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## THE PROBLEM OF AGGRESSION IN THE SURROUNDING REALITY AND LITERATURE ON THE EXAMPLE OF ELFRIEDE JELINEK'S NOVEL "DIE KLAVIERSPIELERIN"

### PROBLEM AGRESJI W OTACZAJĄCEJ NAS RZECZYWISTOŚCI A LITERATURA NA PRZYKŁADZIE POWIEŚCI ELFRIEDE JELINEK „DIE KLAVIERSPIELERIN”

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**Abstract.** The aim of this work is to analyze and evaluate aggression occurring in the reality that surrounds us and its description in literature on the example of the novel by the Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek. The main research problem of the work was defined in the form of a question: how does aggression change a person? The secondary goal was to identify the elements of the social system, which, as a result of passivity, can lead to serious disturbances that are dangerous not only for a given individual, but also for other participants of social life. The following research methods were used in the work: analysis and synthesis, which allowed for the appropriate interpretation of the existing data, induction and deduction,

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which allowed finding the answer to the research question considered in the work. An analysis of sources, monographs, and scientific articles dealing with the researched subject was also used.

**Keywords:** Die Klavierspielerin, aggression, Jelinek, security, society

**Abstrakt.** Celem przedmiotowej pracy jest analiza i ocena agresji występującej w otaczającej nas rzeczywistości oraz jej opis w literaturze na przykładzie powieści noblistki Elfriede Jelinek. Główny problem badawczy pracy określono w formie pytania: jak agresja zmienia człowieka? Celem pobocznym natomiast było wskazanie elementów systemu społecznego, który w wyniku bierności może doprowadzać do poważnych zaburzeń niebezpiecznych nie tylko dla danej jednostki, ale również dla innych uczestników życia społecznego. W pracy zastosowano następujące metody badawcze: analizę i syntezę, które pozwoliły na odpowiednią interpretację zastanych danych, indukcję i dedukcję, które pozwoliły na znalezienie odpowiedzi na rozważane w pracy pytanie badawcze. Zastosowano również analizę źródeł, monografii, artykułów naukowych traktujących o badanej tematyce.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Die Klavierspielerin, agresja, Jelinek, bezpieczeństwo, społeczeństwo

## Introduction

Aggression is one of the biggest problems in the modern world. Not only the concept of aggression is problematic, but also the moral evaluation of various forms of aggressive behavior and of the aggressor himself, which is carried out, among other things, by people with different levels of aggressiveness. The categorization of aggression as definitely bad does not always coincide with the assessment of its specific characteristics and is presented differently in individual theories. These reflections address the moral aspect of aggression, in particular the question of how hostile and instrumental aggression is dealt with in psychological, sociobiological and philosophical theories. The moral aspect of aggression is considered both in the historical context and in the light of contemporary theoretical analysis and aggression research.

By aggressiveness we can understand a tendency towards aggressive behavior, i.e. a certain relatively persistent willingness to react with aggression. In this case it is a personality trait. On the other hand, the term „aggression” can be called the act itself, the individual behavior itself. In the psychological sense, aggression is acts directed against someone or something, aimed at causing pain, damaging or destroying an object. Aggression is violent, offensive behavior that causes the victim to suffer or destroy objects (Kristeva 2008).

Based on my own reading experience alone, I can say that the confrontation with suggestive images of bestiality, accompanied by playful elation, sensitizes to the presence and meaning of analogous motifs in texts whose authors – unlike Gross, for example – did not create a defining structure from these motifs: “pronunciation of the matter”, or more precisely – the pronunciation of the text relating to this matter. As a result of the process of bringing the reader as close as possible to a sequence of scenes involving the ghostly laughter of criminals and (or) the mob cheering them on, the author of *Neighbors* has tuned our receivers to the same or similar signals

react particularly sensitively from stories by Andrzejewski, Borowski or Rudnicki, autobiographical prose by Szpilman, Hirschfeld or Ringelblum.

The Nobel Prize for Elfriede Jelinek is a perverse success. This award is not given to the author unanimously, because this fact caused the indignation of one of the long-time members of the Swedish Academy, Knut Ahnlund, after Jelinek's work: „*Satisfies only the taste of uncultured readers, is a jumble of clichés, the reading of which is a torment is*” (Bratkowski 2004).

When I think back to my reading of this author's work, I have to admit that sometimes I have a problem with Jelinek. Being aware of its importance in women's writing and considering it somehow important a priori, I often experience disappointment from readers. I had such feelings reading some fragments „Die Klavierspielerin”. It is a much more compact text that is actually read “in one breath”, unlike, for example, some fragments of “Excluded”.

### Origin of the novel

Let us begin by explaining – „Die Klavierspielerin” is a brilliant piece, although it requires concentration and intellectual effort. Even if you put it down, you can be sure that you will read it again. There is an endless sadness in this novel. And a sympathy that the reader will surely hear as they get to know the main character better. Erika is a woman with a broken psyche and a ruined life who, although completely oppressed by her mother and subordinate to her, cannot or does not want to break away from her rule. Jelinek's mother-daughter relationship reportedly inspired Darren Aronofsky as he set out to direct Black Swan.

It is worth giving Jelinek some space for himself. In Poland he is not one of the mainstream authors. In the world, as a writer, she is at least considered controversial or even scandalous. She is a well-read and educated woman - she has a degree in art history and plays the piano very well. Unpopular at home, considered a fascist; Her father was a Czech Jew who survived World War II thanks to his work for the Third Reich. A chemist by training - he is said to have researched the methods of using the gas used by the Germans in concentration camps. Father took little Elfriede to the cinema, where they watched documentaries from the death camps.

But it's about the mother, who was pretty lax about the upbringing that adult Jelinek said she “destroyed” them. In one of the interviews, the author admitted: “I think the language saved my life. He gave me strength against my mother's deranged authority. My father didn't save me from her, but he gave me a language that somehow allowed me to hide where her authority couldn't reach. It is not for nothing that „Die Klavierspielerin” is considered a novel with autobiographical traits. “Love-hate” is what the German language calls the relationship between Elfriede Jelinek and her mother, but also Erika Kohut and her mother, which could be translated as a violent

feeling oscillating between love and hate. Jelinek was a former communist and a convinced feminist. Femininity, the battle between the sexes and sexuality are the themes that touch her most often. There are no taboos for Jelinek; some even think that the author is balancing on a fine line between linguistic courage and kitsch (Lipszyc 2004).

Today, the 75-year-old writer lives a secluded life, rarely appears in public and gives almost no interviews. He suffers from agoraphobia, the fear of being outdoors. He hates standing on the candlestick. When journalists occupied her house on the day of the Nobel Prize, which she did not accept personally, she said: "I just want to live in isolation. I just want to be left alone".

### **Erika Kohut as object woman**

Erika is obnoxious - the main character is obnoxious, her mother is obnoxious, and her student Walter Klemmer, who is in love with Erice, is obnoxious. After all, the text itself is repellent - a haunting and relentless image of the ongoing destruction, the warscape, before which Erika Kohut's tragedy unfolds. It's a novel that torments the reader by drawing them into the center of events they don't want to be a part of. The title pianist is a music teacher in Vienna whose personal life is dominated by a demonic mother who ruthlessly controls her daughter. However, this is an illusory picture.

Apparently, because in the evenings Erika Kohut escapes from her mother's prison to porn cinemas, to the park, where she watches copulating couples, and in the privacy of the home hell, she flees to self-mutilation, but is unhappy herself, Erika is also addicted to it, others to bully. Her relationship with her mother is permeated with physical and psychological violence. Her entire environment becomes the object of Erika's revenge - revenge for her own mental handicap, the sexual frustration and the suffering associated with it. In the end, Erika's victim and executioner will be Klemmer, who is in love with her and whose pride and humiliation will drive him to brutally rape his teacher (Ahmed 2014).

Romanticism in music arose from the need for freedom. Erika gives master piano lessons and realizes that in order to play Schumann, one must have incredible precision and even sovereign control over every note, in addition to virtuosity, emotionality and madness. Her big drama is that she doesn't see that these principles belong to the world of art and not to life, that art and life are not the same. Music with its rules and love with its passion become one for them. The „Die Klavierspielerin“ uses the rigid rules of high art and enters into a sexual relationship that is inherently chaotic and characterized by a desire for freedom.

Not only Erika's perverse relationship to Walter and her mother may be mysterious, but also her relationship to music. What the music represents in the inner

world of the protagonist is a mystery to me. When Erika goes to the porn booth, she listens to music, just like when Erika meets Walter in the toilet. Jelinek is said to have worshiped Schumann, which is interesting because in „Die Klavierspielerin“, the title character’s father went insane. A similar fate befell Schumann. This romantic composer has also lost his mind, and perhaps Erika desperately longs for closeness with his music. Perhaps her love of music is some kind of elevated relationship with her father. The desire to be close to his father subconsciously turns into a passion for music. An interesting observation is also the fact that there are no words in the music that represent the indefinite and emptiness for Erika. Perhaps the pianist can only feel at least somewhat free beyond the words.

There is no illusion that Erika can be healed and that with her, we too will calm down for a while. The main characters’ sadistic triangle defies therapy, and the reader must navigate Erika’s suffering alone, willing to understand her actions, while realizing that full understanding is impossible. This novel is not indulgent to anyone or anything.

In „Die Klavierspielerin“ Elfriede Jelinek shows us two faces of Erika Kohut and thus two faces of herself and Austria. What we see when we look at people is not always obvious. If we analyze Erika Kohut’s personality, we have in mind a social ideal that, under the cover of night, turns into a false negation of the ideal. Erika appears to us in the pages of the novel as two extreme people. She constantly faces herself as angel and demon. She vacillates between reason and passion, love and hate, decency and promiscuity, and above all between a tyrannical mother and herself. He is like a victim who cannot exist without his torturer (Jelinek 2012).

Erika’s executioner is her mother. In search of herself and her physicality - under the watchful eyes of her scolding mother - a woman secretly realizes a false image of her sexual desires and love intoxication. Unable to fulfill his feelings and desires, he goes so far as to mutilate himself, go to peep shows, go to porn cinemas, engage in voyeurism in order to finally feel something - to fulfill himself physically, materially, and despite his mother. In life, this leads to a misinterpretation of one’s desires, a wrongly sent message, which in turn ends in rape. Wanting to become master of the situation, she becomes only a victim again, because only a victim can become a victim.

### **Erika and her relationship to other people**

A 30-year-old music school teacher is completely dominated by a possessive and restrictive mother. It allows her to take control of her life, accounting for every hour spent away from home and sleeping with her in the same bed. Every now and then, in a rebellious reflex, he only allows himself to buy a new dress, which his mother discovers and criticizes, which ends in argument, then argument and sobbing

reconciliation, because “whatever Erika does against her mother, she starts to close it very quickly.” regret because she loves her a mom he has known since childhood (Jelinek 2004).

Both the purchase of an outfit and its consequences give the impression of less real resistance than rituals that both heroines invoke from time to time. In this context, their struggle, hidden in the privacy of the house, can be seen not only as a civic hiding of disputes from the environment, but more deeply - as ensuring the absolute exclusivity of their mutual hatred, ensuring that everything that happens will only happen between Erika and the mother, in their own privacy. Their outbursts of mutual aggression and equally violent reconciliations only strengthen a strong, unique bond between women.

Apart from her relationship with her mother, the piano player lives in complete emotional isolation. He sometimes feels something like hatred or disgust towards people as such, but these feelings are also analyzed without emotion, as objective facts rather than subjective experiences. This is illustrated, for example, by the tram ride scene in which Erika calmly and coolly uses the crowd to poke and pinch other passengers.

Despite being the pursuer, she is more likely to arouse pity or embarrassment. The situation only changes when her music student Walter Klemmer, who decides to seduce Erika, appears. Their gradual approach to one another resembles carefully planned maneuvers, analyzing and judging every little movement - this reluctance is justified by Erika’s mother’s reluctance to prevent her daughter from slipping out of her hands. However, the illusion of normalcy fades when the lovers first get together. Intercourse is nothing like the stereotypical “first time,” not a romantic fulfillment of two lovers, but the moment when Erika takes control, inflicting pain on Walter, brutally masturbating him, and then not letting him orgasm. Despite this, the student easily accepts this and looks forward to the further development of romance.

Shortly thereafter he receives a letter from Erika which, contrary to expectations, does not contain any confessions of love, but a detailed description of the sadistic treatment that the piano player demands of him. Though she most wishes for her lover to resist her demands, she arranges the situation herself so that it ends in a brutal rape.

There is no doubt that “Die Klavierspielerin” also has some of Jelinek’s autobiographical elements in this regard. Erika’s antisociality is also evident in the author’s real life (as mentioned, she suffers from agoraphobia, which undoubtedly makes contact with people difficult).

## Erika's autoaggression

The subject of self-harm is rarely mentioned in either the media or the scientific literature, and the information available is incomplete and needs to be supplemented. Auto-aggression is a broad term and it is difficult to define its boundaries as it encompasses behaviors that are commonly considered normal (e.g. exercising beyond one's ability, cosmetic surgery, extreme sports, etc.) but which may cause some body deformities and may be a manifestation of mental disorders and actions considered pathological (self-mutilation).

Self-aggression is an act or series of acts aimed at causing psychological or physical harm, it is "inward" directed aggression. It is a certain disturbance of the instinct of self-preservation, which is expressed in a propensity for self-injury, self-injury that threatens health and even life. A person attacks himself for various reasons, this causes, in addition to physical damage, an aggravation of already existing psychological problems. It's a complex phenomenon. Self-mutilation is not just the mutilation itself, but a process that leads to wounds.

In Jelinek's novel, Erika identifies with the order imposed by her mother, becomes the perfect product of her do's and don'ts, and turns an attempted rebellion against the imposed system into self-harm.

The father's absence is palpable, and as we learn later, he has gone mad. The mother is domineering, overbearing and stifling with her tenderness. He treats his daughter as his narcissistic extension, which means that Erika cannot become herself, she has to be as her mother sees her. I believe that Erika's body and sexuality should be seen as the only areas her mother doesn't have access to.

The protagonist's perverse sexual fantasies are on the one hand a defense against the painful reality, on the other hand she can only build her individuality and identity on this field. Only in perverse relationships does the pianist feel free from her mother. Perhaps the unconscious fantasy of the original scene in Erica's image was violent. Here we can see the sources of her sadomasochistic tendencies (Kiejna 2001).

The relationship between a child and an adult is characterized on the one hand by openness and love, on the other hand by inaccessibility and mystery. Psychoanalytic thinking makes it possible to understand and reason that what an adult does has a hidden meaning for a child, always somehow sexual. However, parental sexuality remains a major mystery that will have to be solved sooner or later. To stay in the mainstream of these considerations, one might think of the title pianist as someone who was sorely abandoned by his father and obsessed or even absorbed by his mother during his childhood. Erika cannot exist without and with her mother. Women seem to live together in an incestuous embrace, and their intimacy becomes a tool of torture, mutual rape, and sadomasochistic play.

The inability to transgress the mother's code leads to a madness of reason. I use this term to describe those situations where reason is used to replace the direct

relationship with another human being (in this case it would be both a physical-sexual and an emotional relationship) with a relationship that is strong communicated through an external medium. Through this mediation, the partner's body and empathy disappear completely from the horizon of one's own gaze, which must give way to cold calculation and the desire to tame one's own "I".

The madness of reason is particularly evident in the case of the pianist who wants to use reason to abuse herself. This is the only way for Kohut to find fulfilment, because this is the only way she can remain fair to her mother. Erika is only the executor of her mother's actions, who used both physical and symbolic violence against her. The insanity of the mind reaches its climax when the protagonist - immersed in utter passivity - becomes a mere copy of her mother, an affectless object alien to body language and the language of emotions. The madness in „Die Klavierspielerin“ becomes linguistically true. It plays a key role in both oral and written form (after all, Erika Klemmer offers a letter with detailed instructions on how to deal with her). Reason articulated in language is used as a tool for managing the body and relationship with another human being.

An example of the violence of (ir)reason is Erika's behavior towards Walter in the school toilet, which he breaks into, outraged by unsuccessful attempts to win over the teacher's feelings. After the "prelude" introduced by the young man, to his surprise there is no physical satisfaction. It gives way to reason – reason is activated at the moment when it should expire, giving precedence to the soma overwhelmed by drives and affects. Erika begins to masturbate Klemmer and instructs him how to handle her. The man has no right to touch Erika, he has to look her in the eyes, he is not allowed to speak and he is not allowed to ejaculate, even though the woman arouses him. Just as Erika's mother punishes, so she punishes Walter. Its purpose is to cause frustration and pain in the quasi-partner. Walter only has the right to follow the teacher's instructions.

The insanity of reason arises from a lack of self-reflection, an inability to go beyond the mother's authority, and finally a disgust for anything that is not the mother. Klemmer's body is not only alien to Erika, it's also absent - it's just an excuse to gratify her own insane desires. Through a close acquaintance with Walter and refuge in masochism, the pianist becomes a victim of madness. Meeting Klemmer is a key moment in Erika's life - the moment of awakening when an aging and abandoned (doomed only to her mother) woman has a chance to have a love affair not only with a polytechnic who adores her, but also around her to free the possibility of reunion with the mother. Erika's instructions to Walter in a letter, which is later read out in her presence, prove to be a confirmation of maternal hegemony and a triumph of unreasonableness.

Erika wants Klemmer to completely overwhelm her and treat her brutally: "Please sit down on my face with all your weight and press my head so hard with your thighs that I can't make the slightest movement." Erika wants an object be in the



hands of a man. However, he is unable to express his innermost desires directly. She tells him in a letter and eagerly awaits Klemmer's positive response to her requests. In this way, the pianist increases her fear and becomes even more convinced of her victimhood. The role of insanity is to constantly amplify the feelings that the subject experienced in childhood - this brings the fear, frustration, pain, humiliation and harm that Erika suffered (and is suffering) from her mother, on top. The reason is to help the heroine arrange such situations that allow her to relive a childhood trauma - the trauma of being rejected, monitored and punished. The external medium makes Erika wait for Walter's decision as if condemned. The letter, which embodies the heroine's masochistic aspirations, serves as a contract that the pianist wants to make with Klemmer (Jelinek 2004).

When the pianist hands Walter a letter describing her masochistic desires, the pianist projects onto him the qualities inherent in her mother. A man is meant to be ruthless and cruel. He can do whatever he wants with his daughter Kohut. Nothing restricts his access to it. Erika wants to be humiliated and monitored: "Please hit me hard in the face with the back of your hand when we're alone. Ask me why I don't complain to my mother or give it back to you. The pianist's madness manifests itself in the desire to be completely defenseless. Erika sees vulnerability as a chance to become an ideal daughter who cannot betray her mother in any way. The heroine wants to be completely dissected from the remnants of her own will, which could thwart her obedience to her mother.

### **Mother Kohut - nameless controller - relations with daughter**

I was very interested in the story of Erika Kohut and her abnormal mother. Perhaps because the bond between mother and daughter is the strongest and most unconditional in life. A mother can identify with her daughter by placing her fears within her and limiting attitudes and beliefs. If the mother lives only for the child, her choices, which she dislikes but are not necessarily wrong, can only be seen as her own failings other than what she wants. Sometimes the mother does not let the child go, any behavior against her makes the child feel very guilty, even if it is already an adult.

The pianist talks about it, but in the life of forty-year-old Erika, her bond with her mother is almost caricatured. Besides, her mother didn't really love her. She sadistically deprived her of her personality, the opportunity to make decisions, hiding by acting on her good's behalf: "After the day's hardships, her daughter screams at her mother for finally letting her live her own life. Because of her age, too, she should have the right to do so, the daughter yells. Every day a mother replies that a mother knows better than a child because she will never stop being a mother.

Erika is a woman who is dissatisfied with herself, unable to act and deeply unhappy. She cannot break free from the arms of the cruel mother who has successfully made her dependent on herself all her life. Erika is grown up, but she listens to her like a little girl. He hates people, disgusts them, hates himself and his body. Unable to love, he has no friends and knows that he will never satisfy his mother's ambitions and, by extension, his own. Sexuality suppressed from adolescence leads to sadomasochistic disorders.

The bond between mother and daughter, one of the fundamental relationships that characterize every woman's personality, is portrayed in the book as something highly destructive and toxic. Despite her advanced age, Erika is almost 40 years old and is closely monitored by her mother. She has no friends, no partner, she can't even choose her own clothes. Except for the mother - there is nobody. The women even sleep together in the same bed. Particularly noteworthy is the fragment in which Erika kisses her mother passionately and passionately. As if she wanted to shake off all her frustration and start over. Of course, despite the catharsis of the main character, nothing changes.

All her life, old Mrs. Kohut has kept a close guard over her daughter, and now - when she is basically all that's left - she guards her all the more steadfastly, like Cerberus at the gates of the dead world (to which old Kohut is certainly traveling). After all, her daughter has to practice and soon become a pianist famous throughout Europe. The threat emerges in the character of Walter Klemmer, Erika's young student, who - as students do - has a crush on his teacher: her maturity, cool professionalism, and seemingly alluring aloofness. And all that, there are no more heroes because apparently Jelinek doesn't need them (Kopacki 2014).

One can get the impression that Erika has some kind of reconstructed umbilical cord, although if you think about it, it might not be a true comparison. The nature of this compromised bond is similar to the relationship between the parasite and the carrier or the addict and his stimulant, yet it is difficult to clearly separate these roles between the two ladies. However, it is worth watching the mother's anger when her daughter comes home late: while they are arguing in the hallway, they (possibly in silence, because the neighbors are already asleep) scratch their eyes, and then lie down shared bed. Commitment, fear of a long and unplanned breakup, need for control, jealousy, possessiveness, anger, hatred - these are a list of traits and feelings that certainly don't all fit into the average mother-daughter relationship (Szczepaniak 2008).

Erika's madness is no doubt fueled by her mother. The protagonist's unnamed mother is the embodiment of a punitive spirit who takes possession of her daughter's body, transforming it into an object, an instrument intended to make her daughter world-famous. Mother can do anything to separate Erika from her own physicality. Dangerous because it can be appropriated by a man capable of undermining the mother's power and destroying her daughter's career. To protect the branch from

itself, from weakness in the face of the dormant drive, the mother develops a series of procedures and sanctions that threaten to override her will. The mother decides who Erika goes out with, how she dresses, what she does in her free time and ultimately what she spends her money on. Already the first pages of the novel paint the picture of a sharp conflict between women, which was triggered by a seemingly trivial cause. The mother attacks her daughter with fists because she not only bought a new dress but also returned home late. The pianist's further cards show that both physical and psychological violence is a daily occurrence in the Kohut family - it is a kind of behavioral norm set by the mother.

Erika has the right to live only the way her mother wants. It is she who "determines the demand for her daughter, which means that fewer and fewer people want to see her daughter or speak to her". Out of alleged concern for her daughter, the mother becomes extremely strict. He becomes the embodiment of modern reason. The goal of Mrs. Kohut's rational project is, in the truest sense of the word, the well-being of her daughter and her artistic career. In reality, however, her intentions are shaped by a desire for dominance and expressions of narcissism, manifested in caring for the child, who is treated as an extension of the mother - a mirror in which to see herself (Nyssen 1994).

As a result, Ms. Kohut is only interested in Erik, who is a reflection of herself, i.e., an embittered and alienated woman who knows no luck with a partner she has abused, incidentally disgusted by men who are the embodiment of sinister urges and that could disturb their peaceful CV. The untamed desires and ambitions behind Reason are inherited by the daughter who submits to her mother's power. The madness would therefore manifest itself in a reduplication of the maternal arbitrariness that Erika experienced as a child and still experiences as a mature woman in her 40s. It is expressed not only in the aversion to the body as a potential source of threat to the development of artistic personality and human beings, but also in the disgust towards the people around Erika, who live and are subject to the laws of biology. Erika looks disgusted at the hectic masses of public transport.

Erika defends herself against disgust and defends her mother's good name by inculcating her daughter's hatred of the body and its fluids. At the same time she defends herself against something that is inside her and sucks in her insides. He runs away from the truth, which shows disgust. In fact, Erika is disgusted by seeing a part of herself that she doesn't accept. The heroine wants to be someone big and special. Erika - although she's only a piano teacher - considers herself special and anticipates her entire environment, which she says isn't even stalking her. Erika's insanity is a reaction to an inability to accept what is her as a being given is subject to the laws of biology as a living being, not as an object. Madness is an attempt to break the mother's monopoly over her daughter's body - an attempt to revise her power. Erika wants to experience the closeness of a mother to a woman, not a machine issuing orders.

I think it would not be an exaggeration to call this a pathological relationship, as the following passage clearly shows: “Erika has no such need or opportunity to caress herself. The mother sleeps next to the bed and takes care of Erika’s hands. Those hands are for practice, they can’t fly under the covers like ants and get to the jam jar there” (Jelinek 2004).

### **Walter Klemmer - a fool in love - aggression in a relationship**

Erika Kohut - the main character of the novel - thirsts for love, which is communicated to the reader between the lines. We just found out that an elderly piano teacher is into sadomasochistic sex, voyeurism and porn booths. Fear of expressing your true feelings leads to tragedy. A young college student who misrepresents and rereads Erika’s letter asking him to tie, gag, and spank her, brutally rapes her in her own home.

Walter Klemmer, a handsome and musically gifted student at the Polytechnic University, seems to be a cure for the main character’s mental illness. Unfortunately, it turned out that he was another executioner. A man wants to seduce an older teacher and then abandon her. So he succeeds. He is not a prince charming, and the novel’s finale is a happy ending.

At least at first, Klemmer is just part of the game Erika is playing with herself and her mother, a prop for perverse manipulations that will block the ultimate, psychotic union with her mother and will not result in moving out to the city and entering into a relationship with an autonomous one Object: In other words, they will help sustain the existence of an apartment space. Strictly speaking, we are not dealing here with a triangle, but with an absurd, spaceless and breathless “double”, a minimally but decisively impossible figure of the broken unity with the mother. The culmination of Erika’s sadomasochistic fantasies, described in a letter to Klemmer, is a situation where Klemmer locks her from the outside in an apartment connected to her mother, but not available to her. You can’t put it more clearly. Erika wants to gain dominance by directing a sadistic dominator and thus perpetuating the perverse space of the apartment. When we hear the words “Now on my terms, K.” read, the context seems to mean that it’s about Klemmer, out of which the worst animal will come out. But it might as well be the director of this sick situation - Erika K.

Erika Kohut and Walter Klemmer confess love to each other, but the essence of the relationship that develops is the corrupt concept of love in Jelinek’s concept. For an economist and athlete with ambitions for power and control, the piano teacher proves to be a provocation, if only because she has an advantage in whatever area. Walter Klemmer – known throughout town as an “art and love sprinter” – decides to break with the “mentor and student” scheme: he now becomes a teacher. Erika tries to fulfill her hidden desires and to live up to the love images she knows from films

– she tries to play the perfect lover: “Let him desire her, let him follow her, let him lie at her feet, let him They’re constantly on his mind, don’t give up escaping him”.

Both act in the theater of love, arrange a love story, provoke and disappoint each other, make deals and hurt each other’s sensibilities, if any - one might add in the spirit of Jelinek’s sarcastic comments. The complicated constellation of mutual expectations is vividly illustrated by the following passage: “They are intertwined like twin insects in a cocoon. Her fragile spider webs of ambition, ambition, ambition and ambition once again rest weightlessly on the skeletons of her carnal desires and dreams.” And when the artificial aura of love confessions, promises, requests and wishes dissolves, unbridled aggression enters the stage.

Der Klavierspielerin speaks of the inability to love, but the novel focuses largely on the psychological and social background of the pathologies presented here. Walter Klemmer is a victim of the myth of masculinity and sex, his fascination with a woman “that a young man might want as an exercise in life” results from calculation: it is worth trying on an older woman who clings to the ideal, a bit “idiotic and stupid”. Lives in spirit only to see if she’s good for anything after “Revealing Her Real Body”: as a lover. Erika, who “feels nothing and has never felt anything”, who disgusts everything physical and physiological, begins to interest Klemmer as a “training model”, a kind of “love maneuver”, preparation for real fights (“mostly the slightly younger Wiesen”).

Seducing an inaccessible woman is a game, a sport, a challenge - it is also guided by the goal of absorbing her physical pleasures, shaping her body in her own way, breaking the armor built up by the mother in the arduous process of the enemy’s body of socialization. Klemmer wants to take this fortified fortress, strip off his armored body, “finally unpack this package”. The execution of this venture may prove to be a pleasure (“hunting is more pleasure for a man than a love affair” - which the author relegates some men to the roles of hedonistic savages), but also requires the use of an appropriate strategy.

Klemmer behaves according to the rules of the love code, functionalizes the rhetoric of love discourse, imitates a passionate lover. He knows what words to say and what gestures to make. He quotes from the arsenal of a particular love code without adding an individual stigma to that code. Klemmer’s philosophy of love is calculated Machiavellianism. Erika Kohut can only imagine the relationship between a woman and a man as a relationship of domination. A woman – in the love order of Jelinek’s novels, she doesn’t want to be excluded or ruled, instead she gets involved in a power game, tries to seize a “phallic” position, wants to be a lady with a capital “L”. From Erica’s perspective, too, “Love Cooperation” is theatrical.

The first edition of the love theater takes place in the toilet: “These two actors in the leading roles will now play a love scene, only between themselves, without extras, only one actor in the leading role, with a heavy load, under the second leading actor”. The fusion attempt follows a stereotypical scenario and the whole scene is a parody of

love discourses from light novels with their metaphors of natural eruptions (storm, earthquake, volcanic eruption). He tears at her clothes, she behaves passively like an “instrument” and screams. Surprisingly, however, there is a pattern reversal that is putting an end to the conventional male performance aesthetic. The woman orders the man to remain passive and begins the action herself, interrupting at the most inopportune moment. This kind of humiliation symbolically robs Klemmer of his masculinity, castrates Klemmer to a certain extent, demotes Klemmer to a woman. Klemmer cannot understand “excluding a man from the course of events” because “after all, he is the rider and she is the horse”. In an impulse of helplessness, the man utters words of love, empty words that fall on the fertile soil of a woman trapped in patriarchal patterns and notions of femininity and masculinity. The woman says nothing about love, but soon articulates her desires in writing (Menninghaus 2009).

At the next meeting, she hands Klemmer a letter listing her perverse desires. The sadomasochistic score should determine the further course of this love. The woman wants to submit, but “she alone decides about her chains” - this is another “phallic” usurpation of Erika Kohut. Epistolic excess is a cloak for true desires - Erika actually longs for something else, she wants tenderness and warmth, she wants Klemmer to “make love to her according to Austrian standards”.

Before the love story unfolds, their error becomes clear, the lovers are separated by an impenetrable wall: “Before hostilities begin, both people who are entangled in each other are mistaken about what they want from each other and what they will get from each other.” The next scene takes place in the cleaners’ room. Erika makes a declaration of love, offering nothing but boring demands, elaborate contracts and endless secured deals. Then, like an avalanche of love, he rushes towards Klemmer and makes love movements as he imagines them: “Er takes off his shirt and spins wildly, as is customary and customary with couples in love”.

A violent love provocation makes a man faint, the amorous fusion turns into pathetic physical acrobatics and ends with violence and insults. And finally the third part of this actually amateurish theater. Klemmer discovers the cards and demonstrates the hate that is hidden under the cloak of love. He declares war to restore the order of love to normal and to show who is the hunter and who is the game. The episode with Erika, who imagined a man as a savior and now asks her to return to love in a normal way, ends with a brutal beating and rape: “The sports master has done it”, “The evil dwarf of love” received the reward for the degradation of manhood.

The relationship between Erika and Klemmer is based on imitation, play and deception. It’s about reducing the partner to an object that’s supposed to behave like a loving subject, but doesn’t. The concept of love in „Die Klavierspielerin” is as follows: “Love is the fact that a man desires a woman to do what he or she in fact forces her to do.” Erika could not do justice to the male or female role, and as she believed in love (she misunderstood Klemmer’s messages), she faced violence and rape. Her problem was that she interpreted what is actually a myth as reality and

thus fulfilled the expectations of the patriarchy. Shaped as a conqueror by normal patriarchy, Klemmer eventually proved to be a real man and got what he wanted. The rescuer turned out to be a rapist. This love is basically destruction. Jelinek exposed the obscene power relationships, the bourgeois economy of love, but also the extraordinary power of collective images and texts of love culture and gender difference, which initiate and create (often even prevent) the relationship between woman and man (Tacke 2013).

## Conclusions

There is no denying that Jelinek's „Die Klavierspielerin“ is a shocking and outstanding work. In the case of Jelinek's novel, the use of seemingly indirect language plays a significant role in the expression of madness - making the characters somewhat dependent, as if unable to speak with their own voice and relying on the protection of madness narrator. He protects his heroes from the rage of madness, as well as related facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes. Thus, literature plays the role of a straitjacket - frustrating anything that might pose a potential threat to the subject. On the other hand, the language Jelinek uses to describe his characters' adventures is a language of madness that mixes styles and aesthetics, using, for example, culinary metaphors or comparisons to talk about human sexuality: “[...] a man usually has a wife to feed and is judged by its ability to eat, and here it provides the woman with warm food, which cooks her entrails on a frugal fire” (Majkiewicz 2016).

A language that shows the subject's utter uncontrollability over what it says - a language that manifests itself as an uncontrollable being most strongly in the case of madness. Erika, who goes to so much trouble to create instructions for Klemmer, becomes the victim of what is spoken and recorded by him. This irreversibility is reflected in the defeat suffered by the protagonist both in the confrontation with language and by it.

The aim of the work was to present the topic of aggression in Elfriede Jelinek's piece „Die Klavierspielerin“. There is no doubt that in this text its volume is overwhelming. We talk about both Erika's self-aggression and various symptoms that the main character experiences from both her mother and Walter.

Against the background of the subject of research and the goals of this work, the author posed the following research problem, formulated in the form of a question: What signs of aggression can be identified in Elfriede Jelinek's novel „Die Klavierspielerin“? The outlined research problem allowed the formulation of the main research hypothesis as follows: It is assumed that the self-destruction of the main character in „Die Klavierspielerin“ was caused by psychological and social disorders acquired through the mother's long lifespan. Physical and emotional abuse of her daughter”.

As part of the research process, the author used numerous research methods - especially theoretical ones, such as z ) and deduction. The empirical research method in the field of desk research was also used, thanks to which own conclusions were drawn for the research conducted in this work.

I think in the case of this novel we can talk about a specific case of aggression, about how excessive parental control can destroy a child (although we are talking about an adult woman). One more fact deserves attention. The effects of aggression, although of course visible almost immediately, in the case of long-term exposure cause permanent and indestructible deterioration of the human psyche, which does not work here and now, but will certainly be visible in the future . So my last sentence is a recommendation that I take with me both from reading Jelinek's masterpiece (let's not be afraid to say so) and from the process of creating this work - beware of aggression, both towards the Sender and the recipient, because the consequences of such action may destroy not only us (Erika), the sender of aggression (Erika's mother) or the environment (Walter).

The aim of the work was to show the issue of aggression in Elfriede Jelinek's work entitled "Die Klavierspielerin". There is no doubt that the amount of it in this text is appalling. We are talking here about Erika's self-harm, as well as various types of its symptoms that the main character experiences from both her mother and Walter.

Bearing in mind the subject of the research and the objectives of this work, the author posed the following research problem, formulated in the form of a question: What indicators of aggression can be identified in the novel by Elfriede Jelinek entitled "Die Klavierspielerin"? The outlined research problem allowed for the formulation of the main research hypothesis, as follows: it is assumed that the self-destruction of the main character in "Die Klavierspielerin" was caused by psycho-social disorders acquired as a result of long-term abuse of the mother over her daughter on a physical and mental level.

In the context of the research process, the author used numerous research methods - in particular theoretical ones such as: critical analysis of the literature on the subject, research on the text, implication, synthesis, defining (in terms of conceptualizing the concept of aggression) and deduction. An empirical research method in the field of desk research was also used, thanks to which own conclusions were drawn for the research conducted in this work.

I think that in the case of this novel we can talk about a specific case study of aggression, how excessive parental control can destroy a child (although we are talking about an adult woman). One more fact deserves attention. The effects of aggression, although of course, can be seen almost immediately, in the case of long-term exposure, they cause permanent and inseparable degradation in the human psyche, which, even if they do not work here and now, will certainly be visible in the future. My last sentence, therefore, raises a certain recommendation that I draw both from reading Jelinek's masterpiece (let's not be afraid to say so),



but also from the process of preparing this work - let's beware of aggression, both in terms of being its sender and recipient, because the consequence of such action may not only destroy us (Erika), the senders of aggression (Erika's mother), or the surrounding environment (Walter).

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