Hyperbulie* is literal and implicitly refers to a history of confinement. For EXPORT, the regulation and control of human energies occurs alongside the existence of painful barriers in society. From this form of regulation and control, '[t]he body [*körper*] is marked by the stigmata of the social matrix'.<sup>41</sup> The artist's body (in the sense of *Körper*), as bearer of social markings, meanings, is, under patriarchal capitalism, interpolated by such meanings. The continuously jolting electrified wires decrease the strength of the human trapped inside them, draining them of their power. Society closes in on the subject like a prison. In turn this means that the human is reduced to her animality, or more precisely for EXPORT, a 'toothed animal' who obeys the plan, and, simultaneously, a kind of willpower which can overcome the pain and bring free flowing energies.<sup>42</sup> Roswitha Mueller argues that, '[t]he wires signify those used to "pasture" c(h)attle.'<sup>43</sup> Her (quite obvious) combining of the words cattle with chattel, points to the pun: the animal; and signifies a form of property, which, depending on legal infrastructure, referred to wives as well as slaves. Yet, it is unlikely that the slaves thought themselves akin to wives of men, however badly those wives were treated, and therefore the analogy might only work in one direction. As we have seen, *Hyperbulie* plays out a drama of containment and escape. Anita Prammer describes the work as demonstrating a process of domestication, human standardisation and functionalisation, as is evident in everyday experience.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Margret Eiffler describes *Kausalgie*. 'The performance itself entails a man, standing on a chalked swastika, whose shadow falls onto a wax plate on the floor; the contour of his shadow is outlined into the wax. A nude female body puts herself within the encircled shadow while the man surrounds her with electrically charged wire. As the warmth of the female body slowly leaves its own impression on the wax plate she forces herself to roll across this concentration-camp-like entrapment and comes to rest on a white paper, obviously the symbol of an undefined tabula rasa, signalling the moment for a liberated self. As in this case, all her other performances and installation works of this time are emblems of overcoming and redefining cultural and social semantics'. Margret Eiffler, 'Valie Export's Iconography: Visual Quest for Subject Discourse', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 29.1 (1996), 108–30 (p. 112). We can also consider *Asemie* as a response to Hélène Vanel's *L'acte manqué* (1938, *The Unconsummated Act*). In her dance, Vanel jumps on and off an unmade bed holding a live cockerel. This is performed shortly before she was killed in a Nazi concentration camp. My description refers to Penelope Rosemont, *Surrealist Women* (A&C Black, 1998), p. 112.

<sup>40</sup> See also: Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Untitled, description of *Hyperbulie*', undated, Sammlung Generali Foundation.

<sup>42</sup> EXPORT, 'Untitled, description of *Hyperbulie*'.

<sup>43</sup> Roswitha Mueller, *Valie Export, Fragment of the Imagination* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 41.

<sup>44</sup> Prammer, p. 71.

The corridor functions as a passage that forces a decision, a course of action or plan. Once brought to her knees by the jolts of electricity, the performer can only exit with the help of the power of *hyperbulie*. The work shows the possibility of overcoming a strange series of painful choices, leading towards an outside. Is it an initiation out of oppression, as Mueller insinuated? EXPORT's title, *Hyperbulie*, which translates to English as Hyperbulia, refers to a way of making many decisions at extreme high speed and from a state of neurosis. Hyperbulia, where the addition of the prefix: 'hyper,' meaning 'over,' 'excessive,' 'exaggerated,' joins to 'abulia'. The meaning of 'abulia,' when stripped of its privative 'a' refers to the Greek *boulêsis* and means something akin to what is now understood as 'will'. When clothed with the 'a' this swaps into its negative form as inhibition, or pathology of the will, diminished motivation, loss of drive. This psychological term was used (mostly) in the late nineteenth-century.<sup>45</sup>

In 1895, in the *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud uses this term prior to the development of psychoanalysis proper. It should be noted that EXPORT cites hysteria as one symptom of 'life' as a woman. Yet for Freud, 'abulia' is paired with phobia and means precisely inhibition of will, or inability to act. With regards to Frau Emmy von N. Freud writes:

The psychical symptoms [...] with very little conversion can be divided into alterations of mood (anxiety, melancholic depression), phobias and abulias (inhibitions of will). The two latter classes of psychical disturbance are regarded by the French school of psychiatrists as stigmata of neurotic degeneracy, but in our case they are seen to have been adequately determined by traumatic experiences.<sup>46</sup>

Hysteria, in the case of Frau Emmy von N., is characterised as the 'transformation of psychical excitation into chronic somatic symptoms' but, in her case most remained in the psychical sphere.<sup>47</sup> Freud recounts her numerous fears, including animals and bad weather conditions such as fog. After her husband died in her presence from a heart failure, she experienced dread at the very possibility of shocking, nameless and unexpected events. She feared asylums and their inhabitants. Freud suggests that this phobia was supported by 'the primary and instinctive horror of insanity felt by healthy people,' and 'by the fear, felt by her, no less than all neurotics,

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<sup>45</sup> Gayana Jurkevich describes 'abulia' as 'disease of the will', in a sense which expands from a person to a nation. He gives the example of Spain. The author takes Théodule Ribot's *Les maladies de la volonté* from 1882 (published later in English as *Diseases of the Will*), where abnormalities of the will are the result of a brain pathology. Ribot coined 'Aboulia' using the Greek terminology, which describes a 'a volitional impairment whose etiology was physiological, and could therefore be medically treated'. Gayana Jurkevich 'Abulia, Nineteenth-Century Psychology and the Generation of 1898,' *Hispanic Review* 60 (2) 2002, pp. 181–94 (p. 183).

<sup>46</sup> Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. II*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1981), p. 87.

<sup>47</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 86.

of going mad herself.<sup>48</sup> Freud cites all of these factors as accounting for her choice of phobias, but in typical fashion consequently assigns the cause of her neurosis to her long period of sexual abstinence, which came to be a determining feature in Freud's analysis of Hysteria.

Explicating his idea of abulias in this case study, Freud suggests that they can be understood as a 'consequence' of a phobia, for example as the consequence of revulsion: loss of will comes after the experience of revulsion. He writes, 'when the phobia is attached to an action of the subject's own instead of to an expectation [of an external event]' an abulia may develop.<sup>49</sup> The inhibition here is caused by fear or anxiety connected to and reliant on the 'performance of the action.'<sup>50</sup> Freud introduces a second kind of abulia that is *dependant* on certain associations that are 'affectively-toned' in other words, full of affects, and simultaneously 'opposed' to connecting with other associations. In the case of Frau Emmy von N., Freud registers that anorexia is the example par-excellence of this kind of abulia: she did not eat because she was averse to the taste of her food, due to the connection in her memory of food to feelings of disgust. Freud asserts, perhaps obviously, that, 'it was impossible to eat with disgust and pleasure at the same time'.<sup>51</sup> For Freud, anorexia proved that a mechanism operates in certain abulias analogous to the one that he had been attempting to evidence in physical paralysis of limbs (caused by concentration of affects), he characterised this as a 'highly specialised [...] "systematised"— kind of psychical paralysis'.<sup>52</sup>

From this we can understand how, in the Freudian sense, abulias left their stigmata on the lives of those who suffered them, as psychical paralysis. A form of resistance to this plays out in the display of a pathological act of will, posed against the psychical paralysis incurred from the societal regulation of human energies, the physical deterioration from pain, electric shocks and containment, in *Hyperbulie*.

### 2.1.3: *Between Victim and Accomplice*

The case of Frau Emmy von N. is emblematic of the position of a certain upper-class woman in Vienna during the *fin de siècle*: Freudian psychoanalysis, a science of the psyche, doesn't account for class, and thus in some respects fails to direct attention towards the psycho-social dynamics of something like psychical paralysis. These dynamics are something both EXPORT and the author Elfriede Jelinek point to in their work. I want to change the direction of this problem: I want to consider what aspects of gender are carried over into the postwar years.

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<sup>48</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 88.

<sup>49</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 88.

<sup>50</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 89.

<sup>51</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 89.

<sup>52</sup> Freud and Breuer, SE II, p. 90.

What insights are gained from directing our attention away from Freud's observations and towards a sociological analysis of gender in Austria in the decade when both EXPORT and Jelinek were children. This is not to psychologise EXPORT and Jelinek but rather, if it is possible, to understand better the environment as a whole.

In the essay 'War and Gender Identity, The Experience of Austrian Women, 1945-1950' sociologists Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Ela Hornung present a double myth concerning gender and the complicity of women during the Nazi years in Austria, women who would become widely considered as the "heroines of the reconstruction era".<sup>53</sup> The double myth the authors present designates women first, as victims of Nazism, in the sense that conservative values concerning the family were reinforced. Under Nazism, women were valued as biologically determined bearers of children and homeworkers, before they were valued as low-paid workers. The second part of the myth says that many women adhered to the slogan: 'good fortune of female birth' which led to: 'good fortune of a later birth'.<sup>54</sup> The authors argue that because of the patriarchal hierarchy that produces the gendered division of labour, less value is placed on women's *Hinterland* activities, which were of course crucial for the war (as they are for all capitalist societies). This meant that the fact of women's cooperation during and after the war, was repressed. The *Hinterland* activities, or what is more often called reproductive labour, was largely seen as negligent.<sup>55</sup> In their study this seems to include low paid jobs. It is precisely the hidden, unseen and often unwaged labour of social reproduction, a labour which fades into the background, into invisibility, which props up the men. The authors claim that this meant that women, as collateral perpetrators, were less accountable for their assistant role in the war and the Holocaust and often saw 'denazification' measures as political persecution.<sup>56</sup>

This brings to light another dimension to the gendered division of labour, which renders women (in this context) as both victims and 'invisible' accomplices. This highlights an old dynamic where oppression can also mean protection. This logic extends to capitalism, as the everyday destruction of human life, and to slavery and genocides. It highlights the fact that

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<sup>53</sup> Irene Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Ela Hornung, 'War and Gender Identity, The Experience of Austrian Women, 1945-1950', in *Austrian Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. by David F Good, Margarete Grandner, and Mary Jo Maynes (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1999), p. 213. On this topic there are more recent studies on German (not Austrian) women. *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* shines light on women who travelled to the East and took part in the Holocaust of their own volition. Wendy Lower, *Hitler's Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013). For an account of German Feminisms' struggle with race and national identity see: Sara Lennox, 'Divided Feminism: Women, Racism, and German National Identity', *German Studies Review*, 18.3 (1995): 481-502. In this article Lennox shows how a central problem in New Left feminism was a battle between, women who distanced themselves from German identity, and positioned the identity "woman" against German men, therefore exempting women from their role in the Holocaust, and anti-racists who called for women to be held accountable for their role in the Holocaust.

<sup>54</sup> Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Hornung, p. 214.

<sup>55</sup> Bandhauer-Schöffmann and Hornung, p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> In their study the authors claim that many of these women were subjected to rape during the aftermath of the war. This seems to imply that this violence compounded their defensiveness. *Ibid*, p. 217-9.

social reproduction, always paired with production, is the imperative of capital and what cannot be subsumed within this is discarded as waste, whether human or otherwise.

This returns us to the problem of ‘identity’ (discussed in chapter 1). As we have seen, EXPORT posits that only by working through historical oppression, by attempting to reveal repression does it become possible to overcome hypostasised identity thinking.

Women’s adaptation to the masculine ideal of beauty, even if it is so deeply internalised that women experience it as their own, is already soaked with the blood of self-abandonment and identity loss. Insofar as the title displaces the problem of adaptation onto the male artist’s problematic of identity, the action acquires a further social dimension: the artist himself very often adapts to the mechanisms and ideals of society, very often loses his identity which would consist in a challenge to that society. He repeats in his sphere what woman must do in hers: he adapts. And the artist, himself oppressed, becomes an oppressor.<sup>57</sup>

EXPORT makes a claim similar in principle to Simone de Beauvoir. For Beauvoir natural traits do not provide the reason for the violent oppression of women, and, ‘woman’ is not a stable, ontological category. Rather, the aspect of the subject that comes to be recognised as ‘woman’ separated from biological fact, is ‘produced’ through civilisation and named as ‘feminine’; it is an after effect.<sup>58</sup> Here, the experience of this feminised position is naturalised through the processes of ‘identity loss’ and ‘self-abandonment’. On the other hand, EXPORT proposes a logic of violence and oppression which falls on all humans and which follows the pattern of one’s adaptation to the ideals of a society: to live as the imposed image that society endorses, gives rise to the oppressed becoming oppressor. The psychological machination at play is spelt out through the dialectic of adaptation and refusal.

## 2.2: Praxis

To proceed from this discussion of Actionism, Feminist Actionism and within that *Hyperbulie*, I want to turn slightly, to attend to the distinction drawn between activity, as both, *busyness under capital*, and *praxis in history*. This leads to the dilemma of what can not merely be *willed*. Is the escape within *Hyperbulie* a leap of faith? Or is it sacrifice — as every attempt to escape domination can become a form of sacrifice? What EXPORT recognises is that the person who is imprisoned, speaks to the limits of the ‘subject’ as a subject who can make the subjective

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Aspekte’, p. 149; Aspects,’ p. 79.

<sup>58</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H. M. Parshley (Jonathon Cape, 1956), p. 273.

claim to autonomy via their ‘free will’ and capacity to choose. In *Hyperbulie* this imprisonment is escaped via the over-exertion of a kind of pathological will.

So far, I have described Feminist Actionism as an aesthetic praxis, the *idea* of which claims that through a kind of thinking, which allows for a way of working on materials, aims to work against the processes of gendering where woman is understood as ‘sex machine, birth machine, cooking machine’; against, the enforced objectification of women *and* the deathly ruins of the total renunciation of life.

In order to conceive of the meaning of praxis more precisely, and how it interacts with theory, I refer to Adorno’s essay ‘Marginalia to Theory and Praxis’ (1969). The context which gave rise to this essay was the German student movement of the late 1960s, coincident with EXPORT and Jelinek’s political education and early art interventions. Along with the essay ‘Resignation’ it is here that we find a theory of praxis which includes a critique of action. In the ‘Marginalia’ Adorno claims that any questioning of the duality of theory and praxis must be connected to the *mediation* of subject and object. We find that what is at stake in Adorno’s defence of praxis, is an inextricable relation of dependence between the positions of subject and object, or rather what these refer to. Without a reflexive moment, praxis exists in name only.<sup>59</sup> I want to press on how subject and object are figured in Feminist Actionism. In this form of Actionism is there a moment of reflection? What kind of mediations are at play?

In a better-known essay, aptly titled ‘On Subject and Object’ written simultaneously to the ‘Marginalia’ Adorno explicates this problem directly. Here, ‘subject’ refers at once to the particular individual, and to a general consciousness, or put differently, to the individual ‘*I*’ and the collective social subject ‘*We*’. Even the traditional idealist notion of the ‘particular person’ is situated by the concept of the species. On the level of the individual, ‘[d]efining means as much as subjectively, by means of rigidly applied concept, capturing something objective, no matter what it may be in itself’.<sup>60</sup> For Adorno, this shows us that (since Kant) subjects and objects are resistant to definitions. Attempts at definition are attempts to ‘capture’ something objective, which prove to elide thinking the in-itself. Against this notion of capturing, Adorno asserts that, ‘subject’ and ‘object’ should be thought of as ‘historical sediment’ to be critically analysed.<sup>61</sup> He continues: ‘The separation of subject and object is both real and semblance’.<sup>62</sup> The separation of subject and object corresponds with, and is inside epistemology. It cannot be *thought* away. This separation is true, as the expression of the painful and ‘coercive historical

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<sup>59</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Marginalia to Theory and Praxis’, in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. by Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 259-78 (p. 259) (hereafter ‘Marginalia’).

<sup>60</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, ‘On Subject and Object’, in *Critical Models*, pp. 245-58 (p. 246). (Hereafter ‘Subject’).

<sup>61</sup> Adorno, ‘Subject’, p. 246.

<sup>62</sup> Adorno, ‘Subject’, p. 246.

process'.<sup>63</sup> Yet it is also false, since this historical process ought not be hypostatized. If hypostatized, then it would be falsely fixated and rendered ideology. Adorno says paradoxically, '[the] mind's claim to independence announces its claim to domination'.<sup>64</sup> When 'mind' thinks itself as independent, then 'mind' also *thinks* that the subject possesses the ability to control his or her own fate.

Once radically separated from the object, subject reduces object to itself; subject swallows object forgetting how much it is object itself. The image of a temporal or extra temporal original state of blissful identity between subject and object is romantic, however: at times a wishful projection, today just a lie.<sup>65</sup>

This extra temporal, stupefied, blissful identity is entertained in the idea of *subjects without objects* — where the possibility of a pure unmediated interlocution between subjects is possible — and this follows in the tradition of idealism. Whereas:

[T]he more individuals are in effect degraded into functions within the societal totality as they are connected up to the system, the more the person, pure and simple, as a principle, is consoled [*tröstlich*] and exalted [*erhöht*] with the attributes of creative power, absolute rule and spirit.<sup>66</sup>

Here individuals, increasingly attached as appendages to social machinery, become ever more fragmented. For Adorno, the person is a 'principle', only derivative as a source of value for capitalism/exchange society. The person is not a person. This means that the person increasingly needs to be 'consoled', comforted, given solace, and will be happily elevated or enhanced, happy to adapt to the status quo if it seems to suit them. This is similar to EXPORT's claim about adaptation. If one adapts to the ideals of a society it becomes increasingly difficult to resist it. Adorno's celebrated exaltation [*Erböhen*] is the power that keeps individuals imprisoned not only within society, but also within their own subjectivity, 'the subject remains harnessed within everything objective it thinks, like an armoured animal in its layers of carapace it vainly tried to shake loose; yet it never occurred to those animals to vaunt

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<sup>63</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 246.

<sup>64</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 246.

<sup>65</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 246.

<sup>66</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 248. 'Je mehr die einzelnen Menschen real zu Funktionen der gesellschaftlichen Totalität durch deren Verknüpfung zum System herabgesetzt werden, desto mehr wird der Mensch schlechthin, als Prinzip, mit dem Attribut des Schöpferischen, dem absoluter Herrschaft, vom Geist tröstlich erhöht.' Theodor W. Adorno, 'Zu Subjekt und Objekt', in *Band 10.2: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft II* (Suhrkamp, 2003), pp. 749-58 (p. 744).

their captivity as freedom'.<sup>67</sup> Captivity surrounds the subject like the hard back of a crustacean. The simile of the carapace forms part of the subject's appearance. But the subject betrays their self by wearing the shell as if it were freedom. 'Captivity was internalised: the individual is no less imprisoned within himself [sic] than he is within the universal, within society. Hence the interest in reinterpreting the captivity as freedom'.<sup>68</sup> Imprisonment within subjectivity, as well as within the totality: society, is the relative freedom granted to the subject *and* also what unites humans in their quest for survival. To say, 'primacy of the object' shows a way for Adorno to understand the subject, as object in a qualitatively different and more radical sense than the object, because the object cannot be known except through consciousness.<sup>69</sup> In other words, mediation applies to what is mediated: the subject supplies the *how* to the object that is the *what*:

Knowledge of the object is brought closer by the act of the subject rending the veil it weaves about the object. It can do this only when passive, without anxiety, it entrusts itself to its own experience. In the places where subjective reason senses subjective contingency, the primacy of the object shimmers through: that in the object which is not a subjective addition.<sup>70</sup>

This relates to the 'Marginalia', not only insofar as praxis demands the mediation between subject and object, but with the additional sense, whereby Adorno posits the subject, as agentive, as within reach of the possibility of sublating the existing conditions of mental incarceration through the *experience* of the subject fully comprehending the object.<sup>71</sup> Yet, for Adorno, praxis *promises* to bring people out of their 'self-isolation'.<sup>72</sup> Because of this *promise*, praxis becomes its opposite: instead of bringing people out of their self-isolation, praxis was isolated. However, this is a somewhat crude judgement: Adorno writes: 'practical people are unresponsive and the relation of praxis to its object is a priori undermined'.<sup>73</sup> We read in this polemical praxis, which is dominated by nature, that people are not only isolated, but are *also* incapable of responding to their object. For Adorno in the 'Marginalia', praxis means one side

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<sup>67</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 252.

<sup>68</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 252.

<sup>69</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 248.

<sup>70</sup> Adorno, 'Subject', p. 254.

<sup>71</sup> In the 'Marginalia', Adorno posits that with Descartes' doctrine of the split between 'res cogitans' (a substance that thinks, a thinking being) and 'res extensa' (extended thing, sometimes translated as corporeal substance) legislates and legitimates the split between subject and object. Adorno writes, 'literature for the first time portrayed praxis as a dubious undertaking on account of its tension with reflection.' Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 259. We can ask, what has changed praxis from the possibility of proletarian revolution (as found in the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*) to activity which falls short of an ability to reflect? What does Feminist Actionism bring to this?

<sup>72</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 259.

<sup>73</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 259.



of itself: its name.<sup>74</sup> Yet, Adorno rescues praxis with recourse to theory. The 'Marginalia' is an essay in defence of theory as praxis, opposed to blind, unthinking action. Adorno writes, '[t]heory steals itself back from the system's immanence only where it shirks its pragmatic fetters, no matter how modified they may be'.<sup>75</sup> Adorno means that theory can only cut through its condition of immanence by escaping pragmatism, thereby theory can become praxis. I suggest that Feminist Actionism in the sense posited by EXPORT is attempting a similar praxis. EXPORT finds this through working on and with pain, and by showing this experience of pain to her viewing audience. EXPORT attempts to save praxis by recourse to art. Therefore, the works contain within themselves the word action.

In Adorno's work there is a recurring motif that claims: '[t]he subject, thrown back upon itself, divided from its Other by an abyss, is supposedly incapable of action. [...] In his [sic] process of self-externalisation toward what differs from him, the individual senses this discrepancy and is inhibited from completing the process'.<sup>76</sup> This claim opens up a contradiction where the split subject is inhibited from self-externalisation and stays in a state of self-isolation. But there is more to this. Adorno raises the concept of experience:

Where experience is blocked or altogether absent, praxis is damaged and therefore longed for, distorted, and desperately overvalued. Thus what is called the problem of praxis is interwoven with the problem of knowledge. Abstract subjectivity, in which the process of rationalisation terminates, strictly speaking can do just as little as the transcendental subject can conceivably have precisely what it is attested to have: spontaneity.<sup>77</sup>

Praxis, without experience and hence reflection, is left damaged and distorted. Like Freud's lost object in melancholia, what is damaged is also yearned for. Praxis with reflection should come to produce knowledge, but the processes of rationalisation coterminous with capitalism's development, ends with abstract subjectivity. This means that in Adorno's totalising scene, neither the abstract nor the transcendental subject is capable of doing anything outside of the web it is entangled in. Spontaneity is outlawed. Praxis accrues an illusory character. We know from the history of twentieth-century Western Europe that prevailing mass movements belonged to fascism *and* coincided with a moment when reflexive praxis was urgently needed but failed to materialise. In many contexts including Austria, attempts at praxis, such as the worker's movements were already brutally defeated. In Adorno's text this illusory character is

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<sup>74</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 259.

<sup>75</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 260.

<sup>76</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 260.

<sup>77</sup> Adorno, 'Marginalia', p. 260.

articulated as bourgeois spirit wedded to autonomy and what he calls a ‘pragmatistic hostility towards theory’.<sup>78</sup> There is a contingent relation between this lack of experience, which is blocked or made absent, and the resultant longing for an undamaged praxis. This consequently leaves praxis overvalued. Adorno seeks a consciousness that *refuses* to divide theory and praxis since it is this division which results in the loss of the quality of each. This idea also appears across *Negative Dialectics* (1966).

In the ‘Marginalia’ Adorno writes, ‘[t]hinking is a doing, theory a form of praxis; already the ideology of the purity of thinking deceives about this. Thinking has a double character: it is immanently determined and rigorous, and yet an inalienably real mode of behaviour in the midst of reality’.<sup>79</sup> Thinking is *already* practical. Thinking is conceived of as a kind of thinking substance. This analysis of theory and praxis leads Adorno to argue for theory’s autonomy. Posing an argument that is close to his claims for the autonomous artwork (discussed in chapter 1) Adorno posits that through its *difference* from reality, theory can become practical and transformative. Adorno advocates a kind of thinking against the forces of adaptation ‘which would merely reinforce the heteronomous objectivity’.<sup>80</sup> As we have seen, theory is given a similar status to art. Something which throws light on this discussion in relation to the theory of art as Feminist Actionism, is revealed towards the end of the essay. Adorno asks if a non-repressive praxis might be possible. He asserts that praxis must aim towards something between the alternatives of spontaneity and organisation.

If someone sacrifices not only his intellect but himself as well, then no one should prevent him, although objectively false martyrdom does exist. To make a commandment out of the sacrifice belongs to the fascist repertoire. [...] Such a consciousness would be the best corrective for a theatre that today confuses itself with reality, such as the happenings now and then staged by the actionists that muddle aesthetic semblance and reality.<sup>81</sup>

This last sentence presents an interesting productive challenge to Actionism since it points precisely to its claims: that it acts directly on reality. Adorno explains that ‘happenings’ within which I think we can include Actionism, *confuse* aesthetic semblance or appearance with reality. Yet I argue that EXPORT’s articulation of Feminist Actionism and what we have seen in the

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<sup>78</sup> Adorno, ‘Marginalia’, p. 261.

<sup>79</sup> Adorno, ‘Marginalia’, p. 261.

<sup>80</sup> ‘The neediness of the object is mediated via the total societal system; for that reason it can be determined critically only by theory. Praxis without theory, lagging behind the most advanced state of cognition, cannot but fail, and praxis, in keeping with its own concept, would like to succeed. False praxis is no praxis. Desperation that, because it finds the exits blocked, blindly leaps into praxis, with the purest of intentions joins forces with catastrophe.’ Adorno, ‘Marginalia’, p. 265.

<sup>81</sup> Adorno, ‘Marginalia’, p. 274.

analysis of *Hyberbulie* can be understood in terms put by Adorno. There is a separation between aesthetic semblance and reality. I also do not want to subsume this analysis under Adorno's. I suggest that we can see a shared thought. Feminist Actionism is not a random actionism, which this judgment lands on. EXPORT proposes a kind of practical thinking, a thinking-praxis through art, which acknowledges the forces of social adaptation, the *Hinterland* activities, the lives ruined by living in the image of the given, and aims to wrench itself away from them with artistic means.

### 2.2.1: *Subject and History*

In an interview from 2000, Elfriede Jelinek describes her construction of the subject as 'history': 'the acting subjects are history in that they only represent the dialectic of history, which is to say that they carry history on their bodies, or express it through their speech'.<sup>82</sup> She continues:

I have written plays in which the characters are constituted by their speech, and as long as they are speaking, they exist, but whenever they cease to speak, they also cease to exist. The subjects speak their historicity, one might say, and thereby become dialectic because they always also carry their antithesis with them. They are artificially constructed, hence constructs. I really do believe that the subject died with the nineteenth century. No one today can maintain that the subject has an identity, even if one likes to read that.<sup>83</sup>

*Die Klavierspielerin* (1983, *The Piano Teacher*) is according to Jelinek, her last novel to depict a character vis-à-vis subject. From this premise, her texts after *Die Klavierspielerin* contain figures who play out a 'dialectic of history' moving in jagged steps through antithetical positions. We could say that to write non-subjects by writing a history of the present, is a way to emphasise objectivity. It is to stake a claim in the primacy of the object against the clichéd subjectivity of expression. To understand, as in fully comprehend the subject, Jelinek has to peer closely, even forensically into all of the ways in which the subject is made an appendage to capitalist society. But we must probe further. Jelinek claims that the subject (in literature) died in the nineteenth century, that one cannot maintain the subject through 'identity'. Here, history is pitted against identity. Jelinek mediates subject through socially formed, constructed language in order to both gain knowledge of and go beyond this language. As EXPORT mediates the body as material in art by staging painful processes, Jelinek sees that immediate access to a free language

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<sup>82</sup> Brenda L. Bethman and Elfriede Jelinek, "'My Characters Live Only Insofar as They Speak': Interview with Elfriede Jelinek", *Women in German Yearbook*, 16 (2000), 61-72 (p. 66).

<sup>83</sup> Bethman and Jelinek, p. 66.

unimpinged by capitalism's domination is an impossibility. As we have seen, Adorno claims that 'subject' and 'object' are sedimented historically. I suggest that Jelinek follows this thought. Via language she analyses the 'subject' as sedimented history, yet her constructions mean working through the detritus of capitalist language:

It is nothing but a construct, constructed by its own historicity, which includes advertising, television and the superstructure, to use the Marxist term. What that means is that even in the most private moments of one's life, or those in which one has the strongest illusion of privacy, the subject cannot preserve itself, because the private sphere no longer exists. We are moving beyond the nineteenth-century conception of the novel or of subjectivity, because we can no longer live under the illusion that we can represent a microcosm of the whole world. No one can afford to do that today, it's an illusion.<sup>84</sup>

Jelinek claims that *privacy* gives the subject its claim to self-preservation, yet the subject is unable to preserve itself, since 'the private sphere no longer exists.' It becomes evident that behind Jelinek's claim lies the assumption that a proper private sphere existed before the nineteenth century. Yet, this is not the domestic private sphere, which is determined by the capitalist imperative to reproduction. Rather, I argue that this refers to the possibility of a kind of inner privacy. For Jelinek the public sphere, or society is totally pervasive to the point where any other thinking is based on illusion. Despite this, *Die Klavierspielerin*, is widely understood as Jelinek's 'semi-autobiographical' novel. It contains details which echo her biography, such as her father's institutionalisation at Am Steinhof Psychiatric Hospital (the same hospital that was run by Nazi euthanasia doctor, Heinrich Gross) and consequent death which took place there:

It was on one of those wickedly flickering spring days that the Kohut ladies delivered the feeble-minded and completely disoriented father to the sanatorium in Lower Austria. That was before the public madhouse Am Steinhof (known far and wide from sombre ballads) welcomed him and invited him to remain.<sup>85</sup>

Yet, this 'autobiography' should not be diagnosed as comparable to other parallel examples of feminist writing of the Self that preceded or were contemporary with it.<sup>86</sup> As we have seen,

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<sup>84</sup> Bethman and Jelinek, p. 66.

<sup>85</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Klavierspielerin* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002). p. 96. Elfriede Jelinek, *The Piano Teacher*, trans. by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1988), p. 92. (Hereafter DK and PT).

<sup>86</sup> Consider Ingeborg Bachmann's *Malina* (1971) and the unfinished *Todesarten-projekt* (*Death Styles project*). Bachmann's influence on Jelinek is discussed further in chapter 3. While there are obvious crossovers,

Jelinek describes her late texts as anti-psychological, that is, they renounce the idealism of the 'subject' of inwardness, of introspection and inner character development. I want to focus on *Die Klavierspielerin* as both the last example where the hint of a narrative subject remains, and as a novel which tests the limits of the subject.

The first half of *Die Klavierspielerin* builds the worldview of the protagonist Erica Kohut. Using the technique of flashbacks it establishes a constellation of recollections from her youth. It portrays Erika's movements through Vienna as she embarks on voyeuristic sexual practices, her obsession with fashion and clothes, and her occupation as a failed pianist relegated to piano teacher as well as her relation to musical tradition.<sup>87</sup> The second half of the novel draws upon Erika's relationship to Walter Klemmer, her pupil, and depicts the trajectory of their relation which oscillates between dominance and submission on the side of each. At points they both participate in and relinquish their own agency. Yet, the penultimate scene leads the reader back to the affirmation of dominant power relations through the act of sexual violence and violation, resulting in the termination and dissolution of their relation as Erika is brutally raped by Walter. How does this bear on the problem of the limit of the subject? How is gender figured within this, and how is gender mediated in art? What role does the body play in Jelinek's writing?

### 2.3: *A retired Niobe*

Jelinek's oeuvre roots patterns of gender construction and reconstruction as well as normative sexual behaviours in the family. On the first page of *Die Klavierspielerin*, the reader encounters 'Die Mutter'. The scene is set: she 'puts Erika against the wall, under interrogation inquisitor and executioner in one, unanimously recognised as Mother by the State and by the Family'.<sup>88</sup> Erika's mother is already placed within the context of the intimately connected family and state, as if one transmogrifies into the other. (The relationship between the family and the state is discussed further in chapter 3.) Later, the mother is described as a 'retired Niobe': a retired monster.<sup>89</sup> The Greek myth of Niobe tells of a mother who loses almost all her fourteen children, the Niobids. In sorrow, she returns to Mount Sipylus where, petrified she transforms into a weeping rock. The dynamic between mother and daughter begins with the mother authoring the daughter: '[h]er pregnant mother had visions of something timid and tender. Then, upon seeing the lump of clay that shot out of her body [*Leib*], she promptly began to

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Bachmann belongs to the previous generation which includes artists and writers already mentioned such as Unica Zürn, Maria Lassnig, Ilse Aichinger, Elfriede Gerstl, Friederike Mayröcker.

<sup>87</sup> Heidi Schlipphacke has noted that the name Kohut is taken from the psychoanalyst who studied narcissism, Heinz Kohut. Yet she maintains that any such readings will fall short. Heidi Schlipphacke, *Nostalgia after Nazism: History, Home, and Affect in German and Austrian Literature and Film* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2010), p. 77.

<sup>88</sup> DK, p. 4; PT, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> DK, p. 159; PT, p. 157.

mould it relentlessly in order to keep it pure and fine'.<sup>90</sup> In *Die Klavierspielerin*, contra EXPORT's 'Schöpfervater' (father of creation) it is the Mother-author's role to endlessly mould the child, to maintain its condition of purity. Erika's sexuality and patterns of behaviour are depicted as rooted in her childhood experiences (from being moulded).

To restate, *Die Klavierspielerin* is a novel of two halves. The first half establishes Erika's worldview with recourse to her past. The second half sets out her sexual relationship with her student, Walter Klemmer. If we continue to focus on the familial relation we find that in the final pages, in a moment of inflicting pain upon herself, Erika stabs herself in the shoulder, and returns to her mother. In this equation neither part of the pair can make an exit; they do not imagine or propose another way.

The discussion of EXPORT's *Hyperbulie* shows the subject simultaneously moving and stuck, shifting rhythmically between each new pulse of electricity which courses through the wires. This pulse is also held within the magnetic signal on the video tape, between camera and monitor. The first constraint thematised in *Die Klavierspielerin* is the dynamic between mother and daughter. The second is found in the dynamic between Erika and her infantile lover, through their navigation of a sadomasochistic sexual relation. Erika's horizon is both disinterested and directed inward, though not in the ways that consciousness raising literature explored. For EXPORT the horizon is beyond, or outside the limits of the corridor. More broadly, in EXPORT's pathology trilogy (*Kausalgie*, *Hyperbulie*, *Asemie*), the performer enacts in differing ways three possibilities for experience: burning pain, pathology of will, loss of ability to communicate. These possibilities invoke the way the human is reduced and degraded in society, yet, these artworks, in gaining such close proximity to this degradation also wrench themselves away from the given reality. These three possibilities explore the interrelation/proximity of the human to the animal as well as to domination, violence and fascism.

### 2.3.1: *Writing the Body*

We learn from flashbacks that Erika's sexual experiences and relations with men culminate in her waiting in vain, waiting without knowing why. *Waiting* is transformed into a condition of deferral. Time passes and events or experiences are disappointing or just missed, to the extent that: 'SHE waits impatiently for her value as a future star to rise on the stock exchange of life'.<sup>91</sup> Life is for a moment something that can be bought and sold, a continuous auction of trusts, bonds, derivatives, companies *and* Erika. Jelinek capitalises SIE/SHE and HER to make Erika's gender explicit. Erika appears as a series of symptoms arising from her gender.

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<sup>90</sup> DK, p. 27; PT, p. 23.

<sup>91</sup> DK, p. 89; PT, p. 85.

We have seen how EXPORT describes the pathology of female repression as ‘historical scars, traces of ideas inscribed on the body, stigmata to be exposed by actions with the body.’ I want to shift from the mother-daughter dynamic and the limits of the ‘subject’ to ask how EXPORT’s idea of exposing the wealth of accumulated wounds through action with the body, is articulated in *Die Klavierspielerin*. In doing so I want to elevate the question: what is a body? Moreover, what is the meaning for its use in art?

In the early stages of Erika and Walter Klemmer’s relationship, Jelinek constructs thought processes which emphasise how her protagonist is changed by her surroundings, such as: ‘HER innocent wishes change over the years into a destructive greed, a desire to annihilate’.<sup>92</sup> The desire to annihilate is the result of what was once an innocent wish. The object of this desire to annihilate is often herself, it is often preceded by the motif of waiting. In another scene the narrator says:

When SHE’s home alone, she cuts herself, slicing off her nose to spite other people’s faces. She always waits and waits for the moment when she can cut herself unobserved. No sooner does the sound of the closing door die down than she takes out her little talisman, the paternal all-purpose razor. SHE peels the blade out of its Sunday coat of five layers of virginal plastic. She is very skilled in the use of blades; after all, she has to shave her father, shave that soft paternal cheek under the completely empty paternal brow, which is now undimmed by any thought, unwrinkled by any will. This blade is destined for HER flesh. This thin, elegant foil of bluish steel, pliable, elastic. SHE sits down in front of the magnifying side of the shaving mirror; spreading her legs, she makes [*vollzieht*] a cut, magnifying the aperture that is the doorway into her body [*Leib*]. She knows from experience that such a razor cut doesn’t hurt, for her arms, hands, and legs have often served as guinea pigs. Her hobby is cutting her own body [*Körper*].<sup>93</sup>

Erika’s father’s razor is given occult, magic powers. Waiting is no longer time passing or deferral, it has come to mean using her father’s knife to injure herself. The blade is paternal,

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<sup>92</sup> DK, p. 86; PT, p. 82.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Wenn kein Mensch zu Hause ist, schneidet sie sich absichtlich in ihr eigenes Fleisch. Sie wartet immer schon lange auf den Augenblick, da sie sich unbeobachtet zerschneiden kann. Kaum verhallt die Türklinke, wird schon die väterliche Allzweck-Klinge, ihr kleiner Talisman, hervorgeholt. SIE schält die Klinge aus ihrem Sonntags mäntelchen von fünf Schichten jungfräulichen Plastiks heraus. Im Umgang mit Klingen ist sie geschickt, muß sie doch den Vater rasieren, diese weiche Vaterwange unter der vollkommen leeren Stirn des Vaters, die kein Gedanke mehr trübt und kein Wille mehr kräuselt. Diese Klinge ist für IHR Fleisch bestimmt. Dieses dünne, elegante Plättchen aus bläulichem Stahl, biegsam, elastisch. SIE setzt sich mit gespreizten Beinen vor die Vergrößerungsseite des Rasierspiegels und vollzieht einen Schnitt, der die Öffnung vergrößern soll, die als Tür in ihren Leib hineinführt. Erfahrung hat sie mittlerweile darin, daß so ein Schnitt mittels Klinge nicht schmerzt, denn ihre Arme, Hände, Beine mußten oft als Versuchsobjekte erhalten. Ihr Hobby ist das Schneiden am eigenen Körper’. DK, p. 90; PT, p. 87.

but what covers it is virginal. She has to shave her father, but her father is dead. She cuts into her labia, which Jelinek names the doorway into her body [*Tür in ihren Leib*]. We see that, ‘body’ in the first instance, refers to an entrance and is allocated the German *Leib*, meaning the live or lived body, it can mean the home of sensory experience. In the second instance of *Körper*, the cut is ‘her hobby’, the body’s temporality is constant, repetitive, like habit.

Natalie Depraz suggests that when *Leib* is used in relation, or opposite *Körper*, *Leib* is inflected with *Leben* – meaning life, ‘*Leben* means the vital, fluid, living, and dynamic side of corporeity’.<sup>94</sup> In Jelinek’s text the somewhat peculiar and evocative use of *Leib* refers to the part of the body that one might have the most intimacy with — the labia — but it could also refer to the stomach or the breast, or to pregnancy, as with *die Mutterleib* meaning ‘womb.’ In the context of *Lust*, discussed in chapter 3, Marlies Janz argues that Jelinek’s use of *Leib* is a kind of blasphemous writing against the body symbolism of the communion, which from Catholic Austria, takes her into proximity with very early EXPORT, if we recall from chapter 1.<sup>95</sup> But it is interesting to pause on this thought in this context, because this does take us into the territory of the *Leib-Christi*, the body of Christ which both is and isn’t crucified. Yet, Depraz describes this aspect in post-Kantian philosophy (prior to Nietzsche) as being linked to subjectivity. In Kant’s *Opus Postumum*, *Leib* is the:

[F]ormal a priori of the subject. [...] Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, however, insists on the fact that the body (*Leib*) is the expression of an individual, but that this expression is already mediated; it is a sign produced by the body, but the body is not at the origin of the sign. For Schopenhauer (*Werke*), the *Leib* represents an immediate object and expresses the will. Nietzsche describes it as a ‘great reason’ (*Also sprach Zarathustra*). In short, *Leib* in the German nineteenth century was associated with transcendental subjectivity, or it was related to the individual, physiological, or instinctual subject.<sup>96</sup>

Depraz shows that in the German tradition, *Leib* both expressed the subject and mediated the individual through the body. The body is understood as split. This split produces a contradiction in the way that Jelinek writes the body, where *Leib* is incorporated in the moment of the cut. When Jelinek uses *Körper* it refers to past cuts, when the body has been a test object, in preparation for the present cut.

If we look further into this split, Depraz maintains that *Leib* is part of a specific Germanic context, with its root in *bleiben*, making the link with dwelling, and *lîp*, being those who stayed,

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<sup>94</sup> Natalie Depraz, ‘Leib/Körper/Fleisch’, ed. by Barbara Cassin and others, *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 561-65 (p. 561).

<sup>95</sup> Janz, p. 111.

<sup>96</sup> Depraz, p. 561.



or did not fall in battle. This is opposed to *mal*, those who fell or 'heavens chosen ones [*die Ausgewählten*]'. Depraz emphasises this life/death polarisation, to claim that the *Leib* aspect of the body is vital and alive, and the inert aspect, belonging to *Körper*, is from 'corpse' or cadaver. Yet, the more commonly used German word *Körper*, denotes the 'structural aspect of the body, [...] its static dimension'.<sup>97</sup> We can say that the *Körper* is solid and material. It brings to mind measurable qualities such as height, weight, strength. It is the *Körper*, the aspect of the body which is solid and material, which takes on the accumulation of cuts.

In her essay 'Schamgrenzen? Die Gewöhnliche Gewalt der Weiblichen Hygiene' (1983, 'Limits of Shame? The Everyday Violence of Female Hygiene') the cut is elaborated as a motif that expands. Jelinek describes Erika's hygiene procedure as one, where using objects such as kitchen utensils, pins and clothes pegs she spikes [*spickt*] herself. As well as cutting, she prods these objects into her body. 'She is her own voyeur with a mirror, no one else watches her.'<sup>98</sup> Comparing this ritualistic spiking to a striptease, Jelinek describes this procedure as one where the person becomes increasingly de-sexualised. She writes:

The woman's undressing is concealed, belittled, made innocent from the decor and the accessories (fur, tinsel, cigarette-tip, fan, etc.). The naked woman (evil, sin) is publicly displayed, in order to be better negated and excommunicated. The woman, in her becoming progressively naked, is not. The viewer of this becoming naked [*Vernacktung*] cleans himself from the evil of sexuality, for which he unfortunately still needs the woman; he is 'vaccinated' (Barthes) so to speak, against the evil of the female sex [*Geschlecht*] (the evil embodied in the female sex [*Geschlecht*]). The meat is killed by the male customer during the meat examination [*Feischbeschauung*].<sup>99</sup>

We begin to see Jelinek's theory of gender: the more a human becomes woman the more she is negated, until she is nothing; this woman could also stand in for Eve's sin. For Jelinek it becomes an impossibility to affirm the position 'woman'. Further on she gives more explication. Jelinek describes 'gendering' as literally 'butchering': 'Erika has gendered herself by butchering herself', she continues:

Erika Kohut watches herself as she inflicts pain upon herself with home and kitchen utensils. This image of a woman, who is penetrated literally by all kinds of kitchen

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<sup>97</sup> Depraz, p. 561.

<sup>98</sup> Jelinek, 'Schamgrenzen? Die gewöhnliche Gewalt der weiblichen Hygiene,' first published in *Die Tageszeitung*, Berlin, 26 November 1983. This version is from Elfriede Jelinek, 'Schamgrenzen? Die gewöhnliche Gewalt der weiblichen Hygiene', *Vernunftkritik* 12 (1984), 137-39 (p. 137). (My translation).

<sup>99</sup> Jelinek, 'Schamgrenzen', p. 137.

appliances, is her attempt to demystify her own body [*Körper*]. Erika Kohut conducts research, so to speak, conducts an analysis of her own body [*Leib*], an analysis that always detrimentally affects its object, her body: it is a necessary masochism, the attempt, that is, to transcend mere striptease and its rules which have been laid down by men. Of course she feels pain. However, she dares to attempt to discover more in her own body [*Körper*] than simply the territory that has been defined by man. Erika Kohut exercises a resistance against the feeling of shame [*Schämgefühl*]. She penetrates herself as if she was entering a forbidden house, and she watches herself do so. Shame can only be a weapon once women are no longer ashamed of themselves, when the shame of women no longer belongs to men. When women are no longer disgusted by themselves, but by men. And when men remain alone with their feelings of disgust. If the limits of shame do not dismember women, but destroy the territorialisation of men, shame is the recognition [*Erkenntnis*] of the most real forms of male violence. But shame, however, often degenerates into the recognition of female helplessness.<sup>100</sup>

Erika's penetration by kitchen utensils, which damage her body [*Körper*] should in turn demystify the brute physical body, in this instance the body which comes under patriarchal rule. The metaphorical act of analysis, the work of spiking and cutting takes place on the *Leib* aspect of the body, the aspect with a horizon of possible transformation. The analysis is painful but does it cause pain? It damages, as if the only way to adequate knowledge is through this kind of destruction. Therefore, to understand the body beyond its presentation via striptease, which leads to its position as decor, Jelinek proposes a purposefully masochistic relationship to the *Leib* (commonly associated with Christ, *Leib und Seele/der Leib Christi*) as well as infused with the meaning of the transcendental subject and the instinctual body. Yet here, working on the *Leib* both is and is not blasphemous. It is a re-ordering of the body: analysing the *Leib* means analysing the instinctual, the psycho-somatic body as it is both driven and distorted. Yet, this body-analysis on the *Leib* (so often recognised as the transfigured body of Christ), is what

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<sup>100</sup> 'Erika Kohut fügt sich mit Haus und Küchen-geräten Schmerz zu und beschaut sich selbst dabei. Dieses Bild der Frau, in die Häusliche Gerätschaften aller Art eindringen, buchstäblich eindringen, ist ihr Versuch, diesen Körper, den sie da hat, zu entmystifizieren. Erika Kohut betreibt sozusagen Forschung, Analyse am eigenen Leib, eine Analyse, die immer auch ihr Objekt in Mitleidenschaft zieht: notwendiger Masochismus, der Versuch also, das Bloße Striptease und seine von Männern festgelegten Regeln zu überschreiten. Natürlich tut ihr das weh. Allerdings wagt sie den Versuch, im eigenen Körper mehr zu entdecken als das Territorium des Mannes. Erika Kohut übt Widerstand gegen das Schamgefühl. Sie dringt in sich selbst ein wie in ein verbotenes Haus, und betrachtet sich selbst dabei. Scham kann nur dann eine Waffe sein, wenn die Frauen sich nicht vor die selber schämen, wenn die Scham der Frauen nicht die der Männer ist. Wenn die Frauen sich nicht vor sich selbst ekeln, sondern vor den Männern. Und wenn die Männer mit ihrem Ekel allein bleiben. Wenn die Grenzen der Scham nicht die Frauen zerstückeln, sondern die Territorialisierungen der Männer. Scham ist die Erkenntnis der realen männlichen Gewalttätigkeit, Scham verkommt aber oft zur Anerkennung der weiblichen Hilflosigkeit'. Jelinek, 'Schamgrenzen', p. 137.

allows Jelinek to push against the limits of ‘female’ or Eve’s shame. Erika’s *Leib* is analysed as the limit of shame.

In *Die Klavierspielerin* it is after an abusive sexual encounter with Klemmer, Erika’s student that Erika reaches for this masochistic body-analysis. When, from within their sado-masochistic relation (which Erika inaugurated by writing a letter, seeking out a contract), Jelinek’s Klemmer abuses Erika with vitriolic language, he tells her how much she stinks, until she becomes like dirt. After their tortuous encounter ends, Erica returns to her home to undertake her body analysis:

Shedding tears, Erika applies the greedy leeches of the cheery, colourful plastic clothespins to her body [*Leib*]. To places that she can easily reach and that will be black and blue later on. Weeping, Erika nips and clips her flesh. She knocks the surface of her body [*Körperfläche*] off balance. She makes her skin miss a beat. She lards her fat with pins and needles. She peers at herself aghast and looks for free areas. If a blank spot shines in the register of her body [*Leibes*], it is instantly tweaked by the greedy claws of a clothespin.<sup>101</sup>

By re-ordering the *Leib-Körper* distinction, by taking the *Leib* which is often closely associated with Christ, as the body of Christ, *der Leib Christi*, with Erika the masochist, Jelinek shifts the body away from the becoming naked, negated, excommunicated woman understood as evil and sin away from asceticism of christianity. She rewrites the ‘female’ *Leib* through the limit of shame. Thus, the outer boundary, contour of Erika’s body *Leib* is attacked. This is not a *Leib* that is healed, or fully transfigured, but it is in a way showing albeit through language, what the damage done by social forces of patriarchal violence and subsequent repression. This projects the transformation of the body in such a way as to deterritorialise the female body, by in a sense re-territorialising it, by negatively refusing excommunication. Jelinek proposes through the example of Erika that when shame is no longer a burden, it becomes weaponised as a force which can destroy the patriarchal territorialisation of the body. When shame is turned into resistance one can recognise the brutality of patriarchal violence. Yet, from the extremity of this position, Jelinek makes a U-turn: shame can in turn regress back into the mere ‘recognition’ of female helplessness. There lies the danger. Jelinek aims to negatively point to a world beyond this helplessness.

The German language takes the concept of shame tethered to women, to an extreme. For example, in English one commonly says, ‘pubic hair’ and it refers to hair covering part of human anatomy, a bone, the groin. In German, the word is ‘*Schamhaare*,’ literally, shame hair.

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<sup>101</sup> DK, p. 253; PT, p. 249.

This means that from the moment a child can use language, the hair that covers the part of the body that brings shame is literally named. Shame sticks to the body through language. ‘*Scham*’ refers to shame and pudency, or modesty. The prefix ‘*Scham-*’ is attached to: *Schambaare*, pubic hair; *Schamlippe*, labia; *Schambein*, pubic bone; *die Weibliche Scham*, vulva, the list goes on. The very word for pubis holds within itself the word shame. Thus when Jelinek writes that Erika cuts into the door to her body, this marks a step away from the language of shame and its *Schamgefühl* (feeling of shame) which relates back to Christian notions of female piety and self-sacrifice (as discussed in chapter 1).

On one of the rare occasions when Freud attempted to understand ‘what women want’, in his notable essay ‘Femininity’ (1933) he pairs female sexuality with shame:

Shame, which is considered to be a feminine characteristic par excellence but is far more a matter of convention than might be supposed, has as its purpose, we believe, concealment of genital deficiency... it seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilisation; there is, however, one technique that they may have invented—that of plaiting and weaving... Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair [*Schambaare*] that conceals the genitals. The step that remained lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together.<sup>102</sup>

First, in the somewhat absurd sense of Freud’s text, shame functions to conceal ‘genital deficiency’, which is connected to *Schambaare*. Shame hair, in Freud’s view, is a natural endowment of the human which ‘conceals the genitals’, thus also conceals “female” ‘genital deficiency’. In this analysis ‘nature’ provides model for *Schambaare* which grows during puberty to cover the genitals. Thereby the one contribution women have made to civilisation — weaving — is understood as a direct response to the feeling of shame and the concealment of so-called genital deficiency. This gives the reason for weaving becoming a form of “woman’s work”. Furthermore, at the root of this is the well-worn quandary for feminists who work with Freud: if civilisation is produced through processes of sublimation, the implication is that women, in Freud’s estimation are incapable of sublimation. This essay is perhaps his attempt to have a final word. Freud ends ‘Femininity’ by acknowledging that science or theory of sexuality cannot say what ‘women’ want. In order to grasp this we must turn to the poets. One question

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<sup>102</sup> Sigmund Freud, ‘Femininity’, in *The Essentials of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 412-32 (p. 430).

which threads through this thesis is: what can we learn from writers, artists and poets who are women, after Freud's time?<sup>103</sup>

In an interview from 1988 Jelinek describes Freud's thesis concerning the potential for aggression in society, as arising from frustration. Jelinek at once identifies with and denounces Freud's theory. She writes:

This frustration in life has a very strong potential for aggression, the transformation of frustration in this case the aggression of the acts of production. I succumb to this. I am a huge supporter of the theory of sublimation which says that one, so to say, sublimates in the production of art. Freud did not concede to women that they can produce, because their super-ego is so weak they did not even need to fight it.<sup>104</sup>

Yet, it should also be noted that Freud's development of a theory of what we now call gender (while the concept of gender did not exist during his time) precedes this essay, and rests largely on the Oedipus complex with its theories of penis envy (and castration anxiety). Jelinek calls this so-called penis envy a vulgar-Freudianism.<sup>105</sup>

If we consider how this theorisation of sublimation effects our consideration of art, we find that Jelinek claims that from within the world dominated by the value system of patriarchal capitalism, it is impossible to produce art that models, or writes, a positive image of utopia.<sup>106</sup> Literature can not do this. It is the social system itself which provides the constraint. Instead of attempting to do this, Jelinek describes working in a rage, letting the rage work through her. The libidinal investment in artistic labour is marked with rage [*Wut*].<sup>107</sup>

In the same interview half a decade after the publication of *Die Klavierspielerin*, Jelinek describes the main emphasis of her work as a whole as focussing on 'sadomasochism and this so called societal super-ego, this prefabricated reality, this second hand reality and the way it is prefabricated'.<sup>108</sup> Here aggression culminates from the transformation of frustration precisely in the act of production. A way of diverting this aggression through sublimation (as Freud describes in *Civilisation and its Discontents*) arises when this aggression is pushed towards the act of producing a work of art, or literature, or a product for society. In this case Jelinek is close to Freud, except that her rage is carried into artistic products which do not compliment the world,

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<sup>103</sup> See also: Daniel T. O'Hara, 'On Freud's Femininity,' *Boundary 2* 26, no. 2 (1999), 193-98; Patricia Jagentowicz Mills, *Woman, Nature, and Psyche*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>104</sup> Gabriele Presber and Elfriede Jelinek, 'Elfriede Jelinek', in *Die Kunst ist Weiblich*. (München: Droemer Knaur, 1993), pp. 106-31 (p. 113).

<sup>105</sup> Presber and Jelinek, p. 113.

<sup>106</sup> Presber and Jelinek, p. 115.

<sup>107</sup> 'Oft funktioniere ich eben nur in dieser Wut, die ja eine sehr starke Triebkraft ist. Der Schöpfungsprozeß ist ein sehr libidinöser Prozeß, man braucht starke Emotionen, um ihn freizusetzen.' Presber and Jelinek, p. 115.

<sup>108</sup> Presber and Jelinek, p. 113.

but press on its limits, such as the limits of shame. Jelinek's rage acknowledges Freud's lack of acknowledgment of women within this equation.

### 2.3.2: *The Perception of Leib and Körper*

Among shorter sketches, in his consideration of the *Leib-Körper* distinction Walter Benjamin writes 'Schemata zum Psychophysischen Problem' ('Outline of the Psychophysical Problem') between 1922 and 1923.<sup>109</sup> Here, I will try to draw out from Benjamin's text concepts that will aid our understanding of Jelinek's language of the body. Benjamin suggests that *Geist* and *Leib* are both identical and distinct as 'ways of seeing' marked by form [*Gestalt*]. When mind and body [*Geistlichkeit*] meet it is in an ephemeral moment: they manifest or appear in a moment of historical 'now' [*Nu*] time.<sup>110</sup> Here, *Leib* and *Geist* are determined temporarily, in a fleeting moment. Yet, paradoxically, in this momentary manifestation of historical 'now' time, the coming together of *Leib* and *Geist* means that they are both ephemeral and immortal, transitory and non-transitory: when identified with *Leib* — mind and body are formal categories.

Our body [*Leib*] then, is not integrated into the historical process, but only dwells in it from time to time; its modification from one form to the next is not the function of the historical process itself, but merely the particular detached relation of a life to it.<sup>111</sup>

*Leib* fleetingly enters the historical process, but is not fully drawn into it. For Benjamin *Leib* can be modified, it moves through forms by virtue of the 'detached relation' that a life has to it. Here, what distinguishes *Leib* from *Körper* is the way that *Leib* can be present to all forms of reality and the real, but not in the sense of *Körper*, which exists as the 'substratum' or *substance* 'of its particular being'. In addition, *Leib* exists as the culmination of all form and belongs with its opposite, genius.<sup>112</sup> To restate, here *Leib* is present to the historical process but detached from life. How does this relate to EXPORT's extended body as artwork, a body which is driven in its attempts to access unconscious material, to bear repression, to explore the scars and traces of ideas, the stigmata left on the body? How do we understand Jelinek's language of

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<sup>109</sup> Sigrid Weigel notes that this and other essays on the corporeal which are collected in Volume VI of the *Gesammelte Schriften* have highlighted the role of the corporeal in Benjamin's writings after 1916. Weigel claims that sketches from this period 'written under the influence of his studies of Freud' foreground Benjamin's preoccupation with 'the relation between language, perception the corporeal and the body.' Sigrid Weigel, *Body and Image-Space: Re-Reading Walter Benjamin* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Outline of the Psychophysical Problem', in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings, 1: 1913–1926*, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 393–401 (p. 393); Walter Benjamin, 'Schemata Zum Psychophysischen Problem', in *Gesammelte Schriften* VI, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 78–87 (p. 78). (Hereafter SW 1; GS VI).

<sup>111</sup> SW 1, p. 393; GS VI, p. 78.

<sup>112</sup> SW 1, p. 393; GS VI, p. 78.

the cut into the doorway of the body as *Leib*? If we recall, in *Die Klavierspielerin* Erika waits to make the cut into the *Leib*, as if the analysis of the body is also the expression of an unlimited abundance of time and pain, yet it is through this analysis that the body is wrenched away from patriarchal laws and its limits are refigured. Whereas the body as a quasi-colonised territory is the *Körper*.

Posed against genius and *Leib*, Benjamin's next pair in the course of his essay comprises of spirit [*Geist*] and 'corporeal substance' [*Körper*] to which it belongs. Benjamin writes: '[c]orporeal substance is one of the realities that stand within the historical process itself'.<sup>113</sup> The *Körper* is a reality inside the historical process, whereas *Leib* stands in relation to it, only entering it in a moment of *now* time. Yet, Benjamin clarifies that the distinction between *Leib* and *Körper* lies in their relation to the human: it is a distinction dominated by form. The body that is able to have a form as a totality, including physical aspects: organs, limbs, which also have a form, belongs to *Leib*. *Leib* is determined by its relation to the real, and to the totality, the historical process. *Leib* includes within itself limitation, sensuously experienced by the human. *Leib* is the 'perception of a relation' to a form of sensuous existence in which the human discovers their self, beyond their substratum or substance. On the other hand *Körper*, the substratum of the human (the substance of the body), is known through the feelings of pain and pleasure. Yet, pain and pleasure are formless. They cannot enter form: 'No form of any sort, and hence, no limitation is perceived'.<sup>114</sup> Thus *Körper*, known through pain and pleasure, is also de-limited by these experiences, *Körper* is known as limitless.

I want to suggest that Benjamin's idea of the *Körper* is akin to Jelinek's interest in demystifying and deterritorialising the body by traversing its *limits* of shame. Pain, which is limitless, still provides a way to know the *Körper*. Yet, Jelinek describes the *Leib*. How does her *Leib* relate to Benjamin's, which can be present to the real, which can be known in its totality? To remind ourselves, for Benjamin, contra Freud (for whom pain is a pseudo instinct which can be sated), pleasure and pain are limitless, the *Körper* has no limits placed upon it and is perceived through pleasure and pain. Thus for Benjamin, perception is the *guide* to the *Körper*. And yet, corporeal substance transcends and is objective on a higher level than the *Leib*, and its pair, genius. The paradoxical *Körper* is concerned with the 'spiritual "nature"' of living beings, humans. *Körper* is attached to what is natural in spirit, rather than the genius and *Leib*. And yet, the human is limited by individuality. 'That limited reality which is constituted by the establishment of a spiritual nature in a corporeal substance is called the "person" [*Person*].'<sup>115</sup> Benjamin posits an enigmatic idea whereby 'the person is limited but not formed.' Its potential uniqueness is given by the 'orbit of its maximum extension'. Benjamin continues: 'This is how

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<sup>113</sup> SW 1, p. 394; GS VI, p. 79.

<sup>114</sup> SW 1, p. 394; GS VI, p. 79.

<sup>115</sup> SW 1, p. 394; GS VI, p. 80.

it stands, then, both with its nature and its corporeal substance: they are not limited by their form, but they are nevertheless limited by their maximum extension, the people'.<sup>116</sup>

Is it this kind of body which EXPORT brings to her audience? Her limitation of the body by electricity which is perceived and felt, draining the person who touches it, and her expansion of the body to include an idea of a people, a society, a world, produces a picture of the limitations that a society places on a people and the possibility of escape. If we consider further the relation of the individual to a society, the person to people, we see that Benjamin provocatively claims that both *Leib* and *Körper* imply two separate universal contexts: *Leib* belongs to 'mankind [*Menschheit*]' and *Körper* belongs to God. Benjamin's *Leib* and *Körper* invert our expectations of them. Furthermore, Benjamin introduces a notion of scale. He describes *Leib* and *Körper* as having fluctuating limits [*Grenzen*] against nature but where these limits shift, the world also shifts. If they expand, *Leib*, 'the function of the historical present in the human [*Mensch*] expands into mankind'.<sup>117</sup> This *Leib* is caught up in a process of annihilation and fulfilment. For Benjamin, 'bodily [*leibliche*] nature' courses towards its dissolution, whereas, the *Körper*, which as the substratum of the human is mortal travels towards resurrection and solitariness (as 'direct dependance on God'). All of the pain and pleasure is taken to the resurrection. Benjamin writes enigmatically: '[h]ence, natural history contains the two great processes of dissolution and resurrection'.<sup>118</sup>

If we return to how we know *Körper*, through the categories of pleasure and pain, we find that Benjamin produces a theory of knowledge and a theory of perception. Therefore, a metaphysical distinction can be found in attending to the physical differences between pleasure and pain. As forms determined by their temporality, we see that pleasure has a 'uniform lightning character' while pain is both chronic and diverse.<sup>119</sup> Pain accompanies *constant* organic processes. Benjamin argues that it is only in pain, that feeling can become chronic; pain as a site, is attached to the particular organs which produce it.

In the works discussed here, created more than fifty years after Benjamin's essay, pain features located in cuts, lacerations, scars and other forms of self-wounding, sometimes at the wish of chronic psychic pain. Yet, in my reading, these actions attempt to go beyond the chronic, limitlessness of the body known through pain, they attempt to recast the body,

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<sup>116</sup> SW 1, p. 395; GS VI, p. 80.

<sup>117</sup> SW 1, p. 395; GS VI, p. 80. (Translation amended).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. Benjamin continues: 'In the utter decay of corporeality [*Körperlichkeit*], such as we are witnessing in the West at the present time, the last instrument of its renewal is the anguish of nature which can no longer be contained in life and flows out in wild torrents over the body [*Körper*]. Nature itself is a totality, and the movement into the inscrutable depths of total vitality is fate. The movements upward from these inscrutable depths is art. But because total vitality has its conciliatory effect only in art, every other form of expression must lead to destruction. The representation of total vitality in life causes fate to end in madness. For all living reactivity is bound to differentiation, whose pre-eminent instrument is the body [*Körper*]: SW 1, p. 396; GS VI, p. 81-82.

<sup>119</sup> SW 1, p. 396; GS VI, p. 82.



without fixing it anew. In Jelinek's case, this is expressed through the body as the limit of shame. By disowning the violence of hygiene and investing in its antithesis, by spiking, prodding, penetrating the *Leib* with everyday objects whose usual place is in the home Jelinek writes a literature of the psychic-somatic moment at the limit of perception. In EXPORT's case the thinking-praxis on the simultaneously subjugated and modelled body as material, produces an artwork which reveals both enclosure and escape, attempts to free the person, the woman from her thing-character of her body.

### 2.3.3: Perversions

If we turn again to Freud, this time to 'The Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' first published in 1905, we find the beginnings of a theory of perversion located in the drives and the partial drives, which I want to suggest illuminates Jelinek's writing at the limit of perception and shame. Freud asks the question, what is a perversion, and answers with: a deviation, a sexual negation. A perversion can be any part of the sexual process that breaks from the 'union of the genitals'.<sup>120</sup> Perversion consists in a moment of substitution, it moves its object, it replaces it. Freud writes:

Perversions are sexual activities which either a) extend, in an anatomical sense, beyond the regions of the body that are designed for sexual union, or, b) linger over the intermediate relations of the sexual object which should normally be traversed rapidly on the path towards the final sexual aim.<sup>121</sup>

Freud's first point refers to any kind of fetish that goes beyond the genitals, meaning that the erotic body is extended to include other things. Here, sexual curiosity can be deviated *from* the genitalia and socially legislated sexuality (orgasm), *towards* the whole body. In order to comprehend this body, we might consider our experience of an artwork, by way of a kind of disinterestedness. Moments that look like perversion appear across *Die Klavierspielerin*. First I want to zoom in on Erika as she watches, lingering on a couple in copulation, in a clearing in the forest:

Erika practices caution. She moves silently, as light as a feather. She is soft and weightless. She is very nearly invisible. She almost vanishes into thin air. She is all eyes and ears. The binoculars are the extensions of her eyes.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. VII*, trans. by James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1981), p. 149.

<sup>121</sup> Freud, SE VII, p. 150.

<sup>122</sup> DK, p. 142; PT, p. 141.

Erika all but *becomes* her abilities to see and hear. Her eyes are increased in capacity through her binoculars. She is ‘but a puff [...], her eyes gape. These eyes sniff, the way a deer sniffs with its nose.’<sup>123</sup> Her physical body all but evaporates. She is sight:

Using the binoculars, she scours the area for couples, from whom others shrink. She cannot investigate the ground under her shoes; she switches into blind. [...] Then she reaches it. Blazing like a huge campfire, the shrieks of an amorous couple flare up from the bottom of the meadow. At last: the homeland of the peepers. The sight is so close that Erika doesn’t need her binoculars. The special night glass. Like a house looming up from a homeland, the couple is fucking itself out of the beautiful meadow ground and into Erika’s eyeballs.<sup>124</sup>

The artist (in this case the artist in Jelinek and Erika) is the pervert who doesn’t seek sexual satisfaction, who sees the whole body and interrupts the logic of procreation. In turning away from the genitalia and the orgasm, what comes into view is the body as a whole.

For Benjamin, we recall, pleasure appears from nowhere and has a ‘lightning character’, and it leads nowhere in particular. We can draw on something analogous here, where in Freud, pleasure is found in lingering, when one has turned away from genital sexuality to experience the body as a whole. Erika’s lingering in the clearing exhibits a kind of voyeurism. Yet she is interested, all eyes. She has struggled to find the clearing. She searches for what others shrink away from. Yet, here attention is moved *from* her own body, feelings and history *to* that of strangers in sexual intercourse. These strangers are as if alight, like a fire. The way this is framed brings to the fore proximity and strangeness. Erika is a stranger, intruding on this pair’s intimacy. But she is also most at home in this situation: she is finally inside ‘the homeland of the peepers’.

‘He smashes into the woman as if he wanted to break the world’s record for soling a pair of shoes or welding a car body’.<sup>125</sup> In Jelinek’s construction, sexuality is cut through with work, on both sides: ‘The Turk has unbelievable energy and is in a — frightful hurry. He increases his gear ratio in order to make as many thrusts as possible within the time unit and perhaps even the monetary unit’.<sup>126</sup> In this cartographic construction, which outlines the contours of Jelinek’s society, the sexual activity becomes an extension of the man’s work: ‘The man works: piecemeal. He raises his limit high. This is his first chance with a native Austrian in a long time,

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<sup>123</sup> DK, p. 145; PT, p. 142.

<sup>124</sup> DK, p. 143; PT, p. 141.

<sup>125</sup> DK, p. 144; PT, p. 142.

<sup>126</sup> DK, p. 144; PT, p. 142.

and he's taking advantage of his chance with hectic activity'.<sup>127</sup> Jelinek portrays a sense of irony to paint a background of 1980s social dynamics in Austria, where class is inflected with the 'foreign labour' of guest workers. One hears through this irony, the construction of the 'Turk' as 'foreign labour'. Thus, Jelinek brings the world into the centre of her story through this sexual encounter. Stranger and native are positioned both through class, as a relation to the mode of production, *and* the oppositions of native and foreign, which for Jelinek, are themselves classed. The Turk and the native Austrian women, the Jugo, those from the Eastern Bloc and the Austrian working class man are written through their position in the social hierarchy.<sup>128</sup> Jelinek ends their copulation with a regression:

The woman visibly becomes an Austrian, and the Turk turns back into the Turk he always was. The woman commands respect, the Turk automatically watches out for enemies and adversaries. [...] The woman threatens to walk out on the guest worker. The guest worker wants to make a nasty retort, but changes his mind and just keeps searching mutely. He has to put up a bold front to keep the respect of the woman, who has abruptly reawakened into an Austrian.<sup>129</sup>

We can see that Erika lingers on a couple in copulation and detours or negates the course of sexuality, the pairing of the genitals, she bears the mark of pervert. Yet within this, Jelinek also invites the reader to consider the construction of perverse hierarchised relations: there is both a moment of exceeding the body marked by social relations and of its regression. The moment where the social markings are dissolved is the sexual moment. But this sexual moment is also bloated with work.

How do these works relate to the notion of the hermetic, asocial artwork? How does art which mobilises the body, stand up to the subject made object in the work of art, both physically and psychically? How does this art relate to history and the historical process? Finally, here I will focus this discussion on two areas, concerning subjectivity and the body, and inwardness and society. In 'Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft' (1957, 'Lyric Poetry and Society') Adorno questions the social element of a lyric work; he probes into how lyric relates to an ideal of universality, in doing so, he foregrounds 'social interpretation' as that which can be understood not as a social perspective, but rather the way that the whole of a society, 'conceived as an internally contradictory unity, is manifested in the work, in what way the work

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<sup>127</sup> DK, p. 145; PT, p. 144.

<sup>128</sup> DK, p. 138; PT, p. 137.

<sup>129</sup> DK, p. 149; PT, p. 147.

of art remains subject to society and in what way it transcends it'.<sup>130</sup> Adorno leads us to an immanent approach where social concepts must be drawn from the inner laws and structures of the works, rather than from their externality or external meaning. Adorno's crucial insight is that art can speak what ideology hides; this claim is extended into *Aesthetic Theory* (1970).

We might not consider *Hyperbulie* as a lyric-poem, or lyric-film in the tradition of New American Cinema, but we could potentially call it a lyric of body-action. If we recall, Jelinek claims that after *Die Klavierspielerin*, the subject is fully historical. But *Die Klavierspielerin* builds a narrative to the point of conclusion and explores the broken inner world of Erika Kohut through the concept of a 'necessary' masochism. Adorno writes that, 'in every lyric poem the historical relationship of the subject to objectivity, of the individual to society must have found its precipitate in the medium of a subjective spirit thrown back upon itself'.<sup>131</sup> As a text, *Die Klavierspielerin* describes a limit of the body by means of the *Leib*, this limit or border expresses Erika as an instinctual subject, betraying a kind of disfiguration or distortion. Through her masochism, the body is disfigured. In the case of *Hyperbulie* the subject presents herself in direct confrontation with the constraints of society, yet, society is entrapped with the subject as the constraints, the pulsating wires, which provides a frame around the subject, merge with her. The space of confinement is elevated and so her struggle with it is also elevated.

In this period, both defined by postwar reconstruction and the absence of acknowledgment for the perpetration of the Holocaust; the collective silences and lies, and willing protection of its perpetrators everywhere in Austrian society, *Hyperbulie* brings into view an image of the proximity between constraining, deathly, society and life which is denied, except through a kind of miraculous escape. We can recall that Adorno describes society as a carapace, a shell that sticks, but also smothers. In this artwork, the precipitate or substance of what is staged, is what is produced from this merging: the attempted exit through *Hyperbulie*.

In 'Lyric Poetry and Society' as in the essay, 'On Subject and Object', Adorno posits the 'I' and 'society' on a spectrum where, thinking with Hegel's speculative impulse, the individual is mediated by the universal. Here, the chiasmus: subjectivity is objectivity and objectivity is subjectivity, is tied to the linguistic form of the lyric. Adorno's essay is filled with disclaimers; he emphatically states that he may be accused of 'sublimating the relation of lyric and society' from fear of crude sociologism.<sup>132</sup> Yet, he turns this around: 'social substance is precisely what is spontaneous in it, what does not follow from the existing conditions at the time'.<sup>133</sup> EXPORT's exit reads as over planned. The escape is inherent to the work. The escape

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<sup>130</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'Lyric Poetry and Society', in *Notes to Literature: Volume One*, trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 37-54 (p. 39). (Hereafter 'Lyric').

<sup>131</sup> Adorno, 'Lyric', p. 42.

<sup>132</sup> Adorno, 'Lyric', p. 42.

<sup>133</sup> Adorno, 'Lyric', p. 43.

structures and names the work. In *Die Klavierspielerin*, there is more space for Adorno's insight. Language itself is the byproduct of the relationship between the individual and society. Jelinek submits to the social forms that language takes, refusing to purify it. Yet she incessantly turns these forms around, she shifts their meanings or pits them against each other, she exploits its resources, pushing the words, phrases, idioms to their limits; she prises out the latent meaning and exacerbates what is at stake in this meaning.

#### 2.3.4: Conclusion: The Social Expression of the Body

Peter Weibel wrote, 'Centred in the body [*Leib*] and in this world, the body [*Körper*] is the artistic medium. The human body [*Körper*] itself is the work of art, the material.' This chapter has shown how VALIE EXPORT and Elfriede Jelinek, by working on the body, attempt to bring the world into their works. For Weibel this began by acknowledging how repression enters the material; the body experiences repression and terror in its reduction during both the economic process where the body is reified to commodity, and with the direct violence of National Socialism. Thus for Weibel, the universal is mediated by the particular, as the abstract is mediated through the concrete: the body is the central point of the historical process. The psychological repression and reduction which the human experiences in the world dominated by exchange, divided by enclosures, prisons, boundaries manifests itself on the body. EXPORT says '[t]he body [*körper*] is marked by the stigmata of the social matrix'.<sup>134</sup>

Through the works *Die Klavierspielerin* and *Hyperbulie* it is by means of the body that the artwork becomes social. The body in the sense of *Körper*, both container and surface, is marked by the effects of society and history. The body as *Leib*, the psycho-somatic body, the body as boundary, comes into being in the act of Jelinek's body analysis. In 'Aspects of Feminist Actionism', EXPORT cites efforts to work through the past, as revealing paths towards breaks with teleological or cyclical modalities of history, and thus 'life'. But, as performances, the works themselves change from their makers, and through formal means take on their own life or death. These works take into themselves their surroundings, and with this material, the concepts and contexts that produce it. Through over-interpretation we are able to apprehend what is congealed in their objectivity, in the contradictions and aporias that they contain.

If we consider the meaning derived in film and video works (mediums which are distinct), we can see that EXPORT's body-action survives as a video, where the action is held magnetically on the surface of the tape as a thread of signals that play through a television. We can say that video persists through the medium of electronic signals that produce representations, charges like the electricity that touches the performers face. *Die Klavierspielerin* functions differently. The constraint takes hold on the contours of the protagonists body.

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<sup>134</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Untitled, Description of Hyperbulie', undated, Sammlung Generali Foundation.

Jelinek poses a distinction between her *Leib* and *Körper*, where the *Leib* exists in the moment of the cut and the *Körper* exists in a past, or ongoing temporality. For Jelinek the *Leib* is in the moment of the body analysis, it is a moment of cutting away the system of patriarchal oppressions, of taking on the body in the only possible way, of exceeding the limits of shame and gendering. But we are also still contained within the *Körper*. Jelinek maintains both *Leib* and *Körper*. *Körper* is not transcended by the *Leib*.

From this analysis of the way that, as EXPORT posits, the body bears the social matrix, as stigmata, and in Jelinek's case, the body is analysed at the limit of shame, we see how these artists attempt to recast the body. The next chapter moves outwards to consider gender more closely, in particular the uses of 'woman' for fascism.

## Chapter 3 - The Uses of Woman

Curtains veil the woman in her house from the rest, who own homes and oddities. The poor creatures, they also have their residencies, where their friendly faces are condensed, just the forever same separates them. In this position they go to sleep: indicating their connections with the Direktor, who, breathing, is their eternal father. This man who dispenses truth as readily as he breathes, that is how much he takes his rule for granted. Right now he has just about had enough with women, that he yells with loud voice that he only needs the one, his woman [*die seine*]. There he is, as unknowing as the trees all around. He is married, an act to counterbalance his amusements. The couple do not blush in each other's presence. They laugh. They have been in the past, are now and ever shall be all things to each other.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1: *Labour of Sexuality*

Here we are introduced to Gerti, and her husband Hermann, the director of a paper mill, figures in Elfriede Jelinek's novel *Lust*, published in 1989 (Plate 3.0). In this first passage we find Gerti hidden away inside her home. She is supposedly protected from 'the poor'; the workers and the unemployed villagers. The man, her husband, is depicted as the 'eternal father'. He emits truth as he breathes. Here, 'truth' and his rule are as if oxygen: necessary for life. Therefore, in the relations between the villagers, 'truth' has come to mean exploitation: they are both separated and joined together in the eternal return, the forever same of wage-labour. The tree-covered mountains, which provide the setting for *Lust*, deliver the resources for paper and cardboard manufacturing. Traditionally they are among the largest industries in Alpine Austria, and they expand to this day. It is significant that the book was published in a moment of capital's global expansion; namely the opening up of the Eastern Bloc, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and yet the social entanglements portrayed in the book stand against a traditional industry: paper. The figure of the forest and with it the woodcutter, appears across Jelinek's oeuvre. Her emphasis on tradition highlights something about the scale and method

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<sup>1</sup> 'Vorhängeschleier spannen sich zwischen der Frau in ihrem Gehäuse und den übrigen, die auch Eigenheime und Eigenheiten besitzen. Die Armen, auch sie haben ihre Wohnsitze, in denen ihre freundlichen Gesichter zusammengefaßt sind, nur das immer gleiche scheidet sie. In dieser Lage schlafen sie ein: indem sie auf ihre Verbindungen zum Direktor hinweisen, der, atmend, ihr ewiger Vater ist. Dieser Mann, der ihnen die Wahrheit ausschenkt wie seinen Atem, so selbstverständlich regiert er, der hat gerade genug von den Frauen, daß er mit lauter Stimme herumschreit, er brauche nur diese eine, die seine. Er ist unwissend wie die Bäume ringsum. Er ist verheiratet, das ist ein Gegengewicht zu seinen Vergnügungen. Die beiden Eheleute erröten nicht voreinander, lachen und sind und waren sich alles.' Elfriede Jelinek, *Lust* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), p. 7; Elfriede Jelinek, *Lust*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: Serpent's Tail, 1992), p. 7. (Translation modified; hereafter cited as *Lust*; trans).

of Jelinek's texts which look very closely, sometimes forensically at her immediate environment, which in turn is mediated by the universality of capitalism. Tradition is not really tradition. In this sense, as Jelinek has said, her work needs Austria, yet her work also extends beyond the clutches of this tiny nation, and beyond the specific moment of its setting. In this chapter I continue to pursue the question posed in chapter 2: how does history sediment in Jelinek's works, and how do they exceed their provincial status? *Lust* is a novel which spills over into a prose poem. It is written in fifteen chapters each move the simple story on in a minimal way. The story is about a family with Gerti at its centre. Gerri is abused endlessly by her husband Hermann. She seeks love with a young student, who also abuses her. She returns to her husband, but as the abuse continues she commits infanticide against her son, alluded to as the reproduction of the father. Jelinek's language is imagistic, elusive, and polluting. She takes words and concepts from poetry and philosophy and explodes them in brutal, pornographic sex scenes. I am interested in reading the figure of the woman in *Lust* against the grain, not in terms of victim or heroine, but as a materialist characterisation of the woman under the conditions of fascistic patriarchy.

This chapter will track *Lust* through the pornography debates surrounding its reception. It will analyse the critique of gender and the family in authoritarian capitalism made by figures in the Frankfurt School and Wilhelm Reich. The final part of this chapter will focus on Jelinek's essays on the uses of gender by fascism, in particular her essay on Ingeborg Bachmann, 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln' (1983, 'War by Other Means'). Following Jelinek and Gillian Rose, I will argue for a feminism against innocence.

In the quote above, we see that in *Lust*, 'needs' also come to mean property relations: the director's 'needs' are his woman since he is married. Marriage, as Carole Pateman argues, is the contract upon which modern patriarchy takes hold.<sup>2</sup> Strangely what makes this the case is his 'unknowing', characterised by Jelinek as rigid, like the wood of the trees which cover the mountains behind the village. He is without the ability to comprehend. Jelinek writes enigmatically that the fact of marriage means that there is no more Lust; there are only laughs. The fact of the contract precludes pleasure. These two people are now locked together in the past, present and future as everything to each other, and she is his woman, 'die seine'. Property relations predominate.

Why is *Lust* of interest to us today? One of the central concerns of this thesis is how Jelinek's and EXPORT's works register the body, and how this in turn relates to Austria's history, its *Opferdoktrin*. The *Opferdoktrin* as noted in chapter 1, registers the ways in which victimhood is fixated on, leaving guilt unaddressed in Austrian society. Mourning, and living with and acknowledging guilt finds no place. If the last chapter looked at the constraint, the

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<sup>2</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 2.



limit in the artwork between society and the subject, the body as the site which bears the marks of repression, as the particular point at which the universal is mediated, this chapter looks at the location, the germ-cell of society: the family. It addresses the family in three ways: first, as the locus of social relations within Jelinek's novel *Lust*. In particular, this addresses how the concepts of social reproduction and technological reproduction are merged through 'woman' with a naturalising effect. I will consider sexuality and labour through the dialectic of creation and production and procreation and reproduction, set in the family. Through the constellation of the family, the imbrication of the politics of social reproduction in art, and art's (non)-reproduction of the social are considered. Second, via a reading of historical analyses of the family this chapter reflects on the relation between the family and authoritarianism. I propose that this family politics forms the basis of Jelinek's critique. Third, following from the analysis of the use of gender and the family for fascist ends, this chapter focusses on Jelinek's essay on Ingeborg Bachmann, an essay which directly addresses the conjuncture of gender, fascism and art. I propose that this reveals a set of positions which shed light on the politics of the family in Austria, and Jelinek's ongoing preoccupation with a gendered dynamic which fuels fascism, and how this critique extends to a feminism that fixates on the body, and reduces the human to the body, twice over.

The significance of re-visiting *Lust* today is heightened by recent developments in Austrian society, which warrant some attention. These developments are characterised by what I briefly sketched in the introduction to the thesis, namely, the shifts towards extreme conservatism on a global scale. In his book *Stille Machtergreifung: Hofer, Strache und die Burschenschaften* (2017, *The Silent Takeover of Power: Hofer, Strache and the Burschenschaften*), Hans Henning Scharsach explains that, since 2008 the FPÖ have been rewriting the National Socialist concept of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' or 'People's Community' into their party programme. In their renewal of a biologist understanding of humanity, premised on a 'natural' order with a 'natural' hierarchy, 'the people' are understood as a natural organism organised around 'ethnicity'.<sup>3</sup> In the *Volksgemeinschaft* women are at the disposal of men, but first of all they are mothers. Valued as mothers, driven by their 'nestbuilding instinct' [*Nestbauintinkel*] they belong in the home. Moreover, 'native' Austrian women are portrayed as living under constant threat from foreign men. In these politics, women are instrumentalised by racist and xenophobic agendas. Scharsach posits that in the currently revived traditional model of gender, family, home, the education of children and provision of care are posited as natural roles, while any demands for political, economic or societal equality are considered the conspiracy of capitalists, Marxists, and feminists (all lumped together), to get rid of 'biologically given' differences.<sup>4</sup> 'Real

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<sup>3</sup> Hans-Henning Scharsach, *Stille Machtergreifung: Hofer, Strache und die Burschenschaften* (Wien: Kremayr & Scheriau, 2017), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Scharsach, p. 94.

femininity' and 'mother role' are pitted against the irritant of emancipation.<sup>5</sup> This is because, for the FPÖ, according to their own press materials and speeches, concepts such as 'emancipation' are understood as the weakening or degeneration of the 'people' through modernity.<sup>6</sup> This family politics makes their anti-feminism akin to, but not the same as, their racist agitation against immigrants, by way of the delusional fantasy given to ensuring the 'birth' or 're-birth' of the 'natural people' [*Volk*].<sup>7</sup> It is from this perspective that the problem of the relationship between the family and fascism is renewed: this underpins my interest in returning to the path laid out in the work of Elfriede Jelinek, in particular with recourse to *Lust*, which, I propose reveals something about the continuities in these family politics that are revived today.

Materialist feminists have long held concerns over the role of the family in the maintenance of capitalism, this being the basis of theories of the gendered division of labour (as discussed in chapter 1).<sup>8</sup> For many women, marriage is a way of accessing economic security. Indeed, the twentieth-century saw two moments when the constraints on women's lives were weakened. I will plot these briefly: during the interwar years within certain developed economies women gained significant freedoms including access to the wage and suffrage, after the 1960s this included greater access to contraception and abortion. Indeed, the moments of conservative renewal followed financial crises. After 1929 the rise of fascism brought women back into the home, or held them in low-paid jobs. For women in the West this changed after the postwar Marshall Plan-funded reconstruction of Western Europe, when capital began to welcome women into lucrative positions, and feminist struggles in the 1970s brought women out of the home and into public space. Yet, with capitalism's expansion, came the deindustrialisation of parts of Northern Europe as industry followed cheap labour. The global financial crisis of 2008 was followed by the intensification of brutal austerity regimes which, as well as the disabled, homeless, refugees, migrants and prisoners has hit working-class women of all backgrounds (though disproportionately women of colour) with the re-intensified double burden of seeking a wage, and navigating care obligations. Many working-class women have been dragged back into the home due to cuts in government-sponsored welfare.<sup>9</sup>

Theorists such as Silvia Federici have written longer histories, which I do not have space to explicate here. In short, Federici cites the creation of the nuclear family with full-time housewife in Europe, as a nineteenth-century invention designed to secure women's economic

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<sup>5</sup> Scharsach, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> Scharsach, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Scharsach, p. 80.

<sup>8</sup> See: Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland: PM Press, 2012); Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family* (London: Verso, 1982); Frigga Haug, *Female Sexualisation: A Collective Memory Work*, trans. by Erica Carter (London: Verso, 1999); Rosemary Hennessy, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (New York; London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> *The Violence of Austerity*, ed. by Vickie Cooper and David Whyte (London: Pluto Press, 2017), p. 14.

dependence on men ‘following the expulsion of women from the waged-work place’.<sup>10</sup> The build up to this is placed squarely within the transition from feudalism to capitalism, when, in a ‘new monetary regime’ it was only the production of commodities for the market, which was ‘defined as value-creating activity’.<sup>11</sup> This inaugurated the separation of production from the production of the worker, with the latter increasingly ‘considered as valueless from an economic viewpoint and even ceased to be considered as work’.<sup>12</sup> Federici writes about the nineteenth-century housewife as redefining the position of women in society, a process which paved the way for the modern nuclear family, under capitalism.

The sexual division of labour that emerged from it not only fixed women to reproductive work, but increased their dependence on men, enabling the state and employers to use a male wage as a means to command women’s labour. In this way, the separation of commodity production from the reproduction of labour-power also made possible the development of a specifically capitalist use of the wage and of the markets as means for the accumulation of unpaid labour.<sup>13</sup>

If we look to Austria in particular: at the level of the state, Austria experienced austerity and budget cuts during the early 2000s with the previous ÖVP-FPÖ coalition. This was reversed in the following decade. However, since the 2017 election of the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition, Austria faces a racialised austerity programme: white Austrian families are bribed, or slightly rewarded and single-parent migrants or immigrant families who do not speak German are punished, facing welfare cuts.<sup>14</sup> Along with caring obligations, and the perpetual gendered division of labour, we now see traditional forms of family organisation, securitisation and protectionism re-gaining traction. The FPÖ’s reintroduction of the *Volksgemeinschaft* is a not-so-gentle reminder of the constant threat to take away rights, wages and to re-inscribe the doctrine of sex on the body, and thus the need for feminisms which address structural paradigms.

### 3.1.1: Pornography’s debates

Considering *Lust* in light of this context means not only reading the past in *Lust*, reading the novel through its own historical moment, but also reading *Lust* in the present. Jelinek poses the question: what procedures and possibilities are available to women to express what she deems

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<sup>10</sup> Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Federici, p. 75.

<sup>12</sup> Federici, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> Federici, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> Gerald John, ‘Was die neue, härtere Mindestsicherung bringt’, *Der Standard*, 28 May 2018 <<https://derstandard.at/2000080584006/Frage-Antwort-Was-die-neue-haertere-Mindestsicherung-bringt>> [accessed 18 August 2018].

dominated sexuality? Jelinek aims to find a *‘Weibliche Sprache’* a ‘female language’ that would parallel Georges Bataille’s *Histoire de L’oeil (Story of the Eye)*, published pseudonymously in 1928 under the name Lord Auch.<sup>15</sup> While this remains unresolved it was in the preparation of *Lust* that she came to conceptualise how ‘women’ express their sexuality in the ‘ruling society’ [*Herrschaftsgesellschaft*], organised by patriarchal capitalism.<sup>16</sup> Jelinek uses the term, *Herrschaft*, which is described as ‘linked to a relation that is fundamentally based in the register of property, over the members of the extended family as well as material goods and land’.<sup>17</sup> Bourgeois capitalist society is woven together with property relations. It is from this premise that Jelinek polemically claims that women are unable to win sovereignty. She posits woman as an ‘obscene object’ who exists to be looked at, who shows herself, but does not speak.<sup>18</sup> If we recall, *Lust* is a novel whose protagonists consist of a family, yet the actions that take place within this family render the novel pornographic. A devastating claim is being made: women in (industrialised) pornography have no language, and beyond that, in the realm of sexuality, women have no language, and no power. In Jelinek’s view the impossibility of a positive female language of sexuality is due to woman’s role as an object of sexuality, not a subject. What seems to interest her in this impossible language of sexuality, is precisely the way that the language of pornography is expressed as a mechanised language, as an obscene language of socially dominant mechanisms and power relations.<sup>19</sup> It is this constellation of claims which manifest in *Lust*. However, I want to posit that *Lust* goes beyond these claims, as it goes beyond this mechanised language.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as readers, we must acknowledge that Jelinek has developed her own language which explores sexuality, yet it is not a positive or affirmative language. It is one which attempts to work through linguistic mechanisms in order to reveal how they are constructed.

Beyond what Jelinek has said about *Lust*, we should note that it is a novel that has been received in relation both to the AIDS crisis and the ‘sex wars’ of the 1980s and 90s. Often *Lust*

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<sup>15</sup> Nobelmedia, *Nobelpriset 2004 Porträtt, Elfriede Jelinek*, 2004 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxeEpHMYtUw>> [accessed 5 June 2017]. The claims in this interview are repeated in many others. Jelinek begins to formulate these questions publicly in 1986. See: Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger, *Valie Export und Elfriede Jelinek im Spiegel der Presse*, p. 104.

<sup>16</sup> Nobelmedia.

<sup>17</sup> Marc de Launay, ‘Herrschaft’, ed. by Barbara Cassin and others, *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, pp. 433–37 (p. 433).

<sup>18</sup> Nobelmedia.

<sup>19</sup> Nobelmedia.

<sup>20</sup> Elfriede Jelinek and Sigrid Berka, ‘Ein Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek’, *Modern Austrian Literature*, 26.2 (1993), 127–55 (p. 131). In this interview Jelinek cites Hölderlin as providing the subtext for *Lust*. Jelinek explains: ‘That’s the purpose, the antipornographic; it is pronounced but then immediately cut off again; it is not built up. In the commercial pornography, when it is halfway interesting, so not only the cheapest, there is a slow build up, where the fore-pleasure is greater than the actual load off; hysterical breaths are taken, which will then suffocate again’. Elfriede Jelinek and Sigrid Berka, p. 149. (My translation.) For a detailed analysis of Jelinek’s use of intertextuality in *Lust*, see Janz, pp. 114–18.

is either elevated or scorned for being pornographic.<sup>21</sup> For example Allyson Fiddler locates *Lust* within these debates even if she prefers to investigate the *effects* of pornography over definitions. She argues that *Lust* is only in a vestigial way pornographic.<sup>22</sup> With *Lust*, Jelinek attempts to *intervene* in the genre of ‘feminine’ eroticism, a genre which, ‘encourages and celebrates the expression of women’s sexuality, their desires and fantasies’.<sup>23</sup> Fiddler emphasises that *Lust* was Jelinek’s attempt to make this intervention within the context of State censorship in the arts.<sup>24</sup> Yet, instead of framing her argument around censorship or anti-censorship as that which characterised the sex-wars, she focusses on the culturally constructed opposites of ‘high’ and ‘low’ porn, which appear as a subcategory of ‘high’ and ‘low’ art. This dichotomous ‘problem’ is situated as one which concerns the relations between Bataille’s *Histoire de L’oeil* and Jelinek’s later iteration. Fiddler argues that it is the pornographic writing, such as the type that Bataille elaborates, which becomes Jelinek’s point of focus, and which can illuminate Jelinek’s novel.<sup>25</sup> Fiddler takes first, Bataille’s own quest for transcendence and second, Jelinek’s response to what she calls ‘male transcendence’.<sup>26</sup> In Bataille’s obscene moment, which he posits in the space and time, between life and death, he finds a position of potential liberation. ‘Murder is the ultimate form of erotic violation for this philosopher of pornography’ writes Fiddler.<sup>27</sup> The three ways of death in *Histoire de L’oeil* consist of: a suicide, a priest being strangled to death, and a matador being gored by a bull. These are charged with erotic resonances, which stand contrary to *Lust*. In the final pages of *Lust* Gerti commits infanticide, killing her son. Fiddler describes this: ‘the mother’s murder of her son takes place in a rather startling, accelerated denouement and this infanticide in fact represents the most sobering, serious and unerotic moment of the novel’.<sup>28</sup> From Fiddler’s account, it becomes clear that although Jelinek claims that her novel runs parallel to Bataille’s, what differs are its limits, the

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<sup>21</sup> Allyson Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn: Situating Elfriede Jelinek’s Lust’, *German Life and Letters*, 44.5 (1991), 404-15; Ulrich Struve, “‘Denouncing the Pornographic Subject’: the American and German Pornography Debate and Elfriede Jelinek’s *Lust*”, in *Elfriede Jelinek*, ed. by Katherine Arens, pp. 89-106.

<sup>22</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 415.

<sup>23</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Der Sinn des Obszönen’, in *Frauen Und Pornografie*, ed. by Claudia Gehrke (Tübingen: konkursbuch, 1988), pp. 101-3 (p. 102); Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 404.

<sup>24</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Wahrscheinlich wäre ich ein Lustmörder’, *Die Zeit*, 28 September 1984.

<<http://www.zeit.de/1984/40/wahrscheinlich-waere-ich-lustmoerder>.> [Accessed 14 November 2016]. In an interview in *Die Zeit* in 1984 (as Fiddler reports in her article in passing), Jelinek comments that VALIE EXPORT was due to adapt *Die Klavierspielerin* for the cinema if enough capital could be raised. EXPORT had written a screenplay for the film, which was subsequently censored by the Austrian State on the grounds that it was too pornographic. In this discussion of the still potential film, Jelinek clarifies some points regarding media: it was important for her that the book was made into a film for cinema rather than for television but except for a notion of style, no answer was given at this point as to why. In an interview VALIE EXPORT describes the setbacks she encountered in financing and producing this film, which remains unmade. See: *EXPORT LEXIKON*, p. 221. Fiddler assumes that these incidents of censorship led to Jelinek’s interest in intentionally working with pornography as a genre.

<sup>25</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 405.

<sup>26</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 408.

<sup>27</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 408.

<sup>28</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 408.

novel's horizon, or moment of liberation. Yet, Fiddler claims that *Lust* becomes a work of *antipornography* in the spirit of the feminist author Andrea Dworkin.<sup>29</sup> What is the meaning of antipornography in this context?

Prior to Fiddler's essay, the German liberal feminist magazine *Emma*, edited by Alice Schwarzer, was engaged in anti-porn campaigns which then lasted until the late 1990s. Fiddler notes that *Emma* defines pornography within a legalistic construct of the visual. This line of anti-porn thinking was strongly disputed in the USA by feminist authors such as Gayle Rubin.<sup>30</sup> And, coincidentally, Ulrich Struve argues that half a decade after the sex-wars emerged in the USA, they arrived in Germany with *Emma*'s 'PorNo' campaign in October 1987. Because of Jelinek's far-reaching reception in Germany, Struve situates *Lust* in this context. The *Emma* campaign closely followed the US debates between Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin. Struve argues that (as Fiddler also briefly comments), the campaign was based on legalistic principles of censorship, and that it claimed that pornography produced a blue print for abuse and violence against women where terms like, 'degradation, dehumanisation and the objectification of women provided the basis for the attack on pornography'.<sup>31</sup> Fiddler rightly calls this campaign out as naïve and notes that feminists have since tried to reorient the debates around pornography by politicising it. However, just before the publication of *Lust*, Jelinek published with both sides of the 'sex-wars' debate; in the pro-pornography *Frauen & Pornografie* and in *Emma* alongside Dworkin and others. Beatrice Hanssen argues that Jelinek invokes a separation between male porn and its feminist corrective, asserting that Jelinek 'locates what she calls the *antipornographic*, consciousness-raising force of her work in the very gap that separates representation or images from intent'.<sup>32</sup> Similarly to VALIE EXPORT's citation of the source of Feminist Actionism as the history of 'female experience', Hanssen argues that Jelinek writes a 'history of women's humiliation' using pornographic means.<sup>33</sup> Jelinek does not become the moral judge, but shows how, with its double standards, society becomes the moral judge of women.

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<sup>29</sup> Fiddler defines pornography thus: '[T]he graphic depiction of whores [*porne-graphein*] — [...] is the cornerstone of traditional objections to pornography on the grounds of its obscene or immoral nature'. Fiddler, 'Problems with Porn', p. 408.

<sup>30</sup> Fiddler, 'Problems with Porn', p. 405. The 'PorNo' campaign write in *Emma*: 'Pornography is the grossly intrusive depiction of sexual processes, from the exclusion of any human reference'. (My trans.) For arguments against censorship see: Gayle Rubin, 'Misguided, Dangerous, and Wrong: An Analysis of Antipornography Politics,' in *Deviations* (Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 254-275.

<sup>31</sup> The bulk of Struve's argument operates around the notion of how Jelinek's text operates to denounce the pornographic object through language, and at stake is a kind of reclaiming of 'language' from men. Struve. p. 93. Arguments along these lines were taken up by more nuanced feminist positions. See: Gehrke, *Frauen und Pornografie*.

<sup>32</sup> Beatrice Hanssen, 'Limits of Feminist Representation: Elfriede Jelinek's Language of Violence', in *Critique of Violence: Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 210-31 (pp. 218-19).

<sup>33</sup> Hanssen, p. 219.

In ‘Elfriede Jelinek’s Satirical “Prose-Poem” *Lust*’ Hans H. Hiebel argues that *Lust* is a satirical critique of masculine domination. In directing his focus to the level of the sentence, Hiebel reasons that *Lust* prevents the reader from producing a continuous narrative. In his view, this renders *Lust* a prose poem. By moving between the public and the private domains, *Lust* mediates between the social and the sexual: ‘it means to reveal how everything private and sexual is socially produced’.<sup>34</sup> He asserts that *Lust* foregrounds the (private) condition of ‘legal rape’.<sup>35</sup> According to UN reports, marital rape or rape taking place within a scenario of cohabitation was only criminalised in Austria in 1989, the year that *Lust* was published. Only since 2004 are there no legal differences between a rape committed inside or outside of marriage or cohabitation.<sup>36</sup>

Contrary to Fiddler, Hiebel argues that the myth inaugurated in *Lust* does not draw from ‘reality’, but rather from the male discourses of pornography as they appear in Sade, Bataille and Henry Miller (*Opus Pistorum*).<sup>37</sup> Echoing Susan Sontag, he asks if a mimetic (rather than Fiddler’s parodic) method can avoid becoming pornography?<sup>38</sup> He claims, like Struve that Jelinek’s ‘anti-pornography’ treats the discourses (Sade, Bataille and Miller) as something to exorcise.<sup>39</sup> But for Hiebel, there is a layer behind Jelinek’s critique of patriarchal domination, which is ‘fixated on the obscene negatively’, in which she betrays a ‘hidden’ interest.<sup>40</sup> Does Hiebel mean to say that Jelinek should merely focus on what is good in society? Moreover, from this somewhat strange form of critique, Hiebel moves directly to address the author’s private life. It is as if he has found out some undisclosed truth, except that it is all already public: Jelinek does not see (dominated) sexuality in terms of tenderness and intimacy — rather it resides in aggressive acts. He writes that a ‘secret sadomasochistic lust for the obscene-terrifying (comparable to a lust for fear) appears to be at work here’.<sup>41</sup> We find that Hiebel digresses from his prior stated aims of reading the text on the level of the sentence and addressing it through a socio-political lens to accuse Jelinek of being a ‘misogynist’, before undertaking any analysis, and reading her interviews as a ‘confession’. To what extent is Jelinek staging a misogynistic battle in which a deeply rooted misogyny is a hinge which society pivots on, and reproduces itself through?<sup>42</sup> I suggest that Jelinek attempts to throw light on this

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<sup>34</sup> Hiebel, p. 48.

<sup>35</sup> Hiebel, p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> Federal Ministry of Health and Women, ‘Violence Against Women’ (UN Women’s Watch, 2005) <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/responses/AUSTRIA.pdf>> [accessed 6 June 2017].

<sup>37</sup> Hiebel, p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> Fiddler, ‘Problems with Porn’, p. 414. From Fiddler’s perspective, *Lust* disproves Susan Sontag: it is parodic and ‘it refuses to fulfil an erotic intention.’ See also, Susan Sontag, ‘The Pornographic Imagination’, in *Styles of Radical Will* (London: Picador, 2002), pp. 35-73 (p. 35).

<sup>39</sup> Hiebel, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> Hiebel, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> Hiebel, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> Hiebel, p. 52.

repeating structure or logic; she attempts to show cycles of violence and the thought processes or social structures which enable them.

Hiebel does return to his primary focus on language toward the end of the article, where he desists to treat *Lust* conceptually, but rather as made up of a formal language consisting of wordplay, puns, figural speech, and tropes. He then proceeds to describe *Lust* again as a prose-poem, made up of ‘fake-prose’ [*Schein-prosa*], that follows in the lineage of writers such as James Joyce or Arno Schmidt, the language distortions of Expressionism, Robert Musil and Karl Kraus, Ingeborg Bachmann and Paul Celan.<sup>43</sup> It is Kurt Wölfel’s 1960s writing on satire as method that Hiebel follows.<sup>44</sup> Hiebel returns to his confusing notion of wisdom, this time through the double of the wise man and the fool, which, according to Wölfel constitutes a main characteristic of satire. He asserts that in *Lust* this is taken up by the all-knowing narrator who is stretched between these figures, and whose descriptions are under-laden with analyses. But for Hiebel, satire is the language of dogma and he is offended by Jelinek: ‘satire prevents human understanding and empathy — “its bird’s-eye perspective cannot give insights into the true essence of the world”’.<sup>45</sup> This alleged method of satire includes precisely the caveat that Hiebel needs: it ‘cannot give insights into the true essence of the world.’ In the concluding remarks to this paper, he reverts to the claim to realism that Jelinek makes. He asks: what does her reality look like and answers: it doesn’t look like reality. For Hiebel the amount of sex in *Lust* doesn’t measure up to the amount of sex that takes place in ‘real Austrian families’; at the time he was writing 16% of Austrian men consider it acceptable to rape their spouses.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.1.2: *Creation, Procreation; Production, Reproduction*

Here I want to turn our attention towards the link, or connection between the reproduction of the world, and the reproduced image, from the point of the family. I want to analyse an idea in *Lust*, which is expressed through Jelinek’s attention to image and language. In *Lust*, Jelinek’s fictional family is the site of first, its own reproduction and second, the reproduction of society; the technologically reproducible photograph and the twirl of moving images, the film, stands in as the fixated, fetishised mass media object, stuck onto women.

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<sup>43</sup> Beatrice Hanssen argues that Jelinek’s satire most closely resembles that of her predecessor Karl Kraus. It is Kraus, like Jelinek, who *judged* Austrian journalism, and whose language and tradition she wants to resuscitate: ‘Informed by Kraus’s language politics, Jelinek takes up the mask of the inhuman satirist, whose interventions — as Benjamin’s Kraus essay appropriately suggests — amount to nothing less than “the devouring of the adversary”’ Hanssen, p. 227. See also: John Pizer, ‘Modern vs. Postmodern Satire: Karl Kraus and Elfriede Jelinek’, *Monatshefte*, 86.4 (1994), 500-513.

<sup>44</sup> In this case, satire introduced a perspectival technique, which echoes Jelinek’s *Lust*. For Wölfel the perspective of satire zooms in and out with sudden movements between extreme close-ups and extreme wide angles. It is akin to an X-ray machine that exposes the bones and veins of mental processes, where the smallest processes are contrasted with the biggest and where people become mere types clumped together under an abstract sign, thereby it should also produce distancing effects. Hiebel, p. 58.

<sup>45</sup> Hiebel, p. 63.

<sup>46</sup> Hiebel, p. 64.



The conjunction of two senses of reproduction, of 'life' and images, arises across Jelinek's oeuvre, we have seen this to some degree with Erika in the forest in chapter 2, and it will return with *Totenauberg* in chapter 5. Perhaps the most notable example in this context, and outside *Lust*, is Jelinek's *Die Ausgesperrten* (1980, *Wonderful Wonderful Times*), which profiles the simultaneous abuse and photographic documentation of a mother by her violent, ex-Nazi husband — who was disabled during World War II — and the discovery of the images by their teenage children. The novel depicts a 1950s Austria, where the four teenagers rage against their parents (generation) in increasingly anarchic and nihilistic ways, which further reinforce the violence of the Nazi generation. The mother protects and defends the father and also comforts him after he has violently assaulted her. Jelinek portrays a continuum between the Nazis and their children.<sup>47</sup>

Similar themes are picked up in *Lust*. As I described in the opening to this chapter, in *Lust*, the family consist of Gerti the housewife, Hermann husband and owner of the paper mill, and their son. A young law student named Michael takes a fourth position. In the previous chapter I have shown that in Jelinek's view her figures are expressions of history. The relations within the family travel the dialectic of domination and sacrifice, or victimhood, in and through the family and the factory. This is further exemplified by complicity with gendered violence (rape) in the marital relation between Gerti and Hermann. Yet, Gerti's abuse leads her to make efforts to find new love, but the relationship she begins with the young student meets a similar fate. At the hands of Michael and his friends, Gerti becomes the victim of an act of gang rape on a ski-slope. The dynamic Jelinek writes means that one form of abuse validates more abuse. Jelinek has described this structuring of experience and of language as modelling the Hegelian master-slave dialectic: where once one enters into the struggle for recognition one is locked in a series of bondage games.<sup>48</sup>

*Lust* fixates on, repeats and reproduces its events, like a photograph or film still. It montages and sticks together its moments, leaping between metaphor, description and analysis, between high German and *Wienerisch*, Viennese idiomatic dialect. This logic of writing with a photographic language, about the image can be found across *Lust*. I want to draw our attention back to the first scene. Jelinek presents Gerti as veiled by a '*Vorhängeschleier*', a curtain-veil, a shroud or haze that spans between this character and the others, also framing her. In the third chapter Jelinek reintroduces the frame. She writes:

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<sup>47</sup> See also: Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 'Ideology and Criticism in *Die Ausgesperrten*', in *Elfriede Jelinek: Writing Woman, Nation and Identity*, ed. by Matthias Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger (Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), pp. 55-75. *Die Ausgesperrten* was adapted into a feature film in 1982, directed by Austrian filmmaker Franz Novotny. Jelinek wrote the script and made a cameo appearance.

<sup>48</sup> Deborah Solomon and Elfriede Jelinek, 'A Gloom of Her Own: Questions for Elfriede Jelinek', *The New York Times Magazine*, 21 November 2004 <<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/21/magazine/a-gloom-of-her-own.html>> [accessed 7 March 2017].

Juicily, calmly, the man inserts the image of his wife into the slit [*Schlitz*] of the viewer [*Betrachter*]. With a shudder the woods reach out for the house, where the video images, a herd of creatures capable of reproduction [*Zeugungsfähigen*], are moving across the screen in front of eye witnesses. The women are dragged into the picture by their fetters. Only their daily routine is more merciless. The woman scans the plain as far as the horizon, the vast plain that lies before her every day to be crossed with her husband, then she lies before him on her cross. The Direktor is unbowed by the responsibilities of his job, his sap is rising, he sucks at her teats and cracks [*Ritzen*] and bellows for the night to come, for the late show to begin. So too, on mountain slopes, the images grow green, and climbers tread them underfoot in their stout boots.<sup>49</sup>

We read that the man places the image of his wife, his property, into the slit of his ‘*Betrachter*’, a kind of mechanical viewer that also refers to the beholder, to the eye of the beholder. In this passage the slit and crack, as the image holder and sex are identified and sutured. There is a pun on reproduction and mechanical reproduction. With mechanical reproduction, images are also a kind of reproductive activity. And in Jelinek’s construction it is the Alpine mountains which shudder. Video images extend into a herd of pro-creatives, ‘*Zeugungsfähigen*’, beings who can procreate — like women — seen by eyewitnesses. We learn that these ‘*Zeugungsfähigen*’ are women in pictures, but the construction is changed. Instead of being the image, put into the slit by their men, they are dragged there by their fetters. Their fetters seem to point to their ‘natural’ abilities to procreate. Their fetters are also part of the body. Jelinek seems to point to the ways that the photograph is not a passive carrier of information, rather it throws an order on the world.

Jelinek invokes us not to forget about the daily routines of the women in the pictures, since only this is *more* merciless, pitiless, remorseless than being in the picture. A hierarchy between procreation and reproduction is marked out, invisible work stands at the top, until the daily routine is transformed into a plain, a vast expanse of land covered with pictures, that the sight of Gerti has to cover. It is as if she is these layers of pictures, *and* she has to cover them, until she can lie back herself.<sup>50</sup> Until she is too exhausted to move.

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<sup>49</sup> ‘In saftiger Ruhe schiebt der Mann das Bild seiner Frau in den Schlitz des Betrachters. Schauernd greifen die Wälder nach dem Haus, in dem die Bilder der Videos, eine bepackte Herde von Zeugungsfähigen, vor den Augenzeugen über den Schirm ziehen. An ihren Fesseln werden die Frauen ins Bild gezerzt, nur ihre tägl. Gewohnheiten sind erbarmungsloser. Der Blick der Frau überwuchert die Ebene der Bilder, die sie jeden Tag mit ihrem Mann zurückzulegen hat, bis sie sich selbst zurücklegen muß. Gar nicht geknickt von seinem voll für ihn verantwortlichen Beruf, steht der Direktor im Saft und saugt an ihren Zitzen und Ritzen, ruft nach dem Beginn der Nacht und der Nachtvorstellung. So grünen auch an den Berghängen lebende Bilder, und die Kletterer treten mit ihren festen Schuhen hinein.’ *Lust*, p. 53; trans., p. 45. (Translation amended).

<sup>50</sup> The translator has punned with cross, but there is no cross in Jelinek’s text.

Jelinek introduces four figures: the image of Gerti, the man, the forest and the procreative creatures who run across the screen. In this construction, the forest is its own character: nature is prescribed more autonomy than the procreative. Yet, there is also a suturing, not only of slit and the crack, but also of the images, the fettered pro-creatives (women) and the mountain slopes (which also stand in for the image of Austrian tourism). Jelinek's images of women are paired with an idea of nature. Already, the landscape 'is a loose fetter upon our fate'.<sup>51</sup> In this construction, we begin to understand that it is in the *image* that mass produced pictures of woman and nature morph together *through* the idea of 'woman'.

We begin to see that Jelinek's construction stages a critique of the naturalised role of woman within the family, within culture more generally, and within the state. At its most extreme (under National Socialism) the state is understood as a 'natural organism' [*Volksgemeinschaft*] divided along a biological line, which, as I alluded to earlier, in many parts of Austrian society remains dominant. Using poetic means, *Lust* critically figures the dynamic of this society, factory, and family. In the next paragraph Jelinek writes:

His simple eyes are just in time to register the suffering bodies [*Körper*]. Bodies gaping wide like sore and wounded chasms. Bodies visiting, to keep up social intercourse. And the men keeping it up, toiling with the heavy tools of their trade [*Schöpfungsgeräten*], labouring at their desire. Dying away [*verhallen*] inside the women. Only their bodies [*Körper*] and heads remain outside, and devise new wombs made of glass, to look into. Instantly Father climbs off Mother, letting fly a gusty fart from his gutsy motor, shifting into reverse, and doing a U-turn on the carpet. The boy pretends to have understood nothing. He himself, after all, is a consumer now, scrimmaging and scrummaging: his needs and wishes are like pages in his memory, his taste has been spoiled by the immortal pictures in the sporting goods catalogues, sport is good for the healthy citizen! Everything belongs to him and his dear parents, to whom in turn the child belongs. Mother covers herself hurriedly. As if with hay. The boy has already grasped that evil has a name: Father. But Papa does still buy the baskets of goodies, the sackfuls of fat with bulging fun, and binds his son with strings of gold. The child affects not to have noticed the bonds that bind his mother, there on the sofa; instead he reads his parents a list of conflicting wishes. You can drive it on sand, gravel, stone, water, ice and snow! Or a Persian carpet. It has to be bought. So that one can look back from far off in the landscape, back at home. The woman is having fun in her handcuffs, she thrashes her legs, her eyes fixed on the uncertainty that is her child: whatever will become of him.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> *Lust*, p. 46; trans., p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> 'Er erhascht mit seinen einfältigen Augen gerade noch die leidenden Körper, wenn sie, klaffend wie wunde Abgründe, einander besuchen kommen und die Männer mit ihren schweren Schöpfungsgeräten, Handwerker

This time the 'his' refers to the third part of the family: the son appears unanticipated in the room. He comes across tinted with innocence. He enters the room seeking his mother, though this is only hinted at. Instead he finds a profusion of bodies. Jelinek writes of 'the men,' of whom there is probably only one, 'toiling with the heavy tools of their trade [*Schöpfungsgeräten*], labouring at their desire.' '*Schöpfung*' is a biblical term that designates creation or conception. We have already heard this term from EXPORT's use of *Schöpfervater* in the previous chapter. '*Schöpfungsgeräten*' is thus better translated as devices of their creation. The context is one of toil and labour, but in the sense of craftsmen [*Handwerker*] who labour on Lust/pleasure with devices for creating. We read an elision, a play on meanings that slides between production, creation and desire. Thus the women are the image procreators, and the men the creators. The women have wombs made of glass for the men to peer into, to see their handiwork; the wombs are like vitrines.

If we alight on the boy's fatal observation we notice that he sees suffering not pleasure. He instantly represses what he has seen, and looks to products in a sporting goods catalogue. 'Sport is good for the healthy citizen.' Sport is a method of sublimation, as is shopping. The son has learnt that, 'evil has a name: Father,' the son has also been easily bought, and bound, by 'strings of gold.' In this triangle, the son doesn't notice what binds his mother to his father. But Jelinek adds handcuffs as well as the mother's enjoyment in the struggle.

If we recall, Fiddler claims that the interconnection of language and sexuality is intrinsic to *Lust*, which is made up of endless sex scenes bordering on rape, that focus on how the man (husband and student lover) uses the woman for his pleasure, treating her as his property or as his instrument.<sup>53</sup> In an interview from 1990, Jelinek explains: 'I tried to grasp aesthetically, what a whole industry, namely the porn industry lives off, namely that something is permanently inserted into a woman'.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Jelinek redirects our attention back to the porn industry's permanent penetration of woman. It is as if, in patriarchal capitalism, this penetration is

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ihrer Lust, im Inneren der Frau verhallen. Nur ihre Körper und Köpfe bleiben draußen und erfinden neue Mutterleiber aus Glas zum Hineinschauen. Sofort fährt der Vater von der Mutter hinunter, nachdem er, aus seinem groben Motor furend, den Rückwärtsgang eingelegt und eine Kehre in den Teppich gefahren hat. Das Kind gibt vor, nichts verstanden zu haben, es ist doch selbst schon wählender, wählender Konsument. Wie Blätter wehen im Gedächtnis seine Bedürfnisse, verwöhnt ist sein Geschmack von den unsterblichen Bildern in den Sport Katalogen der Sportgeschäfte, die den Staatsbürger zum Wohl! auffordern. Es gehört alles ihm und seinen lieben Eltern, denen wiederum das Kind gehört. Die Mutter bedeckt sich grob wie mit Heu. Das Böse Vater zu nennen, hat das Kind schon gelernt, aber der Papa kauft immerhin und immerdar die Warenkörbe, die Fettsäcke, und hält den Sohn an goldene Seile gebunden. Als hätte das Kind die ebenfalls in Banden ruhende Natur seiner Mutter auf dem Sofa nicht bemerkt, liest es den Eltern eine Wunschliste voller miteinander konkurrierender Gegenstände vor. Man kann auf Sand, Schotter, Stein, Wasser, Eis, Schnee oder einem Perserteppich damit fahren! Und es soll gekauft werden, damit man fern aus der Landschaft nach Hause zurückblicken kann.' *Lust*, p. 53; trans., p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> Allyson Fiddler, *Renwriting Reality: An Introduction to Elfriede Jelinek* (Oxford: Berg Publishing, 1994), p. 153.

<sup>54</sup> Elfriede Jelinek and André Müller, 'Ich lebe nicht', *Die Zeit*, 22 June 1990  
<<http://www.zeit.de/1990/26/ich-lebe-nicht>> [accessed 7 June 2017].

weaponised so that to be penetrated means to be degraded. Of course, this is not always the case, and we have to account for fantasy. And this idea itself is one which is often instrumentalised to reinscribe victimhood on women. Yet, this permanent penetration, as Jelinek describes it, can be extended to resemble the position of woman in the family, as in society. If we take the meaning of ‘woman’, from the standpoint of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which is merely an extreme form of patriarchal capitalism, with an emphasis on nature, then this permanent penetration is that which legitimates the gender hierarchy. In the *Volksgemeinschaft* this is extended to racialised people as well. This will be taken up further in chapter 5.

In the morphing together of woman and nature, as landscape, I propose that Jelinek begins to outline the contours of the use of gender in fascism. Sexual violence and sexual abuse are both repudiated (our women are the victims of Other men) and reproduced in authoritarianism. Misogyny is deployed in the name of protecting woman, reducing women to their bodies, treating women as functions. In the context Jelinek is writing, still dominated by the *Opferdoktrin*, does she proffer a way to simultaneously recognise the victims produced by patriarchal capitalism society, and acknowledge the power that the victim-society leverages, the ways that victimhood is used and profited from?

### 3.2: *The Holy Family*

Jelinek’s works discussed in this thesis pivot around and critique the family under patriarchal capitalism. Rather than inventing a false blueprint of a better society with her art, Jelinek’s writing penetrates the very structuring forces of the petit-bourgeois or bourgeois family, the germ-cell and structuring force of society. As she enacts a kind of debasement of language, she does the same to the social forces in her constructions. Here, I want to look further at literature which elaborates a critique of the family and familial relations akin to Jelinek’s focus. This aims to illuminate Jelinek’s critique of the ‘family’ and the use of gender by fascist/authoritarian societies, themselves an extreme version of bourgeois society. Jelinek’s writing continues a tradition of writing in this mode, a tradition that is most apparent in the writing of Sigmund Freud and those who follow.

With the development of psychoanalysis in Vienna towards the end of the nineteenth century, Freud introduced the notion that the Oedipal structure is replicated in the family and becomes prohibitive and law-like in the development of the life of the individual girl or boy. Briefly, this signals to the unconscious desire of the boy to love the mother and kill the father out of jealousy. Girls, on the other hand, compete with the mother for the father’s love. Yet, Juliet Mitchell reminds us: ‘The Oedipus complex is the *repressed* ideas that appertain to the family drama of any constellation of figures within which the child must find its place. It is not

the *actual* family situation or the conscious desire it evokes'.<sup>55</sup> For Freud, an actual family could, but did not necessarily have to exist for this familial structure and consequent repression to persist.

After Freud, there emerged a school of writing and thinking concerning authoritarianism and the family, which was connected to the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School published Max Horkheimer's 'Authority and the Family' in 1936, an essay which aimed to show the mediations between the rise of fascism and the decline of the European patriarchal nuclear family in relation to anti-Semitism in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. Horkheimer follows Engels and thus also J. J. Bachofen in his description of the origins of patriarchy, which laid the ground for both class conflict and the division between the public and familial. For Horkheimer, in patriarchal society, 'woman' is also changed through her experiences. Because she is socially and legally subject to the authority of the male, she is put in extreme proximity to the law.<sup>56</sup> She is dominated in the home, and in social life where the church charges her with Eve's sin. In the Middle Ages, she is scapegoated as a witch and submitted to state-sanctioned terrorism. Furthermore, Horkheimer argues in a corollary way to Jelinek's own theories that, 'the familial role of the woman strengthens the status quo'.<sup>57</sup> In Horkheimer's view this occurs through the identification with the need for economic security. 'Her whole position in the family results in an inhibiting of important psychic energies which might have been effective in shaping the world. Monogamy as practiced in bourgeois male-dominated society presupposes the devaluation of purely sensuous pleasure.'<sup>58</sup> And yet, Horkheimer also claims that with the demands from industrial societies on the heterosexual couple, outside of the home: '[t]here can no longer be any question of a private existence with its own satisfactions and values. In the extreme case, the family becomes the available form of sexual satisfaction and, for the rest, a source of multiplied anxieties'.<sup>59</sup>

We have also seen how Brecht understood the failures of Communism to lie in the absence of critical attention to the family, indeed to its abolition (as discussed in chapter 2). In *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) Marx and Engels make a somewhat rare comment on the family. Calling for its abolition they write:

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the

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<sup>55</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> Max Horkheimer, 'Authority and the Family', in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. by Matthew J. O'Connell and others (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp. 47-128 (p. 118).

<sup>57</sup> Horkheimer, 'Authority', p. 119.

<sup>58</sup> Horkheimer, 'Authority', p. 120.

<sup>59</sup> Horkheimer, 'Authority', p. 124.

family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution. The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.<sup>60</sup>

Their conception of the family is historical, located in relations of production. It states bourgeois family for the bourgeoisie, but absent family for proletarians. The family is classed and its horizon is determined by capital. Later, Engels penned *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) again highlighting patriarchy and monogamy as social forms to be studied alongside political economy. For Engels, like Horkheimer after him, their history is intimately connected to the mode of production.<sup>61</sup>

Likewise, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer cite changes in the organisation of capital whereby the destabilisation of the middle-classes and the ‘downfall of the free economic subject,’ brings the decline of the family, the ‘celebrated cell of society it once was,’ because ‘it no longer forms the basis of the citizen’s economic existence’.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, ‘The Communist Manifesto’, *Marxists Internet Archive*, 2000 <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>> [accessed 6 June 2017].

<sup>61</sup> Friedrich Engels, ‘Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State’, *Marxists Internet Archive*, 2010 <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/index.htm>> [accessed 6 January 2018]. Informing Engels and much of the subsequent critical theoretical engagement with the concept of patriarchy is J. J. Bachofen’s *The Myth, Religion and Mother Right*. Bachofen argues that the transition from mother-right to father-right is compounded during the epoch of the Greeks. He finds reason for this in ancient literatures. He takes interest in *Oresteia* of *Aschylus*. Engels writes: ‘Bachofen interprets the *Oresteia* of *Aschylus* as the dramatic representation of the conflict between declining mother-right and the new father-right that arose and triumphed in the heroic age. For the sake of her paramour, *Ægisthus*, *Clytemnestra* slays her husband, *Agamemnon*, on his return from the Trojan War; but *Orestes*, the son of *Agamemnon* and herself, avenges his father’s murder by slaying his mother. For this act he is pursued by the *Furies*, the demonic guardians of mother-right, according to which matricide is the gravest and most inexpiable crime. But *Apollo*, who by the voice of his oracle had summoned *Orestes* to this deed, and *Athena*, who is called upon to give judgment — the two deities who here represent the new patriarchal order — take *Orestes* under their protection; *Athena* hears both sides. The whole matter of the dispute is briefly summed up in the debate which now takes place between *Orestes* and the *Furies*. *Orestes* contends that *Clytemnestra* has committed a double crime; she has slain her husband and thus she has also slain his father. Why should the *Furies* pursue him, and not her, seeing that she is by far the more guilty? The answer is striking: “She was not kin by blood to the man she slew.”’ If we look further to Bachofen’s broad reception, Peter Davies asks how women’s experience of marginalisation interacts with prevalent theories, interpretations and ideologies of that marginalisation, such that Bachofen put forward. Davies argues that women made a link between their own oppression and Bachofen’s idea of womanhood. He describes Bachofen as developing a version of feminine knowledge: mythical, intuitive, that, ‘gives access to truths that are repressed by both masculine science and supposedly masculinised “Frauenrechtlerinnen” (campaigners for women’s rights).’ As Bachofen’s writings peaked in popularity around 1900 they were also faced strong criticism from the academy, this as Davies points out, allowed them to be appropriated by right wing writers outside the academy precisely because they were being suppressed by it. Peter Davies, ‘Women Warriors, Feminism, and National Socialism: The Reception of J. J. Bachofen’s View of Amazons and German and Austrian Right-Wing Women Writers’ in Sarah Colvin and Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Warlike Women in the German Literary and Cultural Imagination since 1500*, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), p. 46. See also: Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Myth, Religion, and Mother Right: Selected Writings of J.J. Bachofen*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>62</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *DoE*, p. 84.

Moreover, in their formulation, the loss of ‘fatherly’ autonomy, the absence of the family as the guiding horizon of one’s life, means that one’s ability to resist authority subsides.<sup>63</sup>

It is apposite to ask why, of all social forms, does Jelinek endlessly return to the bourgeois or a petit-bourgeois family in her literature? Even if she suggests a working-class family, she also shows its weaknesses. The family is always within capitalist social relations, it does not disappear as per Adorno and Horkheimer. This is an important point of feminist critique, as Rosemary Hennessey writes:

[I]t is important to emphasise that even as more middle-class women enter the paid labour force and private patriarchy’s prohibitions around sex outside marriage loosen, heterosexual marriage and the gendered division of labour remain the prevailing, pervasively naturalised social arrangements whose coherence is still assured and legitimised in law and common sense by reference to an abject homosexual other.<sup>64</sup>

The family is a form of social organisation, called upon by the state during moments of crisis, alongside the church, the police and the army.<sup>65</sup> Yet it mutates. It gains differing horizons. It reverts. The family is the place where gendered roles are reproduced, where care is distributed, and where the body is both consumed and produced.

### 3.2.1: *Psychoanalysis: between Communism and Fascism*

The work of Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich surged in popularity in the 1960s in Austria and Germany.<sup>66</sup> As we have noted, Reich became important for the Actionists from the mid-60s, and his influence spread via Otto Muehl’s *AA-Kommune*.<sup>67</sup> During his time in Vienna and then Berlin, Reich practiced a politically committed psychoanalysis. In Vienna he opened up sex-clinics for working-class patients. He was first to attempt a synthetic reading of Marxism and psychoanalysis. Feminists such as Juliet Mitchell have argued that Reich’s psychoanalytic hunches and insights (his position against the adaptive forces of ego-psychology, and his attempts to draw psychic problems back into social conditions) in the first

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<sup>63</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, *DoE*, p. 84.

<sup>64</sup> Rosemary Hennessey, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (New York; London: Routledge, 2000), p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> See also: Janz, pp. 45-46 and p. 112. Another way of thinking through the importance of the family here, is that it is central to the postwar struggle. The postwar political drama is a family drama played out between the one born too late, the Nazi father and the complicit mother. Dagmar Herzog argues that the repression of sexuality during the Nazi period is displaced onto the immediate postwar years. The ‘68ers experience familial and state repression in the 1950s onwards. Herzog, p. 160.

<sup>66</sup> *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* and *The Sexual Revolution* were found all over German left-wing spaces in bootleg publications. See: Herzog, p. 159.

<sup>67</sup> For the reception of Reich in the *AA Kommune* see ch. 1., note 81.



part of his career were interesting, even if they culminated in questionable conclusions.<sup>68</sup> I propose to read Reich without having to follow through on all his conclusions. Since the subject of this chapter looks at the use of the family (and gender) in authoritarianism, I will read the sociological and political Reich, in particular, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933).

Reich's text postulates how fascism can gain power through social-sexual repression. The first two chapters underscore a theory of ideology that has material consequences. This means that ideology is part of the society. It is not a layer on top which can be scraped, torn or lifted off. It constitutes the society itself. What comes under the name of fascism/Hitlerism can exist anywhere: '[f]ascism is not a political party but a specific concept of life and attitude towards man, love and work'.<sup>69</sup> This understanding of fascism relates to its conception at the core of both Jelinek and EXPORT's practices, as a concept of 'life'. As Reich revised his book in English, he maintained that fascism was not the mere act of one man (Hitler), but the '*expression of the irrational structure of mass man*'.<sup>70</sup> In Reich's view, this 'irrational structure of mass man' doesn't easily cohere with Marxist economic theory, which he claims does not withstand fascism's development and needs updating. He argues that by using purely economic concepts (belonging to the nineteenth-century) in trying to decipher fascism, Marxists failed to understand their object of critique, as they also failed to perpetually revive their 'vital possibilities'. Reich's insight is that the world we inhabit is created by us. He speaks about:

[M]an as a creature who had come under the domination of the worst possible social conditions, conditions he himself had created and bore within himself as a part of his character and from which he sought to free himself in vain.<sup>71</sup>

The character Reich describes is divided, producing an internal psychic struggle. Reich outlines the basic structure of his character analysis (some aspects of this structure are appealing, some more tenuous), as comprising of three layers. The first is the surface layer, where the 'average' person is reserved, compassionate, conscientious, polite and responsible. Reich claims there would be no social tragedy if this layer was directly in touch with the third layer, 'the deep natural core'.<sup>72</sup> But this first layer ultimately belongs to ethical norms which hold down the secondary, sadistic drives. The second layer represents sadistic impulses made up of repressed material. Reich's departure from Freud is most clearly expressed with regard to his third layer,

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<sup>68</sup> Mitchell, p. 138.

<sup>69</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. by Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p xxii.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p xx.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p xxii.

<sup>72</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p xi.

which he claims can be understood as the ‘biologic core’.<sup>73</sup> The biologic core exists under the masks of the top two layers, as a ‘kind’ and ‘genuine’ layer, which, when pushed into action can be and often is distorted by its journey, in that it has to reach through the layers that block it from above, like the psychoanalytic concept of abreaction. This distortion places inhibitions on all ‘genuine’ expressions of life.

Yet, Reich moves from this human structure (the structure informed by character analysis) to the social and political one. In appealing against idealist claims that this human structure is ‘immutable to all eternity’, Reich argues that, ‘after social conditions and changes have transmuted man’s original biologic demands and made them a part of his character structure, the latter reproduces the social structure in the form of ideologies’.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the character structure, with all the damage done to the ‘biologic core’ reproduces the social structure. Reich’s argument stages Liberalism as the reflection, or model of the first layer of ethical norms and tolerance. The one who lives on this level holds contempt for anything and everything which transgresses these norms. For Reich a *real* revolutionary practice would emerge from the deepest, third layer. Fascism, he argues, belongs to the middle layer of secondary (sadistic) drives. This is one conclusion where I would disagree with Reich, for as Juliet Mitchell has argued, Reich makes the biologic core the literal basis of the human.<sup>75</sup> Unlike Freud’s unconscious which is unknowable, the biological core in Reich’s model is the foundation for a better world.<sup>76</sup>

For Reich, fascism is the expression of a mass character structure, where an ‘authoritarian machine civilisation’ and ‘mechanistic-mystical’ idea of life, suppress the human.<sup>77</sup> This ‘mass’ character structure highlights the distinction between the groups: ‘masses’ and ‘classes’. The *mass* character structure is determined both by rebellious emotions and reactionary social ideas: ‘If we conceive of being revolutionary as the rational rebellion against intolerable conditions in human society, the rational will “to get to the root of all things” (“radical” = “radic” = “root”) and to improve them, then fascism is *never* revolutionary’.<sup>78</sup> The mass is not the proletariat. Furthermore, *against* claims that fascism is a reversion to paganism, Reich argues that it is rather the highest expression of mysticism, manifesting in a strange social form that first expresses as masochistic character and then transforms into its sadistic pair.

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<sup>73</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p xi.

<sup>74</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p xii.

<sup>75</sup> Mitchell, p. 170.

<sup>76</sup> Thanks to Hannah Proctor for bringing to my attention Dagmar Herzog’s interpretation of Reich’s influence on post-Marxist French thought. Herzog’s reading claims that *Anti-Oedipus* is based primarily on a combination of Reich and Melanie Klein. Dagmar Herzog, ‘Exploding Oedipus’, in *Cold War Freud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 153-78.

<sup>77</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p xiii.

<sup>78</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. xiv.

For Reich, Marx's most revolutionary contribution was that he 'recognised the industrial productive forces as the progressive force of society and that he depicted the contradictions of capitalist economy as they relate to real life'.<sup>79</sup> From here, Reich suggests that what typified the rise of fascism was a lack of knowledge from the revolutionary left. He laments the way that the language of Marxism became one of *jargon*, as the composition of the 'proletariat' also transformed to become a *mass* of industrial workers, with middle-class shopkeepers ossified as a bulk of public sector and industrial employees.<sup>80</sup> There were still those who thought that a revolution could result from the masses being handed arms, but they did not pay attention to the new 'techniques' of war. In 1933 Reich writes: 'It is a question of the role of ideology and the emotional attitude of these masses seen as a historical factor, a question of the *repercussion of the ideology on the economic bases*'.<sup>81</sup> The implication is that ideology announces itself on the material bases. Here, the masses, for the reason his study aims to elucidate, do not choose the path of emancipation; they do not make a revolution or choose revolutionary struggle.<sup>82</sup>

How does Reich's study of the authoritarian ideology of the family and its relation to fascism help us to sharpen our understanding of Jelinek's postwar critique of the nuclear family? Reich argues that National Socialism gained support from the petit-bourgeois, lower-middle-class and working-class. Reich's interest is in assessing the contradictions in the petit-bourgeois, lower-middle class nuclear family. At first he does this by analysing Hitler's language. Hitler came from this class of Austrian family, and resented the 'Slavisation' of Austria after the Austro-Hungarian Empire. If we recall from chapter 1, there was already a general division in Austrian society between those who assimilated to German culture, and mass migration to Vienna from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Social Democrats' influence on Hitler's thinking allowed him to use the means and language developed by Marxism to access the masses. He nonetheless despised 'Social Democracy's emphasis on class differences, their negation of the nation, the authority of the state, the private ownership of the social means of production, of religion and morals'.<sup>83</sup> Hitler turned towards Otto von Bismarck as his new idol, and he inflected the language of Marxism with his own new nationalistic imperialism.<sup>84</sup> Reich advances this argument to claim that it was the 'authoritarian freedom fearing structure' within

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<sup>79</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> More precisely, on this point he argues that with the economic crisis (1929) a cleavage sprung open between the proletarians who surged to the left, and the ideology of the middle layers of society who surged to the right. The precise quality of nationalism within this surge to the Right was overlooked by the Left. Citing Roosevelt's New Deal, paired with a wariness towards the success of the Russian Revolution, Reich pitches this argument as follows: the 'distressed middle class' become 'radical Rightist'. And, aspects of the proletariat are included in this move, since it is split. The clarifying question for the reader of Reich today might be: what is the reason for this swing? Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 10.

<sup>82</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 13.

<sup>83</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 38.

<sup>84</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 37.

the population, the surrender to nationalistic feelings, that enabled Hitler's fascist propaganda to take hold.<sup>85</sup>

Again, in his analysis of the family, Reich addresses the social position of the middle-class. He locates this position in three areas: capitalist production, its relation to the authoritarian state, and its 'specific family situation'.<sup>86</sup> Within the varied social strata that makes up the middle-class, he claims that the family occupies the same place. Reich explicates the proximity between family ties and nationalistic feelings. As we know from critical theory and materialist feminism, in capitalist societies the family constitutes a small economic enterprise. This is because the assistance of family members decreases the requirement to employ outside help. In this context, Reich emphasises the importance of both relations to the land and to tradition. These relations maintain small-scale agriculture. During the 1930s, the National Socialists also expressed interest in family ties and rural forms of economy dominant in lower-middle-class strata, and they incorporated this into their laws. The ideology of 'blood and soil' was premised on this model:

An entail-inherited farmstead can be owned only by a farmer who is a *German citizen* and of *German blood*. Only he who has no one among his male ancestry or other ancestry of Jewish or coloured origin for four generations is of German blood.<sup>87</sup>

The small family is secured by the patriarchal relationship between men and women, and 'the mode of sexuality derived from this specific relationship' is premised on duty.<sup>88</sup> Reich describes the patriarchal role of the father:

[T]he political and economic position of the father is reflected in his patriarchal relationship to the remainder of the family. In the figure of the father the authoritarian state has its representative in every family, so that the family becomes its most important instrument of power.<sup>89</sup>

And yet, he continues: 'What this position of the father actually necessitates is the strictest sexual suppression of the women and the children'.<sup>90</sup> For Reich, in their relation to the father, women become resigned and boys become authoritarian. Dynamics of competition are

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<sup>85</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 40.

<sup>86</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 44.

<sup>87</sup> This is excerpted from the 'New Order of Agricultural Ownership', 1933, cited by: Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 50.

<sup>88</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 51.

<sup>89</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 53.

<sup>90</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 53.

instilled among every member of the family. This is strongest between the children in each family in relation to their parents. Competition develops from these very early instances most commonly into economic competition in later life.<sup>91</sup>

Another aspect of National Socialist ideology that Reich considers exists in the phrase: ‘*personal honour, family honour, racial honour, national honour*’.<sup>92</sup> He writes: ‘[t]his sequence is consistent with the various layers in the individual structure. However, it fails to include the socio-economic basis: ‘*capitalism, or rather patriarchy; the institution of compulsive marriage; sexual suppression; personal struggle against one’s own sexuality*’.<sup>93</sup> For Reich, ties to the authoritarian family are paired with sexual inhibition. In addressing the role of the mother within this we find that, ‘[i]n their subjective emotional core the notions of homeland and nation are notions of mother and family. [...] the mother is the homeland of the child, just as the family is the “nation in miniature”’.<sup>94</sup> Using Joseph Goebbels’ own language, Reich describes how under Nazism Germany was the Mother, who was endlessly abused by the Jew, and needed to be protected.<sup>95</sup>

Although Reich published *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* in 1933, the socio-political observations and logic it sets forth are persistent in the present albeit in diluted or mutated forms.<sup>96</sup> In particular, with regards to the family politics set forth by the far right FPÖ. This use of gender and the family by the nation state as the model for the reproduction of gender, and the reproduction of compliant subjects is pushed to an extreme during periods of authoritarianism, as Reich shows with the case of Hitler. Therefore, the tendency for feminists and artists to identify and critique the family as the linchpin of patriarchal capitalism can be read in two ways. On the one hand, feminists and artists sought to politicise the labour of social reproduction, to show how it was in fact useful for capitalism. On the other hand, artists and feminists wanted to reject this labour and its trajectory altogether. Reich’s analysis of the role of the family is what carried his work into European social and artistic movements of the 1960s onwards.<sup>97</sup> While I do not know if Jelinek read Reich (though he was certainly read widely in the Viennese milieu), this analysis provides a way to read Jelinek’s presentation of the soil, the family, the nation, the mode of production.

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<sup>91</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 54.

<sup>92</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 56.

<sup>93</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 56.

<sup>94</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 57.

<sup>95</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p. 59.

<sup>96</sup> In Austria citizenship is allocated by genus. Children born in Austria only automatically gain citizenship when a parent has Austrian citizenship. Austria doesn’t permit dual citizenship, meaning those who are able to choose naturalisation will forfeit their prior citizenship. Naturalisation processes became more difficult since 1998. See: Claus Hofhansel, ‘Citizenship in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland: Courts, Legislatures, and Administrators’, *The International Migration Review*, 42.1 (2008), 163-92.

<sup>97</sup> Cf., note 99 above; Herzog, ‘Exploding Oedipus’ and *Sex after Fascism*; Juliet Mitchell, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*; Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies Volumes 1 and 2*.

### 3.2.2: Transactions

In *Lust*, from the standpoint of Gerti, the family is presented as a *defect*: ‘At times the woman is dissatisfied with these defects that burden her life: husband and son. The son a full colour copy, a perfect reproduction, a unique and photographable child’.<sup>98</sup> If we recall, in *Lust* there is an elision between two modes of reproduction: that of reproducing the species as labour-power, and mechanical reproduction, the reproduction of the image. Yet, here, the son also comes to mean the reproduction of the father: the reproduction of a violent and exploitative way of being in the world, as expressed by Reich. Concerning the relation between the mother and son, which as we know comes to end in infanticide, Jelinek writes:

The family can do good. But it expects to eat good food too. And to bag the quarry on feast-days. The loved ones are so fond of Mother. There they all sit, together, blissful. The woman talks to her son (bacon infested with the maggots of love) and fills him with her all-pervasive low and tender shrieking. She is concerned about him. Protects him with her soft weapons. Every day he seems to die a little more, the older he becomes. The son takes no pleasure in Mother’s griping and promptly demands a present. Brief transactions such as these, transactions involving toys or sports equipment, are their way of trying to communicate. Lovingly she flings herself on her son, but even as a torrent she simply flows away, to be heard somewhere far beneath him, in the depths.<sup>99</sup>

In the first pages of the novel, as we have seen, we read about a family which is dominated by exchange relations. From the transactions in the form of demanded gifts, standing in as a mode of communication, we find that property itself does not impose duties from both sides, rather between the couple the property relation prevails. Yet Gerti is not just property of her husband, as Marlies Janz argues, she also seeks her own pleasure with the student, Michael. In a scene where Gerti is with Michael, Jelinek’s meta-narrative of Gerti’s experience is narrated:

So there you are, all skin and flick, and your desire is always the same old film! An endless chain of repetitions, less appealing every time because the electronic media and melodies have accustomed us to having something new home-delivered every day.<sup>100</sup>

The structure of Gerti’s desire is modelled on a film: ‘An endless chain of repetitions’: in this *fata-morgana*, what is new is both home delivered, consumed at home, and repeated daily, the same in a slightly altered form, like the movement of each chapter of *Lust*. This attempt to

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<sup>98</sup> *Lust*, p. 9; trans., p. 9.

<sup>99</sup> *Lust*, p. 11-2; trans., p. 11.

<sup>100</sup> *Lust*, p. 123; trans., p. 102.

find pleasure backfires, and after this abuse Gerti finds herself returned to the clutches of Hermann and his mini-cinema.<sup>101</sup> After living in his deforming possession, her smothering of her child with love, her flinging herself on him, which leads to her floating away as if part of a river of history beyond her control, turns into its opposite: Gerti smothers her own reproduction of the father, her son, to death:

The boy is flaccid and yet he is her whole world: he is silent, and so is her world. He is no doubt looking forward to growing up, like his father's member. Tenderly Mother kisses her little boat sailing around the world. Then she takes a plastic bag, slips it over the boy's head and draws it tight at the bottom so that the child's breath will perish in peace.<sup>102</sup>

She smothers him with a plastic bag. In a story which is ostensibly about the naturalisation of 'woman', as a brutalisation which is then fixed through the image, it is insightful that Gerti commits such an artificial death. Using a plastic bag, she takes away the boy's breath. If we recall from the first pages of *Lust*, the Director's breath is equated to a kind of truth. We see that Jelinek's Gerti takes away this false truth in her son, who is becoming the reproduction of the director. *Lust* began as an attempt to write a language of female desire and sexuality. This project was hastily aborted, when in Jelinek's view the reproduction of the language of sexuality in the media, in industrialised pornography, swallowed any kind of authentic or positive language of sexuality. So even where Gerti asserts her own desires she reproduces a false image formed by the commodity, reproduced, fed to her from television and magazines.<sup>103</sup> In this sense *Lust* differs from *Die Klavierspielerin* (discussed in chapter 2), where sexuality in the figure of Erika is informed by perversions, where she still claims and follows her desire. In *Die Klavierspielerin*, although sexuality is written through with the language of repetitive factory work, it still exceeds this work. The figures partaking in it, for example in the scene in the clearing, lose the social markings that they are encumbered with in every-day life.

In *Lust*, Jelinek's project to depict a language of female sexuality and desire became a project about fascistic, totalising sexual violence and domestic rape and finally infanticide, since here, the one thing that can free women is not reproducing the species. Jelinek focusses on the construction of 'woman' from this empty plain of deathly commodities and transactional relations:

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<sup>101</sup> Janz, p. 113.

<sup>102</sup> *Lust*, p. 254; trans, p. 206.

<sup>103</sup> Janz, p. 113.

The woman does not die, verily she is created by the sex of the Man. Who has reconstructed a complete original scale model of her lower abdomen [*Unterleib*] in his lab. How the Man loves making his appearances, a body [*Körper*] straight from the freezer, thawing as fast as he can!<sup>104</sup>

As woman is ‘created by the sex of the Man’, she never dies, she has no end, she is timeless. The man has reconstructed her lower abdomen, in his lab, as if women are not born but endlessly reproduced as commodified beings. In the previous chapter, we have seen that EXPORT cites Feminist Actionism as a method to transform woman out of her thing-character, her commodity position. Jelinek also places women on a production line, which prevents her death. As Hanssen claims Jelinek’s writing is a writing of the history of humiliation of women, I add to this that it is one drawn out of the commodity, and her production line is also one that is inflected by technological reproducibility. This means that in this case, dying would be the inauguration of something new, yet here, dying itself is foreclosed. Like the womb made of glass that the Man (Hermann) could peer into, this womb also belongs to him. In the relationship between Gerti and Hermann, the fascistic and totalising force of his sexual power comes into play: ‘He reaches under her skirt and batters through the walls of underwear. He wants to force his way into his wife (this is just a family affair) so that he will sense where his limits are’.<sup>105</sup> Jelinek arms the man so that he ‘batters’, into her, as if he were trying to enter a house. Rape is set in the family. As Hiebel claims, the subtext introduces a narrative of legal rape. Yet, Gerti is also an accomplice to Hermann’s crimes: ‘[a]nd the holy Direktorial couple, in perpetual repetition, are on their way back to the penal colony of sex, where they can whine for redemption to their heart’s content’.<sup>106</sup> If ‘sex is the nature of humanity’ humanity exists merely for sex; in Jelinek’s construction, sex is an extension of work and the division of labour.<sup>107</sup> Destruction through work leaves the human destroyed; just traces remain.

In relation to this thesis on the family we may consider a materialist feminist account of gender and labour. Italian feminist Leopoldina Fortunati’s *Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labour and Capital*, from 1981 provides a case in point. I suggest that Fortunati articulates something theoretically which Jelinek aims to articulate through prose. Fortunati developed the idea of economic relations within the family through Marx’s concept of labour power:

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<sup>104</sup> *Lust*, p. 30; trans., p. 27.

<sup>105</sup> *Lust*, p. 24; trans., p. 21

<sup>106</sup> *Lust*, p. 78; trans., p. 66.

<sup>107</sup> *Lust*, p. 67; trans., p. 79.



The family is the place where variable capital is mobilised as *income* and as *capital* — capital in relation to the female houseworker and then in relation to the male worker and future workers. Mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, children and siblings appear to be a natural force of social labour, they are labour-power, as the capacity for maternal, paternal etc., reproduction of labour-power. They are *commodities*, and insofar as labour power is ‘bought’ by capital and produces capital, reproduction workers do not belong to themselves but to capital — they *are* capital.<sup>108</sup>

Fortunati argues that the family consists of a set of reified relations produced through the work undertaken within it. The family is a pool for capital to exploit. ‘Love’ is the appearance of what it disguises: alienation, commodification and non-communication. Jelinek’s *social* writing acts as an index of how ‘woman’ is used under patriarchal capitalism. It is not a moral story, but a story about the economics of sex and image. We can consider *Lust* as exposing the sedimentation of the endless repetition of transactions in the family and in society, with recourse to woman’s representation within industrialised pornography and its endless repetition of images.

### 3.3: Gender and Fascism

In the penultimate chapter of her *Critique of Violence, Between Post-Structuralism and Critical Theory* (2000), Beatrice Hanssen argues that Elfriede Jelinek’s texts contribute a ‘sustained critique of the presence of violence in postwar Austria.’<sup>109</sup> Hanssen claims that violence appears across her works in differing ways. It figures as body horror, fascist violence and gendered and sexual violence. She cites *Die Klavierspielerin* and *Lust* as works that consider the gendered body politic of pornographic exploitation of women as one with an economy approximating that of war.<sup>110</sup> Other of Jelinek’s texts consider philosophical foundations of fascism found in society at large, namely *Totenauberg* (1991), which is discussed in chapter 5, and *Wolken. Heim* (1988). I suggest that it is not just as per Hanssen that the body politics comes to proximate a kind of war, but that the war constitutes a dynamic, which takes place in the family and is shot through with capitalist social relations and is then replicated in wider society.

Hanssen comments that Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* provides a basis for such claims concerning patriarchal violence as they emerged in German feminism after World War II. Within the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, she finds a correlation between firstly, the violence of instrumental reason secondly, the bio-politics of fascism, thirdly, anti-Semitism

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<sup>108</sup> Leopoldina Fortunati and Jim Fleming, *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital* (Brooklyn, New York: Autonomedia, 1995), p. 126.

<sup>109</sup> Hanssen, p. 210.

<sup>110</sup> Hanssen, p. 210.

and fourthly, ‘the historical objectification of women as *phusis*’.<sup>111</sup> Hanssen argues that what Jelinek’s works do with virulent force is to persistently confront the relations between fascism, gender, and sexual violence with the ‘polemical acerbity’ that her language holds.<sup>112</sup>

However, she identifies a contradiction in this method. Hanssen highlights Jelinek’s ability to relentlessly criticise the violence aimed towards women as sexual, domestic and economic violence, while simultaneously deploying linguistic violence to make her critique. Citing accusations made against Jelinek, which claim that her texts explore perversions such as: voyeurism, sadomasochism, anthropophagy and vampirism, Hanssen ascribes to Jelinek’s writings a violence against violence. This doubled violence is described as the ‘mimetic reenactment of sexual violence, which risks subjugating women a second time around’ as well as pointing to ‘the return of the *Ungeist* of German history’.<sup>113</sup> Hanssen claims that this might take the form of the ‘very irrationalism and violence that her writings seek to ward off.’<sup>114</sup> This cluster of problems that Hanssen finds so enticing provides her with a performative contradiction. In order to explore this she turns to Jelinek’s essay on Ingeborg Bachmann: ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’ (1983, ‘War by Other Means’). I am going to follow this thread.

We have seen that in *Lust* Jelinek writes the family through transaction based communication, organised as both a mini-state and mini-business. I have characterised this in relation to Fortunati’s idea that the relations within the family constitute commodity relations. I have accounted for Reich’s claim that competition, which forms one premise of capitalist society, is developed in the family by way of competition arising between children for the attention of the parents. For Reich, competition in the family in early life is a training ground for economic competition. But competition prevails in every relation in the family. Jelinek’s essay ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’ was first published in 1983. Jelinek considered writing *Lust* for at least 5 years prior to its publication, and spent at least two years on the text itself. In this sense I argue that the themes in *Lust* are prefigured in Jelinek’s reading of Bachmann. ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’ strategically aligns two sets of concerns which foresee *Lust*: first, how is the subject position ‘woman’ understood by fascism, and second, what possibilities for artistic expression exist from this position?<sup>115</sup> Thus, this is an essay which describes fascism’s use of woman through Jelinek’s reading of the Austrian author and poet, Ingeborg Bachmann. Describing Austria in the wake of World War II, in the forward to *Der Fall Franza*, (1966, *The*

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<sup>111</sup> Hanssen, p. 210.

<sup>112</sup> Hanssen, p. 210.

<sup>113</sup> Hanssen, p. 211.

<sup>114</sup> Hanssen, p. 211.

<sup>115</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’, in *Kein Objektives Urteil, Nur Ein Lebendiges: Texte Zum Werke von Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. by Christine Koschel and Inge von Weidenbaum (München: Piper, 1989), pp. 311-20. This essay was first published as: Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln: Über Ingeborg Bachmann,’ in *Die Schwarze Botin* 21 (1983), pp. 149-153.

*Case of Franzä*), a part of the incomplete ‘*Todesarten*’-Projekt (*Death Styles Project*) Bachmann writes:

I’ve often wondered, and perhaps it has passed through your minds as well, just where the virus of crime escaped to — it cannot simply have disappeared from our world twenty years ago just because murder is no longer praised, desired, decorated with medals, and promoted. The massacres are indeed over, the murderers still among us often being attested to and their guilt established, some of them, not all even sentenced in court. [...] I maintain and I will only attempt to produce the first evidence that still today many people do not die but are murdered. [...] the slaughter is granted a place within the morals and customs of a society.<sup>116</sup>

To connect the passage from Bachmann to Jelinek’s critique of fascistic violence against women, I want to first unpack Jelinek’s critique of the concept of ‘woman’. This concept is taken to its extreme under the racialised political system organised around the so-called Aryan supremacy that was National Socialism, as we have seen from the standpoint of Wilhelm Reich. It is with this extreme concept of ‘woman’ in mind that we can understand more fully what in Jelinek’s literature stands as an ongoing critique of patriarchal capitalism and the afterlife of fascism in Austria.

Though I do not want to read Jelinek’s essay in a wholly anachronistic way, this text highlights tendencies in feminist thinking of its moment, which crucially had moved sideways from a purely materialist analysis of the structural and historically reproduced economic oppression of women, to consider the *texts*, the expression of women writers.<sup>117</sup> This is not to say that Jelinek disavows or overrides the economic structures that reproduce the oppression of women, for these even appear in this text, but rather that in her focus on Bachmann she includes an addition.

Jelinek’s title, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’ refers to the Prussian military strategist Carl von Clausewitz, who claims that the meaning of war expands as it gains in proximity to the state. Clausewitz writes, ‘war is the continuation of politics by different means.’<sup>118</sup> The *means* by which war is waged are raised to that of a collateral war. The concept of ‘total war,’ though not explicitly used by Clausewitz, was blamed for the level of destruction extolled in the first and second World Wars. Jelinek begins her essay referencing a sentence from Bachmann’s novel

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<sup>116</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’, p. 312; Ingeborg Bachmann, *The Book of Franzä and Requiem for Fanny Goldmann*, trans. by Peter Filkins (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2010), p. 4.

<sup>117</sup> See, Sara Lennox, *Cemetery of the Murdered Daughters: Feminism, History and Ingeborg Bachmann* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), p. 74.

<sup>118</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 27-29.

*Malina*, which echoes Clausewitz: ‘There is not war and peace, there is only war’.<sup>119</sup> It is around this claim that the essay focusses on war, as a perpetual war on women.<sup>120</sup>

‘Since one has been able to experience grey as a particle of eternity, again as a colour, as it is without any special detergent, one should start talking about the struggle’ writes Jelinek.<sup>121</sup> Alongside this enigmatic imperative towards ‘talking’ about the struggle, Jelinek also sardonically asserts that it is once again possible to use words such as, happiness, warmth, beauty, peace and fulfilment without scare quotes. Such words, in the immediate aftermath of the horrors of World War II could not emit even a ghost of their prior meaning. In the face of this, ‘grey’ is highlighted as a ‘particle of eternity,’ as something compelled to repeat, eternally returning to the colour palate. Jelinek sets up a scenario in which the mental image of the horrors of the war and the Holocaust waned, softened, or slipped to the back of people’s memories. Simultaneous with this forgetting, these positive words lost the doubt that encased them. Thirty-seven years after Austria was declared the ‘first-victim’ of the Nazis, Jelinek registers a softening in attitudes represented in literature and art, traditionally the one area in Austrian society which spoke truthfully about Austria’s complicity with, and perpetration of the Holocaust. This is why she returns to Bachmann, because in Jelinek’s view, Bachmann’s project lent itself to not forgetting.

Following her call to struggle, Jelinek writes: ‘Before the flickering tabernacles of the Austrian “TV Papstudios”, from which the furies of brotherhood and the demons of charity spring up, and surpass all other people with their tanks, one should begin again to speak of the war’.<sup>122</sup> The eternal grey, now ‘experienced’ as a colour is what characterises art which Jelinek pitches as both harmonising and ‘cultural appeasement gymnasts [*Beschwichtigungsvorturnern*],’ against Bachmann who is playfully called the crack [*Riß*] author after the conclusion to *Malina*.<sup>123</sup> Ingeborg Bachmann explored the legacy and aftermath of National Socialism in Austrian society through the lens of gender. *Malina* is a novel in three parts, in which the subject, the ‘I’, is caught between two men who might also each be part of her ego. The second

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<sup>119</sup> ‘Es gibt nicht Krieg und Frieden, es gibt nur Krieg.’ Bachmann quoted in Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 311. See: Ingeborg Bachmann, *Malina* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2016), p. 247. There is a discrepancy between *Malina* and Jelinek’s citation.

<sup>120</sup> Silvia Federici characterises the execution of thousands of witches at the beginning of the modern era, coincident with the rise of capitalism as a war on women. Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 14.

<sup>121</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 311. Beatrice Hanssen claims this is a ‘Krausian attack on the role of the Feuilleton’ which even recalls Kraus’ first issue of the *Die Fackel*. Hanssen, p. 211.

<sup>122</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 311.

<sup>123</sup> Jelinek uses the untranslatable term ‘*Beschwichtigungsvorturnern*’ to describe the fellow travellers of far-right, neo-Nazi political parties, who contort themselves and their positions in order to downplay the dangers or effects of such politics. For analyses of gender within National Socialism see: *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. by Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: metheun, 1988). This topic is pertinent to any discussion that takes into account postwar gender relations. It was not until decades following the war that the position of women in Nazi culture (in Germany) was examined with any depth, let alone demystified.

chapter revolves around the image of her violent and incestuous father, which in turn precipitates her own demise: the book ends as the 'I' disappears into a crack [*Riß*] in the wall. Jelinek is arguing against 'harmonising' art which conforms to a re-illuminated reality, where the forgetting of the horror is animated by a new mode of televised reality mediated by flickering screens in every home. Yet, this reality is still dominated by the 'furies of brotherhood' and the 'demons of charity', whose tanks, poses Jelinek are Television shows.

Jelinek equivocates between Bachmann as the '*Riß*' author, and how Bachmann is read by feminists. *Riß* pertains notions of the tear, rent, crack or slit. Bachmann is understood as an author who can tear through the rigid appearance of society, and who can speak the truth both in terms of Austria's *Opferdoktrin*, which she tries to unmask, and in terms of the gendered dynamics of fascism.

We learn that Bachmann's writing marks the expression of her attempts to save her language, her tongue, from cultural destruction via her search for a female subject, an 'I'. Jelinek describes Bachmann as writing, 'a literature of ceaseless searching for something to hold onto, and of not finding that something' which is similar to Jelinek's own sentiment.<sup>124</sup> Jelinek's attention to Bachmann should also be read as an intervention into debates concerning both a conservative tendency in art, and feminism more broadly:

This one burning woman, in her synthetic nightshirt [...] is — unfortunately for too many feminists — similar to all women. Because the pain of this one woman is the pain of all women, This Woman equals all other women. The special, mutual abdomen [*Unterleib*] of all women, makes all women into exactly the same one woman, who gives peace and warm togetherness. In her bed, the burning poet (and with her, all women in the cities that burned their female inhabitants during the medieval ages) is all women, and at the same time no woman, because the woman is nothing.<sup>125</sup>

In Jelinek's view, Bachmann was instrumentalised by feminists. Bachmann's notorious death, which involved her burning in her own home in 1973, is used by feminists to say that her experience and pain, her expression, stand in for that of *all* women. Simply, Jelinek accuses her feminist adversaries (though she omits to name names) of gender essentialism, where women are linked together biologically by one mutual abdomen. Interestingly Jelinek uses *Unterleib*

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<sup>124</sup> Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln', p. 318.

<sup>125</sup> 'Die eine verbrennende Frau im Synthetiknachthemd [...] leider für allzu viele Feministinnen — gleich allen Frauen. Denn das Leid dieser einen Frau ist das Leid aller Frauen. Ist doch auch Die Frau gleich allen anderen Frauen. Der allen Frauen gemeinsame spezielle Unterleib macht aus allen Frauen eben die eine allen anderen Frauen. Der allen Frauen eben die eine allen anderen gleiche Frau; das gibt Frieden und wärmende Gemeinsamkeit. Die in ihren Bett brennende Dichterin (und mit ihr all die brennenden Frauen mittelalterlicher Städte, die ihrer weiblichen Bevölkerung mittels Feuers ledig geworden) ist alle Frauen und gleichzeitig keine Frau, weil die Frau nichts ist.' Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln', p. 312.

rather than the more common *Mutterleib*. For her adversaries, this one collective abstraction, named ‘woman,’ like grey eternity, provides peace and feelings of togetherness. Yet, precisely in being affirmed as a universal category, ‘woman’ is negated. Jelinek adds, ‘[f]eminine salvation in unity [*Einheitseligkeit*] should be warned against.’<sup>126</sup> Her argument is in some ways close to that of Horkheimer, where a unifying femininity exists as the memory of lost sisterhood. For Horkheimer it is paradoxically also that which strengthens the status quo, by strengthening the present against the past, against history.

There is a lesson here for any feminist politics which forms around the suffering of a singular woman, or a politics based on any singular oppression, which all too easily becomes universalising. This tendency is common in feminist politics, which throughout its history has been subject to splits and fractures.<sup>127</sup> One moment of oppression can, in its politicisation stand in for all others, so that those who identify with the victim come to be represented by her.<sup>128</sup> Jelinek distills the logic at play: the pain of one woman is the pain of all women. Yet, this formulation is complicated. If there is some truth to the claim Jelinek argues against, it is in its proximity to the notion that the exploitation of one worker is the exploitation of all workers. Interestingly, Jelinek’s is an argument against understanding ‘women’ as a class. This is because what comes under the abstraction ‘woman’, is something which is put up for extinction.

Another intervention Jelinek made into Bachmann’s legacy was her rewriting of *Malina* into a screenplay. The film was directed by Werner Schroeter, with Isabelle Huppert playing the protagonist. Schroeter’s *Malina* (1991) came under intense criticism (Plate 3.0a). Sara Lennox argues that Schroeter’s approach was disdained by radical feminists who argued that he reneged on Bachmann’s message, which concerns the brutality of men towards women. Lennox shows that feminists such as Alice Schwarzer of the liberal feminist magazine *Emma*, followed by Iris Radisch, Dorothee Römhild, Kathleen Komar and Regula Venske claimed that it was clear that the protagonist had suffered because of paternal incest (as is suggested in the second chapter of the novel *Malina*), a topic that was also of great interest in Germany in the late 80s. For these feminists, Schroeter had replaced this sentiment with its opposite: in his adaptation, from Jelinek’s screenplay, the protagonist is explored through her own complicity in her oppression.<sup>129</sup> There is much to probe here, reading Jelinek in relation to these claims is helpful.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 312.

<sup>127</sup> Indeed, the reactionary part of the anti-porn campaign waged by *Emma* is part of this. Likewise, the splits in feminism along the lines of race and racialised violence is another instance.

<sup>128</sup> The corollary judgement takes the crime of a perpetrator and says all people clumped under his abstract sign, are equal to him.

<sup>129</sup> Lennox, p. 69.

<sup>130</sup> Alice Schwarzer responded: ‘Feminist, postfeminist, antifeminist, or what-ever-else criticism dissects the novel with aesthetic and psychoanalytic methods... Fashionably, it blames the victim, even insinuates that the

Schwarzer reprints (in an altered version) 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln' in 1991. Lennox claims she does so in order to back up her own criticisms of Schroeter.<sup>131</sup> Lennox suggests that the text 'proclaimed men's treatment of women a continuation of the Nazi extermination of the Jews, viewing women as exiles from a culture in which they had no part and no voice and which was determined to destroy them'.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, in her analyses of the splits and fall-outs in relation to the feminist movement in West Germany, Dagmar Herzog shows that some feminists made direct comparisons between the period of sexual revolution after 1968 and the Nazi period. She cites *Emma* as an active force in this campaign. She characterises much of this in the spirit of comments which, 'did not constitute attempts to offer analysis of Nazism', rather they 'had the effect of whitewashing women's complicity during the Third Reich', furthermore, 'Antisemitism, it was declared, was preeminently "a male disease". And any antisemitic opinions expressed by females could be explained as the result not of their own views but rather the fear of losing an (antisemitic) man's love'.<sup>133</sup> Herzog describes a displacement where, "'antifeminism" was "the hidden theoretical basis of German fascism,"' and 'National Socialism was an "extreme form of patriarchy."' <sup>134</sup> Yet, as we have seen, in the case of Reich (and Horkheimer), this was in fact in line with much theorisation of National Socialism prior to the break out of the war. Herzog also shows the other side of this debate: the retort from men to such feminist claims can be characterised by an example where the so-called feminist attacks on pornography were compared to 'the Nazi's attacks on pornography and on its purportedly Jewish purveyors'.<sup>135</sup> Herzog describes a struggle between New Left men and feminist women which emerges from the sexual liberation and anti-war movements and transforms into a battle of blame over the past, along gendered lines.<sup>136</sup> It is clear that *Emma* and Schwarzer are deeply embroiled in this tangle, I would venture that in some respects, both sides of this struggle hold some truth.

If we return to 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln', and pay attention to its politics, Jelinek claims that Bachmann takes the definitive place as the first (German speaking) poet to describe 'the effects of war, torture, destruction in society, and relationships between men and women, with radical poetic means'.<sup>137</sup> As Beatrice Hanssen claimed, as I noted above, Jelinek argues

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victim enjoys suffering, even worse, some of the critics relegate what happens to the realm of a masochist's fantasies.' Schwarzer cited by Lennox, p. 69.

<sup>131</sup> Lennox, p. 69. See: Elfriede Jelinek, 'Jelinek Über Bachmann', in *EMMA*, 2/1991, pp. 21-24.

<sup>132</sup> Lennox, p. 69.

<sup>133</sup> Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 239.

<sup>134</sup> Herzog, p. 240.

<sup>135</sup> Herzog, p. 240.

<sup>136</sup> For Herzog this tendency culminates in Klaus Theweleit's *Männerphantasien* (1977, *Male Fantasies*), in which Theweleit takes seriously feminist claims in order to try to go beyond vulgar Marxist and Freud-Marxist analysis of first, economics and second, the direct relation between sexual repression, and fascism. Herzog convincingly argues that Theweleit fails to draw adequate conclusions. Herzog, p. 246.

<sup>137</sup> Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln', p. 312.

that Bachmann's contribution is to describe the relationship between the sexes as similar to or foundational to aspects of the politics of Nazism. Jelinek draws on the theories of Elisabeth Lenk, Ria Endres and Gerburg Treusch-Dieter to claim that women, by virtue of their ability to reproduce the species are fixed as nature, while men are given the responsibility of civilisation.<sup>138</sup> Thus, in Jelinek's argument, 'woman' is 'biologically inferior' and, as 'eternally submissive' she is marked out as fitting for fascist ideology. Woman's biological inferiority, embedded in delusions connected to 'blood and soil' refers to her sex, the place where fascist man can put his 'eternal weapons', a motif that we find across *Lust*.<sup>139</sup> In this formulation Jelinek is close to Reich and Horkheimer. I suggest that the crux of her argument is over what stands as 'woman'; what woman means.

In the 1980s historians such as Claudia Koonz and Renate Bridenthal have shown how Nazi women such as Gertrud Scholtz-Klink (director of the Women's Bureau under Hitler, and author of *The Women in the Third Reich*, 1978) developed their own ideological positions:

[W]omen 'came naturally to form the "biological middle point" of a new society' driven by 'nationalist and racial powers... Without the courage, power and steadfastness of women, girls and mothers in the Third Reich, the Germany of today would be unthinkable.'<sup>140</sup>

Koonz notes that she found Scholtz-Klink's *The Women in the Third Reich*, in a feminist bookshop in Berlin in 1980. 'Although its essays carried a deeply anti-feminist message, the bookstore stocked it because its author was female. [...] Biology still counted more than opinion in Berlin' she writes.<sup>141</sup> For Koonz, the fantasy image of inert woman, untouched by the world, by politics, by history, maintains the image of 'cherished mothers' and nostalgia for 'mothers who remain beyond good and evil—preservers of love, charity and peace'.<sup>142</sup> This patriarchal idea of 'woman' was incorporated into some strands of feminism.

Jelinek (and Bachmann) foreground the conditions that women must ascend to in a society dominated by fascistic 'Aryan supremacy' but this ascent, it can be argued, contributes to what gave the society its legitimacy. Koonz shows that in a unique way, in the history of Western societies, 'Nazi doctrine created a society structured around "natural" biological poles', where

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<sup>138</sup> See Ria Endres, 'Die Paradoxie des Sprechens', in *Kein Objektives Urteil, nur ein Lebendiges: Texte zum Werke von Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. by Christine Koschel and Inge von Weidenbaum, pp. 448–62; Elisabeth Lenk, 'Indiscretions of the Literary Beast: Pariah Consciousness of Women Writers since Romanticism', trans. by Maureen Krause, *New German Critique*, (1982), 101–14.

<sup>139</sup> Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln', p. 312.

<sup>140</sup> Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. xix.

<sup>141</sup> Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. xix.

<sup>142</sup> Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 4.



‘race and sex became the predominant social markers’.<sup>143</sup> I would however add a rejoinder and query Koonz on just how unique this actually was. We know now that the Nuremberg race laws were in fact inspired by Jim Crow era race legislation in the USA.<sup>144</sup>

Yet, for Jelinek, similarly to Koonz, German (and this includes Austrian) fascism is defined and maintained through a biological hierarchy evidenced in woman’s supposed attachment to nature: ‘woman is the dead organic substance of the ground, compost [*humus*], for myth-forming’.<sup>145</sup> For Koonz this shows how, if women could (and most did) ascend to *their* position in the ‘master race’ and collaborate in the Nazi state, they were also relegated to their own ‘biological’ space, ‘both beneath and beyond the dominant world of men’.<sup>146</sup>

The way Jelinek develops her argument in ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’ reveals some assumptions that we must attend to. First, although these characteristics are naturalising, they are not naturalised: ‘She will be repressed [*verdrängt*] from the sphere of societal production, and thus determined from history to “timelessness” [*Zeitlosigkeit*] [...] and made part of the world of animals and plants, eternal, pure image’.<sup>147</sup> From being a subject of history, ‘woman’ is repressed from societal production; from being active, she is pushed downwards into a static, timeless and biological space. The implication, like many feminist arguments from the period, is that the work of social-reproduction appears timeless, without end and fully naturalised. Yet, what sets Jelinek apart from social reproduction theory is her attention to the mediation of fascism under capitalism, her attention to a dynamic in the relation between the positions of men and women, and her attention to language. Jelinek’s argument firmly claims that what appears eternal and natural is historically produced.

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<sup>143</sup> Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> See: James Q. Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

<sup>145</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 312.

<sup>146</sup> Koonz, p. 6. The Nazi’s set up state funded breeding programmes or birth houses called ‘Lebensborn’ to ‘improve’ or raise the birth rate of ‘racially pure’ and healthy ‘Aryan’ children. If we look family politics in Vienna prior to Austro-fascism and the Anschluss, the historian Helmut Gruber has criticised Red Vienna, pointing to the ways that successful social democracy’s failures became fascism’s successes, indeed the organisation of the family was key here. It is worth considering that policies developed by the Austro-Marxists were proximate in terms of ‘population improvement’ though they differed on the question of race. See: Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture 1919-1934* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 146-179 (pp. 157-165). In a more recent study from 2014, Janek Wasserman argues that the ‘Red’ in Red Vienna was turned into a pejorative in its own moment. This period of Vienna’s history was only understood as Red, retroactively. As we know, Red Vienna was violently smashed by the arrival of the Austro-fascist Engelbert Dollfuß and Cardinal Theodor Innitzer. In a rebuke to Gruber, Wasserman argues that without paying adequate attention to the conservative movement one cannot fully understand what was achieved by the socialists. *Black Vienna* attempts account for a history of conservative ideas and their prevalence in relation to the more dominant history of municipal socialism. What apolitical historians call ‘apolitical conservatism’ was precisely what paved the way for Austro-fascism which led to Nazism. Wasserman’s account aims to emphasise how successful the successes of municipal socialism were, while also venturing on the weaknesses and limits of this movement. Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City 1918-1938*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

<sup>147</sup> ‘Sie wird aus der Sphäre der gesellschaftlichen Produktion verdrängt und damit aus der Geschichte, auf “Zeitlosigkeit” [...] festgelegt, der Welt von Tier und Pflanze zugesellt, verewigt, reines Bild’. Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 312.

‘Fascism is the first element in relationship between a man and a woman’ (I. Bachmann). In Fascism, the woman who dares to step beyond her role as child-bearer and carer, is the plague, the enemy inside, ‘rot in instalments’ (Celine). She becomes the general destroyer, the enemy from the outside, like the Jews.<sup>148</sup>

We see that fascism’s use of ‘woman’ lies in the attribution of value to her measured against what kind of child she produces, what kind of care she gives, what kind of love she provides. If she deviates from this model she becomes ‘degenerate’. There is obviously no comparison between ‘women’ in everyday capitalist society and what happened to Jews (including Jewish women) as victims of Nazism. What I would suggest Jelinek is arguing, if polemically, is this: under the specific regime of National Socialism, if women did not submit to being bearer of children or a poorly paid worker, they would *become* ‘enemy from the outside,’ but it is worth asking, could not this be the case for anyone during Nazism?

If we recall, Jelinek takes Bachmann’s claim: “There is not war and peace, there is only war”<sup>149</sup> as the grounds for her title of this essay. Like other materialist feminists, she takes this claim into the space of marriage:

For love is the continuation of war by other means. On this battlefield, a bloody, sometimes bloodless, destruction of the female, who is not allowed to become a subject, must always remain an object [*Objekt*], the object [*Gegenstand*] of employment contracts which are not recognised by society, called marriage.<sup>150</sup>

For Beatrice Hanssen this points to the ‘*topos*’ of the struggle between the sexes converging with the bio-politics of fascism.<sup>151</sup> Jelinek’s loyalty to Bachmann is paired with a proto or ‘first-generation’ feminism (which for Hanssen is also characterised by essentialist principles) emerging immediately after the second world war, which conflates critiques of gender inequity and critiques of fascism.<sup>152</sup> I would argue that Jelinek is actually making the opposite claim: she

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<sup>148</sup> “‘Der Faschismus ist das erste in der Beziehung zwischen einem Mann und einer Frau...’” (I. Bachmann) Im Faschismus ist die Frau, wagt sie es, über ihre Rolle als Gebärerin und Pflegerin hinauszutreten, Seuche, Feind im Inneren, “Fäulnis auf Raten” (Celine). Sie wird zur allgemeinen Verderberin, zum Feind von außen. Wie die Juden’. Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’, p. 312. It can be argued that Jelinek’s is the inverse of the problematic argument made by Jewish Austrian Otto Weininger in his *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903, *Sex and Character*). Equally, Jelinek’s sentiment is legitimated by Adorno and Horkheimer who in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* write: ‘The explanation for the hatred of woman as the weaker in mental and physical power, who bears the mark of domination on her brow, is the same as for the hatred of the Jews.’ Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. 88.

<sup>149</sup> Bachmann cited by Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit Anderen Mitteln’, p. 311.

<sup>150</sup> Jelinek, ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’, p. 313.

<sup>151</sup> Hanssen, p. 211.

<sup>152</sup> Hanssen, p. 212.

is critiquing both, the essentialism of the Nazi conception of ‘woman,’ and what she finds remaining of this essentialism in the feminist abstraction, ‘woman’.

Yet, Hanssen also argues that to reduce Jelinek’s work to this set of politics — a single minded preoccupation with the battle of the sexes, with biological essentialism — is to miss the ways in which her works hold these forces in tension with one another.<sup>153</sup> Hanssen cites the tension between Jelinek’s sexual politics and her language politics as well as the ways in which her works execute her espoused praxis ‘*die Risse sichtbar machen*’ of making the cracks visible, revealing the ‘faultlines of society where chronic violence turns into acute violence’.<sup>154</sup> Hanssen shows that the word *Riß*, appearing in various moments across Jelinek’s essay, holds within itself the ‘violent force, the language of fierce ruptures and satyric interventions’ which typify Jelinek’s style.<sup>155</sup> Likewise, the reduction to essentialism would for Hanssen avoid the crucial play on the Freudian notion, which Jelinek brings into view, of the drive for destruction [*Destruktionstrieb*]. To repeat, Jelinek does not make or affirm a biologically essentialist argument concerning *what woman is*, since she asserts that this dynamic, this history of patriarchal society should be reflected on within culture.<sup>156</sup> Rather, Jelinek foregrounds a dynamic. Under the extreme form of patriarchal capitalism that was Nazism, ascending to the position of ‘woman’ was obligatory. In a society, ruled by phallocratic, patriarchal capitalism, this ascent is not obligatory but necessary, required, advised, recommended and rewarded: women are both oppressed and participate in that oppression, and the oppression of numerous others.

### 3.3.1: *Subtraction and Destruction*

Jelinek’s analysis of Bachmann provides insight into her exploration of the intertwined structures of reproductive work and love within the family within the context of postwar Austria, a society lubricated by open secrets, disavowal and protection. In Jelinek’s description of Bachmann’s Franza, it is Franza who describes the negative process of marriage as a war on her body:

Her body, her feelings, her labor power [*Arbeitskraft*] are torn from her, step by step, in an act of whole-body lobotomy, until so to speak, the empty outer skin remains: a female, desexualised [*entgeschlechtlicher*], without the bloodshed of socially introduced

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<sup>153</sup> Hanssen, p, 212.

<sup>154</sup> Hanssen, p, 212.

<sup>155</sup> Hanssen, p, 212.

<sup>156</sup> ‘Elfriede Jelinek (Gespräch)’, in *Frauenleben, Frauenpolitik: Rückschläge & Utopien*, ed. by Gabriele Presber (Tübingen: konkursbuch, 1992), pp. 7-37 (p. 34).

carcass exploitation. Being will become, through this perfidious exclusion from the sphere of social processes, non-existence.<sup>157</sup>

Through this progressive stripping away, and emptying out, Franza remains as a kind of carapace of a female, desexualised body, without the physical destruction that comes with work. She is repressed to *Hinterland* activities, forced to partake only in reproductive labour, outside of social processes.

Can we say that reproductive labour, without feelings or a body, comes to designate a kind of empty timelessness? In this schema, similarly to Reich, Jelinek claims that under fascism, women's sexual autonomy is negated. If women submit to the ideal of 'woman', untouched by the world and history, and they enter into this 'misunderstood' role, they simultaneously deny themselves, and in this sense as, given by Bachmann, they agree to their extinction. Jelinek writes of this: 'the true cause of which Bachmann has always called a kind of death drive'.<sup>158</sup> It is here that Jelinek understands woman to 'not' exist. And in turn, every possible positive idea of 'woman' will also exclude the women who can not or will not ascend to its ideal.<sup>159</sup>

'Das Weibliche Nicht-Opfer' ('The Female Non-Victim') was published two decades after 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln' in 2004. It is a short text that contributes to a volume on sexual violence and female experiences in Nazi concentration camps. This text continues on the same path as 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln' but, I suggest that it deepens the historical significance of what is presented: in this case the destruction of women forced into sex-work in the camps of the Third Reich.

Jelinek describes the process of gender construction during the war (which, she asserts is still essentially true), as annihilating the female *Opfer* (as defined above). She goes to the (Heideggerian) concept of Being, which is here defined by what it excludes: who is not allowed to *be*? We read that the position of the feminine is not allowed to Be. Jelinek uses a complex language which often contradicts itself. She follows language itself. So, if beautiful this feminine female must be seen, and to save itself, it would happily hear and obey. Jelinek calls this woman an '*Unselbst*,' an un-self, a self which ceases to be a self; a *Das*, which can only be used for what her presence designates, being a body. This is what gives meaning to the second and enigmatic part of her title: 'nicht-Opfer.' She cannot be a human, a being, 'she has to be a

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<sup>157</sup> 'Ihr Körper, ihre Gefühle, ihre Arbeitskraft werden ihr in einem Akt der Gleichsam ganzkörperlichen Lobotomie Zug um Zug entrissen, bis die leere Außenhaut übrigbleibt, sozusagen ein weiblicher, ein entgeschlechtlicher, unblutig der gesellschaftlichen Kadaververwertung zugeführt. Sein wird, durch diesen perfiden Ausschluss aus der Sphäre der ablaufenden gesellschaftlichen Prozesse, zu Nichtsein.' Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln', p. 313.

<sup>158</sup> Jelinek, 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln', p. 313.

<sup>159</sup> Theorists such as Saidiya Hartman have called for a fugitive justice, which would include feminism outside of the domain of 'womanhood'. Saidiya Hartman and Stephen Best, 'Fugitive Justice', *Representations*, 92.1 (2005), 1-15.

body [*Körper*] or she is not allowed to be anything'.<sup>160</sup> In this context where the human is reduced to matter, the one who is made into a body, and used as a body, destroyed as a body, is not allowed to be anything but a body.

Whereas 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln' registers the use of 'woman' by fascism, and the 'virus of crime' that infects, or even founds Austria as it exists today in relation to art, as a call to arms against harmonising art, or art which tends towards reconciliation, 'Das Weibliche Nicht-Opfer' offers a more specific account of the non-victim, the understanding of woman as body, which cuts through the logic of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the bio-political state. In this essay Jelinek points to specific scenarios in the camps and focuses on the ways that women are destroyed within them.

The first camp to open a brothel in 1942, which sexually enslaved women was Mauthausen, now in Austria.<sup>161</sup> Reports show that 34,140 women were forced into sexual labour during the Third Reich.<sup>162</sup> In the camps, as Jelinek explains the aim was not to produce but to destroy. The production of commodities, ends in the death factories of their makers. Adam Tooze describes this '*Vernichtung durch Arbeit*', destruction through labour, a process of killing people by using them up as part of the Nazi compromise made between ideology and pragmatism.<sup>163</sup> In 1951, Hannah Arendt writes that what is incredible, unbelievable about the horrors, 'is closely bound up with their economic uselessness.' She continues:

The Nazis carried out this uselessness to the point of open anti-utility when in the midst of the war, despite the shortage of building material and rolling stock, they set up enormous, costly extermination factories and transported millions of people back and forth. In the eyes of the strictly utilitarian world the obvious contradiction between these acts and military expediency gave the whole enterprise an air of mad unreality.<sup>164</sup>

For Jelinek, after Arendt, this represents precisely the paradox of the labour camps. Jelinek also emphasises this misuse of transport machinery which diverted human masses to their destruction, instead of keeping the war production [*Kriegsproduktion*] up to date. She adds to this argument about use and misuse, a gendered dimension: still below the '*Untermenschen*', are the female '*Untermenschen*'.<sup>165</sup> The purpose of forced sexual labour of women, which meant the leisure activities of concentration camp guards and SS officers, describes a process of 'group

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<sup>160</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, 'Das weibliche Nicht-Opfer', in *Sexualisierte Gewalt*, ed. by Helga Amesberger, Katrin Auer, and Brigitte Halbmayr (Wien; Berlin: Mandelbaum, 2004), pp. x–xvi (p. xv).

<sup>161</sup> See also Alain Resnais' film *Night and Fog* from 1956.

<sup>162</sup> Nanda Herbermann, *The Blessed Abyss: Inmate #6582 in Ravensbrück Concentration Camp for Women* (Wayne State University Press, 2000), p. 34.

<sup>163</sup> Tooze, p. 531.

<sup>164</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York; Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), p. 445.

<sup>165</sup> Jelinek, 'Das weibliche Nicht-Opfer', p. xiv.

rape, [as] a rape in a collective', (Jelinek adds a disclaimer to say this occurs in every war) where the rape is not for sexual pleasure even if it was done in this way, rather they were for eradicating the humans who also had to serve in this erasure.<sup>166</sup> Most of the women were killed. Jelinek asserts that the word '*verbraucht*', 'consumed', was often used at the time. The 'beautiful' women were consumed and destroyed.<sup>167</sup> Thus Jelinek presents the intertwining of labour and sex with the destruction of the female under the political system of Nazism.

### 3.3.2: *The Dialectics of Language*

If we return to Beatrice Hanssen's argument, she ascribes the concept of inversion to Jelinek's technique with language. Jelinek's characters hover between depicting a possible realism and a hyper-inflated sexually exploitative stereotype, a mask or a cliché. Hanssen locates this technique in Luce Irigaray's idea of 'ironic mimesis'.<sup>168</sup> In the 1970s Irigaray called for women to adopt the strategy, where, by means of 'impersonating subordinate roles allocated to women in society, [this] would lead to their overhaul'.<sup>169</sup> Hanssen's aim, in her essay, is to rescue Jelinek from the pits of criticism by paying attention to the knot in her works which leads her to the violence at their core. Hanssen identifies in Jelinek's work 'fictional realms in which sexual desire, aggression and violence substitute for and permeate one another'.<sup>170</sup> This allows her to say that the first diagnosis of the title of the essay on Bachmann: 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln' produces a linkage where patriarchal structure and war meet each other and according to Hanssen, the latter aspect of this meeting suggests a prescriptive moment that can be read as a call to arms, to perpetuate the war by other means, to use the language of violence against violence.<sup>171</sup> For Hanssen this impulse towards 'destruction through language,' is situated in the context of the 'aesthetics, poetics and politics of violence that have shaped modernity'.<sup>172</sup> However, she also paradoxically guards against this position, which would merely work to make Jelinek's oeuvre respectable within a certain tradition, to canonise her.<sup>173</sup> Where I part ways with Hanssen is precisely in her allocation of Jelinek to the postmodern and poststructuralist discourse and method. Hanssen claims firstly that Jelinek's writings index the expansion of the concept of violence, from material to epistemic and discursive, and secondly through the ways in which her work operates with violence, it illuminates the problem of the 'instrumentality for feminism'.<sup>174</sup> By focusing on this proposition alluded to in Jelinek's essay

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<sup>166</sup> Jelinek, 'Das weibliche Nicht-Opfer', p. xiv.

<sup>167</sup> Jelinek, 'Das weibliche Nicht-Opfer', p. xv.

<sup>168</sup> Hanssen, p. 221.

<sup>169</sup> Hanssen, p. 221.

<sup>170</sup> Hanssen, p. 212.

<sup>171</sup> Hanssen, p. 212.

<sup>172</sup> Hanssen, p. 212.

<sup>173</sup> Hanssen, p. 212.

<sup>174</sup> Hanssen, p. 213.

on Bachmann, Hanssen can suggest that she pushes this proposition of war, as the ‘strategic’ perpetuation of ‘politics by other means’, to its limit point. Furthermore, Hanssen raises the question of whether a properly ‘post-structuralist feminism’ should turn to ‘a strategic use of counter violence’.<sup>175</sup> Hanssen asks whether this form of counter violence can contribute to feminist critique? What are the limitations of such a praxis? If we consider Sara Lennox’s comments on the poststructuralist reception of Bachmann, which explored language and the feminine on a somewhat ephemeral level of theory, then is this the right path? While Hanssen is attempting to redress the relationship between critical theory and post-structuralism, I would argue that one doesn’t need to see Jelinek as aligned with post-structuralist feminism. By paying attention to something more resoundingly evident in her work, we can move beyond the inevitable interstices that post-structuralist feminism leaves us with, and learn more from Jelinek’s writings as dialectical and materialist in their method.<sup>176</sup>

Hanssen’s essay was first published in the mid-1990s, thus one could argue that it is in some ways symptomatic of the debates addressing violence (and pornography, as in the case of *Lust*) in German culture at large at the time. While she published this essay from the USA, it is clear that she paid attention to such debates. That these debates were so fierce holds some residue of ‘German women’s’ values as described by Koonz, and scorned by Jelinek. The analysis of women in Nazi Germany explains that women voted against their participation in, and empowerment through politics: they voted to remain in, or return to a subservient position in the home. Jelinek asserts that this was part of their agreeing to their own extinction.

In *Lust* Jelinek tries to exercise the most sophisticated linguistic possibilities, far away from the stylistic devices of socialist realism, although her work addresses what might be considered similar themes.<sup>177</sup> Jelinek stages linguistic forms in their struggle for recognition each against the other.

Using the constructions of commodity language in exchange society: products, news, finance, fascism, advertising, war, television and cinema, and of philosophy and poetry she mediates between a utopian horizon which separates itself off from the rigidity of given German language with its detritus of historically formed language constructions, and such constructions. I propose that the implication here is not that her work becomes a site of post-modern openness, but rather that it dialectically pushes, by way of extremes, through these different layers/levels of meaning. With each step forward it progresses through its antithesis. If we return to Jelinek’s claim evidenced in *Lust*, which states that linguistic forms are pitted

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<sup>175</sup> Hanssen, p. 213.

<sup>176</sup> Hanssen is right to raise these questions as her study is illuminating in precisely her attempts to historicise this practice of deploying a feminist critical violence, and this works to allay hysterical fears that her works at best produce a metaphysical, and at worst a fascist violence.

<sup>177</sup> Jelinek, ‘Wahrscheinlich wäre ich ein Lustmörder’.

against each other in an Hegelian struggle, it is useful to look to Gillian Rose. In the context of exploring the original developments of modern capitalist society, Rose posits the struggle for recognition as always in its ‘changing configurations of misrecognition.’ She writes:

Between two self-consciousnesses, recognition is represented as the struggle between lord and bondsman, which is subsequently internalised in the duplicated ‘unhappy consciousness’; while in the historical world, it is presented as ‘legal status’: the misrecognitions attendant on abstract legal personality, private property and the decay of public and political life.<sup>178</sup>

For Jelinek, this struggle, as the changing configurations of misrecognition, creates a breach where the object, in this case woman, looks at herself as an object, and in so doing attempts to linguistically transform this objectivity from its media driven, unhappy consciousness. In *Lust*, Jelinek’s attempt to respond to the possibility of expressing female sexuality leads to female sexuality being defined as dominated sexuality. In a related way to *Die Klavierspielerin* where a ‘way out’ is found through the body-analysis of the *Leib*, with *Lust*, Jelinek submits the language of sexuality to this kind of analysis.

### 3.2.3: Conclusion: Against Innocence

In this chapter I have focussed on the double notion of reproduction. First, in terms of the reproduction of life and gendered positions, which takes hold in the family. This chapter has shown that the bourgeois family functions as the mini-business (extending to the directors factory) and mini-state, and inaugurates the mentality of competition needed by capitalism and patriarchy as depicted by the child. It has also described the relationship between the family and authoritarianism in the twentieth-century. Therefore, on one level, reproduction in the family constitutes the reproduction of society, which leads to Jelinek’s Gerti committing infanticide. The second reproduction occurs as mechanical reproduction. In Jelinek’s work this is shown to suture women to her ‘nature’. Therefore, to work in the double reproduction is to critique the naturalisations that occur both in the family (and the factory), and in mass produced culture. The next chapter will go back in time: it will pursue the double concept of reproduction in EXPORT’s works from the 1960s and 70s. It will redirect the double notion of reproduction from the family and the image expressed in language, to an underground history of the body. It will further pursue the position of women in mechanical reproduction, through photography and cinema.

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<sup>178</sup> Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (London: Verso, 2017), p. 67.



How can this notion of the Other, of woman as a body, be navigated, and what does it mean for artistic and political action and justice? For Gillian Rose, this problem of Other and woman as a body asserts itself as one of the disavowal of reason in the name of new ethics. In Rose's essay collection, *Judaism and Modernity* (1993) this problem is ensconced in the dichotomy of reason and ethics, though the notions of 'Other' and 'difference'.

For Rose, like Jelinek, no one is innocent: '[t]o denounce reason and to exalt its abused Other is to replace one mistake by another in three senses: it misrepresents the alterity of reason; it misrepresents the meaning of reason; it misrepresents the use being made of reason'.<sup>179</sup> She continues:

Once the perennial master, 'reason,' with his ambivalence of desire and fear, has at long last been subdued, the implication arises that 'women,' 'the body,' 'love,' released from the rationality of 'man,' 'the mind,' 'logic,' are no longer equivocal.<sup>180</sup>

For Rose, in this ambiguity these positions take on a fixity, even when, as she remarks, they are precisely defined as 'fluid'.<sup>181</sup> 'Far from bringing to light what is difficult out of darkness and silence, difficulty is brought to certainty. Certainty does not empower, it subjugates — for only thinking which has the ability to tolerate uncertainty is powerful, that is, non-violent.'<sup>182</sup> The underlying thread in this argument relies on bringing difficulty and pain into whatever equation is at stake against disavowing difficulty and pain and seeking the puritanical positions of perfected ethics. These further sentences press on this notion of innocence in relation to gender. Rose points her critique at Judith Plaistow who, she argues 'founds a new certainty — the innocence and immediacy of women's experience'.<sup>183</sup> Rose's argument here corresponds with what we have read before:

[A]ll and any experience, however long abused and recently uncovered, will be actual and not simply alter (Other): the discrepant outcome of idea and act will be traceable to meanings which transcend the boundaries of idea and act — to norm, imperative, commandment and inhibition, that is, to the law and its commotion.<sup>184</sup>

For Rose, law brings the 'norm, imperative, commandment and inhibition' into relation with the idea and act, to which they inevitably signal. 'Women's experience' is not innocent of these

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<sup>179</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 3.

<sup>180</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 4.

<sup>181</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 4.

<sup>182</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 4.

<sup>183</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>184</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 5.

ways, just as it does not exist outside of structures that can also be restructured.<sup>185</sup> In Jelinek's work, as in EXPORT's, there is a troubling of the notion of innocence, which lies in its unresolved status. Rose can help us to counter the concept of a pure Other, sometimes present and tangible in Jelinek. Yet, Jelinek is dialectal: where woman is a victim, this is the result of age-old violences. Violences, like marital rape, which are so normalised that they become invisible. She might be a victim and she might also be complicit in patterns or behaviour, or ways of life which perpetuate her victimhood. For Rose, 'new ethics' are characterised by the categories of 'difference' and 'Other' which come to stand for 'theoretical' and 'practical [...] anti-reason', in that order.<sup>186</sup> German feminism in the postwar period made some questionable and damaging assumptions, in particular in relation to women's victimisation. Jelinek pushed against this by pointing to dynamics which repeat, without hypostatising these dynamics. In Jelinek's view, the women's movement could not change centuries, millennia of patriarchal structures.<sup>187</sup> In this sense she is close to the post-Bachofen Frankfurt School tradition of thinking gender.

In my reading, she parries with a problem: it is not that she 'blames the victim', rather, she does not consider that patriarchal 'habits', forms of life inculcated in the family, are easily overcome. I propose that Jelinek's form of poetic feminism does not belong to a school of idealism. As well as sexual violence, it is informed by women's economic dependence, and capitalist reification. It is by refusing to become the victim of another, that white supremacist, patriarchal-capitalist society will stop benefitting and profiting from double-victimhood. This double victimhood is understood in the sense that it frees a person or a nation from responsibility, from the possibility of mourning, facing up to guilt and complicity, and victimhood which relies on bigotry and racism and the exclusion of the Other, to prevail.

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<sup>185</sup> 'Reason that is actual is ready for all kinds of surprises, for what cannot be anticipated, precisely because of the interference of meanings which are structured and reconstructable.' Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>186</sup> Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, p. 5.

<sup>187</sup> 'Elfriede Jelinek (Gespräch)', p. 24.

## Chapter 4 - Life Becomes a Film: Deformation, Media and the Body

### 4.1.0: Cinema: Expanded and Reduced

Expanded Cinema in the 1960s and 70s, like other forms of expanded artistic practice (Viennese Actionism), sought to take apart, piece-by-piece the dominant models of art and film in order to destroy them, while simultaneously ‘activating’ the viewer’s senses. In the 1960s, in light of the singular dominant project of economic restoration through the Marshall Plan, a debate was taking place in the arts which would attempt to transform the concept of art. It would push for a shift in our understanding of art. In Austria this was also taking place in literature, between Elfriede Jelinek, Alfred Kolleritsch and Peter Handke in the journal *manuskripte*.<sup>1</sup>

In her retrospective essay, ‘Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality’ (1991) VALIE EXPORT describes a process where each part or aspect of a ‘film’ is exchanged for a new one. This is the aim of Expanded Cinema. Expanded Cinema tries to negate the illusion or appearance of the image, by seeking out the limit of the screen, rendering it an object, or a material. This would bring the work closer to the ‘real’, where in her words: the “‘illusion” of film would be transformed into the “material” film’ thus illuminating its foundations as illusion.<sup>2</sup>

In the introduction to the two volume *Eine Subgeschichte des Films: Lexikon des Avantgarde-, Experimental- und Undergroundfilms* (1974, *A Sub-history of Film, Lexicon of Avant-garde, Experimental and Underground Films*) Peter Weibel argues that the history of art should be understood as interconnected with the history of capitalism. EXPORT’s films, some of which she made alone, many of which she made in collaboration with Weibel, are included in this volume. Weibel posits that in the age of monopoly capitalism and mass media, where the means of production of media lie in private or state ownership, an economic theory of art is necessary.<sup>3</sup> Here the social powers of productivity appear in their totality as the productive power of capitalism and artistic products contain an ‘immaterial value’: in this formulation, in

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<sup>1</sup> Janke, *Die Nestbeschmutzerin*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> VALIE EXPORT, ‘Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality’, *JAM*, 1.4 (1991), 7-13. In the draft of this essay, which I have seen at the VALIE EXPORT centre in Linz, it is noticeable that EXPORT has crossed out all mentions of Peter Weibel. To me this signifies something of a process of separation in terms of EXPORT’s thinking, which until that point I think is clearly interlocked with Weibel’s. For this reason, in my opinion it would be inappropriate to affirm this separation in this chapter. The period which this chapter addresses, the 1960s and 70s was when EXPORT and Weibel worked in intensive collaboration. See: VALIE EXPORT, ‘Draft, “Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality”’, undated, VALIE EXPORT Center Linz, Forschungszentrum für Medien und Performancekunst.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Weibel, ‘Was ist und was soll eine Subgeschichte des Films?’, in *Eine Subgeschichte des Films: Lexikon des Avantgarde-, Experimental- und Undergroundfilms* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), pp. 12-28 (p. 16).

capitalism, the artist is only ‘productive’ if they produce surplus value.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Weibel argues that it would be a mistake to differentiate between artistic products and the products of industry, because the function of an artwork is not to produce value for human society. In this formulation, within a capitalist society, one understands artistic or industrially produced objects through the commodity. Not in terms of its use-value but in terms of its exchange-value [*Tauschwert*].<sup>5</sup> We can recall the famous line from Marx’s *Capital* (1867): ‘If commodities could speak, they would say this: our use value may interest man, but it does not belong to us as objects’.<sup>6</sup> Weibel formulates a theory of art which is deeply intertwined with the critique of capitalism and animated by concepts such as: ‘*exchange value, surplus value, profit rate, consumption, fetish, competition, demand, monopoly, accumulation, reproduction, transformation of value in price, subsidy, disproportionality, expansion, circulation*’.<sup>7</sup> In Weibel’s schema, these concepts manifest in art in a way which is both deformed and which deforms.<sup>8</sup> How might we reread this theory onto expanded art practices? For Weibel, and EXPORT (as discussed in chapter 1) this brings the brand and the artwork into close proximity. The history of economics illuminates the ideology of art as its symptom: it negatively reproduces a central problem of art, that is to say, its value.<sup>9</sup> Weibel argues that art appears as the production of surplus value, and art history as the history of exchange value held in artistic-commercial products. In turn, the most prolific artist is the one who can generate the most value.<sup>10</sup>

Weibel aims to theorise a sub-history of film, including works which tried to realise new strategies of communication outside of the state/private monopoly on media. Film tried to ‘shift sensibility’, aid reflection, make visible ‘amputated perception’, as well as the structures and conditions of dominant cinema.<sup>11</sup> Expanded Cinema in the 1960s and 70s was a genre of film which wanted to do something. It aimed to abolish ‘old aesthetic values’ and the ‘hierarchy of the instincts’ [*hierarchie der instinkte*] in order to work towards cerebral liberation which would meet political liberation.<sup>12</sup> This cinema, often called ‘independent’, which for Weibel meant that it saw through its dependence, would, in its clearest moments fight against the ways communication media is monopolised.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 16. It should be noted that Weibel’s text is now some decades old, and our attention to it is insofar as this theorisation of art and value informed both the making and reception of art that used the body in the late 1960s and 70s. What is put at stake in particular is the relationship between the body as material, the body as labour power, commodity and the body as superfluous to capital, or beyond its reach. For more on the current debates on art and value see ch. 1, note 24.

<sup>5</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: Critique of Political Economy, Volume One*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), p. 176.

<sup>7</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Weibel, ‘Subgeschichte des Films’, p. 22.

[T]he demand that everyone could and should make films was the signal of a politics aimed at the abolition of the division of labor and the elimination of private property, one which was on the way to a society of self-assertion, freedom of experience and communication, with a (famous) word: on the way to a classless society.<sup>14</sup>

Expanded Cinema followed the immanent method of the critique of capitalism. It aimed to transform the illusory social relations at its foundation.

If we return to EXPORT's focus on Expanded Cinema, we find this quote from Stan Vanderbeek (1966):

Everything expands, in all directions, there is an interconnection between all of the arts, literally between them all, and this is what it is about. I mean, let's say that art and life really should be one, and let's see what happens if we really make them one.<sup>15</sup>

I propose that there are some contradictions within this logic of synthesising art and life which EXPORT takes from Vanderbeek. It is not simply a question of making them one entity or thing. In 1968 EXPORT and Weibel describe *Instant Film*, as a 'meta-film that reflects the system of film and reality. After the development of instant coffee and instant milk, we have finally succeeded in inventing the "instant film," which is screen, projector and camera in one...' (Plate 4.0).<sup>16</sup> Here, the tongue in cheek gesture of the anti-film literally reflects the every-day process of reduction to the instant gratification of commodities. The combination of the two sets of ideas which I have described above: art's expression of capitalism's deformed concepts, and the integration of art and life, as life is increasingly subsumed under the logic of capitalism, animate the principle drive of Expanded Cinema.

The previous chapter has shown how through the writing of gender within patriarchal-capitalist social relations, in the example of *Lust* (1989), Jelinek intertwines sexuality, labour and the image. Here, I will extend this analysis of the role of the body to EXPORT's Expanded Cinema works from the 1960s and 70s, often made in collaboration with Weibel, asking how it mediates the transformations in the concept of art undertaken at this point. I will refer to texts written simultaneously to the works themselves. In the second part of this chapter I propose that *Unsichtbare Gegner* (1976, *Invisible Adversaries*), is the culmination of the Expanded Cinema works, yet, *Unsichtbare Gegner* brings the elements of Expanded Cinema from the streets, back into the cinema.

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<sup>14</sup> Weibel, 'Subgeschichte des Films', p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Stan Vanderbeek, quoted in EXPORT, 'Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality', p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> EXPORT and Weibel quoted in EXPORT, 'Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality', p. 9.

Insofar as *Unsichtbare Gegner* is an (anti-)Viennese film, I argue that aspects of it prefigure Elfriede Jelinek's play *Burgtheater: Posse mit Gesang* (1982). Jelinek's concerns with mass media can be said to parallel EXPORT's, in ways we have seen with *Lust*. In 'Die endlose Unschuldigkeit' (1970, 'The endless Innocence') Jelinek sets out a theory of media and society, in which television takes the role of a societal super-ego.<sup>17</sup> Television makes the world smaller by bringing the external world or environment into the house. It brings its watchers under a proximate consciousness. Jelinek's theory of media is similar to Weibel's in that on the level of the psyche, media is posited as an obstacle to struggle. Media operates to deflect class tensions, and works for benefit of the bourgeoisie, intensifying bourgeois aspiration and reproducing the illusion of the non-differentiation of social classes.<sup>18</sup> While *Unsichtbare Gegner* continues with the genre of Expanded Cinema, I want to suggest that it also attempts to reflect on the body, the psyche and the city in ways prevented by Expanded Cinema's reliance on the extra-cinematic, or literal: the materials, the transformed cinema and the public space. In the final part of this chapter I will read these conceptions of the artist and artwork, the artist and media, through an idea of the 'subterranean history of the body', as expressed in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). I will then reread this text through Rebecca Comay's critique of its gendering.

#### 4.1.1: Cinema takes to the streets

*Tapp und Tastkino* (1968-69) is an articulation of EXPORT's attempts to tear apart the cinema, the screen and to demystify its fetish: the breast (see plates 0.1, 0.1a). In *Tapp und Tastkino* the performer's torso is encased in a mini cinema complete with a stage curtain (Plate 0.1b). Behind the curtain her chest is left bare, and the rest of her body is normally clothed. In the *Wien Bildkompendium* EXPORT and Weibel write:

the projection takes place as usual in the dark, just that the cinema hall got a bit smaller. there is just room for two hands to see the movie, which in this case means to sense and feel the movie. the viewer/user has to lead both hands through the entrance of the cinema hall. with this the curtain is raised. whereas before it was only raised for the eyes, it is now also raised for the hands. the visit is free and clean/g-rated. [...]  
in the state sanctioned cinema they sit in the dark and see how two people do it with each other, and they themselves are not seen. here they do it themselves with lights on and many look at them. they come to their star and are themselves a star. every visitor

<sup>17</sup> This essay echoes Günter Anders' *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (1956). Elfriede Jelinek, *Die endlose Unschuldigkeit: Prosa - Hörspiel - Essay* (Schwifting: Schwiftinger Galerie-Verlag, 1980), p 52.

<sup>18</sup> Jelinek, *Die endlose Unschuldigkeit*, p. 57.

was only allowed to linger for 12 seconds at the *tapp und tastkino*, which is 1/5th of a minute, so that it could be everyone's turn.<sup>19</sup>

In *Tapp und Tastkino* the breast, normally a fetish on the screen, available to be seen but constantly available nevertheless is also *literally* made available. In the *Tapp und Tastkino* the breast is veiled, concealed and simultaneously revealed as real. If we look closely at the articulation of the work, we find that the word, *Tast-* means 'touch,' and yields synonyms such as tactile [*taktil*] and sensuous, groping [*tastend*], tentative or fumbling. The touch of the touch cinema should be a tentative, fumbling, groping touch, but it can also be sensuous.<sup>20</sup> During the enactment of the work, Peter Weibel, equipped with a megaphone, asks the 'viewer/user' to enter the cinema with their hands. Passers-by are incited to touch the breasts inside the mini-cinema box. The work, as the moment with the breast is revealed to them. The film is activated through the sense of touch, literally, with just two hands. Simultaneously, the wearer holds their eye contact: the gaze is *returned*. The touch is a touch that gropes in the dark while walking into a 12 second trap. As EXPORT is without shame, does the viewer experience shame? We could say that *Tapp und Tastkino* functions on one level as a precursor to what Laura Mulvey would later characterise as the scopophilic gaze.<sup>21</sup>

If we return to the breast, in the *Wien Bildkompendium*, EXPORT describes the idea of *Tapp und Tastkino* as an analysis of the breast as the central object in the context of the film industry; it is the breast within mass culture.<sup>22</sup> In a similar way to Adorno and Horkheimer, who argue in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that the culture industry only ever produces false pleasure, it is suggested in *Wien*, that because of the combination of 'fixed partial drives' with the mass exhibition of breasts on screen and 'voyeurism in the audience', the breast on the screen manipulates the audience.<sup>23</sup> They say:

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<sup>19</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261. *Tapp und Tastkino* was enacted in Vienna, Munich and Cologne, Amsterdam, Breda, Eindhoven and London. The Cologne action differed as EXPORT replaced Weibel on the megaphone and Erika Meis replaced EXPORT with the cinema box. A full account of the chronology of demonstrations of this work, and subsequent exhibition history can be found in *VALIE EXPORT ARCHIV*, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> In the unpublished draft of VALIE EXPORT, 'Expanded Cinema as Expanded Reality' EXPORT briefly translated *Tapp und Tastkino* to *Grope and Feel Cinema*, before changing it to *Touch Cinema*.

<sup>21</sup> Mulvey theorises the ways that the 'patriarchal unconscious has structured film form.' Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Visual and Other Pleasures*, (Indiana University Press, 1989) p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Kracauer describes the changes in 'body culture' starting from the 'Tiller girls.' Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995); Jutta Held cites Kracauer and Benjamin in her analysis of the fascist public sphere, describing it 'as a reduction of the public to the aesthetic, embodied in the "mass ornament", which supposedly compensates for a denial of the aesthetic and satisfaction of real need.' Jutta Held, 'New Left Art History and Fascism in Germany', in *Marxism and the History of Art, from William Morris to the New Left*, ed. by Andrew Hemingway (London: Pluto Press, 2006), pp. 196-212 (p. 200).

<sup>23</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.

1 breast brings millions, because its endlessly reproduced decals multiply it a hundred thousand times (about 60 real lovers in life, come to 60 million in the cinema). this technique of reproduction brings 1 breast to the man, millions of times: the market reach [*absatzmarkt*] of a breast is optimally enlarged. chauffeurs and producers powder the original star-breast.<sup>24</sup>

The cinema shrinks before the breast. The reproduction of the breast in the cinema becomes the reproduction of the lover; the original star breast is a stand in for film star. The market-reach of the breast is incomprehensible, the breast is thus understood as the magnet that pulls in the audience. Often EXPORT's descriptions of the work oscillate between *–film* and *–kino*, so that the emphasis shifts ambiguously between the tactile film screen (the breasts) and the shrunken black box of the cinema; between the projection screen, the *leinwand* becoming *hautleinwand* (skin projection screen), and the inhabited space. As we have seen, one problem that this work proposes to solve involves so-called audience voyeurism: cinema goes experience a celluloid surrogate, and cinema going is 'degraded to voyeurism'. EXPORT's artistic response attempts to de-reify the breast:

to counter the depravation, to de-reify [*entdinglichen*] the breast as a commodity fetish [*warenfetisch*], a suppressed partial drive [*partialtrieb*], the sense of touch is rehabilitated. the tactile reception is inserted, because it shields against deception. communication qua remote senses proves often to be a sublime matrix for manipulation and exploitation of needs.<sup>25</sup>

A succession of ideas are presented here. The screen-breast is understood as a commodity fetish, which can be de-reified, though the rehabilitation of the partial drive. The partial drive can be unfixed through the sense of touch as tactility replaces visuality. Commodity fetishism in the Marxian sense means that social relations between humans appear as social relations between things. Marx's analysis of the commodity underpins his analysis of the capitalist mode of production. It is necessary to pause for a moment to consider how the fetish is understood here. We have seen in chapter two that in Weibel's view, Actionism was a way of showing how the processes of reification that the human experiences as an economic subject manifest on the body. For EXPORT, Feminist Actionism defined the attempt to liberate woman from the 'thing-character' [*Dingcharakter*] acquired under patriarchal capitalism, as the products of men

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<sup>24</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261. A 'decal' [*abziehbild*] or the more commonly used 'transfer', refers to a design which is prepared on a plastic material and which can be used to reproduce by transfer, the design onto other materials, for example, glass or porcelain, ad infinitum.

<sup>25</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.



(see chapter 2). I propose that the breast as fetish is to be understood in two ways. First, as the text claims, it is the fetish character of the commodity, as artworks express the deformations of the commodity world. Yet, in the second instance this cinema fetish which belongs to mass communication is specifically attached to woman. Not only to woman, but also to specific parts of her body: the breast, but also, as we will see later, the genitals.

Freud writes of the fetish: ‘The fetish is a substitute for the woman’s (the mother’s) penis, that the little boy once believed in and [...] does not want to give up’.<sup>26</sup> In Freud’s view, giving up on this image would endanger him by empowering the threat of his own castration. Woman is understood as phallic until the moment she is undressed. The fetishist, left by an impression which he takes as his substitute object, refuses to confront this lack. This induces a psychic process of disavowal, which in turn causes a split in the ego of the disavowing subject. The chosen fetish is an object which is endowed with illusory qualities and invested with the power previously reserved for the phallic mother. This satiates the problem: for the fetishist, the woman both has and doesn’t have a ‘penis’, the object is substituted.<sup>27</sup> This means that not only an object, but a piece of reality, is disavowed.<sup>28</sup> Yet, something remains: ‘an aversion which is never absent in any fetishist to the real female genitals remains a stigma indelible of the repression that has taken place’.<sup>29</sup> The genitals continue to induce fear.

Now I want to look from Freud’s fetishism, a substitution which inculcates disavowal, to Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism which describes the process whereby an object is imbued with an illusory quality or value. What does combining the fetish character of the commodity with ‘woman’, in an artwork, mean?<sup>30</sup> In *Capital*, Marx uses the famous example of a wooden table, a product of human labour with a specific use, which, upon becoming a commodity, ‘changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness’.<sup>31</sup> From standing with its feet on the ground it transmogrifies as it enters into relation with other commodities: ‘it stands on

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<sup>26</sup> Freud, SE XXI, p. 152.

<sup>27</sup> Freud, SE XXI, p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> Freud, SE XXI, p. 155.

<sup>29</sup> Freud, SE XXI, p. 155.

<sup>30</sup> In a letter that Adorno wrote to Erich Fromm in 1937, he outlines a project in which he proposes to analyse the ‘feminine character’ with the view to theorise the ideological aspect of this ‘character’ against its patriarchal construction. (This is, as we have seen, similar to Jelinek’s literary project.) Adorno’s idea is a quasi proto-Marxist feminist one, in which he wants to consider (and this helps us to understand his comments on the family which we have encountered in chapter 3) a gendered theorisation of capitalism. Adorno argues that the glue holding society is no longer the family, but rather the commodity [*Warenform*]. What I am interested in then, is how he merges two concepts of the fetish. Attempting to synthesise Marxism and psychoanalysis through ‘connection between the fetish character [*Fetischecharakter*] of commodities and the fetishistic character [*fetichistische Charakter*] of human beings’ Adorno argues that women might start to view commodities as fetishes of the male genitals. This project never went further than this letter. Eva-Maria Ziege and Theodor W. Adorno, ‘The Fetish-Character of “Woman”’: On a Letter From Theodor W. Adorno to Erich Fromm Written in 1937’, *Logos*, 2.4 (2003), unpaginated; Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Adorno an Erich Fromm’, in *Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Briefwechsel, 1927-1969*, ed. by Christoph GÖdde and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 540.

<sup>31</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 163.

its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will'.<sup>32</sup> In Marx's view, the mystical, illusory character of the commodity arises specifically from its exchange value. It is entirely detached from the forms of useful labour from whence it came:

The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things.<sup>33</sup>

How does the image of a breast become a commodity fetish? For Marx, the commodity form reflects the social relations between its producers (as the total of their labour) *as* a social relation between objects.<sup>34</sup> Thus, like Freud, we find that a substitution takes place, whereas unlike Freud, the things which are made, the products of labour, become supra-sensible, they become social. For Marx, against any kind of direct relation, he uses the example of seeing something and experiencing the impression of that thing on the optic nerve, as a 'subjective excitation'. We find that the:

[C]ommodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [*dinglich*] relations between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things.<sup>35</sup>

The meaning of commodity fetishism for Marx is guided by a kind of religious shroud, where the commodities made by humans, take on 'a life of their own, which enters into relations both with each other and with the human race. So it is the world of commodities with the products of men's hands'.<sup>36</sup> Thus, if we return to the breast, we are confronted with the reproducible image of the breast, via the decal, the transfer, as the object of labour, which through a substitution, has taken on a life of its own. Yet, Marx's theory is also gendered, as is history. In *Capital* he comments that the family is organised by the sexual division of labour:

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<sup>32</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 164.

<sup>33</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 165.

<sup>34</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 165.

<sup>36</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 165.

The division of labour within the family and the labour-time expended by the individual members of the family, are regulated by differences of sex and age [...] the individual labour powers, by their very nature, act only as instruments of the joint labour-power of the family.<sup>37</sup>

Here we see in Marx (as noted in chapter 3, regarding the work of Leopoldina Fortunati), that the family produces a joint labour-power, and that women's place within this is both subsumed and naturalised as reproductive labour. It is significant then, that it is the breast, and not any object which EXPORT seeks to de-reify 'entdinglichen'. The phrase, 'Entdinglichung der Dingwelt' which we can derive from EXPORT's use of 'entdinglichen' refers to a process of the de-reification of the world of things, here including the images of women, the fetishised character of 'woman'. The multiplied breast on the screen stands in as a substitute for human needs. By gaining in proximity to her object, her material, the breast, EXPORT attempts to bring the deathliness of the commodity world to life through the rehabilitation of the fixed partial drive, with the sense of touch:

communication qua sensory-contact is the attempt, beyond the barriers of the public and private sphere, markers of alienated communication, styles of human communication, in which from state and industry, emancipated needs can be realised, reconstructed or built. as long as the citizen in the cinema only rips open his eyes and not his trouser zip [*bösentur!*], as long as the tax office fucks him, as long as the citizen [*bürger*] with the reproduced copy of sexual freedom is content, the state is spared the *real sexual revolution*. revolutionary sexuality can only be the revolutionising of social sexual communication!<sup>38</sup>

This leads to the question: what kind of sexual revolution could overcome the state? What would a 'real sexual revolution' look like? The term 'sexual revolution' was coined by Wilhelm Reich, who produced research towards his, *The Sexual Revolution* (1936) in Vienna during the 1920s. For Reich, as we have seen partially in the previous chapter, only through transformation on the very deep level of character, can societal transformation take place. But what leaps does this work make? How is this a process of mimesis, where the artist/artwork is transformed into the partial object: the breast, into a cinema? *Tapp und Tastkino* reaches towards 'sensory-contact' communication as its medium, aiming to break through the mask of alienated communication and in this case its symptom, reification. I want to argue that this is a kind of

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<sup>37</sup> Marx, *Capital*, p. 171.

<sup>38</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.

*anti*-communication, it is an artwork which attempts to de-form reified communication. This attempted 'sensory-contact' is also demonstrated in the most social of all places:

in the public social traffic (with office closing, rush hour as its climax) suddenly the intimacy of sexual intercourse confronts 2 norms of behaviour, those of the citizen and those of humans, whose inhuman antinomy unmasks their collapse, congestion. the obscenity and frankness of the talk accompanying the demonstration of 'tapp und tastfilms' intensifies the pain.<sup>39</sup>

*Tapp und Tastkino* is demonstrated in the world of commodities where sensory contact is blocked, by the traffic, by the world, by the orator next to the performer. EXPORT describes this as intensifying the 'pain of the behavioural conflict and the challenge to the state'.<sup>40</sup>

no wonder that the guardians of order, the pillars of repression, the police, want to force the 'tapp und tastkino' into the ghetto of the cinema halls and to the periphery of the cities. yet, the place of the 'tapp und tastkino' is not the cinema, but peak-time traffic and working hours. in the hustle and bustle of motorised corpses, in the automatism of alienated life, the 'tapp und tastkino' unfolds its power, awakening [*erweckt*] corpses to life. then and there parrhesia and pornography mean the liberation of mutilated individuals, initiating their breakout from the concentration camp [*Lez*] of everyday life.<sup>41</sup>

In a text from 1973 EXPORT writes that in bourgeois society the designated place for sensory sexuality is in the home, and tactile and visual experiences were only permitted within the private sphere of the family. *Tapp und Tastkino* would transplant this directly into the streets, attacking the heart of bourgeois moral codes, and speak to direct emancipation of sexuality, where moral regulations (state, family, property) would be exploded.<sup>42</sup> I want to suggest that in taking apolitical sensuality, where the viewer must sense and feel the movie, into the streets, EXPORT aims to preserve in political action and in art the goal of liberation and freedom, in the sense that we have previously heard as a cerebral freedom. Yet, the action can also reverse into its opposite, since this experiment in the political action of sensuality is converted into

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<sup>39</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.

<sup>40</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.

<sup>41</sup> This passage continues: 'the effect on the official defence counsel of the status quo corresponded to this. from the mainzer carnival orators in the wdr to the east german radio, export was described as the biggest cultural disgrace for west germany, from the tabloids to the regional press it was enough to discuss the "tapp und tastfilm"'. Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 261.

<sup>42</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Tapp und Tastkino etc', *Neues Forum*, ccxxxiv (1973), 57-58, (p. 57).

another conveyer belt of ‘feels’. Incidentally, EXPORT marks a revision to her concept on female sexual self-determination, saying that it occurs at the expense of the woman actionist.

#### 4.1.2: *Fetish against Fetish*

Another notorious intervention into cinema is *Aktionsbosc: Genitalpanik* (1969, *Actionpants: Genital Panic*) which was allegedly first performed in a Munich cinema. In *Wien*, published one year later, EXPORT simply writes: ‘action “genital panik” planned: in the place of a performance, I should force myself through the rows of spectators with bare cunt [cut out of my trousers), ergo cunt and nose at the same height, indirect sexual contact with the audience’.<sup>43</sup> At the time, she doesn’t comment on how it was received. In considering the survival of *Aktionsbosc: Genitalpanik*, it becomes clear that it is impossible to write about it without acknowledging its surrounding controversies. As I have mentioned, EXPORT is cited as saying: ‘Genital Panic was performed in a Munich theater that showed pornographic films I was dressed in a sweater and pants with the crotch completely cut away. I carried a machine gun’.<sup>44</sup> In the same interview, she claims that rows of expectant viewers slowly walked out. EXPORT later denied that she held a gun and has also countered the claim that the action took place in a porn-cinema. Mechtild Widrich argues, while noting that the first descriptions of *Genitalpanik* are documented in the *Bildkompendium*, that the action might have not taken place at all, it ‘might have *only* been imagined’.<sup>45</sup>

After the alleged action, EXPORT produced a poster in which she sits on a chair, legs spread, wearing the *Aktionsbosc* (jeans with the crotch cut out, thus bearing her genitals), and carrying a gun (Plates 4.1, 4.1b). The posters were reproduced and pasted across Vienna. EXPORT takes the method of the decal, and pastes the artwork across the city, where thousands of people see the reproduced copy of the action: the image of a woman bearing her genitals and carrying a gun (Plate 4.1a). When we consider this work now, which exists in various reproductions of differing poses, this second work, the poster and additional images is what remains. Yet, the myth surrounding the work declares that during EXPORT’s walk through the cinema aisles she carried a gun. In this way the work takes an afterlife, a life of its own.

In an essay titled ‘Actionmyth, History Panic: The entry of VALIE EXPORT’s *Aktionbosc: Genitalpanik* into art history’ from 2013, Hilary Robinson tries to set the story straight. She attempts to uncover the errors, to write the true story of the artwork as it happened. She

<sup>43</sup> Weibel and EXPORT, *Wien*, p. 290. To the best of my knowledge there is no documentation of the reception.

<sup>44</sup> VALIE EXPORT and Ruth Askey, ‘VALIE EXPORT, Interviewed by Ruth Askey in Vienna 9/18/79’, *High Performance*, 4 (1981), p. 80.

<sup>45</sup> Widrich, *Performative Monuments*, p. 57.

argues that the 'lack of fidelity to the actuality of the artwork has shaped the disavowal of a feminist gesture of resistance to a conservative state and sexual politics.'<sup>46</sup> Robinson's reading of this work suggests that the 'action', the political intervention lies in EXPORT's occupation of a space where sexual and state politics meet each other. What does she mean by this? In her attempt at myth-busting, she raises the problem of 'the image of a woman with a gun', being one that is 'easily fetishized and thus removed from a consideration of state politics and resistance'.<sup>47</sup> This seems to mean that the image is emptied of its politics in the process of its canonisation.

What is interesting in *Aktionbosc: Genitalpanik* is its ambiguity and the questions which arise from both the idea of a woman parading female genitalia in a cinema, and the reproduced image pasted across the city. The work operates conceptually on this level, no matter what we really know about what happened. There is more to be gained from questioning what the image of a woman with a gun and crotchless trousers walking through a cinema means for art than merely correcting this history. Robinson supposes that the stage upon which these myths exist in society can be corrected.

Silvia Eiblmayr rightly argues that the dialectic of *Aktionbosc: Genitalpanik* means that the cut in the jeans, and the exposed genitalia is given a positive meaning.<sup>48</sup> It depicts the reversal of Freud's moment of castration. We do not see the hole (in the jeans), but the actuality of what is usually hidden. It should be noted that currently female genitals are not hidden but ubiquitously displayed all over the internet, in adverts, in phone booths. Yet, in Catholic Vienna in 1969, where pornographic imagery was prohibited by the state, perhaps this confronted its audience in the negative, as a counterpoint to women's castration by way of the real body rather than its reproduced image. Except that the work is its reproduced image, *and* the myth of the action.

The logic is akin to *Tapp und Tastkino*, insofar as these Expanded Cinema works directly focus on Marxist and Freudian forms of the fetish. The artwork steps into the world of other reified subjects and gestures to the undoing of the process of reification. The artwork, inhabiting a contradiction, attempts to free the partial drive, while simultaneously intensifying the pain of the action with the obscene and frank seller's pitch (Weibel). The breast in the artwork expresses a deformed commodity fetish, as EXPORT the human commodity, the woman as product of man, goes to market. From the alienated conditions of 'life', the cinema of the real, the 'real woman's film' attempts to liberate mutilated individuals. *Tapp und Tastkino*

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<sup>46</sup> Hilary Robinson, 'Actionmyth, History Panic: The Entry of VALIE EXPORT's *Aktionbosc: Genitalpanik* into art history', *n.paradoxa*, 32 (2013), 84-89 (p. 85).

<sup>47</sup> Robinson, p. 87.

<sup>48</sup> Silvia Eiblmayr, 'Valie Export's Feminist Actionism in the Context of Performance and Body Art in the 1960s and 1970s', in *The Connected Body? An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Body and Performance*, ed. by Ric Allsopp and Scott de Lahunte (Amsterdam: Art Data, 1996), pp. 54-56 (p. 55).

doesn't do this by modelling a free society, but through mimesis, by gaining in proximity to the trade of sexuality and the 'traffic in women'. In this way the artwork reveals the kind of mutilation incurred by humans under the sign of exchange. But *Genitalpanik* works differently: on the one hand, it is the myth of the real in the cinema; on the other, it is a reproduced image of a woman with a gun. It is an artwork qua fetish which attempts to confront the fetishist. Yet, in the image does the gun substitute the old fig leaf, the foot, the high heel? Does the work re-inscribe a logic of disavowal? The gun re-inscribes the woman as phallic woman. *Tapp und Tastkino* takes place in the streets. *Aktionhose: Genitalpanik* re-enters the cinema, only to emerge back on the streets, but as a poster, as an image.<sup>49</sup> EXPORT's attempts to break the illusion of the image, lead her more and more into the space of the image. They make an early attempt at a literal *leap*, suturing the question of how the image of woman and 'woman' is produced through cinema, advertising and pornography, and then, how this intersects with desire and fetishisation: what shrouds the commodity also shrouds the body part of the fetishised woman. The works critique the screen image by negating and transforming its material: the screen image is *displaced* by real breasts or by genitals. Freud's prostheses, the medial extensions of the body's functions (as discussed in chapter 1) are also severed from the body.

#### 4.1.3: Production and Reproduction

VALIE EXPORT's texts and works are concerned with the metaphysics and the transformation/transfiguration of the body and of 'woman': woman doesn't exist and must be constructed, leaving the question, *how* is 'woman' constructed? If we recall, this proposition is made with reference to Freud's theory of technology and prosthesis (as discussed in chapter 1). EXPORT's Expanded Cinema works show the displacement of the cinema qua culture industry by fetishised, fixated body parts: breast and genitals. In a text titled 'Weiberleiber' ('Women's Bodies'), published in 1988 in the cultural journal *Neues Forum*, two decades after these works were made, EXPORT returns to the problem of representation, this time in the sense of who is represented and where. She argues that in German and Austrian cinema 70% of roles are designed for men. She declares this a social problem, arising at once from the division of labour in society, and the relationship between the social body and the imperative to work.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps strangely, she refers to (many English speaking) authors such as Condorcet, William Godwin, Adam Smith, David Hume, Thomas Hobbes and Thomas Malthus, to argue that it is the difference between productive and non-productive labour, which provides the logic of modern society since the Industrial Revolution. Following this logic, EXPORT claims

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<sup>49</sup> See: Elfriede Jelinek, 'Valie Export: Der Tod und das Mädchenmögliche', in *Kunst in Österreich*, ed. by Robert Fleck and Noemi Smolik (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1995), pp. 62–64. Jelinek's title is a play on the word: *Menschenmögliche* — what is humanly possible — which gives the blunt translation.

<sup>50</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', *Neues Forum*, 413/4xxxv, 14 (1988), 10-13.

that the reproductive body, as the word 'reproductive' already makes clear, cannot be a productive body. She asserts that this unproductive body, produces a kind of parasitism, which through the 'Apparatus' of production, consumption and circulation, becomes increasingly weakened.<sup>51</sup> 'Woman' is declared responsible, by society, for reproduction: housewives are pushed to the margins of society, to the '*Frauenzimmer*', and this hinders their participation in productive activity. As parasite, the housewife is humiliated because of her role as beneficiary of the body politic [*Staatskörpers*]. In many ways this echoes Jelinek's text 'Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln' (1983) where 'woman' is repressed from taking part in productive labour (as discussed in chapter 3).

In 1988, EXPORT locates the 'old drivel concerning reproductive biology' in modern industrial society, where women are once again weakened as the reproductive bodies of production and circulation.<sup>52</sup> Their loss of work because of pregnancy (or any other reasons), cause the worsening of their social position. EXPORT claims that we can still see the *construction* of the 'female [*Weiblicher*]' body through this logic.<sup>53</sup> Given that the body is socially defined by sex, women are weakened. Reproduction operates as a submission-mechanism simultaneously with the construction of capitalist society, where women, with not-quite-healthy, not-quite-productive bodies, cannot fully participate in society. In EXPORT's view, in this transmission of economic categories to physiological material, the first steps towards the extinction of woman are seen; even class struggle is grounded on the myth of the reproductive bodies of women.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, EXPORT backtracks. She argues that the reproductive body, defined as the childbearing body, is productive. Childbearing should be seen as productive: the uterus is the machine, the child is the product, the mother is the worker.<sup>55</sup> In this (dystopian) vision, menopause means the end of productivity and menstruation means missed production. This logic of the body as a marketplace and as a factory, shows that when reproduction (production) is denied, there is also no woman. Here, women are defined as not-women, as negative, so long as they are simultaneously defined as reproductive.<sup>56</sup> It is the reproductive function that gives woman her negative meaning. What does this have to do with roles in films? EXPORT claims that in films the same logic applies. Citing Heidegger's, 'Die Zeit des Weltbildes' (1952, 'The Age of the World Picture'), she argues that with films the world becomes more and more a picture [*Bild*]. The world exists through the subject who believes in the world, and who can

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<sup>51</sup> EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', p. 10.

<sup>52</sup> EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> In 'Weiberleiber' EXPORT uses 'Weibliche' meaning female. Ibid., p. 11. In an interview from 1994 in *Texte Zur Kunst* EXPORT claims that she would no longer use the term 'Weibliche', for its essentialising connotations. See: VALIE EXPORT and Sabeth Buchmann, 'Anläufe', *Texte Zur Kunst* (1994), p. 38.

<sup>54</sup> EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> EXPORT, 'Weiberleiber', p. 12.



produce representations.<sup>57</sup> For EXPORT, this analysis functions on an active register: ‘woman’ does not have to be mother, body, image or feminine self. But, in order for these prescriptive definitions to change, culture also has to change. Like Jelinek, EXPORT argues that in a phallographic society, women are reduced to body or picture (or nothing at all).<sup>58</sup> To do more than merely make a crack in society, women must transform culture. Only in cultural transgression can women produce art and their own picture.<sup>59</sup>

How does this challenge art’s claim to autonomy (gained through its heteronomy) in the face of mass culture and the culture industry? In Expanded Cinema in the 1960s and 70s it is not merely art and life that merge, but the artist (their body, which they use) and the artwork through an act of anti-communication. In EXPORT’s (and Weibel’s) early Expanded Cinema works this takes place via a mimetic relation to the commodity. EXPORT uses her body as the means by which to enact this mimesis. In chapter 1 of this thesis, the characterisation of Adorno’s concept of autonomous art is presented as analogous to a subjective claim to autonomy, but made through the objective laws of form: the artwork makes an objective claim to autonomy. Yet, in *Aesthetic Theory* (1970) Adorno writes hyperbolically:

After the age of aesthetic autonomy, the position of artists in society, to the extent that it is significant with regard to mass reception, tends to revert into heterogeneity. If prior to the French Revolution artists were lackeys, they have since become entertainers.<sup>60</sup>

There is no longer a separation between art and artist and artists have become ‘entertainers’. This claim can be cynically levelled at *Tapp und Tastkino*: it is a form of street theatre with a man on a megaphone, a woman with a cinema on her torso. Yet this omits understanding the mimetic elements of the work, the way it conceals the breast to reveal its image: breast as commodity fetish. Adorno identifies another contradiction at play:

Art, however is social not only because of its mode of production, in which the dialectic of the forces and relations of production is concentrated, nor simply because of the social derivation of its thematic material. Much more importantly, art becomes social by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art. By crystallising in itself as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing

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<sup>57</sup> EXPORT, ‘Weiberleiber’, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup> EXPORT, ‘Weiberleiber’, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> EXPORT, ‘Weiberleiber’, p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 343.

social norms and qualifying as ‘socially useful’, it criticises society by merely existing, for which puritans of all stripes condemn it.<sup>61</sup>

What is thrown into light is a specific tension around Adorno’s concept of art’s autonomy. On the one hand, there is a suggestion that Adorno places himself *after* the age of autonomy, on the other, art gains its social status by *becoming* autonomous. Art becomes oppositional by occupying this position. Art, in its being-for-itself, criticises society by not adhering to its laws. An artwork which is structured according to its own immanent laws is ‘pure’, and cannot but ‘implicitly criticise’ the ‘debasement of a situation evolving in the direction of a total exchange society in which everything is heteronomously defined’.<sup>62</sup> This relates to the question of the reproduction of society as a whole: it is art, whose ‘asociality is the determinate negation of a determinate society’.<sup>63</sup> This paradoxical asociality is social because it does not reproduce the laws of society, yet it produces a truth about society. Adorno describes artworks as being produced by a kind of social labour. He writes:

The elements of an artwork acquire their configuration as a whole in obedience to immanent laws that are related to those of the society external to it. Social forces of production, as well as relations of production return in artworks as mere forms divested of their facticity because artistic labour is social labour; moreover, they are always the product of this labour.<sup>64</sup>

In Adorno’s formulation an artwork is made up of a force field of several elements which configure into a whole. Heteronomous laws, which rule over society relate to the artwork’s own imminent laws of form. Thus, although the artwork separates itself from the world, it also emerges from the world. It is part of the world. Therefore the forces and relations of production appear in artworks, emptied or ‘divested’ of their ‘facticity’, their givenness, because they are made through a kind of artistic ‘social labour’. Lambert Zuidervaart describes this social labour as a social mediation. Artworks are made through a process of struggle between the artist and the artistic materials, in turn they carry the, ‘imprint of a general societal conflict between forces and relations of production’.<sup>65</sup> Adorno’s concept of artistic labour describes artworks as the congelation of this social labour. Art’s mimetic element shows itself insofar as,

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<sup>61</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 296.

<sup>62</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 296.

<sup>63</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 296.

<sup>64</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 308.

<sup>65</sup> Lambert Zuidervaart, *Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory: The Redemption of Illusion* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 93.

‘the forces of production are not in-themselves different from social productive forces except by their constitutive absenting from real society’.<sup>66</sup> And yet, Adorno is enigmatic:

If artworks are in fact absolute commodities in that they are a social product that has rejected every semblance of existing for society, a semblance to which commodities otherwise urgently cling, the determining relation of production, the commodity form, enters the artwork equally with the social force of production and the antagonism between the two. The absolute commodity would be free of the ideology inherent in the commodity form, which pretends to exist for-another, whereas ironically it is something merely for-itself: It exists for those who hold power.<sup>67</sup>

The theory of the artwork posed here says that by taking on the character of the absolute commodity, a commodity is pushed to its most extreme limit so that it is divested of ideology. The artwork is in fact a social product. It is social in that in itself it does not appear for society. The paradox of the artwork lies in the ways that both the commodity form and the social labour of production, enter the artwork. This produces an antagonistic relation between the two, which empties the artwork of the ideology ingrained within the commodity form. How do these dynamics play into the works discussed here? How does the body, the person in the artwork exist within this idea: what is the societal conflict between the forces and relations of production? What does it mean to attempt to free the fixed partial drive in light of this discussion?

If we return to the notion of the artwork as the expression of a non-sublimating, violent instinct clashing with the world, how does this relate to Adorno’s more established concept of the artwork as the coming into existence of sublimated form? What makes the artwork qua person an artwork, when, as we understand in this thesis, the body became the medium of art, par excellence. I propose that in Expanded Cinema we find the staging of the artwork qua person. In turn, this mimics capital’s expansion in the postwar era in part through women’s re-entrance into the labour market paired with the increasingly fetishised character of the image of woman, supplementing commodities in advertisements, and perpetuating false pleasure in the cinema. Yet, through EXPORT’s *appeal* to sensuality without ideology, the fetishisation of the breast, of the artwork, dissipates for a moment.

#### *4.2: Expanded History Film*

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<sup>66</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 308.

<sup>67</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 309.

*Unsichtbare Gegner* (*Invisible Adversaries*), released in 1976, incorporates Expanded Cinema (testing the limits of the filmic medium and placing the person in the art), extending it also into a feature length film. VALIE EXPORT's *Unsichtbare Gegner* raises questions concerning the body in art history; the politics of humanism and anti-humanism; questions of mediation, including the transformation of media regimes: photography, video, film and news-media beyond Expanded Cinema.<sup>68</sup> What does the film communicate beyond such themes and discourses? What form does it take? *How* does the film work against traditional forms of film as part of Weibel's 'sub-history' of film, how does it push on the limits of Expanded Cinema, and what mediations are at play?

Instead of trying to transform reified social relations and the fetishised image by going directly into the streets, with *Unsichtbare Gegner*, EXPORT uses the constraint of a film to reflect on how the subject is shaped by and shapes her surroundings, by media, in the sense (as discussed in chapter 3) that Reich posited:

[M]an as a creature who had come under the domination of the worst possible social conditions, conditions he himself had created and bore within himself as a part of his character and from which he sought to free himself in vein.<sup>69</sup>

In *Unsichtbare Gegner* the internal conflict is put in relation to transformations in media, and the propensity of the double.<sup>70</sup> It focusses on the internal splits within a woman, which hinder or block what is previously attempted with the liberation of the fixed partial drive, or the confrontation of the real genitals. *Unsichtbare Gegner* brings Expanded Cinema back into the cinema: the film is returned to the screen.

*Unsichtbare Gegner* was realised in the mid-70s, during Austria's Kreisky period. Kreisky, who becomes an object of criticism in the film, called for a resurgence of critical art against the dominant postwar *Heimat* kitsch. We could say that the previous decade of artistic scandals against the conservative society, was followed by a different challenge.<sup>71</sup> The film was funded

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<sup>68</sup> EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 256.

<sup>69</sup> Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p xxii.

<sup>70</sup> Friedrich Kittler theorises the history of the Double in literature, psychoanalysis and film in Friedrich A. Kittler, 'Romanticism - Psychoanalysis - Film: A History of the Double', in *Literature, Media, Information Systems*, ed. by John Johnston (Amsterdam: OPA, 1997). pp. 85-100.

<sup>71</sup> The film EXPORT planned to make was nothing like *Unsichtbare Gegner*. Thus, when the funders saw the film it is said that they were horrified. The battles in culture played out by the artists of the 50s and 60s, including EXPORT and Weibel paved the way for this kind of funding structure along with the change in government from ÖVP minority to SPÖ minority. EXPORT describes it as a successful film, one with which she feels expresses its own ideas. However, the public reaction to this film was split. She says: 'since reactions were not always friendly, I had to live through all kinds of attacks, even death threats. I have boxes full of menacing letters and cassette tapes from time to time. The oppositional press asked for the resignation the State Secretary for Education and Culture. One of the really high points in the press was the naming of myself and Peter Weibel as the "Terrorist Pair." Ironically in 1978 a very esteemed jury named me for the Austrian State Award on the basis of *Invisible Adversaries*. The State Secretary, however, did not dare to sign

by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Sports which awarded EXPORT with 600,000 shillings, which was then followed up with 150,000 shillings. EXPORT took a further 120,000 shilling out on credit.<sup>72</sup> The film caused a media scandal and EXPORT received letters containing abuse and death threats, yet it remained in Flotten Kino in Vienna for more than thirteen weeks (Plates 4.2, 4.2a, 4.2b).<sup>73</sup> EXPORT's film is said to be based loosely on Don Siegel's sci-fi *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* (1956).<sup>74</sup> Contra this claim, I propose that *Unsichtbare Gegner* does not cohere with the future-oriented idea of science fiction.<sup>75</sup> Through its form and idea, more than engaging in creating possible future worlds, it remains locked in its present, turned towards the past, facing its horrors. It brings Expanded Cinema into relation with a deeper concept of history.

The film begins with a newspaper tacked onto a wall in an unknown location. The headline cites the film's title. Below the title there is a photograph depicting women working at desks, with objects sprawled out behind them. The soundtrack consists of electronic beeping. This initial shot fades to black, creating a gap. Anna (Susanne Widl), lies on her bed, crotch bare, so that the triangle of her pubic hair takes up the centre of the frame, her arm is draped over one leg, a sheet is draped over the other, a motive we can recall from *Mann & Frau & Animal* (chapter 1).<sup>76</sup> The camera settles on the radio. A newsreader is heard discussing Austria: Chancellor Kreisky ceases talks with the ÖVP, 'the Socialist Party could not be involved in crimes of...' The sound is refocussed on Anna waking up. The camera pans back, so the whole room comes into view (Plate 4.3). 'Attention! Attention! Humans, Hyksos!' bursts through static. The Hyksos were understood by EXPORT to have invaded ancient Egypt between 1720-1710 BC. They subdued the Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom and then were able to rule

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the paper, so I never received the award.' EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 261. See also: See: Joachim Riedl, 'Gegner in Sight', *Profil* (Wien, 29 November 1977); Gary Indiana and Valie Export, 'Valie Export interviewed by Gary Indiana', *BOMB*, 1982, p. 10; Lamb-Faffelberger, pp. 126-133.

<sup>72</sup> EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 255.

<sup>73</sup> See Amy Taubin, 'The Good, the Bad and the Maternal' in, *The Soho News*, 07/05/1980; Gary Indiana, 'A Terrible Time in the West, But...', *Idiolects*, 9/10 (1981), pp. 10-14.

<sup>74</sup> See Chris Holmlund, 'Feminist Makeovers: The celluloid surgery of Valie Export and Su Friedrich' in, Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal, eds., *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes* (California: University of California Press, 1998). pp. 217-237.

<sup>75</sup> As vis-à-vis Fredric Jameson. The press materials for the film described it as a psycho-fiction thriller. Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2007).

<sup>76</sup> When EXPORT was asked if *Unsichtbare Gegner* was autobiographical she answered: 'Yes. It begins showing a girl on a bed. She hears on her radio the announcement that the Hyksos have come to occupy the land, not peacefully, but with aggression. The girl wakes and doesn't know whether what she heard was true or not. She's a photographer, a video reporter and wants to make documentaries. She feels that Vienna is a kaput town and begins looking within herself wondering if she is crazy or if it is the world around her. She is unsure of reality and sees that everything is wrong. I built up this idea in the film. For example, meat is an animal killed by man, prepared by woman and then eaten by man. In the film the girl suddenly realises that animals are killed by man and she must prepare them for her friends. She takes her house pet, a bird, and kills it. Everyone thinks she is crazy, but she isn't. She's not sure if she is hallucinating or if the people around her are. At the end of the film she puts on lots of warm clothes and goes to bed. Bed acts as good medicine for the sicknesses of life and is the place for dreams'. EXPORT and Askey, p. 80.

for more than a century. The camera continues its swoop backwards, to show the external walls of the building.<sup>77</sup> The radio broadcast announces: ‘population’ ... ‘an invisible adversary’ ... ‘a foreign, perhaps other worldly power’ ... ‘an invisible enemy occupied the town and transformed the people’. The camera jolts back until the window becomes a small square and we only just see the figure inside.<sup>78</sup> Due to time constraints, each shot from the crane was filmed just once. Understanding this process helps to understand what the object is, and what mediations are at play. EXPORT poses a series of questions in her film concerning: ‘*Fremden*,’ strangers, Others; schizophrenia; the place of the human/woman. It is the Hyksos which allow her to produce a conflictual reality. The camera rises up to peer down on the streets. Words from the French painter Georges Mathieu (dating to 1961) layer over the image: ‘You, who squeezed the fish of “Hyksos” between layers of chalk, beware of the traps of the new Caesars.’ What is the role of humanism and anti-humanism in *Unsichtbare Gegner*? A disembodied voice continues, ‘The Hyksos occupy the earth through human beings’. The camera swings round to pause on Saint Stephan’s Cathedral. The Hyksos’ goal ‘is to destroy the earth through increased aggression’. A radio is heard:

Moscow. Vienna ... The Soviet News Agency TASS accused Austrian Radio of serving the goals of fascist propaganda. The fact that former Hitlerite colonel Rudel was given the possibility to appear on Austrian TV must be seen as part of the re-activation of neo-Nazi elements and anti-Semitic tendencies. Whilst on a recent TV discussion Henriette von Schirach, the widow of the former Hitler Youth Leader, was given screen time for fascist propaganda...<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Homa King notes that the opening tracking shot spirals out of the bedroom into the city. The type of invasion we hear about on the radio is one that begins in the enclosed space of the home only to stretch over ever more territory. She goes on to suggest that because of the backward pull of the camera the spaces are in their first instance encountered by their viewers blindly. All having gone before what is seen. You only see after the fact. In comparing Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960) to *Unsichtbare Gegner*, King models two modes of visual perception that produce anxiety in the spectator. King goes on to claim that not only does EXPORT invert the regime of vision with this film, as she had already done in her Expanded Cinema works, but she makes an even more radical suggestion that images themselves can be agentive. Homa King, ‘Vision and Its Discontents: Valie Export’s “Invisible Adversaries”’, *Discourse*, 22.2 (2000), 25-45.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Camera, cameraman and myself just fit into the small gondola swaying in the light of the wind. The crane had to be stationed on a small street in the inner city of Vienna, directly in front of the apartment building where my apartment was. The shot into my room with Anna on my bed was into my living room. Since the crane blocked car traffic, it was only allowed there from one late afternoon to the early morning of the next day, so each of the pans could be filmed only once’. EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 259.

<sup>79</sup> Both Hans-Ulrich Rudel and Henriette von Schirach were notorious Nazi figures. In 1976, Rudel, returned from Paraguay, continued to be a spokesperson and advocate for extreme right wing parties. A scandal that broke out in 1976, reported above. Henriette von Schirach, a friend of Hitler since 1922 and at one point his secretary, published a memoir in 1960 called *The Price of Glory*. Somewhat a public figure, von Schirach appeared on the programme Club 2. ORF on the 28 October 1976. Hans Saeuer, ‘Bundeswehr: Die Generäle von gestern,’ *Die Zeit*, November 5, 1976, <<http://www.zeit.de/1976/46/die-generaale-von-gestern>> [Accessed 21 November 2017].

From the standpoint of the totality of the film, the short radio excerpts function to introduce contemporaneous (with the film), mediated reality into its structure, confounding the way it is a film through and about media and reality, and the hold media can have over human life. Yet, from the standpoint of the present, unless we look several times or were alive at the time of making, this information fades into the background. In an interview, regarding her understanding of the force of the Hyksos' aggression, EXPORT says, 'This unexpected and massive overpowering without a longer historical consequence fascinated me. Where did they go? The only thing lasting about their presence was the "petrified" memory'.<sup>80</sup> The obvious corollary to the Hyksos are the Nazis, who arrived in Austria in 1938, leaving behind not only catastrophe, but also the *Opferdoktrin*, a generalised amnesia, 'petrified memory,' a trail of open secrets, carried along by hundreds of thousands if not millions of foot soldiers since 1945. As well as Heinrich Gross, discussed in chapter 1, these include Colonel Rudel and Henriette von Schirach who enter the film via the radio. Through media within the film, the question, where have the Hyksos gone, is pivoted to become an assertion: the Nazis are still among us. I propose that the Hyksos are used as a weak metaphor to make this assertion without stating it explicitly. Within this assertion we also find that the film *asks* what are the psychic forces behind fascism? How does fascism take hold? What is the role of the media within this? The attempt to reveal the basis of relations between the sexes as undergirded by a fascistic impulse to destroy the Other, represented in Ingeborg Bachmann's unfinished and posthumously published *Todesarten Projekt (Death Styles project)* and later described by Jelinek as a 'war by other means' — is unconsciously reconstructed in this film.

In *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947), Siegfried Kracauer describes the Nazi media regime's full aim to supplant an old reality with their totalitarian one, as one where they had to suppress freedom and annihilate its memory. They had to destroy all remnants of the old ideas, 'with the obvious intention of blocking all individual impulses'.<sup>81</sup> For Kracauer, they also succeeded in preventing the old reality from growing, by seizing it, in order to 'stage the pseudo reality of the totalitarian system'.<sup>82</sup> The Nazis created a media space which effectively changed the perception of reality before the totalitarian system existed as such, and Kracauer writes, 'the masses were compelled to expend their psychic reserve in activities devised for the express purposes of adjusting people's mentality, so that nothing would be left behind'.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 257.

<sup>81</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 298.

<sup>82</sup> Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, p. 299.

<sup>83</sup> Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, p. 299.

If we turn back to the film, the image of the skyline cuts to a ringing telephone. We move from the city to the interior. Anna wakes up in her apartment, runs to the phone and answers. No one is there. She returns the call but no one answers. Her confusion is intensified. The next shot shows Anna facing herself in a mirror. Without moving her body, she watches herself in the reflection take a lipstick and apply it to her lips. We hear a sharp object scratching at brickwork, which slowly transforms to loud knocking. Anna's mirror image adds powder to her face, she appears to experience dissonance in her ability to perceive reality; she ceases to recognise herself, or, she is faced with her double, herself outside of herself (Plate 4.4).<sup>84</sup> Loud stomping shoes crack down on a wooden floor. As the camera looks directly down onto the inner courtyard, a female voice says:

It is said the light was doubled, but it also became weaker. The doubling could happen at the expense of the existing light energy. The mirror image [*Spiegelbild*] was streaked with varying stripes. It looked as if it would become less bright than it should be. 'I do not feel good,' he replied, 'as if I'd had too much coffee, my chamber maid was irritable, and kept talking to herself.' A sultry feeling lay over the crowds today. There is increased agitation among people, there is suicide, madness and murder. The fever is spreading.

From above we see Anna walk across the courtyard and out into the traffic. The camera cuts up from her, as if caught by someone, and zooms forward to find a man lying on the road, his head up against the curb. In an erotic manner he licks the tarmac road. The sound of his licks is amplified. The camera then cuts to a train. Shots of people stepping down from this train are cut quickly together, intermittently interrupted by cuts to the tracks. The sounds jolt in time with these flickering images. Anna takes photographs at the top of the escalator by the Prater.

Throughout the film Anna works on a study of Renaissance paintings. It becomes clear that her focus on these paintings lies in how the bodies of women have been contorted, positioned and represented. EXPORT has called this an historical archive of body postures. It evokes both Aby Warburg's incomplete *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1924-29) and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972). By identifying the idealised female figure in such paintings from this period, EXPORT indexes what she perceives to be an unchanging portrayal of women throughout history. Such portrayals are inherited by each generation of male painters, in part because their content was that of biblical scenarios, but also because each new generation took inspiration from the old. This becomes an analysis of tradition. In 1974 EXPORT made a video, titled, *Body Superimpositions with Historical Reproductions*, which used the same principle as is developed in

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<sup>84</sup> For the history of literature's doubles, see: Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (UNC Press Books, 2012).



*Unsichtbare Gegner*: the image cuts between the figures of women depicted in paintings by Veronese, Botticelli, Titian and Blake. With a model and camera, EXPORT conducts a series of consequent imitations and détournements of these poses.<sup>85</sup> These new stagings decontextualise the figures, emphasising gesture, they show how the body is contorted by blotting out the background. In EXPORT's appropriations, old objects are replaced by contemporary ones signalling to 'women's work,' such as a vacuum cleaner, a telephone, a washing machine or a typewriter. In my reading this method of re-description is EXPORT's way of both framing and entering into this tradition, a tradition which does not belong to women.

This study is developed further. The shot cuts back to Anna as she leafs through other photo constructions (from EXPORT's *Körperkonfiguration* (Body Configurations) series), where a figure is depicted comporting her body in line with Vienna's architecture (Plate 4.5b). In 'Corpus More Geometrico' ('Body according to the Geometric Method') published in 1987, EXPORT writes: 'The body [*Leib*] is not to be compared to a physical object, but to a work of art'.<sup>86</sup> The text explores how the body, here *Leib*, is transfigured from the horizon of the object, to that of an artwork. The body is not merely an instrument but simultaneously it is a body and an artwork. If we recall, from chapter 2, for Depraz the *Leib* takes on the character of a psycho-somatic body. In Benjamin's theory, it is a fleeting body, which dwells in history as it also expands into mankind. As it dwells in history in a moment of now '*Nu*' time, it also tends towards dissolution. Unlike the *Körper*, it doesn't ossify. I propose that Benjamin's somewhat unorthodox reading of the *Leib-Körper* can help us to detect what in turn reads as EXPORT's, and Jelinek's unorthodox use of these notions. EXPORT uses the example of Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (c. 1490) to show how the body [*Leib*] can be stretched into a circle and square simultaneously, becoming a wheel and a double image. 'Between its own body [*Leib*] and the object-world, between body [*Körper*] and cultural environment-body [*Umgebungskörper*]', between the body configuration and the cultural, social and physical context there is a secret proportion.<sup>87</sup>

EXPORT writes, 'I use the photographic fixation in a physical context (house, city, country) because the movement of the body [*Körper*] is not intended to articulate its meaning, rather I force the body code out of frozen history of culture, which is a history of silence over the

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<sup>85</sup> EXPORT is quoted as saying: 'I examine the historical development conveyed by the expression of specific postures. The paintings of the past harbour an archive of postures which went unnoticed and is of immense value for understanding the emotional states and mythologies of the different periods'. VALIE EXPORT, 'Body Superimpositions with Historical Reproductions', *Medien Kunst Netz*, Undated <<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/koerperueberblendungen/>> [accessed 18 June 2017].

<sup>86</sup> VALIE EXPORT, 'Corpus More Geometrico', in *Self. Neue Selbstbildnisse von Frauen*, ed. by Marianne Pitzen (Bonn: Frauenmuseum, 1987), pp. 46-48 (p. 46). This is a reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

<sup>87</sup> 'Zwischen eigenem Leib und Gegenstadswelt, zwischen Körper und Umgebungskörper'. EXPORT, 'Corpus More Geometrico', p. 46.

body [*Körper*].<sup>88</sup> The body as *Körper* is exposed as something that is measured, as propelled by the force of measure, or for Benjamin as the corporeal substance, or substratum of the human, the substance of the body. Yet, the fixation (by photography) points to a history of culture that has been frozen, that lies static and which, EXPORT implies reveals a history of silence that has covered the body.<sup>89</sup> In her words: ‘In the metaphor of the body [*Körper*] as a machine, the body [*Körper*] deteriorates to a cruel economy and functionality’.<sup>90</sup> With these photo constructions we hear one line from the radio, it repeats: ‘and changed the people’ so as to address itself as a proposition to the images.

In another related scene, we find EXPORT playing the role of director in front of the camera. She reconstructs early Renaissance paintings, this time with film cameras. Under EXPORT’s direction, Peter directs Anna’s figure so that it reveals the women (in the paintings) on the screen by imitating their gestures (Plates 4.5c). The narrator says: ‘the bodies positions have been idealised for their expression.’ On the screen we see a series of interchangeable images, which cut between reproductions of the paintings and EXPORT’s détournement of them (4.5). At first glance, the works appear to be developments from EXPORT’s childlike drawings, such as *Madonna mit Gassschlauch* (1973, *Madonna with Gas Pipe*) which depicts a stripped off Madonna inserting a gas pipe connected to a cooker into her vagina (Plate 4.5a). In the last imitation, the original painting is a reproduction of Raphael’s *Madonna del Cardellino* (1505-06, *Madonna of the Goldfinch*) in which Virgin Mary is portrayed sitting on a rock. She holds a book in one hand, and gazes down at John the Baptist who holds a Goldfinch, while her hand rests on his back. Christ leans on her knees and reaches towards the bird. The composition produces the triangle, which echoes and gives meaning to the trinity motif that appears throughout the film, as well as in other films. On the one hand, contemporary ‘reality’ enters the film, mediated by the radio or newspaper. Both radio and newspaper are subsumed by the film. On the other hand, the frozen history of culture: the body and gesture in the historical representation of Western woman in Western art, especially in the high point of Humanistic Renaissance painting is gathered up and optimised in EXPORT’s reconstructions. Women are brought out from the iconographic religious landscapes into an emptied out modern domestic and exploitative space. Gary Indiana has described this:

[T]he expressive content of the male artist’s view of women is passivity, anaemic grace, panic in adversity. There are dozens of such stereotypes but the underlying motive is the absence of strength, and dependency. Judith and Antigone are anomalies in Western art; more typically woman is conquered, raped, acquired or revered (the mother), redeemed

<sup>88</sup> EXPORT, ‘Corpus More Geometrico’, p. 46.

<sup>89</sup> EXPORT, ‘Corpus More Geometrico’, p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> EXPORT, ‘Corpus More Geometrico’, p. 46.

(the Magdalen), aggrieved (the Pieta). EXPORT displaces the histrionic expressions of passivity into the 'expressionless' settings of housework, placing the idealisation within the context of exploitation.<sup>91</sup>

Indiana understands this reconstruction through the superimposition of the classical works over a live model, to historicise the woman's figure, thus showing how body language is acquired and constructed with the aim of dissolving these learnt patterns. The idealised biblical figures are *displaced* from a state of timelessness into the world of labour, exploitation and commodities.<sup>92</sup> Yet, I argue that EXPORT's forcing the body out from the 'frozen history of culture' has a double meaning. As psychoanalysis enacts a kind of dissection of the human, rendering the inner life ever more available, the media through which the historical traces and updated reproductions are depicted: photography, film and video also figures the body in a way which optimises it for increased control.

#### 4.2.1: *Trümmerfrau of Film*

The structure of *Unsichtbare Gegner* works so that it folds the body, the city and the image together, and it shows the conflicted protagonist's confrontations within this. Within *Unsichtbare Gegner* we find an account of Vienna's history, cited as 'oblivion and treason, in malice and brutality'. In this scene the camera pans over the Old Danube. A newspaper comes into view, which cuts to the Austrian flag. The voiceover states: 'Population and authorities are as one.' The cultural climate of the Second Republic as a continuum of the banality of corruption is described. The camera pans out from a collapsed bridge crossing the Danube. 'The banality of evil is not Viennese dirty washing, but its very face.' The camera looks down at a construction site along the Danube canal. Anna walks through this site with her video camera. The narrator says: 'The golden Viennese heart, beating faster for a dog than for an artist, has been bleeding for some people.' The camera zooms into a newspaper which shows a bird, martyred for art. 'If you are creative in Vienna, the police suspect you.' The shot changes to show Ludwig Wittgenstein's house, which in the 1970s (and still today) housed the Bulgarian embassy and was also the subject of fierce battle over whether or not it should be demolished. The house was saved by campaigns and protests in Austria and abroad. We are introduced to a

<sup>91</sup> Gary Indiana, 'VALIE EXPORT', *On Film*, 9 (1978), 26-37 (p. 29).

<sup>92</sup> In a short text addressing the small *Fall of the Damned* by Peter Paul Rubens, Jelinek describes the gendering of this painting through the bodies of its women: 'in their fall, their sinking seems to be even more unavoidable and it seems as if their surrendering to God becomes even more deeply engraved on the female body, as if women did not sin as an autonomous being, but even in her sin was still dependent, seduced and persuaded to evil. The body of the women in its softness is more exposed to gravity. She is no captured eagle, her sin is stuck to her flesh.' For Jelinek, the nakedness of woman in this kind of painting is a metaphor for nakedness itself. Elfriede Jelinek, 'The Fall of the Bodies', in *The Birmingham Six: An Appalling Vista*, ed. by Oscar Gilligan, trans. by Jutta Shannon (Dublin: Litereire Publishers, 1990), pp. 80-83 (p. 81).

battle over the city. The camera lurks behind Anna as she films the Ringstraße. The narrator says: ‘ten years, from 1902-1912 Otto Wagner fought to rebuild Karlsplatz, his plans were always rejected.’ Images from his plans are shown on the screen (Plate 4.6). ‘The architect Loos was forbidden to continue his building because the facade of these houses was too plain. ... The campaigns against the architects of the Opera house were so strong that in 1868 Eduard van der Nüll hanged himself and his friend Siccard von Siccardburg died from apoplexy.’ We hear from the narrator that Emperor Franz Joseph sealed Vienna’s desecration. Anna films in Heldenplatz.<sup>93</sup> ‘The Ringstrasse is a model of borrowed styles, each as ridiculous as the other’ says the narrator. The camera pans across the Austrian National Library, it sweeps across the buildings which mark the co-ordinates of the Ring. The university and the museums imitate the style of the humanistic Renaissance epoch. The Parliament imitates Graeco-Roman style. The narrator explains that the Town Hall, built in 1880 is a Gothic deceit, ‘to house other lies.’ The camera finally settles on the Burgtheater. ‘From 1938 - 45 Austria produced revoltingly sickly, dishonest films, typically known as “Wiener Film” and the elite of the Burgtheater were their actors.’ The camera pans across a film programme. ‘The same crew, after the war, produced the popular travel [*Reise*] and *Heimat* films.’ ‘This smooth transition from Nazi Ostmark to the Second Republic is typical of the hypocritical mentality of the country’ (Plate 4.7).

Elfriede Jelinek addresses this period in her play *Burgtheater* from 1982/85 (Plate 4.7a). If we pause briefly on Jelinek’s play, we find several issues related to institutions, art and recuperation, in particular, with regards to theatre and film. This play was one of Jelinek’s most consequential interventions in post-Nazi Austrian culture. *Burgtheater* alludes to both the specific institution in Vienna of the same name, and to theatre in an expanded sense, as deceptive and duplicitous. Allyson Fiddler argues that *Burgtheater* is about a kind of opportunism and susceptibility of artists to end up working in the interests of the state and capital in general. In the context of Austria discussed here this means to work in the interests of the Third Reich and as apologists for everything that happened under it.

Jelinek’s play is in one sense about elaborate functionaries, *and* about specific individuals: it mocks and satirises by association and by working through their own works the famous Viennese actor family, Paula Wessely and the Hörbiger brothers.<sup>94</sup> After EXPORT, Jelinek’s research method was to investigate materials collected in the Austrian Film Museum, in so doing she revealed a continuity between Nazi propaganda and postwar *Heimat* culture. This was

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<sup>93</sup> *Heldenplatz* is the site of Austria’s biggest mass rallies in the twentieth and early twenty-first Centuries. In the 1930s Dollfuss’ speech and Hitler’s Anschluss speech took place here, In the early 2000s it was the location for huge anti-Haider demonstrations.

<sup>94</sup> Allyson Fiddler, ‘Jelinek “Burgtheater”’, in *Landmarks in German Comedy*, ed. by Peter Hutchinson (Oxford: Lang, 2006), pp. 227-42 (p. 231); Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Paula Wessely’, *ElfriedeJelinek.Com*, 2000 <<http://www.elfriedejelinek.com/fwessely.htm>> [accessed 14 May 2017]. This text appeared after a telephone interview with the magazine FORMAT on 15 May 2000.

commodity culture wrapped around the existing ideologies of “old” capital, family, church, state, homeland, fear of strangers, but away from the rubble cosmopolitan cities that had since received injections of US Marshall Plan capital. She found films that were immediately banned after 1945 such as *Heimkehr* (*Homecoming*) directed by Gustav Ucicky; a ‘Wien-Film GmbH’ production of Nazi propaganda produced in 1941 (Plate 4.7b). This film became central to her construction. Very simply, as with Kracauer’s assessment of Nazi film propaganda (though he does not mention *Heimkehr*) *Heimkehr* performs an absolute reversal of the dominant reality at the time, used retroactively to justify Hitler’s invasion of Poland in the name of the ‘*Lebensraum*’. The Nazis could make Poland’s soil German, but not its people. *Heimkehr* is an explicitly anti-Semitic and anti-Polish film where the protagonists — acted by Paula Wessely and Attila Hörbiger — play the Germans as the victims, while the Poles are depicted as the perpetrators. The film depicts the atrocities perpetrated against the Jews and ‘degenerates’ as having been done to the Germans: a Nazi woman is attacked and during the attack the Swastika necklace is ripped from her neck, she is then stoned. Germans are rounded up and shoved into the backs of trucks, and then dungeons. As with *Burgtheater*, as EXPORT briefly alludes in *Unsichtbare Gegner*, Jelinek presses on the transition levied between this level of ‘banned’ horror and what came to be celebrated and popularised in the 1950s onwards in the name of *Heimat* kitsch culture, reincorporated back into institutions such as the *Burgtheater* and its cinematic allies. For example, Wien-Film continued to use the same actors and directors throughout the postwar decades of reconstruction. This points us to culture produced inside the *Burgtheater*: a tradition.<sup>95</sup> In *Unsichtbare Gegner* the allegation of hypocrisy is levied at the city which Anna inhabits. The camera cuts to the Vienna skyline and then pans down to land

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<sup>95</sup> See Katrin Maria Kohl and Ritchie Robertson, *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000* (Camden House, 2006), p. 121. *Burgtheater* has never been performed in the *Burgtheater*, and was only once performed in Austria. See: Edna Epelbaum, ‘The Stage as Accomplice: Elfriede Jelinek’s Politics of the *Burgtheater*’, in *Elfriede Jelinek*, eds. by Matthias Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger, pp. 115–34. If we look at the context of *Burgtheater*, since 1945 to the present, we find an object lesson which describes well the Austrian and Viennese official culture which EXPORT and Jelinek were railing against. I will plot this very briefly: As part of a discussion organized by the Elfriede Jelinek Forschungszentrum on the 5 May 2017, inside the *Burgtheater*, Cornelius Obonya, the grandson of Wessely and Hörbiger was invited to speak on a panel. In this discussion he was very keen to represent his grandparents with recourse to the typical bourgeois mode of separating out the spheres. He defended them in their Nazi turn, by defending their ‘need’ to act. In his words, acting was their vocation and it did not matter what they did with it, as long as they did it. If Nazis approached them favourably and flattered them with a script, a budget and a director, they would not turn down the job. The content of the script was meaningless; all that mattered was how the words were said. It doesn’t seem complex to claim that they were in fact Nazi sympathisers who made Nazi “art”; who propagated Nazi ideas. Yet, to Obonya, his grandparents were *apolitical*, although they welcomed the Nazis and became acquainted with Joseph Goebbels. Obonya’s defence of them rested on their praise for *Heimkehr*, which, with Goebbels’ was their favourite film. After the war, Wessely’s second job (following a brief investigation), was the lead in Brecht’s Vienna premier of *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (1946) in Theater in der Josephstadt. This took place just before the CIA funded anti-communist Wiener Brecht Boycott that would last into the early 1960s. This seems to be another display of vacuousness, or her ability to suppress the then very recent past. The ‘Wiener Brecht Boycott’ was an anti-communist campaign led by Hans Weigel and Friedrich Torberg and their CIA funded organ: FORVM, a political-literary magazine that existed between 1952 and 1963.

on a man lying on a sun lounger on rooftop terrace, masturbating while reading the bible, his Catholic robes lie flat on the floor beside him, on his head sits a black headdress. The church bells ring (Plate 4.8).

#### 4.2.2: *The History of Women*

In another scene, the film asks the question: when is a human being a woman? The writer Monika Helfer-Friedlich reads from a text, *Männer und Frauen (Men and Women)*, in which she cites a victim of depression induced suicide and describes writing as a therapy to avoid this. Anna recounts how her photographs and video remind her of a professor who would only lecture in front of a mirror. The realist novelist, Ferdinand von Saar killed himself in front of a mirror. This scene acts as a lesson in EXPORT's method. The camera frames Anna's lips as she says: 'My visual work is for me like a monologue. Monologue. I tell myself what I am suffering from. It is like a dialogue with an invisible partner, because I do not believe in the reality of my environment' (Plates 4.9, 4.9a, 4.9b). Monologue takes on a therapeutic potential.

Psychoanalysis as a method of uncovering and abreacting is present throughout the film. The film itself acts out this technique. Anna uses her camera to excavate parts of the city in ruin. Freud claims that a psyche is akin to a city. One can find the ruins of the old among what is made anew.<sup>96</sup>

Anna unfolds a piece of paper and reads: 'It is an attitude of the present germ of all temporal attitudes, whereby the momentary gesture and the realisation that it will have a future, that it can be told later on, are overlaid and linked up.' She says: 'This reproduction and reversal of observation, that depresses me, creates my paranoia, from which I cannot escape, because it surrounds me in the real form of this city and its people.' They watch a video recording of the German feminist filmmaker Helke Sander answering the same question: when is a human being a woman? She talks about the results of reflections, which she can probably make because she is a woman. Sander also recounts working for the women's movement, where she began to be interested in the history of women. She read August Bebel, Engels and Marx, and anything else she could find. But she could not understand the concept of the 'natural' division of labour. The image changes from Sander's face, to EXPORT's photo constructions from the series *Körperkonfigurationen (Body Configurations)*, interspersed with shots of figural sculptures adorning Vienna's buildings. Anna says:

I am not sick. It seems to be a process whose course is unfamiliar to me. It frightens me to see some of my latest pictures and the change in their subject matter and the motive of their content. But if the subjects were not there, I could not take these pictures, so

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<sup>96</sup> Freud, 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p. 69.

they also show me a change in my environment. I would like to check what and if, something changed everywhere outside, or if it is just in me. Pictures pierce me like psychic meteors. They reflect the paranoid reality [*Sie machen mir Angst*]. Are these pictures a defence mechanism against fear, or do they produce fear? I do not want to protect myself against fear with means connected with fear. Like a line becomes a circle.

The camera pans down to Anna and Peter in front of the Palmenhaus by Burggarten. The camera pans slowly from side to side like a pendulum. As the dialogue is critical to our understanding of the film I will quote it in full. The last clause in the last sentence of each of their lines is replayed, as if said twice.

Anna: I do not want to think anymore alone, I want others to pose my questions. Why must I always impose myself against the resistance of reality?

Peter: It is even worse. The less you stick to the human rules, the sooner you win, and victory is surer, the more you can inculcate moralistic, humanistic, idealistic goals in your opponent. Then you can calculate his rationale, acting according to known values.

Humanism is an argument for those in power, and best for those in fascism, for the people who saw the rest of the world as sub-human [*Untermenschen*]. The 'human,' the word human, is the lousiest scam there is, on a par with 'solidarity', 'friendship', 'freedom'. These are words that rulers make victims with, and I do not want to be cheated anymore with such fake words. We are prisoners of ourselves and our environment, governed by alienated 'humans' and spied on by thousands of guards. There is no freedom. We can only hope that we will not betray each other for a short time.

Anna: You're trying to explain something to me that you can not deny yourself. You talk as if the Hyksos had already bought you. As inhuman as if they had taken over your form.

Peter: There is no such thing. It is a Däniken superstition, CIA madness! Some people believe in other-worldly beings, others in the CIA, and you believe in the Hyksos. The system, all systems, from the political, via the familial, to the biological, the super-structures of our systems, those are the invisible adversaries that change people, those are the invisible enemies, the laws by which people act.

Anna: The abstract systems appear to us in the shape of human beings who have a free will and can decide for themselves.

In this scene we find a battle between Anna's bourgeois humanism and Peter's 'enlightened' but masculinised anti-humanism. Again, EXPORT tries to disfigure idealised woman through this re-description of Renaissance painting. She seeks to show the origins of modern humanism, through forms which depict women in idealised ways.

Peter leaves. Anna, distraught, records herself repeatedly saying 'Peter' into a dictaphone. Taking the foil from her cigarette packet, she clears space on her table. She folds the foil into the shape of a small boat, empties lighter fluid into it and lights it. Soon the flames die out. We see that Anna's perception of the world changes. People slow down. She slumps back. People run past quickly. The temporality of her surroundings expands and contracts. She enters a phone box to speak to Peter. She recounts another experience with Hyksos. She claims conspiratorially that mobile senders are altering brain rhythms. She exits and then slides down the phone box, and says: 'scrape away tatters of skin, so as not to fall naked suddenly. Keep order, so as hand and foot will find room.' Paranoia, Laplanche and Pontalis write, is a 'chronic psychosis characterised by more or less systematised delusion, with a predominance of ideas of reference but with no weakening of the intellect and, generally speaking, no tendency towards deterioration'.<sup>97</sup> Paranoia's etymology takes us back to Greek roots, meaning madness and disorder of the mind. For EXPORT the idea to figure psychic conditions is present in a 1972 draft, included in an article co-authored by EXPORT and Weibel titled 'Women Working' published in 1979. She writes:

[T]he responses of the body when it loses its identity, when the ego eats its way through the shredded skin when steel braces bend the joints and the exhausted identity is nailed to modern mythomania. My body actions since 1968, my drawings show the loss of communication and elimination of language when the body rejects the norms of its expression, when the body is depleted to nothing more than a spatial part which hides its wounds and which is no more than an element of a lifeless sculpture (photographed configurations of bodies in nature or architecture). Spatial experience through the body and consciousness deformed by coercive structures (my short films). The thought and the wish grew stronger and stronger to form social the structures (power current) and norms (mutilations) of life, these invisible adversaries, the compassion of meaning, into a metanoia of cinematographic images (draft for the film 1972).<sup>98</sup>

Via an escalator, Anna enters a mall in Karlsplatz. She sees children shouting loudly at a video on television. The video shows a mangled truck, a motorway accident. This cuts to images

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<sup>97</sup> Laplanche and Pontalis, p. 296.

<sup>98</sup> VALIE EXPORT and Peter Weibel, 'Women Working', *Camera Obscura, A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory*, 3-4 (1979), 219-24 (p. 222).



from the *Titanic*; people fall into water. The film reintroduces the notion of escalation of violence.

Back in her apartment she sits by a table and reads a book. The flicking through the pages their sounds begin to echo bullets. She quivers, and rests her head on the table. She picks up another book, this time by Clara Zetkin, and reads to Peter:

Revolutionary about her is her insistence on what she finds in herself. Olga sticks to principles, even when she can not solve her contradictions. She does not deny her split personality or pretend to harmony she does not possess. She would sooner identify herself with the suffering caused by her ambivalence.

Surrealist imagery is also a persistent force. Anna cuts her pubic hair and sticks it above her upper lip to create a moustache. A fish swims in the bath. She then lies in the bath. Shots are montaged together so she is compared to the fish. She removes the scales from the fish to prepare it for consumption. She shaves her armpit. She violently brushes her teeth, clips her toenails and guts the fish. She shaves her legs, and pulls the inside out of the fish. She plies moisturiser to herself and salt to the fish. She adds moisturiser to her whole body and dips the fish in batter. She puts on her mascara and sprinkles flour over the batter. She fries the fish in hot oil and then serves it to Peter. She washes the dishes after him.<sup>99</sup>

Towards the end of the film, Anna sits opposite an ageing man. She has decided to see a psychiatrist. She asks if she can read out a statement she has prepared:

My environment is changing, but my fellow humans tell me that it is me who is changing. Yet I have objective proof, such as radio broadcasts, photos which have recorded this change. Once, I even heard voices during the news, announcing the occupation of the earth by foreign powers.

The psychiatrist asks if, when alone, she has previously heard voices? She replies: only the voices on the radio. She continues to read: 'I can see plainly that people do not act themselves, but that they are under an alien/foreign [*fremden*] influence.' The man asks Anna if she thinks a foreign power is influencing her. Her reply is that the alien domination is exercised over all

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<sup>99</sup> This can be seen at the logical development from *Mann & Frau & Animal*, where EXPORT lies in the bath as if a fish. Anna is back in her dark room where she looks at photographs of children. She has developed images of mangled bodies, ruined cars, homeless people, stateless people, refugees, weapons, police, crying women. We see recording from EXPORT's work *Homo-Meter II* (1976). In this street action [*Straßenaktion*] EXPORT walks around Vienna with bread tied to her stomach as if she is pregnant. Carrying a knife, she offers the bread to passers by. The body becomes analogous to the Body of Christ in the story of the Last Supper. The bread also sits outside the womb standing in for creation.

people. 'I see in them a second person, the real one, which they are not themselves. Behind people I see other beings [*andere Wesen*] as if they were double, and the double is always before the person. He dictates what the person then says or does'. The psychiatrist interrupts Anna again enquiring if she has ever seen of felt herself double (Plates 4.10, 4.10a). Only in the mirror, she replies. After a short pause she continues to read:

What does the person say or do? I only see the shells of people, inside they are empty. They are exhausted and occupied by aliens. I see craftsmen but no humans [*Menschen*], priests, conductors, but no humans. Masters and servants but no humans. Young and old people [*Leute*] but no humans. I see a great battlefield where humanity killed itself. I see everywhere mangled limbs. I am alone in my search for human beings.

The psychiatrist asks Anna if she sleeps well or has nightmares. She replies sometimes she had bad dreams where she is skating through the city. 'People keep telling me there is no such thing as what I see. That is natural. They have been bought over, they are victims of the Hyksos. They speak only as Hyksos. They are put under pressure and have to say that. Who can I trust? What can I see? The truth that I feel? Or what the people tell me?' The psychiatrist asks Anna if she has a problem with her eyes, and if the *doppelgänger* precedes the person. She answers: yes, because it is the evil spirit standing next to them, dictating. The camera closes in on Anna's eyes, then cuts to her taking out her own camera. She begins to photograph the psychiatrist describing her need to photograph/record her all of her surroundings, for her job. At the end of the interview the doctor diagnoses Anna with Schizophrenia. He ascribes this to her symptoms of *doubling*, the influence of external forces over humans, and hearing voices. The film ends when Anna is once again in her bedroom. The film has looped back to its beginning. This time, she gets dressed for bed. The radio blares out: 'We had better treat each other as convalescents, as we still have to archive complete mental health, as we always forget'. The quotation is taken from Rahel Varnhagen the Jewish writer celebrated by Hannah Arendt, from a text from 1813. Anna continues to put all her clothes on, including her boots, hat and gloves. She then gets into bed. The news blares again. Throughout EXPORT's film we see many quotations, starting and ending with the abstract expressionist George Mathieu. We see Ulrike Rosenbach's *Venus* (1976). We hear words written by the poet Friedrich Hölderlin; Marxist feminist Klara Zetkin and Franz Kafka's collaborator, Franz Blai.<sup>100</sup>

*Unsichtbare Gegner* works by constantly and relentlessly bringing the viewer back to the mediation of experience through technological processes. It focusses on the camera and the

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<sup>100</sup> I would have to undertake more archival research including reading drafts of the scripts to dissect these quotations, unfortunately the archive was unavailable for the majority of the time of writing.

video camera, the newspaper, television and radio. It is a film about media. But its materials include much more: dream, history, the city, Catholicism, the body, sexuality, societal repression, schizophrenia begin to form a list of what is worked through. If we see it as a spiral, then its political reality circles in from the outside, both as background information through the news reports and through the form of the work itself, which shows a system of totalitarianism which takes Anna as its victim (which Peter keeps saying), in such a way that we as viewers can see. In an interview EXPORT explains, ‘Anna is not only reflecting the rigidity of bourgeois mentality, she confronts it in her behaviour. I used Anna in order to present my critique of Viennese, or Austrian society—especially its cultural politics’.<sup>101</sup> Anna acts as a kind of limit case, by both reflecting and confronting bourgeois rigidity. In her struggle against the reality principle, which she is also dominated by, she barely survives.

In a 1979 article Peter Weibel describes Anna as a ‘victim of the phenomenon of agreement’.<sup>102</sup> For Weibel, who co-wrote the film, her observation and recording of her surroundings, in order to record and document her perceptions as well as warnings, mean that she perceives a huge amount of aggression and destruction. The visual evidence that she finds also begins to turn against her. She wants to prove what she perceived in her environment, but this only proves her own change. For Weibel ‘reality’ produces a document of unreality.

[F]ollowing a journey through modern everyday life in which the exotic dimensions of its miserable stations are the image meteors of the inner world, following inhuman encounters with ‘human beings,’ her isolation becomes greater and greater because her method of proof justifies what she sees (and what she sees justifies her method).<sup>103</sup>

Weibel ascribes the film with various ‘modal’ levels of reality, which the film then deals with through its imagery and (non-)narrative structure. Following the principle of Expanded Cinema. Weibel says that the protagonist’s consciousness displays no differentiation between concrete reality, observed reality and media reality.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, everything, including the expression of that which is psychic, is swallowed into media reality, and expressed with photography, film, video: ‘mediality’.

EXPORT’s use of ‘image meteors’ reflects Jelinek’s abandonment of plot. The film carries forward the principle of Expanded Cinema, a kind of cinema which wants to break down the media and transform its uses and meanings. From a context dominated by both conservative

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<sup>101</sup> EXPORT and MacDonald, p. 259.

<sup>102</sup> EXPORT and Weibel, ‘Women Working’, p. 219.

<sup>103</sup> EXPORT and Weibel, ‘Women Working’, p. 221.

<sup>104</sup> EXPORT and Weibel, ‘Women Working’, p. 221.

*Heimat* and Hollywood film it aims to directly address the premise of commercial-conventional filmmaking which comes to stand in for techno-capitalist society. Of Anna, Weibel asks:

Are her hallucinations fear triggered by real obsessions or do these fictions produce the fear? Because her eye can no longer distinguish between endogenously (internal) and exogenously (external) produced meanings through observation, Anna — who senses her subjective change — substitutes for her eye, the natural projector of reality, still and video cameras. In this way she can control her observations and her environment with objective observation-machines and she can observe the (hidden) truth. The question is: is it Anna's pathological observation which makes the environment appear so horribly pathological or is the environment actually so pathological, is answered by a recursive fiction.<sup>105</sup>

In a similar way as EXPORT would later write in her essay 'The Real and its Double: The Body' (1987), Anna replaces her eye with the camera. The 'objective observation machines' end up taking on a conspiratorial quality where hidden truth also means hallucination.

Anna's journey is the history of the disintegration of observation which is also the history of the deterioration of an environment (specifically that of Vienna). For, as obviously as Anna develops a system of relations with distorted traits, it is equally clear that her distorted system reflects concealed structures of our real system.<sup>106</sup>

Weibel emphasises this doubling of disintegration through observation and environment taking place in Vienna. Thus, we can say that far from imagining future worlds, and against the principle of a unifying art, *Unsichtbare Gegner* pays attention to a kind of distrust in technological culture which has (had) the power to produce and maintain false narratives, as it did under Nazism in Vienna and throughout its territories. But it goes beyond that. The film's narrative is partially replaced by cacophonies of images, EXPORT calls these 'image meteors'. Its narrative reflects a split subject, as read by Anna: 'She does not deny her split personality or pretend to harmony she does not possess.' Anna manages to enact both a schizophrenic breakdown and show or 'reflect' the system which enables this breakdown.<sup>107</sup> Friedrich Kittler argues that the

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<sup>105</sup> EXPORT and Weibel, 'Women Working', p. 221.

<sup>106</sup> EXPORT and Weibel, 'Women Working', p. 221.

<sup>107</sup> Gary Indiana, 'VALIE EXPORT', *On Film*, 9 (1978), 26–37 (p. 32). Gary Indiana summarises: 'Schizophrenics are said to swallow the world, but civilisation actually encourages this practice by encouraging the reproduction of images. Television is ideal consumption: the world enters the home pre-digested and compacted into image-food. But this form of consumption obliterates genuine encounter with the other and genuine knowledge of the self. The insertion of society's destructive tendencies into the self-realisation process is the theme of EXPORT's Invisible Adversaries.'

first film theory is a theory of ‘psychotechnology’, and that film differently from the traditional arts ‘emits to its viewers their own process of perception—and this with a precision available only to experiment,’ which cannot be accessed by ‘consciousness or language’.<sup>108</sup> If this is the case, then *Unsichtbare Gegner* emits both the traces of a perception in crisis, and the totality of that system which intensifies that crisis. It yokes together the crises of its own time: women’s struggles, struggles for the image, struggles to be a public person, struggles against abuse, and the struggle for history over protected amnesia.

### 4.3: *Silence over the Body*

In the context of her *Körperkonfigurationen* (Body Configurations) VALIE EXPORT writes about a silence over the body, as something stemming from civilisation, ‘I force the body code out of frozen history of culture [*Kultur*], which is a history of silence over the body’.<sup>109</sup> In the late 1980s this forcing of the bodily codes came to mean transfiguring the body from its object status and propelling it towards that of the artwork or sign, something beyond its brute presence, understood as the *Leib* aspect of the body. This was to underscore the ways that the body is constructed and propelled by measure. This kind of attention takes EXPORT into the image space, where the body not only becomes an artwork, and exists in excess of its codification by culture, but through this gathering up, and framing and fixing of the body via media, the body is paradoxically brought into closer proximity to, and optimised for powers of control. In 2018 this means technologies such as DNA sampling, fingerprinting, facial recognition, and cloning. In the period before these works were made this meant eugenicist experiments on the body, as with the Viennese medical doctor and psychiatrist Heinrich Gross, or just brutal murders.

Here I want to step back from the body as artwork, in order to point to a silence over the body that occurs through the division of labour, and will mean deepening our understanding of the very meaning of the artwork itself. The fragment, ‘Interest in the Body’ [*Interesse am Körper*] is included in the appendix to Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). As a sketch contributing to the logic of the *Dialectic* it remains vital. Though it is included in the double-authored book, ideas presented here return in Adorno’s lectures: *Aesthetics*, given in 1958-59.<sup>110</sup> From this fragment we can glean something as to precisely Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s ‘*interest*’ in the body.

Adorno and Horkheimer wrote the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in the USA during the early 1940s. For these authors, this stark period of fascism and war illuminated a hidden history.

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<sup>108</sup> Kittler, p. 100.

<sup>109</sup> EXPORT, ‘Corpus More Geometrico’, p. 46.

<sup>110</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetics, 1958/59*, ed. Eberhard Ortland, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2018).

They explain that ‘the manifest history is also revealing its connection to that dark side [Nachtseite]’.<sup>111</sup> Here, history is both manifest and hidden or latent. They claim that this ‘subterranean’, hidden history was passed over by the ‘official legends’ of the nation states, and their progressive critique. ‘Beneath the known history of Europe there runs a subterranean one. It consists of the fate of the human instincts [*Instinkte*] and passions repressed and distorted [*entstellten*] by civilisation’.<sup>112</sup> I propose that this poses a similar notion to EXPORT’s ‘silence over the body’, and also to Jelinek’s body analysis at the limit of shame (from chapter 2).

If we focus on this using a Freudian model, ‘manifest history’ correlates to ‘manifest content’ which Freud paired with ‘latent content’ in his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). The manifest content of the dream refers to the dream as it appears to the one who dreamt it, as it is, prior to any kind of investigation.<sup>113</sup> ‘Most mutilated of all is the relationship to the body. Under the division of labour, in which the benefits accrued to one side and labour to the other, brute strength was anathematised’ they write.<sup>114</sup> It is the relationship to the body which is at its limit, mutilated. In this formulation, within the division of labour produced under capitalist social relations, there is no way to experience an un-mutilated relationship to the body. There is no possible non-painful, unmediated experience of the body.

Adorno and Horkheimer write: ‘Like the slave, work [*die Arbeit*] received a stigma’.<sup>115</sup> Here, work is stigmatised like slavery, as a corollary, as if it was slavery. What is the meaning of this exaggeration? How is it used and how useful is it? What was held in common between slaves was that as humans they were identified as objects to be bought and sold, forced to labour, and constituted part of an owner’s property portfolio.<sup>116</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer say, the ‘fate of the slaves of Antiquity’ gave the meaning of *mere inferiority* to those in power, and this fate was ‘endured’ up to modern colonialism.

For Adorno and Horkheimer, as we have seen, *interest* in the body is focussed on its role in the labour process. If we connect this to the postulation introduced in chapter 1, (and mentioned above), where artistic expression can take the form of a non-sublimated instinct colliding with the world, then a form of expression which routes away from the path given by civilisation would be set in motion. It would route away from Freud’s system of law and repression:

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<sup>111</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. 192; Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften. Band 3. Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), p. 265. (Hereafter as: DoE; GS 3).

<sup>112</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>113</sup> Laplanche and Pontalis, p. 243.

<sup>114</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>115</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>116</sup> As I have pointed out in chapter 3, the Nazis were influenced by race laws in Jim Crow’s USA in the 1930s, these laws were treated as precedent for the Nuremberg Laws in the Third Reich. Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model*.

The final outcome should be a rule or law to which all—except those who are not capable of entering a community—have contributed by sacrifice of their instincts, and which leaves no one—again with the same exception —at the mercy of brute force.<sup>117</sup>

In Freud's formulation, civilisation is premised on renunciation, repression and suppression. Here, Adorno and Horkheimer follow suit but they place this in the *history* of Christianity where, labour is celebrated but the flesh is vilified 'as the source of all evil'.<sup>118</sup> Christianity then ushered in 'the modern bourgeois order by extolling work, which in the Old Testament had been designated a curse'.<sup>119</sup> They argue that for the early Christian Hermits, the 'Desert Fathers', labour was the direct route to heaven. This was posited against Luther and Calvin, for whom 'the link between work and salvation' was so convoluted and diluted that its persistence would be scorned.<sup>120</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer draw a line between the patricians and princes, who are the benefactors of the division of labour, and the 'irrationality' of the doctrine of 'predestination [*Gnadenwahl*]', which 'left the possibility of redemption open to them' and the others who are all the more subjugated.<sup>121</sup> They write that these others 'were dimly aware that the mortification of the flesh by power was nothing other than the ideological reflection of the oppression practiced on them'.<sup>122</sup> If we recall from chapter 2, Feminist Actionism sought to expose the abulias by highlighting the body as the site of repression, a repression which increases the suffering of the human. We saw that in Jelinek's transcribed body analysis, her words attack the *Leib*, the body which is often understood as the body of Christ, to provoke shame against the shame imposed on women after Eve. Adorno and Horkheimer also argue that mortification of the flesh, ridding the body of sin, is part of an ideological battle against humans under the sign of the Church. They mean that it is nothing more than oppression practiced ideologically.

Adorno and Horkheimer assert that the historical movements of emancipation occupied an epochal cultural shift whereby the split within the subject deepens, at the same time as external coercions subside. We already noted that one of Freud's split subjects is caused through fetishism, as a response to his concept of castration anxiety, a concept which EXPORT already responded to with recourse to the image. Since EXPORT's oeuvre can be in some ways characterised by the split, the double, the tear, the schizophrenic, I want rethink how this split subject is staged within her work. How does this conception of the split help us to see the

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<sup>117</sup> Freud, 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p. 95.

<sup>118</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>119</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>120</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265.

<sup>121</sup> DoE, p. 192; GS 3, p. 265. (Translation amended).

<sup>122</sup> DoE, p. 193; GS 3, p. 265.

truth of her work unfold? If we pursue Adorno's interest in the body, we see that the exploited body, understood by the lowlifes [*die Unteren*] as the bad, was pitted against mind, which, paired with leisure, pertained to the highest good.<sup>123</sup> Simultaneously, as control over the body intensified, the fraud that this was based on was intensified: 'the love-hate for the body [*Körper*] which permeated the mentality of the masses over the centuries' found its 'authentic expression in the language of Luther'.<sup>124</sup> They bring us back to the relationship which they characterise as one which *reenacts* 'the irrationality and injustice of power as cruelty; and that irrationality is as far removed from judicious insight and serene reflection as power is from freedom'.<sup>125</sup> Reflected through Nietzsche and Sade, and psychologically through Freud's theories of the death drive and narcissism, they posit that power itself is irrational and unjust, and expresses itself through cruelty. Irrationality is understood as the opposite of justice and reflection. Nothing can truly be gained from embracing irrationality. Thus culture is tainted by this love-hate obsession with the body. They say:

The body is scorned and rejected as something inferior, enslaved, and at the same time desire is forbidden, reified estranged. Only culture treats the body [*Körper*] as a thing [*Ding*] that can be owned, only in culture has it been distinguished from mind, the quintessence of power and command, as the object, the dead thing, the *corpus*. In humanity's self-abasement to the *corpus* nature takes its revenge for the debasement of the human being to an object of power, to raw material. The compulsion toward cruelty and destruction stems from the organic repression of proximity to the body [*Körper*].<sup>126</sup>

It is precisely through what they call culture that this splitting in the relationship to the body emerges, where the body as *Körper*, as thing, is reduced to *corpus*. This is what EXPORT wants to reverse through her idea of the transfigured body, but which she also risks reproducing.

Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the body (as it was understood) was cultivated for social reasons. The upright stance and the gymnasium trained a 'lordly posture,' and this was superseded by the transition of power under monopoly capitalism with the rise of industry. 'Instead of to the sword, humanity has enslaved itself to the gigantic apparatus', which also gives rise to the sword.<sup>127</sup> Gender plays a role, in that woman is absent. Adorno and Horkheimer claim that the rise of monopoly capitalism meant that there was no need to cultivate the *male* body any longer. However, as we know, in fascism it is the male body which is

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<sup>123</sup> DoE, p. 193; GS 3, p. 266.

<sup>124</sup> DoE, p. 193; GS 3, p. 266.

<sup>125</sup> DoE, p. 193; GS 3, p. 267.

<sup>126</sup> DoE, p. 193; GS 3, p. 267.

<sup>127</sup> DoE, p. 194; GS 3, p. 267.



cultivated; while the female body is celebrated only for its function and in that sense, reduced. In Adorno's and Horkheimer's view, the idealisation of the male in the twentieth century (by artists who sought to reunify body [*Leib*] and mind) is merely the idealisation of something dead and mutilated, which in turn would only serve the interests of mass culture and advertising.<sup>128</sup> If we recall, in the case of Jelinek the *Leib* belongs to an active moment of deterritorialising the body at the limit of shame, while for EXPORT the *Leib* appears in a moment of trying to untether the body from the thing, to see the body as an artwork beyond measure, in the world. Adorno and Horkheimer write:

The body [*Körper*] cannot be turned back into an envelope for the soul [*Leib*]. It remains a cadaver [*Leiche*] no matter how trained and fit it might be. The transformation into dead matter, indicated by the affinity of corpus to corpse, was a part of the perennial process which turned nature into stuff, material.<sup>129</sup>

Yet, if we recall from chapter 1, in *Negative Dialectics* (1966) Adorno writes that the 'new imperative gives us a bodily [*leibhaftig*] sensation of the moral addendum', after Auschwitz Adorno identifies a new moral imperative which necessarily includes within it bodily feelings and sensations.<sup>130</sup> And, if we recall he also claims that '...what hope clings to [...] is the transfigured body [*verklärter Leib*]'.<sup>131</sup> The moral imperative is also only a hope, but it is tied to *leibhaftig*, bodily in a way that might be beyond the *körperliche*, sensations and feelings, and this, hope which is distinct from imperative, which is mere hope, sticks to, clings to, the transfigured body. The transfigured body can only come about in something like song, here this relates to *Mignon's Song*. Therefore, we find a contradiction in Adorno's theorisation. At the end of *Negative Dialectics*, hope reaches out towards the transfigured body, but doesn't necessarily attain it; the body understood in a secular union of spirit and body, in a moment of potential overcoming of the division of labour.

If we consider again the *interest* in the body, Adorno and Horkheimer claim that love-hate for the body is the cause of brutal aggression in the atrocities committed by 'violent men' which are permitted in society where such humans are used by ruling powers, against those whom the ruling powers give over to them, against whom they cease to protect. They claim that precisely in this brutality and aggression is a 'rancour against reification: the splitting of life

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<sup>128</sup> DoE, p. 194; GS 3, p. 267. This is a discrete argument against phenomenology.

<sup>129</sup> DoE, p. 194; GS 3, p. 267. 'Der *Körper* ist nicht wieder zurückzuverwandeln in den *Leib*. Er bleibt die Leiche, auch wenn er noch so sehr ertüchtigt wird. Die Transformation ins Tote, die in seinem Namen sich anzeigt, war ein Teil des perennierenden Prozesses, der Natur zu Stoff und Materie machte.' (Emphasis mine).

<sup>130</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 365.

<sup>131</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 400.

into mind and its object. The human being irresistibly attracts them, they want to reduce him or her to the body [*Körper*] nothing shall be allowed to live.<sup>132</sup> Yet, the splitting is between being reduced to the body, and the body unreduced. In the final instance, as across much of Adorno's work, an answer is given in sexuality. In their description of the brutality and humiliation inflicted upon prisoners of concentration camps, they provide the reason as an 'unsublimated yet repressed rebellion of despised nature', vented on their objects: 'for sexuality is the body unreduced'.<sup>133</sup> They continue: 'In free sexuality the murderer fears the lost immediacy, the original oneness, in which he can no longer exist. It is the dead thing which rises up and lives'.<sup>134</sup> In this fragment, the result of this conflict produces a nihilism that wants to destroy all that has survived.

#### 4.3.1: *The Self-Mutilating Dialectics of Totality*

If we step back and consider this *interest* in the body within the whole of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Rebecca Comay's essay 'Adorno's Siren Song' (2000) teaches us more about how we might read this *interest* through its blind spot: gender. She assesses the figure of Odysseus in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as model of *homo-oeconomicus* for himself. She characterises the chapter on Odysseus as an 'appendage' to the first chapter, and she aptly describes the book as a series of connected appendages. Comay weighs the costs of Odysseus' enlightenment for Adorno (and she cites this as a chapter mainly written by Adorno): 'If reason can only assert itself as the domination of alien nature, this is in turn inseparable from a self-domination which becomes self-mutilation at its extreme'.<sup>135</sup> As we know, the implication of reason's external domination is internal domination; reason swaps into unreason as enlightenment swaps into myth. Here, I am interested in this dialectical notion of domination, which marks the external world only to turn back on the internal world, to leave it mutilated. I am interested in this on two levels: first, as we have also already seen in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno brings the concept of bourgeois autonomy, and thus also autonomous art into question, with the development of the culture industry. Secondly, in terms of language, I am interested in *how* vocabulary such as 'the domination of alien nature', 'self-domination' and 'self-mutilation', become fixed through language, action and image in the works of EXPORT and Jelinek. The beginning of Comay's essay addresses the division of labour within the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. In the story, Odysseus plugs the ears of the sailors so that they will row past the singing Sirens, while remaining undistracted in their deafness. Odysseus ties himself up so that

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<sup>132</sup> DoE, p. 195; GS 3, p. 268.

<sup>133</sup> DoE, p. 196; GS 3, p. 269. 'denn das Geschlecht ist der nicht reduzierte Körper.'

<sup>134</sup> DoE, p. 196; GS 3, p. 269.

<sup>135</sup> Rebecca Comay, 'Adorno's Siren Song', in *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, ed. by Renée Heberle (PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 41-68 (p. 42). This was first published in *New German Critique* in 2000.

he can listen and experience pleasure in solitary safety, but he cannot act. The analogy to the division of labour is cut between the sailors who undertake manual labour, leaning forward, rowing with their bodies comported downwards. They are active but deaf to the sounds of pleasure, and the (entrepreneurial) intellectual labour of Odysseus who stands upright, remains sensitive and sensitised but physically inert, bound to the pole.<sup>136</sup> Comay argues that Adorno's formulation implies the division of labour upon which class society depends.<sup>137</sup> And this can be extended analogously, to the division between philosophy and art/literature. With this, Comay suggests that Adorno is himself inscribed within the Odyssey, in the position of Odysseus as intellectual labourer.<sup>138</sup> The repercussions of this essay, Comay claims, are most evident and vitally significant to Adorno's thesis on the culture industry: music, technological reproduction, and propaganda, *and*, but to a lesser degree, on Horkheimer's writings on the family (which we have encountered in chapter 3). It is relevant to this thesis in particular for the ways in which Comay underscores the role of gender in the formulations on the culture industry.

Comay's answer to Odysseus' dialectic of enlightenment runs as follows: 'the attempt to free oneself from external bondage to the Other unleashes an endless ritual of sado-masochistic bondage games in which the subject has himself tied up tight'.<sup>139</sup> I propose that Comay articulates the unthought within Adorno's formulation. For Comay the Sirens are the voice of nature, pleasure, past. Woman is paired with Siren (although the Siren's identity was not stable), and written as the voice of nature, pleasure and past. For Comay, both the danger and the solution to the voice of the sirens and the logic of temptation, are extreme.<sup>140</sup> If the lure of nature followed by Odysseus' reassertion of dominion over nature was the first stage in this event at sea, this is consequently ramped up to mean sexual difference: 'Perhaps even more dangerous for Odysseus than sexual difference was the possibility that this very sexual difference might be subverted' writes Comay.<sup>141</sup> In this view, we can see that the threat looms against the sexual identity of the listener, and with it, the organisation of sexual difference, under a gender hierarchy.<sup>142</sup> The Sirens, with their 'sweet and sensuous' voices, "'female,'" according to the terms of Homer's day (and ours)', threaten the identity of the listener, but, Comay adds that what this sexual difference really provides is the ("male") promise of a

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<sup>136</sup> Comay, p. 42.

<sup>137</sup> 'The sailors with their plugged up ears are like the factory workers of the modern age: busy hands, strong arms, senses dulled by the brutalizing boredom of wage labor. Odysseus strapped to the mast in solitary delectation would be the bourgeois as modern concertgoer, taking cautious pleasure in "art" as an idle luxury to be enjoyed at safe remove'. Comay, p. 42.

<sup>138</sup> Comay, p. 42.

<sup>139</sup> Comay, p. 42.

<sup>140</sup> Comay, p. 42. Comay also writes that in this, Calypso, Circe and Nausica come to represent 'Other women'.

<sup>141</sup> Comay, p. 43.

<sup>142</sup> Comay, p. 44.

knowledge so absolute it would rupture the bonds of finite subjectivity by assuming the impossible standpoint of the whole'.<sup>143</sup> This whole is the promise of 'history in its totality, as totality, in total recollection'.<sup>144</sup>

Comay recognises that it is the Sirens who claim to know 'all that comes to pass on the generous earth' and that they offer to sing a song to Odysseus which will reveal to him a *total* perspective on life.<sup>145</sup> Questioning how a living Odysseus could hear this song, she writes:

If all autobiography is, at its limits allothanatography (to hear your own true story — the whole story — you must be someone other than yourself and you must be dead), the sirens promise would threaten to disturb the very economy of life and death on which the order of narrative depends.<sup>146</sup>

The implication is that the Sirens reach into the organising principle/logic of time, narrative and self-consciousness itself:

But if the Sirens promise omniscience—a 'masculinity' so total it would end up paradoxically reducing its bearer to a heap of bones—their appeal is sexually ambiguous in other ways as well. What would it mean to seduce through song? Was the threat of the song not precisely that it assailed the passerby through the ear, reducing his body to an open orifice, impregnated by whatever calls? In letting that viscous sweetness penetrate would not the man become, in effect, a woman? Understandably, Odysseus's only counter-spell to the Sirens' magic involves an emphatic reassertion of the phallic position. If the ear is in fact the essential organ of equilibrium and the erect posture, its labyrinthine confusion would render precarious the sense of balance and the upright gait. Hence the seasickness which accompanies every disturbance of the inner ear.<sup>147</sup>

For Comay the ear reduces the body itself to an open orifice, 'impregnated by whatever calls'. Sound both plants a seed and causes disturbance. *Penetrated* by sound, the man is threatened with death, or becomes a woman. She stresses that Odysseus' counter position is precisely to reassert his phallic position: in the moment of reassertion he must simultaneously recognise and acknowledge that he becomes, 'at once both female seductress to the sailor men and male

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<sup>143</sup> Comay, p. 44.

<sup>144</sup> Comay, p. 44.

<sup>145</sup> Comay, p. 44.

<sup>146</sup> Comay, p. 44.

<sup>147</sup> Comay, p. 45.

rapist to the sailor women'.<sup>148</sup> He becomes both 'seductive Siren and supreme victim of the Siren's power'.<sup>149</sup> In reflecting on the time of Adorno's youth, Comay writes:

Adorno of course had his own Sirens to contend with. By the 1930s the autonomous bourgeois subject had been, as he saw it, liquidated beyond repair, having succumbed to the fascinations of the culture industry, to the hypnotic spell of a power which no longer needs to mask itself as such.<sup>150</sup>

In Comay's rewriting of the relation between Adorno and Odysseus, the submission to the very power of the culture industry would in turn block any return to the self. A self which Odysseus would eventually find. She probes further: it is Odysseus' scar, Odysseus as a scarred man, which proves to be the locus of his own self-identity.<sup>151</sup> This scar, she explains, is fully healed, and full of memory, of childhood, of tenderness, and it is privileged. She ascribes to this scar the status of a, 'sign that all that pain had been put to work'.<sup>152</sup> Comay brings this back to Hegel in whose work, pain is understood to be 'neutralised' through the 'labour of the concept' insofar as 'the event of recognition coincides precisely with the restoration of the etymon, or, the proper name'.<sup>153</sup> As well as this turn towards pain and the scar — Comay detours to take the reader on a journey where wound also brings the word exile and scar brings the sign of home. The chasmic open wound is Adorno's (and EXPORT's and Jelinek's) un-healing modern world.<sup>154</sup> Comay notes Adorno's formulation, where every 'intellectual in emigration is, without exception, mutilated', and the idea that this wound is the 'universal diaspora which marks modernity as such'.<sup>155</sup>

#### *4.3.2: Conclusion: The Modern Song*

In this chapter, we have travelled from a sub-history of film to a sub-history of the body by way of reproduction: technological reproducibility and the reproduction of society. VALIE EXPORT's earliest Expanded Cinema works attempt to tear apart the cinema to transform the social relations of illusion at its foundation. By putting her body in the artwork, and by making the flesh accessible to touch, she aimed towards a cerebral liberation, where freeing the fixed partial drive in the viewer/user through the sense of touch would in turn de-reify the breast as commodity-fetish. The dialectic of Expanded Cinema shows that the process of fetishisation

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<sup>148</sup> Comay, p. 45.

<sup>149</sup> Comay, p. 46.

<sup>150</sup> Comay, p. 47.

<sup>151</sup> Comay, p. 47.

<sup>152</sup> Comay, p. 48.

<sup>153</sup> Comay, p. 48.

<sup>154</sup> Comay, p. 48.

<sup>155</sup> Comay, p. 49.

and commodification of life, through heteronymous laws as well as the image, takes place as women attempted to free themselves from this subjugation. The more she struggled against being rendered an image, the (woman) artist in the human size cinema became more image-like. *Unsichtbare Gegner*, is a meditation on the schizophrenic, the split, the tear, the wound, as the logical conclusion of the rigid bourgeois social type, and a film about the expansion of media. It displays a process where all aspects of the subject are swallowed into the media. What EXPORT calls a silence over the body, produced by civilisation, is brought into relation to the *interest* shown in the body, in the final fragments of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which charts a subterranean history of the body, marked by the distortion of the drives.

Rebecca Comay wrenches us into the present by asking: who are the modern Sirens? We might characterise EXPORT and Jelinek as Sirens of their moment. They do not sing a seductive song, but they do lure, tease, frighten, endanger and threaten ‘manhood’. Comay recounts that music, for Adorno, is the ‘most immediate expression of instinct,’ and tends towards the utopian ‘expression of the inexpressible’.<sup>156</sup> Like Jelinek’s language which assumes a kind of rhythm, so that it coincides with breath, in music, ‘in its privilege lies its weakness. Its very autonomy from signification, its “monadic” tendency to introversion, would entail a certain blindness to material origins which is the mark of every fetish’ writes Comay.<sup>157</sup> For EXPORT the monadic, the introversion in the Expanded Cinema works occurs through their brazenness. Instead of blindness to their fetish they say it as loudly as possible. It is as if they say: I am a fetish. What you see is not real. Come and touch me.

For Comay, Adorno’s rendition of music’s logic as ‘congealed self-imitation or self-interpretation’ means that through its production and reproduction music is from the start ‘half phantasmagorised’ as it also ‘anticipates its own alienation in its inner form. It would thus seem to submit most readily to the commodifying force of capital, easily alienated from its own performance, easily cut off from its own source’.<sup>158</sup> New technologies used in music such as those of sound recording mean that production is overwhelmed by reproduction and completes the very process of self-alienation. Life, says Adorno, becomes a film.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, Comay considers that with the rise of the culture industry and thus the construction of mass audiences there is a ‘hallucinatory identification with the apparatus, it becomes unclear who is consuming whom’.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Comay, p. 50.

<sup>157</sup> Jelinek explains that actors know her texts for the stage better than directors, because they are texts to be spoken. Jelinek and Honegger, ‘The Terror of the Cute’, p. 41; Comay, p. 50.

<sup>158</sup> Comay, p. 50.

<sup>159</sup> Comay, p. 50.

<sup>160</sup> Comay, p. 50.

Here, in a more extreme way than in the story of Odysseus, the audience is reduced to a *pure* orifice, to a 'a great formless mouth with shining teeth and a voracious smile'.<sup>161</sup> 'Being consumed, swallowed up, is indeed just what I understand as participation [*mitmachen*] which is so totally characteristic for the new psychological type' writes Adorno.<sup>162</sup> This type is characterised by delusions and projections and without a conscience has no ability to self-reflect.<sup>163</sup>

The next and final chapter continues to question the human intertwinement with technology, but it extends the discussion of gender and media to consider this within language through the concepts of fate and history. It does so by looking at Elfriede Jelinek's play *Totenaufer* (1991) and novel, *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975, *Women as Lovers*) through the concept of fate and its gendering, history and abstraction.

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<sup>161</sup> Comay, p. 50.

<sup>162</sup> Adorno cited in Comay, p. 50.

<sup>163</sup> Comay, p. 50.

## Chapter 5 - A Mountain of Fate

### 5.1: Totenauberg

The phrase from the title of this thesis, 'Figuring Austria's Repressed Violence' reflects the extent to which the body became the primary material, site and consideration in artistic practices in Austria in the 1960s onwards. The body is taken as the central focus and material which artists and writers both figured and disfigured in the space of art, in attempts to work through their history. The chapters so far have shown how this is articulated: through the fixation of the body by film; through the limit of the body and the limit of shame; through the labour of sexuality, the body in the family and the state, and the subterranean history of the body under capitalism, fascism and mass culture. We have explored what Adorno considered a new moral imperative after Auschwitz for bodily [*leibhaftig*] thoughts and feelings.

In chapter 3, we have seen how in Austria revived ideas of the *Volksgemeinschaft* are burgeoning within far-right politics, reconnecting the state to a and idea of the people [*Volk*], and the family to authoritarianism. This final chapter continues this thread in Jelinek's work but it looks at this problem anew. The *Volksgemeinschaft* is an idea that can be paired with *Heimat* (though *Heimat* pre-existed National Socialism), a notion of homeland and *Gemütlichkeit*, cozy culture, in the interwar years. This gives rise to an exclusive collective, the collective of the *Volk* under the National Socialist state of the Third Reich. It meant being German and fulfilling the destiny of that being. *Heimat* culture, culture-industry feel-good culture, was reinstated in the postwar decades, as we have seen in chapter 4 and in relation to Jelinek's Burgtheater, as Austrians rapidly forgot the horrors of the 1940s. I propose that Jelinek's ongoing critique of this notion, stemming from the commodification of the prevalent concept of *Heimat*, amplifies the register of her work beyond Austria although this is the specific context and history that she addresses.

This chapter will follow two works by Elfriede Jelinek, namely *Totenauberg* (1991) and *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975). The first is a play. The second is a novel. They share, albeit in very different ways, a concern with the concept and reality of *Heimat*. This final chapter provides an analysis of this concept which has regained in import. I want to use these two works to try to articulate a claim about the role of fate, capitalist-work, nature and history in Elfriede Jelinek's writings, and in turn to see what Jelinek tells us about the meaning of fate, capitalist-work, nature and history. The two sides of this chapter address differing conceptions of history and fate. First this is addressed through Jelinek's staging of Heidegger and Arendt on the mountain. Secondly, it is read, aided by Jelinek's novel, as a gendered concept, and a concept which has been made abstract. This chapter reads Jelinek's play in its historical context. It reads



Heidegger's text, and Jelinek's response to it, proposing it as a response not just to Heidegger, but first, to the production of fascism's afterlife as a form of work and production which mirrors the increased worklessness which comes with automation, secondly, this addresses the political meaning of Heimat as nativism and thirdly, this analyses the language which Jelinek reworks. In the second part, I will read *Die Liebhaberinnen* against the grain, reading out of it the gendered concept of fate. Through my analysis of these two texts, this final chapter attempts to read out of these texts, the body of time and history, and the logic of fate and abstraction. What I want to propose is that Jelinek's own texts do the important work relating the logic of fate, to history, more specifically, to the history of capitalism.

*Totenauberg* stages a critical, poetic, juxtaposition of Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt. Jelinek's depiction of Heidegger as the Old Man, is premised on 'Die Frage nach der Technik' (1954, 'The Question Concerning Technology'), an essay which can be read as his retroactive attempt to justify his Nazism. There are two further texts by Heidegger which Jelinek is concerned with. 'Abraham a Sankta Clara' from 1910, is a text which endorses conservative discourses of health and illness, which would later become part of the 'pro-peasant' politics of National Socialism (as discussed in chapter 3) and 'Schöpferische Landschaft: Warum Bleiben wir in der Provinz?' ('Why I stay in the Provinces?') from 1933 in which Heidegger describes being affirmed by an old farmer in his rejection of an invitation to go to Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Jelinek's Woman figure is based on Hannah Arendt's essay 'What is Existentialism' (1948), her letters with Karl Jaspers, and the text she wrote for Heidegger's eightieth birthday. As we will see, Jelinek stages the Arendt figure in a way that offers direct critique of Heidegger's thinking. The Arendt figure allows Jelinek to gain proximity to Heidegger's thinking. Yet, as Marlies Janz claims, the Arendt figure is resigned and the play *Totenauberg* is resigned with her. At the very end of the play we hear the Woman say to the Old Man: 'But now it's time to celebrate! We have found each other again!'.<sup>2</sup>

In the first part of the play, 'Im Grünen' ('Out in the Country') the Heidegger figure is placed in the lobby of an upmarket hotel dressed in an old ski-outfit. He is strapped into a body frame, which the author calls a *Gestell* (in the style of an enlarged mould of his body [*Art Körper-Moulage*]). The word *Ge-stell* extended through the dash takes on the meaning of 'Enframing'. The historical Heidegger ascribes the essence of technology to this meaning. On one level 'Enframing' provides the conceit of the play. Jelinek's body frame is a device that literally fits onto the person and enlarges it, Heidegger stands in his own frame, which is an extension of his *Körper*, the aspect of the body which gives rise to measure and control.

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<sup>1</sup> See Janz, p. 133, 144.

<sup>2</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, *Totenauberg, Ein Stück*, (Rowohlt, 1991), p. 89; Elfriede Jelinek, 'Totenauberg (Death/Valley/Summit)', in *DramaContemporary. Plays*, ed. by Carl Weber, trans. by Gitta Honegger (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 217-265 (p. 262). (Hereafter: *Totenauberg*; trans).

The title, *Totenauberg*, is derived from the Black Forest village, namely, Todtnauberg, where Heidegger's ski-hut was located. *Todtnauberg* is also the title of Paul Celan's poem, written directly after his meeting and confrontation with the philosopher in 1967. Jelinek underscores *Die Toten* — the dead, playing on both Heidegger's idea of 'Being-toward-death' and the millions killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Gitta Honegger notes that the title brings together nature, home and dwelling, as they operate in National Socialist ideology and politics by incorporating the native and excluding the foreign, while the *Berg*, the 'mountain' remains full of the dead.<sup>3</sup>

There is a thread which runs through Jelinek's work, which ceaselessly loops back into history. In many cases this means the history and consequent forgetting and denial of National Socialism in Austria. This chapter continues to pursue the question of what 'artistic labour of the body' means in this context. Jelinek's oeuvre evokes a way of working which relates to the genre of documentary. Yet, she doesn't merely document. Rather, she dissects history, in particular, what is forgotten, repressed or disavowed, and transmits it into the present. The thread in Jelinek's writing ties time in knots, as it reveals the waxing and waning of forces of history through losses and gains in power. Her texts agitate these forces of history. They do not give up on history, as they do not surrender history to memory's distortions: in Austria this is best characterised by what became a cliché slogan, 'I do not remember anything'. Her texts astutely describe political genealogies which, in a way akin to EXPORT's image meteors, pierce into the present.

If, for a moment we consider Jelinek's later play *Rechnitz* (2009), we find that it too points us in this direction.<sup>4</sup> *Rechnitz* explores the concept of pride of sin [*Sündenstolz*], which in this case means killing for pleasure.<sup>5</sup> It relates to an occasion when, late into the night, guests at a dinner party killed 180 Hungarian Jews.<sup>6</sup> The Rechnitz massacre took place in the village of the same name in Burgenland on the border between Austria and Hungary, shortly before the Red Army entered Austria in 1945. Records show that a party took place at the Castle in Rechnitz and

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<sup>3</sup> Gitta Honegger, 'This German Language...: An Interview with Elfriede Jelinek', *Theater*, 25.1 (1994), 14-22 (p. 14). The mountain also appears explicitly in Jelinek's later *Die Kinder der Toten* (1995) and *In den Alpen* (2002). *Totenauberg* was completed in 1991 and premiered in the Vienna Akademie Theater (the second stage of the Burgtheater) on September 18, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns, Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel), Über Tiere. Drei Theaterstücke* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2009); Elfriede Jelinek, *Rechnitz, and the Merchant's Contracts*, trans. by Gitta Honegger (London: Seagull Books, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Thanks to Allyson Fiddler for highlighting this to me.

<sup>6</sup> See also the documentary film *Totschweigen* (1994), directed by Margareta Heinrich and Eduard Erne. The title refers to the act of killing through silence. This film revisits the massacre at Rechnitz. The directors interview the remaining villagers who were alive in 1945 when the massacre took place. They discuss with them what happened, their reactions and the silent aftermath: some are more willing to speak than others. In 2009 Teresa Kovacs attributed the assenting silence after the massacre to the fact that Countess Margit von Batthyány gave away money and land to all of the Rechnitz inhabitants up until her death in the early 1980s. David R. L. Litchfield, 'Reason for Rechnitz Silence Revealed', *David R. L. Litchfield*, 2009 <davidrllitchfield.com/2009/06/reason-for-rechnitz-silence-revealed/> [accessed 22 July 2017].

when all the guests were sufficiently drunk, the Countess Margit von Batthyány led her partygoers to kill the 180 Jewish-Hungarian forced-labourers who were building the *Südosdwall*. The next day 18 Jews were forced to bury the bodies. After they had completed this task, they too were killed.<sup>7</sup>

Returning to *Totenauberg*, Matthias Konzett has interpreted this play as a critique of Austrian culture as authentic *Heimat*, where Austria is characterised as a society with ‘insidious marketing of ethnic and cultural identities as its primary commodities’.<sup>8</sup> *Heimat* translates as homeland, yet in Austria and Germany, this term is inflected with nativism. In the first half of the twentieth-century it was a concept used by traditionalist actors within Austro- and Nazi fascism. Part of conspiratorial anti-Semitism included the notions that the *Heimat* was being destroyed by the Jews and the *Heimat* was the location or countryside where one could escape the frays of modernity and the hectic cities. In Austria *Heimat* continues to be exemplified by the image of the Alpine landscape and traditional clothes, namely *Tracht*. In *Totenauberg*, as Konzett explains, Jelinek’s critique of *Heimat* culture is re-articulated through a tourist and cultural landscape depicted as a ‘theme park of genocide’, intersecting along the two poles of Heideggerian belonging ‘*Zugehörigkeit*’ (belonging to a *Volk*), and Arendtian (Jewish) rootlessness.<sup>9</sup> Konzett describes Jelinek’s play not as a ‘casual reconstruction of what may have ultimately lead to Nazi genocide. Instead, she is more interested in trying to account for a “second death” threatening the victims of Nazism’.<sup>10</sup> This second death concerns the loss of memory. Moreover, Konzett describes Jelinek’s method as one where language is shifted ‘from the ideological discourse of fascism, of the unity of soil and being, to that of a more dispersive and ideologically evasive course of consumerism with its deceptive and evasive modes of *Zuhörigkeit*’.<sup>11</sup> Konzett describes Jelinek’s method as displacing the ‘discourse of fascism’, if one can call fascism a discourse, onto something like ‘consumerism’ and culture-industry lubricated belonging. Thus, Konzett proposes that nativism is rewritten as commodity nativism, encapsulated in Austria’s obsession with winter sports, and its tolerance of profitable strangers (tourists) at the expense of immigrants or refugees.<sup>12</sup> I would add that her play *Burgtheater* and her writings on media also function in a similar way, but I would

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<sup>7</sup> Bischof, ‘Victims’, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Matthias Konzett, *The Rhetoric of National Dissent: In Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, and Elfriede Jelinek* (Rochester: Camden House, 2000). p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> Konzett, p. 102.

<sup>10</sup> Konzett, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> Konzett, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Konzett argues that Alfred Bäumler, Hitler’s ideologue of the body viewed *Leibübungen* as a kind of political education of the body that would contribute to the formation of the *Gesamtleib* (collective body of the nation). Konzett, p. 112.

disagree that fascism is merely taken up as a ‘discourse’. I would emphasize that it is through intertextual dialogue that Jelinek stages the two philosophers, in a way which *also* enacts a displacement of a political debate: it pits the cosmopolitanism of Arendt, the exiled Jew, against the nativist traditionalism of Heidegger.

Does Jelinek manage to sharpen or obscure the political stakes in this debate? Jelinek’s method works by way of a kind of rewriting of Heidegger’s and Arendt’s texts. In so doing she seeks to get as close to their language as possible. Does her rewriting, her *distortion* of these texts, or what Konzett describes as ‘displacement’, begin to reveal a truth about them and what kind of ideas they underpin?

I am interested in *how* Jelinek excavates these moments which have been repressed or erased in a way which avoids understanding history in relation to the present by way of comparison, a way which reifies victimhood or identity politics, since as Konzett astutely claims, Jelinek ‘advances a minority discourse without relying on an identity politics that reifies the position of minorities’.<sup>13</sup> I propose that while she carefully investigates history, Jelinek’s art claims that historical events do not have fixed positions. Rather, as such events migrate through time their meaning shifts. With specific conditions of possibility, this meaning is reproduced and repurposed. Therefore, *Totenaufer* is a play which concerns the renewal of tradition. We are returned to the questions which I posed in the introduction to this thesis concerning the role of history in Jelinek’s (and EXPORT’s) work. I propose that Jelinek’s time-study shows the continuity between capitalism and fascism, since fascism is understood not only as a system culminating in the National Socialist concentration camps, where there were no exit points, and minimal possibility for resistance, but also as a system which destroys humans through labour in the sense of *Vernichtung durch Arbeit* (destruction through labour) as discussed in chapter 3. Fascism is also a form of work-time.

In an article titled ‘Working Through Working’ Werner Hamacher analyses three motifs of ‘work’ found in Hitler, Heidegger and Ernst Jünger (mytho-theological, ontological and morphological). He does this to argue that it is the connection between these forms of work that undergirds National Socialism:

National Socialism does not lie behind us as a historically surmounted phenomenon; it may even be utterly insurmountable and resistant to attempts at working through it. For, as a ‘monstrous’ form of work, it is nothing but the production of its own afterlife and survival, and thus it continuously produces itself as a spectre—not as a chimera and

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<sup>13</sup> Konzett, p. 99.

mere illusion but, rather, as a reality worse than death: namely, the sheer positivity of life, dead life, living death.<sup>14</sup>

A correspondence is legible between Konzett's reading of Jelinek's *Totenauberg* as a work which tracks the displacement of the *discourse* of fascism from 'soil and being' to deceptive modes of belonging, and Hamacher's concern with the *production* of fascism's afterlife and survival as 'a reality worse than death', namely 'dead life' and 'living death'. Yet, the distinction between them lies in what Hamacher terms 'a spectre', a haunting, *not* 'chimera' or 'illusion' to which Konzett's deception and evasive modes of belonging relates, because chimera and illusion imply that this 'discourse' exists merely on the surface. Yet, what we have established in this thesis, from Reich and Adorno (via Marx), is that ideology does merely exist as an external layer to social life, but exists within it. It is part of it. It cannot be lifted, or even torn off. For Hamacher, National Socialism produces its afterlife as a form of work, and as a ghost of itself, as a reality in the guise of 'a sheer positivity of life'. I want to read *Totenauberg* as a response to this "monstrous" form of work', while asking what form of work does Jelinek undertake, if this play is a way of working through working, and how might this also be artistic labour of the body? I propose that with poetic means Jelinek takes Heidegger's texts not merely to displace a discourse, but to submit the text to reworking. She rewrites the text so that it is at once recognised for its historical truth (technology sets upon nature and by extension also humans), and its historical violences become readable (humans are worked and destroyed through work and the principle of exchange).

The temporal placing of *Totenauberg* lies both in the postwar decade with Heidegger's essay 'The Question Concerning Technology', and the final moments of Eastern European Communism. *Totenauberg* is partly a reading of the spectre of Heidegger's essay in the crisis of its own time and in the time of political upheaval. In Austria this relates to the 1986 Waldheim scandal, an unwanted reminder of the fragility of Austria's *Opferdoktrin*, highlighting the continued presence of former Nazis in positions of power, including Kurt Waldheim as president; the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the opening up of the East, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In Jelinek's view the play is 'written under the impact of German unification and of the failure of Eastern European communism as a politically practicable model'.<sup>15</sup> She explains: 'I was after the sense of resignation, pain and irony.'<sup>16</sup> The 'opening up of the East' signals to the migration that took place after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Labour

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<sup>14</sup> Werner Hamacher, 'Working Through Working?', trans. by Matthew T. Hartman, *Modernism/Modernity*, 3.1 (1996), 23-56 (p. 25).

<sup>15</sup> Eva Brenner and Elfriede Jelinek, "Where Are the Big Topics, Where Is the Big Form?" Elfriede Jelinek Discusses *Totenauberg*, Theater and Politics', in *Elfriede Jelinek*, ed. by Jorun B. Johns and Katherine Arens, pp. 18-34 (p. 24).

<sup>16</sup> Brenner and Jelinek, p. 24.

shortages at the end of the 1980s and the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia brought an influx of refugees to Austria. These political crises were instrumentalised by the FPÖ, which under Jörg Haider became increasingly vocally anti-immigrant, xenophobic and nativist, calling for ‘zero immigration’, a move that was not forcefully resisted.<sup>17</sup> Jelinek describes what followed as ‘white fascism’ in the sense of a ‘renewed respectability of thinking along the rightist margin’.<sup>18</sup> She relates this to the burgeoning Green party and movement which in turn leads to an obsession with health, and a claim to ‘physical intactness’.<sup>19</sup> For Jelinek, in the historical moment of the globalisation proper of capitalism, both irony and resignation, as I have mentioned at the start of this chapter, are attributes ascribed to the Hannah Arendt figure, who was historically, precisely the philosopher who was forced to become political through emigration.<sup>20</sup>

### 5.1.1: *A Work in Four Parts*

*Totenauberg* is structured into four pictures, or scenes. Each is dialectal, entering into tension with its opposite: ‘Im Grünen’ (‘Out in the Country’) deals with the myth of nature and *Heimat*; ‘Totenauberg (Gesundheit)’ (‘Totenauberg (Health)’) focusses on health, illness and euthanasia; ‘Heim Welt’ (‘Home World’) explores, as Konzett describes, the commodification of tourism, and xenophobia, and ‘Unschuld’ (‘Innocence’) follows up on a philosophy of innocence in the face of Auschwitz, the atom bomb and as Janz claims, genetic engineering.<sup>21</sup>

These scenes contain an extended reflection on Heidegger’s considerations on technology and nature. *Totenauberg* was written in the wake of the publication of *Lust*. Although it takes the form of a play as opposed to a novel, and it takes a different object, namely a conversation between ‘Heidegger’ and ‘Arendt’, I would argue that there is a closeness between the works. As *Lust* articulates the dual reproduction, both in the family and through the image, *Totenauberg* is a play that interweaves the stage and the screen: the play is set against a background of moving images. According to Jelinek’s stage directions a video should be made by the director in an amateurish style. In this chapter, I will refer to Jelinek’s instructions for both the video and play as a kind of ideal form, a notation of something objective.

Jelinek has described her conception of *Totenauberg* as ‘a dialectical interpenetration of language and film’.<sup>22</sup> She explains, ‘I wanted the pathos of the text to encounter the one-dimensionality of the screen, thus appearing to traverse and obliterate the horizontal plane.

<sup>17</sup> See Jelinek’s award speech from 1986: Elfriede Jelinek, ‘In den Waldheimen und auf den Haidern’, in *Blauer Streusand*, ed. by Barbara Alms (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987), pp. 42-4; see also Jelinek’s text: ‘Die Österreicher als Herren der Toten’, in Janke, *Nestbeschmutzerin*, pp. 61-3.

<sup>18</sup> Honegger, ‘This German Language’, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Honegger, ‘This German Language’, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Honegger, ‘This German Language’, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Janz, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup> Brenner and Jelinek, p. 22.

[...] If you have the cinematic element underexposed, the dialectic vanishes, language stands abandoned, alone'.<sup>23</sup> Video is aligned with the technological index, and language with both its written and spoken forms. How do the visual descriptions of video technology oppose or relate to the technology of the text? Does or can the text embody video and video processes, rather than signifying a mere description of these procedures? The video portrays a kind of busyness or restlessness, minimal serenity, noise, and lack of peace. It functions as a background busyness that clutters, fills in silences and fills up space, but its images are also specific. Yet, without the language of the text the video is insufficient, because it reinforces the jargon, which Jelinek wants to pierce through.

The script of *Totenauberg* moves between scales of catastrophe. If we turn again to the first scene, the Arendt figure begins to speak from the screen towards the old man. The source of her monologue alternates between the actor on the stage and the image on the screen. This pulls into view a contradiction in scale between the tiny human on the stage, who is simultaneously blown up and framed by the screen. She says:

Let's start with the insignificant, the small: Aren't the words needed now smaller than any you could ever possess? And you yourself make a nice little picture [*Bilderl*], a 'reproduction' [*Abbildung*]! Don't fit into the fine but phoney suit of this phoney landscape.<sup>24</sup>

Heidegger is depicted as a picture, or copy.<sup>25</sup> He is made into a little picture which is also an *Abbildung*, a reproduction. He is blown up like a photograph, or a small picture inside his literal *Gestell*, his frame. He is expanded, scaled up by his frame into his Being. On one level, it is through the frame, which makes fun of his concept that Jelinek works on the concept of 'Enframing' [*Ge-stell*]. If we turn to Heidegger's essay in question, *Ge-stell* is understood in the sense of calling forth, of an active *en*-framing, a 'challenging claim' that gathers its objects, its humans, in order to reveal them to be used. However, *Gestell*, in normal, non-hyphenated use refers simply to a rack, frame or shelf, to that which props or holds something up, to an apparatus or a structure, to something which structures, to a skeleton. It is the extension of the word *Ge-stell*, through the hyphen that renders it active. *Ge-stell* is designated by Heidegger as the essence of modern technology. Yet, paradoxically, the essence of modern technology is not

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<sup>23</sup> 'My use of film in *Totenauberg* is certainly not accidental, should not be limited to a matter of stage design. I envisioned that there would always be something going on, on the big screen, even when nothing is going on.' Brenner and Jelinek, p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> 'Fangen wir mit dem Unscheinbaren, dem Kleinen an: verlangt es nicht nach kleineren Wörtern als Sie überhaupt besitzen? Sie sind auch so ein Bilderl, eine Abbildung! Passen nicht ins Fesche, aber falsche Kleid dieser falsche Landschaft.' *Totenauberg*, p. 10; trans. p. 222.

<sup>25</sup> *Bilderl* is idiomatic, the *-erl* is a Viennese diminutive, rather than the usual *-chen*.

technological; there is a split meaning in the word ‘Enframing’. *Ge-stell* stems from *Stellen* — to put upon — but ‘producing’ and ‘presenting’ [*Her/Dar-stellen*] are also derived from *Stellen*. For the historical Heidegger, these aspects of the word’s etymology function as modes of revealing, which allow their presence, in the way of *poiēsis*, to be revealed, to come into unconcealment.<sup>26</sup> This mode of revealing is what Jelinek’s body frame points to with some irony, yet her gesture is also resigned. At this point it seems to say something like: ‘Heidegger and his ideas are here to stay, here is how we can laugh at them’.

Heidegger begins his ‘The Question Concerning Technology’ by asserting a kind of processual questioning, where one can not simply answer the ‘question’. The essay is laid out in such a way that each instantiation of the questioning, each repetition reconfigures the question. Each new iteration of the question sinks deeper into the meaning of the essence of technology in Heidegger’s thought. Here, there is no static question, rather, this questioning implies a relation:

The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence [*Wesen*] of technology. When we can respond to this essence, we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds.<sup>27</sup>

Heidegger’s questioning is led by an open comportment to the world. It should reveal the essence of what is being questioned, in this case: technology. What is the quality of this openness? If we return this question to Heidegger, we find an openness which can only be afforded to those who are not being persecuted. In Heidegger’s view, there are two definitions of technology: technology is a means to an end, and it is human procedures. Both means and procedure refer to *instrumentum*, which arranges, builds and heaps Heidegger’s mountain of thought.<sup>28</sup> One aspect of the production of *Totenauberg* utilises visual imagery to create a visible distance from, and contradiction with, Heidegger’s philosophy. Jelinek explains:

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Heidegger, ‘Die Frage Nach Der Technik’, in *Gesamtausgabe 1. Abt. Bd. 7: Vorträge Und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klosterman, 2000), pp. 5–36 (p. 22); Martin Heidegger, ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1977), pp. 3–35 (p. 21). (Hereafter, ‘Frage’; ‘Question’).

<sup>27</sup> ‘Frage’ p. 5; ‘Question’, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> The translator’s footnote to this passage provides the definition of *instrumentum* as that which ‘arranges,’ ‘builds up’ and ‘heaps upon’. Moreover, in this quest to find the *essence* of technology, Heidegger states that the ‘true’ meaning must be sought through the ‘correct’ meaning. And, one must first seek the correct meaning in a way which follows the proper logic of questioning: one cannot approach the subject randomly. But, once the ‘correct’ meaning is found, it is not a given that the essence, that which this essay aims to understand, has been found. In order to find the essence of technology, one must ascertain the true meaning in a ‘free’ and ‘open’ relationship to it, in a state of submission to it. Heidegger resorts to endlessly repeating his request for this mode of comportment: for openness. ‘Frage’, p. 6; ‘Question’, p. 5.



The philosophical voice would encounter the electronic media which today have the capacity to destroy everything. On the one hand, Heidegger is building up a ‘mountain’ of thought—in the truest sense of the word—which, on the other, would be smothered by the world of the media.<sup>29</sup>

Heidegger’s definition of *technē* is formulated in relation to the Greeks. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle marks out the distinction between *technē* and *epistēmē*. *Technē* acts to bring-forth what fails to bring-forth itself. Heidegger takes this forward but draws a distinction between technology under the aegis of the Greeks, as handcrafts, and technology in the period of large-scale (capitalist) machine-powered industry. Furthermore, he introduces the latter mode as oppositional to the former. In Jelinek’s view this oppositional meaning comes to represent the anti-modern, protectionist and traditionalist worldview of National Socialism.

For Heidegger, although this technology *reveals*, it is not connected to truth, since it consists of a ‘challenging’ [*herausfordern*], rather it is connected to *poiēsis*.<sup>30</sup> The term *her-aus-fordern* means to challenge, or to call to action, invoking a different kind of revealing to *her-vor-bringen*, to-bring-forth and *poiēsis*. But Heidegger notices something obvious. As technology measures up to physics as an exact science, the challenging, *her-aus-fordern*, the revealing that invokes action, puts pressure on nature.<sup>31</sup> In his essay Heidegger implies that with technology’s transformation, nature becomes the supplier of energy and a source of extraction.

Against the blossoming flower that can be brought forth *in-itself*, modern technology challenges nature to supply, and to be put to work. The world is revealed as a resource that can be harvested and stored. As opposed to the peasant who did not challenge the land, but merely lived on it and used it according to its own terms (and who were for this reason ideologically celebrated by the Nazis, as discussed in chapter 3), Heidegger says that modern technology ‘sets upon’ [*stellt*] nature.<sup>32</sup> He writes, ‘[a]griculture is now the mechanised food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen. [...] What the river [*Rhine*] is now, namely a water power supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station’.<sup>33</sup> Heidegger pauses on the name — *The Rhine* — because it speaks of both the scene of the river, and the poem by Hölderlin. He asks if the river can still be a landscape, but answers quickly that this can only be fulfilled as a landscape for tourists, organised by the holiday industry.<sup>34</sup> We begin to see that *Totenauberg*, which as Konzett argues is a play about the commodification of *Heimat* and wanted (tourists) and unwanted (refugees and migrants) guests, also echoes the structural limit points of

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<sup>29</sup> Brenner and Jelinek, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 15; ‘Question’, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 15; ‘Question’, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 16; ‘Question’, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Frage’, pp. 16-17; ‘Question’, pp. 15-16

<sup>34</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 17; ‘Question’, p. 16.

Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger's notion of 'challenging revealing', implicitly speaks of a kind of metabolism of industry and nature, periodised since the development of modern physics. But Heidegger omits to mention the human and their labour. He uses the following words to characterise this metabolism/revealing: '[u]nlocking, transforming, storing, distributing and switching about'.<sup>35</sup> The process of this challenging is a repetitive one which regulates itself. It is defined by its temporal infinity, its endlessness. This analysis of Heidegger's formulations on nature and technology is important in order to understand the precise way that Jelinek responds to it. 'Everywhere, everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand [...]. We call it the standing reserve [*Bestand*]'.<sup>36</sup> For Heidegger, this *Bestand*, this standing reserve is *inclusive*, it includes everything. What it constitutes is ready for use. This means that humans are rendered material. If we translate this, in Heidegger's context this was a human-material to be worked, and then killed. *Bestand* implies the concentration camps, or 'KZ', about which Heidegger, the NSDAP philosopher, remained silent.

Marlies Janz describes Jelinek's method as somewhat complicated: it is not merely ideology critique because it also alludes to a truth in Heidegger's work. Janz claims that in this allusion, Jelinek doubles herself and thus her discourse becomes a 'schizoid' discourse, which presupposes the critical interpretation of her own language.<sup>37</sup> We know (from chapter 2) that Jelinek's characters carry both history and its antithesis on their bodies. In *Totenauberg*, this is made literal by means of the use of the body frame and language. In her rewriting of Heidegger and Arendt, Jelinek enacts a concealing, revealing moment. She reveals where the danger which Heidegger refuses to recognise, lies.

In 'The Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger implies that the human relationship to technology can only be understood belatedly. This brings us closer to his concept of time and history: '[t]he essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real everywhere, more or less distinctly, becomes the standing reserve'.<sup>38</sup> Heidegger begins to inflect this mode of thinking with the language of destiny. 'It is from out of this destining [*das Geschick*] that the essence of all history [*Geschichte*] is determined' he writes.<sup>39</sup> His concept of *Enframing* means that humans are sent, *destined* to their revealing, to their becoming resources, to their being measured as '*Bestand*'; the echoes of this language are startling, but not surprising. Jelinek's play *Wolken.Heim* (1988) cites Heidegger's 1933 address as rector of Freiburg University, where he describes the ontological grounding of Nazi institutions: *Arbeitsdienst* and *Wissensdienst* in what Ben Morgan describes as a 'collective, a state

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<sup>35</sup> 'Frage', p. 17; 'Question', p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> 'Frage', p. 17; 'Question', p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Janz, p. 141.

<sup>38</sup> 'Frage', p. 25; 'Question', p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> 'Frage', p. 25; 'Question', p. 24.

and a sense of destiny' combined. This became the meaning of what Morgan continues to describe as Heidegger's 'misguided, utopian desire to overcome the division of labour'.<sup>40</sup> Yet, in the postwar context there is a silent implication that those who were killed in the labour camps and death factories under National Socialism were 'destined' there, as the inverse of the destiny at play in the fulfilment of Germany's destiny, as the destiny of *das Volk*. As if Heidegger's refusal to consider the Holocaust belongs to the same philosophical move as *destining* as the essence of all history. The blindness in the first position is the same blindness as in the second. If we return to Hamacher's essay, we are reminded that National Socialism defined Auschwitz as a workplace:

A workplace where the non-proper, the non-working—and it is insinuated, the already dead—are once more put to death, in order that the proper, the society of work, can emerge as the product of its own labour. It defines murder as the work of life on itself. It defines Jews as the unredeemed; it defines Communists as the dualists of class conflict; it defines Gypsies as the homeless and propertyless; it defines homosexuals as the un(re)productive: it defines them all as materials for work, as work materials—namely as the always already former, as the dead, unproductive people—and it defines work, on the one hand, as the production of corpses, and, on the other, as the production of the 'gleaming' spectral body of the work-state.<sup>41</sup>

Hamacher's reading of 'work makes free', as the destruction, as the 'murder as the work of life on itself' amplifies the historical meaning of Heidegger's *destining* as the determination of all history, a history outside of which, he claimed to stand. As we have seen, Heidegger's notion of Enframing is posited as *destining*. *Destining* is intimately connected to the 'open', or is it itself. This implies that only from an open relationship to technology can one meet the essence of technology outside a relation of domination. Yet, Heidegger introduces an element of danger, as that which emerges from the precise moment of *destining*.<sup>42</sup> In 'destining', what is revealed or unconcealed can also be misinterpreted, for Heidegger this is what produces fear.<sup>43</sup> 'The *destining* of revealing is in itself not just any danger but, danger as such'.<sup>44</sup> Heidegger implies something akin to 'pure danger'. This 'supreme' danger lies in the moment when what is revealed, is no longer considered an object but merely 'standing-reserve'. And, it is humans, in the midst of objectlessness, who order the standing reserve. The 'supreme' danger, is

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<sup>40</sup> Ben Morgan, 'The Limits of Political Hope in 1988: Jelinek's *Wolken.Heim*. in Context', *Austrian Studies*, 22 (2014), 166–82 (p. 172).

<sup>41</sup> Hamacher, p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> 'Frage', p. 27; 'Question', p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> 'Frage', p. 27; 'Question', p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> 'Frage', p. 27; 'Question', p. 26.

characterised insofar as the ‘regulating and securing of the standing-reserve mark all revealing’.<sup>45</sup> This means that revealing as such, for its own sake, as truth, is no longer possible. Heidegger calls this a block: ‘Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of truth’.<sup>46</sup> If we reconsider destining as the moment of danger, producing fear, in the *Jargon of Authenticity* (1964), a text which takes aim at the language of the ‘Authentic’, Adorno brings us back to the level of history. Without referring explicitly to Heidegger, he emphatically criticises this idea of technology:

It is the fear of unemployment, lurking in all citizens of countries of high capitalism. This is a fear which is administratively fought off, and therefore nailed to the platonic firmament of stars, a fear that remains even in the glorious times of full employment. Everyone knows that he could become expendable as technology develops, as long as production is only carried on for production’s sake; so everyone senses that his job is a disguised unemployment.<sup>47</sup>

Adorno’s criticism comes inflected with Marxism. In a world dominated by exchange, there is no existence outside of capitalism, this gives rise to the brutal fear of unemployment, and its more brutal reality. We could say that the spectre of monstrous work and productivity is paired with the actuality of increased worklessness (which has come to represent the meaning of automation). Adorno describes the fear of unemployment as one factor attributed to the resentments against any scapegoated group of people. Brutal violence is itself a response to the subject’s reification to commodity (as discussed in chapter 4). Heidegger displaces the causes of this fear; in his account of technological expansion, capitalism is understood as merely being in the service of the profit motive and humans are sent, destined to becoming stock, or work to be destroyed. This moment in Heidegger’s essay we find something like a defence or justification for what Hamacher terms ‘murder as the work of life on itself’.

Making use of Heidegger’s method of ‘questioning’ technology allows us to read more closely Jelinek’s intertextual language. In *Totenauweg*, the Heidegger figure is accused of forcing himself along the ‘*Holzweg*, [...] timber trail of modern Dasein’.<sup>48</sup> Jelinek cleaves between and hacks into Heidegger’s concepts. To be on a *Holzweg*, in the sense Heidegger uses the term, means to be on a wooded path, which when it becomes overgrown comes to an abrupt halt. From this point one is off track, *lost*, unless one knows the way, through a kind of sense.

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<sup>45</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 28; ‘Question’, p. 27.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 28; ‘Question’, p. 27.

<sup>47</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. by Knut Tarnowsky and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 34.

<sup>48</sup> *Totenauweg*, p. 11; trans. p. 223.

Heidegger cites the woodcutters and forest keepers as the ones who know these *Holzwege*.<sup>49</sup> The Arendt figure says:

Look how people today pursue their recreative battles [*Erholungsschlachten*]! And you dare say that nature rests, stretched out shamelessly in front of us, in our better suits [*angezogen*], or better: pursuits [*ausgezogen*]. Out into nature! Technology doesn't let her be! Forcing the brook out of its bed and the river of history back into its course, whether it surges up, again and again. We are the target, the eye of the bulwark. But we also have an inkling of what's beyond. Actually it has been ours for a long time. Haven't we held onto our title on the shakiest of grounds.<sup>50</sup>

In a people enjoying recreative battles, we find a neologism in which convalescence and rest is paired with battle or slaughter. Technology does not let nature rest. Technology adapts the course of nature. Here, the 'river of history' also refers to the Danube, Jelinek's own river which runs directly through Vienna, and which featured in Hölderlin's poem, *Der Ister*, the subject of Heidegger's 1942 lecture on that poem. But the river of history also implies sending, destining by way of its current. Jelinek's Arendt figure recognises the inkling of truth in Heidegger's claim that nature is set upon by technology. The target insinuates Heidegger's notion of *Bestand*, 'standing reserve', humans reduced to materials. The 'we' of the target here implies Arendt (and Jelinek) the Jew, but throughout the play this identification remains unstable. The Arendt figure continues her monologue: 'Everyone endures the measure of his being.'<sup>51</sup> She says, '[t]he human is set into silence'.<sup>52</sup> As we have seen in Heidegger's essay, being set upon refers to being sent, technology 'sets upon' [*stellt*] nature, revealing it for industry, and revealing humans as standing reserve. Jelinek's rewriting of Heidegger's being 'set upon' shows being revealed into silence, meant and continues to mean, death.

### 5.1.2: *What Hides in Language?*

Jelinek has stated that she wanted to write a play about Heidegger, and that this would be a play about thinking. 'This must be the case, since fascism is the ideology of non-thinking per se. No

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<sup>49</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. by Julian Young and Kenneth Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. v.

<sup>50</sup> 'Schauen Sie, wie die Heutigen ihre Erholungsschlachten austragen! Und da wagen Sie zu sagen, die Natur ruhe aus, schamlos hingestreckt vor uns, die wir besser angezogen sind oder besser: ausgezogen. Zu ihr! Die Technik läßt sie ja nicht! Sie reißt den Bach aus seinem Bett und den Fluß der Geschichte wieder in seinen Lauf, aus dem er stets aufs neue hervorschießt. Wir sind das Ziel, der Mittelpunkt der Schutz-Scheibe. Doch wir ahnen die Ferne. Uns gehört sie ja längst. Wir sind doch ins unzureichende Grund-Buch eingetragen.' *Totenauberg*, p. 11; trans. p. 223.

<sup>51</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 12; trans. p. 223.

<sup>52</sup> 'Der Mensch in die Stille gestellt.' *Totenauberg*, p. 12; trans. p. 223. (Translation amended).

philosopher can seriously believe he can lead a Hitler—one precludes the other'.<sup>53</sup> If we consider the question informing this chapter: how does this play about unthinking-thinking help us understand how the body is figured, disfigured or transfigured by technology, and in Jelinek's art? Like the body frame which Heidegger is set into Jelinek mocks Heidegger's existential philosophy: '[t]hinking is dealing in used cars! Please memorise the many models existing in one era!'.<sup>54</sup> In the context of *Totenauberg* and commodity nativism, thinking is rendered learning by rote, or bartering. The Arendt figure says: '[n]o one buys anymore this utter absorption in what one is'.<sup>55</sup> Heidegger is accused: '[y]our thinking atrophies inside you'.<sup>56</sup> Thinking, which for the historical Heidegger is held in the human, wastes away, it deteriorates. On the stage the old man attempts to get out of his frame. By the end of the scene he has succeeded. He drags the detritus of his frame as he staggers around the stage. As we have seen, from the standpoint of the Heidegger figure, we enter his language. By engaging with the spectre, the production of the afterlife of fascism, precisely as that which, as the figure of Heidegger shows, is so resistant to its overcoming as he is resistant to his being framed, Jelinek shows the latent fascistic meaning in his ideas, dragged through time.

In the increasing build-up of unthinking language, the part of *Totenauberg* which focusses on health sees the Young *Mutter* say: 'I exercise the privilege of the species by coupling wisely. [...] Only quality women have something to give to the world. [...] I have desires for my future without shying away from taking possession of the present. As long as my child is well, it may live'.<sup>57</sup> This fascistic figure of speech reveals echoes of a National Socialist style *Lebensborn* mother, transmitted onto the 1990s style eugenicist ethics of Jelinek's adversary: Peter Singer.<sup>58</sup> Jelinek's *renewed* mother is an articulation of what she deems the continuity in practice of the ideology of 'race' improvement. The character is not historical but merely represents the strain of thinking which takes its obsession with health and intactness to its life and death extreme. Yet, in the present, screening for foetal defects is common practice. The scene changes with the entrance of two men wearing Lederhosen. On the screen, an old documentary shows Jews waiting for transport.<sup>59</sup> On the stage, as if expressing her fate, Jelinek's young mother character explains: 'The thin thread ahead of me becomes my path. I need to accomplish my task as master breeder. [...] We DNA-enriched mothers know how to do that. We pull them,

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<sup>53</sup> Jelinek and Brenner, p. 23.

<sup>54</sup> 'Denken ist Gebrauchtwagen-Handeln! Bitte lernen: die vielen Marken, die es gibt in einer Epoche.' *Totenauberg*, p. 12; trans. p. 223.

<sup>55</sup> 'Es genügt nicht, in dem aufzugehen, was man ist.' *Totenauberg*, p. 12; trans. p. 224.

<sup>56</sup> 'Ihr Denken erlahmt in Ihnen.' *Totenauberg*, p. 13; trans. p. 224.

<sup>57</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 30; trans. p. 233.

<sup>58</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 34; trans. p. 235.

<sup>59</sup> The stage directions state: 'For a long time, one simply sees, in black and white, people in old fashioned clothes who begin to gather in a square. Nothing brutal! The scene must come across as very simple, yet not quite ordinary! It might be quite harmless, if somewhat irritating'. *Totenauberg*, p. 37; trans. p. 236.

unconscious, though consciously produced, out of ourselves'.<sup>60</sup> As we have seen, Jelinek attempts to show the racist health discourse and practice of the Nazis, pulled through time and revealed in the capitalist health discourse and practice of the early 1990s, which persists into the present. It is worth questioning this move. These practices do not carry the same weight, but as we have seen throughout this thesis, both Jelinek's and EXPORT's work attempts to tear open the continuities, renewed traditions of thought processes and images, which both preceded the National Socialist period and survived it. The politics of purification, health and hygiene, an obsession of National Socialist unthinking is constituted in Heidegger's concept of the people's soul or '*Volkseele*', where life is valued through categories of worthy and unworthy.<sup>61</sup>

The image on the screen changes to people in old-fashioned clothes being humiliated. The two men [*Die Gamsbärtler*] wearing *Tracht*, traditional Austrian/Bavarian clothes, speak with rural accents:

Masses of people are adrift. The borders are open. They are hurled at each other as if they were their own pictures in an exhibition. [...] Some day these foreigners too, will have to become hosts to the new; that is when they will own themselves. When they have something cooking. Their neediness has been corralled for so long, rubbing its back against the fence. We don't need to destroy their views; let them convert them into our currency. [...] there are those foreigners who force their way across the border to hoard with us: they only know the kind of deprivation that wants to HAVE. We, on the other hand, don't want anything, because we ARE.<sup>62</sup>

As Konzett claims, Jelinek sets the nativists and the foreigners within a commodified traditionalism, where nativism is given over to the clutches of capitalism, but also pictured, as if staged in an art exhibition, or a play like Jelinek's own. She brings our attention to the mediated spectacle of migration. From the nativist perspective: 'We don't need to destroy their views; let them convert them into our currency' is put in the same breath as: 'they only know the kind of deprivation that wants to HAVE'. The nativist can make a claim to want nothing in the same breath as he states his own 'superior essence'.<sup>63</sup> To Be is pitted against to Have, against what a Self might be in relation to Dasein, which for Heidegger is not a property, but rather shifts between having and not having and is revealed/unconcealed.

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<sup>60</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 41; trans. p. 238.

<sup>61</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'Abraham a Sankta Clara', in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910-1976* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klosterman, 1983), pp. 1-3 (p. 3).

<sup>62</sup> Jelinek calls these figures '*Die Gamsbärtler*'. A '*Gamsbart*' is a feather worn as a decoration on the traditional hat. *Totenauberg*, pp. 45-7; trans. pp. 240-1. (Translation modified).

<sup>63</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 48; trans. p. 242.

If we return to Heidegger, we find him following in the footsteps of Hölderlin, trying to unravel another paradox: ‘the destining of revealing is in itself not just any danger but, danger as such’; where one finds a danger one also finds the possibility of safety, in a ‘saving power’.<sup>64</sup> But the word ‘save’ also takes on an enigmatic meaning, rather than meaning securing, or rescuing, ‘saving’ means: ‘to fetch something into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its genuine appearing’.<sup>65</sup> It is precisely in its moment of danger that Heidegger’s concept of ‘Enframing’ contains within itself the power to save. Yet, Heidegger uses the language of taking root, and the power to save only *grows* if what is Enframed takes root. This rootedness in the land/nativism, points to its opposite: historically in Heidegger’s time this meant anti-Semitism qua anti-rootlessness.

So far in this chapter I have used the terms ‘nativism’ and *Heimat* in relation to Jelinek’s historical rewriting of them. Yet Jelinek’s works claim, the term *Heimat* and the idea of nativism have gained in traction along with the production of fascism’s afterlife. Here I want to show the limits of these terms. To unpack the idea of rootedness (and its opposite rootlessness) one must inquire into the concept of *Bodenständigkeit*, about which Heidegger writes in several places. *Bodenständigkeit* means rootedness in a land. It indicates paradoxically, both the actual depth of the native soil, and figuratively, one’s relationship to the native soil in the sense of dwelling [*bleiben*] there. Marc Crépon argues that the term *Heimat*, which we have been tentatively interested in, does not necessarily refer to one’s place of birth, but is closer to the Heideggerian notion of the place of destining, where as we have seen in ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, one comes into Being.<sup>66</sup> In his lecture *Gelassenheit*, meaning ‘releasement’, or ‘serenity’, Heidegger declares: ‘I thank my homeland [*Heimat*] for all that it has given me along the path of my life’.<sup>67</sup> Crépon characterises Heidegger’s meaning of *Heimat* as the rootedness of the work (thinking) tethered to its production.<sup>68</sup> Heidegger writes, ‘[w]e grow thoughtful and ask: does not the flourishing of any genuine work depend upon its roots in a native soil [*die Verwurzelung im Boden einer Heimat*]?’<sup>69</sup> Crépon argues that for Heidegger the ground or proper basis of thinking or doing, relies, ‘depends’, on *Heimat*. He continues to show how this notion takes *Heimat* as a summons, a calling, a ground. Crépon claims that the premise of *Heimat* in rootedness, though ‘not directly political in itself’ means that all politics connected to it, demand ‘rootedness in a land [*die Bodenständigkeit*]’.<sup>70</sup> He continues: ‘[i]n this way, after the

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<sup>64</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 27; ‘Question’, p. 26.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 29; ‘Question’, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> Marc Crépon, ‘Heimat’, ed. by Barbara Cassin and others, *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, pp. 430-33 (p. 430).

<sup>67</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. by Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 43. It is somewhat of an absurd and unthinking lecture and title, given that this lecture takes place in 1955 just ten years after the end of the war.

<sup>68</sup> Crépon, p. 430.

<sup>69</sup> *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 47.

<sup>70</sup> Crépon, p. 431.



war Heidegger considers the problem of Germans who have become estranged from their country more troubling than that of refugees'.<sup>71</sup> In his Memorial Address for the composer Conradin Kreutzer presented in 1955, Heidegger says:

Many Germans have lost their homeland [*Heimat verloren*]. [...] They are strangers now to their former homeland [*der alten Heimat entfremdet*]. And those who have stayed on in their homeland [*die in der Heimat Gebliebeneren*]? Often they are still more homeless [*heimatloser*] than those who have been driven from their homeland [*die Heimatvertriebenen*].<sup>72</sup>

Crépon cites the well-known passage from *Gelassenheit* to show how Heidegger's attempts to depoliticise *Heimat* lead directly to political demands for rootedness in this sense:

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness [*die alte Bodenständigkeit*] is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation [*ein neuer Grund und Boden*] be granted again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man's nature and all his works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic age? What could the ground and foundation be for the new rootedness [*welches wäre der Grund und Boden für eine künftige Bodenständigkeit*]?<sup>73</sup>

While 'even in the atomic age' refers to Hiroshima, after his 12 year membership of the NSDAP and his early speeches in praise of Hitler's 'new dawn', Heidegger remained silent about Auschwitz, rather, attributing equal importance to Stalin's purges, Hitler's atrocities and the UK bombing of Dresden.<sup>74</sup> Today, it is worth paying heed to Crépon's description which demonstrates how the 'ontological rootedness' which closely connects to the everyday language and concept of *Heimat*, cannot be apolitical. Even if the content of *Heimat* linked to *Bodenständigkeit* doesn't refer to a nation state such as Austria or Germany, but rather to a place where someone takes root disconnected from *Vaterland* and the idea of the nation state as 'place of birth' and the 'political community', it cannot be fully separated.<sup>75</sup> In Heidegger's own context, as Jean Améry has written, the stateless Jews deprived of their rights show the

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<sup>71</sup> Crépon, p. 431.

<sup>72</sup> *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 48, cited in Crépon, p. 431.

<sup>73</sup> *Discourse on Thinking*, p. 48, cited in Crépon, p. 431.

<sup>74</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. by Manfred Stassen (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. xvii. As if in direct response to this, in an interview where Jelinek discusses *Totenaufer*, she explains: 'I am a communist independent of any party system. Being a communist means nothing more or less than taking a stance against capitalism—a system which despises human beings—and believing in the necessity of another social arrangement. While I know about the horrors of Stalinism, which were as devastating as the horrors of fascism, I would not equate the two. [...] The idea is still valid. Yet there's been the attempt to rob us of the idea. I for my part cannot accept the notion that a communist has to sanction everything that has been done in its name. Such positions are moralistic and usually uttered by people who never in their lives had risked anything at all.' Brenner and Jelinek, p. 34.

<sup>75</sup> Crépon, p. 430.

impossibility of this conjunction.<sup>76</sup> At the time of writing, the stateless people prevented from even setting foot on European soil, continue to show its impossibility. Crépon's important conclusive remarks are as follows:

*Heimat* is therefore not only a proper place but also one that furnishes at least a minimum of security. What the depoliticization of *Heimat* forgets, in falling back on a traditional familiarity, is that for an individual deprived of rights, someone without a country, no *Heimat* is possible.<sup>77</sup>

The contradictions emerge between the figures on the mountain in Jelinek's *Totenauberg*. In Austria in the interwar years, where the so-called threat to *Heimat* and the traditional way of life of the peasant, by modern industry was resolved by all types of nationalists in the eradication or just the complicity with the eradication of this perceived threat, which was scapegoated onto the shoulders of the Jews and other non- 'figureable' lives. In the context of *Totenauberg*, this was the migrant escaping the violence of the wars in Yugoslavia. Today, the renewal of far-right traditionalist nationalism reconceives the threat to *Heimat*, which is again scapegoated onto the shoulders of the migrant, the stateless person and the Muslim, while racism and anti-Semitism also animate this politics. In Heidegger's context, the mountain was both the mountain of thoughts, piled up from within the landscape of the Black Forest, and the mountain seen as a refuge from the chaos of the cities. There is an element of Heidegger's thought which is 'correct'. He is right to draw our attention to the effects of being without a *Heimat*. Yet, for Heidegger this remained an exclusive concept. *Heimat* is for Germans, or those who can become 'rooted'.

Since 2015, statelessness has once again emerged as the crisis of our time. The growing tendency, globally, is to deny refugees and migrants entry to a new possible homeland. Swathes of stateless people are denied a place to live, to be at home, to have a homeland. Thousands have died in camps as well as crossing mountains and seas. Right-wing extremists lay claim to new battles, not over 'race' or religion, but over citizenship, albeit when citizenship is something that a State might grant or rescind on the grounds of 'race' or religion.

Jelinek mocks the way that tourism monetises the image of Alpine nature, making it consumable. It is a truism to say that the old traditional village has been ruined by tourism. This is a contradiction taken up in *Totenauberg*, which asks how capitalism intersects with the image and legacy of *Heimat*. Where *Totenauberg* indexes wanted and unwanted visitors, nature becomes a picture providing pleasure to those who can afford it. This is part of fascism's

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<sup>76</sup> Améry cited in Crépon, p. 431.

<sup>77</sup> Crépon, p. 431.

spectral production. However, for the people who lack means, who carry only themselves, barefoot, this nature remains hostile.

In the section 'Home World', the documentary changes to show an image of the mountain close-up. The ski-slope is littered with the corpses and skeletons of mountain climbers. On the stage the Heidegger figure is wrapped in bandages. He builds a toy train-track and a village, an image which resonates as transport for Jews, transport which, as mentioned in chapter 3, was a kind of manic, useless use of technology and resources.<sup>78</sup> This scene now replicates what was previously shown in the documentary. Jelinek works with feedback, or a kind of data feed, which confronts Heidegger's thinking with its own eternal return: its expanse of technology and lack of memory.

In 'Why do I stay in the Provinces?' Heidegger explains his rejection of a position in Berlin so that he can remain in his ski-hut in the Black Forest. In this text he describes his thinking as a kind of peasant philosophy.<sup>79</sup> Heidegger's farm boy, who drags a sled up the mountain slope, piling it with logs and guiding it down a dangerous path, is in Jelinek's formulation a 'recruit of dusk', who 'sleds loaded with merchandise [*Warena Schlitten*] that they keep lugging up the hill to drive them in a dangerous downhill race toward the warehouses, in which both disappear'.<sup>80</sup> It is Jelinek's Heidegger figure who describes these recruits pulling not log-covered sleds but sleds loaded with commodities, which they have to sell in order to survive. The Heidegger figure says: 'We become innocent through them'.<sup>81</sup> Jelinek points to a dynamic that is similar to what is described in chapter 1 as 'guilt management', where from the position of amnesia the new 'victims' become an object through which one purges one's guilt and purifies oneself. Heidegger's own piety is expressed in his text: 'my work [...] is intimately rooted in and related to the life of the peasants [*Bauern*]', and '[t]he inner belonging [*Zugehörigkeit*] of my work to the Black Forest and its people comes from centuries-long and irreplaceable rootedness [*Bodenständigkeit*] in the Alemannian-Swabian soil'.<sup>82</sup> We have already seen the meaning of this ontological rootedness. Jelinek emphasises the falsity of Heidegger's alignment with the peasant way of thinking, where being 'left alone', the message of Heidegger's own text, becomes an impossibility under capitalist social relations. Though Jelinek sometimes shares with Heidegger

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<sup>78</sup> *Totenanberg*, p. 46; trans. p. 243.

<sup>79</sup> There is a discrepancy concerning the dates of writing between the German and English translation. Martin Heidegger, 'Schöpferische Landschaft: Warum Bleiben Wir in Der Provinz? (1933)', in *Aus Der Erfahrung Des Denkens 1910-1976* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klosterman, 1983), pp. 9-13 (p. 10); Martin Heidegger, 'Why Do I Stay in the Provinces? (1934)', in *Philosophical and Political Writings*, ed. by Manfred Stassen, trans. by Thomas J. Sheehan (New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 16-18 (p. 16).

<sup>80</sup> Heidegger, 'Schöpferische Landschaft', p. 10; 'Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?' p. 17; *Totenanberg*, p. 53; trans. p. 244.

<sup>81</sup> Heidegger, 'Schöpferische Landschaft', p. 10; 'Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?' p. 17

<sup>82</sup> Heidegger, 'Schöpferische Landschaft', p. 10-11; 'Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?' p. 17. (Translation modified).

the target of criticism, her aim is levelled at Heidegger's piety and assumptions of preservation, his 'innocence'.

Jelinek's text is complex in that its time-study aspect risks collapsing events and temporal moments together, such as allusions to transport for Jews and culture industry motifs. It does this in the name of highlighting historical continuities and dangers. This produces a question concerning the necessity of precision in artistic or theatrical language. In Jelinek's attempts to blast open her present with recourse to the near past, *Totenauberg* pursues a dangerous move which risks conflation. Yet, where she is accurate in her diagnosis, this gesture is one against the reification of history, it forms part of her struggle over history.

The corpses of mountain climbers rise and begin to speak. 'We are the man of this century, the emigrant who is capable of misery several times in his life'.<sup>83</sup> The dead on the mountain appear almost forgotten. They are spread across the mountain like a tarpaulin. The tarpaulin is an object which would cover the sleds and their piles of logs as it would also cover unwanted commodities; waste not quite thrown away. They appear like a collapsing billboard with the message: 'Dare to be different. Let me be happy!' Jelinek speaks of the forgotten dead, via a commodity and jingoist language. The dead are depicted as an image of a product whose sign is collapsing.<sup>84</sup> This is the production of the spectre of fascism, unable to collapse. A relation or a line is drawn between the production of commodities and the inability to remember the dead. The endless production of commodities leads to the endless production of the present against history and memory. Capitalist reification is part of the production of Heideggerian piety and the historical inability to work through the past. Perhaps we could say that in *Totenauberg* there is a claim, or a demand, that to change one's relationship to the object world, would also be to change one's relationship to the dead. The object world is the world of deathly commodities made from the dead labour of humans and the production of commodities is also the infinite production and reproduction of the spectre of fascism as 'the sheer positivity of life, dead life, living death', Hamacher remind us.<sup>85</sup>

The last scene of *Totenauberg* is titled 'Unschuld', 'Innocence'. The image on the screen is transformed to the interior of a rural castle adorned with horns and antlers, where the Heidegger figure, sits elegantly dressed in a chair and listens to live classical music. On the stage, the toy railroad and village have been scaled up to become metres tall. A constant flow of travellers carrying luggage cross the stage. They have to squeeze past the newly expanded props. Again, Jelinek plays with scale, this time in a literal manner so that the Heidegger figure sits on the stage, cramped in his now shrunken frame, implying a shrunken, defeated Being. What follows is the final interaction between the Woman and the Old Man. As the Arendt

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<sup>83</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 59; trans. p. 247.

<sup>84</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 62; trans. pp. 248-9.

<sup>85</sup> Hamacher, p. 25.

figure speaks she is wearing travel clothes and accompanied by a suitcase. In this scene Jelinek brings us right to the heart of her play, to Heidegger's lack of memory or as Alexander Düttmann describes, Heidegger's 'thought without memory'.<sup>86</sup> The Old Man describes 'home' as the place for essence 'which darkens the sun'. Home, which in Jelinek's formulation, one comes to have, allows the Heidegger figure to not think about the past, but deny it. 'In nature there is innocence, and May makes everything new. It did not happen! It is beautiful in the forest, our hearts belong to all beings. But what is done, we love to forget'.<sup>87</sup> We can read an oblique reference to Hitler's 1933 anti-Semitic, anti-Bolshevik and anti-Marxist speech to commemorate Labour Day, a speech which calls for the purification of May-day, as the purification of nature from struggle.<sup>88</sup> Nature is rendered innocent and is once again elevated in the liberal-environmental movements of the 1990s a gesture which for Jelinek hallows the past, it contributes to the forgetting of the dead and the abandonment of justice. Jelinek hammers this home: 'The blood stays in the ground [*das Blut bleibt im Boden*]. It doesn't speak to us'.<sup>89</sup> This formulation confronts the reader with a paradox: what remains from the ideology of Blood and Soil, linked with the 'community of nature', no longer speaks, it is both outlawed and it became its opposite: the dead on the mountain. The language of Blood and Soil is rendered silent, yet it appears as its own spectre. 'And yet, wherever one stops, a cruel, ghostly world. A march into history; and yet we've never been there!'.<sup>90</sup> Jelinek's Heidegger is forced to recognise and yet cannot recognise history. The stage directions advise that the woman change into a *Dirndl*, implying through dress, that this is a move towards the Arendt figure's resignation, a move towards her joining Heidegger as we saw at the beginning of this chapter. *Tracht*, typically the *Dirndl* and the *Lederhosen* are the traditional clothes of Austria and Bavaria. In the late 1930s such clothes were banned for Jews.<sup>91</sup> Arendt is not Hannah Arendt, but comes to stand in for a historical figure of resignation, for resignation in history. The Woman Arendt says:

Your technology, that dismal place with which you are obsessed, did not create anything new. It made millions of people disappear! History suddenly ran backward, a hand appears and once again hands over the dead lovingly, as to a waiting mother. Strange film, in which the person who was laughing cheerfully is now robbed of his Being.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Alexander García Düttmann, *The Memory of Thought*, trans. by Nicholas Walker (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 272.

<sup>87</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 78; trans. p. 257. (Translation modified).

<sup>88</sup> '25 Adolf Hitler: Speech to Commemorate National Labor Day', in *The Third Reich Sourcebook*, ed. by Anson Rabinbach and Sander L. Gilman, trans. by Lilian M. Friedberg (California: University of California Press, 2013), Epub.

<sup>89</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 79; trans. p. 257. (Translation modified).

<sup>90</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 79; trans. p. 257.

<sup>91</sup> Perloff, p. 40.

<sup>92</sup> *Totenauberg*, p. 83; trans. p. 260.

In ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, humans occupy the roles of either the philosopher asking the questions, or the artists or craftspeople bringing-forth, effecting their objects. But with modern technology, the historical Heidegger says that humans bring everything into the position of ‘standing reserve’. What takes this place can be used, or used up. It can also be destroyed. Heidegger asks a leading question: ‘[i]f man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing reserve?’<sup>93</sup> Heidegger has already considered the Human Resources which supply people to workplaces, clinics and so forth. Yet this sentence is even more explicit: if humans are challenged, called to action to accomplish the revealing of the standing reserve (of nature) do not humans belong to the standing reserve, to a quantity, as a material which can be ‘set upon’, used, used up, *more* originally than nature. Jelinek’s Arendt figure speaks what is unspoken in Heidegger’s essay, precisely that he took no position and said nothing in relation to people being sent to *Bestand*, ‘standing reserve’ in the context of the work-death factories:

You have spooled these people in the frantically running film of history; it doesn’t make any stops; one has to jump on and off. Yes, it has become quite evident, you didn’t quite master this technology—people actually disappeared! They became matter [*Material*] jumping up, waving, briefly made visible in the glowing beam of the projector, one second, only a fraction of one second, brought out by you, big and glowing in a somber light, and instantly used up. Jumping over the edge of the snowbank. Don’t be sorry! That sort of people is sometimes sensitive to the weather, like an entire forest! So lets get rid of them! You had to start them up, over and over again as it were. A perpetual, millionfold repetition. And before they are allowed to finally see what’s been left behind, they are the ones left behind.<sup>94</sup>

Jelinek’s method gathers up Heidegger’s work, his concepts and ideas and throws them onto the stage in a way which uses Heidegger’s own method of following language into the unknown, as if on a *Holzweg*. In Heidegger’s essay, he can only muster to add that the human is commanded by the profit motive, not within capitalism but rather within a specific single industry. From this position humans are made subordinate. In this logic, humans do not become the ‘standing reserve’, quantified. But, before writing this essay millions of humans were put into this position. For Heidegger who refused to acknowledge that, this is because humans are both responsible for pushing technology towards rendering everything quantity,

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<sup>93</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 18; ‘Question’, p. 18.

<sup>94</sup> *Totenaufer*, p. 84; trans. p. 260.

stock, ‘standing reserve’, and they also participate in this. In this sense, Heidegger’s moment of rescue in this brutal questioning comes in the form of a kind of an eerie idealism, (a kind of Christian redemption, which Adorno would call the language of the Authentics).

Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed.<sup>95</sup>

The case is reiterated that the basis of the human relationship to technology relies on a comportment that implies an openness and non-alienated experience. This appears positive, and perhaps contains a kernel of truth, but more than that it is opportunistic. This essay was written in the immediate wake of millions of Jews and others dead, destroyed, displaced, without a *Heimat*, made into *Bestand*, ‘standing reserve’ by the Nazis whose project Heidegger openly endorsed.

The eerie idealism of salvation is expressed in Heidegger’s concept of destining. If we unpack this here in order to understand more clearly the text of Jelinek’s *Totenauberg*, destining [*Geschick*] is separated from a ‘fate [*Schicksal*]’ that ‘means the inevitableness of an unalterable course’.<sup>96</sup> Heidegger relates destining, hearing and freedom: ‘[f]or man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens and hears [*Hörender*], and not one who is simply constrained to obey [*Höriger*]’.<sup>97</sup> This concept of freedom is attached to a kind of listening and hearing that goes beyond hearing constraints and rules to obey, and towards a hearing that is open. Heidegger goes even further: ‘The essence of freedom is *originally* not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing’.<sup>98</sup> Here freedom is not attained through free will, as the liberal freedom of choice, yet the minimal liberal ‘freedom’ is not granted to persons who are stateless or persecuted. Heidegger’s idea bears a radical trace but is haunted by material restrictions: the world is ordered by white supremacy and capitalism. In the face of ‘Aryan supremacy’ and the Final Solution this theory reads not just as absurd, but duplicitous, blind and sinisterly forgetful.

If we re-enter Heidegger’s world, the open [*Freie*] (as what is revealed) implies illumination: what is governed by freedom [*Freiheit*] is lit up, it comes into light. In this formulation, this coming to light is connected to truth. It is to this truthful occurrence that freedom shows its closest proximity and kinship. But this open should be understood as paradoxical because in each moment of revealing there also simultaneously occurs a concealing:

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<sup>95</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 19; ‘Question’, p. 19.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 26; ‘Question’, p. 25.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 26; ‘Question’, p. 25.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 26; ‘Question’, p. 25.

Freedom [*Freiheit*] is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing [*Lichtung*] there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing on its way.<sup>99</sup>

The paradox of freedom means that what is concealed also comes to light. Heidegger's clearing is lit. One could say this is corollary to Adorno's notion of the work of art as a force field which both shows and veils itself simultaneously, which however, emerges from a different premise.<sup>100</sup> In *Totenaufer* — photography and television provide the light and the illumination that takes the place of *poiesis*. Jelinek perverts and reduces the *Lichtung* of the clearing to the light emitted by a TV set. Earlier in the play the Heidegger figure says:

The small pool of light in front of them creates a clearing [*Lichtung*], in which they finally can be seen through the TV cameras. No, no, it's the other way around! Without the clearing [*Lichtung*] they had cut for themselves, the light wouldn't even be seen! It wouldn't hit them. And they wouldn't radiate to the living rooms.<sup>101</sup>

Like Heidegger's farm boy, whom Jelinek rewrites as a character who sleds merchandise down into warehouses, she also pollutes Heidegger's conception of *poiesis*, *Lichtung*, the clearing is reduced to what is emitted from television. I propose that the historical meaning of Jelinek's works lies in this perverting, it is a meaning which takes seriously the effects of the culture industry on perception.

In the final part of Heidegger's essay, we read again that Enframing does not mean essence in terms of a universal genus containing all real and possible examples. Heidegger does not attribute Enframing to a tool or any kind of apparatus (although he told us earlier that *Gestell* refers to a frame), yet all these things belong to Enframing. Through the notion of Enframing as the essence of technology, Heidegger is prompted to reconsider the concept and notion of 'essence' itself. This new characterisation of essence lends itself to something that, following Plato and Socrates, essences; it is something which comes to presence and endures. "The way in which technology essences lets itself be seen only from out of that permanent enduring in which Enframing comes to pass as a destining of revealing."<sup>102</sup> We must return to the case of humans in this questioning.

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<sup>99</sup> 'Frage', p. 26; 'Question', p. 25.

<sup>100</sup> Adorno, AT, p. 398.

<sup>101</sup> *Totenaufer*, p. 22; trans. p. 229.

<sup>102</sup> 'Frage', p. 32; 'Question', p. 31



It is precisely in Enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness [*Zugehörigkeit*] of man within granting may come to light, provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the coming to presence of technology.<sup>103</sup>

The essence of technology is not technological. We are returned back to where we started. Heidegger attributes the place for the right questioning of technology in art. To some extent he locates the problem. This is where Jelinek picks up. Art is like the essence of technology: ‘Enframing’, destining, revealing, but it is also fundamentally different to it. Heidegger’s logic, or way of thinking is thus: the closer we look into the face of the danger, the more strongly and brightly does the saving power shine, and we question more, ‘[f]or questioning is the piety of thought’.<sup>104</sup> Jelinek’s *Totenauberg* questions the premise and legacy of Heidegger’s authenticity. Her use of reproductive technology (video) with language endeavours to show that what is propelled by a lack of memory and repression, returns as a compulsion to repeat. This is crystallised in the Heidegger figure, who refuses to remember. Jelinek’s play throws light onto Heidegger’s unthinking, onto his silence. She throws his thoughtlessness onto the stage and once again spools the film. Yet, Jelinek does not reify history. As she says, it is not a history play.

### 5.2: *Fate in Elfriede Jelinek*

What is fate that means it leads to, or give way to, abstraction? How does the combination of fate and abstraction lean on Jelinek’s rewriting of Heidegger’s event of Being, of destining? These are questions to which I want to turn. From *Totenauberg*, I want to step back in time to *Die Liebhaberinnen* (1975, *Women as Lovers*). I want to shift the focus both backwards and sideways from Jelinek’s critique of Heidegger’s idealism of being, of destining, to one of her early iterations of her ongoing preoccupation with love and work under capitalism. We will turn to a notion of abstraction which arises precisely from the idea of fate found in Jelinek’s novel. *Die Liebhaberinnen* is an explicitly Marxist feminist text, it is a precursor to Jelinek’s texts considered so far in this thesis. It is helpful to look to *Die Liebhaberinnen* in considering more deeply the relation between fate, history and the body in Jelinek’s work. In the first pages of this early text we find the lines: ‘our story, which will soon be over, begins in the urban island of peace. / if someone experiences fate [*schicksal*], then not here. / if someone has a fate

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<sup>103</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 33; ‘Question’, p. 32.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Frage’, p. 36; ‘Question’, p. 35.

[*schicksal*], then it's a man, if someone gets a fate [*schicksal*], then it's a woman'.<sup>105</sup> *Die Liebhaberinnen* revolves around a brassière factory in rural Austria filled with working-class women. The novel interrogates the institution of marriage. We are returned to the scenes of the family (as in chapter 3).<sup>106</sup> The two protagonists of *Die Liebhaberinnen* are named Paula and Brigitte. Their lives are dominated by the determinations of capitalist society. This entails the subjugation of human life by capitalist labour, but expresses itself also in more specific articulations, including what drives humans to reproduce themselves: 'love' and the conservative instincts of self-preservation. The bourgeois need for security and stability appears to these women as a need to be owned by a man, to have a marriage contract. As we have seen in this thesis, feminists have brought to light the struggle and concerns of women within the production process, and feminists have articulated how their labour outside of it is integral to the upkeep of both workers themselves and the class system within which they exist. While Marxist feminist analysis offers a coherent understanding of the social situation of women under capitalist social relations through the categories of productive and reproductive labour, my focus here, as I mentioned above will be the notion of fate and abstraction, as expressed in *Die Liebhaberinnen*. Fate relates to compulsion, it has been described as mythical inevitability, abstraction is understood in the sense of a leveller, that which organises.<sup>107</sup>

'one day brigitte decided, that she wanted to be only woman, all woman for a guy, who was called heinz.'<sup>108</sup> The narrator continues, 'she believes that from now on her weaknesses would be strengths and her strengths very much hidden.'<sup>109</sup> Brigitte does not have time on her side because time belongs to Heinz, the man for whom she is becoming woman. A situation is described whereby Brigitte is stuck in a purgatory ruled by dependence; where her attributes, including her future belong to him. The narrator repeatedly tells the reader that everything Brigitte works on in herself she works on for Heinz, meaning her projected future with him. This future, for the very reason that it belongs to him is however not guaranteed: she has to win him first in order to secure a life outside of piecework. Ageing and working to survive are both life and death to her, which, in the novel, become interchangeable terms. At work in the factory, Brigitte is one of many seamstresses who sew brassieres made of nylon lace. Brigitte does not have much of a subject position beyond this twinned labour and quest for Heinz. She rejects 'empowerment.' In the 1970s it is clear the Jelinek is railing against the stuckness of tradition. We begin to see some of the routes into *Die Klavierspielerin* and *Lust*. In Brigitte,

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<sup>105</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, *Die Liebhaberinnen: Roman*, (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2010) p. 6; Elfriede Jelinek, *Women as Lovers*, trans. Martin Chalmers (London; New York: Serpent's Tail, 1994), p. 3. (Hereafter cited as *Liebhaberinnen* and *Women*).

<sup>106</sup> Incidentally, 'the brassière factory' was proposed as the 1988 title to an English translation that did not reach publication. See: Fiddler, *Rewriting Reality*, p. 67.

<sup>107</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xxii.

<sup>108</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 9; *Women*, p. 5.

<sup>109</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 9; *Women*, p. 5.

Jelinek constructs a figure through which to present an ideology of femininity as the ways, in which ‘women’ are moulded into wives and mothers. They are shaped and styled to become what is expected of them, and gain for themselves only through proximity to male power and gain. Throughout the book Jelinek allows Brigitte to hold onto this precarious identity, building it up as a contradiction in terms, with eventual consequences.

The second protagonist is named Paula. Paula is from the countryside (whereas Brigitte is from a small town). Paula is the youngest in her family and at fifteen years she is given the opportunity to imagine what her future might be: she is given the choice ‘housewife or sales assistant.’<sup>110</sup> The characters in the book are pitted against each other. They are divided by their minor class differences, all fixed to working class, but some, teetering on the edge of attaining the category of petit-bourgeois. Heinz has a family and importantly, a mother who can stay at home, Brigitte only has a mother whose job is sewing the same things as her.

The narrator tells us that Brigitte is nothing, but she can offer her body to the world. Along with her body, the narrator tells us that many other bodies are flooding the market, constantly pressing the notion of competition.<sup>111</sup> In an interview Jelinek describes this ‘market of bodies’, as that which:

[D]eclares women to be bodies and reduces them to their biological being, a being that is unable to improve herself through work, thought, or even in my opinion, economic power. Women are still reduced to biology, regardless of how much work they perform. [...] it is just paradigmatic that as a woman, you are thrown onto this market of bodies, irrespective of what you have done and achieved in your life. Nothing has changed that.<sup>112</sup>

Bodies function in a specific way in *Die Liebhaberinnen*: if they belong to men they are there to do something, to act, to be labour power and to consume women. If they are women’s bodies more is expected of them. They are *reduced* to their biological function as vessels. And they can be consumed as an exemplary, static labour power, seemingly unable to improve materially through work, thereby exposing a rift, or a limit to a politics centred on work. In the Austrian countryside, part of Brigitte’s success lies in her fertility. The narrator says, ‘well done brigitte’s body [*brigittekörper*]. child bearing capacity is the victor. in particular the womb [*gebärmutter*] and ovaries [*eierstöcke*].’<sup>113</sup> The female organ did not ‘go to waste on the line, but through heinz got

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<sup>110</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 15; *Women*, p. 13

<sup>111</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 10; *Women*, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Brenda L. Bethman and Elfriede Jelinek, “‘My Characters Live Only Insofar as They Speak’: Interview with Elfriede Jelinek”, *Women in German Yearbook*, 16 (2000), 61-72 (p. 69).

<sup>113</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 126; *Women*, p. 153.

it into full working order.’<sup>114</sup> The narrator provides a metacritique of the proximity between the functions of work and love and their affective power in structuring and maintaining the gender hierarchy, through the dimension of the family and the division of labour. Brigitte and Paula both become pregnant and give birth. For Brigitte, ‘the little child will occupy an important place: inheritor of the business! brigitte will occupy the second most important place: worker in the shop and in the home.’<sup>115</sup> The novel is carefully structured so that it maps the structure of society. That Brigitte swaps the factory for the marriage contract so easily shows us the limits of both these mutually negating ‘options’.

The tiny world that Jelinek has authored, or in part appropriated from the tiny nation state of the Second Republic of Austria, is made objective with excessive, hard language, which has closed itself off from any aporia. In 2006, she characterised the quality of this ‘second-hand’ language as depravity: ‘[w]hen a man speaks, he speaks the discourse of authority. When a woman speaks, she does not. But what she can do is what I am doing, that is, to deal with this speechlessness, to show, by using this depraved language, how depraved it is and where this depravity comes from.’<sup>116</sup> This language is not constructed through psychology, but by way of its own rhythms and puns.<sup>117</sup> It is a perverse language; it functions to pollute, contaminate, and adulterate what it represents. It does not show pure forms but distorts what it represents into a kind of true image. It works through speechlessness by endlessly circling and repeating, using dominant linguistic forms to negate its own security, moving in only minor new directions, resisting plot. It is inelegant. To read it gives the sensation of being ground down. The reader is not permitted an escape route from this small world. In this sense Jelinek’s language, which she has called a dog, ‘snapping’ at her heels, is almost polar-opposite to Heidegger’s.<sup>118</sup> Both authors follow language, but Jelinek’s language traditions lie with Karl Kraus and Robert Musil. Her use of Heidegger’s own texts is to negate their security.

### 5.2.1: *Real Life*

Nothing is stable in *Die Liebhaberinnen*, including fate. Real life can ‘give an opinion,’ writes Jelinek, ‘if it’s asked, real life is the life after work. for brigitte life and work is like day and night’.<sup>119</sup> But the *meaning* of this ‘life’ is temporal and like that of ‘future’ it returns to Heinz. ‘real life is not only called heinz, it is heinz.’<sup>120</sup> Travelling in a loop, Brigitte returns to her object choice. We are told that if they have love it is because it comes from Brigitte. She must

<sup>114</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 127; *Women*, p. 154.

<sup>115</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 132; *Women*, p. 161.

<sup>116</sup> Elfriede Jelinek and Gitta Honegger, ‘I Am a *Trümmerfrau* of Language’, *Theater*, 36.2 (2006), 20-37 (p. 29).

<sup>117</sup> Jelinek and Honegger, ‘I Am a *Trümmerfrau* of Language’, p. 24.

<sup>118</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, ‘Sidelined’, trans. by Martin Chalmers, *PMLA*, 120.3 (2005), 858–65 (p. 860).

<sup>119</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 10; *Women*, p. 6.

<sup>120</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 10; *Women*, p. 6.

convince Heinz that he needs her, and that his future depends on her. In the novel, it is fate orchestrated by Jelinek that decides what will happen to Brigitte. ‘fate [*Schicksal*] decides brigitte’s fate.’<sup>121</sup> And throughout, Heinz embodies fate: it is what he does and is. Like the women who are lacking a story, or those whose story is only ever a symptom, so the novel struggles to find a plot. We are told that:

a natural cycle has come into being: birth and starting work and getting married and leaving again and getting the daughter, who is housewife or sales assistant, usually housewife, daughter starts work, mother kicks the bucket, daughter is married, leaves, jumps down from the running board, herself gets the next daughter, the co-op shop is the turntable of the natural cycle of nature, the seasons and human life in all its many forms of expression are reflected in its fruit and veg.<sup>122</sup>

This ‘natural cycle’ is precisely what the novel undermines mimetically, by repetitively and relentlessly re-staging and objectifying it, denaturalising it. As if it is itself a turntable, or a film reel, like Jelinek later response to Heidegger. Jelinek shows how linguistic forms and patterns of language contribute to expected patterns of life, and then attacks the depraved ‘reality’ of this cycle. ‘the women begin to hate their daughters and want to have them die as quickly as possible just as they once died, so: they must get a man,’ in this schema for Paula, ‘marriage always comes alone, without life’.<sup>123</sup> Paula is differentiated from Brigitte by her desire to learn a skill. Paula shows some agentive potential, but she is also enthralled by the trappings of modern existence such as television, beauty ideals and clichéd notions of romantic love and happiness. Something separates these characters. They provide a duality in the structure of the novel, which is parable-like; they teach us about the ideology of love and work, but do this from marginally differing losing positions located within the family and in badly remunerated factory labour. Brigitte finds something she is searching for while Paula does not. Fate has a double standard.

*Die Liebhaberinnen*, hinges on two points, the myth of love and the ideology of work. The structure of the novel takes the looping figure of infinity. The forward is mirrored in the epilogue.<sup>124</sup> Brigitte, who starts out in the brassière factory takes up her place in the home as a housewife. Paula, who starts out sewing, ends up working in the brassière factory because of the ‘choices’ she made: she followed a drunk man who, shamed, left her after she took up

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<sup>121</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 10; *Women*, p. 6.

<sup>122</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 15; *Women*, p. 13.

<sup>123</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 15; *Women*, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> Allyson Fiddler and Juliet Wigmore have also alluded to this structure. See Allyson Fiddler, *Rewriting Reality*, p. 71; Juliet Wigmore, ‘Elfriede Jelinek: Social Oppression and Feminist Focus’, *Neglected German Progressive Writers* (2), *Proceedings of the Gallway Colloquium, 1985*, (1986), 164.

prostitution to raise money for her subsistence. Brigitte ends up feeling hatred for Heinz, whom she successfully ‘captured’ although she maintains the status of winner because she gets to keep a home, a child and have a washing machine. Brigitte also feels hatred and jealousy for other women who represent competition. The narrator describes what happens to these women, saying that they die slowly: ‘wives die away together’, whole families die together in ‘mutual dependence. And the daughter can hardly wait, to be allowed to die at last also, and the parents are already going shopping for the daughter’s death: sheets and towels and dishcloths and a used refrigerator. Then at least she’ll stay dead but fresh’.<sup>125</sup> Death can be read as a metonym of the prevailing circumstances, and as an actual condition.

### 5.2.2: *Against Fate*

The original meaning of the notion of ‘fate’ implies ‘the word’ or, ‘to say’. Jelinek uses the word *Schicksal*, which refers to both, ‘sending’ and ‘destiny’. In *Die Liebhaberinnen*, ‘*Schicksal*’ connotes meanings it inherits from Greek tragedy and which travel through German idealism and continue circulating in representations today. They include: death, the portion assigned, one’s lot, thread, linkage, constraint. In Homeric Greek mythology, the Moirai (often known as the Fates) were the three goddesses of destiny. Pietro Pucci has characterised one Moira as a ‘part’ and as a ‘spinner who spins around the newborn child the portion of life assigned to him’.<sup>126</sup> He points out through this example of a terminable life that Moirai are ‘associated with death’.<sup>127</sup> Moira is paired with Aisa, meaning one’s lot, and is used synonymously. The thread spun is *unwinding* and *part* of a whole. ‘Along the line of destiny, every event produces a closure; the line itself, made up of a succession of closures’.<sup>128</sup> Pucci describes the expressions that belong to destiny and fate: the thread and the knot, fortune with its good and bad effects, and the constraints and bonds of necessity as attesting in their ‘own way to the formation of a relationship between the gods and men, and a relationship of man to himself’.<sup>129</sup> The three goddesses of fate, Klôthô, Lachesis, and Atropos, who determined the course of a human life show fate’s gendering in a way that also carries the connotation of bad luck or ill fortune, mishap or ruin. Through this personification of fate, which is at the origin of fate’s conceptualisation, women’s gender and catastrophe merge. This is very different from destining in the sense given by Heidegger who elides history. *Schicksal* is both contributing to, and being caught up in historical processes. For Heidegger, *das Geschick* comes to positively connote taking root, *Being*.

<sup>125</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 17-18; *Women*, p. 16.

<sup>126</sup> Pietro Pucci, ‘Kêr’, ed. by Barbara Cassin and others, *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, pp. 531-526 (p. 531).

<sup>127</sup> Pucci, p. 531.

<sup>128</sup> Pucci, p. 531.

<sup>129</sup> Pucci, p. 532.

In ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets,’ from 1913, Freud imparts his story of the *convergence* of Moirai, the spinners, with the Graces and the Horae or the Seasons. Strangely, Freud’s aim is to show something ahistorical: an eternal humanly derived meaning, contained in the changing story of fate from the Greeks to the Romans to the Middle Ages, that he finally locates in his relationship with his own daughters.<sup>130</sup> The Horae were spinners of clouds, the waters of the sky; they were the goddesses of vegetation, representing the seasons. Later, they came to officiate time, inculcating hours. For Jelinek this sentiment is carried forward as a joke, whereby ‘the seasons and human life in all its many forms of expression are reflected in its fruit and veg’. Yet, from our perspective, more than forty years after Jelinek’s novel in an age of GM products this also no longer rings true. For Freud, the Horae became the ‘guardians of Natural Law and of the divine Order which causes the same thing to recur in Nature in an unalterable sequence’.<sup>131</sup> In this temporal recurrence, Freud saw that the myth of nature became a human myth, and the goddesses of weather (seasons) and time (hours) *became* goddesses of fate, although this aspect only found expression in the Moirai. The Moirai, with ‘ineluctable severity of law and its relation to death and dissolution’ stamped fate upon the lives of humans, who it seemed to Freud, only ‘perceived the full seriousness of natural law when they had to submit their own selves to it’.<sup>132</sup> Freud attempts to explicate what he describes as a man’s ‘choice’ between three women, that concludes in the choice of death, occurring and repeating in myths and fairy tales. He recognised a pattern whereby the third sister was the bringer of death in examples ranging from Psyche to Cordelia in King Lear and Cinderella. This figure of death, as the object choice of the ‘heroes’ in myths and fairy tales is the figure of the dumb, mute woman, the one who chooses to love silently, personified in the Moirai as Atrapos (ineluctable). The choice that is given here is a false choice. Freud writes: ‘the choice between the women is free, and yet it falls on death. For, after all, no one chooses death, and it is only by a fatality that one falls a victim to it.’<sup>133</sup> Freud moves beyond the initial catastrophic collision between fate and gender where gendered fate determines one’s life course, to assert that there is a structure of fate. Within this structure, man is given a false choice; man becomes a victim of woman. Moreover, in this course of events, this example of ‘choice’ functions as a catalyst for man in his *overcoming* death, something that he now knows intellectually. Freud writes, ‘[a] choice is made where *in reality there is obedience to a compulsion*; and what is chosen is not a figure of terror, but the fairest and most desirable of women.’<sup>134</sup> The death figure ‘stands in the place of

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<sup>130</sup> Strachey writes: ‘In a letter to [Sándor] Ferenczi of July 7, 1913, he connected the ‘subjective determinant’ of the paper with his own three daughters’. Sigmund Freud, ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII*, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage, 2001), pp. 289–302 (p. 290).

<sup>131</sup> Freud, ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets’, p. 296

<sup>132</sup> Freud, ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets’, p. 297.

<sup>133</sup> Freud, ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets’, p. 298.

<sup>134</sup> Freud, ‘The Theme of the Three Caskets’, p. 298. (My italics).

necessity, of destiny'.<sup>135</sup> It is what comes to be 'woman' who is stuck in this role. Ultimately conservative, Freud shows us the true meaning of this present persistence of the past myth. He writes:

[W]hat is represented here are the three inevitable relations that a man has with a woman — the woman who bears him, the woman who is his mate and the woman who destroys him; or that they are the three forms taken by the figure of the mother in the course of a man's life — the mother herself, the beloved one who is chosen after her pattern, and lastly the Mother Earth who receives him once more. But is it in vain that an old man yearns for the love of woman as he had it first from his mother, the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms.<sup>136</sup>

Here, the 'inevitability' of these relations is what is both rewritten in *Die Liebhaberinnen* and undermined. Jelinek proposes a form of resistance to fatalistic thinking by way of excavating its logic: we return to Brigitte who ultimately comes to have a fate, because Heinz desires her.<sup>137</sup> Like in the many stories that explicate the logic of the three fates, Heinz chooses Death. In Jelinek's *novel* no one wins, least of all Brigitte. The horizon granted to her within the constraints of the structure and the language of *Die Liebhaberinnen* mean that success is bestowed to her entirely through Heinz's action. If we recall, she rejects any form of self-empowerment, instead opting to gain power through proximity to Heinz, mirroring the machinations of patriarchy. In *Die Liebhaberinnen* the very notion of fate is one that works to fix time in a never-ending cycle of guilt and punishment, the novel is structured in this loop and its characters swap roles. Fate is a fixation that surpasses one's needs and desires. Fate is then in a psychoanalytic sense a word of reaction.<sup>138</sup>

### 5.2.3: Fate's Abstraction

Jelinek's rewriting of fate attempts to go to the innermost core of this compulsive, mythical inevitability. The way fate has been represented in literature is as wedded to tragedy. Expressed in a poetics of tragedy as fate, dictated by the external law of the gods, resulting in the death of the man [sic] of action, or the hero (not merely the one who has chosen death). 'Since Aristotle there has been a poetics of tragedy. Only since Schelling has there been a philosophy

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<sup>135</sup> Freud, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets', p. 298.

<sup>136</sup> Freud, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets', p. 300

<sup>137</sup> *Liebhaberinnen*, p. 126; *Women*, p. 153.

<sup>138</sup> Freud has also described the process of choosing death/fate as one of reaction formation: the replacement of one form with its opposite. The Horae reminded humans that they were part of nature (the seasons and the hours) and in Freud's view, were replaced by the Moirai (the spinners of fate/death). Freud, 'The Theme of the Three Caskets', p. 299.



of the tragic',<sup>139</sup> writes Peter Szondi in *An Essay on the Tragic* from 1961. In this short book Szondi sets out a philosophy of the tragic, which he then develops through analysis of literary work. He creates something like an arc through 'German' thought from Schelling to Benjamin. He shows how Aristotle's poetics of tragedy, instructions for tragic art, became in the German tradition concerned with the *idea* of the tragic. 'Begun by Schelling in a thoroughly non programmatic fashion, the philosophy of the tragic runs through the Idealist and post-Idealist periods, always assuming a new form.'<sup>140</sup> Szondi's task here is to make these 'various definitions of the tragic comprehensible by revealing a more or less concealed structural element that is common to all.'<sup>141</sup> This structural element is addressed most emphatically in Hegel. Szondi notes that in Hegel, 'the tragic and the dialectic coincide.'<sup>142</sup> Szondi asserts that precisely as early as the text *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate* (1798-1800) Hegel calls the 'stages of self-division and reconciliation found in the movement from being-in-itself to being-in-and-for-itself "fate" and "love"'.<sup>143</sup> For Hegel, fate becomes a possibility with Christianity. 'Fate is "nothing foreign like punishment," which belongs to the foreign law, but rather "consciousness of oneself, yet as something hostile." In fate, absolute ethics divides itself within itself'.<sup>144</sup> Here, Szondi asserts that with Hegel fate finds a form, which, in the Christian guise as 'absolute ethics', means that it produces its own laws through acting. For Szondi, this isn't merely about the genesis of fate in Christianity but fate's genesis in general. Through the spirit of Christianity, the genesis of dialectic and the genesis of fate coincide. In Szondi's essay, there is, however, a turning point.

In the 'Transition' in Szondi's essay, he looks to Walter Benjamin and his *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928). He argues that in an almost tragic moment, Benjamin relinquishes the concept of the tragic as it exists as a generalised concept. Rather than replacing the philosophy of the tragic with poetics, as in Aristotle, Benjamin replaces it with the philosophy of the history of tragedy.<sup>145</sup> Szondi writes, 'For Benjamin, the idea of tragedy' as the configuration of phenomena that makes up an idea, 'is constituted by the elements of sacrifice, speechlessness, and the agon.'<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, for Benjamin the following situations must be called tragic:

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<sup>139</sup> Peter Szondi, *An Essay on the Tragic*, trans. by Paul Flemming (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>140</sup> Szondi, p. 1.

<sup>141</sup> Szondi, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Szondi, p. 16.

<sup>143</sup> Szondi, p. 17.

<sup>144</sup> Szondi, p. 17.

<sup>145</sup> Szondi, p. 49.

<sup>146</sup> Szondi, p. 51.

The emancipation from ‘ancient rite’ can occur only by revering it once again; the removal of ‘fatal obligations’ demands, in turn, death as its price; the ‘new aspects of the life of the nation’ require for their realisation the individual as hero, but must also destroy him, for they are ‘inadequate for the single will’.<sup>147</sup>

Szondi suggests that Benjamin, like Hegel, posits the genesis of the tragic as identical with the genesis of the dialectic. Benjamin’s history of the philosophy of tragedy renounces a timeless concept, unlike Freud’s analysis of the afterlives of the three Fates. It is after Benjamin’s work on tragedy and the mourning play that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer began to consider their own *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947).<sup>148</sup>

The notion of fate is held fast within the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. I want to turn to the very beginning of Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s text. The central argument of the text holds that enlightenment reverts to mythology, and mythology (as we have already seen) is deeply intertwined with the notion of fate. Importantly, for Adorno and Horkheimer, the enlightenment is not understood as the period in time spanning between Descartes and Kant, but rather it contains a logic: it is that which demythologises, secularises and disenchanters.<sup>149</sup> The first phenomenon of their investigation in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is ‘the self destruction of enlightenment.’<sup>150</sup> The dialectic means that while they see and acknowledge a correlation between social freedoms gained through enlightened thought, they contend that the social institutions within which these gains are caught up, also contain ‘the seed of the reversal universally apparent today’.<sup>151</sup> They warn that ‘[i]f enlightenment does not assimilate reflection on this regressive moment, it seals its own fate’.<sup>152</sup> For us to acknowledge this ‘element’ of enlightenment is to encounter the destructive aspect of progress, which is not to say that Adorno and Horkheimer were against Enlightenment, rather that they wanted to save it. Adorno and Horkheimer do not posit this destructive aspect in nationalism, paganism or any number of other ‘modern mythologies’ exactly, but rather in ‘the fear of truth which petrifies enlightenment itself’.<sup>153</sup> This ‘truth’ is not merely ‘rational consciousness’ but also consciousness, as Adorno and Horkheimer understand it to play out in normal life. The dialectic implies that after the ‘fall of man’ coterminous with social progress that produces the apparatus of technical institutions — the apparatus increasingly gains in power. As a result the individual loses their power as they are devalued, they disappear before the apparatus that they

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<sup>147</sup> Szondi, p. 51.

<sup>148</sup> Szondi, p. 52.

<sup>149</sup> Simon Jarvis, *Adorno, A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>150</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xvi.

<sup>151</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xvi.

<sup>152</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xvi.

<sup>153</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xvi.

serve.<sup>154</sup> Part of this disappearance is the result of the socio-technical apparatus doing more and more for them. Adorno and Horkheimer's subject does not have the opportunity to complete a task fully, to see something to its end, and this is the regressive element of enlightenment thought that must be first acknowledged and then interrogated.

In this analysis, Adorno and Horkheimer arrive at a brutal verdict: everything that contained difference is now equalised.<sup>155</sup> They argue that enlightenment excises the incommensurable. Individuality is unique so that it can be made the same as any other individuality, just as the enlightenment can be made to sympathise with the social impulse, and just as fascist mythology is shown to be the myth of antiquity.<sup>156</sup> They write: 'Abstraction, the instrument of enlightenment, stands in the same relationship to its objects as fate, whose concept it eradicates: as liquidation'.<sup>157</sup> In this dialectic, 'abstraction' both revivifies and deadens something of Freud's ancient Horae showing how everything in nature is repeatable. Abstraction is a leveller preparing the ground for progress alongside industry, which abstraction rules to be that which now ordains repetition. Capitalism takes precedence over the older time forms. It should be noted that Adorno and Horkheimer wrote their treatises on enlightenment before Jelinek began to write, but the implications of their notions are present in both *Die Liebhaberinnen* and *Totenauberg*.

In *Die Liebhaberinnen*, Jelinek's characters are submitted to the brutal verdict of formal abstraction arrived at in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. These characters also show through their exposition of recycled language, through, as described above, Jelinek's 'depraved' language, the prevailing and maintaining structures of love and work; the repetitive (to infinity) logic of the 'natural cycle' that Jelinek writes for them. The fate-like tool of enlightenment thinking is hammered into the reader by way of Jelinek's relentless prose style which dwells on the very *how* of gendering, the mediations that mean in Western culture women are still rewarded for loving 'in an unassuming and speechless way', and for being speechless. They are rewarded for working tirelessly while knowing that this alienated work will not lead to something new, analogously to the various descriptions of the Fates, sent on their way along the thread of time. A collateral punishment doled out by a patriarchal, capitalist world that still teaches (here, through the figure of Brigitte) that for some women: silence is your only weapon and it is not a good one. The story has a slight narrative that hooks back to the beginning. Jelinek could be the one who risks something.

### 5.3: Conclusion: Sending Up

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<sup>154</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. xvii.

<sup>155</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. 9.

<sup>156</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. 9.

<sup>157</sup> Adorno and Horkheimer, DoE, p. 9.

We have seen from *Totenauberg* and *Die Liebhaberinnen* that Jelinek fixates on the structuring forces of a society by scrutinising historical events, detritus and speech acts. In the first instance this is shown through the dialectic of language and film. It is the film which catches everything, which ‘spools’ the people, which refuses to stop, and functions as a restless, busy, background noise. Jelinek’s *Totenauberg* shows how the human (materials) were fixated by the forces of what Heidegger called *destining*. They were worked, killed and disappeared. Heidegger’s ‘destining’ is taken up throughout *Totenauberg* by way of images of sledding, of skiing, slalom, trains and travel: the activities which take place on the mountain come to stand in for Heidegger’s sending into Being. Jelinek’s retort is to rewrite Heidegger’s destining into history.

In the early 1990s with the political upheaval that came with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the globalisation proper of capitalism, as well ex-Wehrmacht first lieutenant Kurt Waldheim winning Austria’s presidential election, Jelinek scrutinises the production of what after Hamacher, is a “‘monstrous’ form of work’, precisely the production of the survival of National Socialism in the everyday fabric of post-fascist Austria, and as we see in Jelinek’s corpses, it is a reality worse than death. What survives in latent and manifest forms is the continuation of everyday fascistic forms of thought such as nativism, which today, in 2018 is spelled out as ‘ethno-pluralism’.

At the time of writing *Totenauberg*, Jelinek turned her attention to new Others, to refugees, to racism and xenophobia, yet this was also filtered through a kind of resignation. Contra this resignation, two decades earlier in the 1970s, Jelinek pulls us into a world dominated by the forces of capital, showing us how gender is mediated within this. Yetm it should be noted that Jelinek’s style, far from silent, is affecting for the reader precisely because it avoids psychologising the characters. It avoids offering any positive image or blueprint for an alternative to what exists, but it shows how the institutions of love and work prevail through linguistic and formal abstraction.

## Conclusion

‘Figuring Austria’s Repressed Violence: Artistic Labour of the Body in the Work of Elfriede Jelinek and VALIE EXPORT’ has contributed to the understanding of the use of the body in Austrian postwar art and literature. It has done this by addressing three areas which can be summarised firstly, as a historical and cultural project, which delved into and mapped the historical context of Elfriede Jelinek’s and VALIE EXPORT’s works. Secondly, it has theorized EXPORT and Jelinek in relation to Freud and Adorno, in particular, their conceptualisations of ‘repression’, ‘sublimation’ and ‘fetishism’ and how these concepts interact with a revised understanding of Adorno’s concept of artistic labour and the autonomy of the artwork. And thirdly, this thesis has described how the body was treated as the primary material in artistic practices of the 1960s onwards as artists sought to expand the concept of art. By reading the works of Jelinek and EXPORT imminently, on the terms that each work throws into visibility, thus reading out of these works the specific political interventions these works made, I have deepened our understanding of how they use the body, and by implication the meaning of the use of the body in postwar art.

This thesis has shown how, in Theodor Adorno’s theorisation, we find an idea of the body which relates to both artistic expression and moral imperative, which, itself, both does and does not include the body. For Adorno, the body is both abstract and an effect, yet conceptually, after Auschwitz, the body is also real and necessary. Adorno writes: ‘what hope clings to... is the transfigured body [*verklärter Leib*]’.<sup>1</sup> This moral imperative can be understood as a hope tied to *leibhaft*. *Leibhaft* is bodily in a way that differs from the *körperliche* sensations and feelings. Therefore, hope, distinct from imperative, which we could say is something like mere hope, sticks to or clings to a transfigured body.

At the end of *Negative Dialectics*, hope stretches out towards the transfigured body, a body that is not necessarily attainable, and yet, a body that is understood as a secular joining of spirit and body. For a moment, Adorno gestures to the potential overcoming of the division of labour. This thesis has explored how this hope, albeit ‘mere’ hope, might manifest in the actuality of pain.

In the period of the twentieth-century following the mass destruction of human life (by way of death factories), in Europe the body emerged as the medium in resistant forms of art. Indeed, in Vienna, as this thesis has shown, one could say that political resistance was displaced into the field of art. In a social context which appeared to be at once numbed by the war, lies and amnesia that followed, where culture industry commodities, postwar reconstruction and

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<sup>1</sup> Adorno, ND, p. 400.

nation building provided new distractions, art provided the space where forms of resistance could emerge. In this context, the body took on a double meaning. This thesis has shown how the body became a site, staged in the most extreme forms of contortion and mutilation, fuelled by aggression, *and* it was the material with which one could attempt to feel something, one could defiantly attempt to show processes of inner mutilation and repression, and outer social oppression. In EXPORT's view, this was part of 'Feminist Actionism', which aimed to reveal the *deformations* produced by histories of painful oppression and repression. 'Feminist Actionism' was the term coined by EXPORT to draw practices of (women) artists and authors into a tradition which followed the principle of Actionism, but altered its premise, alighting on the historical particularities of women's oppression.

The appearance of 'feminism' in this thesis should point to a multiplicity of investigations, eruptions of protest, political pressure and collective and artistic action, in which both EXPORT and Jelinek partook. Both artists and the artworks they made, contributed to emancipatory struggles which have not ended, and should not end. Yet, the story of 'feminism' is one that must be told with due specificity, because like any broad politics it can not be reduced to one version.

Although the first chapter of this thesis includes some analysis of strains of feminist methodologies, theories and strategies which are international in their range and cross multiple generations, overall, my focus lies on the Austrian (and sometimes the German) context. Where I have used the word 'feminist' in a lumpen way, it has been with this context in mind. Furthermore, I want to emphasize that it is also within the long and persistent history of emancipatory and revolutionary feminist struggles, as well as theories of art, that this thesis intervenes.

Moreover, I want to point out that my title does not include the term 'feminism', though both EXPORT and Jelinek figure as part of a wave of feminist struggles, and are assimilated into what is often described as a 'feminist avant-garde'. It was a conscious decision on my part to redact this term from the title, because it became increasingly important to me to track the complexity of the politics of these practices, both in terms of their specific artistic and formal trajectories and their historical-political-theoretical concerns, but also in terms of my own situatedness in my reading and analysis of them today. In the same breath, I want to emphasise that I didn't want to reduce my analyses of the artworks which featured in this thesis to a global feminism. The term 'feminism' throws up a range of problems because it can easily become ossified and fixed as an 'ism' rather than a politics as relevant today as it was between 1968 – 1989.

My ambition was to produce a new understanding of art and literature (which, as I have mentioned, is often assimilated into a 'feminist avant-garde') by closely analysing the

intertwining articulations of forms, concepts and methods, as well as the political trajectories born from such works. In this sense, by broadening and deepening our understanding of these works, my intervention contributes to a feminist art history and theory. More specifically, chapter 3 was an attempt to work through some of the exigent differences and complexities in terms of, in this case Jelinek's engagement with both proto-feminist discourse of the Frankfurt school and particular strands of feminism in the German speaking context of the 1980s and 90s. From my perspective today, emphasis on the double patriarchy held in the positions of the father of the family and the leader of the state, once more becomes an urgent terrain to redress.

Moreover, it is from the context of a contemporary obsession with the body in art that my ambition to unfold a new understanding of the meaning held in the *idea* of the body as material, in the context of postwar Austria, emerged. The part my title: 'Artistic Labour of the Body' describes an idea of the artwork as simultaneously part of the body, the person, and part of the world. Thus, artistic labour of the body became possible in a historical conjuncture when the body was understood as the most important medium in the field of art. In Austria, as elsewhere, this was coincident with the postwar legacy, and transformations in media and technologies, which meant both the 'democratisation' of the means of representation, and transferring the subject into increasingly close-proximity to the procedures of capitalism and capitalist violence.

The shape of this thesis is a spiral circling outwards. It started from the specific location: Austria, where it provided a detailed contextual history which focussed on the ways in which the politics of the artworks explored in this thesis responded to a context dominated by the myth of its own 'victimhood' or *Opferdoktrin*. Researching this from the standpoint of today's resurgent authoritarian and nativist politics, today's extended guilt-capital management strategies, highlighted the significance of what might be described as provincial interventions. Yet, it was in deciphering the provincial tendencies in these works, in relation to their historical specificity, that I began to sense that I could grasp this project, including the meaning of the often-repeated notion of the 'body as material'. The thesis then moved outwards to analyse the constraint: how the body mediates a boundary or limit between the subject and the world as it becomes external to the subject and their ego. Here, we saw the body presented as part of the world, as an external object. Moreover, the body, in its capacity as labour-power was understood as the place where the economic subject is reified to commodity.

I have examined the practices of EXPORT and Jelinek on their own terms, yet, this thesis has demonstrated corollary ideas in both of their practices, though expressed in different media. EXPORT's and Jelinek's practices engage with late twentieth-century transformations in media regimes. In Jelinek's case this is focussed on representations of television and

photography in her literature, and the uses of moving images in her plays. Behind her representations of media there is often a critique of media as a social lubricant in the sense also advocated by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Moreover, both figures explore pornography and the complicated position of women with regards to a dual notion of reproduction (of the species and of the image). In EXPORT's case, there is a critical examination of all forms of mass media, from print media to television and cinema, radio to computers. Yet they do this in the wake of fascist media regimes; they explore the place of women and the myth the Mother in Western, capitalist societies and they both contributed to the anti-artistic movements of the 1960s and 70s.

The analysis of EXPORT's and Jelinek's works, notes and drafts has provided new insights into our understanding of postwar art through the prism of the body. By focussing on artworks that remain resistant to definitions and which sought to deform the concepts which animate patriarchal-capitalism, this thesis presented a connection between capitalism and fascism premised on 'work'. Because of this, it alights on the body. It was my ambition to bring the use of the body as artistic material into contact with the Adorno's notion of artistic labour, in order to highlight a specific intervention made, with the body in this period. Indeed, the body was used in art and literature in the wake of the extreme bio-political regime that was National Socialism, and used in a way which provoked ideas, or theories, or practices of resistance.

By taking postwar Vienna as a singular social context, with its disavowal and repression, its role during National Socialism and the Nazi Holocaust, and its legal protection and/or re-integration of its perpetrators, or as Bachmann described, its criminals, into all layers of society, this thesis has shown to some degree why the body was used and how it was understood in these practices. This art attempted to engage and think with the body. It included notions and practices of spontaneity, reflection and fantasy. The body is shown to be the bearer of social oppression and psychic repression, while it is also experimented on in ways which attempt to untether the body and the person from this oppression and repression. It sought in an intense activity the undoing of the world, the disfiguring of the 'figurable' body, it sought the limits of the body, and it sought to challenge the dominant conceptions of the human premised on what gave rise to so-called Aryan, or in fact any notion of White supremacy. It attempted to recast the body anew. It is this tendency of the works, in light of resurgent fascisms, which I would consider further in future study.

The first chapter outlined the history of Vienna, and looked at VALIE EXPORT's early work through the prism of film as that which fixes, unpacked as a metaphor for fixing the body. Both EXPORT and Jelinek work with dialectics of the body and psyche, the body and language, the body and history. They do not attempt to resolve these into a harmony, but rather



to tear open the wounds, to show the repression and reveal the lies. This thesis shows how in art, the body became a site which expressed the psyche, while at the same time the psyche is expressed on the body as the ‘stigmata of the social matrix’.<sup>2</sup> Repression is expressed on the body. It is from this perspective that I have brought EXPORT’s and Jelinek’s work into a tension with Adorno’s theorisation of autonomous art. Yet this was aimed, in turn, to bring the concept of autonomous art into a tension with Adorno’s earlier writing which reflect on the body. My interest was focussed on texts written during the 1940s and 50s where Adorno theorises the force of the driven, instinctual body contra his later theorisation of artistic labour. In this thesis, my aim was to test the later conception which is arguably better known to the reader of Adorno, where the artwork is expressed as an extreme commodity; a commodity taken to its limit so that it is freed from the ideology carried within itself. I have pointed out that the works in this thesis have articulated another concept of artistic expression or production in Adorno’s work which is formulated in *Minima Moralia*, where the artwork is both connected to the body, as part of an instinctual body and as part of the world at the same time. This notion of non-sublimating artistic expression implies a non-engagement with the world, it implies a non-reproduction of the commodities, products, or objects made in the image of sublimated labour.

The second chapter examined the limit of the subject and body staged in EXPORT’s *Hyperbulie* as a manic and pathological act of will, while the limit or the contour of the body was expressed by Jelinek through her body analysis on the *Leib*, at the limit of shame. This was a weaponising of shame, shame turned back on itself.

In chapter 3 I emphasised Jelinek’s feminism against innocence, a notion that is developed in relation to the ways that fascism tends to use ‘woman’, nature and the image. Starting from an analysis of Jelinek’s *Lust*, this chapter unearthed the renewal and persistence of fascistic concepts of gender, as they are expressed through nature, woman and the state. It looked at a history of theorisations of gender, the family and capitalism articulated by Marx and Engels, and fascism as articulated by members of the Frankfurt School and Wilhelm Reich. The chapter then returned to Jelinek’s own writings on gender and fascism, in particular her essay on Ingeborg Bachmann ‘Der Krieg mit anderen Mitteln’. With Gillian Rose I have argued against understandings of woman, or the body as pure ‘Other’ or pure ‘difference’.

The fourth chapter examined a sub-history of film and a sub-history of the body through Expanded Cinema. EXPORT’s *Unsichtbare Gegner* shows the human being swallowed by the gaping mouth of capitalist media.

Chapter 5 examined the body framed within history. In the context prior to EXPORT and Jelinek, this meant the body reduced to material, absorbed into the labour process and

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<sup>2</sup> EXPORT, ‘Untitled, description of *Hyperbulie*’.

destroyed in its zero-resistance mechanisms. This chapter compared the notions of destining and fate in Elfriede Jelinek's *Totenaufer* and *Die Liebhaberinnen*. It attempted to unravel Jelinek's concern with fate and history, and to show *how* her writing is a defiant, anti-fatalistic, resistant writing. It is a writing on history against fate. Her play about Heidegger and Arendt is a critique of the 'Event of Being', it functions as a pollutant, it denaturalises, it contaminates in this instance Heidegger's writing. And yet, we see that in writing against the political resignation of her time, in the face of political resignation, Jelinek's Hannah Arendt character displays a kind of historical resignation. This seeming paradox of resignation in relation to a resistant, anti-fatalistic approach to history is expressed in a response of Jelinek to a request from EXPORT recently found in the EXPORT archive. This last chapter underscored a method in Jelinek's works to get as close as possible to her object of critique. In this example, it was fascist epistemology. Today, almost thirty years after it was written the question which hangs over Jelinek's works remains. In her mimetic artistic comportment to fascist ideas and concepts, does she risk merely reproducing what she seeks to destroy? Or, is the only way to surpass something like a fascist epistemology, here cited in the example of Martin Heidegger, to show how it functions, and how it seeps out of the ivory towers of philosophers and into the everyday public spheres? Jelinek's close attention to what Hamacher describes as fascism's perhaps unsurpassable afterlife, is testament to her persistence as an author who did not give in to resignation.

Prior to the exhibition *MAGNA, Feminismus und Kunst* in 1975, VALIE EXPORT sent a questionnaire to its contributors. This questionnaire or letter-interview asked each woman a different set of questions related to their practice, with the aim to find out what the exhibition should reflect. This was an attempt to make a space for women's creativity. It was self-organised. It included art (made by women) of all kinds. The subtitle of the exhibition reads: 'An overview of the female sensibility, imagination, projection and problematic is suggested through a tableau of pictures, objects, photos, lectures, discussions, readings, films, videos and actions' (see plate 0.3).<sup>3</sup>

When I visited the VALIE EXPORT Centre in Linz in late 2017, I came across Jelinek's response to this questionnaire. This was a surprise as its existence had not been noted by the archivists. It was one document among a vast archive containing hundreds of boxes, thousands of collected books and manuscripts, pieces of paper, letters, post-it notes, copy discs and ephemera. These materials are now gradually being organised into a functioning archive.

Jelinek's set of answers contains claims such as: 'a women's exhibition must be a tool of struggle'. It should not be for 'aesthetic products'. 'Each oppressed class, like each socially

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<sup>3</sup> *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*.

oppressed group must have the opportunity to use it.' Moreover, for Jelinek, this was not just about women. She says:

What would be progressive would be women and men united in struggle against economic oppression, against the oppression of their creativity, against the making impossible of spontaneity and fantasy, against the impossibility of satisfaction and happiness in this capitalist industrial society.<sup>4</sup>

Jelinek explains that *art* will not change the position of women, but perhaps women will. This reveals a reaction to an impulse already at play in the late 1960s when art was considered a revolutionary activity, as in the example of Expanded Cinema. However, with some distance we can, I think say that Jelinek's art did attempt to change society. Not by means of presenting a blueprint for a new society, or presenting a unique kind of 'women's art', but rather by ruthlessly identifying myths and social dynamics and restaging them, rewriting them until they became visible and thus changeable. Jelinek's is a study of the fabric of society, as it is a study of time and labour, a study of capitalism (with its fascistic tendencies) in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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<sup>4</sup> Elfriede Jelinek, 'Untitled: Answer to VALIE EXPORT's Letter-Interview for the Exhibition MAGNA', undated, VALIE EXPORT Center Linz, Forschungszentrum für Medien und Performancekunst.

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## Illustrations



Plate 0.1. VALIE EXPORT, *Tapp und Tastkino*, 14 November, 1968, Munich, street-film, action.



Plate 0.1a. Documentation from VALIE EXPORT, *Tapp und Tastkino*, 14 November, 1968, street film, action, Munich, as presented in *Wien Bildkompendium: Wiener Aktionismus und Film* (*Vienna Image Compendium: Viennese Actionism and Film*), eds. by Peter Weibel and VALIE EXPORT (Frankfurt: kohlkunstverlag, 1970).



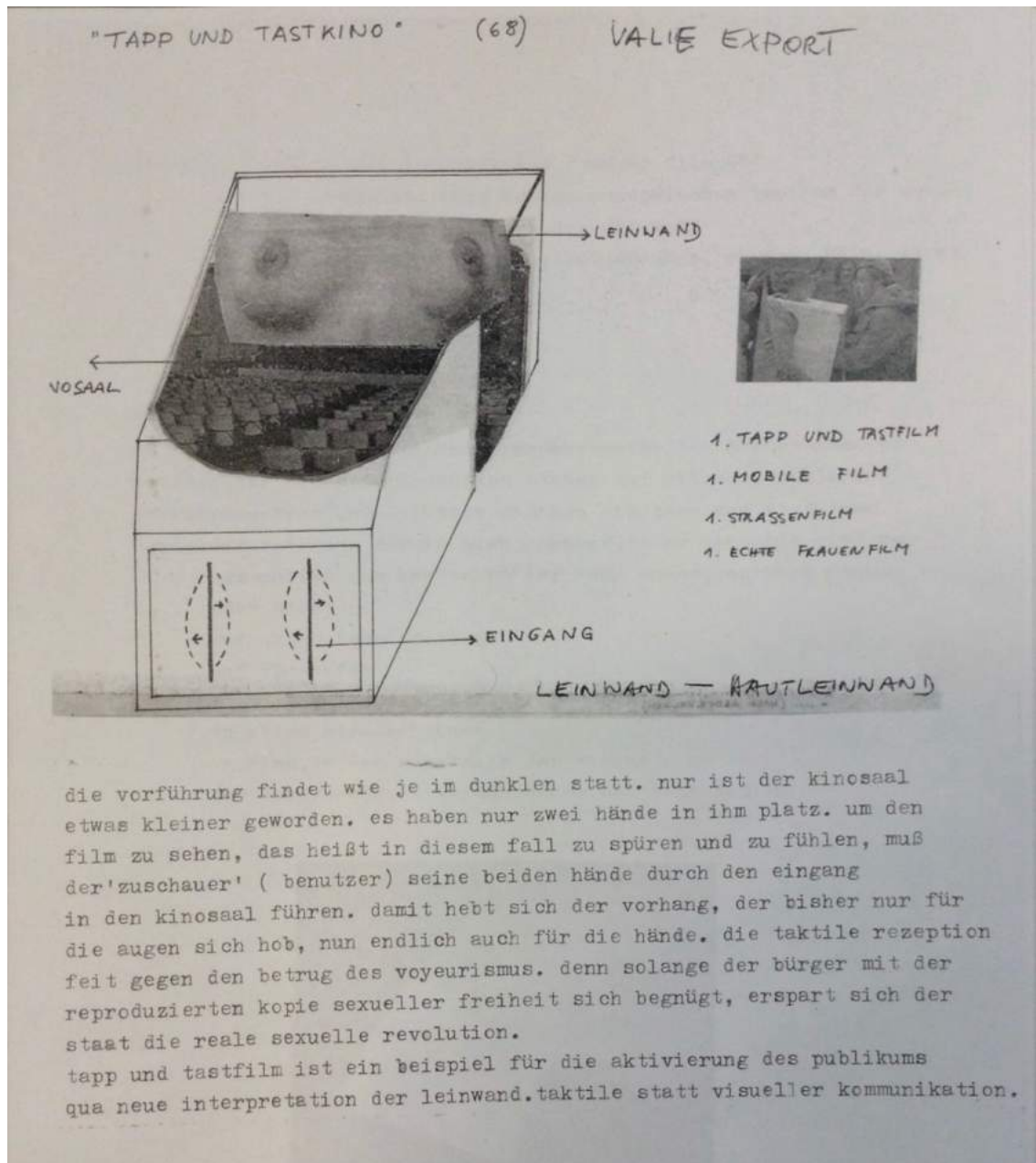


Plate 0.1b. VALIE EXPORT, 'Tapp und Tastkino, Research Sketch', Sammlung Generali Foundation.

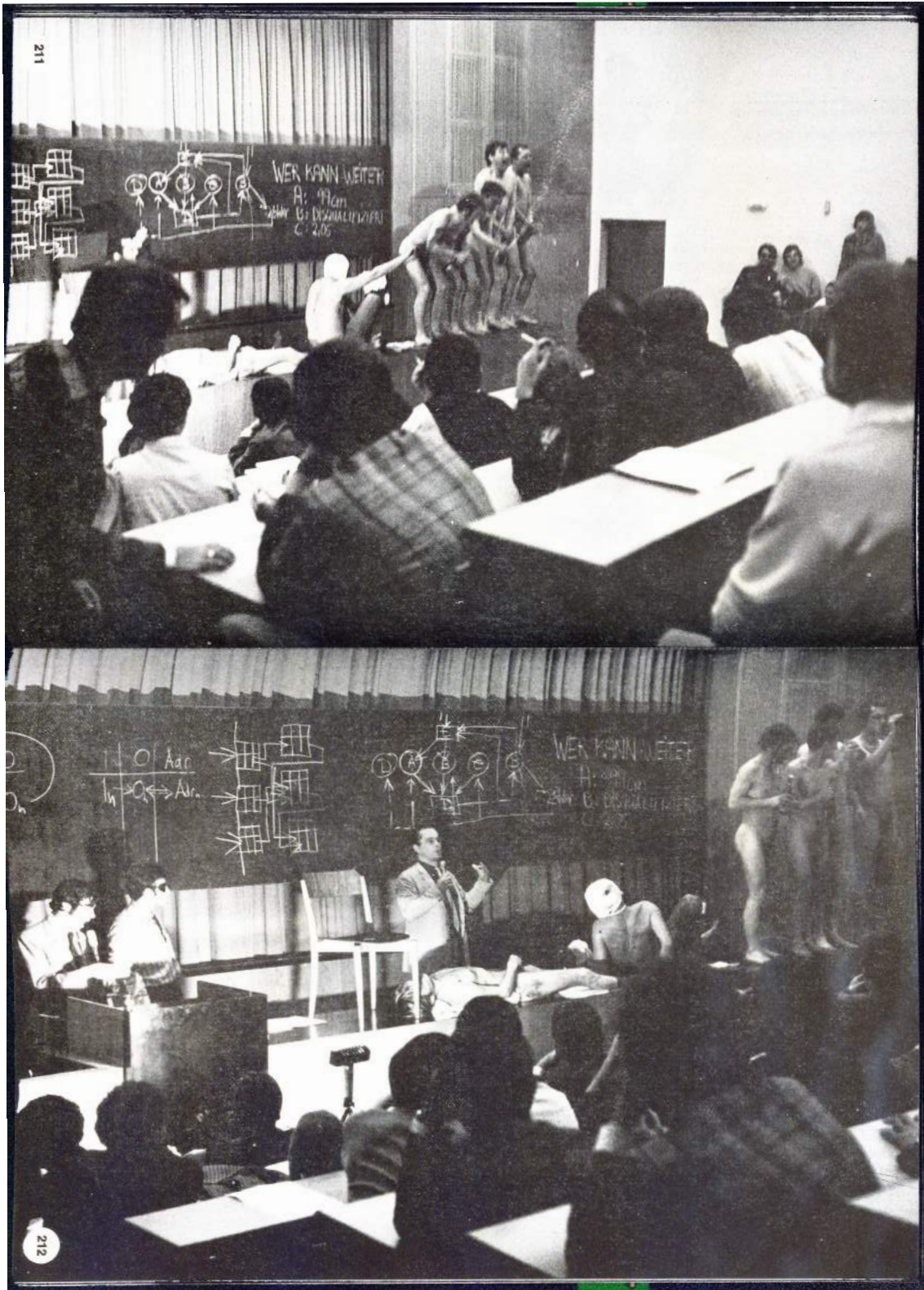


Plate 0.2. Günter Brus, Otto Muehl, Oswald Wiener, Peter Weibel, Franz Kaltenbeck, Laurids, *Kunst und Revolution*, 7 June 1968, University of Vienna, as published in *Wien Bildkompendium: Wiener Aktionismus und Film* (1970).



DER SÖS LÄDT EIN

KUNST UND REVOLUTION

GÜNTHER BRUS

OTTO MUEHL

PETER WEIBEL

OSWALD WIENER

OLGHE WALTENBACK

EIN VORTRAG

PETER JIRAK

HERBERT STUMPF

CHRISTOP SUBIK

EINE DISKUSSION

FREITAG 7. JUNI 1968

20 UHR PÜNKTLICH

die assimilationsdenkweise hält sich

kunst als ventill für staatsfeinde.

die von ihr geschaffenen schizoiden

halten mit hilfe der kunst balance -

sie bleiben eben noch diesseits der

norm. kunst unterscheidet sich von

"kunst". der stat der konsumenten

schiebt eine bugwelle von "kunst" vor

sich her; er trachtet, den "künstler"

zu bestechen und damit dessen revol-

tierende "kunst" in staatsbehaltende

kunst umzuwandeln. aber "kunst" ist nicht

kunst. "kunst" ist politik, die sich

neue stile der kommunikation geschaffen

hat.

NEUES INSTITUTS GEBÄUDE; HÖRSAL 1

eigentümer, herausgeber, verleger, vervielfältiger: Sozialisti-  
scher Österreichischer Studentenbund (SÖS). für den inhalt ver-  
antwortlich: HANNES HORSCHER. alle: 1020 Wien, Erbsbergstrasse 63.

Plate 0.2a. *Kunst und Revolution* poster and invitation text. Text by Oswald Wiener. The Action was organised by the SÖS (Austrian Socialist Student Society).

# ÖSTERREICHS 'KULTURREVOLUZZER'



**FAMILIENVATER** Günter Brax, 28, seine Mutter verheiratet: „Land der Berge, Land am Strome, Land der Zeder...“

**MITTELSCHELEHER** Otto Mühl, 46, „Ma's noch gelbes, Genesee...?“

**RAIKALKATER** unter Heilwaken: „Wanderer, Fremder, Nur zweifeln. Das kann noch einmal, in der St. Pharisäer...“

**JUNGEN** IDEALKOMMUNIST, SOS-Funktionär, schreckensmäßig: „Bei Mühl, jetzt sind wir erledigt...“

**SCHNAPPUZZER** Inel-denschäufel geht: „Die Revolution und die Parteien sind so, Es ist die An-sicht...“

**VERANSTALTER** Peter J. rath, 335-604, Kommentar: „Ich jetzt, habe Freunde, wollen wir die Geschichte diskutieren.“

## Die Polizei ist hinter ihnen her!



### Polizei sagt: Uni-Ferkel sind keine Studenten!

Wien — Die Behörden trugen nun endlich der ersten Uniferkel-Meßung über die Ferkeln auf Universitätsniveau herab und verhalten sich Mißwacht-abend drei Hauptkategorie: skandalöse Verfälle. Nur zugehörige Günter Brax, der 27-jährige Schriftsteller Oswald Wiener und der 44-jährige Otto Mühl werden Donnerstag in das Landesgericht Wien eingeliefert, wo sie nun auf ihren Prozess warten. Inzwischen handelt es sich bei den Verhafteten nicht um Studenten. Die Funktionen erfüllen nur Verträge der Sozialversicherung wegen Verordnungen und die Verordnungen erfüllen. Tugendlich heißt Oswald Wiener bei einer Pressekonferenz erklärt: „Wir werden ähnliche Verordnungen gegen uns weiter machen.“

Bei den Prozessen am 7. Juni werden die Studenten nicht nur Zeugen sein, sondern auch Angeklagte — die Akteure verurteilt mit einem Maßstab des Sieges

Schwere Folgen wird der Mühseligkeit vom vergangenen Freitag für die studentischen Sex-Kommissionen haben: Wien: Polizeibehörden Josef Holubek bei den Kommissariats Innere Stadt per-

Die Ermittlung über die unangelegentlich und beschuldigten Verfälle im Bereich der Wiener Universität schickte die Wiener Universität nicht nur die Polizei, sondern auch die Kommissariats Innere Stadt, die die Verordnungen erfüllen. Die Verordnungen erfüllen von Verordnungen und die Verordnungen erfüllen. Tugendlich heißt Oswald Wiener bei einer Pressekonferenz erklärt: „Wir werden ähnliche Verordnungen gegen uns weiter machen.“

„Forscht sie aus, / nehmt sie und bestraft sie.“ Mehrere Zeugen sind die Univer-sität Wien Anzeige erstatet.

— Belegung vor der Univer-sität — Die Polizei hat die Univer-sität Wien Anzeige erstatet.

— Belegung vor der Univer-sität — Die Polizei hat die Univer-sität Wien Anzeige erstatet.

# Endlich die Uni-Ferkel verhaftet!

Sechs nackte Männer vollführten unbeschreibliche perverse Orgie

## Beispielloser Skandal vor 500 Personen Freitag abend an Wiener Uni

Beispiellose Verfälle ereigneten sich am vergangenen Freitagabend in einem Hörsaal der Wiener Universität. Rund 500 Personen waren zu einer Veranstaltung der SOS, einer linksradikalen Studentenvereinigung, gekommen.

Das Thema sollte lauten: „Kunst und Revolution“. Der Abend nahm einen skandalösen Verlauf.

Verstärkt kam es zu beschämenden Beschimpfungen von Mitgliedern der Kennedy-Familie, die mit Beifall quittiert wurden. Dann entzündeten sich sechs junge Bur-schen der Hörsaal.

Völlig nackt vollführten sie vor den Zuschauern Handlungen, die in ihren Einzelheiten nicht beschrieben werden können.

EXPRESS-Mitarbeiter Michael Johannes, der Augenzeuge der Verfälle war, schreibt auf Seite 3, was er sah und erlebte.

## Die Polizei jagt nun die Teilnehmer der Sex-Orgie

Nach einer Folge hätte die Polizei die Teilnehmer der Sex-Orgie im Hörsaal der Wiener Universität verhaftet. Die Teilnehmer der Orgie wurden von der Polizei verfolgt und in den Hörsaal der Wiener Universität verhaftet.

Die Teilnehmer der Orgie wurden von der Polizei verfolgt und in den Hörsaal der Wiener Universität verhaftet.

**Barometer**

Wetterbericht

Radio 9, TV 6, Theater 12

## Kings Mörder wurde von Verschwörern gedungen

Beim Begräbnis Bob Kennedys Johnsons Frau brach zusammen

„Uni“-Skandal: Ins Gefängnis mit den obszönen Rowdies!

Kreikels vor Cesnar Faustball: Silber für Österreich A-Szbg. 1:2 in Brezgau Rindl in Spa aus

Robert F. Kennedys letzter Weg: Johnsons Gattin brach zusammen

Fußballspielübertragung abrupt abgebrochen: Fernseher empört!

## Die alten Nazis von Bonn National-Zeitung

Sex-Revolution in Wien? Kakademiker hinter Gittern

DIE ALTEN NAZIS VON BONN

Kriegsverbrecher-Vergangenheit und ihre Folgen für Deutschland / von BRUNO BELLER

„Denk ich an Deutschland in der Nacht, werd ich an den Schlaf gebracht.“ Dieses Heine-Wort gilt immer noch für uns deutsche Juden, die wir dieses Land trotz der Vergangenheit lieben und um uns setzen Gegenwart und Zukunft sorgen.

Die alten Nazis von Bonn

Die alten Nazis von Bonn

Die alten Nazis von Bonn

Plate 0.2b. Documentation of the media reaction to *Kunst und Revolution*, as presented in *Wien Bildkompendium*.

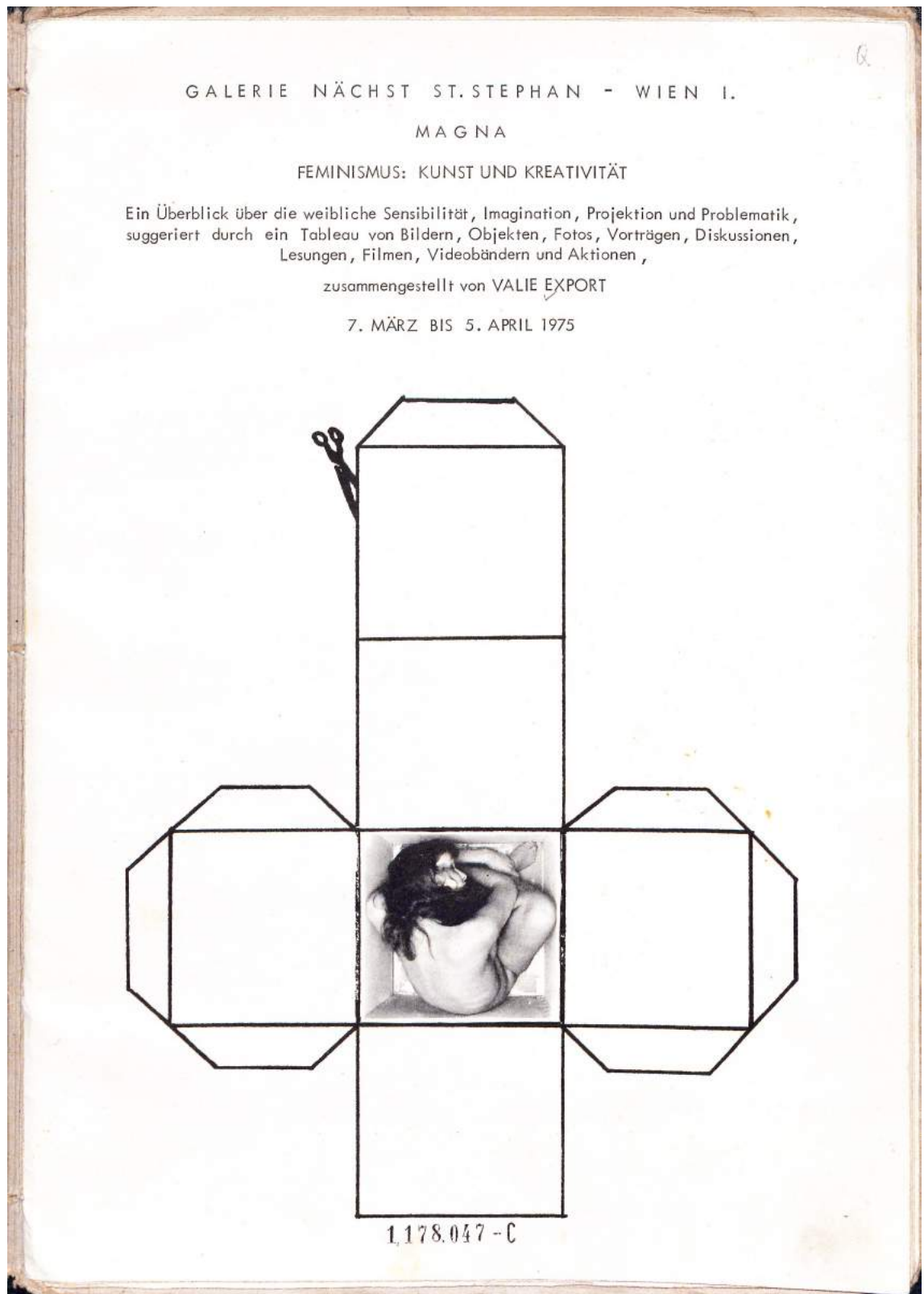


Plate 0.3. The front-cover of the pamphlet accompanying the exhibition: *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*, 7 March - 5 April 1975, Galerie nächst St. Stephan. The exhibition was organised by VALIE EXPORT. The pamphlet was published by Galerie nächst St. Stephan and edited by VALIE EXPORT.



Plate 0.3a. Exhibition view of *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität* at Galerie nächst St. Stephan.

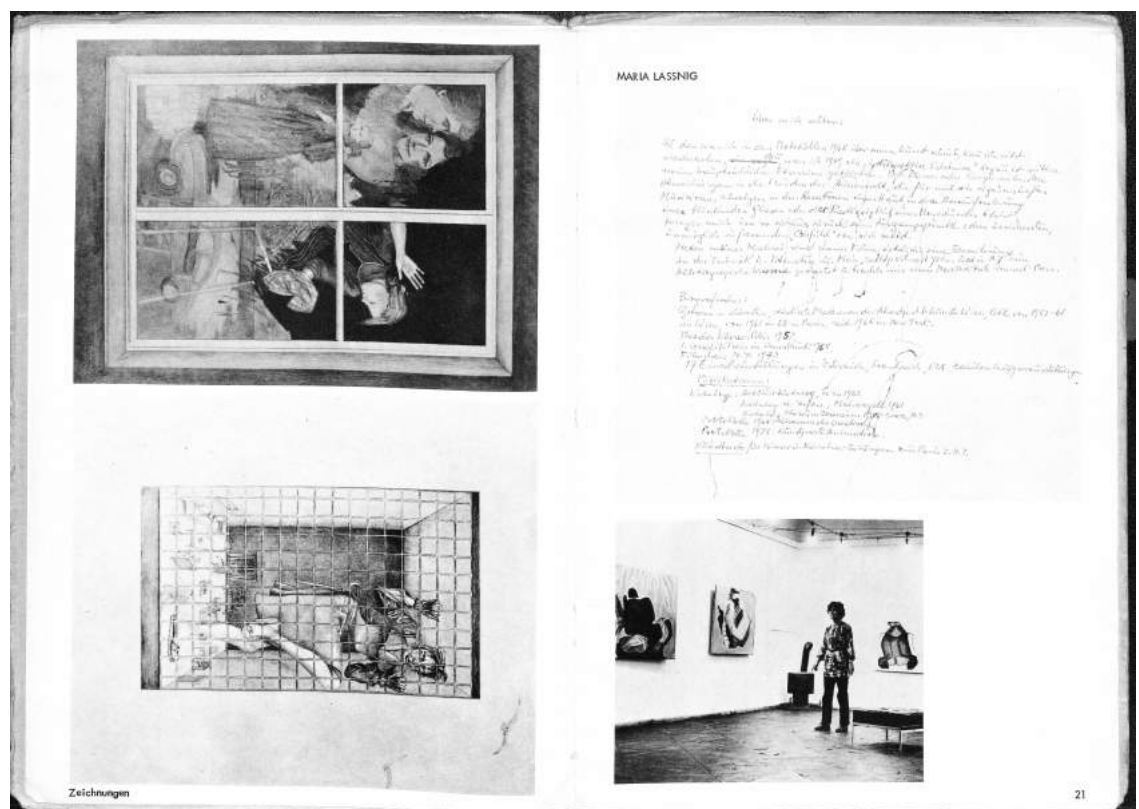
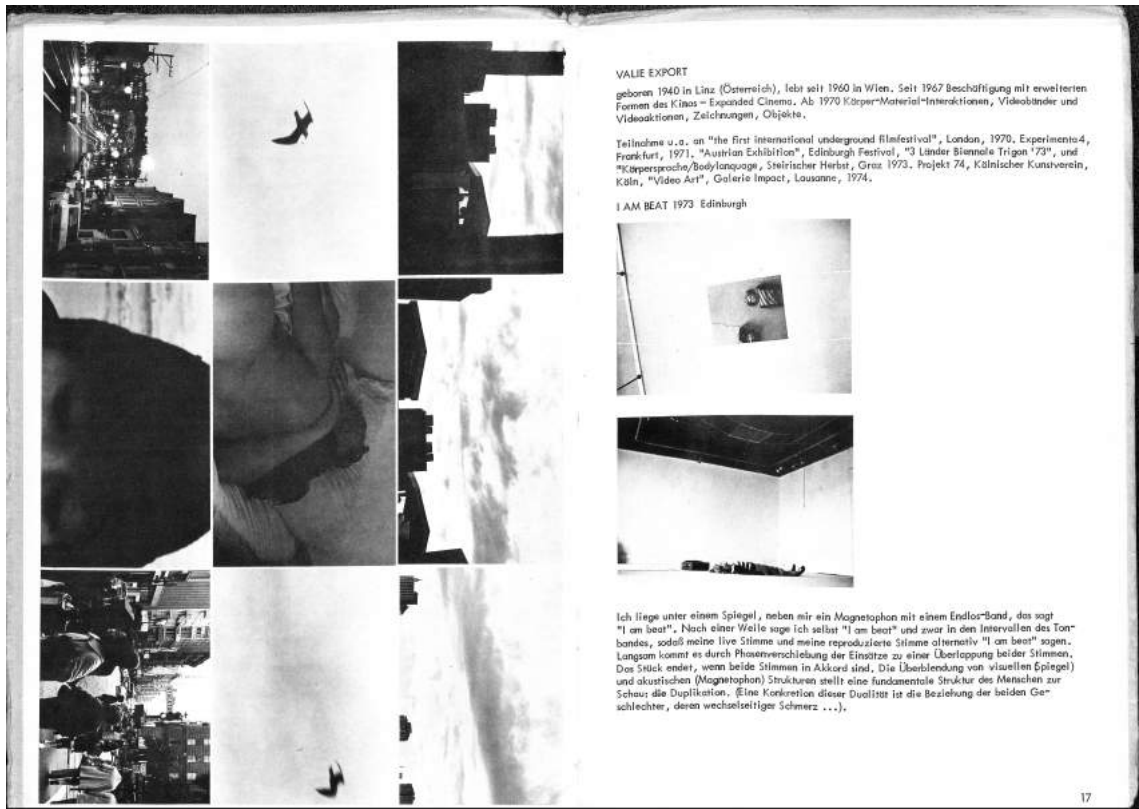


Plate 0.3b. Pages from the pamphlet accompanying the exhibition: *MAGNA, Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*. The pages show the work of VALIE EXPORT (above); and Birgit Jürgenssen and Maria Lassnig (below).



Plate 0.4. The cover image of the catalogue of essays and images: *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn* (*Art with its own Sense*), 1985, edited by Silvia Eiblmayr, VALIE EXPORT and Monika Prischl-Maier (above); exhibition view of *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, which took place in the Museum for Modern Art and the Museum of the twentieth-century 28 March - 12 May 1985. The exhibition and symposium (*Weibliche Ästhetik: Konstrukt oder progressiver Anstoß*) were organised by Silvia Eiblmayr, VALIE EXPORT and Monika Prischl-Maier.





Plate 0.5. Stills from VALIE EXPORT, *Elfriede Jelinek: News from Home 18.8.88*, 1988, 30 minutes, colour.



Plate 0.6. Stills from, VALIE EXPORT, *I turn over the pictures of my voices in my head*, 2008, 11'30".

...REMOTE....  
REMOTE....  
VON VALIE EXPORT  
KAMERA: Ziti 1973



Plate 1.0. VALIE EXPORT ...*Remote...Remote...* 1973 (stills from the performance-film 12 minutes, 16mm transferred to DVD, filmed in EXPORT's studio in Vienna).



Plate 1.0a. VALIE EXPORT *...Remote...Remote...* 1973 (stills).

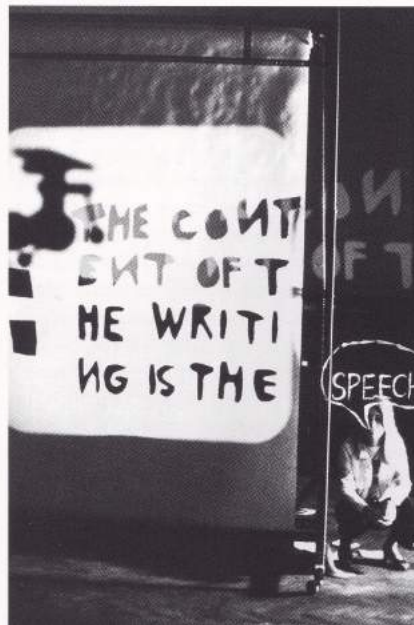
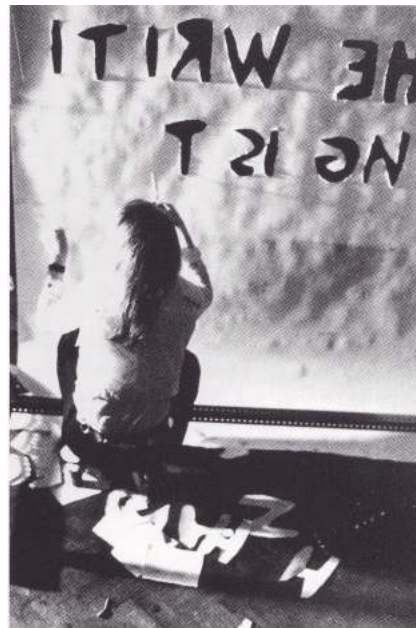


Plate 1.1. VALIE EXPORT, *Cutting*, 1967-68. Documentation of the Expanded Cinema Screen-Action, inter-medial. Containing skin-action, body-action, paper-screens, material-screen, skin-screen, slide projector, slide, scissors, razor blade, headlight, bazooka vest, naked male performer (Peter Weibel). Performed at X-SCREEN, Cologne, 1968; above as presented in *Wien Bildkompodium, Wiener Aktionismus und Film*.

mann frau animal

1. teil onanie die sehnsucht nach dem erleben der eigenen potenz  
denn wenn es stimmt, daß das sexuelle erlebnis  
der potenz im erlebnis des orgasmus liegt, (wie  
es bisher die männer er/leben) dann ist bei der  
frau vieles versäumt geworden. denn durch die  
männer wird sie meist nicht so behandelt, körpers-  
lich und geistig, daß sie einen orgasmus hat.  
also die prktische herbeiführung diese erlebnisses

2. teil vagina-sperma  
blut die ewige bereitchaft der frau für die frucht-  
barkeit zu sorgen  
auch mit dem preis, daß es unglück bringt, oder  
überhaupt sinnlos ist, weil der wunsch nach der  
frucht vorhanden ist  
(frucht)  
warum diese bereitchaft ?

3. teil entwicklertasse das abbild dieser bereitchaft liegt in einer  
entwicklertasse. es ist ein bild welches  
das abbild einer wirklichkeit ist die nicht  
für alle dieselbe wirklichkeit ist. denn der  
fotoapparrat als das auge (das männliche auge)  
durch den etwas wahrgenommen wird, wird in eigen  
er verantwortung, in der eigen erkennbarkeit  
(männliche ordnung) auf etwas abgebildet und  
so wiedergibt (zelluloid) bis es sich zu einem  
eigenen objekt (das weibliche objekt) zu einem  
foto gebildet hat.  
darum das foto in der entwicklertasse.  
darüber die männliche hand die etwas blut auf  
das foto rinnt  
blut- symbol der sühne - nein  
blut als teil des lebens, als sichtbares leben  
in der einsicht auch etwas von sich zu geben, ni  
nur zu fordern  
die hoffnung auf eine bessere heimat



Plate 1.2. VALIE EXPORT, *Mann & Frau & Animal*, 1973, 12 minutes, 16 mm transferred to DVD, colour and black and white (documentation and stills).

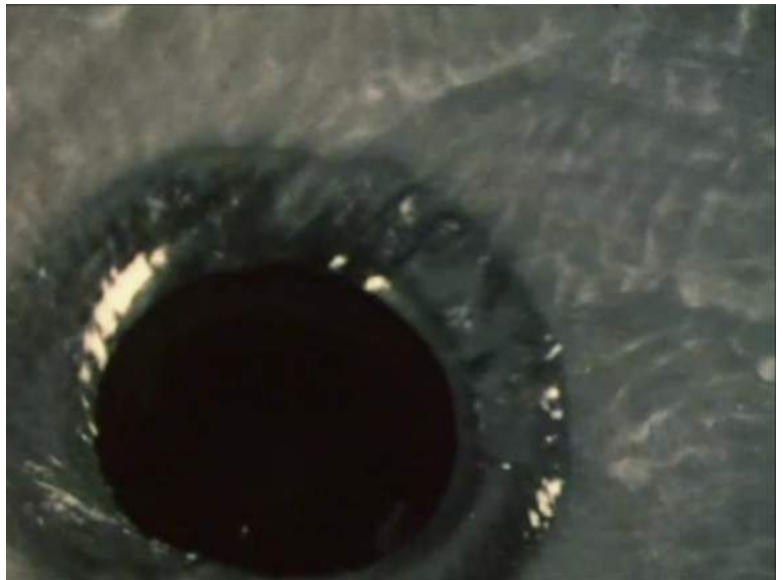


Plate 1.2a. VALIE EXPORT, *Mann & Frau & Animal*, 1973 (stills).

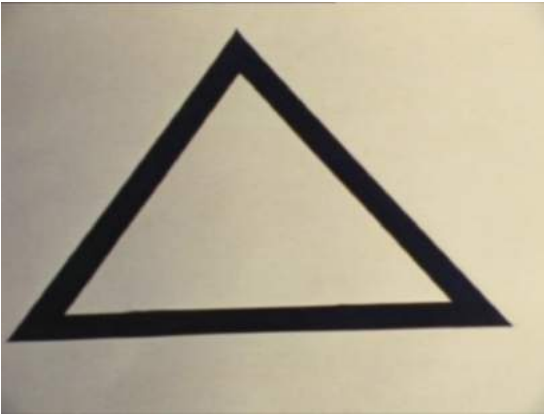


Plate 1.2b. VALIE EXPORT, *Mann & Frau & Animal*, 1973 (stills).





Plate 1.3. The crowds at Heldenplatz, Vienna on the day of the funeral of Engelbert Dollfuß in July 1934 (above); Adolf Hitler's announcement of the Anschluss from the balcony of the Austrian National Library overlooking Heldenplatz, March 1938 (below).



Plate 1.4. The riots at the Palace of Justice, 15 July 1927 (above); the February Uprising 12-16 February 1934 (below).



Plate 1.5. Karl Marx-Hof after the February Uprising, 1934.



Plate 1.6. The 1995 FPÖ-led campaign against Elfriede Jelinek et al. The text reads: Do you love ... Scholten, Jelinek, Häupl, Peymann, Pasterk... or art and culture?

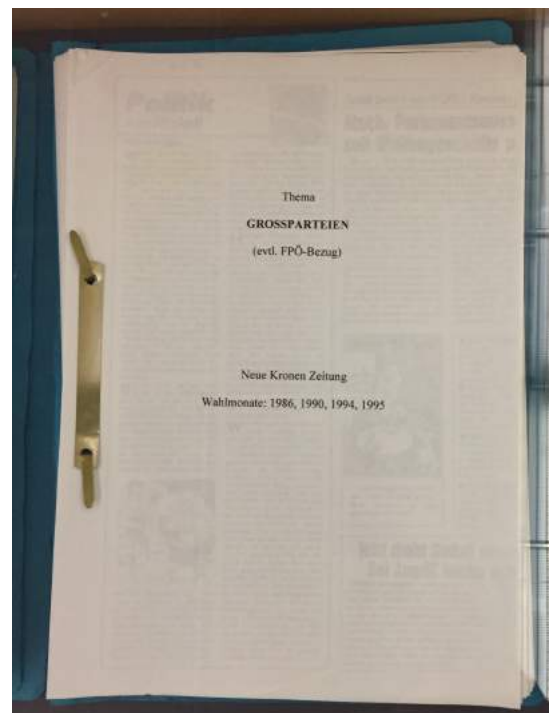


Plate 1.7. Documentation from VALIE EXPORT, *Faschismus in Wort und Bild (Fascism in Word and Image)*, 1986-2000.

weibel/export

# wien

bildkompendium wiener aktionismus und film  
herausgegeben von peter weibel  
unter mitarbeit von valie export

1-2.000

© 1970 by kohlkunstverlag in frankfurt, eppsteiner straße 45.  
das werk ist urheberrechtlich geschützt, die dadurch begründeten rechte, insbesondere  
die der übersetzung, des nachdrucks, der entnahme von abbildungen, der funk- und  
fernsehsendung, der wiedergabe auf fotomechanischem oder ähnlichem wege  
und der speicherung in datenverarbeitungsanlagen wie in polizei- und pressearchiven  
bleiben, auch bei nur auszugsweiser verwertung, vorbehalten.  
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an den verlag zu zahlen, deren höhe mit dem verlag zu vereinbaren ist.

kohlkunstverlag

Plate 1.8. The inside cover of: Peter Weibel and VALIE EXPORT, *Wien Bildkompendium, Wiener Aktionismus und Film*, 1970.

# Die Wiener Avantgarde vor Gericht

Jugendgericht: Oberstg Prinsch gegen Weibel und die EXPORT in Salzburg, Wien - Böhmermann, Wiener Aktionismus und Film



**Einlaß nur mit „Hot pants“**  
Mädchen mit dem „Hot pants“-Wortspiel... (The text continues with details about the trial proceedings and the defendants' behavior.)

**Fünf italienische Filme in Cannes**  
Die fünf italienischen Filme... (The text discusses the film festival and the works of EXPORT members.)

**Armstrong geht es besser**  
Der Jazzmusiker... (The text mentions the jazz musician Armstrong in the context of the trial.)



# Kerkerstrafen für Weibel und EXPORT

Prozess gegen Weibel und EXPORT in Salzburg... (The text provides details about the sentencing of the defendants.)

**Therapie für TV-Abende**  
Die Teilnehmer... (The text describes a television program or therapy session related to the trial.)



Plate 1.8a. Documentation from press coverage of the obscenity trial against EXPORT and Weibel following the publication of *Wien Bildkompendium, Wiener Aktionismus und Film* (above); documentation of protest flags hanging from the windows of EXPORT and Weibel's apartment in 1971, following the trial (below).







Plate 1.9. Otto Muehl's *Leda mit dem Schwan* (*Leda with the Swan*) performed at his studio in the Perinet Celler in Vienna, August 20, 1964.



Plate 1.10 VALIE EXPORT, *SMART EXPORT: Selbstportrait mit Zigarette*, 1968-70.

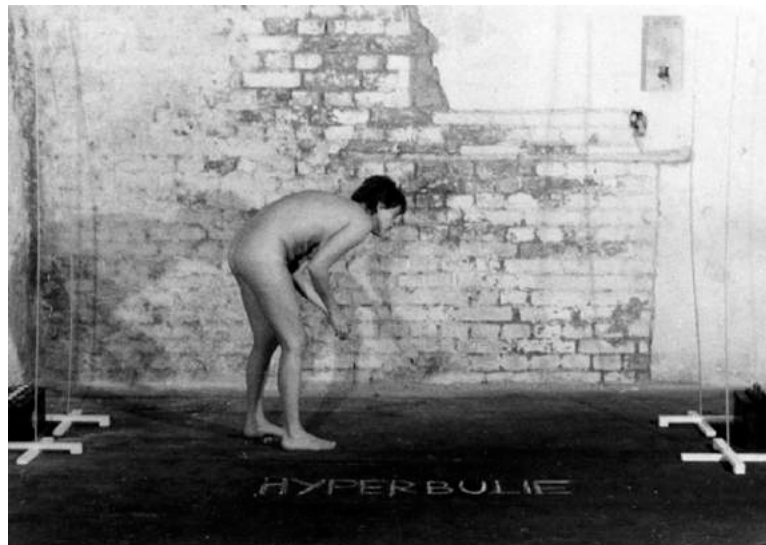


Plate 2.0. Stills from VALIE EXPORT, *Hyperbulie*, 1973, body-action filmed on video. 7 minutes, made in EXPORT's studio.



Plate 2.0a. Still from VALIE EXPORT, *Hyperbulie*, 1973.

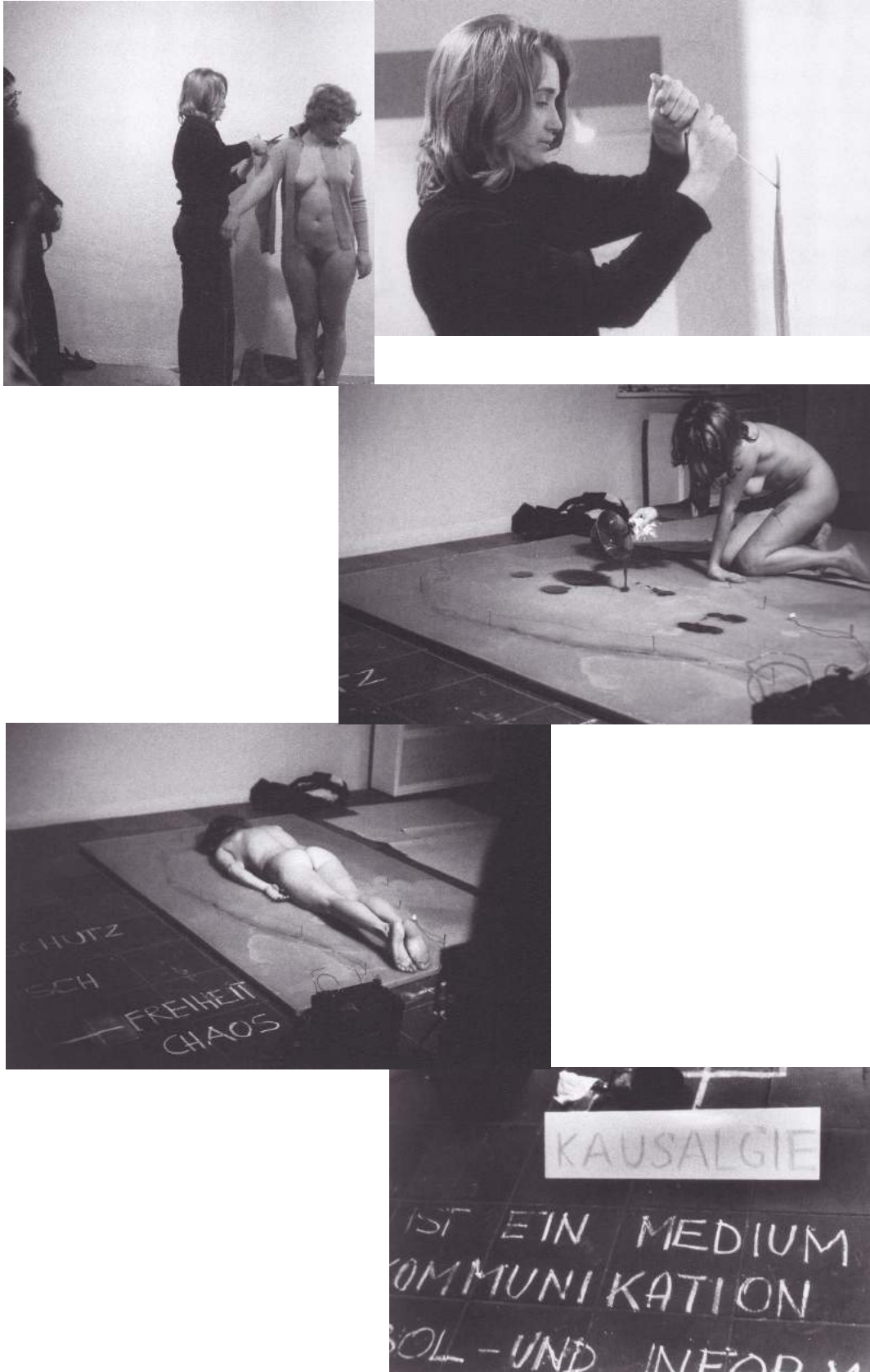


Plate 2.1. Documentation from: VALIE EXPORT, *Kausalgie*, 1973, body-action.

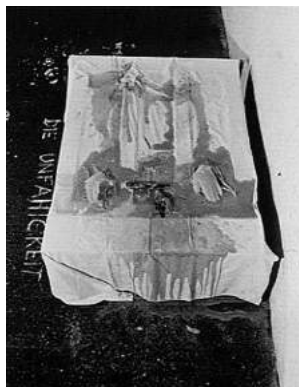


Plate 2.1a. Documentation from: VALIE EXPORT, *Asemie*, 1973, body-action.



Plate 3.0. Elfriede Jelinek in Hotel Sacher for photo-shoot for *Lust* in 1988.



Plate 3.0a. Elfriede Jelinek and Isabelle Huppert.





Plate 4.0. Documentation from VALIE EXPORT's and Peter Weibel's *Instant Film*, 1968.



Plate 4.1. VALIE EXPORT, *Aktionsbühne: Genitalpanik*, 1969 (photograph).



Plate 4.1a. EXPORT's Aktionshose (action pants) are shown in the above image; the poster which was pasted across Vienna is shown below.



Plate 4.1b. VALIE EXPORT, *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik*, 1969, (photograph).



Plate 4.2. Poster from *Unsichtbare Gegner*, 1976 (Invisible Adversaries).



**Unsichtbare Gegner**

Kollektion: Neue Filme  
 Drehbuch: Peter Wagner - Szenario und Idee: Peter Wagner  
 Regie: Peter Wagner - Kamera: Peter Wagner  
 Musik: Peter Wagner - Kostüme: Peter Wagner  
 Schnitt: Peter Wagner - Montage: Peter Wagner  
 Titelformat: Peter Wagner - Ton: Peter Wagner  
 Vertonung: Peter Wagner - Vertrieb: Peter Wagner

Regie: Peter Wagner - Drehbuch: Peter Wagner

Wahl: Top Filmqualität - Preis: der höchsten Auswertbarkeit

Das wichtigste Merkmal in Peter Wagner's Film, der in Form der Erzählung in einer fiktionalen Welt existiert, ist die Darstellung der menschlichen Existenz in der Welt. Die Handlung des Films ist eine sehr einfache, aber die Darstellung der menschlichen Existenz ist sehr komplex. Die Handlung des Films ist eine sehr einfache, aber die Darstellung der menschlichen Existenz ist sehr komplex. Die Handlung des Films ist eine sehr einfache, aber die Darstellung der menschlichen Existenz ist sehr komplex.

Plate 4.2a. Documentation of release materials from *Unsichtbare Gegner*, 1976.

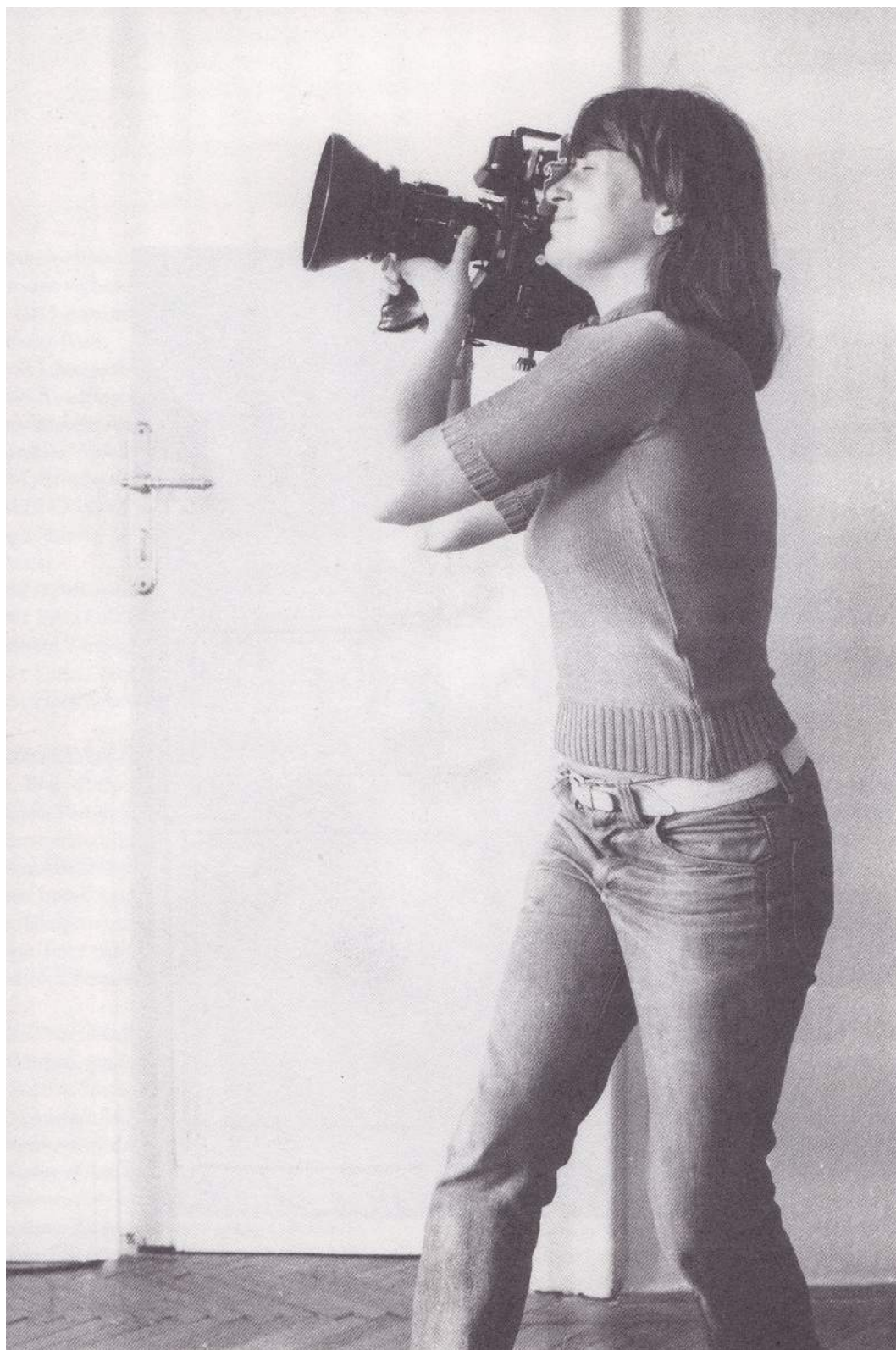


Plate 4.2b. VALIE EXPORT filming *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Plate 4.3. Stills from opening scenes of *Unschtbare Gegner*, 1976.





Plate 4.4. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Plate 4.5. Stills from *Unischtbare Gegner*, 1976.

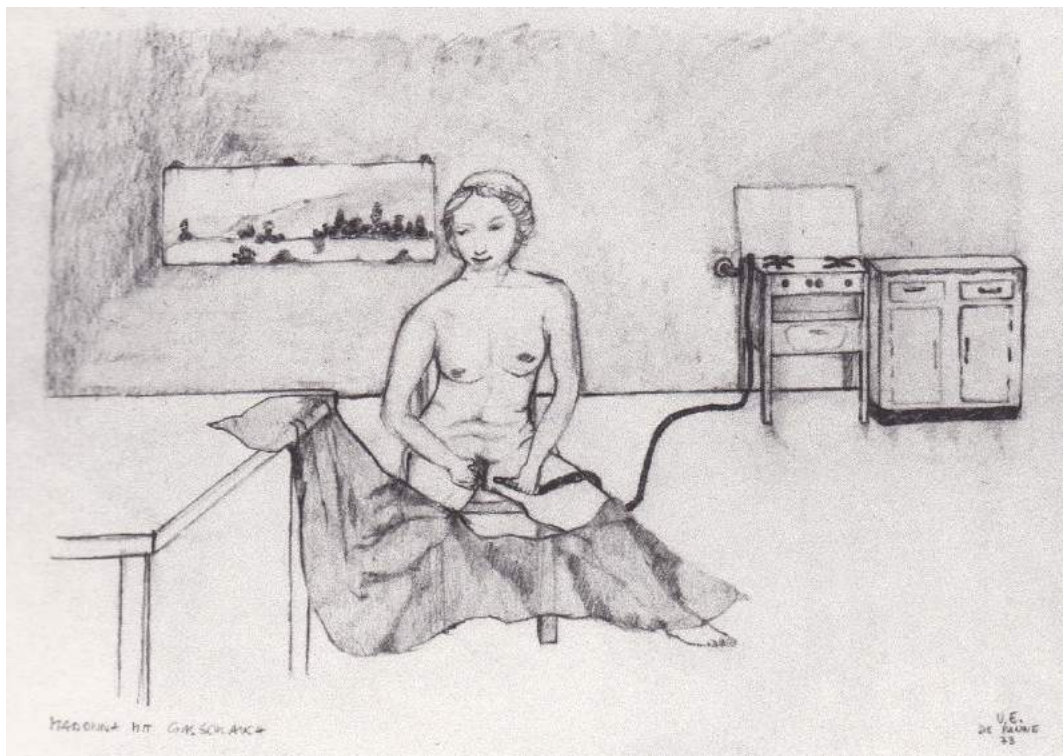


Plate 4.5a. VALIE EXPORT, *Madonna mit Gasschlauch*, 1973 (*Madonna with Gas Pipe*).



Plate 4.5b. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Plate 4.5c. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Plate 4.6. Stills from *Unichtbare Gegner*, 1976



Plate 4.7. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976. Burgtheater.

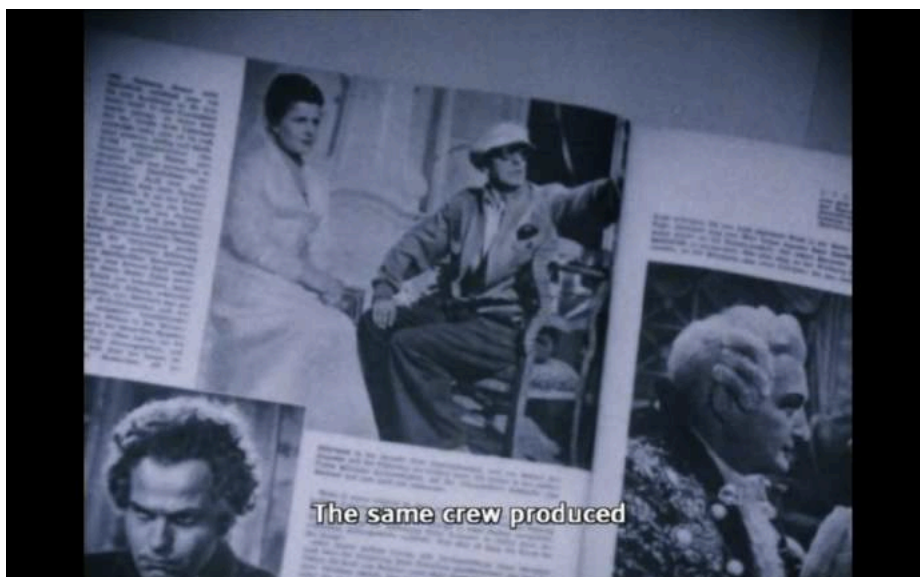


Plate 4.7a. Stills from *Unischbare Gegner*, 1976. Burgtheater.





Plate 4.7b. The opening night of Gustav Ucicky's *Heimkehr* in Vienna in 1942 (above); Paula Wessely in *Heimkehr*, as featured on Elfriede Jelinek's website (below).



Plate 4.8. Stills from *Unischtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Plate 4.9. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976, (When is a human being a woman?).

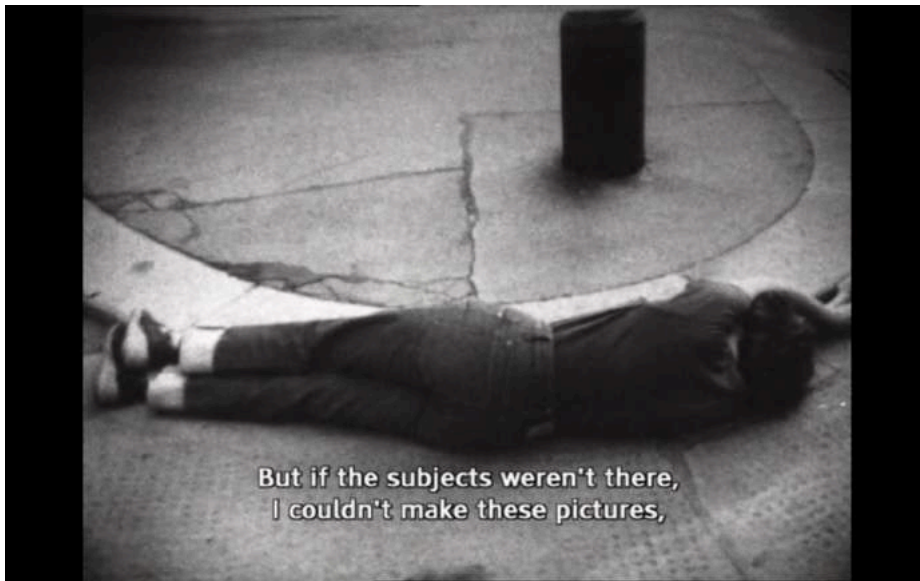


Plate 4.9a. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976, (Body Configurations).



Plate 4.9b Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976.



Behind people I see other beings,

Plate 4.10. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976, (psychiatrist).



Plate 4.10a. Stills from *Unisichtbare Gegner*, 1976, (psychiatrist).