Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dún Laoghaire Faculty of Creative Technologies

"Personally, I can't stand violence."

-Michael Haneke

Witness to Violence: Audience Complicity and Violence in the Films of Michael Haneke

By

Patryk Łukaszewski

Submitted to the Faculty of Film, Art and Creative Technologies in candidacy for the BA (hons) Degree in (Film DL843)

Submitted March 2025

Declaration of Originality

This dissertation is submitted by the undersigned to the Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire in partial fulfillment of the examination for the BA (Honours) (programme name). It is entirely the author's own work except where noted and has not been submitted for an award from this or any other educational institution.

Patryk Łukaszewski

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Tom Kennedy, for helping me through the entire process of writing my thesis.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for their continuous help, in lending me books, DVD's, and more throughout the writing process of this thesis.

Abstract

This thesis investigates how Michael Haneke portrays violence in his films, how he implicates the audience in their thirst for violent media and films, and how he portrays oppressive systems.

It explores structural violence, a term coined by Norwegian philosopher, Johan Galtung, and how Haneke avails of this term to challenge the audience's passive engagement in the viewing of a film, making them accomplices.

I will explore five films to thoroughly explore these topics: *Funny Games, Benny's Video, Cache, The White Ribbon,* and *The Piano Teacher.*

The thesis will also analyse Haneke's filmic devices, such as lack of music, lack of cuts and largely static shots.

List Of Plates

Table Of Contents

Introduction

Michael Haneke's films stand out in the broad landscape of cinema due to their complexity and philosophical undertones. His early studies in philosophy, psychology and drama at the University of Vienna set him on the path to create some of modern cinema's most thought-provoking and anxiety inducing films. His works reflect his critiques of modern media and film culture. He refuses to reduce the cinematic form to mere entertainment, exposing the emotional desensitisation and harmful impact of doing so may have on a film viewer and in a broader sense, on society.

His auteurist approach to the cinematic language provides an incredibly in-depth look into the human psyche in each of his films. He rejects the use of dynamic and dramatic film scoring, fast paced camera movements, and cutting away from action for dramatic effect. Haneke is in fact the master of the film cut, or sometimes the lack of it. He scarcely affords his audience any form of closure or emotional release in his films, seeing these things as constructs of Hollywood cinema. "I despise entertainment cinema because it manipulates its audience. I want to give the audience back their freedom—to think and feel for themselves." (Brooks)[1] .

Haneke forces his audiences to interact with a film's violence as a moral and emotional reality rather than a Hollywood-esque grandiose entertaining approach. His films are intensely political, especially *Cache* (2005) and *The White Ribbon* (2009). His films analyse how structural violence, which is a type of violence wherein some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs or rights. James Quandt writes: "Haneke's world rarely divides into the damaging and the damaged; most of his characters are both. The director is never more precise than in detailing how harm becomes cyclic, violence or humiliation breeding ever greater trauma." (Quandt)[2].

For a long time now, I have held Michael Haneke in the highest regard, and I would probably even consider him my favourite film director. No other filmmaker has ever made me feel so repulsed and disturbed while watching their films, yet I always kept coming back. Why? I will analyse why the films of Michael Haneke make you feel that way, why you can't look away and why he is a master of his craft. I will utilise a large pool of sources and varied interpretations on his work.

In my first chapter, I will explore how Michael Haneke portrays structural violence in his films *Cache* and *The White Ribbon.* I will delve into the term: structural violence, a term coined by

[1]Brooks, Xan. "Michael Haneke: the undisputed king of Cannes." *The Guardian*, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2009/may/24/cannes-film-festival-michael-haneke. Accessed 6 March 2025.

[2] Quandt, James. "Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon." *Artforum*, https://www.artforum.com/columns/michael-hanekes-the-white-ribbon-193050/. Accessed 6 March 2025.

Norwegian philosopher Johan Gultang, and draw from it to explore how Haneke exposes the oppressive nature of humans.

In talking about *The White Ribbon,* I will analyse how Haneke explores the beginning of fascist ideology in the children of a small German village as a result of cyclical maltreatment and abuse from the hands of adults who are supposed to be responsible for them. Furthermore, I will break down the three different pillars of the village, the doctor, the baron, and the pastor. I will look into how each of them holds a position of power in the village and use it to their own benefit by manipulating the villagers, and therefore oppressing them.

In the second half of the chapter, I will talk about *Cache,* a film revolving around the violence of silence. I will look at how the colonial history of France is a direct perpetrator of structural violence towards Majid, one of the film's main characters. I will explore how the main character, George's, childhood guilt is a broader exploration of the systemic historic revisionism and suppression by the French state of their dark and uneasy past. The film paints a picture of how forgetting history, or moving on, is a luxury not afforded to everyone and how it impacts those who have been forgotten about.

In my second chapter, I will carry out a deep character breakdown of Erika Kohut, the protagonist of Haneke's 2001 film *The Piano Teacher.* By doing so, I will delve into the structural violence of familial relationships and how they can result in psychological and sexual repression. Erika Kohut embodies the psychological damage of an abusive and loveless mother-daughter relationship. Their relationship is a constant cycle of emotional violence and submission passed down through generations and is only worsened by the systemic patriarchal clutches of the world around Erika. Her attempts at personal liberation lead her down a dark path of masochistic behaviour and self harm.

Finally, in my third chapter I will discuss what the purpose of Michael Haneke's films really is through audience complicity. Haneke refuses to afford his viewers the comfort of being passive observers, and through a variety of filmic techniques, such as breaking the fourth wall or using a frame within a frame approach, showing violence in the film happening on another screen, therefore implicating the audience. In doing this, Haneke makes the audience an accomplice in the violence, suggesting they are part of the problem with the general desensitisation towards violent films and media in modern day society.

I will do this by doing an in-depth analysis on two of Haneke's most brutal and depraved films, *Funny Games* (1997) and *Benny's Video* (1992). Both of these films directly accuse the viewer of the desire to consume graphic, violent media. In the first half of the chapter, I will focus on *Funny Games* and its constant barrage of accusations towards the audience through fourth wall

breaks, which keep asking the audience “Why am I still watching?”. The characters in the film even directly ask this question to the audience at certain points of the film.

In the second half of the chapter, I will thoroughly analyse *Benny's Video* and the implications it makes for the over consumption of violent films and media. In this film Haneke accuses the audience members as being direct accomplices to the murder of Evi as they continue watching after her brutal murder. Haneke forces the viewer into a position where our protagonist is attempting to hide a heinous crime and we are coming along for the ride.

In this thesis, I will deconstruct all of the above themes and reinforce that Michael Haneke is a visionary auteur trying to make audiences morally responsible for viewing violent films. As Haneke himself said in an interview with the Criterion Channel: "The violence is not in the characters. The violence is in the viewer’s head."[3]

[3] Criterion. “How To Implicate An Audience.” *Criterion*, 2019, https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/6359-how-to-implicate-an-audience?srsltid=AfmBOopTPSRF7vaYuCIqPqSSDV7MjOhoDIa-gtQjFmPOP267tUe6lwgK. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Chapter 1

Structural Violence And Social Control

Michael Haneke's body of work stands out as one of contemporary cinema's most incisive and challenging bodies of work. It blends an acute look into philosophical inquiry and a profound critique of the thirst for violence in modern society through entertainment. The theme of violence echoes through his films such as “Funny Games”, “Benny’s Video”, “The White Ribbon” and “Cache”. The philosophical idea of existentialism is deeply intertwined into Haneke’s films and through it he portrays a tapestry of structural, mental and physical violence.

Haneke’s work can be compared against the writings of philosophers such as Theodor Adorno and Jean Baudrillard. Theodor Adorno argues in his book “Dialectic of Enlightenment” that the culture industry is used to distract and pacify the audiences by offering entertainment. This results in violence being portrayed as a spectacle rather than a concept meant to repulse and unnerve[4] Haneke challenges this idea throughout his films by not sensationalising violence, going against the status quo, and not making the violence pleasurable.

Jean Baudrillard argues in his book “Simulacra and Simulation” that the media has turned violence into spectacle and that violence is no longer tied to real suffering, it is a hyper-real experience[5].

---

[4] Adorno, Theodor. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2002.
[5] Baudrillard, Jean. “Simulacra and simulation.” *Zero Ducks Given*, Editions Galilee, 1981, https://0ducks.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/simulacra-and-simulation-by-jean-baudrillard.pdf. Accessed 16 December 2024..

Baudrillard argues that we as a society in modern day strive for these hyper real experiences, perhaps because they allow us to experience the unthinkable with no risk to one's self. [6]

In the films of Michael Haneke, three main types of violence are portrayed: Physical, Mental, and Structural. The structural violence is displayed through a variety of mediums, such as education, family, or media, all of which can produce suffering and violence in the lives of people. The term structural violence was invented by Norwegian political scientist Johan Galtung in 1969, and it describes the violence people face from social, political, and economic sources[7]. Haneke addresses how structural violence materialises in the everyday lives of his characters. This violence is most prevalent in Haneke's 2009 film “The White Ribbon”. The village of Eichwald is run under a very strict patriarchal, religious, and educational regime.

The regular farmers in the village are in the grasp of the Baron, the pastor, and the doctor, all of whom hold significant power and pose dominance over them. They emotionally and economically oppress the poor farmers.

Following an accident where a farmer's wife mysteriously dies after falling through a rotten wood floor in a freak “accident” the baron makes sure the farmer, played by Branko Samarovski, is left without a job and any chance of finding a future job after the farmer's son calls the baron out for mistreating the villagers. This results in the farmer's ultimate suicide leaving his family without a breadwinner.

---

[6] ibid

[7] Wikipedia. “Structural violence.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_violence. Accessed 16 December 2024.

The doctor continuously sexually abuses his teenage daughter Anna. He exploits his patriarchal power and social standing in the village to successfully deter Anna from speaking up about her experiences. Throughout the film, it is shown that the children of the village hold no power and aren't allowed to express their opinions or emotions. The midwife is aware of the relationship between the doctor and his daughter but due to the patriarchal standing of the village she isn't in a position to speak up about the doctor, she is also in a sexual relationship with the doctor who uses her exclusively for sex and makes her aware he's the only person who would touch her because of her bad looks. She is wrapped around his finger and has no way to get help. He also makes a point of making her feel disposable, insinuating he could have any woman in the village if he wanted.

While the Baron holds power over the villagers through wealth and the doctor through psychological abuse, the pastor oppresses through religion. He is the moral compass of the village and dictates what is right and what is wrong. Throughout the film, nobody questions anything the pastor does, unlike when the baron and doctor are questioned. This solidifies his high standing and untouchable nature.

At the end of the film, the teacher confronts the pastor about his suspicions that the children in the village, including those of the pastor, might be responsible for hurting the disabled boy from the village, Karli. The pastor is outraged by this suggestion and ultimately makes the teacher leave the village by spreading rumors about the teacher.

The pastor constantly beats his children and believes physical punishment is the only way of enforcing discipline on children. He makes his children wear a white ribbon when they misbehave, publicly shaming them as this is a sign to the other villagers and children that they have been impure.

The pastor's punishments and mental abuse of the children leads them to internalize their feelings and emotions, thus ultimately lashing out on those they have power over, in this case, the disabled boy, Karli.

The pastor can also be viewed as a symbol of fascist ideology as his corporal punishment, forced obedience and repression of the children instills in them the basic ideologies of an authoritarian, nazi country. According to James Quandt, the senior programmer of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in his article for ARTFORUM[8]:

> *"Haneke's world rarely divides into the damaging and the damaged; most of his characters are both. The director is never more precise than in detailing how harm becomes cyclic, violence or humiliation breeding ever greater trauma."*

This is an argument which could be applied to essentially every character in the film. The death of the farmer's wife leads the farmer's son to protest the baron, ultimately resulting in his father's suicide. The effects of the baron's mistreatment of the villagers result in the children of the village hating his son, who is brutally attacked twice through the film.

---

[8] Quandt, James. "Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon." *Artforum*, https://www.artforum.com/columns/michael-hanekes-the-white-ribbon-193050/. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Similarly the oppressive and authoritarian regime instilled by the pastor upon the children of the village, including his own, can be seen as a prefigure to nazism. James Quandt further writes[9] :

"The "horror and perplexity" that roil beneath the village's annual harvest festival, the atmosphere of "malice, envy, apathy, and brutality" that the baroness decries, are for Haneke inchoate markers of Germany's future calamity."

To conclude, "The White Ribbon" explores the impact of structural violence through patriarchal dominance, systemic injustice, religious authority and cruelty. Haneke also proves that all these aspects are a stepping stone to resentment and even future authoritarianism, proving that deep-seated structures of power and repression can shape the world into a darker place.

"The White Ribbon" portrays structural violence in a historically distant setting, whereas his 2005 film Cache, on the other hand, confronts the issue at hand in the modern day. The film's main character is a famous host of a literary TV show. He lives in a rich neighbourhood of Paris with his wife Anne and their son Pierrot. Seemingly out of the blue, the family began receiving CCTV-like tapes of their home, paired with drawings, seemingly made by a child, and phone calls to their home phone. These seem harmless on the surface, but George seems increasingly unnerved by them. George believes the tapes, letters, and phone calls are coming from Majid, a young Algerian boy whose parents used to work for George's parents in his childhood.

George confronts Majid about the tapes, he vehemently denies having anything to do with them and even says that George is bigger than him.

---

[9] Quandt, James. "Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon." *Artforum*, https://www.artforum.com/columns/michael-hanekes-the-white-ribbon-193050/. Accessed 16 December 2024.

This makes sense physically, however, Babak Amou'oghli, a film educator and philosopher, argues in his article for the Philosophy Now magazine that George is also bigger than Majid in status. He is a rich, white Frenchman with a large following because of his TV show. Majid on the other hand is a poor, unknown foreigner. Majid is also Algerian[10].

Fig. 01.

In 1961, French police confronted over 20000 Algerian immigrants in the streets of Paris who were protesting against the colonial war between France and Algeria taking place on Algerian soil. The police brutalised and killed hundreds of protestors and never faced any prosecution. This event was later called the Paris massacre. Following this anti-Algerian sentiment rose in France, and they were looked down upon as undesirables. Babak Amou'oghli wrote[11]:

"After the demonstration, in the eyes of France, Algerian immigrants changed from being conditioned guests to being undesirable foreigners, because they put in question the authority and power of their host. This was viewed as a 'violation of the home'; and whenever such violation is felt there will be an increase in ethnocentric, nationalist and therefore xenophobic emotions, which in turn lead to a further decrease in hospitality."

[10] Amou'oghli, Babak. "Caché (Hidden)." *Philosophy Now*, 2011, https://philosophynow.org/issues/84/Cache_Hidden. Accessed 16 December 2024.
[11] ibid

Majid's parents were killed during the massacre, which led to George's family adopting him. George, probably due to Majid's ethnicity, feels threatened and attempts to change his parents' mind about adopting him. He ultimately convinces Majid to kill a chicken on the farm, reassuring him his father requested it be done. Majid obliges and slits the animal's throat. George then lies to his parents claiming Majid intentionally killed the chicken to intimidate George and threatened to do the same to him in the future. As a result of this, George's parents send Majid to an orphanage sentencing him to a life of hardship. George claims it was a childhood mistake, however, at the core of it, he simply did not want to share his wealth with a foreigner in his world. At the end of the film, George attempts to confront Majid again, this ends with Majid brutally slicing his neck open in front of him, similarly to the chicken at the beginning of the story.

In an interview, Haneke said, "*Caché* may be about the French occupation of Algeria on a broad level, but more personally, it is a story of guilt and the denial of guilt that faces every one of us."[12] At the very core Cache is a film about the legacy of colonialism present in French society and its reluctance to acknowledge any wrongdoings to the Algerian people.

[12] João. "Haneke on Caché (Hidden, 2005)." *YouTube*, 17 March 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-kE5hNAzY. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Ipek A.Celik writes in his article for the cinema journal[13]:

"The film poster

implies and the director admits - symbolizes the history of violence that has, until recently, been repressed in the French collective unconscious."

The structural violence here is nearly invisible, however, it emerges through what is not said. The film subtly critiques the violence of historical erasure of inconvenient and unpleasant events. While George never explicitly harms Majid in any way, his refusal to admit what he does not want to remember is a reinforcement of a societal denial of French colonial violence.

Another key aspect of structural violence in "Cache" is the class and racial inequality. The film masterfully portrays how differently the lives of George and Majid turned out. George becomes a successful TV show host with a beautiful house and family, while Majid lives in a dingy, dimly lit apartment. His tired face is a testament to years of hardship. Majid's entire life has become entirely shaped by factors outside of his control because of the systemic exclusion of Algerians from French society following the colonial war.

George, being a rich French man, can afford the luxury of forgetting, or perhaps ignoring his past wrongdoings. Majid throughout the film is shown being trapped in the consequences of the structural violence he has faced since he was a child.

[13] Celik, Ipek A. "'I Wanted You to Be Present': Guilt and the History of Violence in Michael Haneke's Caché." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2010, pp. 59–80. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40962837. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Ipek A.Celik further argues[14]:

"Haneke establishes links between the personal and the collective conscience, the private and the public forgetting, the protagonist's denial and the French state's refusal to admit to the perpetration of colonial violence. The manner in which this suicide is performed and shot aims to violate both the protagonist's and the spectator's vision with an explosive accusation"

Ultimately "Cache" is one of the most profound cinematic explorations of structural violence through Colonialism and the blindness of privilege. Haneke also further reinforces that violence can be perpetrated simply through the act of remaining silent. An act that ultimately leads to physical violence in Majid slitting his throat in front of George, the film makes the audience confront how structural violence can continue through silence and the refusal to acknowledge history.

Fig. 02.

[14] ibid

Chapter 2

Psychological Repression And Masochism In The Piano Teacher

One can not analyse the films of Michael Haneke without focusing more in depth on the characters in said films. Unlike conventional protagonists and antagonists in film, Haneke's characters serve as an insight into how physical, structural, political or psychological forces shape human experiences and behaviours.

Haneke creates morally ambiguous characters stuck in cycles of oppression and violence. The director's exploration of violence is deeply embedded in the social realities of his characters. This reinforces the idea that their personal suffering isn't necessarily a result of their own actions but of larger social and political systems that are out of their control.

Erika Kohut, the main character of Michael Haneke's 2001 film "The Piano Teacher" is a perfect example of how psychological repression and abuse can lead to violent tendencies and self-destructive tendencies. Erika is a distinguished piano instructor living in Vienna in the same apartment as her domineering mother. Similarly to "The White Ribbon," the film posits what implications strained or toxic parent-child relationships may have for the children.

Similarly to “The White Ribbon,” Hanek again argues in “The Piano Teacher” that violence doesn’t necessarily have to come from external institutions or people, but can indeed be from those closest to us, in this case Erika’s own mother. Her mother applies control in huge quantities in Erika’s daily choices, suppressing her autonomy and convincing her to be reliant on her.

Despite being in her thirties, Erika still sleeps with her mother, suggesting a lack of personal space and autonomy from her mother. Erika’s musical career is a direct result of her own mother's failed ambitions, she exerts immense pressure on Erika to be a successful piano player, in the meantime forgetting that Erika is in fact her daughter.

The Mother even dictates Erika’s daily life. She starts a confrontation with Erika upon her return home three hours after her piano lesson. She isn’t willing to let Erika go to sleep until she tells her where she had been. Behaviour like this towards your daughter who is in her thirties can only be described as toxic or abusive.

The overwhelming influence and control towards Erika by her mother leaves her under her control, and very submissive in her day-to-day life. Erika is very emotionally repressed through the continuous abuse induced by her mother. This is apparent in every facet of her life, mostly so in her love life, however. Her idea of love is very skewed, she mistakes love for abuse and control.

Such as in “Her clandestine visits to peep shows and engagement in voyeuristic activities can be seen as attempts to reclaim a sense of control and explore suppressed desires within the confines of her repressive upbringing.” (Yucel,36)[15].

The abusive maternal repression also influences Erika’s behaviour and psyche, leading her towards cruelty and violence. She lashes out at her mother both verbally and physically multiple times throughout the film. She is also very cold towards her students. Upon seeing a female student having a positive, slightly flirtatious engagement with Walter Klemmer, whom Erika has a sexual infatuation with, she decides to put broken glass in the coat pocket of the female student. This results in the student severely injuring her hand, from which Erika seems to take some joy.

The mother is also a symbol of structural violence, similarly to Georges in “Cache”. She functions as a symbol of patriarchal control and abuse. Her abuse reflects the cyclical nature of repression and control and how trauma is passed through generations in a structurally violent cycle. (Hutchinson)[16].

“The Piano Teacher” also delves into how the abuse of Erika from her mother can develop into masochism. Her skewed interpretation of love, as control and domination, causes Erika to find herself deriving her sexual gratification from masochistic acts. She engages in acts of self-harm, voyeurism and sadomasochistic fantasies.

---

[15] Yucel, Ecem. “Analysing Elfriede Jelinek’s The Piano Teacher: The Layers of Erika’s Masochism.” *ruor.uottawa*, 2017, https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/de071700-df53-407c-8c1f-1d4c2c5c5410/content. Accessed 13 January 2025.

[16] Hutchison, Nina, et al. “Between Action and Repression: The Piano Teacher – Senses of Cinema.” *Senses of Cinema*, 22 May 2003, https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2003/michael-haneke/piano_teacher/. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Erika's acts of self-harm, such as cutting herself and eventual genital mutilation, are outlets for her repressed emotions resulting from her mother's abuse. Erika gradually begins a relationship with her student, Walter Klemmer. He is everything she isn't. He comes from a rich family, is extremely talented and self confident. Erika becomes infatuated with him and eventually writes a letter to him, writing in explicit detail all the sadomasochistic fantasies she wants him to subject her to (Lord, 2020)[17].

Through the structural abuse, sadomasochistic tendencies and her new found infatuation for Walter Klemmer, Erika's mental state starts deteriorating at a rapid pace throughout the film. Erika feels inferior to Walter Klemmer and wishes to submit to him fully, as detailed in her letter. This doesn't work however as Walter finds the letter extremely disturbing, this shifts his perspective and emotions towards Erika resulting in a brutal act of sexual assault .

According to Catherine Wheatley, "Erika's emotional unraveling is not the result of Walter's assault alone, but of the realization that her coping strategy—submission—has failed to provide the emotional resolution she seeks" (Wheatley 115)[18]. This leaves Erika's story largely unresolved and unsatisfying at the end of the film. This is an approach often taken by Haneke, violence happens in day to day life and very often it has no resolution. This isn't a popular approach in film, however Haneke also does this for a reason, he wishes to heighten the emotional impact of the violence transpiring on screen, simultaneously making the audience complicit by watching the violence on screen.

---

[17]Lord, Annie. "The Indy Book Club: Elfriede Jelinek's brutal novel The Piano Teacher finds no feeling in violent sex." *The Independent*, 2020, https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/books/features/indy-book-club-elfriede-jelinek-the-piano-teacher-sadomasochism-freud-a9544981.html. Accessed 13 January 2025.

[18] Wheatley, Catherine. *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*. Berghahn Books, 2009.

Erika's repression throughout the film is further amplified by Haneke's choices of framing. He oscillates between long shots and extreme close ups to depict the alienation and claustrophobia Erika is feeling throughout the film (Wheatley,131)[19].

This is perhaps best displayed in the porn theater scene. The scene is in a very overstimulating, over sexualised setting, extremely claustrophobically, in a tiny booth. The camera lingers on Erika as she retrieves a crumpled up tissue from a bin. The tissue has been used before and is covered in the previous occupant's ejaculate. The camera still hasn't cut away from Erika as she inhales the tissue deeply while watching a porno film on the screen in front of her. (Wheatley,132)[20]. This act, paired with the framing of the scene, serves as reinforcement to Wheatley's argument about Erika's sexual repression being reinforced with filmic language.

The porn theater scene is a manifestation of mental and sexual repression which is a direct result of the structural violence she endures throughout, from her mother and the patriarchal system she grew up and still lives in.

Erika has to navigate a patriarchal dominance throughout the film, mainly coming from her mother. Her mother enforces these patriarchal norms upon Erika by expecting her to act in a female way, in both the way she dresses and acts. Erika's living situation also enforces patriarchal norms as she is unable to flourish, professionally, personally, or sexually as a woman due to the cohabitation with her mother.

---

[19] Wheatley, Catherine. *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*. Berghahn Books, 2009.
[20] ibid

This dynamic reflects how patriarchal culture renders female desire impossible, trapping Erika between her professional success and a yearning for sexual fulfillment (Van Dijk, 2002)[21].

Her home isn't the only place where Eriks is violently oppressed by the patriarchy. Erika works in a high-end music conservatory, this is a work environment traditionally dominated by men, and still is (Sharrett, 2017)[22]. She is one of the only women seen working in the conservatory. The patriarchal norm of the classical music industry forces Erika to conform and act a certain way that constrains her expression and mental health. Her authoritative teaching style and emotional detachment can be seen as adaptations to survive and assert herself in this environment, reflecting the pressures exerted by a patriarchal society (The Piano Teacher Film Analysis).

Erika's relationship with her student Walter Klemmer, further displays the implications of the repression of female sexuality and desire in a patriarchal set up. Her desires and fantasies aren't met due to how she is forced to conform at work and at home, this leads her towards the masochistic desires she wishes Walter Klemmer to bind her, gag her, and dominate her both physically and mentally.

Erika's wishes for degradation and humiliation, violence and sadomasochism as well as emotional distance paints a disturbing picture of the realities of a patriarchal system of structural violence.

---

[21] van Dijk, Maria. "Alienation and Perversion: Michael Haneke's The Piano Teacher." *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 1 April 2002, https://brightlightsfilm.com/alienation-perversion-michael-hanekes-piano-teacher/. Accessed 12 February 2025.

[22] Sharrett, Christopher. "Film International." *Film International*, 2 October 2017, https://filmint.nu/the-piano-teacher-criterion-collection-review-christopher-sharrett/. Accessed 10 March 2025.

The film critiques how patriarchal culture renders female desire problematic, highlighting the challenges Erika faces in reconciling her professional identity with her quest for sexual fulfillment (Van Dijk, 2002)[23].

Erika's request for her relationship with Walter Klemmer to be strictly sexual is also indicative of the patriarchal structure imposed by society as well as her mother. The cold behaviour Erikas has grown up receiving from her mother, paired with her patriarchal work environment have repressed her ability to open up to people.

This is extremely sad in a way as due to the structural violence Erika is experiencing in the world all around her, she is unable to love. She essentially feels like she has to be degraded to receive love.

One of the key scenes in the film takes place after Erika's masochistic letter is rejected by Walter Klemmer who feels a deep discomfort with what he has read. Erika doesn't take this rejection well and possibly to regain some agency over her body or simply to feel in control, Erika takes a razor blade and cuts herself in her vaginal area in a bathroom. This scene is shot in Haneke's trademark style with no music, no camera movement and no cuts. This makes for a very uncomfortable and deeply disturbing viewing experience.

[23] Van Dijk, Maria. "Alienation and Perversion: Michael Haneke's The Piano Teacher." *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 1 April 2002, https://brightlightsfilm.com/alienation-perversion-michael-hanekes-piano-teacher/. Accessed 12 February 2025.

According to Austrian philosopher and neurologist, Sigmund Freud, masochism often functions as a way to master one's trauma. In this case following Walter's refusal to act upon Erika's fantasies, she enacts what she wishes Walter would do to her to reclaim control of her body.

Catherine Wheatley argues that Erika's self-mutilation reflects the profound internal conflict between her intellectual control and her suppressed sexual identity "By physically marking herself, Erika externalizes the conflict between the identity imposed upon her by her mother and the autonomy she seeks through masochism" (Wheatley 112)[24].

Ecem Yucel further argues that Erika's self-mutilation can be a result of a lack of a father figure in her life. Citing Sigmund Freud's book: *Ein Kind wird geschlagen* (A Child is Being Beaten), Freud claims the beating fantasies ultimately reveal that the figure of father is the desired punisher (Yucel, 39)[25].

He further argues " In The Piano Teacher, Erika's father is simultaneously absent and present as a shadow. Nevertheless, Erika demonstrates several masochistic actions which comprise the father as a symbol. For instance, Erika's most brutal self-mutilation case is cutting her vagina with her father's razor blade (Yucel, 39)[26].

[24] Wheatley, Catherine. *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*. Berghahn Books, 2009.
[25] Yucel, Ecem. "Analysing Elfriede Jelinek's The Piano Teacher: The Layers of Erika's Masochism." *ruor.uottawa*, 2017, https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/de071700-df53-407c-8c1f-1d4c2c5c5410/content. Accessed 13 January 2025.
[26] ibid

While this is probably a quite far-stretched argument, there is something to be said about Erika's constant strive for male validation. Mainly through Walter Klemmer, she yearns to be humiliated and dominated by him. This takes us back to the deeply rooted patriarchal system of structural violence Erika is subjected to throughout the film. She is made to feel lesser than, and therefore only sees love or affection through the eyes of total domination and humiliation.

Michael Haneke's *The Piano Teacher* delves into complex themes such as sexual repression, psychological impacts of toxic relationships, whether that be familial or work related. Haneke has stated himself that he thought the film "I thought it was interesting because it goes very far psychologically." (Schiefer, 2001)[27]. He further addresses the underlying patriarchal structural violence induced by Erika, and by extension women by saying "Women... are the more interesting characters because they're farther down in the pecking order." (Schiefer, 2001)[28].

Haneke confronts uncomfortable truths about the human psyche and the implications structural violence may have. His approach to the film forces audiences to reflect on the reasoning behind Erika's downfall in the film. By presenting Erika's story without judgment, Haneke encourages a nuanced understanding of the effects of repression and the complexities of human desire.

[27] Schiefer, Karin. "Michael Haneke talks about THE PIANO TEACHER." *AUSTRIAN FILMS*, 2001, https://www.austrianfilms.com/news/en/bodymichael_haneke_talks_about_the_piano_teacher_body. Accessed 12 February 2025.
[28] ibid

Chapter 3

Audience Complicity

A question arises while analysing the structural and physical violence and the characters in Michael Haneke's films, what is he trying to make the audience feel? In films such as "Funny Games" (1997 and 2007), "The White Ribbon", "Benny's Video" or the "Piano Teacher" Haneke establishes the audience as accomplices to the violence transpiring on the screen.

"Funny Games" is arguably the best example of the audience's complicity in the brutalities inflicted upon the unsuspecting family by the two deranged men invading their home, and systemically torturing them both mentally and physically.

In the beginning, Paul, the main antagonist played by Arno Frisch kills the family dog, Rolfi. He then injures Georg, the father with a golf club in front of his wife and young son. After this Anna, the mother is forced to strip for the two delinquents in order to stop them torturing her son. Paul suggests playing a "funny game". He wagers the family will be dead in 12 hours time, while the family are forced to bet against them, thus starting the titular funny games. A "game" of physical torture, psychological turmoil and killing plays out for the remainder of the film.

Film Scholar Tarja Laine argues[29]:

"The film is not meant to be "merely" a thriller (even though it clearly is) but simultaneously a critique of thrillers, violent mass media, and mainstream cinema in general. Funny Games is purposefully shocking rather than enchanting, and it is meant to question the use of violence, rather than to actually use violence itself, as a major narrative element. Instead, we are forced to experience the effects of violence afterward, particularly as they are reflected in the close-ups of Georg's and Anna's faces."

The tormented, humiliated faces of Georg and Anna are a constant reminder to the audience of their complicity in this happening to the characters, simply by watching. The couple's faces become a tapestry of humiliation and degradation, they simply stop emoting after a barrage of constant violence directed at them by the two assailants, entering a trance-like state. According to Marcus Stiglegger and Jurgen Felix[30]:

"In Funny Games, it is Anna's ravaged face especially that we must stare at again and again: a face that gradually loses— torture by torture—all traces of human dignity, destroyed by escalating acts of humiliation forced upon her by her tormentors."

[29] Laine, Tarja. "Haneke's "Funny" Games with the Audience (Revisited)." *Researchgate*, 2010, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254895891_Haneke's_'funny'_games_with_the_audience_revisited. Accessed 12 February 2025.
[30] ibid

In essence, Michael Haneke implicates the audience as an accomplice to the violence depicted on screen by simply making you watch and consume the violent imagery on display. Unlike stylised violence often displayed in films of the Horror/Thriller genre, Funny Games subverts the conventional expectations of the viewer by presenting the violence in a detached manner which doesn't allow a moment of release for the audience.

The brutality of the image is displayed in long static shots which don't afford the viewers the comfort or release of tension from a cut. The static shots are paired with a shocking lack of music, which portrays the situation as realistically as possible, almost documentary-like. This style displayed in the film implicates the audience further as an active participant in the violence on show. The violence is so raw and untouched by the brush of filmic spectacle that the audience watching the film are made to question why their desire to watch such violent actions contributes to the cruelty carried by the film as much as the antagonist's actions.

The idea of audience complicity is heightened by the lack of conventional narrative justice through the survival or potential revenge of the protagonists. The Antagonists of the film win, by achieving what they set out to do, kill the family. There is no happy ending, as a matter of fac,t the film flat out refuses to afford the audience any sort of retribution/resolution, reinforcing the inevitability of violence and knowing exactly what will happen but continuing to watch.

The perfect example of this violent inevitability is the remote control scene. In the scene Anna manages to get a hold of the shotgun and shoots one of the home invaders, Paul. Peter, the other invader, is in the kitchen at this time. He walks back into the living room and in a panic grabs the remote control for the tv. He simply rewinds the movie to before Anna managed to shoot Paul, and manages to stop her from doing it again.

This event is a direct confrontation of the audience's hunger for violence and for retribution. The event the viewers crave (Peter's killing) which should act as a moment of relief for the viewers is brutally snatched away from them. In doing this Haneke tells the audience that this isn't a safe space for conventional film violence and they will have no retribution or resolution of the violence on screen.

Fig. 03.

By doing this Haneke forces the audience to become aware of their complicity in the violence and craving for bloodshed transpiring. In a 2019 interview with the Criterion Channel Haneke remarked how this scene, in his eyes, makes the audience aware that he is the god of this world and they are at his mercy essentially[31].

> "I can tear people away from the story, but five minutes later they're at my mercy again"

The remote control scene is one of many instances of fourth wall breaks in the film. A fourth wall break occurs when a character in a film talks or looks directly at the audience and confronts them about something. Haneke remarked in his interview with the criterion channel that while watching the 1963 film "Tom Jones" when one of the characters breaks the fourth wall saying "I hope they don't catch me" and looking directly into the camera, was a powerful moment of insight for Haneke into his role as an audience member.

The use of fourth wall breaks in Funny Games is the most direct method with which the director chooses to confront the audience. During a game of hot or cold between Paul and Anna (searching for their dead dog) while Anna walks away from the camera, Paul looks directly into the camera and winks at the audience.

---

[31] Criterion. "How To Implicate An Audience." *Criterion*, 2019, https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/6359-how-to-implicate-an-audience?srsltid=AfmBOopTPSRF7vaYuCIqPqSSDV7MjOhoDIa-gtQjFmPOP267tUe6lwgK. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Gregorius Kohar writes in his article for Acinemalens blog[32]:

"If we noticed from the moment Paul smirks at us — breaking the 4th wall — our feelings would not have been provoked, knowing that this is only a film. But Haneke knows the audience well; we have become a slave of convention where the protagonist will win or at the very least will receive a moment of triumph because the filmmakers know that we've been absorbed with the media we're watching and it becomes a reality. This is not the case. Haneke keeps on breaking the convention and keeps reminding us that this is only a film through Paul as he is the medium that connects us with the audience."

Fig. 04.

This moment serves as an accusation towards the audience, Haneke announces essentially: You know what will happen, why are you still watching? This is sharply exemplified when Paul turns to the audience as he makes the bet with the family about whether they will survive or not. The audience has essentially lost at this point, the family, which they would have been rooting for, has no chance, and the audience, through Paul's questioning and looks, is complicit in what is about to happen to them.

[32] Kohar, Gregorius. "Perspective and Violence in Michael Haneke's Funny Games (1997)." *Medium*, 9 October 2024, https://medium.com/@gregoriuskohar/perspective-and-violence-in-michael-hanekes-funny-games-1997-714b6fd8c9fb. Accessed 12 February 2025.

"Benny's Video" (1992) is another core film by Michael Haneke which forces the audience to confront their complicity in the on screen violence. The film is the story of a teenage boy named Benny played by Arno Frisch, the same actor as Paul in "Funny Games". Benny loves American action films, however he seems to be developing a strange obsession with a video of a pig being slaughtered at a farm, which he watches on repeat in his room.

In this film Michael Haneke aims to disrupt the viewing experience and challenge the idea of passive spectatorship. Catherine Wheatley wrote[33]:

> "(Haneke's) films encourage the spectator to consider their own participation in the act of film-going, to reflect upon why they enter the cinema and what it is they want from the viewing experience. They encourage them to look at their motivations and the ethics of these motivations."

Similarly to "Funny Games" the violence of "Benny's Video" isn't aestheticised in any way, shape or form. As a matter of fact the audience is instantly confronted by home video-like footage of a pig being led outside. There is no music to accompany the video, the only audio being the screams of the pig. The pig is then slaughtered using a captive bolt gun and as its limp body with a bleeding hole in its head is tossed around by the farmer oozing blood everywhere, the video suddenly rewinds.

[33] Wheatley, Catherine. *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*. Berghahn Books, 2009.

Fig. 05.

The video is rewound to the moment just before the trigger of the bolt gun is pulled. This time however, the video is played in slow motion. This is a direct attack on the viewer by Haneke. Why would you keep watching something that was distressing enough the first time around, this time in slow motion?

Later on in the film, after befriending and charming a young Evi, a girl from his school, Benny commits the second killing of the film. The act is extremely bleak and uncinematic. Unlike most other film killings, this one is completely devoid of any music or cuts. Benny simply sets up his camera, framing us in a frame within a frame situation as the viewer only witnesses the scene through the TV hooked up to Benny's camera.

The lack of music in the scene results in a gut-wrenching fight for her life from Evi. During the killing, the camera never cuts away from the act, affording the audience no escape, thus implicating them further in the violence transpiring on the small TV screen in Benny's room. The screen within a screen approach further implicates the audience, forcing them to compare what we are being shown to violent action films we consume for stimulation. Some examples of such films could be "The Gentlemen" (2019) directed by Guy Ritchie, "John Wick" (2014) directed by Chad Stahelski or "Climax" (2018) directed by Gaspar Noe.

These films are a direct contradiction to "Benny's Video" or "Funny Games". They are intended to overstimulate the audience with gory, flashy violence, which is drowned out by music and fast-paced cuts, thus not questioning the audience's complicity in the violence portrayed on screen. Haneke strives and succeeds to do the exact opposite in "Benny's Video". The lack of music and any sort of cut makes Evi's murder a gruesome, unflinching critique of action films and the audience's complicity in enjoying said violence.

Darrell Tuffs argues in his "Why am I still watching this" article for A World Of Film magazine that[34]:

"In viewing the scene of Evi's death, the spectator is entering into an unwritten contract with the film, character, and actress, one in which we agree to witness and experience her suffering, and she agrees to simulate it to us, thereby making film spectatorship an act rooted within masochism."

[34] Tuffs, Darrell. "Why Am I Still Watching This?" *Aworldoffilm*, 2016, https://aworldoffilm.com/2016/05/10/why-am-i-still-watching-this-by-darrell-tuffs/. Accessed 12 Febryary 2025.

This is a perfect example of how Haneke succeeds in making the audience complicit in the experiences of the characters on screen, the audience is watching, in this case, the brutal murder of Evi. This is backed up in the writings of Michele Aaron[35] (Aaron, 2007, p.90).

"In viewing *Benny's Video* and consciously choosing to continue watching past its scenes of violence, we sign a filmic consent to take pleasure within the suffering of others' and ourselves, thereby making the spectator ethically accountable for the film's depictions of real and simulated death."

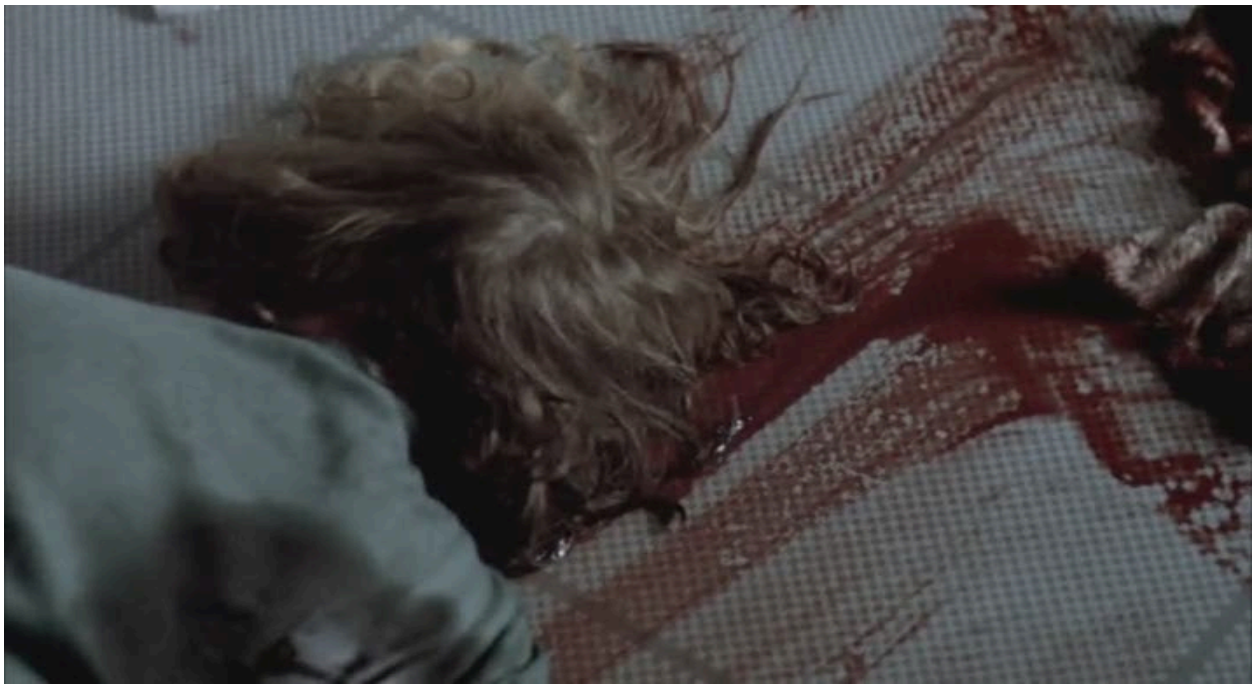

Fig. 06.

Evi's killing is a direct and chilling parallel to Evi's eventual death. It is portrayed in a similar home video style and the killing tool is even the same as both are killed with a captive bolt gun.

[35] Tuffs, Darrell. "Why Am I Still Watching This?" *Aworldoffilm*, 2016, https://aworldoffilm.com/2016/05/10/why-am-i-still-watching-this-by-darrell-tuffs/. Accessed 12 Febryary 2025.

This is yet another accusation by Haneke towards the audience and the desensitisation an audience starts to feel by continuously consuming violent films.

Interestingly, this same point is reinforced by Haneke in Benny's obsessive rewatching of the video of the pig's slaughter and eventually the murder of Evi. His cold, devoid of emotion approach to compulsively rewatching the two brutal events is an imputation to the constant over consumption of violence in the filmic medium.

In essence, Michael Haneke's films aren't a passive film watching experience, they are moral confrontations of an audience's complicity in the violence portrayed on screen. Through direct fourth wall break confrontations and the subversion of genre conventions, Haneke transforms the viewer into an active participant. His films force the audience to confront their complicity in the consumption of violent films. By portraying the true reality of violence in a filmic sense, Haneke forces the audience to question how they contribute to sustaining violence in film. The director himself stated[36]:

"I give the spectator the possibility of participating. The audience completes the film by thinking about it; those who watch must not be just consumers ingesting spoon-fed images."

By doing this, Haneke's films remain with the audience long after the initial viewing of the film and become a moral exercise rather than a simple film watching experience.

[36] Far Out Mag. "From Hitchcock to Tarkovsky: Michael Haneke's top 10 favourite films of all time." *Far Out Magazine*, 17 March 2020, https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/michael-haneke-top-10-favourite-films-list/. Accessed 10 March 2025.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the films I have analysed in my text, Michael Haneke successfully achieves his goal of making the audience explicitly aware of their role in the film viewing experience. His deep study of structural violence and psychological repression, paired with his filmic techniques, leave no doubt that the audience can not simply watch the film, but are indeed accomplices to the violence the director subjects the characters of the films to.

Throughout the three chapters of my thesis, chapter one focusing on structural violence in *Cache* and *The White Ribbon,* chapter two focusing on *The Piano Teacher,* and chapter three focusing on *Funny Games* and *Benny's Video,* a consistent theme has emerged. Violence is cyclical, systemic and often committed not only by institutions but also individuals who are conditioned to carry out violent acts through the system oppressing them. Haneke's films strip away the fakeness of Hollywood cinema and implicate the audience's thirst for blood.

In the first chapter, I explored how Haneke portrays structural violence and the damage said structural violence can have on the futures of the individuals affected. In *The White Ribbon* and *Cache,* Haneke demonstrates that violence isn't always physical or immediate, but can instead be an invisible force with long lasting implications.

In *The White Ribbon*, Haneke shows how the seeds of fascism are planted through the authoritarian and patriarchal structures in place in the village of Eichwald, where the baron, the pastor, and the doctor hold unprecedented immense power over the villagers and mainly the children of the village. The abuse carried out upon the children manifests in their own actions of violence. This cyclical abuse leaves the children with a sense of rage and resentment. The films ending, in which World War I begins is the perfect conclusion to what Haneke wishes to show through this film, implying the abused children of today will be the Nazi's of tomorrow

In Cache Haneke explores a very different type of structural violence, one in which the violence is a lot more subdued and most of it is completely invisible. In fact, the violence manifests through an individual's silence. George's choice to remain silent when questioned leads Majid down a horrid life trajectory. Eventually, it leads to him slitting his throat in front of George as an act of self-liberation.

The film also addresses the historical violence experienced by Majid, and by extension the Algerian people in France. This violence being largely forgotten by the French people, by George means complicity in the violence of the film. Similarly to *The White Ribbon*, *Cache* shows what happens when intergenerational violence is left unaddressed.

In my second chapter, I carried out a deep dive into the character of Erika Kohut from Haneke's film, *The Piano Teacher*. I examined Haneke's exploration of psychological repression, masochism and a patriarchal system.

Through an in-depth analysis backed up by the works of Catherine Wheatley, I examined how Erika's mother, her work environment, and the patriarchal world around her directly influences her to repress her sexuality and identity. I analysed how Haneke's filmic techniques, including static shots and extreme close-ups, and the lack of non-diegetic music reflect Erika's numbness to the world.

Erika's masochism manifests through her extreme sexual fantasies involving her student Walter Klemmer and severe self harm moments, like when Erika cuts her vagina with a razor in the conservatories bathroom. This is a reflection of the internalisation of the abuse Erika has received from her mother, from her work, and from her world.

In my final and third chapter, I explored how Michael Haneke accuses the audience of their complicity in the violence playing out on the screen. I did this by analysing two films, *Funny Games* and *Benny's Video.*

Funny Games turned out to be Haneke's most audacious accusation of the audience. The constant breaking of the fourth wall, the smirking, winking and laughing at the audience by the two perpetrators of violence prove that an audience can in fact not just be a bystander to the violence experienced in film. The scene where Paul rewinds the film with a remote control is a direct confrontation of the audience's expectations, being a thirst for blood. The discontent felt after watching this scene is a further affirmation of the thirst for violence. Haneke makes the audience question why they sought to see an on-screen murder in the first place.

In *Benny's Video,* a similar critique of desensitisation to violence and a detachment from what appears on a screen can be seen. Benny acts as an extension of the audience, in fact he is, in a way, the audience. Haneke's use of the frame within a frame device further implicates the audience, finally positing that the audience can never remain passive observers but are instead complicit participants. Haneke's aim is not to shock or offend but simply to force the audience to question the morality of viewing violence in film and media. All of Haneke's films are direct confrontations of the audience.

The cinema of Michael Haneke is largely outside the standard framework of film and entertainment. It isn't intended to entertain, the goal is to not offer resolution, emotional release or entertainment. His films function as conversation starters and deep philosophical reflections. Haneke's films remind the audience that structural violence, psychological repression, is not simply a cinematic spectacle but a lived reality.

"Film is 24 lies per second at the service of the truth."

-Michael Haneke

Bibliography

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2002.

Amou'oghli, Babak. "Caché (Hidden)." *Philosophy Now*, 2011, https://philosophynow.org/issues/84/Cache_Hidden. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Simulacra and simulation." *Zero Ducks Given*, Editions Galilee, 1981, https://0ducks.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/simulacra-and-simulation-by-jean-baudrillard.pdf. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Brooks, Xan. "Michael Haneke: the undisputed king of Cannes." *The Guardian*, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2009/may/24/cannes-film-festival-michael-haneke. Accessed 6 March 2025.

Celik, Ipek A. "'I Wanted You to Be Present': Guilt and the History of Violence in Michael Haneke's Caché." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2010, pp. 59–80. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40962837. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Criterion. "How To Implicate An Audience." *Criterion*, 2019, https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/6359-how-to-implicate-an-audience?srsltid=AfmBOopTPSRF7vaYuCIqPqSSDV7MjOhoDIa-gtQjFmPOP267tUe6lwgK. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Far Out Mag. "From Hitchcock to Tarkovsky: Michael Haneke's top 10 favourite films of all time." *Far Out Magazine*, 17 March 2020, https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/michael-haneke-top-10-favourite-films-list/. Accessed 10 March 2025.

Hutchison, Nina, et al. “Between Action and Repression: The Piano Teacher – Senses of Cinema.” *Senses of Cinema*, 22 May 2003, https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2003/michael-haneke/piano_teacher/. Accessed 10 March 2025.

João. “Haneke on Caché (Hidden, 2005).” *YouTube*, 17 March 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-kE5hNAzY. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Kohar, Gregorius. “Perspective and Violence in Michael Haneke's Funny Games (1997).” *Medium*, 9 October 2024, https://medium.com/@gregoriuskohar/perspective-and-violence-in-michael-hanekes-funny-games-1997-714b6fd8c9fb. Accessed 10 March 2025.

Laine, Tarja. “Haneke’s “Funny” Games with the Audience (Revisited).” *Researchgate*, 2010, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254895891_Haneke's_'funny'_games_with_the_audience_revisited. Accessed 12 February 2025.

Lord, Annie. “The Indy Book Club: Elfriede Jelinek’s brutal novel The Piano Teacher finds no feeling in violent sex.” *The Independent*, 2020, https://www.the-independent.com/arts-entertainment/books/features/indy-book-club-elfriede-jelinek-the-piano-teacher-sadomasochism-freud-a9544981.html. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Quandt, James. “Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon.” *Artforum*, https://www.artforum.com/columns/michael-hanekes-the-white-ribbon-193050/. Accessed 6 March 2025.

Schiefer, Karin. “Michael Haneke talks about THE PIANO TEACHER.” *AUSTRIAN FILMS*, 2001,

https://www.austrianfilms.com/news/en/bodymichael_haneke_talks_about_the_piano_teacher_body. Accessed 12 February 2025.

Sharrett, Christopher. “Film International.” *Film International*, 2 October 2017, https://filmint.nu/the-piano-teacher-criterion-collection-review-christopher-sharrett/. Accessed 10 March 2025.

Tuffs, Darrell. “Why Am I Still Watching This?” *Aworldoffilm*, 2016, https://aworldoffilm.com/2016/05/10/why-am-i-still-watching-this-by-darrell-tuffs/. Accessed 12 Febryary 2025.

van Dijk, Maria. “Alienation and Perversion: Michael Haneke's The Piano Teacher.” *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 1 April 2002, https://brightlightsfilm.com/alienation-perversion-michael-hanekes-piano-teacher/. Accessed 12 February 2025.

Wheatley, Catherine. *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*. Berghahn Books, 2009.

Wikipedia. “Structural violence.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_violence. Accessed 16 December 2024.

Yucel, Ecem. “Analysing Elfriede Jelinek’s The Piano Teacher: The Layers of Erika’s Masochism.” *ruor.uottawa*, 2017, https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/de071700-df53-407c-8c1f-1d4c2c5c5410/content. Accessed 13 January 2025.

Filmography

Funny Games (1997) - Michael Haneke

Funny Games (2007) - Michael Haneke

Benny's Video (1992) - Michael Haneke

The White Ribbon (2009) - Michael Haneke

The Piano Teacher (2001) - Michael Haneke

Cache (2005) - Michael Haneke