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## Jelinek in Film and Script: Tales of Sound versus Fury: *Malina* (1991)

Sunka Simon

THE TITLE OF THE BOOK-PRINT VERSION OF JELINEK'S SCRIPT FOR Werner Schroeter's 1990 film based on the Ingeborg Bachmann novel of the same name, *Malina* (1971), refers to her script as a *Filmbuch* [film book].<sup>1</sup> This is significant for three reasons: First, the text version of this *Filmbuch* departs in crucial formal and thematic aspects from the final script for the film itself. Second, in its material book format, the *Filmbuch* allows for a parallel existence and analytical textual discussion of the two *Malinas*: Bachmann's and Jelinek's, while at the same time mimicking the schizophrenic *Doppelgänger* plot and structure of the original novel. The split between Jelinek's feminist-inspired script and the male-directed film by Werner Schroeter repeats the division of the female self into a nameless *Ich* [I] and its male-coded companion, Malina, in the novel.<sup>2</sup> Similar to the novel's structure of multigeneric text-fragments (letters, fairy tales, telephone calls, film scripts, opera libretti, dramatic dialogues, poems, testaments, essays, dreams, treatises, etc.), the dissemination of *Malina* into a film book and film fulfill the protagonist's desire to leave something behind while the screen transformation results in a violation of the privacy the woman writer holds so dear.<sup>3</sup> And finally, Jelinek, whose own linguistically fine-tuned aesthetics singularly qualifies her for dealing sensitively with *Malina's* language of gendered oppression, rewrites Bachmann's complex novel for the readership, not just the spectators of the 1990s.

For any successful transfer of Bachmann's protagonist's privileged Bohemian existence and nomadic sense of self, it is crucial to convey that this sense of self is dissolved by the polyphonic structure of the writing fragments in the novel, including its forays into multiple genres and media. Jelinek is no stranger to this feminist writing technique or its dilemma. Since film is one of the avenues of expression investigated in Bachmann's novel, and Bachmann certainly knew of its power in the late twentieth century, Jelinek and Schroeter have an already highly media-oriented script at their hands. To understand Jelinek's concept of *Malina*, it is crucial to investigate how she, but also Schroeter, deal with this inherent media reflexiv-

ity. In order to do so, I will concentrate on major scenes and aspects that have not yet been fully analyzed elsewhere. As has already been demonstrated, Jelinek's revisions and editions are made problematic not mainly because some of them alter Bachmann's narratological structure, but because Schroeter erases most of Jelinek's own signature in the final cut. Taking some of Jelinek's cues, he develops them into full-fledged visual keys to the story thereby creating a psychedelic melodrama with film noir undertones. Shot on original location, the film converts the psychic landscape of *Malina's* female narrator-self into a naturalistic environment, which it subsequently recodes as image-space with the use of pyrotechnics and magic-realist studio-settings.

In general, film critics and Bachmann scholars alike have argued, that both Jelinek and Schroeter opted for a physiognomic approach to the structure and plot of the novel, which Isabelle Huppert, the lead actor, performs with hysterical Stanislavskian perfection.<sup>4</sup> This visually expressive style earned the film three *Filmbänder in Gold* (distinguished German film award) from the *Deutsche Filmpreis Komitee* in 1991. If Werner Schroeter had not referred to Bachmann's original as "das Gejammere" [the whining] and insisted that he and Jelinek were necessary as bridges to make the 1971 text palatable to the 1990s audience, their combined reliance on hysterical body language and fire symbolism would not necessarily have clashed with the original. But his admitted difficulties with the feminist and feminine aspects of both Bachmann's and Jelinek's texts, his dismissive description of the classic feminist novel's verbal extravagance has fueled this essay's intent to analyze the translation of excess in cinematic terms.<sup>5</sup> How does Jelinek's adaptation of Bachmann's extravagant prose compare to Schroeter's choice of film noir and melodrama to generate *Malina's* self-engrossed tone and its polygeneric concept?

#### STRUCTURE AND PLOT OF NOVEL, *FILMBUCH* AND FILM

Before I enter a more detailed discussion of the Bachmann/Jelinek creative team directed by Werner Schroeter, let me briefly outline the structure and plot of the novel out of which Jelinek fashioned a simultaneously compelling and deeply problematic redress of Bachmann's narrative world. The novel begins with a list of the narrative personnel: the Hungarian émigré Ivan and his two boys, Béla and András, ages seven and five, the forty year old man Malina, the title character, and finally the female protagonist-writer, who remains the nameless personal pronoun "Ich" (I) throughout the novel. Jelinek follows Bachmann's lead but also includes the names of

the supporting cast in her script: secretary Fräulein Jelinek, interviewer Herr Mühlbauer, Counts Atti and Antoinette Altenwyl, and the narrator's father and mother. Jelinek refers to the female protagonist as "die Frau" [the woman] throughout the film book. Whereas the novel is made up of a prologue and three chapters "Glücklich mit Ivan" [Happy with Ivan], "Der dritte Mann" [The Third Man], and "Von letzten Dingen" [Of Last Things], Jelinek writes a film script with 123 scenes, which roughly follow the novel's major narrative developments.

The first chapter develops the budding romance between Ivan and *Ich* as experienced in all its painful roller-coaster movements from "himmelhochjauchzend zu Tode betrübt" [heavenly ecstatic to mortally aggrieved] and documents *Ich's* inability to write, to function in the world as a woman and a professional writer while afflicted with love. Besides hundreds of unfinished letters to the outside world, this chapter consists of hectic and utterly mundane phone calls between the lovers and the fragment of an italicized fairy tale called "Die Geheimnisse der Prinzessin von Kagran" [The Secrets of the Princess of Kagran]. In "Glücklich mit Ivan," *Ich* continues to investigate her relationship to Malina, her male soul mate, alter ego, tormenter and therapist, a relationship which *Ich* outlined as framing her own existence *ex negativo* in the prologue. This part ends with *Ich's* visit to the Altenwyl's.<sup>6</sup> In the film book, this part comprises scenes 1 through 70.

The second chapter alternates between *Ich's* narrated dreams (nightmares about loss, betrayal, torture, and murder, depicted as oedipal family scenarios, in which *Ich's* father-figure assumes the lead role, and Malina's and her dialogue about the dreams' meaning and their implications for *Ich's* identity crisis and writer's block. Their intermission dialogue is typed in drama or libretto format. This part finds expression in film scenes 71 to 91. Bachmann carries the dialogue format through to the end of the book as the last chapter becomes more and more fragmented yet also more analytical. *Ich* begins to read her individual crisis as a symptom of a larger gender and class-based societal impasse. The novel ends famously when *Ich* steps into the wall of her room, which has opened up. After her retreat into the wall, the telephone rings. Malina picks up in *Ich's* stead and, surprised by the caller's voice, utters the following lines: "Nein gibt es nicht. Hier ist keine Frau . . . hier war nie jemand dieses Namens. Es gibt sonst niemand hier. . . Mein Name? Malina" [No, there isn't anyone by this name. There is no woman here . . . there was never someone by that name. There is no one else here. . . My name? Malina].<sup>7</sup> Even though *Ich* repeatedly insists earlier that she should have left a message stating: "it wasn't Malina" (354), she also believes that she "lived in Ivan and dies in Malina" (354). The last unambiguous sentence of the novel is "Es war Mord" [It was murder]. In the film book, this last chapter consists of scenes 92 to 123.

## ENVISIONING THE ENDING

Even though Jelinek had to condense the text by selecting adaptable scenarios, she made certain that Bachmann's general composition was transferred to the screen in that the first and the last parts are longer than the middle dream chapter, which outlasts the others in impact due to its montage of traumatic scenes situated in fanciful topographies of and timetravels through Austrian history. To begin with, Jelinek's rewriting of the shocking ending, allows one to grasp the tone for the complex intertextual and extratextual relationships that the three *Malinas* create: Jelinek's script differs strikingly from the book and also from the film version. If Jelinek had had her way, the woman would have disappeared into the wall in a flash of lightning. Malina would have found the final sentence on a piece of paper on the tray he normally uses to carry his cup of coffee to the kitchen. In her version, he rolls up the paper and throws it into the trash bin before walking out the door (151). In the film, the camera catches the woman between three mirrors that split her into two, then three and four mirror images before she disappears from our view. Here, *Ich's* voice whispers the final sentence from off-screen as Malina's body, walking toward the camera, ominously fills the screen. Schroeter drowns the woman's burning desire for a self-determined female self in his incandescently symbolic manhunt for the woman's murderer while at the same time insisting, with the help of Isabelle Huppert, that she fails by her own limits, "sie an sich selbst scheitert."<sup>8</sup>

Jelinek's version seeks to make the woman disappear in a fairy-tale like ending that expands the rift going through the apartment to a "Riß am Himmel" [crevice in the sky]. In her case, the act of vanishing happens in the form of an overexposure of light, so that the audience is blinded and unable to see the actual act of disappearing. On the one hand, this presentation successfully adapts *Ich's* account of her disappearance, written in first person singular, because no third person, including Malina, actually witnesses her merging with the wall. The female subject is literally displaced by Malina at that point in time and place. On the other hand, the old theater trick of vanishing in a flash has been recreated many times on screen, for example by Glenda, the good witch in *The Wizard of Oz*. Countless directors have thus visually suggested timetravel in their fantasy or science fiction vehicles. While this ending is in keeping with *Malina's* fairy-tale aspects, it exaggerates the novel's understated ending: "Aber die Wand tut sich auf, ich bin in der Wand" (354) [But the wall opens up, I am in the wall]. This ending, the text suggests, can happen so matter-of-factly because all of the drama has foreshadowed this moment. There is no need for a final fanfare to make *Ich's* demise more meaningful or melodramatic. Two reasons come to mind. Having to show *Ich's* demise despite its invisibility mandate possibly prompted Jelinek to resort to special effects, and

rather than utilizing a ghost-effect, she opted for a witch-effect, also indicated by *Ich's* "last things" that Malina picks up and destroys: a candelabra, sunglasses—in the book, *Ich* calls them "meine Augen" (355) [my eyes]—and a blue glass cube. Rather than becoming a ghost, the flash of lightning suggests a feminist-inspired haunting of Malina, the warlock, as he inherits *Ich's* powers. In addition, the dominant Hollywood tradition in commercial cinema demands endings that stand out and are overly invested with symbolic codes. The lightning strike is as close as Jelinek could come to an ending of death by fire, a total dissolution but also a potential transcendence of the female subject, without overtly altering Bachmann's text.<sup>9</sup>

By contrast, Schroeter utilizes the apparatus of the camera and its ability to reflect, reproduce, and make objects disappear to capture the vanishing of the female subject. Since we are watching *Malina* as film, this technique translates *Ich's* vanishing into the cinematic medium while maintaining its self-reflexive gesture. The voice-over, however, goes against Bachmann's text, which specifies that out of the wall "nie mehr etwas laut werden kann" (356) [nothing can ever be heard again]. But on another level, it also recodes an existent paradigm in Bachmann's text, that of the noncoincidence of the female subject with itself, in that a German actress actually dubs Isabelle Huppert's voice throughout the entire film. Thus *Ich's* voice is already divested from her bodily representation when the final voice-over splits the filmic subject into image and sound. Nevertheless, both lightning strike and voice-over turn the step into the wall into a demonic event, which overcodes Bachmann's novel with its gothic genre elements from "The Princess of Kagran" story, making it fall in line with female hysteria in *The Turn of the Screw* (Henry James, 1898) rather than the generic ambiguity exhibited by contemporary Doris Lessing's *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974).

### THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

For her overall interpretation of the novel, Jelinek could rely on her own steady feud with a public image ruled by sensationalist press receptions of her plays and public appearances. Repeatedly and pertinently, for *Malina's* *raison d'être*, Jelinek's own oeuvre is reduced to her biography, the biography of being Woman. As "Nestbeschmutzerin" [befouler of her own nest], Jelinek, like Bachmann in her time, is seen as performing the role of hysterical Woman, "keifendes altes Weib," at the exclusion of anything else.<sup>10</sup> That this denunciation reveals more about Austria's inability to come to terms with its deeply engrained patriarchal values and its collaborative Nazi past does not take away its punch. Fighting not only the public but also a distorted image of themselves in the public eye is an experience the two famous Austrian women writers share. Jelinek could thus empathize with

and sustain Bachmann's protagonist's battle in addressing the public in form of letters or interviews. A growing archive of feminist scholarship on *Malina* and the *Todesarten Zyklus* [*Types of Death Cycle*] which includes the novels *Malina*, and the novel fragments of *Requiem für Fanny Goldmann*, 1981, and *Der Fall Franza*, 1979, further lends ample support to Bachmann's expression of a female writer's predicaments with going public.

Because of this shared biographical catch-22, Jelinek's rewriting of the Mühlbauer interview scene stands out prominently. Here, Jelinek not only manages to comprise thirteen pages of text into two pages of script, but she updates Bachmann's allegorical language about Vienna and its "große Zeit" (44) [time of greatness] and supposed "geistige Mission" (45) [spiritual/philosophical mission] to point directly at the recent discoveries about the Austrian attempt to cover up, silence, and deny its Nazi past. Where Bachmann's language largely remains impenetrably philosophical, interpreting Vienna's "geistige Mission" as a crematorium of memory only at the end of the interview, Jelinek is more concrete from the beginning. In the first paragraph already, she mentions the destruction of compromising files under the first *Bundespräsident* of the second Austrian republic (1945–1950), Karl Renner, who had given his "Declaration of Independence" speech on April 27, 1945 and thus set the stage for the myth of Austria as Hitler's first victim ("Moscow Declaration," 1943) to take root. Although a Social Democrat, Elfriede Jelinek provocatively connects Bachmann to the likes of Klaus Barbie, the so-called Butcher of Lyon, who was responsible for assassinating the French resistance leader Jean Moulin and sending the children of a Jewish refugee camp at Izieu directly to the death camps. Barbie's 1987 trial in France initiated the long-silenced debate about French collaboration but also brought forth die-hard habits of denial. By mentioning the two names in close proximity, Jelinek links France's difficulty in acknowledging its past to Austrian collaboration. She further has the woman exclaim "Die Täter sind doch nie angeklagt worden. Die wahren Täter leben noch. Ja, der Brand des Justizpalastes. . . . Dieses tägliche Brennen . . . Brennen . . . Brennen. Was? Sie müssen das jetzt löschen? Ihr Band wollen Sie löschen?" (44) [The perpetrators were actually never accused. The real perpetrators are still alive. Yes, the burning of the court. . . . The daily burning . . . burning . . . burning. What? You have to extinguish that now? You want to extinguish your tape now?]. Her language achieves several things at once. First, it accuses the Austrian public in the guise of the journalist Mühlbauer of harboring the true perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed by fascist countrymen, whether Germans or Austrians. It is perhaps interesting to note that Austrians were disproportionately represented among SS-guards in concentration camps. Second, she evokes a comparison between the *Reichstag* burning as the catalyst for Hitler's rise to power in 1933, and the

burning of the judicial palace in Vienna in July 1927 in protest over the judges' decision to free a fascist sympathizer who had killed a war veteran and a nine year old boy in a skirmish between Social Democrats and right-wing demonstrators.<sup>11</sup> Third, through the linguistic similarities between "Brand" [fire] and "Band" [tape], Jelinek likens the journalist's attempt at "löschen" [extinguish] to the act of covering-up, of erasing historical testimony, of liquidating the voice of dissent. The comparison performs the feminist analysis of the "personal is political." Indeed, in Jelinek's version, the woman appears like an oracle, like Christa Wolf's *Kassandra* figure, whose warnings are not heard because her ranting is considered unintelligible. Fourth, by having Malina throw Ivan's two cats into the room, a scene that does not appear in the original, a part of her private life is injected into the interview process, something the woman wanted to avoid at all costs. And indeed, as a result, the journalist is intrigued and happy to leave the topic of the Austrian past to ask her questions about her personal life instead, which he assumes will lead to the cliché of the single, intellectual woman writer with cats. This ingenious revision accomplishes both Jelinek's own dedication to uncovering of the Austrian dark side and Bachmann's almost Foucauldian understanding of epistemes in the making, of dominant discourses being formed and in being continuously, reiteratively performed, becoming eventually naturalized as truths.<sup>12</sup> But instead of leaving it on the philosophical level, Jelinek shows who has a hand in, and who gains the upper hand, in this truth-making apparatus, namely Malina, who uses the diversion to go through the woman's writing desk, inspecting and taking some of her documents.

### THE THIRD MAN ENTERS THE CEMETERY OF MURDERED DAUGHTERS

Partially because of her own interrogation of the mother/daughter relationship, most famously in *Die Klavierspielerin*, Jelinek begins the fourteen dream scenes in her script with the cemetery of murdered daughters, featuring an undertaker who is dressed like Harry Lime (93) in Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949). In connection with this scene in the graveyard, Sara Lennox's essay "In the Cemetery of the Murdered Daughters" comes to mind. This essay discusses Bachmann's novel with a particular emphasis on the different ways in which young female libido, creativity, language, and self-image are buried by their violent subordination to patriarchal hierarchies, here specifically implying that female subjectivity always refers and defers to the male subject.<sup>13</sup> Jelinek's citation of this figure is important because Harry Lime's charisma and power, like Bachmann's father figure, is mainly expressed through his female lover's unflinching devotion, despite



his dishonesty, criminality, and abuse. Like the cat that purrs and caresses his legs in the shadowed doorway, the lover's "Hörigkeit" [mental and sexual enslavement] stands in for Harry's presence in the film. This shadow-act links the father figure, Malina, and Ivan to Harry Lime and constructs his part of their male existences as "the third man."

Jelinek introduces the figure of "the third man" in one of the early scenes set in a Catholic church with a "gigantic trinity altar picture" whose image keeps reappearing throughout the entire script (19). Upon being struck by the sensuousness of Jesus' suffering body, the woman exclaims that she is thinking of "the third man." Malina responds: "Aber wir haben doch schon drei. . . . Wen meinst du denn?" [But we already have three. . . . Whom do you mean?], upon which the woman with great difficulty utters one word: "Papa" (19) [dad]. This scene brings together several strands of the text in a spatial configuration. The awe-inspiring and overwhelmingly large trinity portrayal triggers the woman's childhood memories. First, it compels her to tell Malina that she grew up as a Protestant and not a Catholic, that this is not her place of worship. Even though her Protestant background does not free her from viewing the artwork mainly as a religious icon, the perceived difference produces a slight rupture in the codified symbolic reception of the image that should make one of three and three of one. The woman sees someone in the picture that is uncannily absent from yet implied by the holy all-male alliance. And it is not the mother, from whose grip Jesus has removed himself, as Malina suggests, but instead the father, who is oddly absent, even though he is represented three times: as father, as son, and as the Holy Ghost.

As another male-dominated discourse, film, here citing itself via Reed's and Welles's *The Third Man*, is the pre-text to *Malina*, father to the image-space of postwar Vienna and to Bachmann's woman character's subterranean mental map of the city and its streets. As the third man of various triads—Malina, Ivan (the lover), father—or Ivan, Bela, Andras (his sons)—the devilishly eroticized Harry Lime, like a father figure in the woman's haunting memories and dreams, is the missing link in all dialectic dichotomies: good and evil, rationality and irrationality, authority and submission, sensuousness and asexual spirituality. But he is neither Jesus nor God nor the Holy Ghost nor the Devil; he is neither all of them nor any one of them. In a sense, the third man becomes the representational matrix of dialectics at work. In Bachmann and Jelinek's texts, a ghostly remainder persists after powerful symbolic mutations as a disturbance in the representational matrix. The figure of "Papa," the third man or the father in Bachmann's text and Jelinek's script, lies in *an-other* image-space of cultural and social patterns of representation and understanding. Jelinek captures Benjamin's sense of "visual space of a 'contemplated scene' and a 'correla-

tively opposed' and concealed image-space."<sup>14</sup> The church scene is crucial for a number of reasons. It makes clear at the outset that the concept of space itself is configured by the sight and habits of seeing what cannot be seen and vice versa. It structurally connects space to memory and cinematic representation. It attempts to prevent the viewer to read an all too easy symbolism into the distorted triangular relationships of the Bachmann text, and it further shows that a woman's tortured body, whether through sacrifice, assault, trauma or birth, does not have, at least not in Western culture, any potential for symbolic meaning. Even the "visual space of the contemplated scene" arrives first at a father, who lurks in the shadows yet is always present. His bystander stance gives rise to the woman's body- and image-space of postwar Vienna, perverting the idea of fatherhood, turning bystander into perpetrator and perpetrator into bystander. Harry Lime's cut penicillin poisons the children of an orphanage. Speaking with Deleuze and Guattari: "to say that the father is first in relation to the child really amounts to saying that the investment of desire is in the first instance the investment of the social field into which the father and the child are plunged, simultaneously immersed."<sup>15</sup> In thinking of the father, the woman forces a mnemonic connection to the sociopolitical realm that has been blocked, although she still remains within the male-determined and socially sanctioned familiar and familial "ways of seeing."<sup>16</sup> Woman, as viewer, viewed, and as reader appears to figure as a conduit for the gaps in representational memory evident in postwar Austria's long reluctance to accept its own responsibilities for the Holocaust and, as Jelinek insists, for its "very strong and longstanding anti-Semitic and racist traditions" that have included a systemic oppression of women.<sup>17</sup>

#### CINEMATIC REFRACTION OF BODY- AND IMAGE-SPACE

Jelinek develops the crucial cinema-scene (64–67) in direct correlation to the church scene analyzed above. A cartoon is playing: "One hears the distorted voices of the cartoon figures. For a while. Then, all of a sudden, one still hears the cartoon voices, the picture on the screen has disappeared, and there appears, accompanied by white noise, in which again and again the cartoon voices are heard, the LANDSCAPE OF THE WILLOWS" (64). Instead of the cartoon, she intermittently sees parts of a melodramatic fairy tale, *The Princess of Kagran*, featuring her in the title role. Instead of writing a scene from the fairy tale, as in Bachmann's novel, Jelinek's woman is literally projecting her visions onto the screen. For the film adaptation, Jelinek has elaborated on Bachmann's existing cinema-scene asserting cin-

ema's power as the most collaborative and technology-determined of all modern art forms and inserting it into the hermetic writing- and reading-centered environment of the novel. She emphasizes the technology of representation by showing a cartoon, the very epitome of moving pictures, of photography turned into film. With the genre choice and the circus-like atmosphere prior to the start of the show, Jelinek recreates an infantile space, in which the primal scene of seeing takes place. The public yet voyeurism-inducing sphere of the cinema thereby regains some of its carnivalesque character from the beginning of film history. In the twentieth century, cinema has also become the place of learning how and what (not) to see, of over-identification, and of turning the trauma of having seen something that is not there into a fetish that disavows that knowledge (Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," 1928). Jelinek utilizes the tripled film-in-film scenario as an opening into the production of projections of *Malina's* textualized desires, disavowals and dream residues.

As the reels of film wind themselves through the receiver heads and around their spools, the white noise of the technical apparatus divides image from sound track and animated representation from body- and image-space. The seamless rhetoric of dominant cinema is reverted to its stage of assemblage, its mechanical materiality, the concatenation of the single frame and the spatial division of projection unit, beam and screen. The *Princess of Kagran* tale is stutteringly projected "like an old film from the prehistoric era of film" that is continuously disrupted by the cartoon. The rhythmic flashing of the beam places the woman into a precarious hallucinatory trance. Her subconsciously projected image wavers, flickers and threatens to break off at any moment. Instead of silence or piano music, princess and prince speak in the former empire's muted (m)other tongue, Hungarian, "without subtitles, without translation." And like an echo, the cartoon voices of modern cinema are heard speaking a distorted high-pitched German. Jelinek is following Benjamin's task of making the formation-process of an image visible once again, to relay its history as image, its image as history: "The dialectical image is one that appears in a flash. It is thus, in the image that flashes up in the Now of cognizability, that the has-been can be grasped."<sup>18</sup> Benjamin here also helps us to see Jelinek's choice of lightning flash for *Ich's* disappearance "in a different light."

Not only does Jelinek lead the cartoon-genre back to its origins in the fairy tale, but also to its high-point in the Romantic era and its revival in "Viennese films" during the Third Reich. The content of the Sissy-like Kagran-tale is pure pathos. On her horse, escaping from the old king and castle with the help of a black prince, the princess rides in the Danube wetlands: "She merges with the landscape that moves like a living organism. She rides through, is almost swallowed up, reappears." At one point, when

she gets stuck between the water and the willows, the prince reappears to rescue her yet again. She wants him to come with her, but he exclaims that truth lies in the "endless ride" itself. The fairy tale has turned into a Western, where women remain in town and cowboys ride off into the desert-sunset. At this point, Jelinek jumps forward in film history: "Ivan and the woman are seen on screen but in eternal timelessness, perhaps as if out of a film from the forties, but very realistically, in the classical garb of that time, meaning a suit and an elegant but simple three piece suit for the woman"(66). Whereas the prince participates in each scene as if they were unique and unrelated incidents, part of the negative mnemonics of an eternal return, the woman reads them in their context and predicts a third one 2000 years into the future, in a city, in a street, speaking as man and woman, not as prince and princess. For her, each episode contains a utopian potential whose disintegration needs to be remembered if it is ever to be fulfilled. The prince can neither follow her logic nor follow her to that utopian place. As in a classic science fiction scene when the past meets its future, he asks confusedly, what she means by "City? Street?" As if he had negated the building blocks of her existence with his inability to comprehend the inter-relatedness of body- and image-space, the princess begins to bleed from the lips and soon from her entire body muttering: "But I know, I know." Quite literally, the language of pathos, here of utopian desire and nostalgia, breaks down in the precise moment, at which the point of connection cannot be communicated due to the difference in spatial concepts.

The woman is bound for and bound in between the archeological layers of the city. She becomes an "embodimen[t] of the representation of the forgotten in the image archive of modernity."<sup>19</sup> The coordinates of her address construct her body-space as image-space. Indeed, she threatens to dissolve when crossing the border of her *Ungargassenland* [Hungarian alley land; neighborhood in Vienna] or when these coordinates become unstable, yet the continuous attempts at maneuvering the thresholds are also her only recourse to herself. Within the diegesis of the fairy tale, the prince has family all over the world, allowing him the privilege of residing in a patriarchal world-order that makes intimate knowledge of local topography and its historical changes superfluous. The woman experiences that the "search for a position from which it might be possible to speak seems constantly to be deferred."<sup>20</sup> Instead of an "unconscious witnessing that could not find its voice or expression during the event," she practically dissolves the subject/object dichotomy. Her "but I know" bears witness to her abduction from history.<sup>21</sup> In her seizure, her body memorizes the distorted communication in apotropaic mimesis, in the physiological imitation of collectively silenced past and future trauma. As a crowd of people with indistinguishable features hastens to the scene, transforming her mutilation into

typical cartoon-violence, the prince stands motionless and the filmstrip breaks to fully return to the cartoon, where no one ever dies, no matter how brutally murdered they are.

With this new scene, Jelinek previews the end of the novel, at which the woman disappears into the crack in the wall, as an abduction by the *alie(n)ation* of women from public and private spheres alike. In the cinema sequence, Jelinek has the moving picture come to a standstill, which results in a burn-up of the frames caught in the heat of the projection lamp. Unlike the cartoon figures that rush to her side, or the lifeless prince, the princess sheds blood as if she were sacrificed on the modernist altar to mechanical reproduction. Her bleeding appropriately begins at her mouth, the source of language and utterances of pain as well as expressions of individuality and subjectivity. After all, viewing habits and the image-repertoire of the twentieth century were formed when the silent film represented women as mute objects of the male gaze, puppeteered by the camera in classic shots like Fritz Lang's capture of Maria by the camera in *Metropolis*.<sup>22</sup> The psychology of viewing drastically changed with the talkies, resulting in the gender instabilities of the 1940s melodrama (*Gilda*, *A Touch of Evil*, for example).

Jelinek's protagonist sees her image-space caught between the different eras and technologies of representation, as they battle with each other for prominence and *Sinnstiftung* [signification]. In the evoked context of science fiction, Jelinek's scene allows for a reinterpretation of the *Frauenopfer* [women-sacrifice] ending. Bachmann's novel is full of reimaginings, attempts at reinventions that begin with the construction of new image-spaces in dreams, operatic and theatrical scenarios, yet conspicuously leave out the cinema. That the wall has become a screen for projections that Malina, unlike her letters, cannot or does not want to read has been made clear in the chapter "Of Last Things." Where he sees but a seamless surface, she sees a gap, a projection of her image as lack onto the wall. Bachmann has the woman close the gap with her body in order to reproduce supposed gushy female textuality as acceptable and cohesive narrative from Malina's, the male's position. Jelinek comes closer to Benjamin's notion of a merger of body- and image-space, in that her medley of cartoon, fairy tale and 1940s melodrama reopens female memory and desire in the body- and image-space of the technical medium film: "The image invades the body, whereupon body and image become one, resulting, in effect, in the leap into a mechanical state."<sup>23</sup>

In this context, it is perhaps also illuminating that Jelinek and Schroeter decided against including a scene of the father as film director (*Malina*, 207–209), in which *Ich* actually resists her father's directions by pouring soap-water over the entire filmmaking apparatus and destroys the ship on which they are filming, causing the deaths of several people onboard, and possibly those of another sinking ship nearby, in the process. Like many of

Bachmann's dreams, *Ich* here actually facilitates the murderous system by resisting it – she literally “schmiert das Getriebe” [oils the wheels]. It is significant that the film version of *Malina* does not include a single dream in which her resistance, as futile and *systemstützend* [supporting the system] as it might be, finds its equivalent.

### FEMALE MASQUERADE AS MINSTRELSY

While Jelinek could have made more of the protagonist as a postergirl for the inconsistencies produced by the “battered woman syndrome,” she introduces a related, and equally controversial, concept into *Malina*: Her mention of the New Guinea Papua tribe in the *Filmbuch* (70–71 and 84) proves that she was aware of the connections between Bachmann's three female protagonists (*Ich*, Fanny, and Franza) and their existential crises. Jelinek introduces the racial dimension when she has *Ich* symbolically receiving the “Schwarze Peter” in a card game with the children (she gets stuck with the card featuring a black man's face and thus loses the game). When Béla paints her nose black and calls her a “Negerin” [negress], as a result, she becomes that, which is “angeschmiert” [tarred, here also: conned]. *Ich* proudly declares “Ich bin eine Papua” [I am a Papua] and seeks to explain the marker of homelessness that distinguishes this tribe to the children. While she is bent on claiming an exoticized racial difference to symbolize her gender-determined lack of a permanent spatial, temporal, and thus also corporeal designation, they only care that she *is* that which is different. Facilitated by her racial drag, she quickly begins to function as *Sündenbock* [scapegoat] within the community, as Béla demonstrates, when he calls her “ein Aas” [a piece of carrion] upon drawing the black-faced card. The male children exhibit their prerogative to treat Otherness as abject in any shape, size or form, especially when one difference is combined with another, here in the combination of Woman with Blackness. When she is in black-face, they feel they have a license for abuse, to project all things bad onto her, even death itself, easily performing what they have learned from this popular racist card game. But this behavior is simply the flip side of the coin to the woman's facile appropriation of a racial identity to circumscribe her sense of the female self's itinerancy.

With the inclusion of racial minstrelsy, which does not appear in the original text, Jelinek extends Bachmann's contribution to the feminist debate of the 1970s to a reading of her text through feminist concerns of the 1990s by hinting at the role of the white woman of privilege as both victim and perpetrator of the colonialist project. It is precisely in this oscillation between victimization and “weiblicher Mittäterschaft” [female collaboration] that Dorothee Römhild saw an adaptation's potential for a nec-

essary "Aktualisierung" of the "Einseitigkeit des feministischen Ansatzes" [updating of the one-sidedness of the feminist approach] in 1993.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore remarkably ironic, also in light of the problems Jelinek and Bachmann faced in the culture industry, that this scene did not make the cut in the final film version. While Schroeter enhances the film up front with a dream image of a murdered daughter, in Jelinek's script scene eighty-two, the ninth dream scene was cut, the "Schwarze Peter" scene being one of them. The last example of erasures I want to discuss is Jelinek's tendency to build on Bachmann's puns. In scene fourteen, which takes place at a boutique, the directrice insists on repairing the torn dress *Ich* so clumsily tried on, with "ein paar Stiche, und fertig!" [a few stitches with the sewing needle, and done!] to which *Ich* replies in Jelinek's version: "Ja, es ist einfach phantastisch! Ein paar Stiche noch, dann bin ich fertiggemacht" (24) [Yes, it is simply fantastic! A few stitches more, then I'm done in]. While this association of stitches with a type of *Frauenmord* [murder of woman] by the fashion industry has its merits within Bachmann's diegesis, it exaggerates Bachmann's ability to deploy semantic and syntactic ambiguities through the use of pre- and suffixes, reducing her statements to all too obvious puns. But at least, this example proves that Jelinek sought to work within Bachmann's language games. Schroeter, on the other hand, who admitted that he never finished reading the novel, cuts most of Jelinek's attempts to translate Bachmann's dense prose into screened lines, a move that underscores the male-dominated entertainment industry's impatience with a feminist-inspired insistence on the weight of every single word.<sup>25</sup> If Jelinek's "characters live only insofar as they speak," Schroeter practically silences them along with Jelinek's screenplay and thus licenses his representational understanding of "Womanliness as masquerade," as that which is always in excess.<sup>26</sup>

This becomes more obvious in the cuts that consist of Jelinek's visually explicit descriptions of violence to the female body, in some cases making Bachmann's allegorical abuses more unambiguous. At the end of the movie scene, Jelinek wants blood to pour out of the princess' lips and out of her body (67), and in the second dream scene, she has the father figure rip out the daughter's tongue *and* all her internal organs in an ice landscape (94). She composes instead a scene in which the father figure actually rapes his daughter (109); and in scene 88, the woman falls into an open grave and has trouble climbing back out. This scene alludes to Jelinek's own utilization and investigation of the vampire/woman connection in *Krankheit oder moderne Frauen* [Sickness or Modern Women]. Jelinek also provocatively rewrites one Bachmann scene, where the woman begins to menstruate at an intersection and blood flows down her legs, by setting it in a new context, namely a construction site, where the protagonist had earlier exposed

herself to the workers in an explicitly sexual manner, a Jelinek invention. Uncoupling active female sexuality from the spectacle of her bleeding makes her solely a victim of her body. By focusing on blood running down *Ich's* legs, shown in close-up as a body fragment, female sexuality is reduced to the sight of the reproductive body, a body in a perpetually permeable state that becomes animal-like through the lack of *Ich's* control over its functions, the woman always being at the mercy of her biological clock. There is no sexual agency for *Ich* left in Schroeter's script, which would in and of itself be close to Bachmann's depicted dilemma, if it inhabited even the smallest portion of a metacritique. But what we get in the final film version is an *Eyes Wide Shut* scenario of orgies, where the woman and her childhood self are always spectators or victims, never equal participants. Similar to Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of another Austrian text heavily invested in gender and modernity, namely Arthur Schnitzler's *Traumnovelle* [Dream Novella], Schroeter's version eschews both active female sexuality and violence perpetrated by men and women on women. There is a theatrical escapade scene and destruction of objects, but in the end, the only really shocking violence is the one the woman afflicts on herself when she is repeatedly hurling herself at Ivan's residence's iron gates.

That so many of Jelinek's creatively rewritten scenes were not included in the film version would have made sense if the goal had been to prevent Bachmann's language from becoming too transparent, and especially if Schroeter himself had simultaneously toned down his visually excessive and overly transparent symbolic codes. Because this did not happen, the result is a privileging of one melodramatic gesture over another. From the outset, Bachmann's novel's highly visual language interlocks internal emotional turmoil with the cityscape of Vienna, a language that utilizes several different media to test a wide-range of communication channels as to their unreliability for transmitting the female image and voice. Jelinek, as shown, enthusiastically follows Bachmann down this path by hooking into the existent visual metaphorical nature and media-reflexivity of the text. Schroeter totally disregards many of her careful appropriations along with her intensifications of *Ich's* verbally and corporeally executed dilemmas. Instead, he overindulges in the representation of Woman as self-consuming and consumed image and makes his film into remake of a Douglas Sirk melodrama (*Written on the Wind*, 1956, for example). As Thomas Elsaesser contends, "the contents under pressure" in a melodrama "are expressed more than they are resolved," referring less to the plot and more to the sociohistorical dimension of the culturally dependent "tensions of class, race, and sex."<sup>27</sup> With its "displaced emotional emphasis," the film is evidence for a general "inadequacy of response" to feminism, coded sexually as well as intellectually.<sup>28</sup>



## NOTES

1. Jelinek. All quotes are taken from this text.
2. This is Brenda Bethmann's argument.
3. A palimpsest is a manuscript (traditionally on parchment or papyrus) written over a partly erased older manuscript in such a way that the old words can still be read beneath the new. *Encarta World English Dictionary*. Bachmann, 345.
4. See, for example, Römhild, Eifler, Bethmann.
5. Bethmann.
6. In Schroeter's version, this part includes the highly problematic burning-cigarette-in-bed scene, which is supposed to allude to Bachmann's own death. *Ibid.*, 397.
7. Bachmann, 355–56.
8. Cerha and Horwath, 10.
9. Elfriede Jelinek is quoted as having intentionally increased the fire metaphor to indicate "the female existence is one that is so precarious and insecure. Burning is a death, in which one actually disappears," *Malina: Pressebeft zum Film*, 25.
10. For a long history of this relationship which culminated in her stated withdrawal from the Austrian public sphere from April 1996 onward, see for example Stähli.
11. See <http://www.marxistische-bibliothek.de/fanal.html> for more information on the burning of the judicial palace in Vienna 1927.
12. See also Butler.
13. Lennox.
14. Weigel, 22.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, 275.
16. Ulrike Sieglöhr would argue that Werner Schroeter has captured the triangulated vision of Bachmann's and Jelinek's texts in his refusal to represent "women" and his ability to represent "a desire for reinventing, negotiating, and even negating gendered identity through performance," 171.
17. Bethman, 67.
18. Benjamin GS V.1, 591–92, as quoted by Weigel, 48.
19. Weigel, 91.
20. *Ibid.*, 64.
21. Laub, 68–69.
22. As in the famous cave scene in *Metropolis*, for example. And again and again, dominant cinema returns to the muted woman as the perfect female: Films like *Children of a Lesser God*, *Wild Rose* or *Nel* demonstrate this only too well.
23. Weigel, 19.
24. Römhild, 167.
25. Cerha and Horwath, 10. In addition, this specific type of cut also lends new credence to Jelinek's cinema sequence, in which the woman character can only speak through her bleeding body – her words by themselves might as well be unintelligible.
26. Joan Riviere.
27. Elsaesser, 165.
28. *Ibid.*, 187.

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