

# **In Search of an ,Other‘ Theater with Elfriede Jelinek**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## CERTIFICATE

It is certified that the thesis entitled “**In Search of an ‘Other’ Theater with Elfriede Jelinek**” submitted by Arati Kumari, Center of German Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is her own work and has not been submitted in part or full for the award of any other degree or diploma of this university or any other university.

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## DECLARATION

I, Arati Kumari, do hereby declare that the thesis titled **“In Search of an ‘Other’ Theater with Elfriede Jelinek”** submitted by me at the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my own work. I completed the study under the supervision of Prof. Madhu Sahni, Center of German Studies, SLL & CS, JNU. The thesis or any part of it has not been submitted by me for any other degree or diploma to this or any other university or institution.

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**Dedicated to my lovely daughter**

*Aiyana*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

My postulate in the thesis, “In Search of an ‘Other’ Theater with Elfriede Jelinek” endeavors to demonstrate that Elfriede Jelinek’s ‘Other’ theater is not a definite ‘Other’, but a perpetual ‘Other’.

Theater is a live medium, it happens in real time, in real space, in the real presence of actors and spectators. Hence, a performance in theater does not repeat itself. However, in my view, Jelinek’s theater is about being constantly an ‘Other’. It is not anything ‘new’; it is ‘Other’ that is being explored here.

After the great success of her novel, *Die Klavierspielerin* in 1983 in the German speaking world, and the award of the Heinrich Böll Prize in 1986<sup>1</sup>, on which occasion Elfriede Jelinek wrote the text *In den Waldheimen und auf den Haidern*, she got established as a Marxist and feminist author and became one of the most widely read authors in Austria. In the year 2004, she got the Nobel Prize for her novel, *Die Klavierspielerin* (1983), which was adapted and made into a film, *La Pianiste* by Michael Haneke in 2001 and the same year the film won the ‘Grand Prix’ award at the Cannes Film Festival, and the film was internationally acclaimed. After receiving the Nobel Prize, Jelinek’s body of work, consisting of various novels, theater texts, and essays got acknowledged internationally, that didn’t just increase the readers as her works began to be translated into various languages; but simultaneously scholarly engagement with her work started increasing at an international level.

**1.1 An overview of Elfriede Jelinek’s theater writings:** Jelinek through her theater work continues the anti-theater tradition created by Bertolt Brecht and Heiner Müller, which rejects illusions and instead creates a distance between the audience and the actors. Dominant topics in her works are female sexuality, he brutality and power play inherent in human relations and the anti-Semitic present of Austria. Her earliest works criticize capitalism and consumerist society in the given patriarchal structure. In her dramas *Was geschah, nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte oder Stützen der*

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<sup>1</sup> Elfriede Jelinek has received a number of literary awards in German Speaking countries.

*Gesellschaft* (1979), *Clara S.* (1982) and *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (1984) Jelinek criticizes the patriarchal and capitalist society. Since the end of the 1980's she has attacked the fascist past and anti-Semitic present of Austria. *Burgtheater Posse mit Gesang* (1984) portrays the life of Paula Wessely, who acted in several fascist films during Nazi era. *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* (1986) is written in the genre of pornography and explores female sexuality. The theater text, *Wolken. Heim.* (1990) thematizes the discourse on nationalism, which montages the quotes taken from different sources in diachronic manner. *Totenauberg* (1991), which premiered in Vienna, dealt with the legacy of the Nazi era through the famous relationship of Martin Heidegger, who joined the Nazi party in 1933, and Hannah Arendt, his student, who was of Jewish origin. *Raststätte oder sie machens alle* (1994) is a comedy that thematises female sexuality. The theater piece *Stecken, Stab, and Stangl* (1995) uses an actual event, the murder of gypsies living in Austria, to address Austria's hostility to outsiders and amnesia about its past; figures on stage show up to speak their uncensored thoughts, thereby revealing Austria's nationalism and national consciousness. In *Ein Sportstück* (1998), Jelinek has associated sports with mass movements, war, and death. Later incidents like the Iraq war have become the focus of her theater texts as in *Bambiland* (2003) and *Babel* (2004). *Bambiland*, an attack on the war in Iraq, envisions a new Disney amusement, "wartainment," in which everyone must participate and this play is partly inspired by Aeschylus' *The Persians*, and the sequel, *Babel*, dealt with the Iraq war; in the latter its media reality is associated with porn. As a protest against inclusion of the right-wing Freedom party in the new government coalition, Jelinek had forbidden the performance of her dramas in Austria. The monologue *Das Lebewohl* (2000) is an amalgamation of Aeschylus's *Oresteia* and Jörg Haider's farewell protocol. *Macht Nichts. Eine kleine Trilogie des Todes* (2001) is about power, and she deals here with the "dead" and the "undead," in other words, with the cultural icons from the past that still have power over our present. In 2002, the second of Jelinek's "Alpine trilogy" *In den Alpen* also premiered in Zürich. With the last text of the trilogy *Das Werk* Jelinek returned to the Austrian stage, to the Viennese Akademietheater, where it was performed under the directorship of Nicolas Stemmann in 2003. This complex text thematises society's disastrous exploitation of nature as exemplified by the building of the two hydro dams in the mountain valleys near the small Alpine town of Kaprun. *Ulrike Maria Stuart* (2005) is a commentary to the history of RAF. *Über Tiere* which she wrote the same

year is a reaction on the sex scandal that got exposed by the release of a tapped conversation between the agents and the customers in the prostitution industry in Austria. *Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel)* (2008) bases itself on a historical fact and relates to an incident in which in 1945, close to the end of the War, in a place, called Rechnitz, on the Hungarian border, 180 Jews were murdered. In the backdrop of this story, Jelinek thematises the fascism in Austrian society. In 2009 Jelinek wrote *Die Kontakte des Kaufmanns* about the global financial crisis; in 2013 *Die Schutzbefohlenen* as a reaction to the rapidly escalating refugee crisis in Europe; the Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris in 2015 compelled her to write *Wut*. This was followed by *Auf dem Königsweg* in 2017 as a reaction to the US Presidential election that saw Donald Trump becoming the US president.

Yvonne Spielmann comments,

“Erfinderisch und ironisch nimmt sich Jelinek die Freiheit, thematische Einschränkungen ebenso wie literarische, dramatische und sprachliche Konventionen mit der Absicht aufzubrechen, gesellschaftliche wie künstlerische Limitationen zu verletzen.”<sup>2</sup>

Jelinek’s writing is about transgressing the boundaries, breaking the literary, dramatic and linguistic conventions, in order to as Spielmann says, violate social and cultural limitations. Jelinek has unconventional approach to literature and drama. Her deviation from norms is apparent not only in the themes, but even in the structure of her later theater texts, which, instead containing dialogues between two characters, consist of lengthy monologues, and at points her theater texts become completely ‘surfaces of language’ (Sprachflächen)<sup>3</sup>.

. Parallel to her plays, or as I prefer to call them, theater texts, she has been writing a number of theoretical texts, right from 1983 with *Ich möchte seicht sein* until today. She has speech on receiving awards (for example *Dankrede, Zum Mülheimer Theaterpreis*) that relates to theater practice, she writes about different theater personalities (for example, Brecht, Johann Nestroy, Einar Schleef, George Tabori, ),

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<sup>2</sup> Spielmann/Yvonne (1992): Ein unerhörtes Sprachlabor feministische Aspekte im Werk von Elfriede Jelinek. In: Bartsch, Kurt & Höfler, Günther A. (Hg.): *Elfriede Jelinek*. 2 Dossier. Literatur. Droschl, S. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Jürs – Munby, Karen (March 2009): *The Resistant Text in Postdramatic Theater: Performing Elfriede Jelinek’s ‘Sprachflächen’*, In: *Performance Research*, Volume 14, Issue 1, pp. 46 – 56, p. 46.

she also writes texts (for example, *Ich möchte seicht sein, Körper egal, Sinn zwecklos*) that are critical about theater practice and there is a suggestion on what could be done instead. Hence, although she is not producing a play like Bertold Brecht and Heiner Müller did; but through writing theater texts and theoretical texts, Jelinek is involved with theater praxis holistically.

## 1.2 Jelinek's Theater Aesthetics:

Jelinek declared in 1992,

“Even if no one believes me, I notice constantly that a woman's work is met with fundamental contempt. I do feel that, although I have been as successful as is possible for a woman. No man can comprehend that. Women are simply not thought capable of a major work! Smaller things, minor things, yes, even poetry. But not a major work! I also feel it in the reception of my work: there are these biologist diversions; people describe how one looks etc. I also find it in the theater: I have indeed written a number of plays, but I certainly cannot say that I have been successful in the theater.”<sup>4</sup>

There was a time when Jelinek complained that the established German directors and theater houses were not interested in her theater texts, now a few renowned directors are associated with Jelinek's theater texts. They have come up with outstanding theater pieces on stage while directing her works. According to Wolfgang Höbel, her theater texts like *Wolken. Heim* (1988), *Das Werk* (2003) and *Die Kontakte des Kaufmanns* (2009) “have fostered an associative style of directing that today shapes the craft of many important German-language theatres”<sup>5</sup>. In his views, some of the best German theater directors of present have become >>style defining artists<<<sup>6</sup> by producing Jelinek's plays for theater. Nicolas Stemann has produced 9 of Jelinek's theater texts. Some other directors, who have done great production of some of Jelinek's theater texts, are Karin Beier, Jossi Wieler and Johan Simons.

Jelinek's theater texts are open and create space for new experimentations in theater. At the same time by allowing directors to do whatever they would like to do with the text in their creative engagement with it, she makes the directors the co – authors for

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<sup>4</sup> Peter von Becker: Theater heute – Gespräch mit Elfriede Jelinek.” In: *Theater heute* 9/92, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Höbel, Wolfgang (Oct 29, 2016): Elfriede Jelinek's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, <https://thetheatretimes.com/elfriede-jelineks-70th-birthday/>.

<sup>6</sup> Höbel, Wolfgang (Oct 29, 2016): Elfriede Jelinek's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, <https://thetheatretimes.com/elfriede-jelineks-70th-birthday/>.

the production. The idea of conceiving of the theater director as a second author (>>der zweite Autor<<<sup>7</sup>) made the director Nicolas Stemmann feel that he could contribute a lot to her theater with music, improvisation, reflexion, dissent, irony, pathos, collage etc. (>>Mit Musik, mit Improvisationen, mit Reflexion, mit Einspruch und Zuspruch, mit Ironie, Pathos, mit Collage<<<sup>8</sup>). In response to a question, if he has developed a special Jelinek – method over the years, he says,

“Jedes Mal stehe ich aufs Neue ratlos vor der Aufgabe, diese Texte im Theater umzusetzen. Ich finde die Ratlosigkeit aber nicht unproduktiv. Man muss ja für jeden Text immer wieder eine geeignete theatralische Form finden.”<sup>9</sup>

**1.3 Theater Practice and Performance Theory:** In order to find a way to talk about the vast experiments in Jelinek’s theater texts and in their theatrical performance, I choose performance theory, which embraces openness and which is developed on the basic premise that performance is expanding and changing in definition and in usage. Jelinek’ theater texts do not consist of classical plot and characters that will make a fictional world; rather her theater texts contain materials from diverse fields of knowledge, literature, philosophy, politics, psychology, media, art etc. “Performance Studies” in the field of arts has taken the theories, strategies and terms related to performance from the social sciences. However, Marvin Carlson says,

“the application of social science methodologies to a wide range of human activities was by no means the only thing that characterized performance studies, nor was it necessarily the aspect of performance studies that most strikingly separated it from the field from which it took most care to distinguish itself—theatre studies. Another very important innovation of performance studies was its interest in a broad range, contemporary and historical, of quasi-theatrical performative activity that had, for the most part, been ignored by more conventional theatre scholars with their traditional interest in the literary text.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

<sup>8</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden» <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

<sup>9</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden» <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson, Marvin A. (1996): *Performance. A critical introduction*, Routledge.

According to Carlson, theater studies carries the interest in literary text but performance Studies does not carry the interest in the literary text. Rather theater by distancing itself from literary text became less and less representational and more performative. According to Erika Fischer – Lichte in fact theater became performance theater by completely disassociating itself from literature. Elfriede Jelinek, as a playwright and as a theoretician has consistently opposed the idea of representational theater through her work. Her theater texts because of being open, experimental and complex and because of the incorporation of materials from various disciplines become a part of performance studies.

The concept of performance has been used widely in various fields, from sociology, to linguistic, to science, to art and theater. This concept finds its usage in practically all the domains of knowledge today. When Judith Butler talks about the gender, she sees it getting constituted through certain performance. Austin in his Speech Act Theory, also challenges the conventional linguistic theories and approaches, and develops the Speech Act theory, which bases itself on the ‘action’ or in other words, we can say, on the concept of performance. Erika Fischer – Lichte in her work “Ästhetik des Performativen” argues that the existing theories in the field of art, are not relevant when it comes to engaging with the new kind of art practices which defy the old way of doing things, and realize art (theater, painting, action art etc.) differently.

#### **1.4 Chapter Divisions:**

Since the basic premise of this research work is that Jelinek’s theater proposes to do away with the classical theater aesthetics in favor of the performance aesthetics, and as Erika Fischer – Lichte says, by and large, theater in general (in the West) has come out of the classical theatrical practices and moved towards the performance, in the first chapter, “Understanding Performance, its Aesthetics and its Properties of Emergence” I aim to explore the concept of performance through J. L. Austin’s ‘Speech Act Theory’, Judith Butler’s ‘Performative Act: Gender Constitution’ theory, Marvin Carlson’s critical engagement with performance, and Erika Fischer Lichte’s theory of performance. In the context of Jelinek’s theater, in my view, it is important to not only explore the term ‘performance’ in ‘Performance Studies’, but also in linguistic and in the field of Gender Studies. Not only the definition of theater in

performance art, but also in other two fields mentioned above, correspond to the idea of 'Other' theater, conceived by Jelinek. Whereas engaging with Austin's theory is important to understand performance as a term, because he coins the term 'performative' to talk about the properties of language that connects it to performance; Butler resorts to the performance theory to claim that gender identity is constituted through performative act. As I mentioned above, Jelinek's theater dives into various fields of knowledge to create a text for a theatrical production, which in fact makes her theater a discourse theater and corresponds to the thought system that I will engage with in the second chapter. Besides, Jelinek makes a very specific use of language, in fact, in her latest theater texts, she needs absolutely no plot, no figures to make her text a piece of theatrical production. It is the performance of language that we see in her later theater works more manifestly. Though in linguistics and in Gender Studies, performance do not seem to be carrying any ambiguity, or any fluidity, however in the field of performance theater, performance is dealt with in the context of the development of the term in various fields of knowledge, Marvin Carlson engages with it critically in the context of theater. Erika Fischer – Lichte deals with various theories in a broad range and she also defines the terms like 'performative' 'performativity' and 'performance' more precisely, in the process of developing aesthetics of performative. To develop her performance of aesthetics Fischer – Lichte substantiates it with various practices in performance art and Performance Theater.

Moreover, I explore through various performance theories, the concept of performance. As we narrow down the concept of performance in the field of theater, Erika Fischer – Lichte's theory on the aesthetics of performative gives a fair idea about the aesthetics that are distinctly other in theater performance in the West today than the aesthetics of representative theater. In my hypothesis I say that it is not a definite 'Other' that I aim to discover in my engagement with Elfriede Jelinek's theater, rather it is to be understood as exploration of an 'Other' constantly. Hence, it has an emerging quality, and it also finds resonance in Fischer – Lichte's performance theory, where she says a performance work makes a >>feedback loop<< with the audience and that has a quality of emergence because what this interaction will bring out is not assessable. According to Fischer – Lichte, the loop situates itself in the autopoietic system, which has an autonomous structure and creative path. This takes

me to the inventors of the term ‘autopoiesis’ Humberto R. Maurana and Francisco J. Valera. I find ‘autopoiesis’ an important concept because of its autonomous system and its creative path and explore the concept further in their work “Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living” in the context of society and ethics. Besides in this chapter, I also feel that performance as a concept can be further expanded to the field of chaos theory and complexity science. These theories dive into aspects and complexities and multiplicities and throw light on the law that governs the system, which is also important for Elfriede Jelinek’s theater texts.

In my second chapter, “Elfriede Jelinek’s Theater Texts – Theater writing as a Performative Act” I try to understand at one go, why she writes, what she writes, how she writes. She may be breaking all the conventions of literary drama, still she writes a text for theater production, which falls in the category of literature. Yet Jelinek distances herself from that literature which is representational in nature. Her body of work pierces through the densely woven net of the contemporary social life; cuts through the fabric of our built up consciousness, and presents it in front of us into parts and asks us to deal with them at the same time as we view them. Through her plays, she intends to change the atmosphere of theater that evokes a kind of aura which touches the sensory organs of the viewers. In my opinion, her theater aims to touch the ‘mind’ of the audience and wants to orient them towards ‘knowledge’. So it connects to the thought system, which according to David Bohm, regulates the world, world is in fact the outcome of the thought system. Hence to make any change in the world, one must make change in the thought system and that would be possible if one comes out of the conditioned thought that decides our action, and get into the process of thinking.

David Bohm’ theory of ‘Thought System’ explains how everything that the world is, and has, is a product of the thought system in any society, thereby the ‘abstractedness’ that we attach with Elfriede Jelinek’s work, gets dismantled. Various ideas and associations that she draws from the thought system that governs the world, actually refers to very concrete and real nature of outcome of that thought system. She counters that thought system by taking things into bits and pieces and bringing them in contact with each other through her own weaving craft and through that she creates a textuality that must interact with the reader at the subconscious level so that the

reader comes out of the habit of conditioned reflexive thought mode, and gets into the process of thinking. I explore it in the context of David Bohm's theory, who finds in his work, the world governed by 'conditioned thought' dangerous.

Jelinek in her use of the various existing materials around a theme makes those materials perceivable. Her theater texts should interact with the subconscious mind of the reader and evoke his/her latent knowledge, experiences and feelings and thereby make the reader an active participant while he/she is reading her texts. Jelinek's theater texts, as part of Discourse Theater, aim to put the readers in the process of thinking. The world being governed by thought means, being governed by discourses, which are controlled by institutions. The open nature of her theater texts are intended to free the discourse from the control. By taking into account Michael Foucault's ("Die Ordnung des Diskurses") theory on discourse who discusses the evolution of discourse and Wolfgang Iser's "Die Wirklichkeit des Diskurses", where while discussing the present reality of discourse, he argues that a discourse community must have multiple voices in order to be free from the control of institutional discourse.

Jelinek uses multiple resources, through montage and collage she creates an intertextuality and thereby she challenges the art of book writing in classical style, which was representational, and it was complete in itself. Deleuze and Guattari in their rhizome theory, state that rhizome is natural, it is non – hierarchical, it is not a closed or a complete state of a thing, rather has an open ending. It does not grow in root form, but has a lateral growth and it takes a work out of subject status and puts in the status of object, from where it can grow in multiplicity the way it happens in nature. Deleuze and Guattari do not go deeper in their development of rhizome theory, but look at a work externally, and stay at the exteriority of a work, as I am doing with Jelinek's theater writing. In my opinion, staying on the exteriority of a work, and working from outside and stitching the materials together externally by not hiding the different lines, Jelinek has a rhizomatic way of working. But making rhizome means allowing a work to grow in multiplicity from everywhere. So a text proliferates, like the data in the field of computer science. To tap that data which is continuously growing manifold, computer science proposes concept drift, which asks one to interact with data, and adapt to the knowledge at every step. The next chapter where I am engaging with two theater texts by Jelinek, I am going to interact with the

text from my reservoir of thoughts, and at every step, with the kind of ideas, association, discourse that I interact with in my reading of the text, I am going to adapt accordingly. I have titled my third chapter “Reading as a Performative Act: Reading *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *ÜberTiere* through the Discourse on Pornography”.

Against the backdrop of legalization of the pornography in Germany in 1980s, I interact with the two theater texts by Jelinek. With the legalization, the pornography came into the mainstream of the society, and it started influencing the discourse on sexuality and gender as well. Jelinek wrote *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* in 1986 in the genre of pornography. I aim to analyse if this text can be read as an intervention in how the mainstream study of the pornography interprets, criticises and evaluates the sexuality (*das Wesen der Geschlechter*) from the male perspective? To understand the mainstream pornography it is important in my view to engage with the norms of the pornography and the concept of desire that is in the centre of pornography. To explore the female pornography in the text, I take into account the scientific debates around female sexuality.

Whereas in the 1980s the pornography gets legalized, in the 1990s it emerges as a big industry. This leads to the normalization of pornography in society and the aesthetic of pornography has an impact on media, fashion and entertainment industry as well. Brian McNair talks about normalization of pornography in society and pornographication of society in his work, “Mediated Sex: Pornography and post-modern culture” and “Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratization of Desire”. Meagan Tyler through her research in the context of Australia gives examples of how pornography has infiltrated in the art, culture and life style on daily basis and this aesthetics leads women in particular towards objectification. In my reading of *Über Tiere* the first interacting point for me are the images inserted in the text, one in the beginning, one in the middle and one in the end. These images are from Paul McCarthy’s art installation, “The Mechanical Pig”, which is a criticism of ‘Americanness’. This art installation, where McCarthy uses the technology to make pig look real, brings in sculpture a performance like quality. Though this aspect is not relevant for my study, however, the response of the female pig as the visitors come close to it, within its sensory field, makes me ponder on the mechanical response of

the pig in the context of a woman's response in a pornographic act. This also brings me to the question of feminization of animal in this art piece, as the pig is female, looks fragile, and beautiful. In the next image that appears in the middle of the text, there are some pirates in an isolated island copulating with pigs. Whereas the first image reflects on the feminization of an animal, the second image reflects on the animalization of men. On one hand there is element of objectification of woman sexuality visible in the response of the female pig; on the other hand the relationship between pigs and men pose the question on the idea of human nature and animal nature. In my view *Über Tiere* thematizes these two aspects, which I explore while bringing in the debate on the association between woman, object and animal. Against this background I read the first part of the text, which is a monolog, and where I see the woman, delivering the monologue, trying to engage herself while speaking, trying to gain the status of subject. The woman's voice keeps on asserting itself through the next part, which is dominated by a highly consumerist society that makes woman more an object of consumption and the pornography industry which in its language itself shows how woman is treated as object in the society. In interacting with the theater text, *Über Tiere*, which is set in the atmosphere of the complete commodification of the body, which does away with the human aspect of living, the text keeps on trying to revive the discourse on love, through the singular voice of "I" in the madness of the market place. Broadly I divide the chapter in three parts: 1. The Genealogy of the Debates around Pornography; 2. An Engagement with the theater text, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, 3. An Engagement with the theatre text, *Über Tiere*. I begin writing this chapter with the broad assumption and while interacting with both the texts, I use the drift technique, by that I mean, I have chosen the adaptive learning, which has allowed me to flow from one topic to another and I see it as an interaction with the text and in that sense as a performative reading.

The fourth chapter, "Elfriede Jelinek on Theater Practice: Reading *Ich möchte seicht sein* (1983), *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos* (1997), *Theatergraben* (2005) and *Es ist Sprechen und aus* (2013)" includes reading of four of Jelinek's theoretical texts emerging from different time periods, from 1983 to 2013. This chapter is to build up further on the concept of performance that is evolving through the chapters; firstly, in the context of various theories in the first chapter, secondly through the emergence of her theater texts out of her writing as a performative act and thirdly through the

reading of text as a performative act. For me, as I mentioned above, Jelinek's writing act, and my reading act merges at certain level with aesthetics of performative. In the theoretical texts by Jelinek her thoughts of theater emerge. I read *Ich möchte seicht sein* rejection of representational aesthetics in theater, by urging actors to not 'to play' (spielen) in theater. 'Spielen' could also mean 'to act', but I read it as 'to play' because in my view she means it that way in her criticism of the bourgeoisie theater. Schiller's theory which revolves around 'Play Instinct' that is fundamental to the aesthetics of the bourgeoisie theater, is opposed by Jelinek, who rather would like people to be shallow in theater that way not the actor's acting but her work will show in a theatrical performance. The shallowness can come if one can borrow from the aesthetics of fashion show. Fashion show is theatrical; in fact it borrows from the aesthetics of theater; however the performance is devoted to bring into highlight a piece of clothing. The basic idea of theater that she talks about in *Ich möchte seicht sein*, gets carried on in her next text *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, which she wrote a decade later. In the second text that I have taken to read, also criticizes the role of actor in theater and rejects meaning (Sinn) as well as body (Körper) in theater. She proposes actor to be like 'filter', through which her work can reach to the audience without any thing getting lost in the process of the theatrical production of the text. Jelinek states her texts are not 'meaning'/'sense' (Sinn) but sense of something (Sinn von etwas), which can get diluted if the actor tries to wear it. In my view, through this text Jelinek is asking the actors to allow the text to reach to spectators for sense making, which according to Michael W. Kramer is a collective effort to come to one interpretation out of several interpretations. Jelinek as a theater writer is pluralistic, as she has magnitude of materials from diverse sources, which she puts within the fold of a text, using her own craft, however without giving the text any depth, hence everything is on surface. She does not want actor to bring his body in to give a meaning or a sense to the text; that must be left to the spectators to do it for their own sake. So, while reading the second text, I draw from it her idea about the role an actor should play in theater and I use Kramer's theory of Sensemaking to argue that Jelinek's is in search of an aesthetics that will create a collective moment in theater to find one interpretation about something out of various interpretations. The exploration of an 'Other' aesthetics continues in the next text, *Theatergraben* which she wrote almost a decade later, where Jelinek proposes the 'theater of aloofness' (Theater der Zurückhaltung). The theory of aloofness, according to Stan Godlovitch is acentric,

asks one to stand and try to understand something from a ground from where that person does not matter. In my view, when Jelinek is proposing the theater of aloofness, she is asking one to develop acentric view while dealing with her theater texts. This is the way nature works and which gets accentuated in Jelinek's last text discussed here, *Es ist Sprechen und aus*. In this theoretical text, Jelinek says that in her theater texts she does not choose between important and unimportant ones, which is very much like how nature works. Nature does not discriminate against anything and lets everything fall together. She would like theater to bring nature like order in the randomness of her writing, when they are being produced for performance. Theater with the kind of structured order that it has, however stands in the contrast of the order in nature. In my view she is asking for an order in theater in the place of any structure and I explore it in this part.

In my fifth chapter, "Analysing the Stage Performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere*", I analyse the two productions and take into account the kind of aesthetics that emerge out of the performances. Ottinger's *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* has a deaf actress reading the text to the audience; whereby according to Ottinger, she engages with the texture of the theater text; which makes it important here to understand the concept of textuality and also the theory of sign language and the aspect of materiality in it. Nicolas Stemann's production of *Über Tiere* is a complex stage presentation of the text. I draw certain features out of his complex presentation, like role play, cross dressing, and explore its use in the performance in order to see how they go with the text. He also restructures the text and thereby enters into a dialogue with it. Both the texts in fact are produced for the theater while taking into account the complexity of the texts and deliver them by relating to them autonomously.



## Chapter 2

### Understanding Performance, its Aesthetics and its Properties of Emergence

The term ‘performance’ is used across the fields; from sociology to literature, from science to the business, and lately it has become the pre-dominant character of the various art fields; theatre, dance, opera, art installations, action arts, to name a few. What is this umbrella concept, ‘performance’ that encompasses various experiments, done in different art fields, which are not ‘representational’, but ‘performative’ in character, as termed by Erika Fischer – Lichte in her work “Ästhetik des Performativen”? Can we infer by the widely and loosely usage of this terminology, ‘performance’ that it is a pluralistic, diverse and open concept? Can we infer from the amount of experiments in the field of art, that the performance character actually allows the different kinds of experiments in the art field today? How to find a linking thread which goes through all these varied experiments that are marked as ‘Performance’? How to theoretise the performance in the context of art field and to offer a structure for it? Or is it possible to talk about it without structuring it? Over the years there has been a remarkable shift in the art field (which includes theater, literature, painting, and action) from the representational character to the performance character, and Fischer – Lichte localizes this performative turn (performative Wende) in the art field in the same period, as John L. Austin coined the concept ‘Performative’ (in 1955).

In the second half of the 18th Century the actors in theater should not produce new, their own meaning in their performance, but should bring into expression the meaning invented by the author and laid down in the text. The actor was supposed to bring into expression the feeling, the mental state, the thought process etc of a dramatic figure at and with his body. This kind of theater attempted to abolish the tension between the phenomenal body of the actor and his presentation of a role figure in favor of the representation. However in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the development of a new kind of theater, the reflexion on the material character of the human body came in the focus. Whereas in 18<sup>th</sup> century theatre, the material character of the body was

seen as a hindrance in delivering the meanings as given in the text, the theatre practitioners like Meyerhold rather thought of making theatre out of the materiality of the actor's body. But now also as before in the 18th Century the case was, the body was treated as a controlled material which could be used as per the demand of the performance. In the place of the text, the materiality of the body was put into appearance now. In the 1960s-70s, the scenario changed as now the body was not considered as a completely controllable material. At this point of time, according to Erika Fischer – Lichte, the theater recognized the two states of the body: 'Being-Body' and 'Having – Body'. 'Being - Body' orients itself to the phenomenal aspect of the body and 'Having - Body' to the semiotic aspect of the body. The theater as before and as always continued keeping the actor's body in the centre, but in the use of the body, it did not go on the "Having – Body" aspect of the body but on the corporeal (leiblich) "Being – in – the – World" aspect of the body of the actor/performer. This brought the complete shift in how the actor's body was approached. In the 1960s there was a radical change in the way the performative space was viewed and now one could witness a major exodus of performances out of theater buildings. The new theater spaces were looked for in erstwhile factories, slaughter houses, bunkers, tram depots, market halls, shopping centers, sport stadiums, in the streets, in subway, public parks, auto workshops, graveyard etc. Predominantly the spaces were chosen which were not conceived as performance spaces. In most of the cases such spaces were chosen which allowed a permanent redefinition of this relationship between the actors and the spectators. Hence, theater does not happen in the theater space; it happens where the actors and the spectators come together and build up a relationship.

According to Marvin A. Carlson, in his work "Performance: A Critical Introduction", in his engagement with late 20<sup>th</sup> century performance theory and practice, he finds 'performance' an elusive term, which has a perpetually expanding usage and definition and therefore it qualifies to be used as umbrella concept for various experiments happening in various art fields. Since the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, until now a large body of work has emerged with this changing character and the need has been felt, to find a language to talk about the aesthetics of the performance in various art fields. The art, if it carries the representation character, works under different aesthetic conditions and follows different aesthetics norms. Elfriede Jelinek

contributes to the new aesthetic conditions and aesthetic norms through her theater texts (plays) and her texts on the theater (theory on the theater practice). This chapter with the help of Fischer – Lichte’s work, “Ästhetik des Performativen” explores the aesthetics norms in the theatre today in the West and in the process also involves other theories, to argue, evolve and strengthen the debate in this area further.

This chapter is divided into 3 parts: “Performance as Concept in the existing theoretical debates”; “Erika Fischer – Lichte’s “Ästhetik des Performativen” and “Possibilities of widening the aesthetics theory of performance”.

**2.1 Performance as Concept in the existing theoretical debates:** Because of the ambiguity in the term ‘performance’, its expanding usage and changing definition, as Marvin Carlson states in “Performance. A critical introduction”, it is important to bring into discussion the theoretical engagement around the term ‘performance’. Besides, as Erika Fischer – Lichte argues in “Ästhetik des Performativen” that there is a tendency in general, and also in the academic field, of using the two terms, ‘Performative’ and ‘Performance’ alternatively, hence, it is important to do a precise reading of these terms to get some clarity on their definitions. Even if these terms are fluid, and may go beyond the fixed definitions. Performance encompasses various fields, from art to literature to social sciences. But for my study, particularly important is understanding performance, and other terminologies related to this term in the context of theater, language and gender, as according to me, these are important aspects of Jelinek’s theater. In this section, I will explore the concept of performance in the contexts of J. L. Austin’s ‘Speech Act Theory’, Judith Butler’s ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution’ Marvin Carlson’s critical engagement with ‘performance’, and in the context of Erika Fischer – Lichte’s performance theory.

**2.1.1 Performance in J. L. Austin’s ‘Speech Act Theory’:** Before Austin, for a long time, the domain of the language philosophy was pure science, which focused on the verifiability of the statements, i.e. in stating them as true or false. The focus was on the constative utterance, which aimed to look for the ideal statement, which is valid in all circumstances, for all purposes and to any audience. J. L. Austin’s position is just opposite to that. In the place of universality, he speaks about particular situation, in the place of universal validity, he situates the language in particular context and thereby he coins the term ‘performative’ which also resonates

with Jelinek's kind of theater writing. Austin's "Speech Act Theory", bases itself on speech, i.e. it must be spoken. The theater texts by Elfriede Jelinek qualify to be the theater texts, because, according to Jelinek, they must be spoken. Austin shifts the focus on that aspect of the language which is not representative, but performative. Here it is important to go through his "Speech Act Theory" to understand the aspect of performance, or the language imbuing the quality of being performative.

Broadly Austin divided and analysed the Speech Acts in three categories: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act, where he describes the three acts as such, "He said" is locutionary, "He argued" is illocutionary and "He convinced" is perlocutionary. According to Austin, performing a locutionary act is equivalent to uttering a sentence with a certain sense and reference and can be understood as "meaning" in the traditional sense. Informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, etc are the utterances which have certain conventional force and Austin names it illocutionary acts. Then there are the acts where an effect is brought by saying something. This is called perlocutionary act. Though Austin does not see one act as a consequence of the other act, but he argues that there is a connection between the three acts.

Austin says,

"Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution."<sup>11</sup>

The locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts don't emerge from each other, but they are all necessary aspects of the speech act theory. The 3 acts must be included in a speech act situation for it to function successfully.

Austin's theory revolves around utterances, whereas he asserts that the linguistic expressions are not only a medium to describe the facts or to claim a fact as has been the case in the pure science; but with a linguistic expression an action can also be executed. It is the whole speech situation that needs to be taken into the consideration as one speaks. Opinion, context, purpose and knowledge are the aspects to be taken into account as one engages oneself with a particular utterance. The Speech Act

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<sup>11</sup> Austin, J. L.: "How to do Things with Words. The William James Lecture delivered in Harvard University in 1955", Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1962, P. 116.

theory deals with the language, the context, the knowledge that together make part of the situation of the utterance and hence it is not only a pure linguistic engagement, which strives for a universal truthfulness of one statement. Rather the speech act theory is about localizing the language through the utterance, which involves somebody, who has certain knowledge about the things, and who makes the utterance in certain context. Hence it is very local, time and space specific and situational aspect of the speech. By choosing to use the word, 'utterance', Austin indicates also at the physical aspect of the language, as it requires someone to utter it, and hence one speech act becomes "physical action". Judith Butler, who finds performative at the core of her debate on the emergence of gender identity, sees it in the physical plane, i.e. body.

**2.1.2 Performance in Judith Butler's 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution':** In 1988 Judith Butler wrote the essay "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", in which she has argued that the gender identity is constituted through the performative acts, which are based on the >>phenomenal conditions of the embodiment<<. In this section I aim to identify the components, which according to Butler, reflect on gender being performative.

According to Butler,

"...gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time- an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts"<sup>12</sup>.

Butler says that there is not somebody who does the acts, but the acts, themselves, through their stylized repetitions constitute the gender identity. According to Butler, the stylization of the acts leads to stylization of the body and hence the gender is instituted. The instituted gender projects >>an abiding gendered self<< through "bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds"<sup>13</sup> and this indicates at the performative nature of the gender identity. Butler is of the view that the gender is created through corporeal acts and the acts that constitute the gender >>bear

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<sup>12</sup> Butler, Judith: *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, In: *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, Dec., The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, pp. 519-531, p. 519.

<sup>13</sup> Butler p. 519.

similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts<sup>14</sup>. So, whereas when Austin uses the term ‘performative’, he seems to bring the language out of the representation character; in Butler’s context, when she mentions the constitution of the gender identity through performative acts within the theatrical context; then it means that the acts are actually representation. This can be understood as acting in the representational theater.

In the context of Austin, the performance happens because of the materiality of a language, which becomes an utterance that is used by a speaker in a circumstance and that persuades one to act. According to him, even if some utterances do not directly prompt any action, and plays the part of informing one, however that information can play a role while one is taking action. So, according to him, an utterance is always performative. However, gender is a fictitious identity; it is delivered by acting upon some unseen fixed script, though it is not at hand.

While referring to Merleau – Ponty, who wrote in “The Body in its sexual Being” that the body is a historical idea, and >not a natural species<sup>15</sup>, which can be continuously realized as it is also a set of possibilities, Butler, comments that “these possibilities are necessarily constrained by available historical conventions”<sup>16</sup>. Because, according to Butler, gender is not >>factic materiality<< but >>a materiality that bears meaning<< and she finds the manner in which this bearing takes place is fundamentally dramatic or in other words theatrical.

Butler finds,

“The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again.”<sup>17</sup>

Butler makes one major shift in the feminist theory by moving gender from >a >>substantial model of identity<<<sup>18</sup> to an identity which is >>a constituted social

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<sup>14</sup> Butler p. 520.

<sup>15</sup> Butler, p. 520.

<sup>16</sup> Butler p. 520.

<sup>17</sup> Butler, p. 526.

<sup>18</sup> Butler p. 520.

temporality<<<sup>19</sup>. According to Butler, there is no pre-existing identity to measure an act, that makes one one's gender, and hence the idea of a true gender identity is actually a work of regulatory fiction. Marvin Carlson in his engagement with the term performance, argues in the line of Butler that,

“The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as “performance”...”<sup>20</sup>

Carlson explains further that all the human activities are carried out with a consciousness of itself. He distinguishes doing from performing by arguing that we may do actions without thinking, but when thinking is attached to doing, and then the action acquires the quality of performance. For Carlson, all the human activities are performance, because socially sanction modes of behavior demands that one must think before one does something. This is how Butler explains the constitution of gender identity. He names performance a conscious act, Butler names gender constitution performative act. In the section below I try to understand Carlson's perspective on the term 'performance'.

### **2.1.3 Marvin Carlson's critical engagement with the term 'performance':**

Marvin Carlson, in his theoretical work, “Performance: A critical introduction”, while acknowledging the popularity of term 'performance' in various fields of art, literature, social sciences through various activities, also mentions that this popularity has led to various theoretical works about performance in different fields. Carlson proposes three concepts of performance, one involves skill, second involves the display of culturally coded pattern of behavior and third kind of performance does not emphasize skill or behavior but the general success of an activity according to some given standard of achievement.

According to him, terms like 'performing' and 'performance' are used in varied contexts, but in 1990s the specific categories like “Performance Art”, “Performance Theater” emerged. While defining performance in the context of art, Carlson says that performance art bases itself upon the “physical presence of trained or skilled

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<sup>19</sup> Butler p. 520.

<sup>20</sup> Carlson, Marvin: *Performance. A critical introduction*, Routledge, 1996, p. 4.

human beings whose demonstration of their skills is the performance.”<sup>21</sup> Since performance bases itself on the articulation of body or self, Carlson states that individual body is in the centre of an art performance.

In his view, performance is more closely connected to post-structuralism and postmodernism than to structuralism and high modernism. It is a paradoxical term, which on one hand would like to reinforce and dismantle both the stable system of meanings and representation. In his engagement with ‘performance’, Carlson does not really distinguish performativity and performance, which Erika Fischer – Lichte attempts to explain in her work “Ästhetik des Performativen”. Fischer – Lichte says that the terms like performativity, performative and performance are sometimes used interchangeably, however, they have different connotations and there is a need to bring more clarity about these concepts. Fischer – Lichte sees the clear line amongst the concepts of performative, performativity and performance and argues that they are not interchangeable concepts.

**2.1.4 Erika Fischer – Lichte and the concepts of performativity, performance and performative:** Whereas J. L. Austin coined the term ‘performative’ to talk about the performance aspect of the language in 1950s; Judith Butler talked about it in 1990s, which along with other theoreticians, engaging with the concept of performance, is a theme of discussion in Erika Fischer – Lichte’s exploration of the aesthetics of the performative. It was possible for me to bring Austin’s theory and Butler’s theory, within Fischer – Lichte’s discussion on the concept of performative; however, I have undertaken here above the detailed and independent engagement with Austin’s and Butler’s theories, because in my view, the performance of language and gender has particular significance in Elfriede Jelinek’s theater aesthetics. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Erika Fischer – Lichte brings into discussion the various performance theories undergoing in different fields of knowledge in different era, together. Fischer – Lichte takes account of all those debates in her work and contributes in bringing more clarity to the concepts of performativity, performative as well as performance, which have been very ambiguous concepts in the earlier discussions on the topic. This section is divided into two parts: first part will deal with how Fischer – Lichte is

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<sup>21</sup> Carlson, p. 3.

distinguishing and conceptualizing ‘performativity’ ‘performative’ and ‘performance’; the second part will focus on the evolution of the concept of performance in different disciplines in different periods of time.

According to Fischer – Lichte,

“Performativität führt zu Aufführungen bzw. manifestiert und realisiert sich im Aufführungcharakter performativer Handlungen – so wie die einleitend festgestellten Performativierungsschübe in den Künsten diese dahin tendieren lassen, sich in und als Aufführungen zu realisieren, bzw. in neuen Kunstformen resultieren wie der >>Performance Art<< und der >>Aktionskunst<<, deren Bezeichnungen bereits auf ihren Handlungs- und Aufführungscharakter unmißverständlich hinweisen.”<sup>22</sup>

Going by Fischer – Lichte’s line of argument, we can derive this conclusion, that first of all there is the concept of the performativity which leads to the performance. According to Fischer - Lichte, performativity realizes itself in the performance character of the performative acts. She gives the example of the art field, where the initially determined performativity push in the art lets the performative actions be inclined to realize themselves in and as performance. So what we see is actually performance, but the performance entails in itself performativity push and the performative acts. The performativity can be understood as the potentiality of something that can be manifested, however, it requires some performative acts for the manifestation and what is realized has a performance character which has the potential to result in new art forms. Hence the performance is an open and fluid concept for the materialization of many possibilities. The open character of performance has been recognized by Butler and Austin. Fischer – Lichte says though they don’t delve in the concept of the performance, but to both of them the performance seems to be the epitome of the Performative as well. It can be concluded here that performance is the manifested part and hence it takes the centre stage in the discussion in the field of performance theory, however, it can’t be loosely used, and while talking about the performance, one needs to take into account the concepts of the performativity and the performative as well, which are not the same as performance, and which are essential for a performance to take place.

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<sup>22</sup> Fischer – Lichte, Erika: *Asthetik des Performativen*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2004, p. 41.

If we take into account Austin's Speech Act theory, we can derive the conclusion that all the speeches are performative in nature, as he relates language to utterance which is a performance in itself, and which also has a performance character, i.e. it is an action and it is also seeking for further 'action'. The gender identity and other identities, like ethnic, cultural etc. too, are also created through performance. These identities are created through the performance of the body as body is recognized as a site of possibilities because it contains materiality. So whereas Austin says that, it is not necessary that the performance means physical performance in the field of language philosophy; in the context of social identities, particularly, the gender identity, Butler argues, the gender is the outcome of physical performance. Through the repeated performance of acts the gender identity is created. Carlson defines performance as reflexive and conscious articulation of body through the performance. Fischer – Lichte in her engagement with various theories of performance, makes distinction between the terms of performativity, performance and performative. According to her a performance cannot happen if already performativity is not there. It is performativity that realizes itself in a performance and for a performativity to realize into performance, performative act is important.

In various theoretical engagements performance emerge as a concept with a focus on body, where body while doing something does not produce meaning; rather it dismantles meaning and the representational character of a structural system. This shift demands a new language, a new theoretical engagement to talk about various experiments in the field of various performance arts, which Erika Fischer – Lichte has worked upon in "Ästhetik des Performativen". With Fischer – Lichte's work I try to understand the components and elements of >>theatrical performative activity<<<sup>23</sup>, that is the core characteristic of theater performance today.

**2.2 Erika Fischer – Lichte's *Ästhetik des Performativen*:** Generally in the context of West and particularly in the context of Elfride Jelinek's theater, it is no more about representational theater, rather any performance with her theater texts can be conceived as a theatrical performative activity. A theatrical performative activity is part of performance art/theater that has taken the concept of 'performance' from modern fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology and linguistics, where,

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<sup>23</sup> Carlson, p. 71.

“the concept (of performance) has been complicated and enriched as it has flowed from one of these fields to another and circulated back to them after development by yet other theorists whose primary interest lay elsewhere, in gender studies, in cultural studies, or in human performance in general.”<sup>24</sup>

Carlson finds performance and performativity >>ever fluid terms<<<sup>25</sup> and according to him it is not possible to find a stable connotation or group of connotations for them.

In the representational theater the understanding around an issue is created through mediating the content of a literary text while using the materiality of the body in minute detail. In this traditional theatre, the real body of the actor has to minimize its presence by lending itself to the fictional character. Over the period of time the focus shifted towards ‘performance’ as in the theatre it was recognized that it is the physical presence of the actor that creates the performance and the theatre can reach to the spectator in more effective manner if it bases itself on the corporeality of the actors and the spectators. However, it is not a simple spontaneous coming together of actors and spectators that create a performance. According to Marvin Carlson, >>we may do actions unthinkingly, but when we think about them, this brings in a consciousness that gives them the quality of performance<<<sup>26</sup>. So generally speaking, thinking brings consciousness and that gives an action the quality of performance. The question arises here, what makes an art piece a performance? Are there some underlined features, across the art fields, which can be traced as the features of performance? What are the elements of the performance character of an art piece? Is there a possibility of deriving some kind of code that could be by and large prevalent in all the art performances? In other words, can the numerous experiments in the art field, have a code of performance that can be identified in all the performances? Is there a way to sum up all the experiments so varied with each other through a common code?

The question arises here, why do I choose to use the term, ‘code’ to talk about performance, which has varied ways of expressions? And if I choose to use this terminology, am I contesting the basic quality of performance, which has an open structure? What does the code mean? First of all I engage myself with the conceptualization

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<sup>24</sup> Carlson, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Carlson, p. 70.

<sup>26</sup> Carlson, p. 4.

of the code and then in the same vein I will try to reason why I chose to talk about the code of performance. This will be followed by an engagement with Fischer – Lichte’s work, “Aesthetik des Performativen” where she talks about the elements and strategies of the performance art.

By definition, code is something that converts information such as a letter, word, sound, image, or gesture - into another form or representation. The code is done for communication. If we go by this definition, can we say that the code of performance can be a system of rules to convert the aspects of the performance into key concepts? That is what I am looking for; the key concepts, to be able, to characterize a performance. The code in this context has representational character. In the context of the semiotics, Ferdinand de Saussure says that signs acquire meaning and value when they are interpreted in relation to each other and signs can be interpreted only if one is familiar with the conventions or codes currently in use to communicate meaning. In the context of theater, Winfried Nöth in his work, “Handbook of Semiotics”, talks about theatrical codes and codes in theater. According to him, the theatrical code gets constituted through the conventions of the theatrical performances. In the similar vein, the performance code gets constituted out of the conventions of different performances that Fischer – Lichte takes into account while she is expounding her theory on the aesthetics of the performative.

Erika Fischer – Lichte has engaged with various theories and practices related to the field of performance to draw for her theoretization of the aesthetics of performative. In her theoretization of the performance practices, her points emerge as the code of performance, in other words as conventions, that are currently visible in the theories and practices in the field of performance art. However, performance is an interdisciplinary concept and as Marvin Carlson says, performance art is a complex and constantly shifting field in its own right and it becomes more complex if one takes into account >>the dense web of interconnections that exist between it and ideas of performance developed in other fields and between it and the many intellectual, cultural, and social currents that condition any performance project today<<<sup>27</sup>. So, like in the field of Information Technology, an old code can become >>spaghetti<<<sup>28</sup> and that is the reason for a system to strain. There are lot of activities, lot of inter-

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<sup>27</sup> Carlson, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-paul-ford-what-is-code/>

connections, lot of events; software coding encompasses almost all the spheres of knowledge and ways of living in the society. And the coders do create new codes “to create new kinds of chaos and find new kinds of order”<sup>29</sup>. So, I do read here Erika Fischer – Lichte’s theory on the aesthetics of the performative as new kinds of order.

This section is divided into 3 parts; first, Strategies for Performance Theater; second Elements for Performance Theater; third, Performance Theater for Individual/Social Transformation.

**2.2.1 Aspects of Performance Theater:** The concept of the stage planning is replaced here by the staging strategies. The performance is about the construction of an experimental arrangement, with the objective to make and maintain the feedback loop. Fischer – Lichte identifies role reversal, community, touch and liveness as key aspects of Performance Theater. According to Fischer – Lichte Performance Theater makes the strategy to create a situation that includes these four aspects. Below I will try to understand what these concepts are, what role do they play in a performance.

a) **Role Reversal:** In contrast to the representational theatre, that disempowers the actors and also the spectators in favor of the plot of a literary text to live for a specific time; role reversal is to be understood as a process of disempowerment and empowerment, which concerns the actor as well as the spectator. The actors disempower themselves to empower the spectators. They agree to share the authorship and the power with the spectators, even if it is in different degree. The actors empower themselves, so that they can push the spectators to new behavior patterns or put them completely in a mode of crisis, and take away their position of distance, where they stay above the event as observer. The strategies empower the actors by giving them skill to not allow the spectators to just be an observer. However, what is produced is not known, because it involves the spectators as well, although the game design is known to the actors, who initiate it. The role reversal, where an actor can take the place of a spectator and vice versa, actually pushes the performance towards the unknown, and because of the role exchange the aesthetic process of the performance always occurs as self production (Selbsterzeugung), as an autopoietic, as permanently changing *feedback* – loop. The self – production means that all the participants produce it together. That it is not planned, controlled and in

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2015-paul-ford-what-is-code/>

this sense produced by anyone alone and that it takes away each individual's power of control sustainably. So all are co-producers here. The categories like producers or recipients are irrelevant. The co-producers play a part in varying extent and in different way on the design of the performance, without being able to define it. This results in a performance at no point being understood as an expression of an already given meaning or an intention. There is a novelty about it, there is some newness about it, and so in this sense it frees itself from a given discourse as well.

According to Fischer – Lichte, one can interpret the role exchange as an execution of a symmetrical relationship between co-subjects. But the performance is not to be understood as expression of a given meaning or intention. The unavailability of the performance is also not to be understood as a way of existence, independent of actors and the spectators. It emphasizes the involvement of all the participants and here it deals with the reciprocal action. Hence they can influence the process of performance as well as they could be influenced by the process of performance. Fischer – Lichte says that the feedback loop actually shows transformation as a fundamental category of the aesthetic of performative.

**b) Community (Gemeinschaft):** The Feedback loop is a natural phenomenon that occurs by itself. In theater it is produced. However to produce the feedback loop between the actor and the spectator, the theater must appear as a phenomenon, which is based on the aesthetic, connected directly with the social and the political. It is related to the production of a community of actors and spectators, based on the physical co - presence of the two.

With the performative turn of the arts in the sixties the boundaries between art and no-art, between the aesthetic and the political was transgressed, and thereby a new discussion started on the community of actors and spectators. The art works of the sixties (i.e. Nitsch or also Schechner's performance group) with their performances radically defined the concept of the community. Now the community should enable >>a viable dialectic between solitude and being – with-others<<<sup>30</sup>. It should be a community of co-subjects, a community where the individuality of all the participants is respected. Fischer – Lichte argues that any community, which is created through the together executed actions, is not to be understood as a 'fictional community, rather

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<sup>30</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 87.

as a social reality, which, differently than other social communities, has existence only for a short time. The moment the common actions finish, the community disappears as well. So, one can say that this is the community that gets created through the action, for the action and in that action. It lives its life and then disappears.

**c) Touch (Berührung):** According to Fischer – Lichte as the corporal presence of actors and spectators constitutes the prerequisite of the possibility for the emergence of a community out of the two groups; it also implies the possibility of the touch of a spectator through an actor and the other way round. The illusion theater excludes a real touch, a direct physical contact between actors and spectators. Through the example of the performance piece “Secret Service” (2002) by the choreographer, Felix Ruckert, in which the spectators could be part of the performance by being blindfolded and could play a role in the performance by touch, Fischer – Lichte says, the touch between actors and spectators exposes the secret relation/context, which exists between the functioning of the autopoietic feedback – loop and the experience of the liminality<sup>31</sup>, which can lead to transformation. According to Fischer – Lichte, it is the apparent contradiction between the possibility of the active participation in the performance – which can reach up to the level of doing together (Mitmachen) and playing together (Mitspielen) through the physical sensing of the circulating energy and the release of one’s own energy - and the experience of the unavailability of the performance, that puts the spectators in a liminal state.

The concept of the liminality was coined by the folklorist Arnold van Gennep in 1909 and later it was developed by Victor Turner. In his book *Rites de Passage* van Gennep says, there are rites which mark the passage from one status to another status for individual as well as for group and there are also rites that mark the transitions in the passage of time. According to van Gennep, the transition rites are liminal rites, which fall in between the other two rites, “rites of separation” and “rites of incorporation”.

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<sup>31</sup> “Liminality does not and cannot “explain”. In liminality there is no certainty concerning the outcome. Liminality is a world of contingency where events and ideas, and “reality” itself, can be carried in different directions. But for precisely these reasons, the concept of liminality has the potential to push social theory in new directions.” Thomassen, Bjórñ: *The Uses and Meanings of Liminality*, International Political Anthropology, Vol. 2 (2009), No. 1, pp. 5-28, p. 5.

Victor Turner in his essay, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage”, that made a chapter in his 1967 published book, “The Forest of Symbols”. He rediscovers the importance of liminality in his essay. According to Björn Thomassen towards the end of his life, Turner got more inclined towards the concept of liminality, as he identified it with the importance of not only in – between periods; but the concept of liminality helps also in understanding the human reactions to liminal experiences. That is transformative for the individual and also for the group. In 1978, while working on the Christian pilgrimage, Turner argued that participants in a pilgrimage are outside given structures and identities, and they are there as equals in the pilgrimage, and that homogenizes the status of all the participants and brings in the feeling of community, which enables them to share the aspect of liminality. In his article, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: an essay in comparative symbology” (1982[1974]), Turner says that the liminal experience in the consumerist society has shifted to liminoid moments. Liminoid moments can be found in art, which allows the creativity and uncertainty to unfold.

Fischer – Lichte argues that unavailability of the performance as it happened in the case of *Secret Service* holds the spectators for the duration of the performance on the threshold. In anthropology, liminality, which is derived from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning "threshold", is related to in – between, uncertain status. It is linked to the ambiguity that occurs in the middle stage of rituals that van Gennep refers as transition rite; when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the ritual is complete. So this is the liminal stage, in which the separation, transition and incorporation, all three rites, as devised by van Gennep, are present. During a ritual's liminal stage, participants stand at the threshold between their earlier way of structuring their individual or community identity and a new way, which gets established by the the ritual. Hence if a performance, brings a kind of ambiguity or disorientation in the spectators when they are in the performance; they are neither this, nor that side of the threshold, neither they define the course of the performance, nor is it carried out beyond their exertion of influence. They glide between all the possibilities and positions here and there; they find themselves >>in between<< position, and that is called the liminal stage. The old order gets dissolved during liminality and the liminal period creates a fluid situation that enables new institutions and customs to become established. The

disolution of order can also mean creation of the chaos, and then emergence of a new order out of it.

**d) Liveness:** Before the invention and development of corresponding technologies one was not speaking of >>Live<< - Performances but only of performances. This concept of >>Live<< - performances only make sense, if besides >>live<< also the mediatized performances occur. Today it is an era of medialization and no event in the field of art, politic, ceremonies, inauguration can do without the transmission of the same on the TV to reach to million public. Hence today one confronts a new contrast.

According to Fischer – Lichte,

“Ein neuer Gegensatz scheint entstanden zu sein: der zwischen >>Live<< - Aufführungen, die durch die leibliche Ko – Präsenz von Akteuren und Zuschauern konstituiert und von der autopoietischen *feedback*- Schleife erzeugt werden, und medialisierten Aufführungen, bei denen Produktion und Rezeption getrennt voneinander ablaufen. Die *feedback* – Schleife ist hier außer Kraft gesetzt.”<sup>32</sup>

Fischer – Lichte makes the distinction between the theater as live medium and the live transmission of what is happening on the stage. Both are the two kinds of live presentation, however, in the performances which are constituted out of the physical co – presence of actors and spectators, the feedback loop between the actors and the spectators plays an important role. But in mediatised performances the production and reception run separately from each other and hence the feedback – loop has no role to play. And yet, the reproduction technology can be a tool to create the feedback loop as well. For example, Frank Castorf’s “Der Idiot” (2000), the live media has been used to create the feedback loop between the actors and the spectators. This piece rotates around the idea of theater being a live medium and the mediatalised presentation of the performance. There is a constant play between live and video presentation of the live. Because of the mediatisation of the performance there was a constant threat of actor’s physical presence in the performance. This way the feedback loop was broken or seemed broken, as the spectators were looking at the actors in video and hence could not influence them in any way. But, the use of the media in the

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<sup>32</sup> Fischer - Lichte, p. 115.

theater, has to mediate in creating some kind of feedback loop, in order to make it a theatrical performance.

Fischer – Lichte says,

“Ihre Sehnsucht nach der leiblichen Rückkehr der Schauspieler galt zugleich dem gegenseitigen Wahrnehmen und Wahrgenommen – werden, das die *feedback* – Schleife in Gang setzt und so die Aufführung erzeugt.”<sup>33</sup>

The spectators’ longing for the physical return of the actors applied at the same time to the contrast of being perceiving and perceived, which gets the feedback – loop going and so the performance gets produced. There is ambiguity of who perceives and who is being perceived and may be also there is role reversal or may be the actors and the spectators both perceive and at the same time being perceived also.

The liveness of the theater allows the spectators to have a complete access to the performance to view and that gets actually challenged here, not the aspect of ‘liveness’. So the liveness is an inherent property of the theater and the mediatisation does not take away that basic property.

**2.2.2 Components of Performative Theater:** As society is getting more and more performance oriented and as Marvin Carlson marks the twentieth and twenty – first century as the “age of performance” while referring to McKenzie and as “performance moves on its triumphal path through the discourses of cultural, social, organizational and technical study”<sup>34</sup>, the contemporary performance is most closely culturally related to theatre. In other words, the contemporary performance has the element of theater in it. In Fischer – Lichte’s opinion, the theater has the performativity in it, i.e. theater bases itself on the performative production of materiality. She analyses the process of performative production of materiality, in the process certain elements emerge that can be read as components of theatrical performance. What is the materiality that she is talking about here? How is the materiality put into performative production? Is performative the innate quality of the materiality? While engaging with her theory on the performative production of

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<sup>33</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 125.

<sup>34</sup> Carlson, p. 213.

materiality, under the title, “Components of the Theatrical Performance”, I will be dealing with these questions mentioned above.

According to Fischer – Lichte there are four components that contribute in this process of embodiment in the theatre: Corporeality (Körperlichkeit), Spatiality (Räumlichkeit), Sound (Lautlichkeit) and Temporality (Zeitlichkeit).

**a) Corporeality (Körperlichkeit):** The concepts of embodiment, presence and animal body constitute the element of corporeality.

**a.1 Embodiment (Verkörperung):** The embodiment theory abolishes the separation of body and mind, while arguing that people conceive and perpetuate everything bodily. The theory of embodiment in the field of psychology also places the individual’s thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in one’s body. Embodiment is the process of uniting the imaginary separation between body and mind, which is connected to the aspect of ‘Having Body’. Hence, ‘Being – Body’ means that one’s consciousness is embodied in one’s body. Fischer –Lichte argues that the actor/performer does not transform his body in a work, rather carries out, on the contrary, the processes of embodiment. In this process the body is ‘another’ (ein anderer). It transforms itself, creates itself new and happens (sich ereignet).

**a.2 Presence:** The actor through his ‘Being - in - Body’ performs in the real space and real time and that is how the “absolute present” is created which brings the undivided attention of the audience on the actor. The presence (Gegenwärtigkeit) of the theater brings a highly effective transforming potential for the spectators, as it is not producing the presence through controlling the theater space through actor’s body, rather here it is about energy being in the play.

Fischer – Lichte says,

“Die >>Magie<< der Präsenz besteht also in der besonderen Fähigkeit des Darstellers, Energie in einer Weise zu erzeugen, daß sie für den Zuschauer spürbar im Raum zirkuliert und ihn affiziert, ja tingiert. Diese Energie ist die Kraft, die vom Darsteller ausgeht. Insofern sie den Zuschauer dazu animiert, selbst Energie hervorzubringen, empfindet dieser den Darsteller

auch für sich selbst als Kraftquelle – eine Kraftquelle, die plötzlich und unerwartet entspringt, sich zwischen Darsteller und Zuschauer ergießt und diese zu transformieren vermag.“<sup>35</sup>

In the concept of the presence, the human body appears in its materiality as energetic body (Leib), as living organism; the technical and electronic media produces the illusion (Schein) of the presence of the human body, and in the process the human body gets dematerialized (entmaterialisiert) and de-corporealised (entleiblicht). The electronic medium robs the body of its materiality, of its corporeality, and that way what is produced is only the >>Illusion of the Present<< (>>Schein der Gegenwart<<). In the theatre in its materiality the body is energetic, it is lively organism. In Erika Fischer – Lichte’s opinion, an aesthetic of performative is an aesthetic of presence, not of presence – effect.

**a.3 Animal Body:** Fischer- Lichte talks about the role of animal – body in theater. With reference to Beuy’s Aktion “I like America and America likes me” (1974, René Block Galerie New York) and other performances, that use animal in the performance, she explains that like human body, live animal – body is also unavailable. Both the bodies, human as well as animal bodies, have no work character but an event character. However, whereas an actor can act according to the plan on the stage, the animals don’t do the same.

Fischer – Lichte says,

“...wo immer Tiere auf der Bühne auftreten, entfalten sie eine geradezu unheimliche >>Präsenz<< im starken Sinne: Sie scheinen den ganzen Bühnenraum zu füllen und alle Aufmerksamkeit auf sich zu ziehen. Sie stehlen den Schauspielern die Schau.“<sup>36</sup>

The animals get more attention than the actors due to their unassuming presence. The animals on the stage are perceived as break through of real in the fictive world, of coincidence in the order, of nature in the culture. This creates a critical moment when the human order of the nature is in threat as this creates a moment when it seems that the animal will take over the stage and that can lead the theater towards a natural chaos in the place of human order. According to Fischer – Lichte the presence of the animal – body on the stage brings something unseen, new, unpredicted; it is

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<sup>35</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 169.

<sup>36</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 185.

something, which could spoil the plan of theater, it comes there as a subversive moment in the theatre, and there lies the fascination for the spectators.

**b) Spatiality (Räumlichkeit):** It constitutes of the performative spaces (Performative Räume) and atmospheres (Atmosphären). The corporeality is fluid and transitory in the performative theater, so is the spatiality. It does not exist before or after the performance, the spatiality comes through the performance. It cannot also be compared to the space, in which it takes place.

**b.1 Performative spaces (Performative Räume):** Fischer – Lichte divides the space into two categories: geometrical and performative. The geometrical space, which works as a container does not get effected by what takes place in it. However the performative space changes with each movement of people, objects, light, and each sound of the vocal. It is instable and permanently in fluctuation. The spatiality of a performance emerges in and through the performative space, it is perceived as per the conditions set by the performative space.

Fischer – Lichte says,

“Der performative Raum ist nicht – wie der geometrische Raum – als ein Artefakt gegeben, für das ein oder mehrere Urheber verantwortlich zeichnen. Ihm eignet entsprechend kein Werk-, sondern ein Ereignischarakter.”<sup>37</sup>

The performative space is different than the geometrical space. It is not just given there as an artifact, but has an event – like character. This can be compared with Gernot Böhme’s definition of material and materiality. According to him, “material is the stuff of which things are made. Its qualities are inconspicuous; they don’t call attention to themselves. What is significant about material is how it responds to manipulation and stress and, no less important, how it fits into legal and economic calculations.”<sup>38</sup> He links material to the process of making, whereas, according to him, materiality relates to the process of perception and he explains, “Materiality is supposed to show itself, to come forward, to help shape the atmospheres in which we

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<sup>37</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> Böhme, Gernot: “Staged Materiality”,  
[http://interstices.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/INT14\\_02INV\\_02\\_Bohme.pdf](http://interstices.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/INT14_02INV_02_Bohme.pdf)

live.”<sup>39</sup> Whereas raw material has quality, materiality has theatrical value. If we compare it with the concepts of space and spatiality, we notice that it has certain resonance with the concepts of material and materiality. A space could be big, small, and dark or lighted and has a physical parameter; whereas spatiality is the outcome of human exchange in a given space, which has a particular atmosphere.

**b.2 Atmospheres (Atmosphären):** The spatiality does not just emerge out of the specific use of the space by the actors and the spectators, but also through the atmosphere. According to Fischer – Lichte, atmospheres, which include even smell and sound, belong to the performative space, not to the geometrical one. In a performance the atmosphere has a comparable significance in the production of spatiality as the presence has in the production of corporeality.

**C. Sound (Lautlichkeit):** It consists of auditorium and voices.

**c.1 Hörraum (Auditorium):**

“Theater ist niemals nur ein Schau – Raum (*theatron*), sondern immer auch ein Hör – Raum (*auditorium*).”<sup>40</sup>

The auditorium is constituted through music, speaking, singing, screaming, sounds (Stimmen) and different kinds of noises, which might differ according to the genres and epochs. Particularly since 18th Century sound, ton, noise by theater doers, actors, musician, technicians during the performance constitute the auditorium of the theater. Though it did not include the noise by the public, that was rather considered a disturbance and which was to be fought. In 1952 with the performance of *Silent Piece* in New York, not the sound of the performance but other sounds constituted the auditorium.

“Die verschiedenen Laute tauchen im Raum auf, breiten sich für unterschiedliche Zeitdauer in ihm aus, klingen je anders zusammen und verschwinden wieder. Die Lautlichkeit verändert sich so permanent, transformiert sich ständig. Es ist evident, daß ihr kein Werk-, sondern ein Ereignischarakter eignet.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Böhme, Gernot: “Staged Materiality”, [http://interstices.ac.nz/wpcontent/uploads/2013/12/INT14\\_02INV\\_02\\_Bohme.pdf](http://interstices.ac.nz/wpcontent/uploads/2013/12/INT14_02INV_02_Bohme.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 210.

<sup>41</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 216.

Because of the happening character that the sound has, in the production of its materiality, it expands itself beyond the geometrical space, where the performance takes place. The sound plays itself in the bigger space. So the performance space loses its boundaries, and opens up itself for the spaces, which goes beyond its space. Thereby the boundary between inside and outside gets dissolved. Whatever is heard becomes part of the performance, and can change the performative space. So the theater is not happening only in the space where one can see; but also the space where the sound is reaching, that space makes it part of the performance space.

**c.2 Voices (Stimmen):** The voices contain all three kinds of materiality: corporeality, spatiality and vocal. It is corporeal because it goes through the body with the breath; spatial because it spreads as sound in the space and reaches the ear of the spectator as vocal. According to Fischer – Lichte, the close relationship between the body and the voice can be seen in the screaming, sighing, moaning, sobbing and in laughing. These are speechless pronouncement of the sounds, which reaches deeply into the body of the one, who hears it. These sounds penetrate him/her in the body, resonate in him, and are absorbed by him/her. Fischer – Lichte says, beside these speechless sounds there are also sounds that we hear in the form of songs and language. The performance now predominantly consists of this kind of sound.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the association between sound and language is dominated by the language.

According to Fischer Lichte,

“Der Akteur hat seine Stimme so einzusetzen, daß sie in bezug auf das Gesprochene eine parasyntaktische, eine parasemantische und eine parapragmatische Funktion zu erfüllen vermag.”<sup>42</sup>

Here the voice has to be completely in the service of the spoken words. The voice must make the syntactical plan clear, highlight the intended meaning, and it must strengthen the effect that the speaker must have on the listeners. However since 1960s the performance art is trying to disassociate the voice from the language. It has allowed the voice to materialize itself.

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<sup>42</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 220.

“Die Stimme erscheint polymorph. Sie verliert jede auf Geschlecht, Alter, ethnische Zugehörigkeit oder anderes veweisende Markierung. Der Hör – Raum, den sie erzeugt, wird als ein liminaler Raum erfahren, als ein Raum ständiger Übergänge, Passagen, Verandlungen.”<sup>43</sup>

The voice is transgressing the boundaries, it is manifesting itself, and also when it is being used for a language to be spoken; it does not loose its own life.

**d. Temporality (Zeitlichkeit):** The materiality of the performance presents an emergent phenomenon. The focus on the phenomena of the emergence eliminates the procedure of temporal structuring. The phenomenon emerges, stabilizes itself for different periods of time and again disappears. There are two procedures which are important in this context: time brackets and rhythm.

**d.1 Time brackets:** According to Fischer – Lichte,

“Es ist die Leistung der *time brackets* – vor allem in Kombination mit den Zufallsoperationen -, Zeit-Inseln zu schaffen, ihre spezifische Emergenz zu ermöglichen und sie nicht nur hervorzuheben, sondern geradezu auszustellen und so für den Zuschauer in intensive Weise erfahrbar zu machen.”<sup>44</sup>

Through a couple of examples of theater performances, Fischer – Lichte talks about the concepts of timelessness (*Zeitlosigkeit*), time – island (*Zeit – Insel*) etc, which come up as break free from the earlier concept of continuity. In comparison to the measurable time this time proceeds with different tempo, rhythm and intensity.

**d.2. Rhythm (Rhythmus):** Rhythm brings the corporeality, spatiality and sound in relation to each other und regulates their appearance and disappearance in the space. It is not possible to think about the structuring the time in which the rhythm does not participate in some ways.

Fischer – Lichte says,

“Unter Rhythmus verstehe ich in diesem Zusammenhang im Unterschied etwa zu Takt und Metrum ein Ordnungsprinzip, das nicht auf Gleichmaß, sondern auf Regelmäßigkeit zielt.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 223.

<sup>44</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 232.

<sup>45</sup> Fischer – Lichte, p. 233.

Rhythm is a kind of the principal of order, which seeks for some kind of regularity in how something performs. In the rhythm all foreseeable and unforeseeable things interact to each other. It emerges out of the repetition and variation of the repeated. Only repetition does not yield any rhythm. It is as mentioned above a principal of order (Ordnungsprinzip), which presumes its permanent transformation, and works towards it.

If we look at all the elements of the performance categorized by Fischer – Lichte, we notice that the performance character that we see in the theatre, and also in other arts, is due to the performative production of the materiality of not only actor's body but also of other components of the theatrical performance. All the elements of the theatre, following specific geometrical or rhythmic patterns appear in the space for a while or they are determined through the co-incidence operations, they stabilize themselves for a while, for a different duration of time. Their appearance and disappearance cannot be qualified as a coherent reasoning or a specific motivation because as all the components in their materiality appear on the stage or disappear from the stage, they bring forth exclusively emergent phenomena. The phenomena emerge because there is no cause – chain involved in the emergence of the element which happens through the co-incidental operations and the geometrical patterns created as part of the strategies for staging the materiality. Presence of actors, ecstasy of the things (Ekstasen der Dinge), atmospheres, and circulation of energy happens as well as meanings, which are produced, whether as perceptions, or as the produced feelings, views, and thoughts. The actions of the spectators happen in response to what is perceived; and then the actions of the actors as response to the behavior and the actions of the spectators, which are perceived, i.e. seen, heard, felt, from the actors. Fischer – Lichte says, hence the aestheticity (Ästhetizität) of performances, constituted from its eventfulness (Ereignishaftigkeit), is evident.

**2.2.3 Performance Art: Creative and Autonomous Art:** Since there is no linear production – reception concept in the theatrical performance, rather a kind of circularity, which is created because of the interaction between the actors and the spectators in the performative space, hence according to Erika Fischer – Lichte, aestheticity of performative theater is unassessable. However, the interaction between the actors and the spectators creates a feedback – loop, and according to Fischer –

Lichte, this loop situates itself in the autopoietic system, which has an autonomous structure and a creative path. This section talks briefly about the autopoiesis system as proposed by Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, who in fact coined this term, which will follow by a section on the role of performance art in society. In the last section I will try to see, if Fischer – Lichte’s structural study of the performance art and a reading of Maturana’s and Valera’s theory of autopoiesis give us certain sense to talk about the autopoeisis system and its path in the context of the feedback loop created in the theatrical performance.

**a) Autopoiesis, a creative path:** Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela were together looking for a word “that would by itself convey the central feature of the organization of the living” that was autonomy<sup>46</sup>. His essay on Don Quixote de la Mancha, in which Maturana analysed Don Quixote’s dilemma of whether to follow the path of arms (*praxis*, action) or the path of letters, (*poiesis*, creation, production), and his eventual choice of the path of *praxis* deferring any attempt at poiesis, led him to understand the power of the word ‘poiesis’ and he invented the word >>autopoiesis<<. This was a word without a history, and it “could directly mean what takes place in the dynamics of the autonomy proper to living systems”<sup>47</sup>. In his view, it is *poiesis* that takes place in the dynamics of the autonomy that is the central feature of the living systems.

The autopoiesis comes as a concept in the context of the field of biology that must help one in recognizing the invariant features of the living systems around which the natural selection operates. Maturana also explores in his work the question of society and ethics in the context of his theory on the autopoiesis, which I will engage with here.

**a.1 Society, Ethics and Autopoiesis:** In his section on “Society, Ethics and Autopoiesis” Maturana links the social system to the autopoietic system as he finds the social system being constituted through the participation of living systems in general and human beings in particular. He does not view social systems simply as an outcome of the human beings coming together, but there is something more at work

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<sup>46</sup> Maturana, Humberto R. & Varela, Francisco J.: *Autopoiesis and Cognition. The Realization of the Living*, D.Reidel Pub Co., 1980, p. xvii.

<sup>47</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xvii.

here that contributes to a set of people coming together and forming a social system, and that is the living systems.

Living systems are units, which are self – referring in nature because of the circularity of the living system’s organization. The circularity maintains a living system’s condition of being a unit of interactions. The functional significance of the organization of the living systems is only in relation to the maintenance of its circularity. Maturana says that there is a kind of prediction which a circular organization implies that once an interaction takes place, that interaction will take place again. However, whereas he defines an interaction as a particular interaction, for him, a prediction is a prediction of a class of interactions that is defined by those features of its elements that will allow the living system to retain its circular organization after the interaction, and so, to interact again. Maturana says that in the process of the evolution of the living systems, >>what changes is the way in which the basic circularity is maintained, and not this basic circularity in itself<<<sup>48</sup>. Moreover, he says that the living systems are composite unities and these unities are realized through the neighborhood relations. Autopoiesis is basic for the functioning of a living system and a collection of the living systems, even if it integrates a composite unity through relations, but if it does not involve their autopoiesis, then it is not a social system and the phenomena proper for it to operate as composite unity is also not a social phenomenon. In other words, the living systems, containing composite unity, based on the relations, taking place between the components of a society, is not a social system, if the autopoiesis is not realized. According to Maturana, the constitution of a social system is determined through the recurrent interactions of the same autopoietic systems.

**a.2 Natural Social System and Human Social System:** Human beings in particular and living systems in general constitute the social system, which can be either natural or human, depending on how it gets formed. The social systems that have a collection of autopoietic systems are called natural social system and “...through the realization of their autopoiesis, interact with each other constituting and integrating a system that operates as the (or as a) medium in which they realize their

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<sup>48</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. 10.

autopoiesis...”<sup>49</sup> The autopoietic systems interact with each other and a system is constituted through this interaction in which the systems realize their autopoiesis. That means, they realize their autonomy and creation. Systems are the outcome of the autopoiesis and they also operate as mediums in which their autopoiesis is realized. If the realization of a social system entails the autopoiesis of its components, then the realization of the autopoiesis of the components of a social system would be intrinsically indispensable and constitutive of its operation as such<sup>50</sup>. If the autopoiesis of the components of a natural social system are not involved in its constitution, because the relations that define a system as social do not entail them, then the autopoiesis of the components (and hence their autonomy and their individuality) would be intrinsically dispensable<sup>51</sup>. At the same time it is important here to note that he also takes into account the autopoietic system in individuals. According to Maturana, the human beings are autopoietic systems and their activities as social organisms must satisfy their autopoiesis. He argues that a human being satisfies his/her autopoiesis in a social domain,

“... through the fulfillment of the basic biological preferences (state of pleasure) and rejections (state of displeasure) that constitute the immediate experiential domain in which they, as components of a society, necessarily realize their individual worlds and contribute to the determination of the individual world of others.”<sup>52</sup>

Human being as a social being through his/her individual actions also, constitutively effects the lives of other human beings. Hence the individual actions of a human being have an ethical significance. The individual behavior of a member of a society leads a human society towards a social change. In a human society, a social change can only happen if the conduct of its members changes.

A society defines the domain in which it is realized as a unity and in that unity it creates an operationally independent medium which operates as a path of structural change that a society follows in its individual history. If the change is stable then it also works as a historical stabilizer of the structures. The structures realize the selected invariant relations that define the society as a particular social system. About

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<sup>49</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxiv

<sup>50</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxiv

<sup>51</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxiv

<sup>52</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi

the stability of a particular social system, Maturana says, “The more varied the medium of selection, the greater the domain of stabilized relations in the society, and, hence, more fixed the structure of its components.”<sup>53</sup> He is of the view that in a human society the change takes place in a language centered culture and the structure of human components is stabilized “through a cultural stabilization of the relations that they must satisfy as social entities.”<sup>54</sup>

**b) Performative Theater for Individual/Social Transformation:** According to Fischer – Lichte the performance brings >transformation< in the being of the participants because performative theater is a >>process of embodiment<<. Through strategies like role reversal, where the interactions between the actors and the spectators take place; the creation of a community for a short while for the period of performance, which could be artificial, as it is the >product of human art< however at the same time natural because it creates an autopoietic system as it involves touch and liveness between the real people in the real moment, and in the real space, the performance can be transformative for the participants. The art is on the path of creation. It creates the moment, the community, and the touch. It does not question the natural social system, but the human social system that builds up a particular social perception and sticks to that by keeping it in circulation by borrowing the mechanism of living system from a natural social system. When one is within the social system, one does not see it. However a particular social system must also include the autonomy of the individual and their take on the path of creation. The wider and more diverse the interaction, the system is more stable. However, the changes do take place in a social system if the individuals move out of the path and take up the role of the observer. An artist, as Maturana says, works outside the domain of unity, is antisocial and yet not there to disintegrate the society, but to integrate it, because he has chosen the path of creation, and for that Fischer – Lichte has also suggested “autopoiesis” as the way to do it, i.e. autonomy and creation should be the basic philosophy of the performative theater.

According to Erika Fischer – Lichte, the performance destabilizes the perceptions of the self, world or foreign, that leads to the loss of valid rules and norms, which take one to the path of transformation, however, the durability of the transformation can

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<sup>53</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi

<sup>54</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi

differ from case to case. This can also be the case that after leaving the performance space, the spectator considers his momentary destabilization as senseless and unreasonable and would like to go back to his/her old set of values. Or may be after the performance he/she stays in the state of disorientation for a long time and only much later on the basis of his reflection, looks for a new orientation.

Performance is an important aspect of any possible transformation in any individual or a society. A performance allows the interactions between the actors and the spectators, and a relationship (short or long) is formed, and together they create a community. The director uses certain strategies to produce particular kind of interactions. However, the life of the performance depends on the feedback loop's life span, and that feedback loop operates until the interactions between the actors and the spectators last. This can be read as the natural social system of the community created by and through a piece of theatrical performance. For the specific time for which this community gets created, it aims to work in a natural form, while connecting to its own living system. Mathura explains, that, if the realization of a social system entails the autopoiesis of its components, then the realization of the autopoiesis of the components of a social system would be intrinsically indispensable and constitutive of its operation as such<sup>55</sup>. That means, for a social system to realize itself it is important that it has the autopoiesis of its components. This ensures the autonomy, and individuality of its components.

“Whereas if the autopoiesis of the components of a natural social system are not involved in its constitution, because the relations that define a system as social do not entail them, then the autopoiesis of the components (and hence their autonomy and their individuality) would be intrinsically dispensable”<sup>56</sup>.

Hence the components will lose their autonomy and individuality and that destabilizes the system.

At the same time it is also a community made of individuals who have their own autopoietic systems. Through connection and association the emergent phenomenon is produced. The connections emerges out of the search for the autobiographical situation, that one comes across while watching a performance. The

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<sup>55</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxiv

<sup>56</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxiv

associations happen without being called for or searched for. The associations, Fischer – Lichte explains, relate to memories of the earlier lived, learnt, experienced, completely specific subjective experiences as well as to the intersubjectiv valid cultural codes. Besides there can be associations triggered by creating some situations, which emerge as sudden intuition, new ideas, as thoughts, not thought over previously and therefore they are able to surprise the perceiving subject more strongly than all other associations. The meanings which get produced in this process are known as emergence and what can be physically articulated can be perceived by others, and what can be noted as thought, leads to the perceivable action. Maturana says that a human being as a social being through his actions is though individual in his/her expressions of preferences or rejections, but he/she constitutively effects the lives of other human beings, and therefore has an ethical significance.

It is important for the realization of a society that “the component autopoietic systems should satisfy certain relations regardless of the actual structures (internal processes) through which they realize them”<sup>57</sup>. In his words, “Interactions within a society are necessarily confirmatory of the relations that define it as a particular social system; if not, the organisms that interact do not interact as components of the society which they otherwise integrate.”<sup>58</sup> It is the relations that a human society is defined by and the interactions within a society must confirm to them. However the interactions do not need to be defined by those relations. In fact any social change in a human society comes through interactions operationally not defined within the society. If the interactions are not operationally defined within the society, then >>a component organism can undergo interactions that lead to the selection, in its ontogeny, of a path of structural change not confirmatory of the society that it integrates<<.<sup>59</sup> It is through “social creativity” that interactions can be operationally outside the society. This generates the >>mode of conducts<< that can change the defining relations of a particular society. If the generated mode of conducts is not successful in defining the relations of the society as a particular society, then it separates them from it. Maturana argues that the social creativity, that becomes the agent of change for a social system is in fact antisocial in the social domain in which it takes place and the creative path that one takes, comes from one stepping into the role of an observer. The

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<sup>57</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi

<sup>58</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi.

<sup>59</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi.

conduct of human being as observer means that “he (the observer) stands operationally as if outside the various social systems that he otherwise integrates, and that he may undergo in this manner interactions that do not confirm them.”<sup>60</sup> So an observer is potentially always antisocial.

The creativity, displayed by some members of a human society, outside the particular social structure, however for the integration of the society, is important in changing the structure of a human society. A society, which sees all human beings as equivalent to oneself and it loves them without them surrendering largely their individuality and autonomy, is a >>product of human art<<. In other words, it is >>an artificial society<< that admits change and every human is indispensable for it. Maturana sees such a society as a non – hierarchical society for which all relations of order are constitutively transitory and circumstantial to the creation of relations and it continuously negates the institutionalization of human abuse. This very clearly indicates at the role of art and artist that is crucial in bringing substantial change, transformation in the life of a social system that lies in the centre of Erika Fischer - Lichte’s proposed theory of the aesthetics of performative. The performative shift in theater brings the theater out of the orbit of the representational theater that kept the hierarchy intact, as it did not make space for the spectators’ participation in the performance. Though theater is a live medium and it is hard to suppress the materiality of different elements which in fact pave the path for the performative theater. The elements of the “aesthetics of the performative” support the creation of the kind of the >artificial society< that Maturana talks about. It is a society, non - hierarchical and all inclusive in nature. It emerges out of the interactions and actions of different elements that lead the society, created thus, towards transformation.

**2.3 Possibilities of widening the aesthetics theory of performance:** While discussing, what is it that performative strives for, chaos theory and complexity science make an important body of discussion in this part. There is a kind of resonance that I do find between what Fischer – Lichte’s theory on the performative and the chaos theory. This part will investigate the possibility of the expansion of the concept of the performative in the field of the chaos theory and the complexity science.

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<sup>60</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvii

In the last section I have engaged with autopoiesis in relation to society. Autopoiesis in the context of human society is about constituting such a society, where individuality and autonomy of individual member of society is largely maintained; at the same time it has its own living system, which has circularity and it is maintained through the repetition of the interactions of the unity. Maturana says that the constitution of the non-hierarchical, equal and all representative society is an >artificial society< and is possible in the realm of art only. However, Fischer – Lichte suggests that such a society even though created artificially, as a performance art, can bring changes in the society, if the performance incorporates the autopoietic system in how it happens. There is some kind of inner organizational structure, the relations of units, their interactions with their environment, which keeps a society going. About the stability of a particular social system, Maturana says,

“The more varied the medium of selection, the greater the domain of stabilized relations in the society, and, hence, more fixed the structure of its components.”<sup>61</sup>

This indicates at the complexity in the relation that contributes in stabilizing a social system. This leads us in the domain of the complexity science.

“As technological and economic advances make production, transport and communication ever more efficient, we interact with ever more people, organizations, systems and objects. And as this network of interactions grows and spreads around the globe, the different economic, social, technological and ecological systems that we are part of become ever more interdependent. The result is an ever more complex "system of systems" where a change in any component may affect virtually any other component and that in a mostly unpredictable manner.”<sup>62</sup>

The complexity science has evolved the methodologies which can help to deal with the complexities in science, culture, society, philosophy and ethics. The complexity science uses the concepts like “emergence” “the edge of chaos” to analyse the complex structure of the society. Hence there is a relation between the two theories. Since complex science uses the chaos theory in developing its concepts, hence first of all, here I engage myself with the chaos theory which will be followed with an

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<sup>61</sup> Maturana & Varela, p. xxvi.

<sup>62</sup> Heylighen, Francis, Cilliers, Paul & Gershenson, Carlos: “Complexity and Philosophy”, <https://arxiv.org/ftp/cs/papers/0604/0604072.pdf>, p. 1.

engagement with the complexity science, and then it will be linked to the aesthetics of the performance.

**2.3.1 Chaos Theory:** There is a common perception about the ‘chaos’, that it is something unstable, random, and irregular. This perception gets challenged with the advent of the chaos theory, which acknowledges the instability and randomness in the chaos, however, it asserts that there is a kind of stability in the instability, there is a kind of pattern in the randomness, and there is a kind of regularity in the irregularity. The chaos theory, which evolved first of all in the field of natural science and later found a place in the field of social sciences, asks us to differentiate between the instability and the chaos; they can’t be equated with each other. Chaos is actually deterministic and patterned. To understand the evolution of the chaos theory it is important to see how actually the science was perceived prior to the acknowledgement that chaos is deterministic factor in the events, incidents, occurrences, experiments etc. An engagement with the basic philosophy of the classical science will help here in understanding, why in the era of classical science, chaos was not taken into account, in any study; rather it was discarded as disturbance.

Newtonian science believes in closed system, ignores the emerging properties and is based on the reductionism. It works on the premise that whatever exists now, has existed from the beginning of the time and will continue to exist. According to the classical science, science is not a creative process, it is based on observation and “Knowledge is nothing more than another such distinction-conserving mapping from object to subject.”<sup>63</sup> Essentially the philosophy of the classical science or the Newtonian science is *simplicity*. According to this science the complexity of the world, which is apparent, can be dealt by analyzing the simplest component of a phenomenon. Once it is done, then the evolution of the phenomenon is perfectly regular, reversible and predictable and the knowledge gathered in this process is a mere reflection of the pre-existing order. Hence, the scientific evolution has regularity, reversibility and predictability and so the knowledge has no new dimension and is a reflection of the pre-existing order.

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<sup>63</sup> Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, p. 4.

According to Francis Heylighen, Paul Cilliers and Carlos Gershenson,

“The elements of the Newtonian ontology are matter, the absolute space and time in which that matter moves, and the forces or natural laws that govern movement. No other fundamental categories of being, such as mind, life, organization or purpose, are acknowledged. They are at most to be seen as epiphenomena, as particular arrangements of particles in space and time.”<sup>64</sup>

So, like in the classical theater, which is scripted, so it refrains from making theater a place for any emergent phenomena, the classical science also, by seeing the evolution of a phenomenon as something regular and constant, becomes a part of the pre-existing system, and has no new emerging knowledge to imbibe. As in the classical theater here also the time and space come in absolute form. In theater the shift on the performative demands that we challenge this position of the classical theater and in challenging that the focus shifts on *Being Body*. Beside time and space, eventually other factors of being, like mind, organization, life, purpose etc. come into the play also in science. It happens gradually. When these factors are taken into consideration, the basic features of the Newtonian science, like determinism, materialism and objective knowledge are get challenged in the later phases by its successor theories within physics: quantum mechanics, relativity theory, and non-linear dynamics (chaos theory).

The chaos theory evolved in 1960 from the meteorologist Edward Lorenz' research work into the possibilities of long term weather prediction. He created a basic computer program based on differential equations, which could theoretically predict the weather. When Lorenz ran his meteorological model on a computer, he discovered that a very small difference (less than one part in one thousand) in the initial conditions led to large changes in the weather predicted by his model over time. This discovery, sensitivity to initial conditions, is one of the fundamental characteristics of chaos theory. Moreover, whereas in the Newtonian science, the slightest differences are ignored as something negligible, in Lorenz' differential equations, the slightest difference turns out to be the big changer.

The chaos theory focuses on the qualitative study of unstable aperiodic behavior in deterministic nonlinear dynamical systems. The systems are deterministic on one

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<sup>64</sup> Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, p. 3.

hand and therefore its behavior not so random, still because of the instability, aperiodicity, and sensitivity to initial conditions, the behavior of chaotic systems is not predictable even though it is deterministic. So, though a chaotic system appears to behave randomly, however there is always a sense of order and pattern in it.

In 1987, James Gleick, wrote the book, “Chaos. Making a New Science”, in which he remarked that for Lorenz, the chaos

“...with all its unpredictability, was as stable as a marble in a bowl. You could add noise to this system, jiggle it, stir it up, interfere with its motion, and then when everything settled down, the transients dying away like echoes in a canyon, the system would return to the same peculiar pattern of irregularity as before. It was locally unpredictable, globally stable”<sup>65</sup>.

In the context of Information theory, Gleick says, if the irregularity features a chaotic system in a persistent manner, then a chaotic system is stable.

Gleick, who found “creative process”<sup>66</sup> in the disorderly behavior of the chaos theory, defined chaos as such,

“The heart of the new snowflake model is the essence of chaos: a delicate balance between forces of stability and forces of instability; a powerful interplay of forces on atomic scales and forces on everyday scales.”<sup>67</sup>

He explains that earlier the surface tension effects were disregarded by the scientists as they assumed it to be negligible. However, if taken into consideration, the tiniest scales proved crucial, because the surface effects around the tiniest scales proved to be infinitely sensitive to the molecular structure of a solidifying substance. He gives the instance of ice, which gets built by a natural molecular symmetry, in preference for six directions of growth. He made the observation that the six directions of growth are managed by the mixture of stability and instability. This mixture of the two “manages to amplify this microscopic preference, creating the near-fractal lacework that makes snowflakes.”<sup>68</sup> There is universal law of chaos that takes care of the non – equilibrium phenomena, called, snowflakes. Snowflakes are the products of

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<sup>65</sup> Gleick, James” “Chaos: Making a New Science”, Penguin Books, 2008, p. 48.

<sup>66</sup> Gleick, p. 43.

<sup>67</sup> Gleick, p. 309.

<sup>68</sup> Gleick , p. 311.

imbalance, it is transitory, and what it becomes in the process is something new. Hence it has emergence quality.

**2.3.2 Complexity Science:** The present day society is a complex society, which is different than, orderly or disorderly nature of a system. Whereas,

“Order is simple to model, since we can predict everything once we know the initial conditions and the constraints. Disorder too is simple in a sense: while we cannot predict the behavior of individual components, statistical independence means that we can accurately predict their *average* behavior, which for large numbers of components is practically equal to their overall behavior.”<sup>69</sup>

But they say that in a truly complex system, the components are to some degree independent, and hence autonomous in their behavior, while undergoing various direct and indirect interactions. Therefore it is very difficult to predict the global behavior of the system, though it is not random.

In 1996 Holland introduced the *complex adaptive system* which is the most important conceptual tool of the complexity science. The basic components of a complex adaptive system, called, agents, who as autonomous individuals, try to achieve some personal goals by acting upon their environment, which includes other agents. The agents can be human, ants, cells, molecules etc. The agents are initially ignorant about their wider environment or about the long term effect of their actions, as they are governed by their individual behavior. Only at the later stage they get to know other agents. It works here according to the principle of locality, in which the agents only interact with only few other agents from their local neighborhood. However their actions have global effects, so the local actions have the global consequences in substantial manner that effects the system as a whole.

“Such global effects are by definition unexpected at the agent level, and in that sense *emergent*: they could not have been inferred from the local rules (properties) that determine the agents’ behavior.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, p. 10.

<sup>70</sup> Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, p. 11.

The authors argue that if the interaction between the agents is regular, like in the case of crystal or gas, it could have been easy to predict about the global configurations. However, it is not possible to predict the configuration at the global level, because from the local level to the global level it is not a regular progression of a thing. From the local to global level, the agent's goals are intrinsically independent and so there are often conflicts amongst them. Hence, "the action that seems to most directly lead to A's goal, may hinder B in achieving its goal, and will therefore be actively resisted by B"<sup>71</sup>. That means, there can't be a state which satisfies all agents' goals equally. However, the authors argue that the agents will >co-evolve<, they will adapt to the changes made by other agents, and will make changes in their environment as well. This results in an on-going mutual adaptation. The actions are local and the effect of the actions move step by step towards the more remote agents. The effect of the action diffuses the network formed by the agents and the relationships of interaction, because the same action has different effects in different parts of the network at different times. This makes the system non – linear. There is no proportionality between cause and effect. On one hand, small fluctuations may be amplified to large, global effects by positive feedback or "autocatalysis", depending on the initial conditions, which is referred to as the "butterfly effect". This line of argument brings complexity science closer to the field of deterministic *chaos* as it supports here the idea that the globally unpredictable changes are produced by locally deterministic processes. However, the effect of the local actions can be different for each step of the networking formed by the agents. This leads to a global evolution that is not only unpredictable but also creative and it can lead to emergent organization and one may find the innovative solutions to global as well as local problems. "Self – organization" and "adaptation" play a big role in this process. The self – organization is a simultaneous process, free from any internal or external control. The complex systems, says the author, which are created through self – organization and evolution, are intrinsically adaptive, because it does not have a fixed plan; it lives through intrinsic uncertainty. So, different agents working within the system, have to be mutually adaptive.

**2.3.3 Performance theater as emergent phenomenon:** Fischer – Lichte also says that it is not possible to assess the theatrical performance beforehand because it

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<sup>71</sup> Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, p. 11.

depends on the interactions between the actors and the spectators, and also other components, like space, atmosphere, temporality can appear in various ways, depending on the staging strategies, and can influence their own living system and of each other. Fische – Lichte says, it is the stage planning, which works in a manner that on one side, what appears on the stage, looks transfigured, on the other hand also the one who is perceiving notices in the act of perception, how the movement, light, colors, sound, smell etc. effect him/her. Fischer – Lichte says, in spite of very experienced, effective staging strategies, the stage can't be steered, and the performance presents the emergent phenomena. According to the chaos theory, the systems are deterministic on one hand and therefore its behavior not so random, still because of the instability, aperiodicity, and sensitivity to initial conditions, the behavior of chaotic systems is not predictable even though it is deterministic. This explains the emergent property of the performance. Since the role – exchange, though deterministic, as there is some plan to do role – exchange in certain manner, forms the feedback – loop between the actors and the spectators step by step, hence their behavior is instable, aperiodic, and sensitive to initial conditions, and therefore it has emergent property.

The aesthetics of performative makes the aspect of transgression and transition strong in the theatre. The boundaries will be the threshold (Schwelle), which does not separate from each other, rather they connect to each other. Whereas the boundary is bound to the law, the threshold is bound to the magic. Whereas the boundary is seen as linear, which excludes this or that, as the dividing line; the threshold is to be introduced as a in-between space (Zwischenraum), in which everything possible can take place. Whereas the boundary presumes a clear separation, the threshold presents a place of the possibility, strength, and transformation. However, both, the boundary and the threshold, deal with the phenomena of the perception. What appears as boundary to one; can be the threshold for the other one, and that invites one to transgress it. Fischer – Lichte argues, in the act of transgression the boundary is used as threshold. The boundary, which is used as threshold by one, can be experienced as boundary by others. The boundary transgression aims at transforming the boundaries in the thresholds, and thereby at the art of transition, art of crossing the threshold.

**Conclusion:** From the material aspect of living, we have shifted to the materiality of living. Whereas material is to do with making, the materiality is about the perceiving the things; it relates to being performative. Whereas making relates to the deliverance of a finished product, materiality brings the real in appearance and has a theatrical sense. Hence, when we talk about a theatrical performance, we talk about its appearance and its path of creation. How does it look and what is the process of it? To understand the path of creation along with the appearance of the materiality, we need to relate to the autopoietic system of the components of the theatrical performance. In other words, we need to understand the living system of each component. It is important to understand how each component interacts to its environment. It is also important to see how the components relate to each other. Because the performative theaters brings us out of the habit of looking at the theater from distance and to get into the role of only observing the performance from far and be involved only till the level of understanding it. In the performative theater, as Erika Fischer – Lichte has theoretized, the components of the theater, i.e. presence, animal body, spatiality, temporality, auditorium etc. are not material rather materiality oriented. When all the components of the theater are being brought to their materiality; one cannot refer to any scripted tale. In Fischer – Lichte’s view, it is not work – oriented, but event oriented. It is event oriented, because the performance is based on how different elements of the performance are interacting with each other in a given moment, and creating an experience. In the domain of science, at first glance, it seems to me, to find a resonance in the chaos theory, because there is a lot taking place at the same time. Does it create some kind of chaos, when there is interaction happening at multiple levels? The chaos, according to chaos theory, is how things are happening in the nature.

James Gleick explains a natural phenomenon in his work on chaos theory in these words,

“Snowflakes are non equilibrium phenomena, physicists like to say. They are products of imbalance in the flow of energy from one piece of nature to another. The flow turns a boundary into a tip, the tip into an array of branches, the array into a complex structure never before seen. As scientists have discovered such instability obeying the universal laws of

chaos, they have succeeded in applying the same methods to a host of physical and chemical problems, and, inevitably, they suspect that biology is next.”<sup>72</sup>

There is this transitory and fluid character in the structure of the snowflakes. As here the boundary turns into a tip, tip into an array of branches, the array into a complex structure never before seen; in the theatrical performance also there is constant shift, and has a transformative character. Snowflakes’ transformation happens due to the imbalance in the flow of energy. The theatrical performance has lot of moments throughout the performance, which challenges the defined worldview of the one, who perceives the performance through the concept of liminality, creating an in-between space, shuffling the performance between meaning and effect, presentation and representation, challenging perceptions of the participants in the performance through and through.

So the chaos theory brings us out of the classical thinking, which looks at the irregularity as something that needs to be sorted out by simplifying things, and once the irregularity has been taken care of, then the nature is all about order and regularity, and that is how it works in the nature, and taking the inspiration from there, the society should also look for that kind of regularity and order, like in nature. The chaos theory challenged it by stating that, the irregularity that happens in the initial level, effects the outcome of certain phenomena, and must be taken into consideration and not sorted out, rather acknowledged, and we must try to understand its existence and its routined occurrence. The complexity science, which is also called, the integrated science, as it uses the theories developed in different fields of knowledge, situates itself on the >edge of chaos< and its “Complex Adaptive Theory” explains how through adaptive method the agents, i.e. human beings, adapt to the local and global environment and other agents, that creates a global level effect. The complexity science says, if one is adaptive, one can notice that the action at every stage has an effect, and things change at every stage, and one must adapt accordingly. So, on one hand, the classical theory, focuses on the order, the chaos theory on disorder, however, it says, there is certain kind of order in disorder, the complexity theory, keeps the complexity in the center, and asks us to deal with it.

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<sup>72</sup> Gleick, p. 314.



## Chapter 3

### **Elfriede Jelinek's Theater Texts – Theater writing as a Performative Act**

While documenting the material, crafting the language, tailoring the discourses, stitching the thoughts, incorporating ideas, inserting the images, Elfriede Jelinek is 'doing' things with the existing materials. Her collection of materials comes from different sources and encompasses spoken words, written stuff, and also the gestures around a particular theme or inter – connecting themes. Jelinek's role as a writer is to put the material in the state of the materiality so that the material is perceivable. Each text brings with itself multitude of materials, and through Jelinek's ways of working, they are open for the new multitude of more materials that will emerge each time a reader brings his/her own material, living in his/her unconscious mind, on the forefront as a result of the interaction with the ideas and associations of the text. In my opinion, through her theater texts, Jelinek aims to bring the readers at the level of "threshold thinking". To achieve it, she thematizes the discourse; she works on it and not under it. In another words, she does a discourse analysis. To work on the discourse, she uses lots of existing materials, where the materials must come out of their classical fold and interact to the situation, created in the texts by Jelinek. This way, Jelinek makes the materials 'performative'. The way materials are interconnected to each other, it appears to be rhizome like. At the same time, the vastness of the materials used, and their quality to proliferate, do point out at the text being a case of drifting, and can also be handled as per the Concept Drift , devised in the field of Computer Science.

I have divided this chapter into four parts to discuss the different aspects:

**3.1 Jelinek's Theater Texts and David Bohm's "Thought System":** In the first part, I engage with David Bohm's theory on thought, where he elaborates on thought as a system, and also makes a distinction between the concept of thought and thinking. The understanding of thought as a system is important as I am of the opinion that her theater texts must be located in the thought system, because her theater texts

aim at bringing the readers at the level of the ‘threshold thinking’ through getting them into the materiality of thoughts.

**3.2 Jelinek’s Theater Texts and Discourse:** From here I come to the content of her body of work for theater. Her theater, in my view, is the part of Discourse Theater. Jelinek works with discourses diachronically and thereby she challenges the institutional control over discourses. By and large today in the West have come out of the classical theatrical practice of reenacting past in theater or telling a story; theater more and more involve with the discourses that institutions use to cite their rule to make people act in the society according to certain pattern. Michael Foucault’s “Die Ordnung des Diskurses” discusses the concept of discourse and the changes in how the discourse has been defined again and again in different ages. Foucault’s theory will be referred as I read here Wolfgang Teubert’s “Die Wirklichkeit des Diskurses” to analyse the reality of discourse in the society. Teubert discusses the reality of discourse and also the way a discourse can be free from the institutional control, which is pertinent in freeing people from acting on the basis of conditioned thought. Jelinek uses intertextuality to create multiple voices, which is important according to Teubert, to make discourses free. Following the reading of Teubert’s text, I engage myself with the concepts of text, textuality and intertextuality, to understand Jelinek’s writing technique.

**3.3 Jelinek’s Theater Texts and Rhizome:** Third aspect that is crucial in my engagement with Jelinek’s theater texts, is the kind of structure that her theater texts have. The materials that Jelinek uses from diverse sources make a text ensemble in Jelinek’s work through intertextuality. Jelinek’s works are considered at the same time very open in character as they are not considered very rigidly structured. Deleuze and Guattari propose the concept of rhizome in philosophy and in spite of its very open form, they talk about the principles of rhizome. Rhizome theory is about inter – connectivity and Jelinek’s theater texts are about inter textuality, and like in rhizome, also Jelinek’s texts have very open form. So, I presume here that the principles of rhizome should make some broader frame to talk about Jelinek’s theater texts as well.

**3.4 Jelinek’s Theater Texts and the Theory of Drift:** Though principles of rhizome can become a theoretical basis to understand the nature of Jelinek’s work; but still the question arises, how one can engage with her theater texts, which fall in my view in

the line of principles of rhizome. In my view, Jelinek works in rhizomatic fashion through drifting and thereby her works get the character of fluidity.

**3.1 Jelinek's Theater Texts and David Bohm's "Thought System":** Jelinek creates a text ensemble out of the materials, originating from different era and different fields and which are crucial in contributing to the thought process of the individuals and the groups in different times and spaces and they get shoved deep down in the realm of the unconscious thought, however still they impact how does an individual or a group works, but it is not the part of the conscious thought process. When the material is brought to the level of perception through the materiality, i.e. it has come to the level of conscious thought and the reader engages with the conscious thought, it may open up the unconscious thought that the reader has in his/her brain about that theme, that field.

In the field of psychology, the research tells,

“It seems that, before one experiences a conscious thought, unconscious brain processes work behind the scenes to generate the thought.”<sup>73</sup>

So, Jelinek, does not bring the stuff in the platter for the consumption of the reader, but showcases a stream of conscious thoughts, that can only be experienced through the unconscious analysis and interpretation. To read Jelinek's theatre texts, the conscious thought needs to be connected to the unconscious thoughts of the reader.

In this section, first I try to understand the concept of thought, particularly on the basis of David Bohm's theory on the thought as system; then in the context of the discussion on the materiality in the performance field, as discussed in the first chapter, I try to conceptualize the aspect of the materiality of thought for the reading of Jelinek's theater texts.

**3.1.1 Thought as System:** David Bohm, a theoretical physicist, says, the world is a product of thought and it affects everything in the world. It affects us physically, it alters the perception and it is changing the world we are living in. Thought plays an important role in the making of the world and in turn the world plays a key role in the

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<sup>73</sup>Morsella, Ezequiel (Feb 9, 2012): *What is a Thought?*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/consciousness-and-the-brain/201202/what-is-thought>

making of the thought. He describes thought as a vast system. According to Bohm, thought is a system, which includes thoughts, feelings, felts and also the >>state of the body<<. So, he says, it includes the whole of society. Hence, it is not only an intellectual activity.

To understand how the thought system works, Bohm makes a distinction between thinking and thought. Thinking implies the present tense, it is an active verb and it means that we are doing something. Thinking is also critically sensitive to what might go wrong. Thought is past participle to that. Thinking does not disappear; rather it leaves a trace of itself behind in our brain and becomes thought. The thought acts automatically then onwards. Thought is the past, however, thought as an activity, is the past and also the present and it acts, though it does not know it.

Bohm says,

“...thought doesn't know it is doing something and then it struggles against what it is doing. It doesn't want to know that it is doing it. And it struggles against the results, trying to avoid those unpleasant results while keeping on with that way of thinking. That is what I call sustained incoherence.”<sup>74</sup>

Thought is a form of reflex and conditioning. Reflex is ‘to turn back’, conditioning is to repeat something very often. About the relationship between reflex and conditioning, Bohm says,

“It (repetition of something) somehow leaves a mark in the system, in the nerves, and then a reflex has been altered. You can see the conditioning of reflexes all the time. In fact, a great deal of our routine learning consists in establishing conditioned reflexes.”<sup>75</sup>

Thought follows certain logic in doing whatever it does in making the personal and larger world, and thereby the reflex, as the basic nature of thought, plays crucial role. This is the nature of thought; where one reflex leads to another one. It follows certain logic and Bohm says that the logic is reflex; it is not a proof of the reality. He argues that it is not us who control our thoughts, rather the reflexes are >> driving us and in

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<sup>74</sup> Bohm, David (1994): *Thought as a System*, Routledge, p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Bohm, p. 67.

increasingly dangerous ways<<<sup>76</sup>. He also says that the automatic reflex damages the natural order of mind.

To find the coherence in the system, to bring the action closer to the reality, and to protect the natural order of mind, one needs to go deeper in the thought. There is certain kind of perception, according to Bohm, which is deeper or intelligence, which is deeper and which can sense incoherence. Thinking plays a role here.

In the words of David Bohm,

“Thinking is an active verb, think-ing. It means you are doing something. One thing you are doing is criticizing your thoughts, seeing whether they cohere. And if they don’t, you begin to change them and experiment with others. You get new intuitions, new insights”<sup>77</sup>.

As a grammatical category, thought is past participle, i.e. something already done, whereas thinking is going on right now. When we think, we criticize our thought and if any change is required, we make it. Because,

“As the reflex gets more and more automatic it becomes more thought and less and less intelligent, less and less adapted to the particular situation.”<sup>78</sup>

Thought does not allow an individual to think according to a particular situation.

**3.1.2 Jelinek’s Theater Texts and Thought System:** Thoughts, feelings, felts, memories, and experiences, all come together in Jelinek’s theater texts, drawn as fragments from various existing materials on a particular theme. By doing this, Jelinek aims to take away the reader from the auto reflex mode of thought, which in fact triggers some very unpleasant incidents. For instance, the killing of Romas in Austria, and which compels Jelinek to write a play *Stecken, Stab und Stangl* (1996). She goes deeper in the thought shows the undercurrent of fascism in Austria. Austria today takes the position that it did not participate in the holocaust during Second World War, as it was not a sovereign state in the past. However as a people it was part of the Nazi past. Bohm says that thought affects us physically. So the tragic incident is an outcome of thought that is an automatic reflex. However, Jelinek in this theater

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<sup>76</sup> Bohm, David: *Touch the Future: The Limitations of Thought*, A conversation with Michael Mendizza, [https://tffuture.org/files/2/members/esa\\_bohm\\_thought.pdf](https://tffuture.org/files/2/members/esa_bohm_thought.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.mindstructures.com/2011/01/the-difference-between-thinking-and-thought/>

<sup>78</sup> Bohm, p. 2.

text, and also in several others goes deeper and collects all the memories, feelings, experiences, thoughts to put together the thought system that does not allow the reader to not see the layers of thoughts and their inter-connectedness. The murder of the 4 Romas comes as incoherence in the thought system that shows Austria as a country without any Fascist background. Jelinek challenges that thought system, by bringing in her theater text through the collection of her materials, and through her treatment of those materials, that they appear in their materiality, and the reader is asked to go beyond automatic reflex and think.

Elfriede Jelinek in her theater texts, when she is trying to give materiality to the materials, he is making the material perceivable. According to Bohm, perception is the ability to perceive something new and it is not contained in the memory. Our automatic, mechanical thinking gets challenged this way, as perception does not allow us to make the decision of the present on the basis of the feeling of the past, rather we must think.

**a) Jelinek's Theater Texts and Materiality:** In the previous chapter, I have dealt with Erika Fischer – Lichte's work on the aesthetics of performative, where she talks about the performative production of the materiality through elaborating on the components of the theatrical performance. Her theory defies the representational character of the human body and speaks for its material character. She explores the materiality of the spatiality, temporality, sound, atmosphere etc. Hence, we see the performative concept relates to the materiality of not only the human body but other components as well. If all the components appear during the performance in their materiality, the performance becomes a site for the emergent phenomena. Whereas thought as David Bohm defines it, is conditional, however if one can get into the materiality of thoughts, it can also lead to a conclusion of the reality which is not a reflex, not a conditioning, rather something more authentic, more reality oriented, more creative and intelligent.

Jelinek in her use of the various existing materials around a theme makes those materials perceivable. Material can be compared to 'thought' and materiality to 'thinking'. Material is a 'finished product' like a 'thought'. A thought is a perception, and a material is a perception too. However thinking as well as materiality is defined as something perceivable.

In the context of the performative sense of the materiality Erika Fischer – Lichte says that appearance and path of creation are important aspects of a theatrical performance. These aspects become perceivable if one is able to relate to the autopoietic system of the components of the theatrical performance, i.e. presence, animal body, spatiality, temporality, auditorium etc. The materiality is related to appearance, and one must connect to the autopoietic system of its components, in order to perceive it. Not only it is important to understand the living system of each component but also how the components interact to their environments and to each other and hence it has the characteristic of emergence. Jelinek in her theater texts let the materials interact with each other and that is how they enter into the domain of materiality and become perceivable.

In my view, Jelinek's theater texts demand from readers to get into the materiality of the thought. The thought system that she creates is expressed through the language. At this point, it is important to look at the relationship between the language and the thought to proceed on how Jelinek through her texts brings reader out of automatic reflex mode.

**b) Relationship between Thought and Language:** There are two opposing views on the thought – language relationship. According to the Communicative Conception of language, developed by Carruthers and Boucher in 1998, suggests that language and thought have independent relationship. According to this theory, language is a tool that humans use to communicate what they think. According to cognitive approach, the language and the thought are interdependent, primarily in the case of the native language where the language shapes the thought and vice versa. The socio linguistic fields lately in their reports tell that the language a person speaks shapes his/her view. A bilingual person finds it easier to express his/her feeling in the native language. Beside other factors, language also plays a role in determining values. So, in today's world, language is no more just a tool for communication, rather it is seen as a factor in shaping the values or a medium to express the feeling with much more ease.

There are different views on the relationship between the language and the thought; however there is no denying the role that language plays in transferring the thought from one mind to another mind. The language transfers the linguistic information about a particular thought into another individual's mind and that can be the cause of

a new thought that can affect the physical reality of the immediate world and the larger world of that individual.

The language that Jelinek brings in use in her theater texts are aligned with Austin's Speech Act Theory. The pure linguistic discourse looks for the universal validity of the language, whereas the speech act theory talks about the speech situations. Austin talks about the utterance in the place of the sentence, and by the issuing an utterance in a speech situation, he brings the focus on the performative character of the language. Jelinek in her theater texts, take materials from other sources, in the forms of words, sentences, references, citations and makes them the stuff for uttering. The way the language is used in her theater texts, is to be seen as utterances and not as sentence.

**c) Jelinek's Theater Texts consist of Utterances:** According to Austin, language becomes performative, if instead of sentence the utterance is paid attention to. Whereas sentence is connected to the written language, utterance is linked to the spoken language.

As per definition,

“The main difference between sentence and utterance is that the sentence conveys a complete meaning, either spoken or ritten, hereas utterance usually does not necessarily convey a complete meaning.”<sup>79</sup>

Also utterance is related to the verbal communication, which consists of a sound or incomplete spoken group of words. So, utterance like sentence is the carrier of the meaning, however not the complete meaning. Utterance is a sound, consisting of incomplete spoken group of words that could be phrases, clauses and clause combinations spoken in some particular context. Jelinek uses sentences, words, group of words as alliteration, sloganeering, phrases, repetitions, citations, puns, jokes etc., in her theater texts.

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<sup>79</sup> <http://pediaa.com/difference-between-sentence-and-utterance/>

The existing content that contributes in the making of a discourse, which in turn shapes the social structure, lose their absolute status by Jelinek as she extracts parts of the existing content and make her own theater texts where the text is actually decentered.

According to Dagmar von Hoff,

“Für diese Strategie weidet sie verschiedenste Textkörper aus, zerlegt sie und fusioniert Textpartikel neu. Seziert wird dabei eine Originalsprache, die eine authentische, weil sinnstiftende Rede vorgibt. Die Worte der anderen, Trivialpartikel, Literatur- und Theoriediskurse durchquert sie und montiert sie zu einem Textgewebe, das von dramatischen Figuren nachgeplappert wird.”<sup>80</sup>

Jelinek opens up the text bodies, dismembers them and fusions the text particle new. In the process of the production of her theater text, she dissects the original language which sets pretence for a meaning talk. She shakes off that pretentious ground of the linguistic purity which pretends to give the complete meaning through a sentence. In Jelinek’s hands, the meanings are not complete. That way the classical position of the language gets shaken. She takes the words of others, text particles, discourses etc. from the existing material, thereby the old work with its pure linguistic expression that gave it certain degree of universality, is taken away from those works, and while she makes her own text out of those parts, particles, fragments, it is not one text that she creates, but the text web. In Dagmar von Hoff’s words, a work, created in this way, can only be parroted. Parroting means vocal imitation of human utterance without possessing the language. In one study of the semantic of talking parrots, it says,

“Talking birds such as parrots and mynah birds are capable of faithfully reproducing words and phrases of human language that they have heard, but their utterances carry no meaning. They are speaking neither English nor their own languages when they sound like us.”<sup>81</sup>

Because of how Jelinek works on her plays, the vocal imitation is possible. Her texts contain human utterances and if they are imitated by dramatic figure without the use

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<sup>80</sup> Hoff, Dagmar von (1990): *Stücke für das Theater. Überlegungen zu Elfriede Jelineks Methode der Destruktion*, In: Gürtel, Christa (ed.): *Gegen den schönen Schein. Texte zu Elfriede Jelinek*, Neue Kritik Verlag, pp. 112 – 119, p. 112.

<sup>81</sup> Fromkin, Victoria, Rodman, Robert, Hyams, Nina (2010): *An Introduction to Language*, Cengage Learning, p. 23.

of the sound speech, they can just deliver what the content in her work is. Parroting a text or a sentence or a word is about giving voice to the speech unit, not a meaning to it. Jelinek's texts are already utterance. The utterance carries a meaning as a sentence does, yet it differs from a sentence because it never carries a complete meaning. It is a natural unit of speech that is bonded with breaths. One, who gives voice to the utterance, can only parrot it.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the stage planning has two pronged strategy. On one hand, what appears on the stage looks transfigured because of the plan; on the other hand the actor in the act of perception, notices, how the movement, light, colors, sound, smell etc. affect him/her. Since, no stage plan can foresee the level of the actors' and spectators' interactions, and the outcomes of those interactions, hence a performance comes up as an emergent phenomenon. When we say a phenomena is emergent, i.e. it can't be pre-conceived, but then what is it that the art practitioners do with the material? They make a staging strategic for a performance piece, so that the materiality of all the components performs in a particular manner. The performance arrangement is responsible for the creative path that gets paved between the actor and the audience during their interaction. In the similar vein, Jelinek's theater texts pull the reader in the materiality of thought through certain arrangement that has the potential to pave the path between the material in the theater texts and the readers. The arrangement that she as the writer of those texts make puts the already existing material in the state of materiality and then they are perceivable.

There are text specific arrangements of the materials in Jelinek's theater works as well. At the moment, I cannot go into the specificity of the individual texts, which I am doing in the next chapter by reading two theater texts by Jelinek, *Über Tiere* and *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*. Here I am only pointing out that when Jelinek arranges the texts, the way she does, and establishes a speech situation and also a relationship between different fragments, they have an objective.

Jelinek's theater texts are complex. If a simple logic that X leads to Y, is cut off, is disabled, and there exist several variations on the same surface as Jelinek does in her theater texts, then the reflex and the conditioning do not work and a thought can't be constituted out of them. There could be multiple ways to connect them to each other. So instead of the stuffs in the text getting converted into a thought, the texts demand

certain intelligence from the readers to make sense of the content of the texts. The texts resist the easy conversion of the content into the thought. It rather creates a moment for the ‘threshold thinking’ (Schwellen Denken).

**d) Threshold Thinking in Jelinek’s Theater Texts:** When Jelinek makes a text web, works around with the language, presents together with several other materials/concepts/ideas/discourses, the fragments of known works, or a famous quotation or a popular jargon, she is resisting the idea of automatic reflex and think. Think in a way that the thinking does not get converted into a thought. For that she keeps the reader constantly on the threshold.

In Bärbel Lücke’s words,

“Sie (Jelinek) literarisiert eine Theorie des Schwellen – Denkens, die gar keine Theorie im strengen Sinne ist und die es auch erklärtermaßen nicht sein will.”<sup>82</sup>

According to Lücke, Jelinek is literarizing a theory of threshold thinking, which is also not a theory; rather her work blurs the boundary between literature and philosophy. The threshold thinking comes up in Jelinek’s theater texts, not only by blurring the boundary between literature and philosophy, but also between other systems of knowledge, like music, sociology, history etc.

One instance of the in between position is her theater text, *Totenauberg* in which Jelinek, according to Maja Sibylle Pflüger, mockingly materializes the world of philosophers in a ski village, the Arendt – figure speaks in to voices: one is voiced over by the actor on the stage and the other one, her double is shown speaking on the screen. They speak the same text with the same voice, sometimes together, sometimes, one listens to the other one. Using the film in the theater makes this text by her inter-medial. It is like being in between two mediums. The reader has to engage with two projections of the Arendt figure, one on screen, the other one off screen. It is like putting the piece, partly, in between the production aesthetics between two mediums. Different texts by Jelinek experiment differently in creating this in between state in different ways and orients one to further innovation and experimentation that can keep the world out of the realm of thought by bringing in the

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<sup>82</sup> Lücke, Bärbel (2007): *Jelinks Gespenster. Grenzgänge zwischen Politik, Philosophie und Poesie*, Passagen Verlag, p. 159.

act of thinking. Whether it is thought or thinking both contributing in the making of discourse that actually regulates the world, but whereas the thought takes us towards a closed system, thinking leads us towards the open one.

**3.2 Jelinek's Theater Texts a Part of Discourse Theater:** Ingo Breuer, while referring to Hans Thies Lehmann in his work on post dramatic theater, says that today reality is mediated more and more through >> zwischengeschaltete Schemata, medial vorfabrizierte Attitüden und Darstellungsmuster<<<sup>83</sup>. The synchronized reality which was presented to us through bringing the discourses within the realm of institution that is governed by a set of rules gets challenged by this diachronic emergence of discourse which new mediums, like media, performance culture, sciences have brought in. Therefore, Breuer says, theater is no more about imitating and reenacting the past incidents, no more about the mimesis of the plots, rather about the mimesis of the discourses and gestures. The new ways of looking at reality, which is also shaping the reality, is challenging the theater writing as well.

With the time the theater which has acquired the performance character, as it has discarded the representational character, which happens due to theater being sight for the enactment of the literary texts, or plays, brings the focus on the intensity of the presence. In the classical theater, which is based on recreating the world as described and presented in a literary play, the theater apparatus, as whole, is in the service of the text and the theater is about bringing the fiction alive on the stage. The fiction borrows the life from the components of the theater, from the body of the actors, and also the other elements of the theater, time, space, sound and costume, according to the definition of the classical theater, which is followed also in the writing of the plays; i.e. theater in writing and in practice follow the similar aesthetics. So, the theater happens because of the liveness of its elements which creates an effective present for a fictional reality. A shift has happened in the field of theater with the change of the perception that the theater does not happen because of the literary text rather because of how the materials of the theater by getting into their materiality

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<sup>83</sup> Breuer, Ingo (Oct 2000): *Zwischen 'posttheatralischer Dramatik' und 'postdramatischem Theater'. Elfriede Jelineks Stücke der neunziger Jahre*", In: *Processes in Theater, Art, and Literature*, Knut Ove Arntzen, Siren Leiväg (Hg.) und Elin Nesje Vestli St. Ingbert (in Vorbereitung). Vorabdruck: >> <http://www.inst.at/trans/9Nr/breuer9.html><<.

create a reality and that is where the theater ceases to be representational and it takes the performance character.

Erika Fischer – Lichte argues that the theater gets the performance character by bringing the focus on the actor's body; Elfriede Jelinek's theater texts challenge the theater that bases itself on the actor's body. Jelinek writes texts for theater, which do not entail the representational aesthetics, but they are also not interested in the materiality of the actor's body. Because, as Breuer says, it is the interposed patterns, the pre-fabricated attitude and perception created by media that governs the reality, the body and the gesture. Jelinek's theater texts show that the real players are actually the discourses, and theater must allow the play between the discourses to take place. Whereas for literature oriented theater, the materiality of actor's body was essential; Jelinek writes pieces for the theater that sees the materiality of the actor's body as a hindrance rather. In her theater texts, when they are performed, one must perceive the materiality of the discourse. According to Erika Fischer – Lichte, the representational theater bases itself on the inner theatrical communication, which is challenged in the performance theater, as it replaces the inner theatrical communication with the external theatrical communication. In other words, the communication between dramatic figures is replaced by the communication between the stage and the audience, between the presenters and the spectators. This shift is noticeable in theater writing as well. Whereas the materiality of theatrical components make the external theatrical communication possible; the writing in theater also challenges the representational aesthetics by bringing in the element of materiality, and thereby it breaks free from inner textual communication and replaces it with external textual communication.

So, it is the materiality of discourse that is taking place in Jelinek's theater texts and it is being done through bringing in the aspect of external textual communication. First here we discuss the reality of discourse in the present time that should help us in understanding how the diachronic treatment of the materials that contribute in making the discourse impact this reality; second I try to understand the concept of text, textuality and intertextuality to elaborate on the aspect of the external textual communication that according to me Jelinek in her theater texts works towards.

**a) Reality of Discourse in the context of Wolfgang Teubert's "Die Wirklichkeit des Diskurses":** According to Foucault's analysis of discourse, in this era a discourse is controlled by citing the rules, through institutions, kept within the ambit of a discipline, this relates to the culture which is governed by the aesthetics of representation. The aesthetics of representation relates to understanding the things, and does not work with the idea of unexpected action that can let something new emerge which has a transformative power in the society.

Wolfgang Teubert says,

“Natürlich nehmen wir, die Subjekte, die Mitglieder einer Diskursgemeinschaft als ‘Verstehende’ am Diskurs teil. Was im Folgenden ausgeführt wird, soll begründen, dass ‘Verstehen’ durch Diskurs konstituiert wird, im Diskurs stattfindet, und nicht über den Diskurs hinausreicht.”<sup>84</sup>

So, being within a discourse community, and which has almost become like a thought system, in the present context, the understanding of the participants is constituted through a particular discourse, takes place within it, and can't transcend it. However, the social change takes place in discourse. But there is condition to it. If the discourse is polyphonic, then the social change can unfold itself.

According to Teubert,

“Er (Sozialer Wandel) kann sich entfalten, wenn der Diskurs plurivokal, vielstimmig ist. Denn jeder neue Beitrag verweist dadurch, dass er rekurrente Textsegmente benutzt, auf bereits Gesagtes und fügt diesem durch die Einbettung in einen neuen Kontext etwas so bisher nicht gesagtes dazu.”<sup>85</sup>

So, new contributions are added to the old text segments through embedding in a new context. That way a text ensemble is created, where texts are in intertextual relationship with each other. However, since it involves interpretation and not understanding, the communication which a discourse theater that Jelinek creates is not inner, i.e. within the ambit of her theater text, but is external, i.e. it involves the reader with his/her own input also. It goes beyond the conditioned and reflexive thought

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<sup>84</sup> Teubert, Wolfgang (2013): *Die Wirklichkeit des Diskurses*, In: *Linguistische Diskursanalyse: neue Perspektiven*,

Dietrich Busse (ed.), VS, pp. 55-146, p. 59.

<sup>85</sup> Teubert, p. 69.

more, and connects to the unconscious brain of the reader. So, how does he/she interpret a particular text ensemble, becomes also the content of the discourse.

Intertextuality and interpretation are two important aspects in making Jelinek's theater texts externally communicative. It is the intertextuality that constantly keeps the reader out of the framework of a text, and it is the aspect of interpretation in the place of understanding that keeps the theater at Jelinek out of the boundary of inner communication.

Uda Schestag in her work "Sprachspiel als Lebensform" engages with the analysis of intertextuality as the process of structural narration (>>eine Analyse von Intertextualität als erzählstrukturelles Verfahren<<<sup>86</sup>). There is no narrative plot in Jelinek's theater texts; however there is a structural narration in them and it becomes crucial in the context of the aspect of the external communication too get familiar with the concepts of text, textuality and intertextuality, as they all are inter – related, and distinct concepts.

**b) Text, Textuality and Intertextuality:** The literary theorists and cultural anthropologists like Roland Barthes (1987), Paul Ricoeur (1971), Clifford Geertz (1973), James Clifford, George Marcus (1986), and Stephen Tyler (1987) regard text as a socio – cultural product, and beside a work of literature, it also includes a street sign, an arrangement of buildings on a city block, or styles of clothing. K. Rhiney in 2010, includes more things to the list: >> paintings, photographs, maps, electronic media, landscapes as well as economic, political and social institutions<<<sup>87</sup>. Though, text has wide interpretation in varied fields, but Rhiney says that broadly text can be defined as >> as a configuration of signs that is coherently interpretable by some community of users<<<sup>88</sup>. A text is innately communicative, and it is part of an ongoing discourse, that is produced, received and interpreted by various social actors and agents. A text has the textuality through which it is read.

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<sup>86</sup> Schestag, Uda (1997): *Sprachspiel als Lebensform. Strukturuntersuchungen zur erzählenden Prosa Elfriede Jelineks*, AISTHESIS VERLAG, Bielefeld, p. 165.

<sup>87</sup> Rhiney, K. (2010): *Text/textuality* In: *Encyclopedia of geography*, B. Warf (ed.), pp. 2809-2813, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591.n1129>.

<sup>88</sup> Rhiney, K. (2010): *Text/textuality*, In: *Encyclopedia of geography*, B. Warf (ed.), pp. 2809-2813, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591.n1129>.

The textuality of a text defines its characteristic; the textuality gives a kind of distinction to a text by putting it in some particular social and cultural context. If one does not take into consideration the socio cultural world to which the text is connected, the text becomes >>incomplete and indeterminate<<<sup>89</sup>.

At the same time, the textuality is the individuality of a particular text, something that distinguishes one particular text from other texts; the intertextuality is the basic character of any text, because whatever account of world a text gives, it is mostly mediated through pre-existing notions. Rhiney says that >>texts shape and are in turn shaped by other texts<<<sup>90</sup>. Hence, the meaning is produced from text to text and not in and of the text themselves. So according to Rhiney, the intertextuality is always already there, whenever a text is in sight, because it is built up on already existing notions. However in Jelinek's case, there is deliberate attempt to bring different texts, different signs, and different ideas, in relation to each other within her text. If there are diverse kinds of texts brought into relationship with each other, then the text web that gets created is very complex.

Rhiney argues, it is the textuality through which we read a text and reading through textuality means reading a text in its socio – cultural context and that way it becomes complete and determinate. If read in isolation, it becomes indeterminate and incomplete. But what happens if a text is intertextual not in content but in narrative?

Marko Juvan says in his article, “Spaces of Intertextuality / The Intertextuality of Space” that the stress on spatial is very crucial for the idea of intertextuality. According to Juvan, intertextuality has spatial models and it contradistinguishes itself from the “established notions of verbal interaction that represented communication as linear transmission of an information “package” from author to reader and backed by a monolithic common code”<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> Rhiney, K. (2010): *Text/textuality*, In: *Encyclopedia of geography*, B. Warf (ed.), pp. 2809-2813, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591.n1129>.

<sup>90</sup> Rhiney, K. (2010): *Text/textuality*, In: *Encyclopedia of geography*, B. Warf (ed.), pp. 2809-2813, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412939591.n1129>.

<sup>91</sup> Juvan, Marko (2004): *Spaces of Intertextuality / The Intertextuality of Space*, In: *Primerjalna književnost* (Ljubljana) 27, Special Issue, pp. 85 – 96. P. 86.

He gives two postulates of intertextuality. First postulate says that each text is lively because it opens up a dialogue that generates a “complex and ever changing network of inter-subjective relations and identity positions”<sup>92</sup>. Second postulate says that below the semantic and structural patterns of the text there lie many layers of codes, utterances and cultural representations. Therefore the patterns are dynamic and indeterminable. So, whereas textuality makes determination and completion of a text possible; intertextuality is, on the contrary dynamic and indeterminable.

There are two ways that Jelinek uses intertextuality, Uda Schestag says, one is integrating intertextuality and the other one is structuring intertextuality. According to Schestag, who has dealt with the concept of intertextuality in the context of her novels, the integrating intertextuality relates above all to the characterization of figures and the elements of the material and works as a pretext. The structuring intertextuality plays a text structuring role and thereby taking quotations from other works is essential. The use of both kinds of intertextuality has an impact on the content as well as on the form in her theater texts. This allows the discourse come out of the institutional control and step into its original form, where it worked as a truth teller. Originally the discourse played the role of the truth teller, but then, first it became identifiable with its form, and then it got swept under the power of institutions, and eventually fell in the ambit of disciplines, which has tried constantly to cite some definite rules to tame the discourse. However, as Elfriede Jelinek’s theater texts, are an outcome of intertextuality at various levels and in different ways, and has the power to challenge the determined, defined aspects of text production that has representational character, and always culminates in a desirable result; because the intertextuality does the opposite, as it is like floodgate, which, when opened, the materials gush out and in their multiplicity and thereby some kind of transformation is possible. To deal with the aspect of multiplicity, which the intertextuality brings out, I will read here below the rhizome theory that keeps multiplicity in the heart of its philosophy.

**3.3 Jelinek’s theater texts and Deleuze’s & Guattari’s Rhizome Theory:** Though the world may appear functioning as a root system, however it is entwined with the rhizome. According to David E. Beek, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of

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<sup>92</sup> Juvan, p. 86.

“the rhizome,” illuminates the phenomenon of intertextuality as it connects any point to any other point. This justifies reading the rhizome theory to make a wider ground for a more open theoretical reasoning for Jelinek’s theater texts.

This section is divided into two parts: first part will deal with the theory of rhizome, which will be primarily based on Deleuze’s and Guattari’s take on it; and in the second part I will trace the rhizomatic structure in Jelinek’s Theater texts.

**3.3.1 Deleuze’s & Guattari’s Theory of Rhizome:** The first reference of ‘rhizome’ as a concept, we find in the field of science, which originates from the ancient Greek word, *rhízōma* "mass of roots". In the field of biology, a rhizome is a plant stem situated either at the surface of the earth or underground. It has nodes from which roots and shoots originate. Rhizomes, also called creeping rootstalks and rootstocks, grow from auxiliary buds and grow horizontally and they allow the new shoots to grow upward. Even a single section of the rhizomes is enough for a new plant to grow. In a plant, a rhizome is a storing point for the protein, starch and other nutrients. These nutrients help the plant in surviving in the extreme weather situations and it also helps normally in the growth of the new shoots. Rhizome also allows the lateral growth of the plants like bamboo, asparagus, ginger, turmeric, lotus, and many types of ferns etc; it does not grow vertical ever. The definition of the rhizome in science tells us that the rhizome has different abilities to grow than root system. It imbibes multiplicity, as it can grow on as plants from every node of it. Basing their philosophy on the concept of the rhizome, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari develop their rhizome theory, which becomes a theoretical base in analyzing the works beyond science in the fields of literature, art and culture as well.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their project “Capitalism and Schizophrenia ” (1972–1980) developed rhizome as a philosophical concept. They conceived rhizome as an "image of thought", basing it on the botanical rhizome, first in the project mentioned above and then in 1987 in their work, “A Thousand Plateau”.

In their path breaking work, “A Thousand Plateau”, while rejecting the idea of finding the subject in a book, they define a book as such:

“A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously for matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the

exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movement deterritorialization and destratification.”<sup>93</sup>

In other words, for Deleuze and Guattari, matter and how the matter works are the key aspects in a book. The two elaborate the characteristics of the books written under different systems.

**a) Characteristic of Root System and Radicle System:** Deleuze and Guattari term a book, written in the classical form, root book. According to them, such a book is like a tree, with a strong root and characteristically a tree with a strong root is hierarchical in nature and the spiritual reality of a root book is binary logic. However, in their opinion the nature does not work in this way. In the nature roots are taproots, “with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one”<sup>94</sup>. They elaborate that there are two kinds of reality, spiritual and natural. If one is following the spiritual reality, one has to follow the Law of One becoming Two, Two becoming Four; however if a book is written according to the natural reality, it is possible, for the object of the book to go directly from One to three, four, or five. However, a strong principal unity of the pivotal taproot supporting the secondary roots must be available. The spiritual reality relates to subject and the natural reality relates to the object. Hence the taproot support does not really make much difference as far as multiplicity is concerned.

In the radicle system the principal root gets aborted or its tip has been destroyed, and then “an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development”<sup>95</sup>. They argue that here it is the natural reality that aborts the principal root; however the root’s unity is still in force as past or as something yet to come. So, either the past unity comes back or some new kind of unity comes up. Deleuze and Guattari find two kinds of unity in the radicle system: linear and cyclic. The modern methods make the multiplicity grow in one direction; whereas the unity of totalization, grows into circular or cyclic dimension. Whereas

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<sup>93</sup> Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix (1987): *A Thousand Plateaus*, Translated by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p. 3.

<sup>94</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 5.

linear unity has direction; the cyclic unity has dimension. Whenever multiplicity is taken up into a structure, “its growth is offset by a reduction in its laws of combination.”<sup>96</sup>

The laws of combination originate from the field of chemistry and describe the basic principles, obeyed by interacting atoms and molecules. The interactions can include many different combinations that happen in many different ways. Because of this diversity of interactions an astounding variety of chemical reactions and compounds take place spontaneously. According to the definition, “Though chemical reactions can be as complex as they are numerous, they are all fundamentally governed by these same guiding Laws of Chemical Combination, which lay the groundwork for analysis of chemical reactions. They give a mathematical formulation and allow predictability given initial conditions.”<sup>97</sup> So, in the case of linear unity, there are the reduced laws of combination in play, and that curtails the spontaneity of the interactions. Hence, the growth is more predictable. So the chance of something new emerging is rare.

Even in the modern methods which relates to radicle system or fascicular root, though it is object oriented, contrary to the classified form, which is subject oriented; however in the fascicular system, the binary logic is still not overcome, the subject object dichotomy is still there. The unity of the object, which has an inclination towards the natural reality, is never allowed to happen. Rather in the modern method the subject gains a new kind of unity, which is a higher unity and it is achieved through overterminism.

Deleuze and Guattari remark,

“The world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> *Laws of Chemical Combination*. Brilliant.org. Retrieved on June 11, 2019, from <https://brilliant.org/wiki/laws-of-chemical-combination/>

<sup>98</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 6.

Overdeterminism was first used scientifically by Sigmund Freud. In his work “The Interpretation of Dreams” he favored interpretation of these features of the dreams not only once but several times and at various levels and in the context of the complex of dreamer’s psyche. If a single – observed effect is determined by multiple causes, then it is the case of overdeterminism. So, the effect is single, and it is determined by multiple causes, that makes the effect more validated. In other words, the overdeterminism can be read as oversimplification; even if the multiple causes are at sight, the effect that is created is only one. The higher unity that the subject in the modern time achieves is done through this sort of overdeterminism, which oversimplifies the situation by not taking note of the various dimensions in the proper context. Deleuze and Guattari also argue that such a unity is always a supplementary dimension to that of its object. They say, whereas the classical books were root cosmos, the modern books are radicle-chaosmos. The two theoreticians suggest that multiple must be made, and for making it, one does not necessarily need a higher dimension, but it can also be done with the number of dimension that one already has and for this they give the formula  $n - 1$  and they name a system of this kind as rhizome. According to them, a rhizome is a subterranean stem. It is not root and radicles, but bulbs and tubers. This is also the feature of the books, written as fragmentation, and leads one towards the unity of totalization, because, though they go in the linear direction, but through making multiplicity, they get into cyclic unity. Joyce’s and Nietzsche’s writings are the example of rhizome kind of writing. Jelinek also writes in rhizomatic fashion, i.e. she creates multiplicity. Her theater texts are written as fragments, but they work for the unity of totalization.

**b) Principles of Rhizome and Jelinek’s Theater texts:** Rhizome is connected to the natural reality. According to the philosophy of the rhizome theory, a work must free itself from subject to operate as rhizome. Also a work of rhizome can’t be a complete and finished work, but at the same time, by not being a complete work in itself, it becomes part of the bigger whole. Through her theater texts, Jelinek brings things out of constructed reality and puts them in the natural order. There is a way, how Jelinek does it. If in philosophy, her theater texts seem closer to the rhizome theory; in my view, they will find resonance in the four principles of the rhizome theory, proposed by Deleuze and Guattari as well.

Deleuze and Guattari have proposed four principles of rhizome, which I presume to be as guiding laws in the field of philosophical discourse on rhizome, as are the laws of combination in the field of chemistry. In chemistry, the chemical reactions can be analyzed on the basis of laws of combination. The reading of principles of rhizome should help in understanding the connections that different texts make with each other in Jelinek's theater text. The four principles will be discussed here and along with that I will make an effort to trace those principles in Jelinek's theater texts in general.

**b.1 Connection and Heterogeneity:** According to Deleuze and Guattari whereas there is a plotted point and fixed order in the root or in the tree, any point can be, and must be, connected to any other in rhizome. This is the first principle of rhizome.

Maja Sibylle Pflüger says that Jelinek pushes drama to its boundaries of the presentation and of the understandability by developing a decentering text structure. Not only the formal aspects of the drama is decentered but also the structures of meaning, as there is no content key, no centre of textual event, which can open up the text for interpretation. Each and every theater piece by Jelinek contains several existing materials, sometimes with reference, sometimes without reference, and though she puts the two things, or sometimes more than two things in combination with each other, however they do not become one through combination. Jelinek, by decentering her text, increases the materialization of more and more multiplicities. There is no unity in the text, so one cannot interpret it either. One can look for the tubers and bulbs that are the connecting points in the rhizome making.

Deleuze and Guattari say that a rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. The semiotic, the power discourse, the social, cultural, historical contexts all make together in heterogeneity and connection a rhizome like work in Jelinek's theater pieces. The materials in her theater texts also have ramifications, and demands one to connect with the text, while bringing in more semiotic chain, power discourses along with social, cultural and historical contexts for the readers, or the personal memory of those contexts by involving the readers in the text at the level of thinking.

Jelinek's theater texts are actually the language planes. It is the Speech Act that is on display in her theater texts. Her theater is about the performance of the language. The language constitutes the thought system that kind of steers the human race to act upon in the real situation. It is the discourse that controls the way reality is constituted and it is the discourse that projects the reality to be lived.

Jelinek's theater texts consist of semiotic chain, discourse, and discourse analysis and in the process she aims to create a linguistic community. The creation of a community is possible only by establishing certain connections amongst different materials in the text with each other by bringing in one's own collection of materials out of one's memory. Jelinek brings in the magnitude of materials in bits and pieces in one particular text out of the common experiences (particularly Austria, also Germany, and recently other countries like Japan, France, USA), and thereby she asks the reader through her texts to come out of the habit of determining or overdetermining an event, a history, a concept, a literature, a philosophy, an ideology, an idea, whatever that a community surrounds itself with, rather there is a hint of letting it be indeterminate.

A linguistic community can be made only if there are connections, among the materials in the text and the connections extend further with the reader. About the community, Erika Fischer – Lichte says in the context of the performance art, that any community is created through the together executed actions. Such a community is not a fictional community, rather as a real community. The only difference between this community and other social communities is this that the community in the performance art has a much shorter life span. As the action finishes, the community ceases to exist. The linguistic community that Jelinek proposes can also be seen as an effort from her towards making not a fictional, but a real community. As a community in the field of performance disappears the moment the common action finishes; in the similar vein, here the linguistic community disappears the moment the together thinking finishes. As Fischer – Lichte argued the representational theater is a hindrance in the making of a real community; likewise the fictional figure is a problem in the making of the real community in the performance of language, that otherwise allows the readers to get directly involved with the content of the text.

According to Corina Caduff the semiotization of the text material hinders the constitution of the figures. A figure, constituted out of a sentence, gets dissolved after

every sentence, and then it gets constituted new with every new expression. There is a constant process of meaning making and it does not get built up. This process is visible in Jelinek's theater texts, like *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis, Über Tiere, Wolken. Heim*, which do not have dramatic figures, but the texts consist of the units of meaning. Jelinek creates the semiotic chain in her theater texts by not allowing the constitution of figures, rather all the sounds, all the voices, all the gestures, all the mimics, and the texts that she uses are the tools to create a linguistic community. So, as Caduff says, "Jelinek setzt mit ihren Dramen nicht Rollen, sondern Sprachflächen gegeneinander."<sup>99</sup> The language – planes, are structured through the distribution among different discourse bearers, which in themselves are the units of the meaning. These units of the meaning (Sinneinheiten) are exposed to constant interplay of dissolving and new constitution of the meaning. This is how a semiotic chain functions.

For language to performance, it must step out of the dramatic figures, and make a linguistic community. James Benjamin Flieder says in the context of Jelinek's theater piece, *Wolken. Heim*,

"For the collective identity of Wir, the world within which he resides and his identity are unified. Since the conglomeration of text and character in *Wolken.Heim*. deals with German identity, the unification of Wir's identity and his habitat make Wir the subject of his own discourse. He is essentially one being, reflected by the language in which Jelinek depicts him. If Jelinek had listed him as a character in the play—in the traditional way that a playwright includes dramatis personae—and called him "Wir," there would already be distance between him and the reader, and him and the playwright through the extra construct of dramatis persona. By omitting that, Jelinek makes the discourse, and thereby the point of the play, Wir."<sup>100</sup>

So, when Jelinek does away with the dramatic figures in her theater texts that allows her texts and the reader to come together as a linguistic community. By omitting the dramatic personae she makes the discourse.

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<sup>99</sup> Caduff, p. 256.

<sup>100</sup> Flieder, James Benjamin (2006): *German National Identity in Elfriede Jelinek's Wolken. Heim.*, (master's thesis), Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, The Florida State University, College of Arts and Sciences, <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu%3A185019>. p. 7.

**i. Discourse as channel of communication in Jelinek's theater texts:** Discourse works as channel of communication. Jelinek's theater texts consist of semiotic, i.e. sign system, where she has literature, philosophy, poems, names, references, genres, ideas, associations, concepts, inter-medial concept, interdisciplinarity, or also an event, or a place, where what communicates through the text between the materials is discourse.

In my section above I read her theater also as Discourse Theater, so her theater texts engage with discourse, make discourse and are open for making discourse further. At the same time, her theater also presents itself as a semiotic chain. Both semiotics and discourse studies relate to the use of language, however they are different. Discourse is defined as 'language above the sentence', and not a unit of semiotic signs,

“but an abstract construct that allows the semiotic signs to assign meaning, and so communicate specific, repeatable communications to, between, and among objects, subjects, and statements”<sup>101</sup>.

So, in the semiotic chain, the discourse brings meaning to the text, it is the channel of communication.

In the 1960s the semiotics was related to the study of signs and symbol language. The work of Ronald Barthes in 1964 and Umberto Eco's in 1976, influenced the field of semiotics and the semiotic did not limit itself to the language only, but also to other semiotic codes, such as images, film, dance and architecture. This shift is also seen in the field of discourse analysis. Whereas in 1960s the discourse analysis was apolitical and purely related to the study of use of language, gradually by the end of 1970s it was recognized that “discourse is profoundly embedded in society and culture, and hence, closely related also to all forms of power, power abuse and social inequality”<sup>102</sup> So, the moment the discourse appears in Jelinek's theater texts, it carries along with it, not only linguistic meaning, but also the social, political, historical, cultural realities. Hence, there is certain connection between the two.

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<sup>101</sup> Yodiansyah, Hefri, Yuzalmi, Nanik (Jan 12, 2019): *Concept Keys in the Philosophical Communication*, P. 97.

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hefri\\_Th/publication/329118095\\_Book\\_review\\_Communication\\_Media/links/5c65537592851c48a9d2c604/Book-review-Communication-Media.pdf?origin=publication\\_list](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hefri_Th/publication/329118095_Book_review_Communication_Media/links/5c65537592851c48a9d2c604/Book-review-Communication-Media.pdf?origin=publication_list)

<sup>102</sup> *Editor's Introduction: The Study of Discourse: An Introduction. The Emergence of a New Cross-Discipline*, <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/The%20study%20of%20discourse.pdf>.

Semiotic builds up the linguistic community, whereas the discourse is there to communicate between all the materials in the text and also with the reader. The heterogeneity that Jelinek's texts contain, are because of diverse linguistic signs and also because of various discourses in play.

In her first theater text *Was geschah nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte* she has the dramatic personae, who speak the lines, loaded with the concepts. Also in *Clara S. musikalische Tragödie* the characters are in between being individual and as a bearer of discourses. They move in between.

Michael Schmidt says,

In ihrem Sprechen untergraben sie ihre jeweilige Individualität, und zugleich erfährt der Diskurs durch sie eine Individualisierung. Sie sind weder Ich, noch reines, abstraktes Sprechen. Mit einem von Deleuze entlehnten Begriff könnte man sie als individuell bezeichnen. So sind die Figuren zugleich geschichtlich über- und unter determiniert. Sie sind Zitat, Bruchstücke eines gelebten Lebens, das, etwa für Clara Schumann im 19. Jahrhundert, als vorbildlich und emanzipiert gelten konnte. Das gelebte, verlorene Leben der Menschen wird zu einem dumpfen Rauschen, das unter dem Diskurs liegt. Dieses Leben ist zugleich an- und abwesend.<sup>103</sup>

According to Schmidt, the dramatic personae in *Clara S. musikalische Tragödie* are though real, living characters, but they are historically under- and overdetermined. According to Hesse and Bloor,

“...undeterminism shows the necessity for bringing noncognitive, social factors into play in explaining the theory choices of the scientists (on the grounds that methodological and evidential considerations alone are demonstrably insufficient to account for such choices).”<sup>104</sup>

On the one hand, by using undeterminism, that allows one to use noncognitive factors in the work; on the other hand the overdeterminism, that supports the use of multiple

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<sup>103</sup> Schmidt, Michael (July 28, 2016): *Macht und Simultanität in Elfriede Jelineks Theaterstück Clara S. musikalische Tragödie*, pp. 1-15, p. 3, [https://jelinetz2.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/schmidt\\_clara-s-musikalische-tragoedie.pdf](https://jelinetz2.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/schmidt_clara-s-musikalische-tragoedie.pdf).

<sup>104</sup> Laudan, Larry (1990): *Demystifying Underdetermination*, In C. Wade Savage (ed.), *Scientific Theories*. University of Minnesota Press. pp. 267-97, p. 268.

causes in favor of one single effect; Jelinek makes figure indeterminate. The living figure lies under the discourse.

In her later works, where Jelinek increasingly becomes more and more abstract in her presentation of the concepts, her theater takes more intensely the character of a performance of language.

Jelinek's theater texts, as Honegger says, is about the >>performance of the language itself<<<sup>105</sup>. Her theater is termed as >>dramaturgy of speech acts<<<sup>106</sup>. Honegger remarks, "it (Jelinek's theater) provides a provocative new model for the multiple dramas inside language"<sup>107</sup>. The drama is within the language, and it is this drama that must be on display in the performance.

**b.2 Multiplicity:** In the field of philosophy, and as Deleuze sees it, multiplicity is a complex structure and it does not refer to any prior unity. This implies that the induction of multiplicity means one has not started with a point of unity and one is not developing further any point of unity.

Semiotics and discourse studies, which contribute in the making of the language planes in Jelinek's texts, have methodologically common ground. Both these disciplines take "interest in properties of 'naturally occurring' language use by real language users, instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples"<sup>108</sup>. The semiotic chain and the discourses that Jelinek's theater texts have woven in the linguistic surface are not unnatural; rather they come with the contexts, in which they are embedded. The language in her texts is the ones used by the people in real. But the multiplicity, which gives the complexity to her theater texts, is made by her. It is constructed. Deleuze and Guattari, while discussing multiplicity as a rhizome principle, say that the multiplicity is not something given, but is made.

According to Deleuze and Guattari,

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<sup>105</sup> Honegger, Gita (Jan 1, 2007): *Staging Memory: The Drama Inside the Language of Elfriede Jelinek*, In: *Studies in 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literature, Volume 31, Issue 1*, Article 13, pp. 285 - 306, p. 288. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2334-4415.1653>.

<sup>106</sup> Honegger, p. 288.

<sup>107</sup> Honegger, p. 301.

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/The%20study%20of%20discourse.pdf>

“The multiple *must be made*, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available—always  $n-1$  (the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted). Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at  $n - 1$  dimensions. A system of this kind could be called a rhizome.”<sup>109</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that one must take away the uniqueness from the multiplicity to be constituted in order to make it rhizome. Being unique means being only one of its kinds, and then unique is something that does not allow any further connection, and hence stops further association, and the process of rhizome formation.

Multiplicity opposes the idea of unity. There is no prior unity over which the multiplicity can be built. The complexity that Jelinek’s theater texts contain within themselves is due to the multiplicity that she builds. First here I give a few references to assert this point that there is multiplicity in her texts; second I talk about the methods that she uses in subtracting from the available dimensions.

**i. Defiance of Unity in Jelinek’s Theater texts:** There is no prior unity that her theater texts base themselves upon. Jelinek takes from other texts that already exist, as I have written above, in her use of language, she is not inventing any new example, though her texts are marked by her special treatment to the language, still it does not relate to the study of an abstract language system. However she also does not centralize her theater texts around particular texts and stay around those texts. Rather she subtracts the dimension from those texts that she uses in her theater pieces, and out of several dimensions that she subtracts from numerous other texts, she makes the multiple, thereby the uniqueness of the iconic texts is lost, and she does not attach any uniqueness to the multiplicity to be constituted also. The idea behind creating the multiplicity in her work is to take away the root book like character of those works that she takes from, and make them part of a radicle system and in doing this the multiplicity created by Jelinek in the form of a theater piece is also the part of that whole, which is in the process of making, nobody is sitting on either end of it.

In her theater texts, Jelinek defies any kind of unity.

According to Maja Sibylle Pflüger,

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<sup>109</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 6.

“Die Theatertexte bilden ein Ensemble von Einzelsequenzen, die nicht unbedingt klar umrissen sind. In der Konsequenz ändert sich die Funktion von Akt und Szene für die formale Segmentierung des Dramas. Das Fragment der einzelnen Szene besitzt mehr Gewicht als der Handlungszusammenhang. Jelinek verhindert durch die szenische Fragmentierung die Konstruktion eines übergeordneten Ganzen.”<sup>110</sup>

Jelinek’s theater texts are the ensemble of single sequences (Einzelsequenzen), but they are also not clearly distinct from each other. Pflüger says that the fragment of the individual scene has more weight than the narrative contexts (Handlungszusammenhang). Since the individual scene is fragmented, it does not contribute in making her theater text a bigger total.

Thereby the unity as existed in the classical drama as the division of acts, for the formal segmentation of drama, is lost. In the theater piece, *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* where Jelinek has still used dramatic figures, and the dialogue between the figures, the text is divided into the scenes. *Wolken. Heim* is divided into 24 part, and Pflüger remarks,

“...dort ist ein so dichtes und beinahe unentwirrbares Gewebe der Sequenzen entstanden, daß sich kaum mehr eine Sukzession der Ereignisse herauschälen läßt.”<sup>111</sup>

So, no particular part of the theater texts are in subordinate position to the next one, this also means that there is no prior unity that the parts of the text have to refer back to. There is no root where they have to return.

In the conception of figures also Jelinek abolishes any idea of unity. In her earlier theater works, where Jelinek still has dramatic figures, like in *Was geschah nach dem Nora ihren verlassen hatte*, *Clara S. Musikalische Tragödie*, *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen*, *Raststätte oder sie machen alle* and a few more, the figures say the words or the sentences which are loaded with concepts that sound more like discourse, and this automatically makes them plural in character. Even if the dramatic figure relates to one person, there also Jelinek destroys the unity of the character, because of her method of working.

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<sup>110</sup> Pflüger, Maja Sibylle (1996): *Vom Dialog zur Dialogität. Die Theaterästhetik von Elfriede Jelinek*, Francke, Tübingen, 1996, p. 37.

<sup>111</sup> Pflüger, p. 37.

Pflüger says,

“Jelinek spaltet einzelne Figuren so auf, daß deren Monologe von verschiedenen Stimmen gesprochen werden. Die Arendt – Figur aus *Totenauberg* spricht mit zwei Stimmen, wovon eine der auf der Bühne anwesenden Schauspielerin gehört und die andere ihrem Double im gleichzeitig gezeigten Film. Sie sprechen denselben Text mit derselben Stimme, teilweise gemeinsam, teilweise hört eine von beiden zu. Die Replik verliert so ihre Homogenität und wird vielstimmig.”<sup>112</sup>

Jelinek’s theater texts are a product of the technique of montage, quotations, collage etc., i.e. each work by has varied contexts and references. In fact, the essentialization of our daily life hides the fact that our life as we live is a result of a complex, social, economic, cultural structure, in my opinion, her theater texts, one by one, take up the themes, the areas, the issues, that relate to us, and Jelinek tries to unearth all the dimensions, that take part in creating that complexity.

**ii) Multiplicity is made:** There is a process of the fragmentation in the constitution of the text by Jelinek, as we have discussed above. In fragmentation of the text there is no primary or no supplementary text. The citations, references, quotations, images, textual pieces from various sources form the fragmentation of her theater texts, which are structurally intertextual, through the use of the methods like montage and collage.

Collage and montage that Jelinek uses to bring in the multiplicity in her theater texts are not organic, rather inorganic processes. Jelinek’s theater texts are like rhizome, which in the definition of Deleuze and Guattari, is ‘natural’, however according to them the principle of multiplicity is not something given, or natural, rather it is made. Jelinek produces the theater texts; thereby she uses the technique of montage and collage, in order to expose the naturalness of our identities, which are actually constructed by the discourses, controlled by media, institutions, disciplines, ideologies. She fragments in her theater texts the coherent identities that have been constructed and projected as something given, something natural by bringing in different materials that contribute in the making of those identities.

Montage is a technique, first introduced in film in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is defined as

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<sup>112</sup> Pflüger, p. 29.

“the process or technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of films to form a continuous whole; a sequence or picture resulting from such a process”<sup>113</sup>.

There are two distinct features of the montage technique: various materials can be put together through this technique into a sequence and thereby the space, time and information are condensed. Montage puts things in sequence; still it is different from continuity. Continuity works for pre-determined narrative, but montage creates the dialectic collision of the images to create the meaning in the film. It is not much based on the script; rather it is concerned with the synthesis of association between shots. Montage is a tool, which adds poetic to the cinema and it is considered parallel to the literary metaphor. In the context of the literature it would be different pieces of texts coming together in dialectic relationship with each other. Out of the dialectic relationship between the text pieces the synthesis of associations between texts emerges. So, montage is not to support a big narrative of a particular text, rather, it comes in use exactly because the text pieces need to interact with each other, and make connections. Moreover it is a creative tool. Through the technique of selecting, editing and piecing together separate sections, one can make a piece of work poetic. Though primarily associated with films, montage has been practiced also as a literary device in avant – garde movements. Montage “refers to the conjoining of heterogeneous discourses in a given text”<sup>114</sup>. Jelinek’s earlier theater texts use montage as a literary device. In *Was geschah nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte, Clara S. Musikalische Tragödie, Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* Jelinek combines heterogeneous discourses; feminist (and different streams of feminist discourses), socialist, capitalist, gender, sexuality etc. The montage element in a piece of literature poses the question on the >>agency of the modern subject<<<sup>115</sup>. This is evident in the treatment of the figures in her earliest theater texts. The real living historical character like Clara S., or the renowned fictional characters like Nora or Emily, a fictional character but with a hint of once living author of “Wuthering Heights”, Emily Bronte, in *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen*, they all become in the hands of Jelinek the discourse bearers.

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<sup>113</sup> Leibowich, Jared (Winter, 2007): ‘montage’, The Chicago School of Media Theory, <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/montage/>.

<sup>114</sup> Barndt, Kerstin: *Montage in Literature*, Article DOI, 10.4324/9781135000356-REMO18-1, <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/overview/montage>.

<sup>115</sup> Barndt, Kerstin: *Montage in Literature*, Article DOI, 10.4324/9781135000356-REMO18-1, <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/overview/montage>.

According to Kerstin Brandt,

“Montage literature tends to playfully dissect language itself, breaking down traditional syntax and semantics in the process. It favors ambiguity, irony, and paradox over narrative unity or totality.”<sup>116</sup>

So, if Jelinek uses montage as a literary tool, she is questioning the agency of subject on one hand; and is breaking free the text from the concept of unity that is acquired through a narrative plot, on the other hand. Montage has its parallel in the form of collage in other art mediums. Whereas there is editing, piecing together different shots in the montage, in collage it is about the juxtaposition of different things.

By definition, collage is

“an abstract work of art in which photographs, pieces of paper, newspaper cuttings, string, etc., are placed in juxtaposition and glued to the pictorial surface”<sup>117</sup>.

Collage is a technique of art production where an assemblage of different forms of materials is used. It opposes the modernist idea about purity, originality, and authenticity.

About the literary collage, Joanna Halse says,

“Literary collage, manifest in both a temporal and material sense within the context of the book, aimed to challenge traditional narrative conventions. Collage was evinced in postmodern fiction through the literal combination and layering of various appropriated texts; the writing of texts in borrowed intonations; the physical fragmenting of narrative through the play of typographic elements and the subversion of the conventions of the book and accepted modes of reading.”<sup>118</sup>

So, literary collage challenges the narrative books and also the accepted modes of reading by appropriating different texts, thereby physical narrative gets fragmented.

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<sup>116</sup> Barndt, Kerstin: *Montage in Literature*, Article DOI, 10.4324/9781135000356-REMO18-1, <https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/overview/montage>.

<sup>117</sup> Leibowich, Jared (Winter, 2007): “*montage*”, The Chicago School of Media Theory, <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/montage/>.

<sup>118</sup> Halse, Joanne (April 2006): *Framing the Text: An Investigation of Collage in Postmodern Narrative Illustration*, (master’s thesis), Department of Fine Arts, University of Stellenbosch, <http://scholar.sun.ac.za>, p. 82.

In her theater texts, Jelinek not only takes material from literature and philosophy, but she also appropriates materials from film and television. Morgan Marcell Koerner says while citing Gillian Pye, in the context of Jelinek's theater text, *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen*, that this work has a >>multi – faceted comic collage<<<sup>119</sup>. This theater text and also *Burgtheater*, while citing Pye, Koerner states, uses slapstick and grotesque comedy. In the theater text, *Alpenkönig the Alpenkönig* >>continues to ask for donation while he is being mutilated<<<sup>120</sup>. According to Koerner, the *Alpenkönig* in >>excessive length<<<sup>121</sup> (5 pages) and in >>repetitive structure<<<sup>122</sup> mimics and here Jelinek follows the strategies more common to the films than to the literary grotesque. In her theater texts like *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen*, *Raststätte oder sie machens alle* or *Burgtheater* she makes playful citation of media entertainment.

The techniques of collage and montage fragment the text and because of the textual fragmentation the reader does not get the opportunity to reach to a cohesive conclusion, as he is surrounded by a choice of multiple conclusions, >>aroused by a variety of associations induced by the inserted fragments or distracted by the materiality of the context<<<sup>123</sup>. Joanna Halse, while referring to Lewis, says that the textual collage on one hand, disrupts a narrative's plot, but on the other hand it gives a reader certain amount of power to interpret a text. Since it presents more than one conclusion to the reader, the reader may make further associations and conclusions. Halse concludes,

“Within such a climate of multiplicity, a text may appear to change its direction and content continuously and simultaneously.”<sup>124</sup>

So, the multiplicity has the nature to multiply, it is the climate of multiplicity that Jelinek's theater texts also form. So, if one comes under this climatic condition, one is touching a content that is continuous and also simultaneous. Here below I engage with

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<sup>119</sup> Koerner, Morgan Marcell (2015): *Beyond Media Critique: Performance and Pop – Cultural Pleasures in Elfriede Jelinek and Frank Castorf's Raststätte oder sie machens alle*, In: *A Different Germany: Pop and the Negotiation of German Culture*, Desmarais, Claude (d.) Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 121 – 138, p. 122.

<sup>120</sup> Koerner, p. 123.

<sup>121</sup> Koerner, p. 123.

<sup>122</sup> Koerner, p. 123.

<sup>123</sup> Halse, 53-54.

<sup>124</sup> Halse, p. 54.

the characteristics of multiplicity to get a grasp of its role in the context of Jelinek's theater texts.

Deleuze and Guattari explain that a multiplicity does not have subject or object; it has only >>determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions<<.”<sup>125</sup> Hence if it increases in number, the multiplicity changes in nature also. So, whereas in the root – system and in the radicle system, the laws of combination get reduced, in rhizome the multiplicity grows and with that the laws of combination also increase, as the multiplicity in order to grow, must change its nature. It can change its nature if it gets connected to other, there by emerging as something new. Unlike the older systems, based on order and points, there is no order, no point in rhizome, only line. There are no units of measure; but the multiplicities of measurement. According to Deleuze and Guattari the multiplicities do not let themselves be overcoded, as they are defined “by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities”<sup>126</sup>. They look at the multiplicities as a plane of consistency, and they remark that ideal for a book would be to put everything, “lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations”<sup>127</sup> on a single page, together on a plane of exteriority.

Jelinek's theater texts work according to the principle of multiplicity.

Bärbel Lücke remarks,

“Jelinek ‘erlöst’ so den Text von den Gattungsregeln als *Code*, von dem *einen* Sinn als idealem Gehalt, von seiner überzeitlichen Wahrheit und Ewiggültigkeit. Im Spiel mit den aufgefropften textuellen und kulturellen Zitaten (Pop etc.) werden sämtliche Texte *plural*, *multifunctional*, *offenes Kunstwerk*, *Ereignis*. Sie bedueten anders (etwas anders), sie bedeuten neu.”<sup>128</sup>

The general characteristic of her theater texts are that they are plural, multifunctional, open, an art work, an event. They do not follow the rules of the genre; rather they question its totality.

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<sup>125</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 8.

<sup>126</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 9.

<sup>127</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> Lücke, Bärbel (2008): *Elfriede Jelinek, Eine Einführung in das Werk*, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, p. 107.

**b.3 Asignifying rupture:** According to the third principle, a rhizome has a line of segmentarity, from where it can get >> stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc. <<<sup>129</sup> and then there are lines of deterritorialization to flee. The rupture happens when the segmentary lines explode into a line of flight. The lines are tied to each other and hence there is no dichotomy here, still a rupture may lead into reconcounting organizations that restartify everything, which can develop into the formations that >>restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject<<<sup>130</sup>. In other words the asignifying rupture can give life to a signifier, which gives birth to a subject.

In their work, “A Thousand Plateaus”, in the chapter “Micropolitics and Segmentarity” Deleuze and Guattari explain that the notion of segmentarity was “constructed by ethnologists to account for so – called primitive societies, which have no fixed, central State apparatus and no global power mechanisms or specialized political institutions”<sup>131</sup>. To understand the line of segmentarity it is important to understand the segment, in the social context of the primitive societies.

In the context of the primitive societies, the social segments are a local construction, which excludes any prior determination of a base domain. A social segment has extrinsic and situational properties, i.e. they can’t be reduced to the intrinsic properties of a structure. The activity within a social segmentation in a primitive society is spontaneous, so there is no separation between the segmentarity and the segmentation - in - progress. So, such a social segmentation appears to be very dynamic. Segmentations also do not mean that the segments do not communicate with each other. Deleuze and Guattari say that there is considerable communication between the segments, which consist of heterogeneous elements. The communication between heterogeneous elements may result in one segment fitting into the other one in many ways. They argue that in the primitive societies there is certain freedom between the segments in the moment of fusion and division; depending on the undertaken work and the situation.

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<sup>129</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Deleuze & Guattari, p. 209.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the line of segmentarity relates to stratification, organization, significance, territorialization and attribution. The same line turns into line of flight, and that is when, the rupture happens. The rupture is asignifying and brings in deterritorialization, after that again the reterritorialization happens, meaning and subject is restored. In Elfriede Jelinek's theater texts, as I have written in the last section, the discourse plays the role to assign meaning to the language. So, what comes in between the discourses is the moment of rupture.

- i. Asignifying reapture in Jelinek's Theater Texts:** Since the intertextuality is the structural base of Jelinek's theater texts, i.e. her individual theater text consists of several texts, so it does not have the structure, which is marked with intrinsic properties. The intrinsic properties are the properties of a system within. The segment has the exterior properties, i.e. not essential or inherent. The properties that a segment has, matches with the properties that Jelinek's theater texts have. Rather it makes sense to say that a theater text, with all that it is, has the character of a primitive society, which has segment, segmentarity and segmentation taking place constantly. Then, there is the line of segmentation in the principle of rhizome, which relates to organizing, territorialization, giving significance to the text; then there is flight from the line, which is linked to deterritorialisation by Deleuze and Guattari, which they term as >>asignifying rupture<< after that again there is activity of reterritorialization. In my opinion, in a text or a book, the aspect of deterritorialization, the asignifying rupture is an intentional undertaking by the author to stop the process of territorialization, which if it continues as it does, can turn into a domain, with a capacity of prior determination. There is the moment of 'asignifying rupture' in Jelinek's usage of materials ranging from philosophy to a shopping bill, from a literary text to a pop song, from the reference of a iconic figure in history to a figure from everyday life. There is the moment of 'asignifying rupture' in Jelinek's usage of materials ranging from philosophy to a shopping bill, from a literary text to a pop song, from the reference of a iconic figure in history to a figure from everyday life.

#### **b.4 Cartography and Decalcomania:** According to definition,

“Cartography is the study and practice of creating maps to communicate spatial, topographic, and geographic information effectively.”<sup>132</sup>

It is the science and art of map making. Decalcomania is a technique used by Max Ernst, a German painter and sculptor,

“...in which a piece of paper or glass is laid over a painted surface and then removed. This action creates suction, pulling at the paint to form a scaly, biomorphic texture”<sup>133</sup>.

Whereas cartography relates to the field of geography; decalcomania is a technique of art, done on the pottery.

Deleuze and Guattari, while elaborating on their fourth principle say that a rhizome keeps itself away from the genetic axis or deep structure. They define genetic axis as objective pivotal unity and all the successive stages are organized upon it. Deep structure is like base structure which can be broken down and the unity of the product passes into another transformational, subjective dimension. Thus, a work with a genetic axis or deep structure is representational in character and such a work is based on the principles of tracing. On the basis of the tracing principle, a work just explores unconscious that is already there from the start, just hidden in the darkness (of memory and language). Deleuze and Guattari say, a rhizome is a map, and not a tracing and whereas tracing reproduces unconscious, mapping constructs the unconscious. Moreover, tracing always comes back to the same; a map has multiple entryways. They also add, that map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing has to do with competence.

**i. Work on Unconscious in Jelinek’s theater texts:** With the tracing, one only explores the unconscious, but with mapping, one can construct it. When Jelinek approaches the vast array of materials already existing, her approach to the materials is similar to that of mapping. The mapping is equal to performing and contributes in the construction of unconscious.

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<sup>132</sup> <https://www.worldatlas.com/what-is-cartography.html>

<sup>133</sup> Backus, Jessica (Dec 30, 2014): *Beyond Painting: The Experimental Techniques of Max Ernst*, <https://www.artsy.net/article/jessica-beyond-painting-the-experimental-techniques-of-max>.

In the field of psychology, Sigmund Freud divided the mind into conscious and unconscious states. By definition, the conscious state contains all the thoughts, feelings, cognitions and memories; the unconscious state is the deeper mental processes, which are not easily available to the conscious mind. The unconscious state of mind is very crucial, as

“the unconscious is where much of the mind’s work gets done; it’s the repository of automatic skills, the source of stored and often repressed memories of traumatic experiences, intuition, fantasy and dreams, and an engine of information processing.”<sup>134</sup>

The unconscious state of mind is automatic, so there is no scope of any introspection on it. I have written in the beginning of this chapter that in Jelinek’s theater texts the work is oriented towards the unconscious. The materials of a domain are put together consciously to interact with the unconscious mind of the reader, which is a storage of all kinds of repressed memories. Jelinek’s work on the materials can be compared to the cartography and decalcomania. She dives into the collective unconscious state of the society through the process of mapping and thereby the materials come to the conscious state and the aesthetic she applies could be compared to the engraving that is done on the top of a clay work as in decalcomania.

According to the research in the field of psychology, the unconscious mind actually works behind the scene and then one experiences a conscious thought. The memories, the feelings, the emotions, the dreams, if, they are thematized in a text, then, that means, the writer is digging the deep unconscious corner of the mind. Through stepping into the collective unconscious Jelinek plugs in the reader to his/her own unconscious state of the mind. So it emerges as an uninterrupted flow of thinking, the way David Bohm suggested the thought system to work in the making of the world. According to him, as I have elaborated earlier in this chapter, thinking relates to the current situation in the present time, and does not work as per reflex and conditioning.

So when one is dealing with Jelinek’s theater texts, one is dealing with the unconscious. The unconscious, which leaves nothing behind for the introspection; it connects one to the automatic thoughts. To do that Jelinek constructs language planes,

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<sup>134</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/unconscious>

where the materials from the past and present, and all different kinds, are put on one surface in a rhizomatic fashion and its openness, its multiplicity, its decentered structure allows one to drift.

**3.4 Theory of Drift and Jelinek’s Theater Texts:** As the conscious thought connects to the unconscious thought, the reader goes into the materiality of the thought. It is the unconscious movement that takes one there. Erika Fischer – Lichte, while exploring the aesthetics of the performative, says that it is the materiality of the actor’s body, and the materiality of space, time, sound etc, which gives performance a transformative quality. So, the materiality of thought through unconscious movement can lead to something unexpected, may be to a new dimension of the thought. The unconscious movement (mental or physical) is termed as drift. Jelinek’s works are like rhizome, i.e. they have endless possibilities to grow in different dimensions. The basic premise here is that Jelinek drifts while she is working with different materials, and that creates a kind of work, which allows the reader to drift as well and thereby the new rhizomes get made.

As per the definition, drift is ‘chance’, to drift is ‘to take chance’ and the movement of drifting is

“a transitioning that is responsive to chance and to circumstance, one which allows the various cross-pressures of the tide to carry a human subject, bobbing and vulnerable, to somewhere wholly unexpected, perhaps to somewhere that never could be arrived at via the pathways of rational intention”<sup>135</sup>.

As per my basic premise, the movement of drifting is important in responding to the chance and circumstance which the existing materials in the hidden corners in their existence, contain, and Jelinek’s movement of drifting has been responsive to those chances and circumstances. In my assumption, it is the movement of drifting that allows a particular thought process the complexities of the material. Interestingly, whereas the literature and art field asks for relearning to drift, the science, where the

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<sup>135</sup>Lucas, Rosy: *Drifting in the Weeds of Heaven: Mary Oliver and the Poetics of the Immeasurable*, In: *RHIZOMES*, Berry, Ellen, Siegel, Carol, Saper, Craig J. & Burgess, Helen J (eds): ISSN 1555-9998 . 230 East Hall Bowling Green State University Bowling Green, OH 43403. <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue13/lucas.html#15>.

concept got theoretized first, looks at the concept drift, as problem, and explores the ways to handle it.

In this section, first I engage with various theories emerging in different fields to understand the concept of drift. Second I look at the Concept Drift, which has got recognized and has been worked upon in the field of Computer science. Jelinek's theater texts work as pretext in my engagement with the concept of drift as per both the dimensions.

**3.4.1 Concept of Drift and Jelinek's Theater texts:** Drift, random drift, genetic drift, concept drift, the concept of drift emerge in various fields, and at this stage, it is still in the phase of formulation and organization. Still there is a debate going on, whether the drift should be seen as an opposite concept to the natural selection, and still the various components (like, process, cause, outcome, effect), or the terms like physical fitness, sampling etc, are argued; but there is a wider recognition for the concept and it is seen as something that brings a new unexpected variation in the evolutionary process. It is associated with something new that is seen as a 'chance'.

In 1929, a founder of population genetics, Sewall Wright, introduced the concept of genetic drift. Wright referred to all changes in allele frequency<sup>136</sup> as either "steady drift" (e.g., selection) or "random drift" (e.g., sampling error). He was using it in the sense of a directed process of change, or natural selection. So, he was not distinguishing drift from natural selection. His successors found the role of drift to be insignificant in the evolutionary scheme. In 1968, with Motoo Kimura's "The neutral theory of molecular evolution" the interest in the concept of drift rose again. Kimura claimed in his theory that most of the genetic changes are caused by genetic drift acting on neutral mutations. The genetic science says that the genetic drift is the

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<sup>136</sup>Allele frequency (also called gene frequency) is the term used to describe the fraction of gene copies that are of a particular allele in a defined population. Let us consider, for example, a population of 100 diploid individuals. Each individual carries two copies of each gene, so there are a total of 200 gene copies in the population of 100 people. Now let us say that 20 individuals in this population are heterozygous for allele A (with a second allele of some other type), and 5 individuals are homozygous for allele A. Each homozygote would contribute two copies of the allele toward the total fraction, while each heterozygote would only contribute one copy toward the total fraction. So the total number of A alleles in the population would be 20 + 10, for a total of 30. The allele frequency would be this number divided by the total number of gene copies (30/200) to yield 0.15, which is the allele frequency. From: Silver, L. (2001): "Allele Frequency, in: Encyclopedia of Genetics, (eds. Sydney Brenner and Jefferey H. Miller), Elsevier Science Ltd., p. 37.

change in genetic diversity. Specifically, it relates to the change in frequencies of different alleles, over generations because of chance.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome work keeps itself away from the genetic axis or deep structure. In my opinion, Jelinek is against the canonical ideas, thoughts, views, identities, which works as deep structure in the society and when Jelinek montages the pieces of texts from different established sources, the parts of the texts get deviated from their genetic axis. When the movement of the materials take place in a text, the ability of the material to be able to interact with other materials, if done through the method of drift, can bring something new as chance. By drifting one can also come across something that is not there in the text, but the reader can bring in there between the materials, where he/she finds the need to fill any gap. Here I give an instance of her first theater text, *Was geschah nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte oder Stützen der Gesellschaften* which comes 100 years after Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* and in which Jelinek makes Ibsen's plays the materials for her text to think about the women's role in the patriarchal society, which dominates not only the house environment, but also the other spaces, like work place, which is a combination of patriarchy and capitalism. Whereas Ibsen's play is a canon and hence like a root book, has a direction; Jelinek's Nora play talks about dimensions that could connect patriarchy to capitalist structure, feminist movement to its evolution and its heterogeneous growth. As Christine Kiebuszinska says in her work<sup>137</sup>, certain clichés continue to surround the reception of Ibsen's play even today, and in that sense, it seems to have acquired an authoritative position in the society across the cultures and boundaries<sup>138</sup>. Jelinek in her play, by using heterogeneous material, exposes the dream of gender equality that seemed to get materialized with Ibsen's Nora walking out of her house. By using Ibsen's plays as pretext, robbing the characters in her play of any psychological depth, using the capitalist jargons, by throwing in the discourse of materialist feminism, as Christine Kiebuszinska comments, Jelinek, is unmasking >>the illusion perpetuated by misreadings of

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<sup>137</sup> Kiebuszinska, Christine 1998):*Elfriede Jelinek's Nora Project: Or What Happens When Nora Meets the Capitalists*, In: *Modern Drama*, Volume 41, Number 1, University Toronto Press, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/md.41.1.134>.

<sup>138</sup> I watched the last performance of an adaptation of Ibsen' play "A Doll's House" in Nepali in 2005 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Phoboo, Abha Eli (March 2005): *Real life drama*, Issue 238, <http://archive.nepalitimes.com/news.php?id=1140#.W6SRWtczZdg>.

canonical texts<sup>139</sup>. By bringing Ibsen's plays in the connection with other materials that makes the larger context to talk about gender identity, Jelinek is changing the gene frequency of the existing genetic diversity that is in place so far. Talking about the random genetic drift, the genetic science gives an example of pollen grains.

“Every pollen grain contains a different combination of alleles. Which pollen grains — whether carried by wind, insects, or some other medium — actually succeed in arriving at a compatible flower and producing a seed — are largely determined by chance events. Thus, some genetic diversity is usually lost at every generation through these chance events.”<sup>140</sup>

Or, we can also say that a new genetic diversity comes up in this process, and contributes to the stepping in of the species into something new. So, Jelinek's work asks the reader to drift through various materials related to gender identity and flow.

In the field of computer science, the concept drift relates to the learning in the context of non – stationary distributions. Most of the machine -learning - models are static.

The scientists argue,

“...increasing online deployment of learned models gives increasing urgency to the development of efficient and effective mechanisms to address learning in the context of non-stationary distributions.”<sup>141</sup>

This is commonly termed as concept drift. The computer science gives suggestion to deal with robust outcome that the medium provides through its model and below we talk about it.

**3.4.2 A Glance at the Model, proposed in Computer Science to handle the Concept Drift:** In the language of the computer science, “During classification a change in the concept or distribution of dataset over the time is termed as concept drift.”<sup>142</sup> It is about change, which could relate to the concept or to the distribution. According to Yamini Kadve and Vaishali Suryawanshi, “Concept drift occurs when

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<sup>139</sup>Kiebuszinska, Christine 1998):*Elfriede Jelinek's Nora Project: Or What Happens When Nora Meets the Capitalists*, In: *Modern Drama*, Volume 41, Number 1, University Toronto Press, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3138/md.41.1.134>.

<sup>140</sup><http://studylib.net/doc/10501873/genetic-diversity-is-alwacys-changing-both-across-migration>

<sup>141</sup><https://arxiv.org/abs/1511.03816>

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p. 804.

the concept about which data is being collected shifts from time to time after a minimum stability period.”<sup>143</sup> It is called ‘streaming data’, which is different from the stationary data, which could be mined through the conventional data mining algorithms. Sikha Mehta Janardan finds that the classical classification algorithms are not compatible with streaming data, because of the >>resource constraints<< and >>single scan of the data<<. She relates the resource constraints to processing time and memory, and single scan of data to one look and to no random access. The data streaming is a dynamic process, and Yamini Kadve and Vaishali Suryawanshi argue that one needs to consider the problem of the concept drift to be able to mine streaming data with >>acceptable accuracy<<. Janardan suggests that the concept drift can be handled through the use of >adaptive learning<, which can be implemented through using incremental and ensemble learning. The adaptive learning comes in the place of tailored learning, which is suitable for the stationary data. The adaptive learning is an educational method, where “learning is mostly associated with activities involving computers and interactive networks simultaneously and users require that learning material/activities should be provided to them in suitable manner”<sup>144</sup>. It is based on the student’s learning needs, and the learning material is adaptive in nature. The incremental learning and the ensemble learning are fundamental methods of the adaptive learning.

In the field of computer science,

“Incremental learning follows a machine learning paradigm where the learning process taking place whenever new examples emerge, and then adjusts to what has been learned from the new examples”<sup>145</sup>.

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<sup>143</sup>Kadve, Yamini&Suryawanshi, Vaishali: “ A Review on Concept Drift”, IOSR Journal of Computer Engineering (IOSR-JCE) e-ISSN: 2278-0661,p-ISSN: 2278-8727, Volume 17, Issue 1, Ver. II (Jan – Feb. 2015), PP 20-26 - [www.iosrjournals.org](http://www.iosrjournals.org). p. 20.

<sup>144</sup> Fröschl, Christoph, Nguyen, Loc & Do, Phung: “State of the Art of Adaptive Learning”, The 2009 World Congress in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and Applied Computing (WORLDCOMP’09) , All content following this page was uploaded by Academic Network of Loc Nguyen on 25 January 2018,p. 1. , [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221186474\\_State\\_of\\_the\\_Art\\_of\\_Adaptive\\_Learning](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221186474_State_of_the_Art_of_Adaptive_Learning)

<sup>145</sup> Zang, Wenyu, Zhang, Peng ,Zhou, Chuan, Guo, LI (2014): *Comparative study between incremental and ensemble learning on data streams: Case study*, in: *Journal Of Big Data*, pp. 1-16, p.1, <https://journalofbigdata.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/2196-1115-1-5>.

So, the existing model of knowledge is always extended with the feed of new input data, hence it is incremental in nature. The other fundamental method of the adaptive learning can be defined as such:

“The fundamental principle of dynamic ensemble learning is to dividing large data-stream into small data chunks and training classifiers on each data chunk independently.”<sup>146</sup>

The ensemble learning consists of multiple models, such as classifiers or experts, which are strategically generated and combined to solve a distinct computational intelligence problem. In incremental learning, which follows a machine learning paradigm, a learning process takes place each time a new example emerges and thereby the learning paradigm gets adjusted with the new learning from the new example. So, adaptive learning, which uses both incremental and ensemble learning, makes customized material by using the existing model of knowledge and constantly increasing it by bringing in new input data, and also through creating ensemble of various models of knowledge.

**3.4.3 Jelinek’s theater texts and Concept Drift:** As Yamini Kadve and Vaishali Suryawanshi explain that concept drift happens when the concept about which the data is being collected changes after a minimum period of stability and that shift in the concept occurs time to time. In my opinion, Jelinek’s theater texts also entail the material which has data stream like quality. Right from the title, to the content in a play, the figures, the non – figures, the words spoken, the myth unfolded, the history revisited, the believes questioned, the purity doubted, everything is there in her plays as concept. Her texts are loaded with the concepts and they have the potential to proliferate with any interaction. In my opinion, like in concept drift, where while data is being collected, the concept can shift, the particular concept around which one may work in Jelinek’s text, can also shift, while one is working around that concept. So, what I am suggesting is, that the multiplicity, decentered content, plurality all that is created by Jelinek in her theater texts by use of montage, collage, intertextuality, and all is done by her, to create the threshold concept, i.e. the concept, which has the

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<sup>146</sup>Zang, Wenyu, Zhang, Peng ,Zhou, Chuan, Guo, LI (2014): *Comparative study between incremental and ensemble learning on data streams: Case study*, In: *Journal Of Big Data*, pp. 1-16, <https://journalofbigdata.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/2196-1115-1-5>.

quality to change, to transcend, can be handled, if one tries to interact with her text, using the method of adaptive learning.

**Conclusion:** Jelinek in her theater texts constitutes a thought system, and by bringing it together, which seems to have certain structure, she asks the readers to come out of automatic reflex, that is termed by David Bohm as 'thought'. Bohm proposes that one must go deeper in the thought system to get rid of the automatic reflex and conditioning. Thereby to get into the act of thinking is very influential as thinking, a verb, in present tense, views the thought system critically, and thereby one can work on the incoherent aspects of the thought system. According to him, we need to be governed less and less by thought, which literally constitutes everything in the world and more and more by intelligence that can come up with our ability to see the incoherence, and that is visible only if one can go beyond conditioned automatic reflexes.

Jelinek takes up this job in her theater writing through putting the material into the materiality. The texts consist of utterances and not the sentences and thereby they become part of the speech situation. So already there is a performativity in the text itself. The lines in Jelinek's texts are part of a speech situation; they are already working, as per the categories, made by Austin, that of illocutionary, locutionary and perlocutionary, which simply need to be uttered, if the text is performed in theater.

At the level of narration, thought may not be located in the plot, however there is a structural narrative in the theater texts by Jelinek, which can be interpreted. The structural narrative comes out of various discourses in the text that kind of becomes the communicating factor. On the one side there is semiotic chain, like various texts; on the other side the discourse, both relate to the language. Jelinek does not see her readers as readers, but as a contributor to her theater texts, as her texts, open and pluralistic, can grow more. Jelinek's theater texts entail performativity, the act of reading her texts, must also be performative, i.e. it should contain emerging properties. That is how I see reading her two theater texts, *Über Tiere* and *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*.



## Chapter 4

### Reading as a Performative Act: *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere* through the Discourse on Pornography

Elfriede Jelinek wrote *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* in 1986 in the genre of pornography and the same year it was performed in Graz in the direction of Ulrike Ottinger. The theatre piece, *Über Tiere*, written in 2007, consists of two parts, a monolog which is followed by a piece on sex scandal that happened in Austria and got reported in the newspaper. According to Jelinek, the second part wrote it by itself, i.e a major chunk of it, comes from the tapped conversation between the different agencies of the flesh trade. Further, one more part was added to it in 2013, a Swiss – specific part, and which was premiered at Schauspielhaus Zürich in Februar 2014.

1980s is a path breaking period in many ways in the West. The laws against pornography were lifted in 1980s and the pornographic materials (magazines, Like *Penthouse*, *Playboy* or pornographic films, erotic novels etc.) got acceptance in the public space. This was also the time when we entered in the post – modern era, and that brought another way of looking at the social realities and it also brought a new perspective in the feminist thinking. The post modern theory changed the way the women were looking at the subjectivity, sexual difference, historical progress and the literary tradition in the 1970s. The post modernist argument is,

“As identity has been variously theorized as a complex effect of culture rather than an ‘essence’ at the heart of the individual, so the cultural suppression of the feminine may be understood as much more than the exclusion of women from positions of institutional power.”<sup>147</sup>

Margaret Littler says that it was important for the politicized feminism in 1970s to emphasize women’s shared experience, to strengthen female solidarity. In 1980s,

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<sup>147</sup> Littler, Margaret (1997): “omen’s riting of 1980s and 1990s”, In:“Post-war Women's Writing in German: Feminist Critical Approaches”, Weedon, Chris (ed.), Berghahn Books, pp. 101 – 129, p. 102.

“... femininity came to represent the urge to transgress all boundaries set up to perpetuate hierarchical, normative categories of existence. The acknowledgement of multiple, interpenetrating and colliding realities brought with it a shift of focus in literature from ‘epistemological’ to ‘ontological’ concerns, that is, from the text as representation of reality or expression of a subject’s psyche to the text as the site on which difference is articulated.”<sup>148</sup>

It is apparent here, that by and large, in the contemporary society, the various fields of knowledge, has left behind the representational character and in the place of looking for the points of assimilation, and the text becomes a place for the articulation of the difference. The point here, is, if Elfriede Jelinek’s *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* can be seen as a site of articulation to talk about difference in different aspects of the pornographic desire in contrast to the homogenic nature of the male pornography? Can the theater text by Jelinek be read as an intervention in how the mainstream study of the pornography interprets, critics and evaluates sexuality (das Wesen der Geschlechter) from the male perspective?

According to Agnieszka Jezierska, whereas in the first part of the text *Über Tiere* a middle aged woman talks about her declaration of love (Liebesbekenntnis) and a lament of love (Liebesklage) with the help of the metaphysical concept, in the second part of the theater text *Über Tiere* everything is reduced from metaphysical to physical.

Agnieszka Jezierska argues,

“Obwohl der Monolog als ein separates Werk konzipiert wurde, gewinnt er eine weitere Bedeutung mit der Fortsetzung: „*Über Tiere* manifestiert das hysterische Begehren nach dem Begehren in der Konfrontation von romantischem Liebesideal und käuflichem Sex.“<sup>149</sup>

Jelinek wrote *Über Tiere* in 1990s, the decade when the pornography took another turn. Since 1990s particularly, with the technological advancement in the field of mass communication, we notice the sexual overload in terms of accessibility of sexual representations, products and services to a wider group of consumers. According to F. Attwood the development of new communication technologies that support, replace or reconfigure sexual encounters are becoming part of people’s everyday lives more

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<sup>148</sup> Littler, p. 102-103.

<sup>149</sup> Jezierska, Agnieszka: Das ist mein Thema: Moral! Moral! Sour!, <https://jelinektabu.univie.ac.at/moral/prostitution/agnieszka-jezierska>

and more. In this decade one noticed the rapid normalization of porn and along with it, a complete shift in social attitude. It emerged as a multibillion dollar industry. My assumption is that the theater text, *Über Tiere*, in the atmosphere of the complete commodification of the body, which does away with the human aspect of living, keeps on trying to revive the discourse on love, through the singular voice of “I” in the madness of the market place.

This chapter is divided into three sections: first, “Genealogy of the Debates around Pornography”, second, “An Engagement with the theater text, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*”, and third “An Engagement with the theatre text, *Über Tiere*”.

**4.1 Genealogy of the Debates around Pornography:** In the context of my reading of the two theater texts, I think, it is important to have an understanding of the discourses that have emerged in the field of pornography and the sexual discourse. In the post modern society where not ethics, but aesthetics, sits in the centre of the debate, while one witnesses the mainstreaming of the pornography, as a result of its wide reach, and easy accessibility, it is important to take into account the new concepts, the new interpretations, the new vocabulary which have emerged in the process of analyzing pornography, primarily in the social context. Hence, the first part of this chapter will deal with different concepts that have emerged and are building up a new sexual discourse. This engagement is important in the light of Elfriede Jelinek’s theater texts, *Über Tiere* and *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* which not only contains the debates on pornography and sexual discourse, but also engages with it, and takes the discussion further in its social context.

According to Angela Frischauf,

“Im Unterschied zu explizit sexuellen Darstellungen früherer Epochen und anderer Kulturen steht bei P. die Intention der sexuellen Reizwirkung im Vordergrund. Während sexualbezogene Darstellungen früherer Zeiten individuelle Werke einzelner Künstler und i.d. R. nur den jeweiligen Oberschichten zugänglich waren, hat sich P. seit dem 19. Jahrhundert

zu einer Massenware entwickelt, die zu einem Bestandteil der allgemeinen Freizeit- und Unterhaltungskultur geworden ist.<sup>150</sup>

The sexual presentations of earlier periods were the individual works of individual artists, and were primarily accessible to the upper class of the society. Since 19<sup>th</sup> century pornography has developed into a mass good (Massenware) which has become over the period of time a necessary part of free time engagement and entertainment culture. Whereas Brian McNair saw it as “democratization of desire”, the feminist argument found the “subjective sexuality” which the sexualisation of culture brought forth as further subjugation of women. The gradual normalization of the pornography in the society has drawn the attention of the western scholars. The mainstreaming of the pornography today is more aligned with aesthetics and less with ethics as was the case earlier. What kind of relationship does society share with pornography today, which has been seen traditionally as something happening outside the social realm, is the point of investigation here. There is no historical assessment undertaken in this section to understand this relationship, here I try to take into account the different concepts and discourses which have emerged recently to understand this relationship.

**4.1.1 Pornography in Contemporary Society:** One presumes that there is a widespread consumption of the pornography in the society in the form of films, books, magazines etc. It is a normalized aspect of our society, and an essential part of the consumerist culture. Thereby, on one side, the legalization of the pornography, on the other side the high consumerist culture in the society have played substantial role. In this context, “Porn Studies” has emerged as a branch of study to engage with this culture in the society.

Juris Dilevko and Lisa Gottlieb (2002) and Katherine Kinnick in her work, "Pushing the Envelope: The role of the mass media in the mainstreaming of pornography"

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<sup>150</sup> Frischauf, Angela (2009): *Sexualität und Pornographie im Frauenbild der Gegenwartsliteratur*, Bedey Media GmbH, <https://www.diplom.de/document/226548>.

(2007) research how the economy that runs this giant industry (pornography) is making inroad into popular culture and blurring the line between the pornography and the mainstream cultural spheres to some extent. Katherine Kinnick is of the view that the sexual themes, production techniques and the language that turned the pornography into a big industry are also influencing mainstream music, movies, television programs, and video games. Juris Dilevko and Lisa Gottlieb, while taking into account the widespread internet consumption, make the point that the heavy consumption of pornographic material indicate that it is no more easy to distinguish between pornography and mainstream entertainment. The authors indicate that pornography does not hold a marginal space in the society any more.

Hence Meagan Tyler says,

“This acceptance of actual pornography in the mainstream must be seen as integral to the processes of pornographication more generally, such as the use of pornographic imagery in traditionally non-pornographic forms of culture.”<sup>151</sup>

In the section below I engage with the aspect of pornographication of society that happens as the main stream culture is borrowing the aesthetics of the pornography today.

**4.1.2 Pornographication of society:** The term pornographication first appears in Brian McNair's 1996 work “Mediated Sex: Pornography and post-modern culture”. He defines the "pomographication of the mainstream" as: "the incorporation of pornographic imagery and iconography into a variety of popular culture forms, such as advertising, popular fiction and Hollywood cinema"<sup>152</sup> This book by McNair focuses on a study of the infiltration of the pornographic imaginary in art, popular culture, fashion and advertising. In his next book “Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratization of Desire”, written in 2002, he talks about the concept of porn chic.

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<sup>151</sup> Tyler, Meagan (Jan 1, 2010): *The Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia*, [https://www.academia.edu/927852/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Pornography\\_and\\_Pornographication\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.academia.edu/927852/The_Politics_of_Pornography_and_Pornographication_in_Australia).

<sup>152</sup> McNair, Brian (1996): “Mediated Sex: Pornography and post-modern culture”, Hodder Arnold Publication, p. 137.

According to McNair,

“Porno – chic is not porn, (then), but the representation of porn in non – pornographic art and culture, the pastiche and parody of, the homage to and the investigation of porn; the postmodern transformation of porn into mainstream cultural artefact for a variety of purposes including, as we shall see, advertising, art, comedy and education.”<sup>153</sup>

Until the late 1980s representations of the pornography in popular culture was dark and violent, however in the 1990s, pornography went through a postmodern transformation and emerged as a cultural artifact in different fields, like advertising, art, comedy and education. The unprecedented growth of the pornography industry evoked an interest in the iconography and conventions of pornography as a genre. The porn – chic gave birth to *meta – pornographies* works of all kinds, in every medium and genre, avant garde and mainstream, fictional, scientific and journalistic. These works showed a popular fascination for pornography and drew the path to legitimately satisfy this fascination within parameters of mainstream cultural production.

McNair says,

“Porno – chic replaced the traditional demonization of porn with, if not always approval or celebration, a spirit of excited inquiry into its nature, appeal and meanings.”<sup>154</sup>

In other words, what pornography brings forth in 1990s, is not porn, but representation of porn in the mainstream, that is named “porn – chic”, and the use of iconography and conventions of pornography, creates a meta – pornography in the mainstream, with a purpose to inquire into the nature, appeal and meaning of pornography as a genre. Sorensen in the year 2005 talked about the pornofication in the Scandinavian context at three levels: volume, clean – up and fragments. Volume relates to the volume of pornography available with much more ease now than before; clean – up relates to increasing legitimacy to pornography and fragments is about the

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<sup>153</sup> McNair, Brian (2002): “Striptease Culture: Sex, Media and the Democratization of Desire”, Routledge, p. 61.

<sup>154</sup> McNair, p. 63.

increasing use of >>figures, stylistic features and verbal expressions<<<sup>155</sup> drawn from pornography in art, media, culture, etc.

Today pornography as a central form of social sexualisation is omnipresent. The cause and effect of this phenomenon is wide spread and very complex. The most important place of the sexualisation is the media, which almost exclusively sales a big number of products with the display of women's body.

The concept "Pornification" describes a development in our society where media takes an active part in immersing us in the pornographic aesthetic. It is an intergral part of popular culture now and pornification analyses the transformation of porn in media at present and also its impact on our culture. The promotion of particular views on good sex happens through all the media. A big market is devoted to it. For example, in "Pushing the Envelope: The role of the mass media in the mainstreaming of pornography", Katherine Kinnick (2007) argues that the trend towards mainstreaming is clear because now the line between pop culture and porn culture is blurring. The sexual themes, language and production techniques of the porn, that makes the pornography a multibillion dollar industry, are being used in the mainstream music, movies, TV and video games increasingly for a mass appeal. The success of the pornography industry has helped in making pornography inseparable from popular culture.

Meagan Tyler, in the context of Australia, talks about the problematic of using pornographication and sexualization interchangeably, and gives some instances of the mainstream cultural products that are using pornographic imagery. According to Tyler, the pornographication is not about sex in general, but about a particular kind of sex.

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<sup>155</sup> Tyler, Meagan (Jan 1, 2010): *The Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia*, [https://www.academia.edu/927852/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Pornography\\_and\\_Pornographication\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.academia.edu/927852/The_Politics_of_Pornography_and_Pornographication_in_Australia).

She talks about the Lee Jeans billboard, where

"a young woman lying down and looking towards the camera with open mouth and holding a lollipop to her tongue. She is wearing navy shorts and a blue striped top which is unbuttoned" (ASB, 2003, n.pag)<sup>156</sup>.

Though, in the court, it was not accepted as a pornographic image, however, Tyler argues, this advertisement campaign was shot by a pornographer turned fashion photographer, Terry Richardson, who often uses the pornographic images in his material to be presented.

Tyler elaborates,

"The Lee Jeans billboard, for example, shares much in common with his other work, such as the "Farming" and "Las Vegas" campaigns for clothing brand Sisley. The brief in the Las Vegas campaign was to show women dressed as strippers and call girls, a variation on porn-chic, directly mimicking the styles of street prostitution."<sup>157</sup>

They represent a particular aesthetics, and the mainstream culture incorporates in itself the aesthetics from the pornography aesthetics and that is how the porn-chic gets created. Hence Tyler also suggests to not use the two terms sexualization and pornographication interchangeably. This acceptance of actual pornography in the mainstream is seen as integral to the processes of pornographication more generally, such as the use of pornographic imagery in traditionally non-pornographic forms of culture. Harry Bord, who dealt with pornography in his article, "Pornography and the Alienation of Male Sexuality" in 1988, says that today pornography is an established domain of knowledge with its own values, ethics and aesthetics, and if there is a

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<sup>156</sup> Tyler, Meagan (Jan 1, 2010): *The Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia*, [https://www.academia.edu/927852/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Pornography\\_and\\_Pornographication\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.academia.edu/927852/The_Politics_of_Pornography_and_Pornographication_in_Australia).

<sup>157</sup> Tyler, Meagan (Jan 1, 2010): *The Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia*, [https://www.academia.edu/927852/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Pornography\\_and\\_Pornographication\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.academia.edu/927852/The_Politics_of_Pornography_and_Pornographication_in_Australia).

presentation on the pornography in the mainstream, it is obvious that one is aware of the values, ethics and aesthetics, that are contributing in the emergence of discourses on the pornography. Against this background, I read Elfriede Jelinek's theater texts, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere*. Elfriede Jelinek wrote *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* in 1986, in the genre of pornography and the theater text, *Über Tiere*, was written in 2005, when the pornographication of society was even more visible as it was penetrating the mainstream culture. In the last two decades there has been an explosion of the pornographic imagery and the reference to the pornography in the mainstream culture. There is a widespread infiltration of pornographic imagery in art, popular culture, fashion and advertising. The texts, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere* by Jelinek are the reflection of the ongoing debate in the field of pornography in the society.

**4.2. An Engagement with the theater text, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:** In the 1980s, as has been mentioned before, pornography was legitimized in society. Pornography then and still is primarily seen as a place for male consumers, as by and large it is linked to the satisfaction of male sexual desire.

According to Robert Jensen,

“Pornography is the material sold in pornography shops for the purpose of producing sexual arousal for mostly male consumer.”<sup>158</sup>

However seeing the normalization of the pornography in society and also the pornographication of the mainstream culture, McNair reads this development as an expansion of the pornospace and sees it as a step towards the democratization of desire, which gets challenged by the feminists who do not see it as organic movement.

Meagan Tyler remarks,

“McNair's representation of the mainstreaming of pornography as the "democratisation of desire" is also problematic from a feminist perspective as it suggests pornographication is an organic process, a type of bottom-up social movement where (gender-less) people have

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<sup>158</sup> Dines, Gail, Jensen, Robert & Russo, Ann (1998): *The production and consumption of inequality*, Psychology Press, p. 3.

demanded greater access to pornography and pornographic imagery and this has been delivered as requested.”<sup>159</sup>

In *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* when the main protagonist talks about desire, she also seeks a license to drive, and that is where the question of gender surfaces. In pornography not only the male desire is more pronounced, at the same time, it is male who steers a pornographic act. One can infer from this that there is interdependency between the desire being explored and articulated and its full fulfillment. As far as female gender is concerned, not only Jelinek's text is not just about 'desire' but what all comes on her way as the woman articulates her desire. Where does she find herself in the expansion of pornospace that has been created because of the widespread presence and normalization of the pornography, and its infiltration in the mainstream culture? Can it accommodate the desire of the woman (in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*) in its normative, codified fold?

Though Jelinek's text definitely engages itself with the theme of 'desire' which is the leitmotif of any work of pornography, but it is not a straight path to desire. The text is about pornography, however it is not pornography. It follows the pornographic style of writing, as in the text there is no concept of time and space, there is no plot and no narrative, and it centers on talking about different ways a desire can be fulfilled. However the text transcends the genre of pornography as it emerges as a struggle on behalf of the protagonist to be free of the gender discourse that defines a woman's life. It also negates the pornographic claim of living by absolute physical desire, devoid of subjectivity. Pornography in the heterosexual context considers a woman as desiring and desired. The text uses the similar pornographic scenes and imageries, that the mainstream pornography talks about, uses the symbols and the aesthetic practiced in the genre of pornography and refutes the claims of the pornography as woman always wanting 'sex' and man always being 'ready' for sex. At the same time, it also deconstructs the myth of 'gender unity' that the heterosexual society propagates. In this context, while referring to Wittig, Butler says,

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<sup>159</sup> Tyler, Meagan (Jan 1, 2010): *The Politics of Pornography and Pornographication in Australia*, [https://www.academia.edu/927852/The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Pornography\\_and\\_Pornographication\\_in\\_Australia](https://www.academia.edu/927852/The_Politics_of_Pornography_and_Pornographication_in_Australia).

“...the “integrity” and “unity” of the body, often thought to be positive ideals, serve the purposes of fragmentation, restriction and domination”<sup>160</sup>.

The woman in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, a construct of heterosexual patriarchal society, is suffering from the fragmentation, restriction and domination as she takes the role of the speaking subject and that questions the idea of the gender unity, which entails gender, sex and desire. First of all, here I engage with Judith Butler’s idea about gender unity that is constructed in society to support the heterosexual, patriarchal society.

**4.2.1 Norms of Pornography:** The mainstream pornography is based on heterosexual desire. It is based on the premise that women and men are perpetually ready for sex.

According to Harry Bord,

“The predominant image of women in pornography presents women as always sexually ready, willing, able, and eager. The necessary corollary to pornography’s myth of female perpetual availability is its myth of male perpetual readiness.”<sup>161</sup>

Generally, sex refers to biological difference between male and female; gender refers to the role of male and female in a society. So, when we talk about pornography for man/woman, we talk about it from the social perspective. In recent time, pornography in general means sex because of its wide spread presence and legitimation in the society. In fact, Judith Butler defines gender as unity of experience of sex, gender and desire, for men as well as women. According to her gender is cultural designation of the self, and desire is heterosexual desire. The heterosexual desire can only then establish itself if it can differentiate itself “through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires”<sup>162</sup>. Butler argues that there is the causal relationship between gender, sex and desire, but also desire reflects the gender and gender reflects the desire. In other words, desire is very gender specific, and one particular gender has one particular kind of desire and it will not be same like the desire of the other gender, because there is this binary gender system.

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<sup>160</sup> Butler, Judith (1990): “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity”, Routledge, 1990, p. 146.

<sup>161</sup> Brod, Harry (2014): *Pornography and the Alienation of Male Sexuality*, In: *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*, Hearn, Jeff, Morgan, D.H.J ( eds), Routledge, pp. 124-140, p. 127.

<sup>162</sup> Butler, p. 30.

According to Butler,

“The act of differentiating the two oppositional moments of the binary results in a consolidation of each term, the respective coherence of sex, gender and desire.”<sup>163</sup>

However, in the context of the patriarchal structure of the society, which bases its fundament on woman as lacking something, that man has; the woman becomes absent, she becomes silent in the phallogocentric view of the patriarchy. Hence, the heterosexual desire that we see as two different kinds of desire according to the gender system, is actually, pronouncing men’s desire. *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* brings the desire of woman into expression through the speaking subject.

Within the heterosexual context, it appears that man and woman are binaries, they are different from each other, and for each gender, desire and sex correspond to their own gender, and not to the other one, and so gender emerges as a unity that one creates with the experience that contains gender, sex as well as desire. Particularly recently with the omnipresence of the pornography, its projection of sex determines the sexual behavior in society. It is important here for us to just get a view of mainstream, popular pornography in general and then also to see how the desire in the pornography, particularly the heterosexual pornography materializes itself.

**4.2.2 Desire and Pornography: *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:** The desire of the Other Sex is a central feature of pornography and it is generally associated with the process of objectification of the female body. However, according to Lacan, as Mark Bracher explains, the subjectification, as well as the objectification of both male as well as female body takes place in pornography. Man desires woman, woman desires man, and a woman, desiring a man becomes an object of man’s desire. So, the other sex, is an imaginary other and also a symbolic other. The Imaginary Other functions as the object of male desire and also as the subject of desire, through being the object of audiences’ identification.<sup>164</sup> While basing his argument on Lacan, Mark Bracher says that images, pictorial or verbal, play an important role in pornography’s arousal of desire. But,

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<sup>163</sup> Butler, p. 30-31.

<sup>164</sup> Bracher, Mark (1993): *Lacan, Discourse, and Social Change: A Psychoanalytic Cultural Criticism*, Cornell University Press, p. 90.

“In order for the *image* of woman to produce male heterosexual desire, that image (of a female body) must be coupled with the “*signifier*” “woman,” because “woman” is the object of heterosexual male desire in the Symbolic order.”<sup>165</sup>

The phallic signifier is central to a masculine identity and desire and it plays important role also in the construction of “woman” as the object of that desire. The masculine identity, braced with the phallic signifier, signifies woman at the same time as lacking and also desiring this organ signifier. This way the heterosexual man experiences the full possession of the phallus. This “allows him both to find women desirable and to satisfy both his active anaclitic and his passive narcissistic desire in the symbolic order.”<sup>166</sup> A heterosexual man does not only desire the woman’s body but also the woman’s desire. Hence, “desire” in the field of pornography, is a complicated desire. Jelinek, while writing in the genre of pornography, is dealing with this “complicated desire” in reverse manner. She writes the pornography to put a male body as desired, and female protagonist as desiring.

I read *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* in two sections: Desire and Performance. One has desire and the pornographic acts are the steps to materialize those sexual desires in a situation. Below in two parts, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and the Concept of Desire” and “How does female sexuality function” I aim to look at two aspects, desire and performance.

Jelinek writes pornography, she uses its discourse, its language, its metaphor, however, to me, it seems an effort to bring the sexuality out of the fold of pornography, which on one side creates the myth of male’s perpetual readiness and female’s perpetual availability. Moreover, if we just for a moment see society only as gender binaries, we witness two different kinds of desire. Men have one particular kind of desire, which relates to objectifying woman’s body. Pornography is how it functions is not to be framed by time and space, or any narrative or plot. So if the sexual acts in the society borrow the aesthetics from pornography, it means that the sexual relationship is purely physical and for that the actors have to be emotionless, flat and factual to participate in this bodily experience. At the same time, again this should be made clear here that the heterosexual pornography is for the male

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<sup>165</sup> Bracher, p. 91.

<sup>166</sup> Bracher, p. 94 - 95.

consumption. The woman as the speaking subject in the *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* gives expression to her desire as a subject; however she does it outside the framework of pornography. In the place of being emotionless and flat and only focused on the fulfillment of physical desire, she speaks about love, and also complains, how her partner, does not want to know, what goes on inside her, beyond this bodily affair. It is obvious here, that the woman is not negating 'desire', however there is more to it, than how the norms of pornography project it. Desire relates to the sexuality and in the gender binary, also to gender. Butler quoting Irigary, says that "the "mark" of gender, for the feminine, is nothing but the phallogocentric erasure of female sex"<sup>167</sup>. Can we infer from it, that the woman in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* gives up on articulating her desire, because the phallogocentric theory, which empowers male sexuality, has strategically erased the female sex, by introducing the category of feminine gender?

**4.2.3 Female Sexuality in scientific debates:** Whereas from Harry Brod's point of view, in a heterosexual pornography, the male sexuality is restricted to a genital performance; Cindy M. Meston, while exploring female sexuality in her paper, titled, "The Psychological Assessment of Female Sexual Function", says females are related to reproductive functioning and sexual response is hardly implicated here. In fact, both male and female are connected to the reproductive functioning of sex. Hence,

"In females reproductive functioning centers around ovarian function and general gynecological issues; the sexual response per se is hardly implicated. Because reproductive potential for a male, on the other hand, involves the ability to attain and maintain an erection until vaginal penetration ejaculation have occurred."<sup>168</sup>

As a result much research has been conducted in advancing the understanding of male sexual response and that has become the base to assume the mechanism of female sexual response. The vascular or nervous system perspective is applied to study the female sexual response and this system equates the male erectile and female vasocongestive responses to each other. This differentiation, one that is 'erectile', and

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<sup>167</sup> Butler, p. 35.

<sup>168</sup> Meston, Cindy M. (2000): "The Psychophysiological Assessment of Female Sexual Function", in: "Journal of Sex Education and Therapy", Vol. 25, No. 1, USA, pp. 6 – 16, p. 6, <https://labs.la.utexas.edu/mestonlab/files/2014/10/2000-1-Meston.pdf>.

the other that is ‘response’ are two different ways of functioning and it is addressed in the field of psychophysiology. Meston points out that in the psychophysiological measurement of female sexual arousal, there are low correlations between genital blood flow measures and subjective reports of arousal. In other words, in the case of women, if both, subjective and physiological indices of sexual arousal in women are taken into consideration, the measures do not correspond to each other. It is not the same in the case of men, where one can see high level of correspondence between penile tumescence and subjective reports of sexual arousal. Meston says, in contrast to the conventional method, the psychophysiology also takes the subjective feeling of the individual into consideration as it engages with the sexual arousal of an individual. She explains that the subjective feelings of arousal “may fluctuate throughout the erotic presentations depending on individual sexual preferences”<sup>169</sup>. The low correlation between measures of sexual arousal in women can be because women estimate their sexual arousal subjectively, just not on the basis of genital blood flow, but also on the basis of external stimuli information. Whereas women depend largely on stimulus information, for men bodily cues are important, when they define their internal states. Another study in the field of psychophysiology<sup>170</sup>, reveals that subjective sexual arousal in men is defined generally in terms of sexual excitement, but for women it is not only the sexual excitement but also positive and negative emotions and hence one must take into account the situation when sexual behavior of a woman is being studied. Moreover, Meston, while referring to some other studies undertaken in the field of Developmental Psychology, says that women are much better in giving meaning to non-verbal and emotion-based facial cues. Hence there are several aspects that must be taken into account, from the situation, to the context, from the linguistic expression to the non verbal expressions, while engaging with the study of female sexuality. This complexity gets reflected in the first part of Jelinek’s

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<sup>169</sup> Meston, p. 13.

<sup>170</sup> Brauer, Marieke, ter Kuile, Moniek M. & Laan, Ellen (Aug, 2009): “Effects of Appraisal of Sexual Stimuli on Sexual Arousal in Women with and Without Superficial Dyspareunia”, [Arch Sex Behav.](#); 38(4): 476–485. doi: [10.1007/s10508-008-9371-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-008-9371-8).

theat text under consideration in this part. The desire of the speaking subject in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* is not only physiological but also situational, not only physical but also emotional:

“Von unten dringen Straßengeräusche zur Warnung herauf, wir bleiben hier innen, der Berg ist so glatt, daß man Steinhaken anbringen müßte um voranzukommen. Ich befinde mich auf einer Reise, das Ticket ist mir schon verabfolgt worden. Ich bin illusionsfrei, was meine Vorzüge betrifft, was sind die schon im Vergleich zur Schuljugend, die immer zu vielen auftritt.”<sup>171</sup>

She also expresses her emotion in here:

“Ich liebe Sie mehr als alles (ich meine mehr als mich selbst, die ich mir alles bin).”<sup>172</sup>

According to the norms of the pornography, there is no reflection, or any moment of reflection in pornography, however, the woman keeps on telling that hers is ‘complicated desire’, ‘dumb desire’ and she admits that may be her approach towards sex is discouraging and still she offers what she has, and may interest people, to look at.

“Sie sehen hier meinen entmutigten Annäherungsversuch, was habe ich schon zu bieten, ich setze mich Ihren Blicken aus, mein sehr geehrter Fremder, den mein Urteil nicht zu beschäftigen scheint.”<sup>173</sup>

According to Aura – Elena Schussler,

“In pornography, the gaze is the one aspect that helps to establish a relationship between subject and object, between the one who looks, usually identified by the consumer, and the image he looks upon, rendered by the body/bodies captured by the camera in various positions invoking sex or sexuality.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1986): *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>172</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1986): *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>173</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1986): *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>174</sup> Schussler, Aura-Elena: “Postmodernism and Surrealist Pornography”, In: “Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences” 149 (2014), © 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license, (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). P. 855 – 862, p. 859.

Though, the woman in Jelinek's text shuffles from being subject to being object, however she refuses the complete objectification of herself.

“Jetzt schaue ich mir einmal an, was die Menschen an mir interessiert, obwohl es an mir doch festgewachsen ist wie ein blasser Gedanke, sie könnens nicht nach Haus mitnehmen. Aber auch ich kann es nicht kaufen, denn ich habe es schon. Nehmen daher Sie mich in Kauf!”<sup>175</sup>

Here she poses the question, what could make her interesting for the people. Then she says, what could make her interesting for people has already stuck in her like a pale thought. Hence, one must not only accept what she has, but also her. There is ‘me’, that I translate here as ‘self’ of the woman, which is what the woman has. So, as object of desire also, the woman makes her demand, asserts herself and reflects.

*Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* breaks the myths that the pornography projects in its acts of being a sight of manifestation of sexual desire. As Harry Brod also says, pornography, particularly the heterosexual pornography, reduces male sexuality to the function of its male organ. The woman, whose sexual desire is also met, in the sexual intercourse, articulates here in the text, that her sexual desire remains unsatisfied because the bodily function of the partner reduces hourly. The pornography also has element of violence, and here the woman just reverts the situation and uses violent means for the sexual arousal, and still it does not have the right effect. She articulates her love, which is not an element of the pornography. What can love signify in the economics of language in the field of the pornography?

Bracher says,

“In pornography, the exclusion of love is (thus) crucial to the production of the (anaclitic) desire, because love interferes with the inscription of a woman as minus phi, operating to inscribe woman not as wanting the phallus but as possessing what will fulfill a man in his subjecthood, as possessing a subjectivity that can accord recognition to other subjects.”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1986): *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>176</sup> Bracher, Mark (1993): *Lacan, Discourse, and Social Change: A Psychoanalytic Cultural Criticism*, Cornell University Press, p. 96.

Hence, when the woman is bringing in the element of love, she is bringing in the subjectivity in pornography, which can displace the fundament of the pornography that bases itself on objectifying woman.

**4.3 A Reading of the theater text, *Über Tiere*:** The theater text, *Über Tiere* by Elfriede Jelinek consists of two parts. The first part is the monolog by a woman, which consists of the discourse on love, the dynamics of man and woman relationship with each other, as well as the subjective assertion of a woman in the face of her constant objectification. The second part is the montage of the quotations from the wire tap conversations between the Viennese women traffickers and their customers, where it deals with the extreme objectification of the women, being negotiated, in the prostitution industry. Whereas the objectification of woman in the first part is at the individual level, in the second part it is at the industrial scale. The faint voice of the woman from the monolog, can be traced also in the second part, when, even in the standardization of the sexuality in a very consumerist society, she talks about ‘particular’, ‘subjective’, and about ‘love’. A further third part of the play was written by Jelinek in the year 2013, however, here I restrict myself to first two parts only, as the research plan is conceived, thinking of the theater text in the form, as it emerged in the year 2005.

The theater text, *Über Tiere* can be translated in English as *About Animals*. As the text is about man and woman and their sexuality, so it can be assumed that the animal she is talking about is human and that gives me the reason to ponder on the theme of animal and human sides of human existence to deal with the themes of gender and sexuality in the society. The text, *Über Tiere* contains the images from Paul McCarthy’s art installation “lala land parody paradise”, and in my reading of the text, I feel, that the images capture the spirit of the text. Moreover, the images, that are put together with the text and the spots, where they are put, have some kind of relationship with the text. In the software language as well,

“Adding clip art and pictures to your document can be a great way to illustrate important information or add decorative accents to existing text.”<sup>177</sup>

Though the text is not primarily image based, however, it begins with an image, has another in the middle, and ends with one. They appear as “Introduction”, “Middle Portion” and “Conclusion” of Jelinek’s text. I read the two parts of Jelinek’s theater text, as, “The Mechanical Pig” and “The Pig Island Marquette”. The first part ends where the image “The Pig Island Marquette” is inserted.<sup>178</sup>

In the first part of the text, which I am reading as “The Mechanical Pig”, there are two emerging points for me, first is, the discourse on love; the second is the body as a theme. They both build up as the text unfolds itself, parallel to each other, and also overlap each other, and make distinction from each other as two sides of one event. In the second part of the theater text, which I read as “The Pig Island Marquette” the body and its usability becomes the central theme and the negotiation for the consumption of the body really takes an international character. Whereas in the first part, the ‘particularity’ of the human beings is highlighted; in the second part, love is a system, and there is a standardization of, what is to be expected from the body, within the system, in which, the woman says that love has become world religion. Whereas in the first part, the woman is resisting the objectification, in the second part she is resisting a standard objectification of the woman’s body.

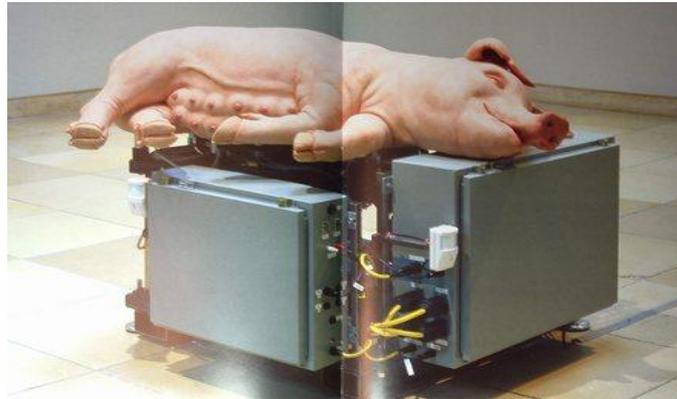
**4.3.1 *Über Tiere* – Part 1/ The Mechanical Pig:** I begin this part by making a general observation about the image. This will be followed by an engagement with the art installation ‘The Mechanical Pig’ from Paul McCarthy’s “LaLa Land Parody Paradise” with the help of the documented work, research and media reviews on the event. Pig being the subject of this art piece intrigues me to explore the relationship between human and pig; on the other hand it being a female pig in the image, with a prime focus on the body, prompts me to look at the aspect of sexualization and objectification of the female body, in animal and in human. Against this background, I read the first part of the *Über Tiere*.

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<sup>177</sup> <https://www.gcflearnfree.org/word2010/inserting-clip-art-and-pictures/1/>

<sup>178</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com/>

The theater text, *Über Tiere*, on Jelinek's homepage, has the following image on the first page:



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Here we have the image of a mechanical pig, where her physiognomy seems to be quite pronounced, and she is lying on top of a machine. She appears fragile and also dependent on external support.

This art installation, 'The *Mechanical Pig*' took two years to create, and while creating it, Paul McCarthy involved his technicians in constructing a complex yet extremely robust robotic structure that would last indefinitely. This robotic pig has even excited the interest of the Disney studio itself. Interestingly, the Disney fantasies have been part of McCarthy's imaginative world also, along with several other things, in his critic of the 'Americanness'. The interesting aspect of this art project is that it is robotic, but yet not a straightforward automaton. The movement in the pig's body depends on the automation and also on the sensory presence of the visitors. The pig comes to life as she is approached closely by the onlookers. The body of the pig gets alive, her tail moves, and eye lid has certain effect, which happens because of the machine and also because of the sensory effect created by the physical presence of the spectators. There is absolute dependence on the presence and perception of the spectators for the sculpture of the pig to perform. As an art piece, it transcends its medium. The sculpture becomes performance. How does the pig appear in

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<sup>179</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, <https://www.elfriedejelinek.com/>

performance? She appears like a sexualized, feminized body. She looks beautiful, fragile, with her teats exposed. The thing is, if the animals, which apparently do not show the very obvious distinctive gender lines in terms of appearance, how come the femininity of the animal here is so pronounced and for what purpose? Does it relate to the objectification of the animal, in this particular case, does it relate to the objectification of the female animal and how does it relate to the objectification of women in the society? Is there a similarity between how woman and how animals are viewed in the society? To engage with these questions, in my opinion, it is also important to see, as here, it is a specific animal, i.e. pig, and how are pigs perceived in society. Generally speaking, there are two broad categories: humans and animals. Humans and animals have been sharing certain bond through the history and through that bond humans have developed certain perception about particular animals. Pig is an example of that. Humans and pigs have bonded together since a long time and it has resulted in certain discourse that has emerged out of this experience that humans have gathered in relationship with pigs. Here I intend to look at the relationship that human beings share with pigs in order to understand why it could become a part of McCarthy's art installment, as a solo piece, as, through his work, McCarthy aims to critic the contemporary American society, and in his critic of the society, body, sexuality and power are central themes.

**a) Humans and Pigs:** Pigs have been around for 45 million years, they inhabit all continents, were probably first domesticated in China between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago, and are highly >> trainable, endlessly adaptable, and despite the scriptural prohibitions, pork is, by a large margin, the world's most popular meat<<<sup>180</sup>. Not only that, in the medieval period, pigs were also an alternative currency, which gave rise to the term "piggy bank", as a household, back then, made its investment in its pigs. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century pigs have become the material for the bio – medical research as besides being used as meat, they are also used for organ transplantation, their tissue is used for skin grafting, insulin and as the raw materials of many drugs; because their

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<sup>180</sup> "Fine Swine", The Daily Telegraph, 2001-02-25.  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/4259823/Fine-swine.html>

physiognomy is very similar to that of humans. They are used >>in the study of everything from alcoholism (exhibiting a particular fondness for fine Russian vodka) to battlefield injuries<<<sup>181</sup>.

Pigs, widely present in world cultures, have taken on several meanings and have been used for many purposes in traditional arts, popular culture, and media. They stand for extremes of human joy and also fear; they are part of celebration and also of ridicule and repulsion. Citing Richard Horwitz in his “Hog Ties: Pigs, Manure, and Morality IN American culture (1988)” Benton Jay Komins says that a pig’s flesh “marks special events and abstinences, and its image "stands for such extremes of human joy or fear, celebration, ridicule, and repulsion"<sup>182</sup>. Hence, as Komins says, “More than a piece of succulent meat or an inflated toy, the pig encapsulates ambiguity.”<sup>183</sup>

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the term, male chauvinist pig (MCP) came into usage, which was meant for some men, usually men with some power (such as an employer or professor), who believed that men were superior and expressed that opinion freely in word and action. In the year 2005, Ariel Levy wrote the book, “Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture” which critiques the highly sexualized American culture in which women are objectified, they objectify one another, and are encouraged to objectify themselves. Levy defined "raunch culture" as the over sexualisation of the women particularly since the 1990s with the overlapping interfaces of music, TV, video and advertising. The MCPs and the FCPs, both are the product of the patriarchal structure of the society. Whereas MCP is coined to criticize the general mindset of the men, who feel superior to women; the FCP is coined to criticize the women who pretend to achieve the superiority while objectifying themselves. This is two different sides of a coin; one

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<sup>181</sup> “Fine Swine”, The Daily Telegraph, 2001-02-25.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/4259823/Fine-swine.html>

<sup>182</sup> Komins, Benton Jay (2001): *Western Culture and the Ambiguous Legacies of the Pig*, In: *Comparative Literature and Culture*, Volume 3, Issue 4, Article 6, Purdu University Press, pp. 1 – 10, p. 2. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6b21/4aafcbfcae682eb9888aab39776692e828b1.pdf>.

<sup>183</sup> Komins, p. 3.

asserting power while being in the position of the subject; other asserting power through objectification. And, in both instances, the pig is used as a metaphor. Pig has been played around from all sides, to symbolize power as well as to show the subjugation. Pigs are a symbol of being sexy, filthy, bossy, aggressive, docile etc.

Humans have a particular history with pigs and the behavior the human shows towards pig is based on that history and briefly above we have tried to understand this history. Human beings have lived together with pigs (in the house), they have lived off the pigs (the economy depended on the pigs), they have certain perception about pigs (like women think, male pigs are wild), and because of the similarity of pigs and human physiognomy, pigs have been used by human for biological tests; pigs are meat for human also, and then there is whole politics of presenting animals in sexualized and feminized way as well. In the next section where I am attempting to understand Paul's "Mechanical Pig" in the context of a general visible pattern that shows certain association between woman, object and animal.

**b) Association between woman, object and animal:** In her work, "Differentiating Between Objectification and Animalization: Associations Between Women, Objects, and Animals" Kasey Lynn Morris proposes that

"animalization, characterized by an association with animals, occurs when a woman is portrayed in a sexualized manner. In contrast, *objectification*, characterized by an association with objects, occurs when a woman is portrayed with a focus on her appearance"<sup>184</sup>.

In Paul McCarthy's art installment, both the characteristics are visible, the objectification as well as the sexualization of the pig, as the appearance as well as the feminization of the animal is undertaken here.

**c) Objectification and sexualization of female Pig:** In "The Mechanical Pig" the female pig is feminized and objectified. The way she has been sculpted, pink, fragile, and cute; and how her body is in display, lying on top of the machine; her appearance,

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<sup>184</sup> Morris, Kasey Lynn (2013): *Differentiating Between Objectification and Animalization: Associations Between Women, Objects, and Animals*, (Master's Thesis), Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida, Kasey Lynn Morris, p. iv. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d230/374cfd483daa014ebb20cf05deff97e890ee.pdf>.

rather than any activity she might be engaged into, is very remarkable here. According to one review of the event,

“So lifelike is this many-teated sleeping pink sow, breathing sonorously and twitching a curly tail in her porcine dream, that only her cumbersome life-support system of electronic gizmos, hydraulics and computers convinces us she's not real. Even her sphincter puckers in her sleep. Pigs are not renowned for their personal grooming, but this one is perfect: immaculate, pedicured, sleek, gamine, not an whisker out of place”.<sup>185</sup>

In the review the focus is on the appearance of the animal. It is many teated, (so, female), pink, pedicured and very sleek. It is so much in contrast to normal perception about the pig that a pig (irrespective of being male or female) is a filthy and ugly looking animal. However, here it is not about changing the perception about pigs, but about gendering the pig and in doing that objectifying the pig.

Lindsay Wilson says that gender is a means of humanizing, however,

“... for women, gendering serves as a strange double-bind- to “improperly” gender oneself is to risk some form of retribution, sometimes violent, for not following the gender binary, but to “properly” gender oneself does not open up the possibility of full humanity either. Objectification serves as one background against which the gender binary pulls a type of bait-and-switch on women’s gender performance- doling out humanity based on the proper “performance” of gendered norms but then taking it away by function of the constant treatment as merely tools for the sexual and emotional gratification of other people.”<sup>186</sup>

Wilson argues that while being addresses as ‘he’ or ‘she’, a human being, in a binary position, gets humanized, even if it is a product of gender performance. However, woman never gets to be treated as fully human, rather as a tool for emotional and sexual gratification of men, and hence, she is systematically objectified. Objectification is done by focusing on the appearance. Hence, the objectification of the pig as woman can be linked to the motive of presenting the pig as a tool for emotional and sexual gratification. How is this achieved?

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<sup>185</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2005/oct/25/1>

<sup>186</sup> Wilson, Lindsey (2015): *Gender Performativity and Objectification*, pp. 1-9, <https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1416&context=gsurc>.

The pig is gendered, and in the process of getting gendered, she is objectified, so that she can be a tool for the sexual gratification of the viewers. The pig's body responds when the viewers come in close contact to her. According to one review on the art installation,

“Approach and she begins to breathe deeply and regularly. Circle her and she twitches. Her trotters kick, her mouth and snout move and her eyelids mimic the effects of REM<sup>187</sup>. Walk a little further and you will see that even her tail waggles and her rectum pulsates.”<sup>188</sup>

So, first the appearance of the pig gets established, and then the stimulation generates a kind of response in the animal, which can be read as the female sexual arousal, and that must stimulate the viewers. This is a three dimensional art work, and the response that the viewers' physical presence generates in the pig; it encourages him/her to go around it and simultaneously that brings life in different parts of the pig's body, as the comment above from a review of the installment tells. The viewers could be all, man, woman or any other gender. However, the animal in display, which gets life like, as its materiality performs, has attributes of a woman. The pig is a gendered body and a female gender, which is denied of the subjectivity so that it can be used as a tool to serve the patriarchal objectives; i.e. read as human objectives. However, through performance, it is made look 'real'. The seemingly natural appearance of the gender identity can be exposed if it can be established that it is constructed, and that is what Paul McCarthy does in this art installment. The pig is gendered, objectified, and sexualized, through the mechanics. By exposing the mechanics, McCarthy reveals that the pig is not real.

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<sup>187</sup> “There is this finding that in females, there are periods of sexual arousal during REM sleep similar to the cycle of penile erections in the male. The research was conducted on 10 subjects, age group 21 - 35, utilizing thermo - conductance method to measure the vaginal blood flow (VBF), and the outcome showed that >>females manifest cyclic episodes of vascular engorgement during REMPs equivalent to erections in men.” From: Fisher, C., Cohen, H. D., Schaivi, D. Davis, Furman, B., Ward, K. Edwards, A. and Cunningham, J.: “Patterns of Female Sexual Arousal During Sleep and Waking : Vaginal Thermo – Conductance Studies, in: Archives of Sexual Behavior, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1983. P. 97-122., p. 97.

<sup>188</sup> <http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/june/16/from-book-to-bid-paul-mccarthy-s-mechanical-pig/>

It is stated in a review on the art installment,

“So lifelike is this many-teated sleeping pink sow, breathing sonorously and twitching a curly tail in her porcine dream, that only her cumbersome life-support system of electronic gizmos, hydraulics and computers convinces us she's not real.”<sup>189</sup>

Judith Butler in her work, “Gender Trouble”, claims that gender is a construction that >>regularly conceals its genesis<<<sup>190</sup>. By revealing the genesis of the performance of the pig, which is mechanical, McCarthy also points out at the constructed nature of the sexuality in the society.

**d) The monolog:** Gender is constructed and categorized as man and woman to serve the heterosexual patriarchal structure. According to Judith Butler, words, acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, and a gender identity thus emerged seems coherent and if the organizing principle of identity is revealed as a cause, then the performative character of the gender becomes obvious. According to Butler, this coherence is maintained “for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality”<sup>191</sup>. The revelation of the organizing principle of identity which works as ‘cause’ for certain ‘effect’, i.e., gender, can expose the surface level of coherence in the gender identity. If the gender is constructed, and it is constructed for regulating the sexuality, that means, the sexuality is also a construction. Like, ‘The Mechanical Pig’ is sexualized in certain manner by Paul McCarthy, through the use of certain mechanism, the same way, the gender norms, sexualizes man and woman in certain ways along gender line. The engagement with the regulated sexuality in the woman’s monolog must be seen in the context of the patriarchal power structure. The woman’s monolog in the first part of the *Über Tiere* deals with the themes of gender, sexuality and power. The power appears as ‘Law’, as ‘Authority’ as ‘Document’, and there is a possibility of either drawing power from it within the power structure or feeling subjugated by it as well. For me, this relates to Judith Butler’s take on the psychic life of power, where she talks about the subject formation and subjection in the realm of power. In the first

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<sup>189</sup> Searle, Adrian (Oct 25, 2005): *Shiver me Timbers*, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2005/oct/25/1>.

<sup>190</sup> Butler, Judith (1990): *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, p. 178.

<sup>191</sup> Butler, p.173.

section, I will talk about the subject formation and subjection within the power. This follows with an idea of going into the field of inter-subjectivity; as the woman says that in the deed that happens between man and woman, there are some personal exchanges that take place. However, the idea of inter-subjectivity is based on seeing the 'other' as 'subject', and towards the end of the monolog, the 'other' has become a body, which sits like a rock on a solid ground, and is an object.

**d.1 Subject formation and subjection to power:** Unlike McCarthy's pig, who is completely mechanical, as the pig shows no sign of resistance, the woman here, comes to the point of understanding this reality, that her existence is 'mechanical' while trying to gain the position of subject through the power. On one hand, she is searching for her subjectivity, on the other hand, she is aiming at the subjection of the man under the power. The formation of subject within power and subjection of individual within power fall in the realm of the psychic life of power, where some law, some authority without any ontological base, works in a manner that an individual submits to the authority /to the law. This is an external power that the individual internalizes and may not recognize it as anything foreign. With the help of Butler's take on the psychic life of power, I try here to trace, how the external mechanism of human love and relationship, has been exposed here.

Judith Butler says in her work, "The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection",

"Subjection" signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject."<sup>192</sup>

Whereas for the partner, acquiring the driving license is subjection, and he refuses to get one, hence he refuses the subjection for himself. The partner exists outside of this power structure. However, the woman, in referring to the Authority, the Paper, seems to have internalized the terms of the power. However, Butler sees the process of subject formation as a psychic form.

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<sup>192</sup> Butler, Judith (1997): *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford University Press, California, p. 2.

According to Butler,

“...no subject emerges without a passionate attachment to those on whom he or she is fundamentally dependent.”<sup>193</sup>

The opening line of the monolog is,

“Lieben ist eine bestimmte Art von Angewiesensein, mein sonderbarer Herr.”

Love is a particular kind of dependency. The dependency of love is on the terms of power. Whereas the woman fears the authority that it will ask for license, she says, the man questions the grounding of the authority. If the woman insists too much on the Paper, according to her, he tells her, that he will take away her ‘Scheinen’, i.e. ‘appearance’ from her.

She says,

“Schein muß weg, so oder so.”<sup>194</sup>

Whereas the dictionary meaning of ‘Schein’ is glow, appearance, shine, certificate, pretence etc.; for ‘scheinen’ which is a verb the meaning is ‘appear’. The woman in the theater text argues that the man has problem with ‘paper’ because it is issued by the authority which is not grounded. He is outside this power gambit and he has the power to take away from the woman how does she appear/exist. Whereas the law was subjecting her, i.e. subordinating her; and at the same time it was also creating the conditions for the formation of subject for her; the man by apparently taking away her ‘act of appearing’ also reveals the falseness of her subject formation. It is the objectification of the woman that the woman must agree upon as time and again in her monolog in which she addresses her partner, it reflects on the partner’s interest in the woman’s body as the tool of sexual pleasure.

The woman is still looking for the subjection of the partner within the terms of some other power, since he is refusing to submit to the law, which asks for the ‘Paper’, and where he does not see the real authority, but which has a psychic life.

The woman says,

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<sup>193</sup> Butler, p. 7.

<sup>194</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

“Ich bin zu müde, und zwar für alles, aber nicht für Das Alles, von dem ich vorhin gesprochen habe, denn Das Alles ist das Leibhaftige, und das ist fundiert, im Gegensatz zur Instanz, die ihr Fundament erst noch graben muß.”<sup>195</sup>

Das Leibhaftige’ means ‘concrete’, material’ ‘physical’ ‘corporeal’. She says, it is ‘the all’, i.e. absolute, and in contrary to the authority, it is well grounded. So, it is the corporeality that subordinates the partner as well as the woman; because she has dependency on the authority, and she has dependency on the man for her ‘appearance’ (Scheinen) and also she says, she can do anything only if her partner wishes. This is a kind of dependency without any passionate attachment. She suggests the partner to follow the power structure which has a psychic life; the partner rejects it, saying that the authority is not well grounded. She says, the corporeality is well grounded, and the woman with this argument is saying that that is where we are heading. Thereby she orients the argument towards the subjection and subject formation of the individuals in the field of corporeality. She submits to the law of corporeality, because, she says,

“Da könnte ja jede kommen und ein Loch wollen.”<sup>196</sup>

This brings the woman’s body to the objectification and the sexualization like the mechanical pig. The passionate attachment, the theme of love that runs through the monolog ceases to exist, as the woman must choose the corporeality as the last resort in her relationship with the man. While talking about love, woman dwelt on the questions of subjection and subject. The corporeality focuses on objectification and object. Now, she recognizes that ‘the corporeality’ “das Leibhaftige” is actually, “The All”, and she says, it is well – founded, but the effort to not to love, is too stressful for her. And she misses the old way of loving:

“Wie traure ich vergangenen Zeiten nach, als es möglich war zu lieben und nicht zu lieben! Zu lieben, indem man nicht geliebt hat.”<sup>197</sup>

She says, what love meant then, when she was young:

“Lieben, indem man links liegen läßt, obwohl man nehmen könnte!”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>196</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>197</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

The woman says, as a young woman she let her body, be a path for the entering caress, for the unconcerned concern. It is like loving in not loving. When she was young, the woman says, the body had kept itself upright for this purpose, to remain in this ponderable (imponderable?) moment, no, rather: to get stuck. But, then it was enough for her, to try painfully to keep her body upright. Her body was like a boulder of rock trying to balance on an abyss, against a foot kick, but it did not fall, it might happen only, if the rock beneath it gets loose. She says, nothing had prepared her for this deep fall of love. Then she mentions how the love is talked about by people, that it is an incurable fall.

Then the love becomes a 'deed' and the woman's mother says,

“Der Ort der Tat muß danach wieder hergerichtet werden, als hätte die Tat nie stattgefunden. Aber die Tat ist unumgebar. Unumgänglich. Ist es wirklich unumgänglich, daß die Liebenden persönlichen Umgang miteinander haben? Darauf kann ich nur mit ja antworten.”<sup>199</sup>

The place and the deed must be again put into the order. As if the deed never took place. But, the woman says, the deed is crucial, indispensable. She poses the question, if it is really indispensable that the lovers have personal dealing with each other.

**d.2 Intersubjectivity of the relationship:** The woman explains in her monologue that in the deed of love there is a personal dealing between the partners, which is not indispensable. It actually relates to the experiencing of the deed. Jessica Benjamin says that the idea of intersubjectivity in the field of psychoanalysis comes from the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas.

Citing Habermas, Benjamin argues,

“Intersubjectivity was formulated in deliberate contrast to the logic of subject and object, which predominates in Western philosophy and science. It refers to that zone of experience or theory in which the other is not merely the object of the ego's need/drive or cognition/perception but has a separate and equivalent center of self.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>199</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>200</sup> Benjamin, Jessica (April 20, 2016): *Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Subjectivity*, pp. 1-10, p. 2,

The idea behind talking about the dealing between the partners during the deed is to ask for the recognition of the 'other' as subject, and not as 'object'. Benjamin argues that the other must be recognized as another subject. Only then the self can experience fully his or her subjectivity in the presence of others.

Benjamin is of the opinion that because we deny the mother's subjectivity, theoretically and also practically, this prevents profoundly our ability to see the "world as inhabited by equal subjects"<sup>201</sup>. By referring to the mother, the woman is envisioning the world as 'equal subject'. Even though the mother advises that after the deed is over, the place of the deed should be again put in the order, as if nothing happened. By going back to the mother, and taking note of what she said, the woman gets her mother out of the position of the object and acknowledges the subjectivity in her.

According to Jessica Benjamin,

"Separation-individuation theory (thus) focuses on the structural residue of the child's interaction with the mother as object; it leaves in the unexamined background the aspect of engagement, connection, and active assertion that occur with the mother as other. This perspective is infantocentric, unconcerned with the source of the mother's responses, which reflect not only her pathology or health ("narcissistic" versus "good enough") but also her necessarily independent subjectivity."<sup>202</sup>

Hence, the woman, in her monolog, though differs from the mother in her view, but she takes the mother's view about love, into consideration. The mother's view is important not for validating the mother's point but for a world with a more equal subjects. Because, as Benjamin says, the infantocentric view that the child has towards the mother also influences the relationship with a partner.

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<https://msu.edu/~lotz/classes/f2006intersubjectivity/pdfs/benjamin%20recognition%20and%20destruction.pdf>.

<sup>201</sup> Benjamin, p. 2.

<sup>202</sup> Benjamin, p. 3

According to Benjamin,

“It (the infantocentric perspective) also misses the *pleasure* of the evolving relationship with a partner from whom one knows how to elicit a response but whose responses are not entirely predictable and assimilable to internal fantasy. The idea of pleasure was lost when ego psychology put the id on the back burner, but it might be restored by recognizing the subjectivity of the other.”<sup>203</sup>

The view that the partner in the first part of monolog has towards the woman is that of object, and if we go by Benjamin’s theory, it is related to the infantocentric viewpoint, which relates to seeing mother as an ‘object’, and the child is unconcerned about the source of mother’s response and the mother, says Benjamin, has an independent subjectivity and this infantocentric view gets extended in the relationship with a partner as well. Benjamin suggests that intersubjective perspective helps the partners in transcending the “the infantocentric viewpoint of intrapsychic theory by asking how a person becomes capable of enjoying recognition with an other.”<sup>204</sup>

However, the possibility of the inter- subjective relationship gets lost as the woman says, that love has become something that can be afforded. It has entered the market place and has attained the quality of a product through the sexual objectification of woman’s body.

**d.3 Sexual objectification of woman:** According to the sexual objectification (SO) theory,

“SO occurs when a woman’s body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire (Bartky, 1990).”<sup>205</sup>

In 1997 the theorists Fredrickson and Roberts said that women to varying degrees internalize this view, which is an outside view and begin to self – objectify themselves. The self – objectification means treating oneself as an object which is looked and evaluated on the basis of appearance.

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<sup>203</sup> Benjamin, p. 3.

<sup>204</sup> Benjamin, p. 3.

<sup>205</sup> Szymanski, Dawn M., Moffitt, Lauren B. & Carr, Erika R. (2011): *Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research*, In: *The Counseling Psychologist*, Volume 39, No. 1, pp. 6–38, <https://www.apa.org/education/ce/sexual-objectification.pdf>.

While engaging with the theme of the SO – environment, the authors of the article, “Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research” say that it occurs in the social structure in which the traditional gender roles are prevalent. In the article it is argued that the traditionally men’s gender roles are oriented towards

“competency, achievement, and agency and include traits such as independence, aggression, competitiveness, rationality, problem solving, and objectivity (Bakan, 1966; Parsons & Bales, 1955)”<sup>206</sup>.

The women’s gender role orients them towards “nurturance, emotionality, passivity, dependency and harmony”<sup>207</sup>. Whereas the socialization factor drives men towards power, control and dominance over women; it orients women towards submission to men. The men, according to the SO theory looks at the women’s body as a physical object of sexual desire and women in the sexual society, and as per the gender role, which orients them towards submission to men, do get drawn towards the self – objectification and they tend to draw power through the process of self – objectification. Butler says, “...power imposes itself on us, and, weakened by its force, we come to internalize or accept its terms.”<sup>208</sup> So, women engage in self – objectification, and Ariel Levy discusses this phenomenon in “Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture” in the context of American culture, which, according to her, not only objectifies women, it encourages women to objectify themselves. So, whereas the root of the SO of woman’s body, which is visible in the monolog in *Über Tiere* also, is to be seen in the context of the heterosexual society, the next part of this theater text, which, for my convenience, I have titled, “The Pig Island Marquette” do situate us in a more market oriented, consumerist, patriarchal society.

**4.3.2 *Über Tiere* – Part 2/The Pig Island Maquette:** Whereas in the first part, there is resistance against objectification; the second part of the *Über Tiere* is to be read as the resistance against the market. In this part also, first I make my observation of the image. This will be followed by an engagement with the art installation on the basis of the documented, reviewed and researched material. Whereas in the first part, I, deal

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<sup>206</sup> Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, p. 21.

<sup>207</sup> Szymanski, Moffitt & Carr, p. 21.

<sup>208</sup> Butler, p. 2.

with the topic of “Human and Pig Relationship”, in the second part, I extend that reading further in exploring the human and animal nature. Then, once again the question arises, what is the human, and what in the animal, which the animal kingdom, in which we live, has, and towards which the “Pig Island” is pointing out at? This will be the point of exploration in the second part of this part. This will follow with a reading of the text along this line.

As the discourse on the objectification of the woman gets established, and the market language sips in, in the first part of the *Über Tiere*, we see the image of Paul McCarthy’s “Pig Island Maquette” and which actually is the major part of *Über Tiere* and only towards the end of the theater text, Jelinek has inserted the third and the last image, of the “The Mechanical Pig” from rear. The rear view of the mechanical pig can be read as the woman in monolog re – emerging, however, from the back, in a posture, where she is non – communicating, at least, not through her femininity.

Below is the image



Pig Island Maquette, Detail, aus *lala land parody paradise*, Paul McCarthy, Pig Island 2003-2005<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

If you look at the image, It seems to portray a dirty place, with pig faced human, or human faced human, or a big head on top of a baby like body and palm trees. Men are copulating with the pigs. Men look tired, worn off, far away from home, but somewhere at home, being themselves, playing their game, not governed by any law, but by the bodily existence. It looks like masculine world. There are some men, looking far away, who are in the background of the image, what is most visible, is the human copulating with the pigs, and pigs copulating with pigs, indulged in pleasure.

“Pig Island”, a very complex art installation by Paul McCarthy, looks like a >>carnavalesque amusement park<<<sup>210</sup>.

McCarthy has used diverse kinds of material, like, “wood, plastic, clay, foam rubber, polyurethane, electrical cords and components, plywood, paper, cardboard, plaster, papier-mâché, light bulbs, rope, spray paint, paint, glass, mirrors, carpeting, metal, rubber, tape, dust, glue, fabric, wire mesh, leather, implements ranging from construction tools to musical instruments, Plasticine, rocks, plants and animal fibres”<sup>211</sup> to create this amusement park. To this carnivalesque presentation, besides materials, media and art also contribute; a TV monitor plays Mike Nichols' 1966 movie of Edward Albee's play “Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf”, which refers to ‘Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf’, a tune sung in Disney's 1933 animated short “Three Little Pigs”. Besides, McCarthy also integrates icons and the characters from the politics, Disney – stories, and Hollywood: Angelina Jolie, Alice in Wonderland, Paula Jones, George W. Bush etc. in this installation. Art and non – art, art as rough draft of art seem to work as a strategy from McCarthy’s part to keep the viewers between dream and reality. McCarthy while bringing in the feel of Disney, however defies the picture – perfect Disney fairytale projection through using the maquette, ca.

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<sup>210</sup> *Pig Island by Paul McCarthy*, (May 19, 2010), <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/36843/pig-island-by-paul-mccarthy/>.

<sup>211</sup> <http://uk.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2016/june/16/from-book-to-bid-paul-mccarthy-s-mechanical-pig/>

60x70x80cm, made of urethane and epoxide resin, which we see in the image above along with the UT text , titled, “Pig Island Maquette”. According to the given definition,

“A maquette is model for a larger piece of sculpture, created in order to visualise how it might look and to work out approaches and materials for how it might be made.”<sup>212</sup>

Whereas in the first image, in the beginning of the *Über Tiere*, the mechanical pig looks quite perfect; in this image we see small scale models of the pirates and the pigs, maquette, which by its very definition, means rough and unfinished thing. The pig island maquette has certain rawness, although, the pirates and pigs are also mechanized like the mechanic pig, however, they bring in a different kind of aesthetic.

Like “The Pig Island” which McCarthy creates using his sculpture, lot of different kinds of materials, media, art, and interweaving reality with dream, mixing art with non – art, and through all this bringing forth an aesthetic which exposes the beauty of ‘American Dream’, Elfriede Jelinek, in the part which is below the image of “The Pig Island” creates another island which is made of the philosophical discourses, poem on love, reference of pop stars, like Tony Junior, the literary figure Don Juan (referred to hyper sexuality in the male in the field of psychology), the pornographic industry etc. It is a complex reality that emerges out of her juxtaposition with the complexities of the present Austrian society and the objective is to reveal the true human nature.

In the context of the first part of the *Über Tiere*, I came up to the point in my reading of the monolog that the objectification of the body relates to the infantocentric perspective, which does not allow the child to see mother as a subject and it gets extended in the relationship with the partner as a child grows into the adult. It is the infantilism that stays in the core of the grown up adults. This infantilism is in display in McCarthy’s “Pig Island Maquette”. About McCarthy as an artists, who began his

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<sup>212</sup> <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/maquette>

art life as a painter, and for him sexuality, domination and power are a central theme of portrayal, one review says that he “turns the ritualised, performance aspects of painting into muck-raking and shit-smearing, replacing existential heroics with a monstrous egotistical infantilism”.<sup>213</sup>

According to Cambridge Online Dictionary, egotism is “thinking only about yourself and considering yourself better and more important than other people.”<sup>214</sup> By definition, infantilism is, “persistence of the characteristics of childhood into adult life, marked by mental retardation, underdevelopment of their productive organs, and often dwarfism.”<sup>215</sup> According to infantocentric perspective, a child is unconcerned about the source of mother’s response. When somebody asks someone to live for him/her, it is called egoistic infantilism, which a small child displays as the child depends on the parents and he/she asks them to live for him/her. The small child does not see the need and capacities of the parents; all he/she does, is ask and he/she is provided with what he/she needs. There can be extension of this attitude in the adult, if the adult still insists on others to provide him/her for his/her need. Not seeing the need and capacities of the parents, what happens, when this egoistic infantilism gets combined with the sexualism? As there is the attitude towards not looking at the source of mother’s response, and hence mother becomes an object for the child, in the similar vien, there is an attitude towards not looking at the partner’s source of response, and hence the partner becoming an object in the sex. The sexual objectification relates to “decreased mind attribution (Loughnan et al., 2010), diminished agency perception (Cikara, Eberhardt, & Fiske, 2010), and dehumanization (Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011).”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Searle, Adrian (Oct 25, 2005): *Shiver me Timbers*,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2005/oct/25/1>.

<sup>214</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/egotism>

<sup>215</sup> <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/infantilism>

<sup>216</sup> Bernhard, Philippe, Gervais, Sarah J., Campomizzi, Sophie and Klein, Olivier (2012): *Integrating Sexual Objectification With Object Versus Person Recognition: The Sexualized-Body-Inversion Hypothesis*, In: “Psychological Science”, 23, 2, pp. 469–471, p. 469.

In *Über Tiere* Part 2/Pig Island Maquette, on one hand one can witness the dehumanization of the woman; on the other hand the men, like the pirates in the “Pig Island Maquette”, where men and pigs in copulation with each other, and also in their appearance, and the men in *Über Tiere*, in negotiating the flesh trade, seem to answer to the animal instinct in human, from which the human in the name of the civilization, has been distancing himself/herself. What is this human nature and what is this animal nature and where do women and men stand in this dichotomy of being human and being animal? Does this dichotomy stand or is there is an overlapping of the concept? What does the truth of the civilization tell us about it? I am going to deal with these questions here in my reading of the second part of the *Über Tiere*, while basing my argument on animal/human discourses in the field of behavioral science. The Behavioral sciences include various disciplines like psychology, anthropology, cognitive science etc. to deal with human action >> and often seeks to generalize about human behavior as it relates to society<<<sup>217</sup>

**a) Human Nature and Animal Nature:** To understand this dichotomy between human nature vs. animal nature, I engage here with Aura - Elena – Schussler’s article “From Eroticism to Pornography: the culture of the Obscene” in which she talks about the sexual field in the context of the wider field, which for long, was put in the taboo category by the culture. However, the widespread infiltration of pornography in culture and in life in general, opens up the debate about human nature vs. animal nature; how the differentiation has been created, and how does this differentiation work? What is the foundation of this differentiation?

Since the beginning the focus of the human civilization, has been to elevate from animal desire by trying to raise the human from above the basic desire, which is considered to be the life of an animal.

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<sup>217</sup> *Definition of Behavioural Science*, [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com).

In his book, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, which Bataille wrote in 1986, and in which he analyses how the human nature was defined by focusing on the interiority of living in human in comparison to the exteriority of living in the animals, he finds out that through labor and civilization human nature differentiates itself from animal nature. Citing him, Aura – Elena Schussler says that in the process of defining the human nature, the taboo of death and the sexual taboo was pre – dominant. He argued that the transgression of these taboos did not need denial of the same, rather its overcoming and completion. He goes on the line of pornography, however, even Plato’s philosophy considered eroticism to be path “to gaining happiness and knowledge by passing from the sensible (material) world to the world of pure thoughts”<sup>218</sup>. According to Schussler, though, sexual fiend is a taboo in culture, however, eroticism, “is the action that transgresses, through its superiority, the sexual taboo, by using culture as a method of freely self-developing the Eros rather than repressing it”<sup>219</sup>. So, while eroticism was a part of the high culture, and the culture is a product of the civilization, pornography is a part of the obscene culture, which is also by definition, is part of the civilization.

Like eroticism, pornography is also part of human society. Schussler, while referring to Bataille, says, “for millennia, man has separated himself from the animal through organised labour, by assuming death, by imposing taboos on sexual life, with the awareness of an inner experience, superior to the outer, immediate experiences”<sup>220</sup>. She argues that this inner experience belongs to the individual’s inner world, which in Bataille’s word, “is a “spirit” (subject) world, whilst the outer experience/the outer world/the animal world represents the part of human experience that brings him closer to >>nature<<, to >>original<<, to >>animal<<. “It is the experience more likely to

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<sup>218</sup> Schussler, Aura-Elena (2013): *From Eroticism to Pornography: the culture of the Obscene*, In: *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 92, 2013, pp. 854 – 859, p. 855. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042813028966>.

<sup>219</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

<sup>220</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

include the experiences that apply to our bodies, like pornography, for example<sup>221</sup>. This theory explains that, though, human beings have made immense effort to differentiate himself/herself from animals by bringing in the aspect of labor and civilization as species; however when we talk about being human and being animal as traits, here, it can be derived that being human and being animal are two aspects of human life. However, by and large, in the patriarchal structure, the human beings have been put into gender binary, man and woman; which is done on the basis of this understanding that man and woman possess different characteristics. Hence, the inner constitution and outer constitution of the two will have some differences as well. First of all, here I will take into account the aspect of inner world in the context of *Über Tiere*; second, I will look at the outer world dimension of the two; and third, at the human nature that intervenes on the name of ‘love’ and ‘work’ in being animal.

**b) Inner World Dynamics and *Über Tiere*:** As human being we divide our life in the inner world and the outer world. However, in both the aspects there is differentiation in what constitutes the inner and outer world of man and woman, along the line of this gender binary. The inner world, which distinguishes the human from animal, and which brings the subjectivity to human existence, has different dimensions for men and women.

While referring to Bataille, Schussler says, there are inner as well as outer experiences, whereas the outer experience relates to the body; the inner experiences relate to the consciousness. Whereas the outer world experiences belong to the nature, to the materialist world, the inner world experiences belong to the spirit (subject).

However, according to Schussler,

“The inner experience that he (Bataille) ascribes to consciousness – entailing the feeling of desire in opposition to that of anxiousness – is the one which in fact generates the onset of transgression.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

<sup>222</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

The inner world entails the feeling of desire. According to the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, human desire is the fundamental motivation of all human action. Citing Hobbes says,

“...a desire is both the first beginning of an action and the source of an interpretation of the world in which that action is carried out.”<sup>223</sup>

So, the transgression of the sexual taboo is also rooted in the inner experiences of the human beings. However, if, one’s inner experiences, instead, entail the feeling of anxiousness, then, it can be inferred here, that the transgression is not possible. The woman who in *Über Tiere* Part 2, likes to be booked but not marketed, says,

“Und schon ging in dir plangemäß meine Besorgnis auf, was ich diesen Abend wieder tun würde. Du wußtest es andererseits aber schon vorher mit Sicherheit, ich war ja vorbestellt. Es ist ja nicht so, daß ich noch einen Willen hatte, daß ich noch irgendeine Funktion in meiner Umwelt gehabt hätte als die, was von dir gewünscht würde. Darauf hin habe ich den ganzen Tag fleißig flugwärts gearbeitet (ich wußte, irgendwann würde ich rausfliegen!), daß etwas von deiner Seite aus gewünscht würde, das ich dann tun dürfte. Von mir aus konnte ich gar nichts tun, seltsam, diese Lähmung.”<sup>224</sup>

The reason behind the woman’s anxiety is that how she functions that depends on the desire of the man; however he can be sure and secured as he has booked her to fulfill his desire. She comes out as a medium for the man to transgress the sexual taboo that has been put in the place to subdue the animal nature in the human. The transgression of the sexual taboo means meeting the origin/nature/animal, which is the part of the outer experiences for the human, however, the anxiety on the woman’s part makes it impossible for her to have the similar outer experience like her male partner.

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<sup>223</sup> Foisneau, Luc (2014): *Hobbes on Desire and Happiness*, In: *Homo Oeconomicus* 31(4), pp. 479-489, p. 486.

<sup>224</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

c) **Outer World Dimension and *Über Tiere***: The outer world experience brings human being closer to animal, which is closer to nature, hence, this experience that applies to the body, also brings the human closer to the nature. However, in this outer world experience, if man appears to be nature; women seem to be 2<sup>nd</sup> Nature. The *Über Tiere* Part 2 thematises this hierarchy that exists in the human society. Not only, man in his relationship with women, negates the human nature, and wishes to go to the animal aspect of it; however neither the human nature, nor the animal nature of women get infolded in men meeting the women, as the relationship of the two is centered towards the wishes and desires of the man, who is already an ‘other’ for the woman in *Über Tiere*. The woman says,

“Ich konnte viele Jahre lang nicht erwarten, dir zu begegnen, wußte aber leider nicht, wer du warst, andererseits: große Angst davor. Wird er wollen, wird er nicht wollen? Wird Ausziehen gewünscht sein, oder wird es diesmal nicht gewählt werden, sondern ein schlichtes Essen im Gasthaus an der Ecke? Wird er mich angezogen wieder wegschicken, ich vermeide hier den Witz, wieso ich von dir so angezogen war, daß du mich nicht ausziehen wolltest, denn ich hätte es eh selber gemacht, das Ausziehen.”<sup>225</sup>

How is it done? How can a living being be made mute in terms of her own desire and wishes? Pornography, which is not sex in general, but a particular kind of sex, relates to the objectification of the woman’s body. According to the objectification theory, “perceivers may view sexualized women as objects and sexualized men as persons at a basic cognitive level”<sup>226</sup>. The sexualized woman is perceived as object because here it deals with the appearance of the woman, which relates to her exteriority, however in the case of man, it is about reducing his existence to the merely animal instinct. In the case of the men, it is his assertion outside the boundary of the civilizational world.

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<sup>225</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>226</sup> Bernhard, Philippe, Gervais, Sarah J., Campomizzi, Sophie and Klein, Olivier (2012): *Integrating Sexual Objectification With Object Versus Person Recognition: The Sexualized-Body-Inversion Hypothesis*, In: “Psychological Science”, 23, 2, pp. 469–471, p. 469.

In the words of Aura-Elena Schussler,

“...it is the moment at which sexual exuberance, meaning our animal instinct, opposes labour and order, meaning our humanity, to undermine the civilising dynamics and to reactivate the remnants of a repressed libido.”<sup>227</sup>

So, if, pornography, is a domain, where outer experience is made, and if it is seen as a place where one has the opportunity to transgress the sexual taboo; for women it is impossible to do so, because in the sexualized objectification, where the focus is on her appearance, and hence on becoming an object, the women lose that inner world, where the feeling of desire is situated, and which, according to Bataille, has the potential to generate the onset for the transgression. That way, she gets deprived of the outer experiences as well; as she is reduced to the status of the object and hence in how she is used she becomes animal, whereas in living the outer experiences, the men are living the animal nature. Whereas, the living the animal nature requires no detail reading, however, women being used as animal needs more attention, hence, under the next section, which I title, *Women as 2<sup>nd</sup> Nature*, I try to understand, in the context of *Über Tiere* Part 2, how pornography, is about using women's body as sexualized object same way, as animals are used by human beings.

**d) Women as 2<sup>nd</sup> Nature in the Context of *Über Tiere* Part 2:** Human beings have not only elevated themselves above animal by bringing in the idea of labour and civilization, but in dealing with other animals and also in men dealing with animals, the aspect of 'use' and 'need' takes the centre stage, and both animals, and 'women' are through some process, distanced from the 'force of life' which make human and animal both 'living being' and make them a thing to be used. This is where men become 1<sup>st</sup> nature, and other animals, along with women, become 2<sup>nd</sup> nature and in this section, we talk about this aspect, in the context of Jelinek's *Über Tiere* Part 2.

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<sup>227</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

Women become a thing of use in the pornography; she is a product, associated with the vocabulary like pre – order (vorbestellen), sale (vertreiben), to take for free (Gratis nehmen), requirement (Gebrauch), need (brauchen) etc. While talking about the theme of the *Über Tiere* Barbara Gronau says,

“Die Entrechtung der Frauen, die im Zentrum von *Über Tiere* steht, scheint immer wieder um das Motiv des Lagers zu kreisen, etwa wenn in „Jeder das Ihre“ das Motto des KZ Buchenwald mitschwingt. Denkt man an den modernen Umgang mit dem Tier als Fleischlieferant, Laborratte oder Stammzellenspender, so wird deutlich, dass der Mensch und das Tier in der Moderne dasselbe Schicksal des Lagers teilen.”<sup>228</sup>

The prostitution turns out to be, actually, a form of slavery, as it involves the human trafficking, and complicates the breaking free from the trade as it deals with a complex international nexus with different kind of laws from different countries. In her comment, Gronau finds that in how the animals are used in the modern world, has similarity with how the human beings were treated in the concentration camp. Now, if we look at how the animals are used in the livestock market, we see similar handling of women in the prostitution industry. Carol J. Adams points out towards it in her work, “The Sexual Politics of Meat”.

Adams explains,

“Objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object. The oppressor then violates this being by object-like treatment: e.g., the rape of women that denies women freedom to say no, or the butchering of animals that converts animals from living breathing beings into dead objects. This process allows fragmentation, or brutal dismemberment, and finally consumption. While the occasional man may literally eat women, we all consume visual images of women all the time. Consumption is the fulfillment of oppression, the annihilation of will, of separate identity. So too with language: a subject first is viewed, or objectified, through metaphor. Through fragmentation the object is severed from its

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<sup>228</sup> Gronau, Barbara (2007): *Kreatur und Beunruhigung – Nachdenken Über Tiere*, pp. 20 – 21, p. 21, [www.2ndnature.at/ueber-tiere-von-elfriede-jelinek.html](http://www.2ndnature.at/ueber-tiere-von-elfriede-jelinek.html).

ontological meaning. Finally, consumed, it exists only through what it represents. The consumption of the referent reiterates its annihilation as a subject of importance in itself.”<sup>229</sup>

At one place in the *Über Tiere 2*, it says,

“Zuviele andre Mädels da, die zu teuer sind. Sie kommen ins Hotel, und auch das Taxi muß bezahlt werden.”<sup>230</sup>

Whereas this sentence while using the taped audio conversation of a prostitution dealing in Vienna between the dealers and the customers, show the object like dealing of woman’s body, as it is something that has a price, one part of the text below talks about the concept of presence and disappearance that is associated with the woman’s body at the same time. As the body she must make the presence which obviously is not needed. Through her body as an object, the woman serves to the presence of the man.

“Der fremde Wille braucht jedoch die Anwesenheit nicht, er will und will und sagt ich und sagt ich und sieht meine so gut fundierte Präsenz gar nicht. Ich bin seine Präsenzdienerin, aber er sieht mich gar nicht. Ich bin die Anwesenheit selbst, versuche zu verschwinden, gerade indem ich eben immer da bin, unsichtbar, wie die Zeit oder die Schwerkraft. Da zu sein wie ein Ding und gleichzeitig wie diese Unwillkürlichkeit des Ewigen ringsumher, das die Uhr ticken läßt und uns auch.”<sup>231</sup>

In Adams’ point of view, every meal of meat mans absence, which is ceated because of the death of the animal hose place the meat takes. The absent referent” separates the meat eater from the animal and the animal from the end product. Adams argues that the function of the absent referent is to keep our “meat” separated from any idea of meat being once an animal. Once the existence of meat is disconnected from the existence of an animal, who was killed to become that “meat,” meat becomes unanchored by its original referent (the animal). Rather it becomes a free-floating

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<sup>229</sup> Adams, Carol J. (2010): *The Sexual Politics of Meat, A Feminist - Vegetarian Critical Theory*, First Published in 1990, The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, p. 73.

<sup>230</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>231</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

image. , used often to reflect women's status as well as animals'. Animals are the absent referent in the act of meat eating; they also become the absent referent in images of women butchered, fragmented, or consumable."<sup>232</sup>

In *Über Tiere* Part 2 also, the woman are referred as for example >>das Blond<<<sup>233</sup>. However, by bringing in the whole marketing aspect that plays a crucial role in the appearance of a woman, Jelinek actually highlights, what is being demanded is also fake, that is not how the mean's object is in desire in original appear.

“Inzwischen sagt der Kenner: graublond, und zwar mehr grau als blond, das nie mehr nie mehr zurückkehrt, das Blond. Das, nebenbei gesagt, nie eins war. Warum also ruft man jetzt danach? Und ruft nach einer aktiven attraktiven Verfärbung? Wo doch der Grundton schon nicht mitgestimmt hat, und so war die Wahl ungültig. Das soll er gefälligst dem Herbstlaub zurufen, das kann alles von allein, er soll es rufen, der Grundton des Haares, der sich längst nicht mehr kennt, nicht mal mehr auf der Farbskala, die in vielen langen, schrecklichen Strähnen im Supermarkt hängt.”<sup>234</sup>

The woman, in continuation of the monolog, Part 1, is, still trying to, form her subjectivity, also in the face of the sexualized objectification, by asserting that at least her hair is not fake. She says,

“Haar wird vorgetäuscht, ist aber keins. Also mein Haar kann es nicht täuschen, an dem orientiere ich mich, mein Haar, mein Eigen, das war einmal lebensecht und froh und hat sich mit heller Freude gezückt, wenn man dran gezogen hat.”<sup>235</sup>

In the text there are too many voices, too many discourses, too much speaking, the voice of the woman is drawn towards subjectivity of the woman, towards love, towards particularity in this market driven existence of one and all, where everything and anything becomes immediately a standard. Moreover, where women are

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<sup>232</sup> Adams, p. 13.

<sup>233</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>234</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>235</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

objectified, and men appear in the spirit of Don Juan, who in the field of psychology, symbolizes the hyper-sexuality of men, and sexuality, which applies to the body, is connected to the animal nature of human beings in general, and men in particular. There are instances in the *Über Tiere* Part 2, where the human nature intervenes in the text, which is about animals, and the following section engages with that.

Pornography has emerged lately as a big industry, and illustrates women involved in the industry as sex workers. It is their work place. Schussler relates Pornography to the culture of obscene, and that way, it can be seen as social unit, and constructed unit, and can't be seen within the scope of the discourse that bodily experience is natural and relates to animal nature. However, as pornography, relates to sexuality, it connects to animal side of human beings. However, if women are involved as worker, then it does not really stay within the scope of animal nature. Certain order, certain regulation, certain codes are introduced to give the pornography as an industry a structure; then surely the human nature/animal nature differentiation gets into question. How can it be looked within the scope of the *Über Tiere* Part 2?

In the pornography industry, which works on the principal of pleasure, women primarily are at work to serve men who are there as a client to get away from work that makes them part of the civilization process. Here I look at both the aspects in the context of *Über Tiere* Part 2: the work that women do in the pornography industry; and the work that men defy to answer their animal nature's call.

**e) Women at Work in pornography industry:** The Pornography industry is based on the principal of pleasure. According to the Pleasure Principle of Sigmund Freud, there exists a strong tendency towards the Pleasure Principle in the mind. Primarily there is an instinctive tendency in us to avoid unpleasure and seek for pleasure. There are certain instincts which endeavor "in accordance with the principle to obtain fresh

pleasure”<sup>236</sup>. So, the pleasure principle is the instinctive seeking of pleasure, which, according to Freud, can be very dangerous. To target long term pleasure, the egoistic instinct likes to choose Reality Principle, to avoid any unpleasure. According to Freud, this instinctive seeking of pleasure does not come from animal instinct, or unconscious being, rather from human instinct, or conscious being. Schussler says, “Eroticism is the activity of a conscious being, whose sexual desire is the result of its inner experience.”<sup>237</sup> The eroticisation of the entire body through activating its erogenous zones can be termed as process of labor. So, the “libidinal” labor includes labor, eroticisation of the body and pleasure, and that is the nature of work in prostitution industry.

In the *Über Tiere* Part 2, women as sex workers are involved in the libidinal labor like, “Naturfranzösisch”, “Küssen” or “Griechisch” etc. These are the libidinal activities, that one must do; they just do not happen in a natural way, as is thought, the way it happens in the animals.

“Es gibt da keine Aufpreise mehr für Naturfranzösisch oder Küssen oder sonstige Sachen, es gibt sehr wohl Mädels, die darüber hinaus Griechisch machen. Ich mache Griechisch nicht, und ich habe Griechisch nicht gemacht in der Schule des Lebens. Griechisch hat sich selbst gemacht, aber von selbst macht es sich nicht. Es muß gemacht werden.”<sup>238</sup>

The work they do is called, ‘service’.

“Optisch eine typische Russin, auch im Service.”<sup>239</sup>

Experience in the service also counts.

“Hier steht aber Pornostar, wieso ist sie dann keiner? Ja, die hat auch ein paar Pornofilme schon gemacht, wir schwören es.”<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Freud, Sigmund (1967): *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Translated by James Strachey), W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., p. 4.

<sup>237</sup> Schussler, p. 855.

<sup>238</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>239</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

In this era, when not only pornography has become industrialized, but there is pornographication of everyday life as well, and in such a context, the woman (of the *Über Tiere* Part 1) is attempting to resist the market, by not being salable, by opposing market, beauty pageant competition, by bringing back the idea of love. Love means no work and then also no money. However, she says, everybody likes to pay, and nobody wants to have it for free. Moreover, loving someone means, being out of work. And if love prevails, then there will be more unemployed people, and also more unfulfilled wishes.

“Sogar das Taxi muß man, wie gesagt, noch zahlen. Dafür ist Küssen dabei. Alles dabei. Küssen, Naturfranzösisch, Schmusen, wirklich komplett. Also draufspritzen und so etwas ist auch dabei. Genau. Come in mouth. Come in face.”<sup>241</sup>

And the job is dirty.

“Die Kleine war eine Scheiße. Vor mir niemand entdeckte diesen Mangel. Scheiße Scheiße Scheiße! Die hat mir einmal den Schweif geblasen, und dann war ihr die ganze Nacht schlecht, in der Früh hat sie mir ins Bett gespieben.”<sup>242</sup>

The prostitutes work to fulfill the wishes of the client. However, according to Schussler, their labor is neither normal nor libidinal. It is not normal labor because it contains sexual element. It is also not libidinal because it is done to satisfy the sexual instinct of the client, and for which they get paid. She makes use of the >>offered erotic pleasure as a means to make a living<<<sup>243</sup>.

**f) Men as Consumer in Pornography Industry:** Schussler says,

“It is certain that this conflict, involved in shaping basic human instincts, especially the sexual one, led to the accumulation of a certain frustration within the individual, frustration that was often released under the auspice of orgies and sexual perversions. We might say that it is the

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<sup>240</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>241</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>242</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>243</sup> Schussler, p. 856.

moment at which sexual exuberance, meaning our animal instinct, opposes labor and order, meaning our humanity, to undermine the civilising dynamics and to reactivate the remnants of a repressed libido.”<sup>244</sup>

Though pornography industry is based on labor, which, as we see above, is not counted as normal labor, and also not as libidinal labor, however, it is kind of labor, that serves the clients who are there for pleasure. The work that women do is to help the men/clients to defy the civilization which is based on the labor. The clients are university professors, lawyers, parliamentarians etc. and their work is directly involved in maintaining the order in the society. Their desire and wishes that drives them towards pornography is sexual exploitation of young girls and even children and also extreme violence and abuse.

The paradox in this text is shown in the kind of people who appear as client and the truth of the pornography industry which treats women as livestock.

**Conclusion:** Whether it is *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* or *Über Tiere*, both the theater texts, while dealing with the theme of the pornography primarily, resists the objectification of the woman’s body or objectification of the body in general. With the increasing acceptance of pornography in the mainstream, the texts tells us, the heterosexual pornography at least, do not democratize the desire; because the fundamentally it is still the medium to satisfy the male sexuality. The texts open up the areas of male and female sexuality, male and female desire, objectivity/subjectivity in the field of pornography, the consumerism, the discourses on human and animal, the question of power; and definitely it asks us to question the basic desire that creates pornography and which, in fact is a complex desire, rooted in individual entities. According to Aura- Elena Schussler, “...the values proposed by Pornotopia are much closer to what contemporary individual is looking for.”<sup>245</sup> According to her, pornotopia contain the values like complete freedom of expression,

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<sup>244</sup>Schussler, p. 855.

<sup>245</sup> Schussler, p. 858.

which is built around the concept of the genitality and the obscene. The woman in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* is trying to explore the space, the language, the situation, in which she can find her expression on the concept of the genitality and the obscene. The theater text *Über Tiere* shows, how the objectification of woman's body, that puts them in the category of 2<sup>nd</sup> nature, keeps them far far away from the idea of expression.

Schussler proposes,

“For that reason, the sought-for genitality is not limited only to exposure and exhibition or to its voyeuristic approaches – as the body-flesh has already gathered its laurels – but to what genitality can transmit in relation to gender differences and sex changes, as well as sexual orientations and travesties. These situations generated by pornotopia also involve the creation of a political discourse of pornography. It consists of dissolving the interdicts and the social norms and, last but not least, of releasing the individual from sexual pressure, characterised by the monitoring and supervision of this natural act, a representative activity for both the Renaissance and Modernism.”<sup>246</sup>

A political discourse on pornography, which could be based on the concept of genitality, as suggested by Schussler, could be a way forward to democratize the desire in the society.

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<sup>246</sup> Schussler, p. 858.



## Chapter 5

### Elfriede Jelinek on Theater Practice: Reading

*Ich möchte seicht sein (1983),*

*Sinn egal Körper zwecklos (1997), Theatergraben*

*(2005) and Es ist Sprechen und aus (2013)*

As is visible in the Austrian theatre tradition, the plays/ theater texts are a piece to be performed on the stage and also a contributor to how the theater should be done. Thomas Bernhard wrote the plays, which were not only for theater, but they also dealt with theater and impacted the theater practice. Elfriede Jelinek's theater texts also through their form and content contribute to the aesthetics of theater as content and also as form. The openness of her theater texts allows new experiments in the space of theater. At the same time, they close the door for any 'inbox' treatment of her theater texts. Jelinek has written a number of texts on theater in criticism of the conditioned approach to her theater texts, and how she intends to counter it. Her texts to theater are a criticism on the theatrical practices; they throw a light on the strategies that she implements in her theater texts to counter those practices; though this emerges some thoughts on theater practice.

The performance character has replaced the representational character in theater today by shifting the focus from the literary text to the body of the actor. The underlined argument of the 'aesthetics of the performative' is this that theater is a live medium and the actor's body, through the process of embodiment that unites the imaginary separation of body and mind, creates a performance and not a fictional plot and fictional characters. Erika Fischer – Lichte bases her theory of 'aesthetics of the performative' on the theatrical practices, which are not a product of literary texts; because according to her these literary texts are written with the representational aesthetics. Parallel to this there is a movement in the field of literary writing, which is written as per the aesthetics of the performative. They do not carry the aesthetics of representation; and hence they seek for a different approach to them. Whereas the

performance theory criticizes the representational theater for being subservient to literature; Elfriede Jelinek is critical of the theatrical practice that acts as constraint for the enactment of her theater. Here stand Jelinek's theater texts on a ground, where they are not representational in aesthetics, but performative, because they do not contain material but materiality, they are not closed and complete; rather open and fragmented. So, here the literature comes back in theater and demands to be performed. Her theater texts want to use theater as an apparatus to mediate them. Thereby she brings literature and theater back together in a relationship, however in a new definition. There lies the relevance of reading her texts to theater, which should also work as a theoretical background for my last chapter, where I am analyzing the stage performance of two of her theater texts, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere*.

Jelinek has written so far around 50 texts, which include her speech on receiving the prizes, like "Zum Mülheimer Theaterpreis", or her interviews about her theater writing, or her commentaries on the theater personalities like, Brecht, Einar Schleef etc., besides her texts that engage more directly with theater practice. I engage here with four theoretical texts *Ich möchte seicht sein* (1983), *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos* (1997), *Theatergraben* (2005) and *Es ist Sprechen und aus* (2013). The texts, written in different time periods of her evolution as a theater person, are critical of the existing theatrical practice on one hand, and talk about alternative practices on the other hand. The criticism, as well as the ideas that emerge out of the criticism, are important to perceive the kind of aesthetics that she is conceiving.

**5.1 *Ich möchte seicht sein*:** Jelinek was a student of Art History and Theater Science at the University of Vienna. By the time she came up with her first theoretical work, she had written two plays: *Was geschah, nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte, oder Stützen der Gesellschaft* was premiered in Graz, Austria (October 1979) with Kurt - Josef Schildknecht as director, *Clara S, musikalische Tragödie*, was premiered at Theater der Stadt Bonn (September 1982) under the direction of Hans Hollmann. As a theater writer she was two plays old. Both these plays, written in the traditional drama form, consisting of dialogues and monologues, are women centric and the protagonists are known women figures, Nora from the Ibsen's play, "Doll House",

and Clara S. after the famous composer Clara Schumann. The plays thematize feminist, Marxist, Capitalist discourses.

In 1983 Jelinek wrote her first theoretical text, *Ich möchte seicht sein* where she criticizes the theater as a space, where the actors act and the spectators watch. She comments,

„Ich will nicht spielen und auch nicht anderen dabei zuschauen. Ich will auch nicht andere dazu bringen zu spielen.“<sup>247</sup>

Because, when one performs in theater, one says something and does something as if it is real. However, in Jelinek's view, theater should serve as a space, where the actors should say (not do) things, which one should not say usually in real life. The lines from her theater texts should be said, and not enacted on the body. For that, theater must cease to be what it is. She proposes theater to be a space to exhibit work. Jelinek remarks,

„Ich will kein Theater. Vielleicht will ich einmal nur Tätigkeiten ausstellen, die man ausüben kann, um etwas darzustellen, aber ohne höheren Sinn. Die Schauspieler sollen sagen, was sonst kein Mensch sagt, denn es ist ja nicht Leben. Sie sollen Arbeit zeigen.“<sup>248</sup>

Jelinek says, in theater, which will not be a theater; she wants to show the work, which one can practice, but nothing of very high sense. So as the title suggests, the performance has to be shallow, it has to be external. To stay on the exteriority of the work, Jelinek suggests theater to borrow the aesthetics from fashion industry. There are three important aspects here. First is, theater as no theater. When Jelinek says, no theater, she means, no acting in theater. To see how theater can do without acting or playing (spielen), I will engage with Schiller's concept of play instinct, that as crucial aspect of the bourgeoisie theater in Germany. She opposes 'play instinct' because she considers her theater texts, not a 'play' but a 'work'. So in my view, instead of play instinct, she is suggesting to approach her work with work instinct. Following Schiller's theory and Jelinek's opposition to it; I will engage with the concept of work and work instinct. In my opinion, it is important to understand the concept of work

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<sup>247</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>248</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

and work instinct to be able to perceive her opposition to the existing theatrical practices. This will make the first part of the discussing Jelinek's first theoretical text, "Play Instinct vs. work Instinct". On the basis of Jelinek's criticism of the actor's role in theater and because of her suggestion to do theater like fashion show; I explore these two aspects in the next section, titled, "Actors are Form, Theater Texts are Content".

**5.1.1 Play Instinct vs. Work Instinct:** According to Erika Fischer – Lichte literature loses prominence in the field of theater because of the >>performative shift<<. This shift means, performative theater unlike representational theater refuses to be in the service of literature. Jelinek is also critical of the representational theater, however, not by doing away with literature from theater, rather by questioning the practices in theater that works as per the representational aesthetics. She questions the aesthetics, based on the play instinct that was the essence of the bourgeois theater in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Schiller, the representative dramatist of the bourgeois theater of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, engages in his fifteenth letter with the concept of play, in the context of the ideal of beauty. Schiller says, play instinct is an association between the form instinct (Formtrieb) and the material instinct (Stofftrieb), as only the unity of the reality with the form, with the co-occurrence, with the necessity of passion, with the freedom, completes the concept of the humanity. He further explains that the material instinct relates to the reality because this instinct is directed towards the preservation of the life; and the form instinct is related to the necessity of the things and is directed towards the preservation of dignity. He emphasizes the importance of playing a role in the theater in these words:

“...der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt.”<sup>249</sup>

The importance of playing a role in theater has been emphasized; because play brings perfection in the humanity and the other way, only a perfect human can play. According to William F. Wertz, Jr., in "A Reader's Guide to Letters on the Aesthetical" explains the play drive in these words,

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<sup>249</sup> Schiller, Friedrich (2000): *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen: In einer Reihe von Briefen*, Philipp Reclam jun. Stuttgart, p. 59.

“Not a third, independent drive, but rather the harmonious, reciprocal combination of the sensuous and formal drives. It is based upon the union of love and creative reason. Schiller says that the object of the play drive—which we call beauty—is “living form.”<sup>250</sup>

The play instinct aims at the perfection of humanity. According to Jelinek, theater should not serve as a place where the actor will appear to be perfect through the play. The search for perfection drives the bourgeois class towards theater, and it pretends to find that perfection in that space. Jelinek rejects this illusion and goes against the concept of playing/acting (Theaterspielen) and instead recommends work/labor in theater. So I argue that instead of play instinct (Spieltrieb), Jelinek’s theater demands work instinct (Arbeittrieb).

In general work can be defined as each human activity of a physical and spiritual/cognitive/mental (geistig) kind, which leads to the production of goods and the occurrence of situations. In antiquity, all the activities, which were counted as ‘unfree’ that was carried out by the slaves, were termed as work. These activities were mostly physical, which served in the production of eternal objects. In antiquity, free people did not get involved in the rigorous physical work. Also in the medieval period work was not valued highly, it was still considered as hardship and agony. The feudal concept of work in this period oriented itself lesser towards productive activity; rather the work contained hardship/trouble, which is connected to a military enterprise. The middle class attached social position and a secured income with work. With the beginning of the modern era, work got a very positive meaning in the context of the bourgeois emancipation of reason and became the key concept of the epoch. According to Locke the origin of the modern quantitative property is work. Adam Smith says that the whole consumer world of bourgeois affluence is the result of work. Hegel sees work as activity, which is directed towards the fulfillment of a need. He means that bourgeois society arises from the totality of relationships constituted by work. Marx divides the work into two categories, quantitative, which has use value; and qualitative, which has exchange value. Marx says that in the modern era, the form of abstract work and its product is understood as form of value and therefore work is seen as alienated work. He argues that the lifting of alienation would be at the same

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<sup>250</sup> Wertz, Jr., William F (Spring – Summer 2005).: *A Reader’s Guide to Letters on the Aesthetical*, In: *Fidelio*, Volume 14, Number 1-2, pp. 80-104, p. 84.

time freedom from 'work'. In the postmodern society, not only is production but also consumption an active process. Baudrillard, while criticizing Marx for just concentrating on the mode of production, asserts, "Consumption is as "active" an exchange as production"<sup>251</sup>. According to him, when one consumes, one does not just destroy a material object, but the object is attached with certain signs, that carries certain symbolic meaning, and the consumer appropriates the meaning while consuming the product. In consumption there is an active appropriation of signs, not simple destruction of an object. "What is consumed is not simply a material object that satisfies an all too rational need, but a symbolic meaning, in which the consumer places himself in a communication structure where an exchange occurs which is profoundly tied to the whole system of political economy. In order for the system to be reproduced there must be not simply the reproduction of labor power but continuous reproduction of the code."<sup>252</sup> So, the alienation is not only on the side of production, but also on the side of consumption. In the era of capitalism the signifier is detached from the signified and thereby the signifier becomes its own signified. Baudrillard gives the example of a deodorant that when the product has reached the hand of the consumer, it has transcended all the referents, it is detached from use value or exchange value, it does not have anything to do with the workers who, while producing it, might have been alienated or exploited in the process of the production, because it acquires a symbolic meaning. So, what is consumed is not a thing that has certain materiality and is a product of complex cycle, derived from labor and nature, "but purely and simply an element in a code"<sup>253</sup>. The code makes the consumption high, rather indefinite, as code is its own referent. Jelinek is aware of the codification of the work, so she does not target the mode of production, but rather the culture of consumption, where since all the referents vanish, the product is codified, and hence, the complex cycle of nature and labor is downplayed, so the work/labor/product is lost. Jelinek is asking the actors not to become the code that gives the meaning to her theater texts, which divorces it from the mechanisms of production; rather they should become a tool to show her labor/work/product. And for that she proposes the theater to do something like a fashion show. What kind of aesthetics the fashion show has and what kind of dimension it brings to theater? In fashion show, the body does not

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<sup>251</sup> Baudrillard, Jean (1975): *The Mirror of Production*, (Translated with Introduction by Mark Poster), Telos Press, St. Louis, p. 8.

<sup>252</sup> Baudrillard, p. 8-9.

<sup>253</sup> Baudrillard, p. 10.

add any meaning and depth to the product; it works as a form for the content, i.e. cloth.

**5.1.2 Actors are Form, Theater Texts are Content:** According to Elfriede Jelinek, actors should not burden the theater with their substance. In the field of chemistry, a chemical substance is defined as, “a form of matter that has constant chemical composition and characteristic properties. It cannot be separated into components by physical separation methods, i.e., without breaking chemical bonds”<sup>254</sup>. So, if Jelinek opposes the idea of bringing substance into theater, i.e. she is opposing body appearing in the theatrical performances on a constant and consistent plane, as if it is pure, not at all effected by anything. However, how we behave, as human being, could be the outcome of various power discourses. The social realities, identities, units (Einheiten) are a result of different power structures, which are regulated through language. These discourses do not empower any individual, however they live through individuals. In this sense the body works as a tool for the successful execution of different power discourses. As in theater, the same way, also in life, an act is performed in front of an audience in a particular space and for a particular time span, through the members of a particular society in certain way, so that it sounds natural. According to Judith Butler’s theory of performance regarding the emergence of gender identity, the repetition of stylized acts by individuals creates a seamless identity that gives the impression of being pure and constant and that way, it seems to carry substance. So, it only seems to carry the substance, however there is no truth in it. Human body has potential to materialize and that property of body is used to produce acts that give the impression of body being substance. However, Jelinek’s theater texts are in the intersection of different discourses. So there is no scope to project body as substance here, or use this substance like appearance of body. Fashion show that also happens live as an event for an audience, in real time, by models, through using their body, but without substance, is suggested by Jelinek as a way to do theater. A fashion show, because,

„man die Kleider auch allein vorschicken könnte. Weg mit den Menschen, die eine systematische Beziehung zu einer ersonnenen Figur herstellen könnten! Wie die Kleidung,

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<sup>254</sup> Ritsukaao, Rippvann: “Chemical Substance”,  
[https://www.academia.edu/7006976/Chemical\\_substance](https://www.academia.edu/7006976/Chemical_substance).

hören Sie, die besitzt ja auch keine eigene Form, sie muß um den Menschen gegossen werden, der ihre Form IST.“<sup>255</sup>

Since, there is no constructed figure in Jelinek’s theater texts, not even in her first two theater texts, where she inserts all already known real/fictional characters and fed them the lines that are already known in terms of ideas/discourses/ideologies, there is no way to manufacture a systematic relationship with them, to do that an actor’s body with substance plays a crucial role, because the substance is made of a code of performance, and that is what an actor offers to put over a constructed figure in theater. The actor is the form and the text content in her theater. To play on the stage the actor has some freedom, but like in a pullover. When one wears the pullover, the pullover has its own margin and armholes to give the model certain space for certain gestures. Jelinek says, the actors have certain freedom on the stage, but he/she should make the gesture that can be imitated exactly by others; i.e. stylized gestures, like in fashion show.

In criticism of director’s role in theater, Jelinek argues that director makes theater a place for himself by filling the stage with his meaning by himself, and thereby he kills the fashion, which is futuristic. About the temporality in fashion industry, George Simmel says,

“Ihre Frage (Mode) ist nicht Sein oder Nichtsein, sondern sie ist zugleich Sein und Nichtsein, sie steht immer auf der Wasserscheide von Vergangenheit und Zukunft und gibt uns so, solange sie auf ihrer Höhe ist, ein so starkes Gegenwartsgefühl, wie wenige andere Erscheinung.“<sup>256</sup>

There is element of being and not being at the same time in fashion. However in the context of theatre practices, Jelinek comments,

“Denn diese Leute (die Schauspieler) sind doch, die sich verkleiden und mit Attributen behängen, die sich ein Doppelleben anmaßen. Diese Personen lassen sich vervielfältigen, ohne daß sie ein Risiko eingingen, den sie gehen nicht verloren. Ja, sie spielen nicht einmal

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<sup>255</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1983): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>256</sup> Simmel, Georg, „Die Mode“ in: Bovenschen, Silvia (Hrsg.), *Die Listen der Mode*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1986. S. 179 – 207. S. 189.

mit ihrem Sein herum! Sie sind ja immer dasselbe, nie brechen sie durch den Boden oder erheben sich in die Luft.”<sup>257</sup>

So, either performance in theater has to be like in film where the same is shown always, or else, like our clothing, every time something new, because nothing stays forever. This is in sync with the philosophy and aesthetics of fashion industry, which is the subject of discussion below. I will engage with the basic philosophy of fashion industry that drives creating the cloth, which I will see in connection to Jelinek’s plays. I do understand the clothing as an equivalent to Jelinek’s theater texts, and dealing with the philosophy of fashion industry can support the talk on her theater texts as well. Additionally, it can also evolve further the idea that Jelinek has about theater being a space where the literature is not given a life, but where the work that her literature is, is shown. The play is ‘clothing’; the theater staging is the ‘fashion show’. Creating a cloth is not an isolated activity, and it requires craftsmanship, which must go with the spirit of time and culture (besides its technical aspect); and fashion show as a concept borrows from theater for the presentation of clothing.

**a) Philosophy of Fashion Field:** Fashion is without substance. It changes permanently. It is form, structure, sign. It is abstract and as form it is against any meaning being attributed to its special contents. The permanent change in fashion is also seen as a threat to human longing for a harmony in mental, spiritual, physical appearances. Fashion is about trend, it keeps the people there as they must be watchful to know the latest trend, and they embrace the novelty offered; however move to next novelty quickly. There is an extreme concept of temporality attached to it. However, the abstractness, the feature of changing permanently, the temporality, and the newness attached perpetually to it, does not mean, fashion is beyond law, time and social realities, on the contrary, and it connects more closely and intensely with these factors.

The clothing has a form, which must be in tune with the form of the individual that nature has given to him/her. So, if meant for humans, it must take into account the human form, when clothing is being created. The material is available, the form is given, and the designer makes the cloth according to his/her aesthetic sensibility and

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<sup>257</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

taste. The aesthetic, the sensibility, the taste that a particular designer gives to a piece of cloth, is not arbitrary, but is ruled by strict legality.

According to Silvia Bovenschen,

“Der beginnenden Veränderung von Lebensstilen, dem Verhältnis von sakralen und profanen Momenten, der Entwicklung der Wissenschaften, den politischen Trends, der Technologie, dem Sport und der Kunst müssen sie Aromastoffe abgewinnen, die eine stimmige Komposition des Neuen begünstigen.”<sup>258</sup>

So, the creation that comes up acquires its sensibility from the life style, from the relationship of sacred and profane moments, from the development of sciences, from the political trends, technology, sports and art, which supports the coherent composition of the new. Bovenschen argues that any mistake in the creation can land the creator to perish. In Eduard Fuchs’ view only a creation that goes with the general cultural tendencies of the time, becomes a fashion. In fact, fashion does not follow only the great line of cultural development, but it also expresses its most >>subordinate tendencies<<<sup>259</sup> . All the forms of a particular fashion and also its detailed finesses are adequate for the general political and social tendencies of a time. So the fashion entails the general tendency of a time and also the subordinate ones. It demands a general seeing and also the detailed seeing. In fact there is a very strong concept of temporality in fashion, and George Simmel explains it in these words,

“Ihre Frage (die Frage der Mode) ist nicht Sein oder Nichtsein, sondern sie ist zugleich Sein und Nichtsein, sie steht immer auf der Wasserschneide von Vergangenheit und Zukunft und gibt uns so, solange sie auf ihrer Höhe ist, ein so starkes Gegenwartsgefühl, wie wenige andere Erscheinung.”<sup>260</sup>

There is element of being and not being at the same time in fashion, because a line of clothing is taken by a group of people, however the rest of the population is on the way to it. And the moment everyone starts practicing the trend, it is no more a fashion. Its life cycle completes the moment it goes to the mass of the people. So, fashion is something that begins with few, reaches the mass, and in reaching it gets

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<sup>258</sup> Bovenschen, Silvia (1986): *Über die Listen der Mode*, In: *Die Listen der Mode*, Bovenschen, Silvia (Hg.), Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, S. 10 – 30, S. 26.

<sup>259</sup> Fuchs, Eduard (1986): *Ich bin der Herr dein Gott*, In: *Die Listen der Mode*, Bovenschen, Silvia (Hg.), Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, S. 156 – 178, S. 163.

<sup>260</sup> Simmel, Georg (1986): *Die Mode*, In: *Die Listen der Mode*, Bovenschen, Silvia (Hg.), Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, S. 179 – 207, S. 189.

destroyed. The time a fashion is at its high point, it gives the feeling of intense present. Fashion is not about perfect beauty. It is about the constant aesthetic exploration of the material within the constraints of legality. Eduard Fuchs is also of the opinion that fashion is not about the perfect beauty, which looks for some kind of harmony, but it is about constant new making of the specific sensuality (Sinnlichen) in the cloth. This orientation about the basic philosophy helps to understand how fashion is created. The concept of temporality and the idea of permanent change indicate at the transcendental properties of fashion. At the same time adherence to the strict legality does also make fashion an image of a particular society, of a particular period. It is abstract and as a form it is against any meaning being attributed to its special contents. So fashion, in the form of cloth has special contents, but it is actually a form and does not allow meaning to be attributed to the content, because it is all about the exteriority.

Jelinek opposes the idea of the production of meaning in theater as well. As I have discussed above, in a capitalist society, consumption is as active a process as production and in consumption, not just the material object is consumed, but a symbolic meaning, which emerges by detaching the product to its referents. “The exchange of signified has always hidden the "labor" of the signifier...”<sup>261</sup> This involves the codification of the product and thereby the consumer steps into the system of political economy. Once a product is codified, it gets monopolized by the capitalist, and that makes the consumption uncontrolled and indefinite. The code must be dismantled, if the uninterrupted flow of the work force needs to be restrained, that will lead to the liberation of the workers. According to Baudrillard, it is in the representation, that man “becomes his own signified for himself and enjoys himself as the content of value and meaning in a process of self-expression and self-accumulation whose form escapes him”.<sup>262</sup>

Jelinek states also,

“Die Schauspieler bedeuten sich selbst und werden durch sich definiert.”<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Baudrillard, p. 18.

<sup>262</sup> Baudrillard, p. 16.

<sup>263</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

The fashion show, reflects on an art form, which is not representational in nature, hence the referents are visible.

**b) Fashion Show as an art form:** The fashion show works on the premise that fashion industry offers novelty constantly that must be shown to the public. Can this become the basic premise of theater as well? Can theater also be a space to showcase novelty? Jelinek asserts this point in the context of theater also,

“Theater darf es nicht mehr geben. Entweder das Immergleiche wird immer gleich wiederholt (Filmabnahme einer geheimen Aufführung, die von uns Menschen nur mehr in ihrer EINZIGEN EWIGEN Wiederholung gesehen werden darf), oder keine zweimal dasselbe! Immer etwas ganz andres!”<sup>264</sup>

That kind of novelty, which is visible in the fashion show, theater must bring out each time there is a performance. It is the newness that should attract one to theater, not the familiar. Moreover, Jelinek, as I have mentioned above, because of her conception of theater as a place where the ‘new’ is put on the show, suggests to do theater as fashion show.

Fashion show is like a bridge between the production and the consumption. In a fashion show, an outfit is displayed to get attention of the spectators, who can later buy it. On one hand it entertains the audience; on the other hand it helps to sell the product. It is considered an art form and it has developed its own set of aesthetic convention. A fashion show makes the designer an artist and not only a dressmaker.

According to fashion show theoreticians,

“Instead of a mixture of old and new clothing items, which most people tend to wear, the fashion show separates the new collection, presented on stage, from the clothes worn by the audience, making them in the process appear ‘already-old’. In these ways, framing devices are essential to making the fashion show a distinctive cultural form.”<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Ich möchte seicht sein*, Elfriede Jelinek, <http://www.elfriedejelinek.com>.

<sup>265</sup> Skov, Lise, Skjold, Else, Moeran, Brian, Larsen, Frederik & Csaba, Fabian F.: “The Fashion Show as an Art Form”, p. 5. <https://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/7943/Creative%20Encounters%20Working%20Papers%2032.pdf?sequence=1>

A fashion show is characterized by self referentiality. Normally a fashion show is planned and scripted to each pose and turn. Though sometimes as in any live performance, an accident can happen. The audience is observer and also the part of the spectacle. The aspects of the fashion show, which gives it the form of drama, are: light, stage, music, and framing devices, like technology, props and conventions.

**Stage:** It is divided in two, front and back stage, whereas front stage is carefully scripted in its staged framing devices, both in place and time; the back stage consists of ordered chaos.

**Light:** There is strong light on the runway, audience is in the dark. This is done to reinforce the direction of the gaze on the stage.

**Music:** The music accompanying a fashion show is selected and played by a DJ in order to match the designer's concept for the show. Music together with lighting and slides are used to emphasize distinct features of the collection presented.

**Movement:** The movement in the fashion show is called catwalk movement. In the catwalk the upper body is kept erect, arms dangle carelessly, and the legs play the main role in creating the right effect. The movement pattern of the models is highly stylized; it makes the model a stylized object.

**Audience:** Audiences, normally carefully selected and organized, are generally part of the cast. By and large different kinds of people, associated with the event, like

“fashion editors, photographers and journalists, celebrities (including other designers), retail buyers, fashion industry representatives, business associates (such as sponsors and partners), guests of designers and other key performers (such as models, stylists), including well connected and persistent fashionistas”<sup>266</sup>.

The fashion show is distinct, but at the same time, has a theater like quality in it. The patterns of movement are stylized to present the collection in as flattering manner as possible. This flattering manner is created because of the presence of the living body on the stage. The stylized body movement shows how the cut and fabric of an outfit actually interplays with the body, how it works when worn. So, the body serves to

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<sup>266</sup> Skov, Lise, Skjold, Else, Moeran, Brian, Larsen, Frederik & Csaba, Fabian F, p. 20.

highlight the cloth, its design, its cut, and the fabric in a very conventional, stylized manner, through the movement.

In today's capitalist society mode of production is as important as the consumption. So, unlike the industrial society, in capitalist society the locus is no more production. Hence, not only is labor alienated, but also the product is deprived of all the references, and is given to the consumer, attired with some kind of meaning. This alienates the people involved in production of a good on one hand, and also the consumer on other hand. When Jelinek says, that director bring their own meaning in theatrical performance, then it means, the work, that she would like to show, is more distant, because of meaning being attributed to it. There fashion show stands as a bridge, because the production and consumption aspects of a creation are more connected to each other, as different players, involved in the fashion industry, from the designers to manufacturers, buyers, stage managers, models, media persons and all others in a way work together to put up the event.

**4.2 *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*:** The art field has distanced itself from the literary text since 1990s, and has become completely performative, and according to Erika Fischer – Lichte, the unique character of the performance in the art field is this that it can't be repeated, it is done once and that is all. Performance conceptually has an open structure, entails numerous experiments, is always on the lookout for innovations. Jelinek also does not structure the theater in her text, but she tells what possibly hinders the performance aesthetics in theater, i.e. from the theater to be always something new, and what could be done to keep the novelty as the character of the play. The text, *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos* criticizes primarily the actors, tells what she would like the actors to do, and what will happen if they do as Jelinek prescribes them to do. As the title of the text itself suggests, for Jelinek the sense/meaning and also the body is irrelevant. First I will have a look at her theater texts, written from 1983 to 1997 to understand what kind of theater figures emerge out of her theater texts, because according to the norms of theater, the role of the actors is to give body to the figures. This will be followed by Jelinek's criticism of the role of the actors/theater/acting in theater and her prescription for what they should be doing.

**5.2.1 Figures in Jelinek's Theater Texts (1984-1996):** From 1983 to 1997, between the publication of her two theoretical texts, *Ich möchte seicht sein* and *Sinn egal*,

*Körper zwecklos*, Jelinek wrote 8 more theater texts/plays: *Burgtheater* (1984), premiered in Bonn in 1985, under the direction of Horst Zankl, *Begierde oder Fahrerlaubnis* (1986) performed same year in Graz under Ulrike Ottinger's direction, *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (1984), premiered in 1987 at the Kammerspielen in Bad Godesberg under the direction of Hans Hollmann, *Wolken.Heim.* staged at Schauspiel Bonn, in the direction of Hans Hoffer in 1988 and got published in 1990, *Totenauberg* (1991), premiered in 1992 at the Burgtheater, Vienna under the direction of Manfred Karge, *Präsident Abendwind*, published and premiered in 1992 at Tiroler Landestheater Innsbruck, directed by Johanna Liebeneiner, *Raststätte oder Sie machen alle*, published and premiered in 1994 at Burgtheater Vienna under Claus Peymann's direction, *Stecken, Stab und Stangl*, published and performed in 1996 at Deutschen Schauspielhaus Hamburg under the direction of Thirza Brucken. The concept of corporality that emerges from Jelinek's theater texts mentioned above, is a pretext against which her theoretical text, *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos* must be read.

**5.2.2 Role of Corporeality in Jelinek's Theater texts (1984 – 1996):** Jelinek's theater texts that emerge between 1984 and 1996, through the content and form of the texts, create a moment in the field of theater for varied aesthetic experiences. While referring to *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* Corina Caduff says that her figures embody mental/intellectual figures (Denkfiguren); the figures are >>anti – corporal<< (anti-leiblich). Caduff argues that through the creative play in the intertextual field, Jelinek presents a body – discourse, which criticizes the cultural domestication of the body. Jelinek's body discourse does not allow the figures in her theater texts to have an inner life/emotion life (Innenleben). The figures are, what they say, there is nothing unpronounced there. Her objective has been to put into question the classical role of the actor to mediate gesturally between outwardly acting and spiritual inwardness. In her quest to make anti – corporal theater, Jelinek writes theater texts, which are more like monologues, for example *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*. In *Burgtheater*, the figures speak an artificial language. In the theater text, *Totenauberg* it is not possible to differentiate the figures as Jelinek has intersected the figures with each other, and because of which there is overlapping and substitutions are visible. When one cannot differentiate one figure from the other, it is not possible to embody those figures in performance. According to Maja Sibylle Pflüger, in her work, "Vom Dialog zur Dialogizität. Die Theaterästhetik von Elfriede Jelinek", the pretexts in *Totenauberg*

show the heterogeneous composition of the voices, out of which different figures emerge. There is not one voice, but several voices; there is also not one pretext but several pretexts. It is also important here to understand that what gets created out of the given pretexts and voices in Jelinek's texts are figures and not the characters, neither in her text nor in the performance on the stage.

In Brechtian theater figures and characters are different conceptually. A character has certain characteristics, which may appear fixed, even if it is diverse. A figure is not so much about characteristics, so not that fixed. There is fluidity in a figure. It is "the sum of his or her *Haltungen*, something that omits any sense of recurring characteristics or psychology"<sup>267</sup>.

So, out of the multiplicities of voices and pretexts, Jelinek's figures emerge; they are fluid, changeable and contradictory and have no psychological depth. They can destabilize an actor if he/she is engaging with the theater text by trying to imbibe the role of the figures, as conventionally the actors have been doing for the characters. In fact the text is not about the interpersonal relationship between different figures; rather it is about the interaction between different philosophical ways of thinking through and against each other. Jelinek has done away with the conventional drama form, which based itself on the dialogical exchanges between the characters. In Pflüger view, there is no external form of drama in *Wolken. Heim.*, however she has used the dialogical text procedures. The dialogical textual procedure is an outcome of intertextuality and montage. About the structure in the theater text, Pflüger comments that it is here about speech/talk (Rede), however, who is talking, is not clear, it is 'we' that appears as a grammatical subject of the sentences, and seems to be delivering an endless monolog. However, she says, if watched closely, the collective singular splits up in different voices. So, first, it is many in one, as the grammatical subject 'we', however its singularity breaks down because of many distinct voices in 'we'. *Wolken. Heim* brings in bodiless voices of an undead German 'we'. In *Stecken, Stab und Stangl* the silent ghost pictures of the victims of the Austrian neo-Nazi terror, in which 4 Romas were murdered in the small town of Austria, Oberwart. With her theater text, *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* Jelinek puts aside the elements of traditional drama, which consisted of plot, dialogue, dramatic figures etc. and replaces

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<sup>267</sup> Barnett, David (2017): *Brecht in Practice*, <http://brechtinpractice.org/theory/figures-not-characters/>

it with a language that does not allow the theater texts to acquire the dramatic form. According to Evelyn Annuß,

“Die Rede ist nicht dialogisch aufeinander bezogen: sie ist vielmehr durch ihre intertextuelle Zusammensetzung und Widersinnigkeit in sich dialogisch, vielstimmig.”<sup>268</sup>

The intertextual composition and the contradictoriness in fact make Jelinek’s theater texts dialogical. In all the theater texts mentioned above, the body is absent, it is the language that is in play, it is the voices that are prominent, with the exception of *Raststätte oder Sie machen alle*, where body, lust, desire come in the forefront. Whereas in other theater texts, mentioned above, she is presenting various ideas in the language, here the body is in centre in *Raststätte oder Sie machen alle* to counter certain ideas about lust, sexuality, desire ideas.

**5.2.3 Criticism of Theater Practice in *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*:** Jelinek criticizes in this text as well the role of actor in theater, and she explains beforehand how the figures are conceived by her in her theater texts.

### **Figures:**

“Die Zeugen meiner Anklage gegen Gott und Goethe, mein Land, die Regierung, die Zeitungen und die Zeit solo, sind die jeweiligen Figuren, jedoch ohne sie darzustellen und ohne sie sein zu *wollen*, weil sie sie ja schon sind! Also nicht im Sinn einer platten Identifikation mit einem Etwas, sondern im Sinn eines Sinns von etwas!”<sup>269</sup>

According to Jelinek, the figures are there as witness for the prosecution against God, Goethe, her country, the government, the newspapers and the time. So in that sense the theater texts by Jelinek are like court trials, and the figures are there as witness. The figures are not a plain identification with something; but with the sense of something. They are the sense of something, and that is what the actors have to carry forward.

**Actors:** Jelinek perceives actors as filters.

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22 Annuß, Evelyn (August 1999): “Im Jenseits des Dramas. Zur Theaterästhetik Elfriede Jelineks”, In: “Text + Kritik, Zeitschrift für Literatur”, Arnold, Heinz Ludwig (Hg.), Verlag edition text + kritik GmbH, München, Heft 117, “ELFRIEDE JELINEK”, 2. erweiterte Auflage, p. 45 -50, p. 45.

<sup>269</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

“Der Sinn läuft überhaupt durch den Schauspieler hindurch, der Schauspieler ist ein Filter, und durch ihn läuft Sand durch Sand, ein anderer Sand, durch den Sand, Wasser durch Wasser.”<sup>270</sup>

In fact in her theater texts also the language is used in a manner that the sentences pass through the figures (if they are there). So if the actors intend to play the role of these figures, then according to the demand of the theater texts, they must allow the sentence to pass through them. Hence, Jelinek proposes the actors to be like ‘filter’ and complains that rather than acting like a filter, which will work to mediate the ‘content’ of her theater texts, the actors booze from her fountain, simply because they have been hired. Since it is the actors who are on the stage, they are closest to the fountain, and drink from it like a fish. She calls them >> Sinnvergifter<<<sup>271</sup>. There is a proverb, which goes like this: ‘Trinken kann jeder, Saufen nur die Elite’<sup>272</sup> (Everybody can drink, only the elites can booze it up). According to Jelinek, the actors “pollute” the meaning of the text only because they situate themselves on the stage. They are on the stage as a passersby is on the road. They are on risk, and they can risk others too, if they develop a relationship with others. It is like, when we want to cross the road to ourselves by ourselves but we notice that one is already standing there, whom we would not like to meet.

**Theater:** According to Jelinek, everybody knows where he/she has to go. Each one is an individual with their own goal and everybody has something together, for example their presence at the place at the same time. What during the crossing of the road takes place, because of the presence of the passerby and because of the atmosphere, is theater. So, the theater happens in that moment, when individuals do happen to be in the same place, but without stepping into each other’s space and also because of the atmosphere of the place. So, the moment, in which the individuals bring something out in that space all together in one frame, as one unit, is ‘theater’.

The actors should deliver news and a message, the beginners a news and the advanced ones a message. Neither she likes it that the actors appear (Schein) as something nor that they present the reality, which she says, is like resembling to oneself, however

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<sup>270</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>271</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

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<https://dict.leo.org/forum/viewUnsolvedquery.php?idforum=1&idThread=848367&lp=ende&lang=en>

one must resemble to what the author prescribes. What does Jelinek prescribe in her theater texts?

**5.2.4 Jelinek's prescription for actors:** Jelinek is critical of the representative theater, in which the actor wears the language as >> Königsmantel<<<sup>273</sup> which allows him/her to hide under it. When he/she is acting, he/she puts the “overcoat” (Mantel) on; when he's not, he hangs it on the coat rack. Creating a character and believing that that character is in any way any different than the actor himself, Jelinek describes as “das Allerschlimmste”<sup>274</sup>, the “theatre” that she seeks to avoid. What she desires is “dass die Sprache kein Kleid ist, sondern unter dem Kleid bleibt”<sup>275</sup>.

According to Jelinek, the actors can meet anyone but themselves on stage. Critical of actors being substance in the space of theater, of being the privileged one in theater, critical of their ability to be many in theater, she makes a strategy to outdo them:

“Also lade ich ihn, den Schauspieler, mit der Herausforderung meiner Sprache auf, mische die unbezahlten Forderungen von mindestens zweihundert anderen Autoren, die groß waren und wirklich gelebt haben, auch wenn sie uns heute unwirklich erscheinen, und mische als dann auch noch meine eigenen Einkaufsposten, die sich sofort neben mir aufpflanzen und keinen mehr durchlassen, darunter; der Schauspieler erhält die Anforderung, welche jetzt auch die meine geworden ist, habe ich doch auch die Autorität von gespenstischen Hauswesen, Fremden, Geistern, die ich herbeizitiert habe, auf den Block, den Einkaufszettel dazugeschmiert und sie dem Schauspieler dann auf den Körper gedrückt.”<sup>276</sup>

Jelinek says that she has pressed all that her individual theater text is made of, on the body of the actor. So, there is no ‘real’ body, and also there is no ‘fictional’ body. Rather the body is pressed by her text. i.e. it is a layer of the body, which does not allow either the body to play or it to materialize.

The semiotic theater of the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, which keeps the literature in the centre of the performance, takes away the life out of the organic body as it aims to present a semiotic body. Because, only a purely semiotic body, can bring in

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<sup>273</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>274</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>275</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>276</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1997): *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

appearance the meaning, given in the text, to mediate to the audience. Though, Jelinek would also like the theater to be a medium to mediate her text, however, on one hand she is against the organic body, that has the potential to effect the theater, on the other hand, she is also against the semiotic body, as she is not in favor of theater making sense out of a text. However, the actor, with his living body, must be there to demonstrate how it is not living. Jelinek says, if the text that she writes for the theater, is read as news or as message, in a while one can see that the actors don't speak; rather they are the speech themselves.

In the context of the semiotic theater, Erika Fischer – Lichte says that disembodiment is assumed in the concept of the embodiment in the semiotic theater that makes it against the transitory nature of a performance. The gestures, the movement of the actor, the sound, that he/she produces, is transitory, however the meaning which is brought into expression through the transitory medium, stays beyond the fluid sign. Jelinek is against the body gestures, but she is against them, not because they are transitory, but because they give certain meaning to the content of her theater text, that actually has sense, but not meaning in it. So in the place of meaning, Jelinek's theater is for the mediation of sense, it is about sense making.

**5.2.5 Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos in the context of Michael W. Kramer's theory of 'Sensemaking':** While referring to Weick, the founder theorist of the concept of Sensemaking, Michael W. Kramer says that Sensemaking occurs when "individuals collectively come to an understanding about the meaning of an experience they have had."<sup>277</sup> An experience can have several interpretations and the sensemaking is involved in reaching one interpretation. Kramer explains that in the process of selecting one interpretation, one commits to a particular meaning for an experience, though an experience can have possibly several meanings. However, when one chooses a particular meaning for an experience, that influences further actions and at the same time the process of sensemaking continues. Jelinek's theater texts are based on collective experiences, about war, nationality, sports, feminist movements, capitalist era. Also the stories, the philosophy, the events, the history, the fiction, the reality, all that Jelinek includes in her writing for the theater, are a part of collective experience. So, performing her theater text is about not mediating the meaning of the

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<sup>277</sup> Kramer, Michael W.: "Sensemaking", 08 June 2016, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118955567.wbieoc185.p.1-10.P.1>.

text through the representation, rather here it takes a longer path. A group of people, when they come together in the theater space, through some presentation skills of the theater practitioners, should be able to find a space to reach to one interpretation out of several, related to the particular experience that a text by Jelinek mirrors. As the theory of sensemaking says, it is not about doing away with the meaning, rather through meaning, one interprets an experience, and makes sense out of it. The meaning thus chosen culminates in action, and the process of sense making goes on.

The next theoretical text by Jelinek, *Theatergraben* (2005) explores the theater aesthetics in a new dimension.

**5.3 Theatergraben:** Since the figures in Jelinek's theater texts are not to be identified with something, but with the sense of something, which according to Jelinek does not require any sort of identification. So, she suggests in her text, *Theatergraben*, which she wrote in 005,

“Warum nicht ein Theater der Zurückhaltung, wo Fremde zu Fremden Fremdes sprechen, nur aus andren Mündern, die auch fremd sind, aber wissen, was ein anderer gesagt hat? Fremdes sprechen, das nur irgendwann einmal einem vertraut war, der darin zu Hause war?”<sup>278</sup>

In this text Jelinek proposes to conceive a theater of aloofness, where the foreigners/strangers (Fremdes) speak something foreign (Fremdes) to the foreigners/strangers (Fremdes). Moreover it is also spoken from the foreign/stranger mouths. However it is about speaking strange or foreign, in which one is at home once. In engaging with *Theatergraben* I am going to read first the theater texts that emerged between the conceptions of *Sinn egal*, *Körper zwecklos* and *Theatergraben*. This brief engagement will be followed by an exploration of the theater aesthetics that roots itself in the concept of aloofness, ‘Zurückhaltung’. The reading of the text, *Theatergraben* should put a light on how the concept of ‘aloofness’ is to be understood in the context of theater, and what kind of aesthetics it brings in the theater.

**5.3.1 Jelinek's Theater texts (1997 – 2005):** The theater text, *Ein Sportstück* (1997) premiered in 1998 under the direction of Einar Schleef at Burgtheater, Vienna. The

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<sup>278</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Theatergraben*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

text has an open structure and comes with the instruction that she does not give too many instructions, so one can do what one wants to do with it. The text consists of polyphonic monologues and has no designated speaker. Her next theater text, *Macht nichts. Eine kleine Trilogie des Todes*, (1999), premiered at the Zürich Schauspielhaus (2001), is about power. This trilogy, comprising of *Erlkönigin*, *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, and *Der Wanderer* thematizes the dead and undead, and deals with the cultural icons from the past that still have power over our present. Jelinek writes in the postscript of band that the texts from the trilogy have been written for theater, but not for a theater performance.

“Die Personen führen sich schon selber zur Genüge auf.”<sup>279</sup>

Jelinek says that the persons already perform themselves well enough.

The theater text, *Ich liebe Österreich* consists of 480 words, it is a play in a play (Spiel im Spiel) and it was premiered in June, 2000 within the frame of the action “Bitte liebt Österreich” under the direction of Christoph Schlingensief. This action was a cultural reaction on the formation of the ÖVP – FPÖ coalition government in Austria in February 2000. As a part of this action, Schlingensief put the containers in the touristic, cultural places and in front of the Wiener Staatsoper in Vienna, in which 12 asylum seekers lived a week long and each week two of them had to leave the container on the basis of people’s feedback about the occupants through phone call or Internet. The images from the containers were transmitted through webfreetv. Jelinek visited the Action; she was allowed to go inside the container, where she asked the occupants of the container to write the German sentences they knew and she wrote a “Kasperlstück” out of that. In Schlingensief’s work, the audience was in the centre, Jelinek put the asylum seekers in the centre. The Kasperltheater from 18<sup>th</sup> century is popular today as the puppet theater for children, and Jelinek uses this theater to make a theater text in the context of a cultural event. The monologue *Das Lebewohl*, a text composed of Aeschylus's Oresteia and Jörg Haider's farewell protocol, premiered at the Berliner Ensemble in December 2000. Earleir in June, 2000, at the Thursday Demonstration against the ÖVP – FPÖ government at the Wiener Ballhausplatz, the first reading (Urlesung) of the text took place. Written as a monologue, the text uses

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<sup>279</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (1999): *Macht nichts. Eine kleine Trilogie des Todes*, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag.

the real name (Haider) and emerges as a protest text. *In den Alpen* (2002) premiered at the Munich Kammerspiele in conjunction with the Zürich Schauspielhaus the same year. In this theater text, the real event is presented as drama, the accident that happened is observed as catastrophe. *Der Tod und das Mädchen I – V* (2003) consists of five princesses' dramas. The formation period for this theater text is between 2000 to 2003; *Prinzessindramen I-III* premiered at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg in 2002 and the same year, parts IV-V premiered at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin. Jelinek's princess dramas are about power and sexuality. So are her following theater texts, *Das Werk* (2003) premiered at the Akademietheater in Vienna in April 2003 under the direction of Nicolas Stemmann, *Bambiland* (2003), premiered at Burgtheater, Vienna, under Christoph Schlingensiefel's direction; in 2005 Nicolas Stemmann directed two of Jelinek's theater texts *Babel* premiered at Burgtheater, Vienna and *Ulrike Maria Stuart*, premiered at Thalia Theater Hamburg.

The texts are according to Jelinek, not for theater performance, but for theater because the plot and the classification of the figures are mostly non – existent in her theater texts, in some, if they exist, according to Jelinek, they perform themselves, and need nobody to bring those characters to perform. Her theater texts are made of speech, which is not about action and plot, but the speaking entails narrating, explaining, and commenting. She continues working with the technique of montage and collage in her work. Sarah Neelsen comments on Jelinek's in the context of *Babel*,

“...prahlt Jelinek regelrecht damit, dass ja eigentlich kein Satz von ihr stamme, und sie nur in fremden Gärten geerntet habe...”<sup>280</sup>

In the year 2005, Jelinek writes the text, *Theatergraben* and as mentioned above in the beginning of this section, she proposes a theater of aloofness where the foreign speaks to foreign in foreign and for that she has made up a text out of the harvest from the foreign garden.

### **5.3.2 Theatergraben in the context of Stan Godlovitch's 'aesthetics of aloofness':**

Jelinek is criticizing in this text the theater that works as entertainment for the

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<sup>280</sup> Neelsen, Sarah (WS 2005/ SS 2006) : *Eine Lektüre von Elfriede Jelineks Babel im Lichte der Intertextualität, zwischen Bibel-Mythos und Abu Ghraib-Bildern*, (master's thesis), Germanistikstudium, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Lyon/Frankreich, <https://jelinetz2.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/neelsen.pdf>.

audience. As if it is the deadly sin of the theater if it bores the audience. It must be noted that by now the theater had already witnessed the premier of Jelinek's *Ein Sportstück* in 1998 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The performance lasted for more than 6 hours. With the duration of the performance one can assume that it had already abandoned the entertainment aspect of the theater. Jelinek proposes theater to be a kind of refusal (Verweigerung) to life. As if nobody has seen the life, and if one has seen, one does not understand it. Theater should not play the role of a tutor or the interpreter/expounder (Erklärer). She says, one becomes powerless, if one lets oneself be overwhelmed by what is happening on the stage, and when one is powerless, one forgets to lead one's life, instead it's the stage figures that take the space of his/her own life. One is without power, but one knows that one is giving life to the fictional character that is embodied by the real persons; this only contributes to the austerity of the powerlessness. Jelinek argues that one has no power over powerlessness or else it would have been power, and then one would not have needed the theater. One is powerless, but one knows that one needs power at any cost and it is only the figures on the stage that are equipped with power, that is so, because we allow them that power, and their lies our power, the power of the audience.

Theater is a space of powerlessness that can be countered through a theater of aloofness (Theater der Zurückhaltung), which can be created through speaking foreign/strange (Fremdes Sprechen).

“Da fügt sich auf der Bühne Fülle zu Gefühlen und Gefühle wieder zurück zur Fülle, die wir in uns hineinstopfen, aber es paßt nie zusammen, weil es aus dem Nichtwissen ins Nichtwissen platscht ...”<sup>281</sup>

According to Jelinek, in speaking foreign/strange (Fremdes Sprechen) nobody knows anything, and everybody speaks. Thereby the abundance on the stage is added to the feelings, and feelings back to abundance, but it does not fit in, because it splashes from ignorance into ignorance. Therefore,

“Besser, wir springen selber auf die Bühne oder wir werfen das, was wir von uns nicht wissen, aber zu wissen glauben, hinauf zu denen, die auch nichts wissen, aber uns das widerspiegeln, was wir zu sein glauben, wenn wir von unserem wahren Sein (das muß es doch geben, das wahre Sein, aber wo, aber wo?) schon nicht wissen können. Wir wissen nur, daß es

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<sup>281</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Theatergraben*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

ist. Wie es ist, das wollen wir gezeigt bekommen, nicht um es nachzumachen, sondern um überhaupt eins zu bekommen.”<sup>282</sup>

Jelinek elaborates, we (the audience) should ourselves spring on the stage, or we should throw that what we do not know about ourselves, but we believe that we know, on them (the actors), who also know nothing, but they reflect, what we believe to be, when, we ourselves know nothing about our true self/being/nature/existence (das wahre Sein). So one can say that one goes in theater in search of one’s true being, which one believes, it is, but where, that is not known. So, Jelinek says that one comes to theater in order to see it, the true being must be shown and the audience comes to theater to get one, not to do one by himself/herelf. Hence, when one is not in theater sitting powerless, and in the state of powerlessness giving all that one believes one has to the theater figures, one comes out of the pretence of believing that one has got one’s true self in theater. Jelinek suggests in this scenario, ‘aloofness’ in the place of ‘intimacy’ in theater.

The dictionary meaning of aloofness is, “not interested or involved, usually because you do not approve of what is happening”. One is there, but not involved, and is not approving what is going on in front of that person, this is aloofness. To understand how it can work for theater, I am exploring here the concept of aloofness and its aesthetics in the field of environmentalism, given by Stan Godlovitch. In the context of acentric form of environmentalism, he has evolved “aesthetics of aloofness”, which has resonance with Jelinek’s sense of aesthetics for theater.

According to Stan Godlovitch, there are two forms of environmentalism: centric and acentric. In his view it is the acentric form of environmentalism that takes into account nature as a whole and to adopt this form of environmentalism, one must find “a corresponding acentric natural aesthetic to ground it”<sup>283</sup>. Jelinek’s theater texts are also acentric in nature, as there is not any special focus; it does not make binaries, rather multiplicities, and while freeing discourse from regulation, makes knowledge free and all encompassing. Hence, one can definitely draw a parallel between acentric

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<sup>282</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Theatergraben*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>283</sup> Godlovitch, Stan (2004): *Icebreakers: Environmentalism and Natural Aesthetics*, In: *The Aesthetics of Natural Environment*, Carlson, Allen & Berleant, Arnold (ed.), Broadview Press, pp. 108 – 124. p. 109.

environmentalism and Jelinek's theater writings. Whereas in the aesthetics, proposed earlier, there is always some kind of centre, if not in plot, than on actor's body, however, in my view, Jelinek proposes acentric aesthetics for the theater. In this section, I am engaging specifically with Godlovitch's exploration of the acentric natural aesthetics to go with the acentric form of environmentalism.

Godlovitch referring to Allen Carlson, who developed a "scientific natural aesthetics", states that this aesthetics must embrace "not only all creatures great and small but also all processes long and short"<sup>284</sup>. To get all the dimensions, one must transcend the "immediate experiential limits by urging that our appreciation of nature should be underwritten and even inspired by scientific discoveries."<sup>285</sup> The scientific discoveries help one to go beyond the immediate experiential limits and surface subjectivism. Here at work is the >>acentrism of sub – surface revelation, science as the impersonal aperceptual avenue to the beauty of Reality<<<sup>286</sup>. It takes one beyond >>artist's sensorium<<. The scientific knowledge allows one to appreciate nature at micro- and macro- levels. If one has scientific knowledge, one not only admires the beauty of a flower, but also of its cell. A natural scientific aesthetics is objective, impersonal, distant, and it dismisses our scalar limits, like something is very large or very small, very brief or very long. Hence, a scientist's "aesthetic perspective extends (beyond), if not transcends, the sensuous surface of our common perceptual world"<sup>287</sup>. In other words, one is distancing oneself from one's immediate natural limited resources and that gives this kind of aesthetics, also termed as cognitivist aesthetic, an acentric form. According to Godlovitch, it is the cultural aesthetics that has types, structures, genres and styles, the scientific natural aesthetics let things fall together.

The scientific natural aesthetics is all inclusive. Godlovitch states,

"Any natural aesthetics has to respect the inarticulable, which is, after all the spontaneous side of wonder."<sup>288</sup>

In other words, the spontaneity is inarticulable and there lies the wonder of nature. One must go beyond the limiting experiences to be able to perceive it. Or else only

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<sup>284</sup> Godlovitch, p.115.

<sup>285</sup> Godlovitch p. 115.

<sup>286</sup> Godlovitch p. 116.

<sup>287</sup> Godlovitch p. 116.

<sup>288</sup> Godlovitch, p. 118.

the already perceived can be again perceived but the newness will be missed. “Aesthetics of aloofness” and “sense of insignificance”, which comprise the adoption of an acentric perspective, are related to mystery. The acentric perspective allows one to view the world “from any of an infinite number of points of view”<sup>289</sup>. Godlovitch says that to appreciate nature acentrically, one must not be impressed or overwhelmed, so to appreciate an art work acentrically, one also must not be impressed or overwhelmed by it. An acentric aesthetic demands one to have a sense of being outside, of not belonging, and it finds resonance in Jelinek’s suggestion to speak foreign/strange (Fremdes Sprechen).

>>Proper impersonality<<, >> true Indifference<<, >>autonomy<< are nature’s principal marks. In the words of Godlovitch,

“Locus defines our humanity and the way it copes with life by transmuting rigorously whatever is external to it into manipulable experience.”<sup>290</sup>

So to look at nature acentrically one must choose one out of several points of view, from which one does not matter at all. When we choose the point of view, from which we do not matter at all, we are adopting the aesthetics of aloofness.

Godlovitch defines aloofness aesthetic as such,

“Aloofness is more detached, distant, than, disinterestedness. It calls not only for the removal from experience of all functional and personal considerations of the object, but all limiting scalar (e.g. sensuous) ones as well. To achieve aesthetic aloofness is to disavow any preference for customary surface perception in the aesthetic because it is precisely that avenue of apprehension that is manifestly a victim of scale, an emphatic expression of culture.”<sup>291</sup>

So, the aloofness in engagement with Jelinek’s theater texts will mean not engaging with it on the basis of functional and personal consideration and one should also avoid receiving sensory experience out of it. The body and the person, if does not attempt to become the locus of the performance of a text, then the theater is on the path of acentric performance.

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<sup>289</sup> Godlovitch, p. 121.

<sup>290</sup> Godlovitch, p. 123.

<sup>291</sup> Godlovitch, p. 123.

**5.4 Es ist Sprechen und aus:** There is over a decade between her theoretical text, *Theatergraben* and the one under consideration here, *Es ist Sprechen und aus*. Like in previous three parts, here also I begin by taking into account the kind of theater writing that has come out, parallel to these texts. Then I engage with *Es ist Sprechen und aus*, which is her latest theoretical text and by reading it, we can draw from the text, what kind of aesthetics is emerging from it.

**5.4.1 Jelinek' Theater texts (2006 2018):** The theater texts written during this period continue to be intertextual in content and almost every year she has produced one theater text, with the exception of the year 2007. *Ulrike Maria Stuart* was written in 2005, premiered at Thalia Theater Hamburg in 2006. In 2006 Jelinek wrote *Über Tiere* on the backdrop of the sex scandal that was leaked to the public. *Rechnitz* (*Der Würgeengel*) (2008) refers to a particular event of the Nazi past in Austria in 1945 (before the War ended), in a place called Rechnitz, on the border of Hungary, 180 forced Hungarian and Jewish laborers were murdered and it was never investigated/researched. In 1994 Margareta Heinrich and Eduard Erne made a documentary film »*Totschweigen*« about this massacre, and in 2006 the same year, as Jelinek wrote this theater text, David R. L. Litchfield wrote the book, "The Thyssen Art Macabre". Elfriede Jelineks theater text *Abraumhalde* (2008) uses Schiller's play, *Nathan der Weise* as reference. It is peculiar about this time period (which I have made for my convenience) that she also writes the texts, which thematise the issues which are of larger geo-political significance. *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns. Eine Wirtschaftskomödie* (2009) describes the naivety, unscrupulousness, cynicism, submission to the system and the truths about cash handling through the long monologues put into the mouth of the small shareholders, stock exchange players and mayors. The text emerges after the big bank collapse in the West, the Lehman Brothers went corrupt, the other western banks, like Merrill Lynch, AIG, Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, HBOS, Royal Bank of Scotland, Bradford & Bingley, Fortis, Hypo and Alliance & Leicester, needed to be rescued, and it was felt that, "the ramifications of the Banking Collapse of 2008 will be felt for years if not decades to come"<sup>292</sup>. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009, a reading of the text was done in Vienna. In 2010 appeared Jelinek's trilogy, *Das Werk/Im Bus/Ein Sturz*. and premiered the same year at Schauspiel,

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<sup>292</sup> Mathiason, Nick: "Three weeks that changed the world", Sun 28 Dec 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2008/dec/28/markets-credit-crunch-banking-2008>

Cologne. The text, *Das Werk*, written in rhizomatic fashion, like her two other texts, *Im Bus* and *Ein Sturz*, follows musical form rather than narrative structure. The temporal – spatial context is not as relevant as the rhythmic pattern that cuts across the temporal – spatial context. Karin Beier’s presentation in Cologne in collaboration with the theater musician Jörg Gollasch, makes the performance at times a concert, wherein layered rhythmic patterns are taken from the text, *Das Werk*. *Das Werk* is the main work of the trilogy, and narrates the story about the construction of one of world’s biggest reservoir power stations in Kaprun, Alps, in Austria. It was built in 1920s by the forced laborers during the Nazi period. This technical mastery was achieved through the loss of lives of many of these workers. So the first part of the trilogy is about the construction of the power station, second part is about a road accident, the third part is about the catastrophic duel nature of the technique. In her next theater text, *Winterreise* published in 2011 and is premiered at Münchner Kammerspiele the same year, Jelinek is again composing the language of the text, i.e. it has a musical form, rather than narrating in it. Not only the meaning but the phonetic and the sound of the words are also important here. The text consists of eight scenes, in which “Ich” and “Wir” have been assigned monologues, and the lines from Wilhelm Müller’s cycle of poems run through it and is also a binding factor between all the eight acts. In this theater text, there is a father – figure, who through his intense monologue narrates how he was discarded by his wife and his daughter. Expulsion (*Vertreibung*) is the central theme of this work. *Kein Licht*, published in 2011 and premiered at Schauspielhaus, Cologne the same year, under the direction of Karin Beier, thematises the triple catastrophe that took place in Japan in March, 2011, following a major earthquake

“a 15-metre tsunami disabled the power supply and cooling of three Fukushima Daiichi reactors, causing a nuclear accident on 11 March 2011. All three cores largely melted in the first three days”<sup>293</sup>.

*Faust In and out. Sekundärdrama zu Urfaust* published in 2012, is premiered the same year at Schauspielhaus, Zürich 2012, under the direction of Julia von Sell. In this text, Jelinek works around the Gretchen tragedy from Goethe’s *Faust*. Two figures

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<sup>293</sup> *Fukushima Daiichi Accident*, (October, 2018), Volume 5, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-accident.aspx>.

“FaustIn” and “Gistin” sit in front of TV, and seem to be talking loudly about the thing they watch on TV. Dušan David Pařízek directed the performance of the text. As the title suggests, Jelinek writes it as the secondary drama of Goethe’s >>Urfaust<<. Here Jelinek thematises how Goethe constructed his women characters. This theater text, along with her other theater text, *Abraumhalde* demand the presentation of these texts in combination with the primary texts in the theater space. This way her secondary dramas “in turn penetrate into the dramatic reference texts as enclosures and sedimentations”<sup>294</sup>. The same year Jelinek also wrote *Die Straße. Die Stadt. Der Überfall* that premiered at Münchner Kammerspiele. The text is a mirror of a city, and centres around particularly “Maximilianstraße”, “Kleinhesseloher See” and also Feldherrnhalle“ in Munich. *Schatten (Eurydike sagt)* also published in the year 2012, and premiered at Burgtheater, Vienna in 2013, narrates the Orpheus – myth from a new perspective. Whereas in the myth, Orpheus is the main character, in her text Jelinek lets the feminine ‘I’, Eurydike speak. Eurydike is an author, and Orpheus is the singer, and the woman stays in the shadow, like Clara S. did, like Nora did in her pervious theater texts. Jelinek, after death, allows the feminine ‘I’ to go completely in the shadow, and thereby the feminine nothing (das weibliche Nichts) materializes itself in the absence of the light. A year later, in 2013 she wrote *Aber sicher!* and this text premiered at Theater Bremen the same year under the direction of Alexander Riemenschneider and is considered to be an echo of the earlier text, *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns. Eine Wirtschaftskomödie*. The theater text engages with the finance market going wild.

*Die Schutzbefohlenen* (2013), is also an intertextual work and makes a critic in the fields of capitalism, media, religion, myths etc. The debut reading of the text took place in St. Pauli Church, Hamburg. The text emerged out of the incident in 2012, as some refugees look for shelter in the Wiener Votiv kirche, as they were living in inhuman living conditions in the reception centres in Traiskirchen. In 2016 the text as

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<sup>294</sup> Kovacs, Teresa: “Elfriede Jelinek and Ewald Palmetshofer in between. Sedimentations, enclosures and overlaying of dramatic formations in contemporary German-language playwriting”, pp. 243 – 262, p. 251.  
[https://www.academia.edu/34890532/Elfriede\\_Jelinek\\_and\\_Ewald\\_Palmetshofer\\_in\\_between.\\_Sedimentations\\_enclosures\\_and\\_overlaying\\_of\\_dramatic\\_formation\\_in\\_contemporary\\_German-language\\_playwriting](https://www.academia.edu/34890532/Elfriede_Jelinek_and_Ewald_Palmetshofer_in_between._Sedimentations_enclosures_and_overlaying_of_dramatic_formation_in_contemporary_German-language_playwriting).

expanded more. So, 2012 -2016 is the formation phase of *Die Schutzbefohlenen*. Aischylos' *Die Schutzflehenden* is the dominating pretext in Jelinek's text, and she uses the material from other sources as well. It is the theme of refuge and asylum that connects the materials used from different sources. Her theater text, *Wut* (2016) premiered the same year in April under the direction of Nicolas Stemann at the Munich Kammerspiele, is about the 2015 Charlie Hebdo massacre in Paris. It is a rage against terror, which is polyphonic, comprising voices of enraged German citizens, and other Europeans, and also the rage of antique hero Heracles who after because of the Goddess Hera's unending wrath against him, extinguishes his own family in rage. The text is narrated by a blind female seer who accompanies the reader/viewer in the future. The text, *Am Königsweg* published in 2017 and premiered same year in Hamburg, is inspired by the US election that got Trump elected as the president of the USA. This text also engages with the issues of capitalism, power, masculinity, and fascism. The blind seer takes a look at the current global developments and lets the voices and motives from mythology and Western history shimmer out.

This shows the consistency in her engagement with the medium of theater, where she continues to talk about power, sexuality, fascism, immigrant issues, terrorism, capitalism etc., she uses the montage, collage etc. to create her intertextual texts, through collecting the material and putting them together in rhizomatic form. Her work grows in scale now as they go beyond regional identities more and more, and makes a global context for her theater texts, as the Paris incident, the Japan earthquake, the US election, give her the impulse to respond to those incidents through the medium of theater and her texts are performed repeatedly. Parallel to writing the theater texts, she keeps on writing texts about theater directors, practices etc.

#### **5.4.2 Es ist Sprechen und aus in the context of James Gleick's Chaos Theory:**

As Jelinek continues making complex rhizomatic connections in her theater texts between 2005 until the present time, she states in *Es ist Sprechen und aus* that for her it is not possible to speak once and for all; she speaks in fragments, without being able to separate the important from unimportant, without creating the figures in the text, which according to her, is a work of diplomacy that certain figure will be allocated certain parts of texts for speaking. So, what she ends up giving to the readers/theater

practitioners is chaos. In her text about the chaos as her writing and theater as a place of order, nature plays a crucial role. There are several concepts speaking in this text by Jelinek: chaos, order, nature, the nature as it is, and which signifies orderly chaos; and her own nature, where she digs and finds it ruled over by chaos, and because of which nothing can be decided. In my view, Jelinek is indicating at it, that she works according to her nature, in other words, she works on a theater text according to her own natural aesthetics, and as I have underlined in my reading of her text *Theatergraben*, that there is no center in her theater texts, and hence it demands a acentric perspective, which can be located in the natural scientific aesthetics; in the same vein, while pointing out that her writing is chaos, and mentioning that theater as it is, is a place for order, she would like theater to operate as per the natural aesthetics. In this section I like to bring together my engagement with the chaos theory in the first chapter of this research work together with the theory of natural scientific aesthetics, in the context of her theater text, *Es ist Sprechen und aus*.

There are primarily two aspects of the text, *Es ist Sprechen und aus*: first, “Chaos in Jelinek’s theater texts”, second “Order in Theater vs. Order in Nature”, which I will discuss here below.

**a) Chaos, a characteristic in Jelinek’s theater texts, as discussed in *Es it Sprechen und aus*:** Jelinek asserts that her theater text is speaking/speech (Sprechen). However, she does not speak once and all, rather she speaks in fragments, and yet, what she speaks, she could also speak with other sentences and other words. So the open nature of the content, its possible variation and its fragmentation make it relatable to how the chaos works in the nature.

However she says,

“Ich habe nicht die Kontrolle, ich habe vielleicht die Herrschaft über ein endloses Sprechen, das im Vergleich zum Chaos aber gar nichts ist, ein kurzes Räuspern vielleicht, aber ich habe keine Kontrolle.”<sup>295</sup>

According to Jelinek, she can’t do other than what she has just done again. She says that often she does not know, what she has already said, and she knows only this that

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<sup>295</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2013): *Es is Sprechen und aus*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

she could not have said it differently. For something different to see, she suggests to scoop out something from the chaos. Because, chaos, as it appears, can already be something different, or should be something different. Chaos comes from something that is disorderly. It is the non-equilibrium. It is based on the differential equation. So, here though she says that because she has the domination over the endless speaking and what she presents in her theater text is a great deal too much, still as she is dominating it, hence it does not have the character of chaos, which means, always something different. It might not be always something different, but in Jelinek's word, it is disorderly. She writes her text, for which she goes within her own nature and when she digs up there, she comes across the chaos. The phenomena in nature are outcome of the chaos and so one can say, her work, i.e her theater texts are also an outcome of nature, her own nature. So, one can say that partnering with chaos means to look within our own nature.

Jelinek explains that in the form of a theater text, she gives chaos to the reader/performer. She also explains what kind of chaos it is. Her chaos is hot, like soup, in which she throws letters out of dough, that softens nothing but the heat which is given to them. This chaos spits something out, however never ever people. In fact, what she delivers is fragments that are part of a whole. The whole is also not the whole rather it simply consists of bigger parts, and is invisible and orderless, which will never be a whole, because the whole presumes order.

Her theater texts follow this path to meet the bigger whole which is also not structured or classified. On the other hand, theater must create order. Her theater texts consist of too many things, but not of figures. Jelinek suggests that the others (directors) should think about creating the figures, as they tend to work towards the order in theater. On her part, she says, she only gives her chaos, and that is rather disordered as Jelinek makes no distinction between the important and unimportant things.

“...ich gebe nur mein Chaos her, meine beliebigen Erfindungen, ziemlich ungeordnet, nicht einmal Wichtiges wird von Unwichtigem getrennt.”<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2013): *Es is Sprechen und aus*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

An orderly chaos is watched over by nature; probably it has even produced it. So, it is governed by the universal law, like everything in nature. Jelinek comments that there is no talk of nature in theater, but they talk about nature. The nature stays away; it has nothing to search in theater. Then she finds her own nature, which is ruled by the chaos that can decide about nothing. So, it is not deterministic, according to her. How has science dealt with chaos that it has spotted in phenomena in nature?

It was first of all in the field of computer science, that chaos was spotted as an important aspect. Whereas in the Newtonian science, the slightest differences are ignored; Lorenz, when he ran his program on computer in 1960s to make the weather forecast, he made the observation that the slightest difference in the initial conditions leads to big changes in the weather predicted by his model over time. There have been always unstable, aperiodic behaviors, probably determining the dynamical aspect of a system, however undermined in the linear, structured study of a system. Recognition of those behaviors is fundamental for a system, with certain characteristics, that has emerged over the years, (particularly since 1960s), as chaos system.

A chaotic system is recognized by three defining features as I have discussed in the first chapter. First, a chaotic system is deterministic; so be it periodic or aperiodic behavior, the chaotic system has determining equations. Second, it is sensitive to initial conditions. Even a minor change in the starting point can be detrimental for outcomes. So it takes into account the slight change that is visible in the initial condition. Third, chaotic system is not random and if a system is random, it is not chaotic.

Chaos is not a structured concept, but it is also not random, it has its own patterns, it is governed by certain laws from within, and has certain order, that Jelinek does not find in her work.

“Mein Sprechen auf der Bühne ist kein Ordnen, nicht einmal ein Her-Stellen, ein gutes Chaos ist eben beides...”<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2013): *Es is Sprechen und aus*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

Rather her speaking leads what was, what came to the writer's mind, for her own sake, to what is, every evening on the stage. The text of a piece, what it was, will become on stage, every evening what it is.

“Da wird das, was war (der Text zu diesem Stück ist bis dahin, aber welches Stück meine ich dann, immer ein anderes, obwohl es jeden Abend dasselbe ist?, ja längst geschrieben), das, was war, wird also zu dem, was ist.”<sup>298</sup>

Jelinek says that the piece (in my view, a performance), which should be different every evening, but she says, it is same every evening, and the text to this piece becomes what it is, from what it was, on the stage. Jelinek elaborates, every evening, the past plunges into what is and throws it into itself. So, the present is taken over by the past. So there is a state of lawlessness between the set rules. Lawlessness is anything but chaos and the lawlessness prevails between the set rules, so there is nothing new going to emerge out of it.

Whereas nature watches over the chaos and also creates it, the theater and nature are far away from each other. Below I discuss nature and chaos in relation to each other to understand the order that chaos follows under the watch of nature in order to understand how theater and the order that it seeks for is far from nature. This will explain, why Jelinek towards the end of the text, *Es ist Sprechen und aus* terms the theater as a place for consumption, and not for life.

**b) Order in Theater vs. Order in Nature:** According to Jelinek, order means in theater so far, as she sees it, allocating the text to the figures. However, she says, for her, order has a different meaning.

“Da hätte ich so schöne Wirklichkeit überall, ringsumher, die schreit geradezu nach Vereinzelung, denn wenn nichts vereinzelt wird, kann der Einzeller dort oben nicht sprechen, dann bekommt der Schauspieler kein Dekagramm, keinen Millimeter Rede zugeteilt. Er muß alles selber machen. Er wird angeleitet, nicht angeleint, bloß angeleitet, aber am Ende des Tages, das man Abend nennt, muß er letztlich doch alles wieder selber machen.”<sup>299</sup>

By allocating the disorder to the persons, the theater splits the chaos. Jelinek says, a beautiful reality, which surrounds her all around, screams to be isolated, if nothing is

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<sup>298</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2013): *Es ist Sprechen und aus*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>299</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2013): *Es ist Sprechen und aus*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

isolated than the single person there above, can't speak, and then not even a millimeter of the speech can be allocated to him/her and he/she must do everything by him/herself. The chaos should not be split as it is done in order to create life in theater.

While criticizing the theater practice, Jelinek says, a performance that awakens life in theater is considered a successful performance. But Jelinek says by her, the life is consumed, she conceives theater as consumption. It consumes the author's life force, and also it is consumption in itself. It also devours the life force of the actors, by something voracious, left over by Jelinek's chaos, i.e. her theater texts, that eats up the actors, which beforehand they have eaten to be able to spit out again, on the board where already there is lot around, and also more is possible. There lies the unpredictability of the performance, which, whether it is the performance theory, or the scientific theory, or the rhizome theory, they all, in their non-linear, dynamical structures, seem to have embraced. In the field of chaos theory also, the scientists have asserted that chaos is order, but an order without predictability and that makes it always young and new.

Jelinek states that nature is far from theater because theater chooses order, and nature let things fall together. Stan Godlovitch also points out that it is the cultural aesthetics (theater a part of it) that has types, structures, genres and styles, the scientific natural aesthetics let things fall together. So, this aesthetic allows the differences, the irregularity, the instability, and goes beyond any kind of scalar limit. This extends the aesthetic perspective of the theater practitioner and also that of the viewers. Jelinek writes a text at certain point, for her own reason, and the aesthetics, which is not aiming at order, has the potential to take the text beyond writer's domain/sensorium. So the aim should be chaos and not order in theater. However, it should not be understood, as if, there is absolutely no boundary, no law, no order, around a thing under consideration. On the contrary, there is an order in chaos, and that is because it is part of a bigger whole, that is never a complete whole. An orderly chaos is produced by nature. James Gleick in his work "Chaos" published in 1987, while presenting his snowflake model, where he takes instance of how a snowflake gets formed through the interplay of forces on atomic scale and everyday scale, it explains the phenomena that we term as chaos in our life. Going by our traditional learning, we

think that a thing has to be in the state of equilibrium and balance to be able to create something. However, Gleick points out that the formation of snowflake is a non-equilibrium phenomenon. Snowflake gets created because the energy flows in imbalanced way from one piece of nature to another one. The imbalanced flow “turns a boundary into a tip, the tip into an array of branches, the array into a complex structure never before seen.”<sup>300</sup> There is certain pattern in the imbalanced flow of energy, the outcome is the beautiful snowflake; as it is taken care of by the universal law of chaos. The instability, the irregularity obeys the universal laws of chaos, hence now, this is the basic premise against which the methods are developed to a host of physical and chemical problems. Jelinek proposes the chaos like order in theater as well. That can be achieved if one works according to natural scientific aesthetics, discussed in the section above.

**Conclusion:** In this chapter I discussed four theoretical texts by Jelinek, originating from different period of time, starting from 1980s till 2018. The criticism of existing theatrical practices and the suggestions of doing things differently in theater give insight into delving in other fields as well to renew the aesthetic approach in theater.

Jelinek criticizes the theater, where the actors pretend to be real on the stage. This happens because when they act they are using their play instinct. In criticism, she is target the representational theater, which is based on the play instinct, given by Schiller, the representative playwright of the bourgeoisie theater of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The play instinct, according to Schiller, makes him perfect human being and according to him a human being can act/play (spielen) only if he is a perfect human being. Jelinek departs from this view as she states in *Ich möchte seicht sein*, words like ‘work’, ‘activity’. In the process of exploring the historical evolution of the concept of work in different eras, one cannot separate it from the concept of production and consumption. The alienation of work in the capitalist age is more pronounced as the product for consumption is attached with certain sign. A product has certain symbolic meaning and the consumer appropriates the meaning while consuming the product. When a product is wrapped up with a symbolic meaning, then it is alienated consumption. Since, Jelinek defines her theater texts as work, she would like the work to be mediated to audience without extra meaning being attributed to the

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<sup>300</sup> Gleick, p. 314.

texts. Hence, she asks actors to be shallow (seicht). Being shallow means being without depth. If on one hand there is rejection of the psychological depth in the actor; on the other hand it is also against the concept of “Being – body”. Whereas in the psychological treatment of a character one is getting into the mind of a character, while acting; the aspect of being body integrates the mind and the body of the actor to each other in the process of embodiment. Jelinek rejects these approaches and proposes shallowness as an aesthetic in theater. The text does not give any alternative aesthetic theory; however Jelinek takes instances from the components of the fashion show to talk about the relationship between her theater texts and the actors. Theater texts could be a product like cloth. New clothing reflects new trend, likewise theater texts also reflect new ideas and thinking, which is constantly changing. The relationship that models share with cloth; the similar relationship Jelinek suggests between the actors and her theater texts. Models wear the clothes to show them to the audience. The piece of cloth could be simply displayed by hanging it by a hook or it could be simply put on a mannequin as well. However, while wearing it, the models walk and make certain stylized gestures, thereby the clothing gets more highlighted, more accentuated, the clothing speaks. The movement, the stylized gestures give life to clothing; for which the models are needed. However, the movement is not defined by the model’s body, but by the cut, size and design of the outfit. Accordingly the models move. They move within the dress and with the dress. Thereby meaning and body are not the focus of the attention, but the cloth, its style, its aesthetic, which as the audience is aware of, lasts only for a while.

Approximately a decade later, Jelinek wrote *Sinn egal. Körper zwecklos*, in which she continues the debate on the actor’s role in theater, in the context of her even more complex theater texts. Jelinek finds ‘semiotic body’ as well as ‘organic body’ incapable of mediating the texts that contain not the sense but the sense of something (“Sinn von etwas”). Whereas in the previous text, an actor is supposed to be shallow, now she conceives the actor as a filter, who should let the text pass through him/her, like sand or water passes through a filter. She suggests that her texts should be delivered as news or as message to the audience. Audience can make sense out of the text themselves. According to the theory of sensemaking, it occurs when individuals together come to an understanding about the meaning of a collective experience. Jelinek’s theater texts contain the collective experiences and theater provides a ground

for individuals to understand the meaning of those experiences collectively. According to the sensemaking theory, when one chooses a particular meaning, through that meaning one can interpret an experience and make sense out of it and that result in some action. So the end goal of this process is to put the audience on the path of action.

Jelinek's next theoretical text that I chose to read is *Theatergraben* that she wrote in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Her theater texts are more inter-textual, more open and more complex and varied now. The actor, who has to be shallow in 1980s, as filter in 1990s, must be aloof now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The actor should move away from the role of being interpreter/demonstrator/expounder(Erklärer). First she proposed to be like model in fashion show; then she asked actor to deliver the lines as news or message; now she is asking him/her to be a foreigner/stranger on the stage and say things foreign (Fremdes Sprechen). She calls it "Theater der Zurückhaltung". Theater is not home, but a foreign space where nobody is on the familiar ground; hence nobody is powerful. If the aesthetics of aloofness is followed, one is standing on uncomfortable ground. It takes the participants in theater, actors and audience away from their immediate experiential limits; because it is comprised of acentric perspective. The acentric perspective is an outside perspective. Having acentric perspective does not mean being impressed or overwhelmed. Hence one gets impersonal, indifferent and autonomous in approach. How does it work? Out of several points of view, a person must choose one point of view, according to which, he/she does not matter at all. Doing it he/she becomes impersonal, indifferent and autonomous. That is the characteristic of scientific natural aesthetics.

The next text, *Es ist Sprechen und aus* takes us closer to the scientific natural aesthetics. She is talking about natural aesthetics here too in the recent text on the theory of theater practice. By now, her texts are even more polyphonous. Jelinek states, she writes the theater texts according to her own natural aesthetics. She speaks in fragments, does not separate the important from the unimportant, like in nature, where things are not sorted out. She admits, she has no control over the unending speaking, so what she offers the readers is chaos. However she would like theater to play a role in bringing the orderly chaos that is how the nature works.

Jelinek's theater aesthetics emerging out of my engagement with her four theoretical texts take us on the path of creation according to natural aesthetics, and that is where my discussion on the aesthetics of the performative theater takes me in the first chapter. In the next chapter, which is also the last chapter of this research work, I am going to analyze the performance of two of Jelinek's theater texts. It will be interesting to engage with the two performances against this backdrop. I am not going to analyze the plays according to the prescriptions by Jelinek or within the framework of the aesthetics of performative. But all the debates will find a common ground in my analysis of the performances.

## Chapter 6

### **Analysing the Stage Performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere***

In this chapter, while engaging with the performances of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* (1986) under the direction of Ulrike Ottinger and of *Über Tiere* (2007) under the direction of Nicolas Stemann, I am interested in exploring the aesthetics that emerge out of these performances and also in analyzing how do they contribute to my search of ‘Other’ theater with Jelinek. The two texts by Elfriede Jelinek that I am analyzing here are the texts that I have interacted with in the third chapter of this research work. The analysis of the performances of the two works should not to be seen in the light of the third chapter. The two performances are looked at here within the realm of theater/performance aesthetics.

The stage performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* under the direction of Ulrike Ottinger makes use of the deliverance of the text in the sign language by a deaf actress, and hence opens up the possibility of the exploration of the aesthetics of doing theater in the sign language. Sign languages are fully fledged developed natural language. Iconicity is its basic feature; however in the phases of development, they become more and more arbitrary, like any other natural language, which gives more and more abstraction to the sign languages, but the basic modality of the sign languages remain visual. In this performance the actress is reading the text out for the audience, and the text is also projected in the spoken language behind on the screen. So, in the performance there are aspects of seeing and reading the language, which will be the focus point in my analysis of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*. The next theater text, *Über Tiere* which appears to be in continuity with *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*, and which she writes 15 years later in response to actual social scenario, has a complex treatment under the direction of Nicolas Stemann. In my analysis of his work I will try to understand the nature of complexity that he creates

on the stage. This chapter is divided into two parts: *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere*.

### **6.1 *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:**

“Auf der Leinwand im Hintergrund der Spielfläche wird, Satz für Satz, die Textur von Elfriede Jelinek, eingeblendet, in der kaum ein Satz nur ein Satz ist.”<sup>301</sup>

In the performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* Ulrike Ottinger uses the stage as ‘playing surface’ (Spielfläche) and according to her it is Jelinek’s ‘texture’ not the text or the play that she is working on in her production. Besides, a sentence is hardly only a sentence. That means, the text under consideration here is performative in itself. Dealing with the texture of the text means looking at its materiality, and stating that a sentence is more than a sentence means acknowledging how loaded the sentences are with the meaning.

Elfriede Jelinek wrote the theater text *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* in 1986 and the text was performed the same year at the Steirischer Herbst Festival in Graz, Austria. In the performance, the deaf actress, Ingeborg Podelhl, stands between the sign of ying and yang and presents the text in sign language, which, according to the director of the performance, Ulrike Ottinger, is the reading of the text. In that sense, this performance makes itself part of the Reader’s Theater. Theater, which involves, sets, intricate blocking and movement, is a form of visual storytelling, in Reader’s Theater, the actor uses the vocal expression to make the audience understand the story. The idea here is to bring the literature in performance through reading with an emphasis on understanding the written text through hearing. The reading in the Reader’s Theater is associated with the spoken language, in Ottinger’s piece, it relates to the sign language and connects to seeing. Where it is about the projection of the texture on the screen, or about reading the texture, inserted sentence by sentence in sign language, both connects to seeing. However it is not about seeing a spectacle, it is about seeing the text.

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<sup>301</sup> <https://www.ulrikeottinger.com/index.php/827.html>

**6.1.1 Texture in Jelinek's Theater Texts:** In general, texture is feel, appearance, consistency of a surface. In the field of linguistics, as Paul A. Crane defines the term as such:

“... texture is created within text when there are properties of coherence and cohesion, outside of the apparent grammatical structure of the text.”<sup>302</sup>

So texture takes a text beyond obvious grammatical structure through coherence and cohesion. Coherence is defined as the contextual meaning at the paragraph level within a text; cohesion refers to the relations of the meaning within a text, and is a semantic term. If the coherence and cohesion are missing then a text will only be a site for isolated sentences. Text gets texture through the properties of coherence and cohesion that take care of contextual meaning and relation of meaning within a text. Cohesion plays a crucial role in creating one kind of texture. It does it through the “ties that coordinate ideas and experiences...”<sup>303</sup> So texture is the coordinating factor between ideas and thoughts. In other words, a texture can appear only if there is a tie that coordinates ideas and thoughts, which can happen only if there is a context given to a meaning and through establishing the relation of meaning. So, when Ottinger is dealing with Jelinek's texture, she is connected to the functional aspect of her literary piece. Still she states that Jelinek's texture is displayed on the screen sentence by sentence, whereas a sentence is hardly only a sentence. So even if the lines from Jelinek's texts are displayed in linear manner and read by the actress in the sign language in the same linear fashion; yet Ottinger says, every sentence is more than a sentence.

Jelinek's texts are marked by intertextuality, i.e. they lie between the texts; i.e. they are not texts, but intertexts. Jelinek has also mentioned in interviews that she does not invent anything new in her work, rather she picks from various sources. Jelinek quotes from the works that have been written like a 'tree book', and do produce discourses that work in a very hierarchical manner in the society.

However as David B. Fowler says,

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<sup>302</sup> Crane, Paul A.: *Texture in Text: A Discourse Analysis of a News Article Using Halliday and Hasan's Model of Cohesion*, pp. 131 – 156., p. 132.

<http://lingueletteratureculturestraniere.uniroma3.it/bacheca/lloppriore/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2016/12/CRANE-on-Cohesion.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> Crane, p. 141.

“The meaning of a text does not reside alone in the creative genius of its author; there is a complex correlation between a text and the contexts in which a text has been read and reread, including various dynamic interrelations between creator and contemplators, past and present”<sup>304</sup>.

Since Jelinek does not invent anything new in her work; so she is a reader, a contemplator, who reads and contemplates. Sometimes she mentions the texts she is using in her work, sometimes she refers to the sources, many times she just picks the lines as it is without mentioning the sources, and her ability lies in giving them certain context, that brings certain coherence and cohesion to the diversity of the material that she uses; and thereby the texts that are existing, get a texture in the hands of Jelinek. The texts that are there, she gives a texture to them, i.e. she brings them in appearance. To bring them in appearance, besides reading them in the context, she also gives certain physical features to them.

According to Jennifer Dickinson,

“Writing is a material practice of language not only because it creates enduring (if sometimes ephemeral) physical objects but also because...it is produced by and produces embodied linguistic expression.”<sup>305</sup>

Dickinson elaborates that the font, color, capital or small writing, proportions, size, distribution of the text components, and the relationship amongst the components, are the physical features of a written text. Jelinek’s texts, in how she presents them, show distinct physical properties, like she gives alternatives to words/expressions throughout the text. She often puts brackets, sometimes adding in a question mark, a number of exclamation marks, sometimes words are in capital letters. The printed text (*Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*) shows strong physical features. At the same time, though it is not a lengthy text, however, the whole text is like one block, as if, written in one breath. The physical feature that a written text contains makes it readable. To read a written text, while taking into consideration its physical feature, and by socially

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<sup>304</sup> Gowler, David B. (2010): *Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Textures of a Text and its Reception*, In: *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Volume 33, Nr. 2, pp. 191-206, p. 191, [https://www.academia.edu/3051105/Socio-rhetorical\\_interpretation\\_Textures\\_of\\_a\\_text\\_and\\_its\\_reception](https://www.academia.edu/3051105/Socio-rhetorical_interpretation_Textures_of_a_text_and_its_reception).

<sup>305</sup> Dickinson, Jennifer (2017): *Physicality and Texts: Rematerializing the Transparent*, In: *Language and Materiality: Ethnographic and Theoretical Explorations*, Cavanaugh, Jillian R. & Shankar, Shalini (eds.), Cambridge University Press, pp. 265 – 268, p. 265.

and culturally contextualizing it, one needs to follow the tradition of multimodal language use, which involves not only verbal medium, i.e. speech, but also other bodily mediums, i.e. facial expression, intonation, gesticulation, posture, stance, gaze etc. to convey the written text. The reading text, if, it is devoid of multimodality, it can miss on the physical aspect of a written text. If a text is read in the spoken language, it is not just the speech that makes the material of the text, but other aspects, mentioned above also. It is not a simple verbal medium. This leads me to assumption that a text read in sign language, can also not be a simple sign medium.

Following this I will try to understand theoretically how the sign language functions, what kind of structure it has in order to understand what kind of aesthetics it brings in to expand the horizon of theater? Is the use of sign language meant to challenge the way we perceive things through a reading in the spoken language? This relates to the question, what are the ways of perceiving a text that is not read in the spoken but sign language? It is not about understanding the text through hearing the words, rather through seeing the words. So here the question arises how the words are seen in the sign language. Even if there is certain level of universality in a sign language and yet it is as complex as any spoken language. It is important here therefore to understand the basic characteristics of a sign language.

**6.1.2 Theory of Sign Language and Ulrike Ottinger's Theatrical Production of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:** Sign languages are used by deaf people, who cannot hear, but they have “an intact capacity for language”<sup>306</sup>. Instead of >>vocal – auditory<<<sup>307</sup>, which is used in spoken languages for communication, sign languages use >>gestural – visual<<<sup>308</sup> channel. Sign languages use the manual communication, employing hand gestures, movement, orientation of the fingers, arms or body, and facial expressions simultaneously to convey something.

Linguists consider both the spoken and signed communications, as types of the natural language. Though for the spoken communication, one depends on the hearing, for the signed communication one depends on seeing; yet there are certain similarities in how the languages of both kinds have evolved over the time. The sign languages

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<sup>306</sup> Fischer, Susan D. (January, 2015): *Sign languages in their historical context*, pp. 442 – 465, p. 442, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264741714\\_Sign\\_languages\\_in\\_their\\_Historical\\_Context](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264741714_Sign_languages_in_their_Historical_Context)

<sup>307</sup> Fischer, p. 442.

<sup>308</sup> Fischer, p. 442.

have the fundamental properties that all languages have and are fully fledged natural languages “that exhibit linguistic structure at all levels of formal description (phonological, morphological, and syntactic), and whose organization is supported by a similar neural architecture as is found for spoken languages.”<sup>309</sup> Linguists are of the opinion that the sign languages and spoken languages share the characteristics like semanticity, arbitrariness, productivity, and cultural transmission.

**a) Linguistic Structure of Sign Languages:** Sign languages like spoken languages organize the elementary units called phonemes into meaningful semantic units. There is arbitrariness in all the languages, sign and spoken, however, there is some difference in how the sign languages and spoken languages work with arbitrariness. Sign languages use iconicity, i.e. the transparent relationship between meaning and form. Hence, the sign languages conform to the other principle of arbitrariness. Due to different modality, sign vs. spoken, the spoken language shows far greater arbitrariness than the sign languages; however, the sign languages also have it. In the sign language, some features of a sign are iconic and many others arbitrary; i.e. in a few features the relationship between form and meaning is established; however in many it is arbitrary.

Spoken languages base themselves on word production, sign languages on sign production; and sign as well as word can be decomposed into “minimal phonological constituents or formational parameters”<sup>310</sup>. The location of the sign in relation to the body, the movement of the hand and the hand shape are the main formational parameters of the sign production as well as word production. The productivity happens when the phonological constituents are organized into syllables. In the spoken language, which depends on the sonority, a syllable constitutes of the consonants and the vowels, which finds parallelism in the sign language, which depends on the visual, where consonant can be compared to ‘hold’ and vowel to ‘movement’. According to linguistic theories, in the spoken language syllables must

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<sup>309</sup> Perniss P., Özyürek A., Morgan G. (2015): The Influence of the Visual Modality on Language Structure and Conventionalization: Insights From Sign Language and Gesture, In: *Topics in Cognitive Science*, 7, pp. 1 – 10, p. 1, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tops.12127>.

<sup>310</sup> Baus, Cristina, Gutierrez, Eva, Carreiras, Manuel (Nov 13, 2014): *The role of Syllables in Sign Language Production*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4230165/>.

“include a *nucleus*, which corresponds to the maximal peak of sonority, the vowel”<sup>311</sup> and in the sign language this finds parallel in the parameters of location and movement; whereas movement is considered to be the visual equivalent of the sonority.

Sign languages are natural languages, and have a fully developed linguistic structure, comprising of common linguistic features; however there are some distinct properties of the sign languages in comparison to the spoken languages, because of different modality that the sign languages base themselves upon. In the section below it is being explored.

Sign languages function in visual modality that enables “iconic representations of objects, events, and spatial relations, which can exhibit a high degree of resemblance between form and meaning”.<sup>312</sup> This feature is present but suppressed in spoken languages, which are by and large linear, as only one sound can be made or received at a time. Sign language is marked by simultaneity. Visual perception allows processing of simultaneous information, although there is articulatory and linguistic limitation. A sign language has also non – manual elements like postures or movements of the body, head, eyebrows, eyes, cheeks, and mouth and they are used in various combinations to show several categories of information, besides lexical distinction, grammatical structure, adjective or adverbial content and discourse functions.

Citing Lillo Martin, Marcin Mizak explains that language operates in an auditory – vocal modality and in a visual-gestural modality and the similarities between these two modalities are that in both the modalities language appear to be biological in nature.<sup>313</sup> Although the two languages develop independently, still in their

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<sup>311</sup> Baus, Cristina, Gutierrez, Eva, Carreiras, Manuel: “The role of Syllables in Sign Language Production”, published 13 November, 2014, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4230165/>.

<sup>312</sup> Perniss P., Özyürek A., Morgan G.: “The Influence of the Visual Modality on Language Structure and Conventionalization: Insights From Sign Language and Gesture”, In: “Topics in Cognitive Science”, 7 2015, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/tops.12127.P.3-4>.

<sup>313</sup> Mizak, Marcin (2011): *Sign Language – A Real and Natural Language*, In: *Lublin Studies in Modern Languages and Literature*, Volume 35, No. 1, 2011, pp. 50-66, p. 56. <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-f04233d1-14ea-4a91-b7f9-52cef5b6954c>.

independent growth, separately, they tilt towards more and more arbitrariness and have a very high level of abstractedness about them and hence a sign language can't be seen as a picture language, it is not a "mirror reflection of the external world"<sup>314</sup>. Still the basic difference between the two is that one has auditory – vocal modality, the other one visual – gestural modality. The gesture and mimic are used also in spoken language, like they are used in the sign language; however the basic difference between the two is that one is for hearing and the other is for seeing.

A sign language user, while reading a text, written in spoken language also, perceives it visually, which allows processing of simultaneous information, though the manual articulator is subject to motor constraints. In the section below, I will investigate, how the actress, Ingeborg Podel, a deaf actress reads the text.

**b) Description of the Performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:**



This is an image from the performance and this is how the whole performance looks like. The actress is positioned between the image of ying and yang and the screen behind projects the text sentence by sentence. The image shows the playing area has no depth.

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<sup>314</sup> Mizak. p. 61.

<sup>315</sup> <https://www.ulrikeottinger.com/index.php/begierde-und-fahrerlaubnis.html>

“Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis”

“Welche Herrenlose spricht zu

Ihnen wie sie Ihnen folgt”

While the title of the text, with one line below it (from the text) is displayed on the screen, one can hear the footstep of the audience, then the light on the stage, and one can see the actress, dressed up in black, with a white bow on the waist, and white gloves, in between the image of ying and yang. The rest of the stage is dark. The actress articulates what is visible there in written form on the screen in sign language. Then she pushes the button with the movement of her leg (which is not visible) and then the next block of the text appears on the screen. The actress is constantly there on the stage, does not change the place. The text appears as one line, sometimes two lines together and sometimes three lines together, on the screen, and altogether there are 61 snippets, some portion of the text has been taken away. This can be read as Ottinger’s interpretation of the theater text, she restructures it. She puts certain lines together and she omits certain portion of the text. She also omits from the title, the word “eine Pornographie”. Though the actor is a woman, but there is ying and yang on both side of the actress to indicate at the ‘man’ and ‘woman’ side of the character. The performance is approximately 40 minutes long.

**c) Analysis of Ingeborg Podelhl’s performance in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis*:** Carmen Schwartz<sup>316</sup>, while interpreting the sign language production of the text, states that the text has been presented in an artificial language by the actress. According to Schwartz, Podelhl’s artificial language consists of the elements of Lautsprachbegleitenden Gebärden (LBG), i.e. sound accompanying sign language and the German sign language (DGS). The LBG is constituted from the DGS, which has grown naturally in the line with other sign languages of the world, and is grammatically quite different from the German language.

According to Schwartz, Podelhl in her translation of the text orients herself towards the grammar of the German language and does word to word linear translation of the text in single sign (einzelne Gebärden). Thereby she uses the process (Vorgehenseise)

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<sup>316</sup> Carmen Schwartz, the official sign language interpreter in Germany, who interpreted the performance of Ingeborg Podelhl on the basis of the video documentation of the performance, for my research work.

of translation in LBG. In her production of the text, Podehl uses not only the hands, but also the mouth, and thereby she makes the shapes with the mouth (Mundbilder), which correspond to the original text. So, although, there is no tone in it, but the actress makes the mouth image of the words, as they will be spoken in the spoken language. However, Schwartz says, it is not a consistent LBG translation, as some parts of the texts, are modified in a manner, that they correspond more to the German sign language (DGS).

Schwartz elaborates,

„Es findet jedoch keine einheitliche Übersetzung in die LBG statt, denn einige der verwendeten Gebärden sind so modifiziert, wie es nur die DGS vorsieht (z.B. die schreiende Waffe wird am Körper festgenagelt und nicht willkürlich in der Luft), was zu Missverständnissen führen kann. Andere Gebärden sind ungenau gewählt (sumpfer statt dumpfer, überwingen statt überwinden), eventuell war es für einige Worte auch schwierig überhaupt eine Gebärde zu finden (Behende, Märtyrer).“<sup>317</sup>

For few words, she uses finger alphabet, for example, „Hansi“ and „Replik“. The question mark and the brackets in the text are signed, but not the comma and full stop.

As stated in Ottinger's homepage<sup>318</sup>, this performance does not deal with the text, *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* but with its texture, i.e. with the feel, with the appearance of it. In other words, a text goes outside its grammatical and linguistic structure. If a text is about its appearance, i.e. it is about how the text interacts with its environment. A performance also in sign language needs to go beyond its linguistic and grammatical structure in order to find an appearance to which, not only deaf but also a hearing person can relate. This aspect is recognized in the field of scientific research as appearance is a key aspect in developing a recognition system for the sign language. The scientists working in the field of sign languages have begun to use appearance based features „which include whole information of the image frames and also the geometric features of the signers' dominant hand which play an important role in the signings“<sup>319</sup>; whereas most of the features used in existing sign language recognition systems focus only on one aspect of the signing like hand movements or

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<sup>317</sup> The document that I received from Carmen Schwartz is attached in the appendix.

<sup>318</sup> <https://www.ulrikeottinger.com/index.php/begierde-und-fahrerlaubnis.html>

<sup>319</sup> Zahedi, Morteza, Dreuw, Philippe, Deselaers, Thomas & Ney, Hermann:” Using Different Aspects of the Signings for Appearance-based Sign Language Recognition”, in” “World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Computer and Information Engineering”, Vol:2, No:11, 2008. P.3773. <https://waset.org/publications/1765/using-different-aspects-of-the-signings-for-appearance-based-sign-language-recognition>

facial expressions. In her analysis, Schwarz takes into account the appearance of the sign language in the performance.

Schwartz finds the way Podehl uses the sign language space, it presents a kind of linguistic uniqueness (sprachliche Besonderheit). In her view,

„Man kann sich den Gebärdensprachraum jeder Person als Halbkugel vor dem Oberkörper vorstellen. Beim poetischen Gebärden wird dieser Raum als sprachliches Stilmittel stark ausgenutzt, oder gar erweitert. Entsprechend führt Ingeborg Podehl ihre Gebärden in einer oft auffälligen Form aus, z.B. besonders schwungvoll, elegant, gedehnt oder vergrößert. Parallel setzt sie ihre Mimik und ihr Mundbild in der jeweils zu den Gebärden passenden, besonderen Form ein.“<sup>320</sup>

According to Schwarz the sign language space of a person is hemisphere in front of his/her upper body. In poetic gestures, this space is used very well as linguistic stylistic device, or even expanded. Schwarz comments that Ingeborg Podehl has very poetic gestures and she performs energetically, elegantly, and in expanded manner. At the same time, she uses her facial expressions and her mouth image in the particular form that should be appropriate for each gesture.

**6.2 Über Tiere:** The year 2019, when I am engaging with the performance of Jelinek's theater text, *Über Tiere*, he has already directed 9 theater texts by Jelinek, so in that sense, his engagement with her work, *Über Tiere* is a piece in the 'chain' of the collaboration between the two.<sup>321</sup> Jelinek expects the director to be co-creator for her theater texts and Stemann is drawn towards her theater texts, because she allows the theater practitioners to co – create. Stemann, whose theater is characterized by music, video, collage, costume, likes to work with the texts.

Stemann says,

“Jelinek betont immer wieder, der Regisseur – oder auch das Theater – sei so etwas wie der zweite Autor. Und hier habe ich den Eindruck, dass ich sehr viel beitragen kann. Mit Musik,

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<sup>320</sup> The document that I received from Carmen Schwarz is attached in the appendix.

<sup>321</sup> *Über Tiere* is performed in the year 2007. He directed *Das Werk*, premiered at the Wiener Akademietheater, Vienna in 2003; *Babel*, premiered also at the Wiener Akademietheater, Vienna in 2005 *Ulrike Maria Stuart*, which was premiered at Thalia Theater, Hamburg in 2006. So, by 2007, he had already directed three of Jelinek's theater texts, and emerges as Elfriede Jelinek expert. Since the production of *Über Tiere*, he has further expanded this collaboration with Elfriede Jelinek by engaging himself as a director with more of her theater texts, *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns – Eine Wirtschaftskomödie* (2009, at Schauspielhaus, Cologne), *Urlesung von Rein Gold* at the Muenchneroperfestspielen, 2012), *Die Schutzbeholfenen* (2014, at Thalia Theater, Hamburg), *Wut* (at the Kammerspiel, Munich, in April 2016).

mit Improvisationen, mit Reflexion, mit Einspruch und Zuspruch, mit Ironie, Pathos, mit Collage.“<sup>322</sup>

Though, Stemann says in an interview that through his long engagement with her texts, he has not developed any method to do Jelinek’s theater; rather the performance evolves gradually through the engagement with the text, that also reflects on the relation that he shares with the text and he also point out at it in his interview. One thing that brings the author and the director together, is, that, he has been already making an effort to get theater out of the dialogical form, and treat a theater piece as “text surface” (Textfläche).

Stemann states,

“Einige Kritiker haben geschrieben, ich sei durch die Beschäftigung mit Jelinek auf die Idee gekommen, dialogische Texte wie eine «Textfläche» zu behandeln. So habe ich aber schon gearbeitet, bevor ich Jelineks Stücke kannte! Die Differenz vom Schauspieler zur Figur war immer ein Wesen meiner Arbeit. Die Inszenierung bildet nicht den Text ab, sondern ein Verhältnis zum Text – und damit das Verhältnis von «uns», von unserer Gegenwart, zu bestimmten Dingen oder Ideen. Dieses mein Verfahren hat sich bei Jelinek-Texten noch einmal als besonders sinnvoll herausgestellt.“<sup>323</sup>

Stemann says that his theater is not about the actors playing the role of the figures out of a drama text, rather it is about the relation to the text, and thereby about the relation of us, of our present to particular things or ideas. This means, then, that according to Stemann, a particular theater text entails particular things or ideas, and when he builds a relation to a text, the things or the ideas come in relation to us, our present time. So, the central focus here is the relation to the text.

**6.2.1 Essential features of the performance:** The play is one hour, fifteen minutes, eighteen seconds long. There are six actors in the performance; four women and two men, playing the role of client, madam of a brothel, prostitutes, buyers, sellers, sufferers and exploiters. So, the actors are role playing. But what kind of role playing is it? To deal with the role playing in the context of this performance, it makes sense to have a look at, what the role playing means in the representation theater, where there is a plot and there are characters.

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<sup>322</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «*Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden*», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

<sup>323</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «*Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden*», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

**a) Role Play:** The actors are doing role play, however they are not living it and in that sense, what they are creating is not to be compared to the characters out of a drama text (in conventional sense), being played by the actor. So, Stemann creates those characters, along with the supply of lines from Jelinek's text, through the costume, music, light, and the materiality of actor's voice and the body gesture. When one simply speaks the lines from the text, one can probably follow that such expressions relate to certain type of people, for example in the context of *Über Tiere* one can still make it out that it is a prostitute speaking or a client is speaking or whatever. But in Stemann's performance, when they appear, they are part of our collective image of how a client or a prostitute or a pimp, or even author Jelinek, looks like. So when you look at a girl in Stemann's performance, with her costume, the line she speaks, the blue light, and she does not have a name, and has not been introduced in the pretext of a story, still one knows, it is the prostitute.



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This kind of role play allows us to connect to the real people from the pornography industry. In our consciousness, in our collective memory, they are not there as a 'face', but as a 'type' and when in the performance one comes across such a type, one need not give it a name to know that type.

However, there are scenes, where Stemann has used 'crossdressing'. The two men, appear in crossdressing. The crossdressing that the men have done in the performance, has certain significance, which will be explored below in the context of the performance. Whereas the dressing signifies membership to particular group, like a commoner, or an elite; also gender and sex, i.e. man or woman; the crossdressing transcends in my opinion the significances that is attached to the dressing.

<sup>324</sup> © Iko Freese / drama-berlin.de, [https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber\\_tiere/](https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber_tiere/)  
<sup>325</sup> © Iko Freese / drama-berlin.de, [https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber\\_tiere/](https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber_tiere/)

**b) Crossdressing:** The men, besides dressing up as men, which I read as dialogue between genders, that Stemann creates by making couple of minor changes in dialogues<sup>326</sup>, also does is through cross dressing, as the men appear in minis, sandals etc. that is the director's 'input' to the performance, and not the instruction, given in the text.



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To understand crossdressing it is important to understand the role of dress that plays a crucial role in human experience and expression of the gender. A dress carries certain significance that Gregory Bolich G. says, “is a proper entry point in the world of crossdressing”<sup>328</sup>. Bolich argues that cloth and dressing signifies gender, sex, groups, and has social functions, as the clothes not only signify the membership to various groups, but the clothes also serve to “signal availability, enhance attractiveness, and make value system (i.e. about one’s modesty)”<sup>329</sup>. Hence, dress is significant in the complex and subtle expressive and experiencing system, says Bolich, so he says, the personal experience acquires much bigger dimension apart from wearing cloth. Dress carries meaning and the meaning that a dress carries, actually contributes to the experience and expression of a gender and the relationship between the experience and expression is reciprocal. In the words of Bolich, “What we experience may unconsciously leak out in our expression or burst exuberantly and consciously forth.

<sup>326</sup> <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/the-psychology-of-cross-dressing/>

<sup>327</sup> <https://www.gettyimages.ca/detail/news-photo/deutschland-berlin-mitte-ort-deutsches-theater-kammerspiele-news-photo/544277549>

<sup>328</sup> Bolich, Gregory G.: “Crossdressing in Context, Vol. 1 Dress & Gender”, Lulu.com, 2007, 310 pages, p. 18.

<sup>329</sup> Bolich, Gregory G., p. 19.

What we express generates and shapes internal experiences.”<sup>330</sup> In fact, each experience of a dress is an expression and an expression is an experience. So, when one opts for the crossdressing, one is relating to the experience of that dress and that in turn shapes the expression that one makes.

The study in the field of psychology associates crossdressing as a way to try to understand the other gender. When one is cross-dressing, it is connected to a universal desire to *be* for a given time, >>the gender one admires, is excited by – and perhaps loves<<<sup>331</sup>. If a man dresses up like a woman, for example, as the actors have done in Stemann’s production of Jelinek’s “Über Tiere”, it may appear dramatic and yet it is considered reasonable in the field of psychology, as it is a way to get “closer to the experiences of the sex one is profoundly curious about – and yet has been (somewhat arbitrarily) barred from.”<sup>332</sup> When one crossdresses, one lives in the experiences of a group of people he/she is keen about. When one dresses as other gender, for example a man like a woman, the logic behind it is, that he seeks to know what it would be like to cross his legs in a tight short dress, (for instance, the actors in the Stemann’s performance are wearing minis) and if they wear a pair of heels, (also in Stemann’s performance of the *Über Tiere*) to know how does it feel like to walk across a marble floor in a pair of heels, or other accessories that they put on.

When the actor is dressing up like a woman, he is not picking up the mannerism of the female gender, he is rather trying to gain the experience of being in that dress, and in the pair of heels.

Crossdressing relates to gender and sex. The discussion on the crossdressing revolves around gender, sex and sexuality. According to Gregory G. Bolich, crossdressing is particularly “apt to engage value systems”<sup>333</sup>. Dressing relates to experiencing and expressing, so crossdressing in which one gender wears the cloth of another gender, could be inferred as a way to experience and express the other gender.

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<sup>330</sup> Bolich, Gregory G., p. 28.

<sup>331</sup> <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/the-psychology-of-cross-dressing/>

<sup>332</sup> <https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/the-psychology-of-cross-dressing/>

<sup>333</sup> Bolich, Gregory G. (2007): *Crossdressing in Context, Vol. 1 Dress & Gender*, Lulu.com, p. 19.

“He might extend to imagining what it would be like to kiss a man as a woman, to feel bristles that are normally his on lips as soft as those of the lovers he has known.”<sup>334</sup>

In the performance of *Über Tiere* the man is crossdressing (flowery green body hugging cardigan, mini and a pair of heels) and he is reading the lines from the text<sup>335</sup>, which is about the prostitutes in offer in the porn market and what is their functionality?

“Es ist ja nicht so, daß ich noch einen Willen hatte, daß ich noch irgendeine Funktion in meiner Umwelt gehabt hätte als die, was von dir gewünscht würde. Darauf hin habe ich den ganzen Tag fleißig flugwärts gearbeitet (ich wußte, irgendwann würde ich rausfliegen!), daß etwas von deiner Seite aus gewünscht würde, das ich dann tun dürfte.”

The women in pornographic industry are sold as cattle and are reduced to their work which does not include her intention to do it and is only wishing to have a function of her own in her environment. She works hard, all day long, and as per the wish of the client. The crossdressing is done to understand the person according to whom a person dresses up. In the context of the text, the man dresses up as woman, in body tight dress, and speaks the lines from the text, and to know the prostitute's life more, he likes to get into her function, be her, and proposes the other man to have sex with him.

This can be analyzed as a way to understand not only the other gender, but in very particular, the prostitutes and their life.

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<sup>334</sup> [https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber\\_tiere/](https://www.deutschestheater.de/programm/archiv/u-z/ueber_tiere/)

<sup>335</sup> “Wir haben hier eine Mischung aus europäischer und russischer Kultur, aber die müssen Sie vorbestellen. Ich meine, die müßtest du vorbestellen. Das sind die besten Mädels, die man vorbestellen muß, das sind sicherlich momentan die besten Mädels. Sie kommen aus Litauen, wo die beste Mischung aus den Kulturen hergestellt und vertrieben wird. Vorbestellen ist genau richtig. Vertreiben ist aber auch nicht schlecht. Ich lasse mich jetzt auch vorbestellen, wenn auch nicht vertreiben, vielleicht erhöht das meinen Wert, meinen Reiz leider nicht, da ich ja immer hier bin. Eine Nichtvertriebene. Eine nicht Vertriebene. Wir verdienen am Vertreib, ich meine am Vertrieb. Hier steht aber Pornostar, wieso ist sie dann keiner? Ja, die hat auch ein paar Pornofilme schon gemacht, wir schwören es. Wir könnten es beschwören, wenn wir sie sähen. Aber die müßten Sie auch vorbestellen. Wenn man alles immer vorbestellen muß, was für eine Freude hat man dann sofort, wenn man sie brauchen würde? Die Freude. Die reine Freude. So. Sie werden es schon wissen! Für diesen Abend lasse ich mich also vorbestellt, aber eben nicht vertrieben sein. Wäre ich vertrieben, ich würde was kosten. Warum zahlen, wenn es billiger auch geht? Warum etwas gratis nehmen, wenn man dafür zahlen kann? Egal, aber weniger egal als vorhin, als es um Fleiß und seinen Preis ging. Und schon ging in dir plangemäß meine Besorgnis auf, was ich diesen Abend wieder tun würde. Du wußtest es andererseits aber schon vorher mit Sicherheit, ich war ja vorbestellt.” Jelinek, Elfriede : “Über Tiere”, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

**c) Dialogicity:** Maja Sibille Pflüger says that in the place of dialogue, Jelinek's work contain "Dialogizität der Rede", i.e. dialogicity of the speech. According to Pflüger, the dialogicity of the speech unfolds itself only in the absence of the dialogue.

In Pflüger's words,

"Die Interferenz der Tetfragmente übernimmt das dialogische Element. Ein funktionierende Dialog würde die Materialität der Sprache und ihre semantische Potentialität ausblenden und die Brüchigkeit der Sprachoberfläche durch die Rückbindung an die semantische Ebene glätten."<sup>336</sup>

So, a dialogue takes away the plurality of a speech, its materiality. The dialogicity of the speech in the contrary weakens the denotative and strengthens the connotative dimension of a text. The denotative means the literal meaning of a word, whereas connotation gets created when the meaning is not so direct, i.e. the meaning, behind something said, is initially hidden. So, when Jelinek does away with the dialogue, she makes the speech more dialogical, as dialogicity contains the materiality of the language, because a particular speech is not tailored for individual speaking in the form of a dialogue, it entails polyphony and thereby the text experiences dramatization. Through intertextuality, Jelinek shifts from the dramatic dialogue to dialogicity of the speech, whereby according to Pflüger, she does not only adapt the text segments, but also the style, pitch, genre, names, narrative fragments (Handlungsfragmente), constellations of the figures, places and time specification (Zeitangaben). In my view, it is these aspects of the language that relates to its materiality, with which Stemann engages himself, while bringing the text to theatrical performance.

If the writer shifts from dialogical form to the dialogicity, so does the director. Stemann rather than working with the form of dialogue, works with the text planes. Jelinek's text planes also don't contain dialogues. The first part, where the "I" is speaking, is seen as monologue, and it is followed by polyphony.

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<sup>336</sup> Pflüger, Maja Sibille (1996): *Vom Dialog zur Dialogität. Die Theaterästhetik von Elfriede Jelinek*, Francke, p. 50.

According to Bakhtin,

“A monological world is made up of objects, integrated through a single consciousness. Since other subjects have value only in relation to the transcendent perspective, they are reduced to the status of objects. They are not recognised as ‘another consciousness’ or as having rights. Monologism is taken to close down the world it represents, by pretending to be the ultimate word.”<sup>337</sup>

Jelinek is trying to bring in a single consciousness on the gender line through a monologue. On one side there is a monologue in the text, and because of that certain consciousness runs through the text and Stemann is in dialogue with that consciousness.

Being in dialogue means, being in dialogue

“not only with other people, but also with everything in the world. Everything ‘addresses’ us in a certain sense. Each of us is uniquely addressed in our particular place in the world. One can see one’s exterior only through others’ perspectives”<sup>338</sup>.

So, Stemann in the first part of the performance is in dialogue with the other consciousness. A dialogue is possible, because there is certain kind of monologue that the text offers. But the dialogue can’t be carried out if the text loses that one-streamed lined consciousness.

The parts of the text with connotation, is read and the one with detonation is spoken in the performance. At times, as in between the reading, the male actor stops to listen to the voice, it seems certain dialogue is taking place between the genders, male and female. Stemann also changes a few words from the original text to make the monologue like a dialogue.

The actor reads this sentence,

“Auf den Fußpfad verzichten, den Fußtritt vermeiden.”<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Robinson, Andre (July 29, 2011): *In Theory Bakhtin: Dialogism, Polyphony and Heteroglossia*, <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-bakhtin-1/>.

<sup>338</sup> Robinson, Andre (July 29, 2011): *In Theory Bakhtin: Dialogism, Polyphony and Heteroglossia*, <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-bakhtin-1/>.

<sup>339</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

“Was meine ich damit?”<sup>340</sup>

This sentence is changed into “Was meinen Sie damit?”

There are three actresses and two actors, who exchange lines from the texts, sometimes the female actor reads, sometimes they say the lines together, sometimes they speak, at times they scream, laced with laughter, pleasure, seduction, etc., so in that sense, instead of living the psychological character out of a conventional drama, the actors and the actresses give life to the speech in the text.

After the third female actor, to whom the projected ‘Kussmund’ first speaks and then engulfs her, the two male actors, one in mini, the other one in formal suit, do quote Jelinek from an interview, in which she says, she has documented this theater text, because otherwise people think, she is exaggerating, the two quote from an interview about,

“ich habe nie uebertrieben...” “Tiere sind unschuldig...Maennner sind nicht unschuldig...”<sup>341</sup>

The actors say this line from Jelinek’s interview and thereby the performance enters into the polyphonous part of the text, i.e. ‘I’, the monologue, the female consciousness disappears, and the market place, the flesh market of prostitution emerge and for that Jelinek takes the material from the real conversation, tape from telephone conversation between client and agent, pimp and prostitute, that got released by the Austrian magazine ‘Falter’, same year as Jelinek wrote this theater text *Über Tiere*.

The monologue that Jelinek wrote, which of course, has several dimensions, includes many discourses, around love, around pleasure, around gender, so in the plurality of the perspectives, Jelinek creates a monologue, and the director, Stemann, upto approximately 40 minutes of the performance, is being dialogical with this monologue. So, Stemaan, to a larger part, while trying to bring in some kind of dialogue, here and there, though certain exchanges between the actors, through making some lines like dialogue by changing ‘I’ to ‘You’, in engaging with the

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<sup>340</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

<sup>341</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede (2005): *Über Tiere*, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com).

monologue, that does not in fact operate according to the principle of monologism<sup>342</sup>, as ‘I’ is in dialogue with the world; so Stemann works according to the ‘dialogical principle’. Stemann deals with the monologue part of the text at multiple levels, and that makes his engagement with the first part dialogical. Neither Jelinek’s monologue is monological, nor is Stemann’s relation to it like one to one dialogue; but varied forms of response to the text shows that Stemann approaches Jelinek’s work dialogically. By definition, a dialogical work “constantly engages with and is informed by other works and voices, and seeks to alter or inform it”<sup>343</sup>. Dialogism does not allow anything to be reduced to a unity, to a whole; it is interactive and takes into account the multiplicity of the voice. As I have mentioned above, Stemann, in the monologue of *Über Tiere* deals with a consciousness, which is actually a “product of responsive interactions, and cannot exist in isolation”, i.e. one is in dialogue with one’s ecological surrounding. Stemann is aware of it when he is bringing the parts of Jelinek’s text in the theatrical performance.

In Jelinek’s theater text as the ‘I’ completely disappears, that one particular consciousness is lost, to which the director was responding by interacting with the text by delivering the speech in different ways. For the polyphony .i.e. created in Jelinek’s text thereafter, Stemann chooses a different performance method.

The next part is completely theatrical.

**d) Theatricality:** The next part is created as theater, where there are prostitutes, customers, pimps, and the writer, Jelinek herself. The Jelinek – character is reading from the magazine “Falter”, and things are happening on the stage. The lights, costume, pitch of voice, music, video projection, together they create the atmosphere like the prostitution world, and the polyphony that Jelinek’s text here onwards creates, is created on the stage by bringing on the stage prostitutes, madam, pimp, client and thereby the author also contributes in the creation of this polyphony. There is

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<sup>342</sup> “In monologism, one transcendental perspective or consciousness integrates the entire field, and thus integrates all the signifying practices, ideologies, values and desires that are deemed significant. Anything irrelevant to this perspective is deemed superfluous or irrelevant in general.” Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «*Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden*», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

<sup>343</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «*Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden*», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

shouting, screaming, hysteria, reading, dancing, jumping, seduction, and pricing, all these things are derived from the text, to make theatricality out of that.

Theatricality gives kind of spectacle to the text. Theatricality relates to illusion, fiction or play, and differentiates itself from reality. The director chooses theatricality to depict that part of the theater text from Jelinek, which puts the content from the real world as it is and which she does, to show that it is not exaggeration. The reality, if Jelinek says, is not an exaggeration, i.e., that it may look like an exaggeration, which by definition is, overemphasis, overplay, something that is more than a reality. So, she says, the reality is something unbelievable, it has such a scale that Jelinek does not need to bring drama in it to highlight the issue. To represent the reality that the text puts blatantly as a theater text, Stemann uses theatricality.

According to Russel,

“Theatricality is the expert deployment of theater and all of its weapons: the projected voice, exaggerated gestures, pratfalls, florid costumes, chorus lines, curtains, painted flats, painted faces, beginnings, middles, ends, the gun on the table that is going to go off. Theater.”<sup>344</sup>

In his point of view, theatricality can be a space for somebody who has an >>outsize personality<< or somebody with a different perspective. So Stemann chose theatricality to mediate a reality, which exceeds the notion about reality in real. Since this part of the text (from p. 11 onwards) is a word to word copy of the actual conversation tapped and put into the public domain by the Austrian magazine “Falter”, and could be put into the genre of the Document theater text; however because of its scale, Stemann chooses theatricality to bring the ‘truth’ of the society, that Jelinek is trying to depict, in spectacle.

Whereas, if documentation method is used, it indicates that the performance is trying to bring us closer to the truth by bringing in the facts. Theatricality depends on the already tested ways to make the content of the text fall into it. The two actors say, we believe you, it is not exaggeration and the actor uses the existing theatrical tool to recreate what the text speaks. However the theater gets over before the last scene, as the performance ends with the last lines from the text that recounts the real incident.

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<sup>344</sup> <http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/theatricality/mark-russell>

The men come to the front of the stage...read out from a paper...

“Am Ende 31 Kilo, verweigert jede Nahrungsaufnahme. Ficken! Verweigert jede Nahaufnahme. Verweigert jede Ausnahme. Ficken! Herr Jesus! Herr! Sie wälzt sich im Staub. Die Zähne splintern. Kopf gegen die Wand. Körper auf 31 Kilo heruntergefahren. Maße nicht bekannt. Herr Jesus! Sie wird gehandelt. Sie handelt davon. Sie handelt damit. Gütiger Herr Jesus.”<sup>345</sup>

Stemann's bases the stage presentation of Jelinek's *Über Tiere* on the principle of dialogicity, which is open for the other perspective, believes in the multiplicity of the voice, and takes into consideration the connotative as well as the denotative language. Because this is the approach that Jelinek has as she writes her texts as well. Stemann likes to work with text in his theater, and says, if he is going against the text, he notices it during the rehearsal.

**Conclusion:** In Ottinger's performance of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* the stage has no depth. Ottinger calls it “Playing surface” (Spielfläche). Whatever is happening is in forefront. The space of performance is the hemisphere in front of actress's upper part of the body, which allows her to make all the hand movements. The space is defined by the light, which makes only the hemisphere in front of Podelhl visible, besides ying and yang, and also the text on the projector is visible. This means, it is only seeing, and very focused, concentrated seeing in the performance, because there is no physical movement, like actress changing the place or some activity happening on the stage etc. To connect the audience of a spoken language, she is using the grammar of the spoken language. Schwarz finds the sign language in which Podelhl has translated the text as ‘artificial’. This means, the language does not have a life in it. That way, she comes closer to Jelinek's idea of not making theater a home. Not making it a living space, here one tries to be real. In translating Jelinek's text for the performance, she is doing word to word linear translation. Since the actress stands in one place, set never changes, light, costume, actor nothing changes. It is about relating to the text in a language, where modality of the language is different, which brings along with it a feeling of ‘Other’ in the audience, if they are the user of the spoken languages. To put something in artificial language, one must step out of one's feeling and emotion and

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<sup>345</sup> Jelinek, Elfriede : “Über Tiere”, [www.elfriedejelinek.com](http://www.elfriedejelinek.com)

the drive to connect to the text, and thereby one deals with the text by staying outside it.

Nicolas Stemann is autonomous as a director while directing the theater text *Über Tiere* and hence in the theatrical production he is making a relationship with the text and getting into a dialogue with the discourse on female sexuality and gender.

Stemann brings in dialogical form in the monolog part, by letting big part of monologue, which is the literary language, be read by male actor. The actor reads the lines slowly and carefully. Then there are lines, which are expressed very directly in simple language and connects to the feeling, those lines are spoken by the female actor. In allocating the lines to the actors in the first part, monolog, the director decides, whether the line should be spoken or should be read, it is about engaging with the discourse in the text. The actors lend voice to the lines, not the body.

The second part of Jelinek's text is a projection of pornography industry, its vocabulary, its dealing, and its world, which emerges mostly from the exact incorporation of a tapped conversation from pornographic industry. Whatever is repeatedly said in the words in the text, is translated into the medium of theater through the actors getting into the role play. In this part, the atmosphere is created by costume, light, music, sound, and voices but hardly any dialogue. All the elements mentioned here, get into their materiality to give the appearance of a prostitution market.

This theatrical production, without being subservient to the text, mediates the text to the audience using different components of performative production of theater.



## Conclusion

The hypothesis of this research work was that Jelinek is looking for an ‘other’ theater which should be perpetually other. In five chapters of this work, I have used various theories, theater and performance theory, linguistic and gender theory, science theories (Autopoiesis, Chaos theory, Complexity Science, Concept Drift), theory of thought system, rhizome theory, discourse theory, pornography theory, animal discourse, and fashion aesthetics, concept of sensemaking and aesthetics of aloofness. I have made the range of my research scope broader, become more interdisciplinary in searching for an ‘other’ theater with Elfriede Jelinek.

Marvin Carlson names all human activities performance. This term has fluidity, it is beyond rigid definition, and that made me explore this term in the context of my research work. In fact, as an afterthought, after developing a better notion of the performance theory, I found it apt to in see my two following chapters, second, “Elfriede Jelinek’s Theater Texts – Theater writing as a Performative Act” and third “Reading as a Performative Act: *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere* through the Discourse on Pornography” as performative. Austin calls performative acts, ‘utterance’ which does not allow language to be representational in nature; rather it directs one to some action. When Butler says that gender is an outcome of performative act; she is bringing the gender identity to the performance of the body. According to Fischer – Lichte something has performativity in it, and it is through the performative act, that a performance can take place. In the similar vein I see Jelinek writing for theater is a performative act, and my reading of her two texts as a performative act as well. Erika Fischer – Lichte, while distinguishing between ‘performativity’, ‘performative’ and ‘performance’, proposes aesthetics of performative, which she does not bracket to be particularly linked to one form of art. In that sense, the aesthetic she is proposing should relate to various art fields.

Erika Fischer – Lichte’s aesthetics of performative, which I have examined in depth as a theoretical base for exploring Elfriede Jelinek’s theater; has three key points: first all the elements that are used in making of a performance, are put there by her in the stage of materiality. It is not time (*Zeit*), it is temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), it is not space (*Raum*), it is spatiality (*Räumlichkeit*), it is not body (*Körper*), but corporeality

(Körperlichkeit), it is sound (Lautlichkeit) and atmosphere. All these elements are brought from the status of material to the status of materiality and they all perform in theater and they are not subordinate to each other.

Second key point for me in aesthetics of performative is about democratizing the space of theater, which is also in my view, Jelinek's objective for theater. The Performance theory in the field of anthropology is related to ritual science, where a performance takes place within a community and everyone present there is part of the performance. Erika Fischer – Lichte envisions a performative theater as an occasion for a short term community formation, which must happen as a result of the interaction between all the participants. However, at the same time, it is not a rigid structure that governs it; rather there is a feedback loop that gets created between the actors and the spectators which works in circularity and gives life to the community by situating the loop into autopoietic system, which recognizes the invariant features of the living systems around which the natural selection operates. In Maturana's view, this is how a social system is formed, there has to be a circularity of the living system's organization to give life to the system. The way circularity is maintained, can change, however the basic circularity of a living system does not change. Fischer – Lichte does not elaborate it much, however she says that this circularity of interactions between the actors and the spectators should locate itself in the autopoietic system. This way the community that gets created is natural community, which is autonomous and creative. In fact in the context of society and ethics, Maturana says that autopoiesis is not only basic for the functioning of a living system, but human beings are also autopoietic systems and whatever activities they do as social organisms, must satisfy their autopoietic systems. If individual's autopoietic system is not satisfied while he/she is doing an activity; then he/she might come out of that social domain. In Maturana's view, an artist works outside the domain of unity, and through his/her path of creation, instead of disintegrating the society, he/she works to integrate it. According to Maturana, in a human society the change takes place in a language centered culture and cultural stabilization of relation of human components is important for the stabilization of human components in the system. So if Fischer – Lichte is suggesting to situate the feedback loop in the autopoietic system, she is only asking the actors and the spectators to return to their nature. At the same time Maturana also recognizes that an artist is anti – social,

however not with the aim to disintegrate the society, but to integrate it, because he/she thinks creatively, i.e they must satisfy their own autopoietic system, when they are involved in some activity.

The third aspect very important in her theory is the idea of threshold, the aspect of liminality, the concept of being in – between, and that is where, according to her there is a chance of the participants in performance transforming themselves. Being on threshold, or being in liminality, or being in – between two things, is a position, where one is about to transform, like James Gleick's idea of how snowflake keeps on transforming itself, and how it acquires a different form, there is a chaos and an order in how it happens. Whereas the chaos theory holds change, even if it is minor, in initial condition, important to explain a phenomenon; complexity science, which situates itself on the edge of chaos, proposes complex adaptive system to explain the complexity of something. This effort of expanding the idea of aesthetics of performance in chaos theory resonates with Jelinek's theoretical text on theater, *Es ist Spreche und aus*, in which she talks about chaos in her writing, which is not in order, according to her, as the chaos in nature is. By not differentiating important things from the unimportant ones, she is working according to her own nature; however there is dense complexity in her theater texts.

My exploration of expanding the idea of aesthetics of performance in chaos theory resonates with Jelinek's theoretical text on theater, *Es ist Spreche und aus*, in which she talks about chaos in her writing, which is not in order, according to her, as the chaos in nature is. By not differentiating important things from the unimportant ones, she is working according to her own nature; however her texts are too complex, open and rhizomatic. To recognize the invariant features in her work, I have engaged with rhizome theory in the second chapter. While bringing in different materials, originating from classical writing to the very normal day to day vocabulary, she is extracting the uniqueness away from the work; like in rhizome theory. That way subject status of a person or a work is diminished and object status is introduced.

Although in my reading of *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* and *Über Tiere* I have identified the woman's voice trying to assert herself as a subject also while in the man's plan, she is reduced to the status of object. The norms and aesthetics and basic premise of pornography is centered around male sexuality, in fact the discourse of

pornography makes both men and women instrumental in strengthening the patriarchal views and norms, by asking men and women to believe in certain stereotypes, that aims at controlling woman and subordinating their position within the patriarchal power dynamics. By freeing the scientific debates around female sexuality from the dominant debates, which is oriented towards man's needs, man's desire, man's sexuality, which is considered a base for all the research, is problematic.

However in her later theater texts, Jelinek abandons the idea of creating a subject status for woman, and by bringing everything, from important to unimportant, on surface, next to each other, she is taking the uniqueness away from the classical work, which have shaped in a very structured and hierarchical manner the consciousness of Austria. This has led to the formation of dominant thought system in the Austrian society. As David Bohm says, a thought system, consists of conditioned and reflexive thought, which has its root in the past experiences and any action emerging out of it, is a reflection of past experience. In Bohm's point of view, an automatic thought is dangerous for the world. Jelinek's writing, which I read as a performative act, is performative, because she interacts with the existing materials and extracts from them and make them interact with the reality of our time. Thereby she is asking her readers/spectators to think, that means according to Bohm, to use intelligence, and be in present, to take a position about something. One can do it by themselves. Jelinek proposes it to do collectively, because in theater we all come together in one space.

We need a collective space because discourse does not get formed alone. It is a social exercise and it needs to be dealt with in a bigger collective group, may not be as a community, but definitely collectively. Because racism, or fascism, or sexism are the signs of our collective identity, and there is reflection of these factors also in our individual deeds. What kind of theater practice would it be where individuals in individual capacity and as collective can be connected to the conscious thoughts that Jelinek develops around an idea/or a discourse or an incident in her writing, with the unconscious thoughts about the same in the mind of readers/spectators? Because it is then that we come out of our automatic thought process and start thinking about those ideas, discourses, and incidents in the present.

As we follow the trend in fashion industry, where a piece of clothing goes out of fashion very fast; Jelinek works with the materials that form a thought system, and

before a thought saturates in our mind, we need to update it, refresh it, as we do with the clothes, or we do with the data in virtual reality. In the place of involving ourselves through our body in theater; Jelinek proposes aloofness, which is about going beyond our immediate experiences, in the realm of scientific aesthetic, which asks us to go deeper than surface reality, not to feel something more strongly, but to be more aware about the nature of a thing. So the idea of being an ‘other’ in theater, or being aloof or being foreign is proposed by Jelinek to develop an impersonal, objective and distant outlook towards a thing.

Theater directors, like Nicoals Stemann, who says, he likes to work with texts, and while working on Jelinek’s text, has experimented in the theatrical production of the text diversely. Jelinek conceives the directors as co – author of her text; and even would like the actors to find ways of not being trapped by her endless speaking. The theatrical productions of her texts are redefining the aesthetics of theater. In the scope of this research work, I have only analysed the theatrical performances of two of her theater texts, however it is very intriguing how much exploration is happening around the texts that she creates. Her theater texts demand an ‘Other’ treatment and the exploration is on. They refuse to be defined, categorized and structured, so one has to look at her theater texts always anew. This is recognized by Ulrike Ottinger, who comments that in *Begierde und Fahrerlaubnis* a sentence is hardly only a sentence; or that she is dealing with Jelinek’s texture. To deal with the complexity of the text she chooses the mediation of the text on the stage in sign language; whereby not only Jelinek’s text but the expression of the text in sign language brings in the aspect of seeing the reading of language. Fischer – Lichte while elaborating on the components of her aesthetics of performative, says that sometimes in one performance, one component could become more pronounced than other one. In this performance it relates to seeing, no word uttered in spoken language. The text finds articulation sentence by sentence in sign language. Stemann in the context of Jelinek’s theater text says that he feels he can contribute to her texts a lot<sup>346</sup>. The content of *Über Tiere* gets

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<sup>346</sup> Heilig, Barbara Hilliger (October 10, 2016): «Diese Sprache will gesprochen werden», <https://www.nzz.ch/feuilleton/buecher/wie-inszeniert-man-elfriede-jelinek-diese-sprache-will-gesprochen-werden-ld.123008>.

on stage the discourse figures, light, music, utterance, at the same time, while bringing in a male actor to read lines from monolog, and by making small changes in the lines of the text here and there, he establishes a dialogue with the text; thereby he makes the spectators a participant of the event taking place on the stage.

To understand Jelinek's theater can only be an ongoing project because there are so many different kinds of experiments going on through her texts in theater and with each new theater text that she writes, she brings a piece of present reality as a part of a very complex thought system that needs to be interpreted in such a way that it has some meaning for the reader/spectator and which in turn can influence the action of the reader/spectator in the real life. Jelinek is not against 'meaning' of something; in fact she would like one to find one's own interpretation of an experience that have multiple interpretations through sensemaking. The theory of sensemaking asks one to interpret an experience through meaning and make sense out of it. The meaning is not enough in itself, which was the core of representational theater; experience, which is the basic of Performance Theater, is also not enough for one to take an action. Only when one commits to one interpretation out of several, linked to a particular event, then one can give some meaning to an experience. This needs an 'Other' kind of aesthetics. Jelinek asks all participating in her theater, writer, director, actor, spectator, to be aloof.

According to the aesthetics of aloofness if one is standing on a ground from where a thing in particular does not matter to the individual, then one can be more neutral in giving sense to an experience. So, being constantly on the 'Other' ground is what makes Jelinek's theater perpetually 'Other' and the aesthetics must correspond to this idea of being 'Other' constantly.

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