

**A
Dissertation
On**

**UNDERSTANDING THE DISCURVE NARRATIVE AND
INDIVIDUAL MORALITY IN MICHAEL HANEKE'S
CACHE**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of
BA Journalism & Mass Communication program of
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation **titled “Understanding the discurve narrative and individual morality in Michael Haneke's Cache”** is an original work prepared and written by me, under the guidance of Mrs/Mr/Dr **Javed Khatri** Assistant Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication program, Navrachana University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication.

This thesis or any other part of it has not been submitted to any other University for the award of other degree or diploma.

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signature

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aniket Solanki', written in a cursive style.

To

My friends, family and my guide.

I whole heartedly dedicate this work

ABSTRACT

Understanding the discourse narrative and individual morality in Michael Haneke's *Caché*

Caché (movie) by Michael Haneke, was released in 2005. It is a complex layered study about individual and collective morality. A deep look into how past events shape an individual's social reasoning and how one can get consumed by one's own ideas of people and world. Focusing such factors, the study talks about the individual rationality regarding guilt and shame at play after the end of post-modernism, and how early technologies changes the metaethical foundation of the society. All these factors have changed the way an individual deals with the ideas and events of past. This study is about how Michael Haneke sets the above-mentioned discourse in film language.

Keywords: Morality, World Cinema, Michael Haneke

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

To study a Michael Haneke film is a kaleidoscopic pursuit, be it from the view of pure cinema that looks at the approach of the created image, the world in it, the sounds of it along with every other cinematic element, or through the eye of a storyteller that seeks to understand the characters, their intentions, actions, approaches, attitudes, along with the endless list of emotions and factors that drives the narrative. Yet still, the film would stand present with overwhelming amount of information that lies in the foundations of a Haneke movie. A voyage into these worlds of Haneke stories bring one to face the deeper aspects of morality of the society, the invisible forces of values that drives the community, is at the core of his narrational thematic approach. Although, these intricately woven narratives might seem to go through the angle of the subjects (characters of the film), they are critical anecdotes of a non-psychological approach that aims to understand the world being documented.

First look of these created world feels distant and alienated – some place that is completely unknown and bizarre – yet a closer look brings these worlds closer to the viewer in disturbing and confronting ways. This is not done through the excess showdown of extreme violence or encounters of first layer emotional mockery, but through construction of tragic events that shakes the foundations of the existing ideas of the individual, as well as, collective morality – raising questions that are not his but that of the viewer and explorer of these alien societies that exists in the shadows of our known post-modern world.

In his long spanning career as a filmmaker, he made films for German and Austrian television and went on to make feature films in Germany, Austria and France – along with an American

remake of his 1997 classic, *Funny Games*. The evolution of his filmography goes through excavation of the contemporary morality, collective normative ethics, sociological factors, along with their genealogical restructuring by historical events.

This study will delve into some of this factor to surface the underlying driving aspects of these worlds and ours. Further, the study will shift to the under fathom the complex cinematic discourse used by Michael Haneke in two of his films: *Benny's Video* (1992), *Caché/Hidden* (2005).

First, section will focus on the factors that has shaped western world's collective ethical structure that will help us understand the features of different societies and the individuals that are part of it. Even though the study of these factors provides some idea of the moral values of the societies, a unified study of the metaethical features of certain historical events that directly or indirectly affected these societies will be inspected. Specific historical events such as Colonialism and Cold War period, will be studied to understand the world of *Caché/Hidden* (2005) – the story whose central themes focus on collective guilt of Colonialism and its effects on individual guilt.

Furthermore, the second section will focus on specific factors that are closely related to the themes of his second movie from 'The Glaciation Trilogy', *Benny's Video* (1992) – a film that shows the bleak effects of technology on the newer directions the world's moving into. Here, the study will focus on the shift of Modern Technological boom, Video Technology, Consumer Culture of Modern World, and their effects on aspirational values of the newer generation and its shaping of their values and morality.

Along with the specified themes related to these movies, the base of moral evolution of Western society is looked at briefly that has altogether, over the years, shaped the westernized world as we see today. Yet, it does not intend to show the world on a one globalized compass. The differences in the inner worlds are pointed out, with a genealogical approach, where the scenarios are reached from the historical context to the current timeline. Even though, some aspects of this approach walk roundabout our study, a brief overview of the building blocks of values of today's

civilization is important to understand the critique put forward by Michael Haneke. The reason for such approach is the lack of commentary of the filmmaker with regards to the worlds he has created. Yet, to figure out specificities of moral aspects of such complex narrative is – and has always been for critics – a task of an ambiguous nature, where objective conscience of his worlds is the last place one might reach. This pursuit becomes more ambiguous due to the non-psychological characterization in his films. The inner state of the character is not what his films talks about, but rather about the situational presentation of the events and the people affected by it – yet these effects on them are not shown with a humanist clarity of emotions, which is rather easier for audience to empathize due to the subjective awareness of universal emotions. It is rather put forward as an information that one might know, a situation one might have witnessed, a rumor one might've heard, regardless of it been true or false, an individual cannot keep from the fermentation of the information by one's own world view. This tumultuous processing of information is assessing the situation by an individual is Haneke's end goal. The cryptic nature of these stories is the driving force that coerce the viewer to confront their metaethical foundations of everything they believe in - by showing them the world as it unfolds.

1.1 Morality

The formative genealogical understanding of the moral evolution of the western societies – later critiqued by Haneke – goes through numerous changes in time, space, ideas, which are than termed as a certain period in time. Although, detailed understanding of these time periods is important, this study avoids examining its microscopic details. The reason for this is the diverse ideas that will be examined on a macro scale. Our metaphysical existence is not linear in any form, in my opinion, and hence, neither should be the approach to study fractions of it. Furthermore, human nature is prone to corruption, according to Kantian ideology, which is justified to some extent in our study of mid-18th century western world, when rationality was on a rise and reason

was gaining power over collective beliefs – the critic of which (reason) Kant wrote with great discernment.

The study's final aim is concerned in the formation of post-modern values; ideas that rejected almost everything we believed in before. But how did we reach at this point in time? The easier way to look for our final goal is to just study the preceding time period and its metaethical foundations, and we might arrive at our point of discussion: Post-modern worlds of Michael Haneke. Although, it saves us extra efforts of looking back into time, it denies to explain, why had there been a rejection of modernity – an era that had been the best harvest of the seeds sowed during the birth of enlightenment – the time when sciences were roaring and giving birth to even more sciences that showed directions to unknown realms – and yet, these are just some questions that makes us look at the world we see. What about the façade of civilizations that we don't see? To talk with Haneke's ideological analogy, the events did take place in the time space, but how does one explain the oddity of the collective feelings of civilization? How does one explain differences that we know today?

Progress is messy, and as much as we would like to assert human validation in shaping of the world we created, it has not been the case. There were preexisting beliefs, there were premature forms of complex human sentiments, there were pre-defined structures of human motivations that determined the functioning of the society, the evolution of these factors has always placed humans in situations marked on historical timeline. The overview of these factors is stated further.

1.1.1 Shame

The dilemma of such blind faith and law was the inconsiderate presumptions regarding the unknown. There are many acts of ignorance and enormity committed by people against themselves in the jaunt of blindness. Anything and everything considered to be ungodly, rebellious to ideas of religion, was considered a sin. A sin in, middle ages for example, was considered more punishable

than crimes, and hate against it was the rage of the dark of human faith, something that was unknown until later philosophical explorations of human psyche. In such matter not only the religious society but an individual felt entitled to 'do its divine duty' and therefore the punishment was not a simple business as it was for petty crimes. *Shaming* was the way of these civilizations. Public shaming of the individual was conducted, where gatherings played a huge part. The intent of the punishment was desegregation of the condemned individual from the society which did not – in any way – wanted to fail the faith. Considering this, one cannot unsee the animus of the those in charge of the verdict (religious leader, rulers, lawmakers), that is, to make people fear the disregard of themselves from the society, rather than the betterment of one's morality. In such case, if one does not completely align oneself with the ideas of religion, for such person, the fear of alienation would force him to put a façade of faith, all the while holding his moral values.

1.1.2 Birth of Individual

The societies, back in middle ages, were confined by many reasons, yet it was not a complete void of the power of individual will and strength. Pre-dating Renaissance, the exploration of new worlds had already seen a rise, routes to the new worlds were opening, cultural interactions were taking place. The exploration expenditures were starting to get private mercantile interest, which, earlier was funded by the State. Moreover, such birth of individual interest was also a starting point of human endeavors, where the will to understand unknown aspects of everything, was the tip of the iceberg. The dream of unknown was the byproduct of the possibilities that were recently explored. The unknown meant everything that was lacking, individual liberty, utopia, and possibly everything that there was for lay people. To dream is an urge to seek. These dreams were the seeds of Enlightenment: Birth of Individual will.

1.1.3 Individualism

Even though Renaissance is considered to be the eruptive birth of enlightenment, we would should see it as the foundational blocks that made the ladder for surge of human conscience. Sure, it was the great age of art and artist but it was not yet a collective value of society as a complete sphere. Building on this golden period of western world, the young ideas of science and art paced up and explored dimensions of unknown parts of the world, but it was not until Rene Descartes wrote his discourse concerning individual will and experience. This was the birth of modern philosophy – the idea of ‘Self’ was the direction of new thought. Subjectivity, Empiricism were the foundations of this ideas – even though, they did not rely on it completely.

This development of collective thought was yet to know the deeper, darker realms. The exploration of oneself was might have been liberating for a society with confining ideals, but it did not mean that everyone was on the same train of thought. There were dangers to changes, as there always are – too much justification of unknown, complete disregard of the old thoughts and identity beliefs, and many known-unknown factors were welcomed by some and opposed by other.

1.1.3.1 Understanding the ‘Self’

The exploration of the previous mentioned dilemmas of new thought was further explored by mid-18th century philosophers across Europe which explored dimensions of Epistemology, metaphysics, of enlightenment, along with developments in political, ethical and ideas of religious enlightenment. These ideas helmed subjectivity, empiricism, experience, conscientious ideas of oneself as the important driving factors of new thought. ‘Reason’ was replacing the ‘*ancien régime*’ – the traditional hierarchical structure based on religious ideas that was in favor of monarchy, church, and the nobles. Moreover, Kant laid out the in-depth facades of ‘reason’ with a critique that examines the antinomic effects on collective morality – which turned out to be the way of an individual’s dealing in post-modern societies. Furthermore, as the 18th century saw a

rise of radical modern ideas the study of human nature and aesthetics laid out our means for understanding emotions, passions and desires – conscientious beauty of which lead to the birth of romanticism, the age that emphasized inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual. Here, the rise of idealist human will have made way into the literature, art and music – the look at the better part of human depths. The other half of it was evident in the late-modern age, where, idealism was developed further in collective forms by Hegel – on ideas of which Marx formed his study of materialistic grounds of society. All of these ideas formed a modern way of a united forms of empiricism and rationalism.

1.1.3.2 Understanding Tragedy

An understanding of everything based on one's own experience and reason meant that the pre-established ideas of collective morality was to be challenged. Although, the modern philosophical explorations were in favors of the modern ideas of enlightenment, one theologian and thinker Søren Kierkegaard, rejected the idea of life been meant to be studied in and evaluated, for it was meant to be lived. These ideas were developed in his studies by humanizing the events of Bible, and the mentioned figures as human who faced the life with humane ideas of self and society, rather than distant figures of mythology. This view of life saw it as a dilemma to be dealt with rather than something to reason with.

The late-modern ideas of rationalism proceeding the thought above brought concluded the idealist view of the enlightenment. Arthur Schopenhauer, argued a school of thought that rejects the will and conduct of life, which argued the obscurity of evaluating life by any order, yet also disregarding the ideas of beliefs and values. The ideas of pessimism and atheism were the foundation of Nietzsche's oeuvre that emphasized the death of God and its replacement by human will. In these views the ideal of the civilization, 'a regulator', of collective morality was dead – not in literal terms, as the society was still religious – and the place was up for bets for humans.

1.1.4 Guilt

In the metaphysical state of 19th century, god does not rule the metaethical state of society, the understanding of human tragedy prophesize the replacement of sins with laws that viewed the situation in rational eye. This was the sign of the birth of new morality. The traditional ideas of engraved laws of society were looked down upon for being less human and irrational. The collective utilitarian values of good and bad were dissolving in the wider view of unexplored metaphysics of humankind (western world). The fear of shame is replaced by guilt of an individual. The fact that by now one has to live by his own beliefs, whether it be of his faith in the Divine, or empirical factors of existence. The spectacle of public shaming started disappearing and was replaced by hidden punishments and capital punishments. The State was the new god – which was still was the ruler of the state, monarch, especially. Additionally, this also meant that the collective ethical grounds can be altered by the State, which gives more power to them because the so-called, the society defined by the State ensures that an individual still lies on the same axiological plain.

1.1.5 The New State

In such scenario where the State held unprecedented powers over individualistic society, an incompetent ruler cannot manage to avoid anarchy – for ex, French Revolution. The new ruler had to be a powerful individual – what Nietzsche termed Übermensch (or Supermen) – who can command values that above tradition Christian morality, based on reason and radical disregard to old beliefs and faiths. One who could make policies that were more concerned with human and society rather than faith and superstitions. The French Revolution showed a surge of such beliefs in the western societies, as the revolution showed a renunciation of monarchy, inequality, and convention traditionality. The late 19th century Europe was a land of strong States which were exuberant with the ideas of liberalism and new nationalism.

What one does not notice in these good times is what Nietzsche called ‘the civil-law relationship between the debtor and his creditor’ (intext ref). Here, what he means is that the current generation (society) feels a juridical duty towards the foundation generations, where it is believed that, the current prevailing strength of the society is the result of the sacrifices that the forefathers of the society (in his discourse, Nietzsche uses the term ‘tribe’) made, in order to create a strong collective will for their future generations. Nietzsche further explains, that this moral debt grows greater, as these epistemological beliefs never die in the prevailing society – Unless they are completely disregarded. As these already powerful societies grow, so does their debts to their forefathers. These debts become the metaethical foundations of the values on which these societies rest.

1.1.6 Colonialism: Unseen Worlds

The recall of the Age of Exploration was always hidden in the backdrops of the European values. These new worlds ensure that the strength, prosperity, exuberance in Europe prevailed and grew – and it did. While Europe became more individualist and ambitious, the chauvinistic values in the colonies grew. A collective thought of (absurd, in terms of individualism) idealist chauvinism was the way of life in colonies. The settlers, with their individualistic impulses were now the State of these worlds. Just like pre-enlightenment Europe, the colonies were also their own collective thought spheres, with their own moral values – which the colonies not only failed to recognize, but disregarded. This apathy of cultures meant that their gods (collective morality based on religious foundations) did not mean much to the settlers. In western metaethics, reason was over irrational. In colonies this meant, power over nation, rather than over morality. To simplify in fewer words, the idea of superior us (westerners) over still credulous, irrational other (people of different culture) was their reason to ‘rule’ over the colonies.

1.1.7 Punishment

In the colonies, the western settlers chose not to change the religious metaethical foundations of the culture, where the evident gain of it was the fragility of the society (1.1.6). Here, one must see the western society in the consumerist eye, for the late 19th century Europe was individualistic with a rising dependence on decadence. In the backdrop of this decadence lied a capitalist mess – an economic structure that was highly reliant on the colonial supplies and revenues. Colonies were to be colonies to ensure the Wests' capital functioning. Adding these factors to the hierarchical absurdity, the acts of rebellion were to be controlled. The historical practices of public punishment – a spectacle, and how it injects fear – that was disappearing from Western States, was their method to ensure that the colonial societies feared the State (Western Administrations). Although, they did not take into account, the way it turned out in their societies in the past.

1.1.8 Horror of blooming modernism

The change of 19th century was not a harmonious one. War, pandemic, economic disaster in the early decades of the century was a sign that once promising systems lead by reason and collective superior beliefs in consumerism and colonialism might crumble as the hits were hard to take for Western World. The situation turned dire with the rise of fascism across the Europe.

Progress is messy, argued Hegel, and the mess of blindness of reason (1.1.6) was a fall of ignored parts of enlightenment. Fascists wanted to be the gods. The collective prophecies were on the rise, which resulted into the Second World War. To expound the pre-war and wartime shifts of ethical ground would be a long study on its own, yet it does not mean the importance of this time period is any lesser compared to other time frames explained. In fact, the first half of 20th century changed everything western world knew about their moral superiority; and this result rooted from

the hasty errors made on a global scale. The aftermath brought along ideas of globalization, liberalization, change in power dynamics, to the rest of the world.

1.1.8.1 Cold War

One factor that would be important for our study is to understand the dilemma of Cold War. The time period shows the shifts of global power and how genealogical factors played their roles in shaping of the global conduct, which turned out to be in favor of the West. When two ideologies faced each other the segregation of the countries brought along the power creditor-debtor dilemma mentioned earlier. Here, the now decolonized nations, were in a feeble position, where the weak economies had to be the debtors of the West, if they intend to survive in the global consumerist structure. Moreover, it was the already structured metaethical foundations in the Colonies by the Settlers, that weakened their choices. To mention America's anti-communism absurd efforts would just add another reason to see the West as an idea of selfish irrational oppressor. It came as no surprise why many nations chose to be neutral even though they lied on the same plane with either of the ideologies.

1.1.9 First World Guilt

The free world of late modernism was establishing themselves in the ways of the post-war time. Consumerism was spreading its feet into every corners of the world, which resulted into the rise of capitalism, which aimed at the new hopes of the decolonized nations. The ideas of West sneaked, promoting individualist ideas and selling dream, while also instilling fears of 'The Collective functioning' – which was the economic functioning of Communism and Socialism. Capitalism ensured that the world feared the irrational suppression of one ideology. Where the State should not be too powerful, which turned out to be successful and communist ideas were failed after the fall of Soviet Union – but ironically, it made the West more powerful than ever.

The face of this power was not the State but capitalism, that favored the West, but fails the rest of the free world.

1.1.9.1 Melodramatic morality

The reemergence of creditor-debtor idea (1.1.8.1) and the irony of power dynamics after the fall of Soviet Union brought forth the rejection of ideas of modernity. The flaws of consumerism and the distribution of economic power in the globalized world bluntly showed the failures of third world and pointed towards the bigotry of the capitalist system. Is the first world accountable for the failures of the Third World? Colonialism is a complex answer put forward plainly. Yet, the capitalist rationalism denies any epistemological liability. The post-modernist rejection of the presumptuous beliefs of modernity, shows us the global ills of collective morality, which are not only economic but democratic. In her book, *'Cold Intimacies: Making of Emotional Capitalist'*, Eva Illouz, talks about psychoanalysis and the situation of a-emotional world, where economic behaviors – based on formation of post-modernist collective metaphysics – conflicts with humane aspects of the society and individual, she states, “In this process of general democratization of psychic suffering, recovery has strangely become an enormously lucrative business and a flourishing industry” (Illouz 2007: 42).

‘There is a collective turbulence in the dealings of society and an individual. The rejection of every pre-existing individualist epistemic narrative that is visible in the core values of post-modernism, shows the perplexity of globalized drama that shows no clarity of corollary.’ (Illouz 2007: 42).

1.1.9.2 Shame & Guilt

The post-modern world saw a rise of tons of new ideas that embraced freedom on one, choices of every individual along with a rise of technology was becoming personal in nature.

Globalization is not a concrete plain of moral foundation, and the stronger it gets, the more inner worlds it will create. Post-modernity created these inner worlds that replaced the values of guilt in ways that suits one's or a chain's rationality and morality. Shame is replaced by capitalist endeavors. Punishment and laws are as distant from people as it were before, maybe even more.

In the global context of second decade of 21st century, the melodramatic morality resides in the realms of media – in Haneke's world, it resides in video – where the difference of guilt, shame and collective morality is unfamiliar.

1.2 Elements of Media – Aesthetical Discourse

The process of turning a discourse into a movie is a complex functional design of media elements that delivers the aesthetic, semiotic, narrative, thematic essence to the viewer. In this study we will segregate media elements according to their nature and functioning in the movie we'll be analyzing. Michael Haneke is known for his extreme discursive methods of using these elements; all the while critiquing it's impacts of the society as a complete sphere. In his movies, Video as a technology behaves with an ironic invasive force that tells the story (of the film) in its own language. In this view, Haneke movie are narratives told with different elements in their own way in a same thematic plain. Furthermore, Michael Haneke is known for extremely controlled storytelling, therefore, even the subtle acts of these media elements might be a sign of the director's discourse.

1.2.1 Video

In this evaluation of a Haneke movie, we will make the primary distinction of these elements very clear here: *Film and Video are not the same*. Additionally, this statement might seem a supportive opinion of celluloid film over digital methods of filmmaking – this is might also be considered an appropriate statement – but, what this statement implies, is that there is a stark

difference in overall semiotic communication when the director makes an aesthetical choice of showing an moving image as a ‘recorded video’ and a moving image as a ‘film – part of a movie’. This means, what happens in these different plains, notable or unnoticeable, might be different not just in terms of aesthetics, but also different with the semiotic information. In terms of the movie that this study explores, *Caché (2005)*, we see cerebral use of Video as tool for keeping audience alongside the narrative. No matter how critical a viewer is, this scholarly use of video as a language does not allow viewer to pace up to the real conclusions before the final act.

Our primary aesthetical focus of the would be on Video and how it helps to shape this complex discourse created by Michael Haneke

1.2.2 Music & Sounds

One can tell a lot about a film based on its sounds and use of music (soundtracks). A lot of movies use soundtracks extensively to carry the viewer along with the emotional tone of the movie, and it is definitely a reliable way to make the audience feel the depths of the narrative. This is not the case with *Caché*. Even though, Michael Haneke has used soundtracks in his earlier films, this movie does not contain any soundtrack. This factor of storytelling is a directorial opinionated choice of pulling the film close to the utmost essence of reality (and real world). This storytelling principle gets even more powerful and raw in *Caché*, as there is no music in the movie at all. This world with no musical sounds gets hard to follow along for those who try to view this film with an intention of enjoying the story or feeling the story. What this film does is set a premise for a question to arise based on the individual’s metaethical standard, all the while flowing with the problems of collective morality. The dark matter of the content, in this sense, in perfect harmony of the sounds of reality rather than music.

Additionally, when these sounds of these world collide with the world projected by video – in the movie – they expose the audience to the whole metaphysical details of the world of *Caché*.

This includes speech deliveries, their use in correlation to the situations, voiceovers running along the moving image. The important events in the film will be examined further.

1.3 Hypothesis

1.3.1. Regardless of the non-conventional storytelling, Haneke's characters are reflection of contemporary motifs of individuals.

1.3.2 Haneke's stories reveal the underlying truths of modern societies and its values like an analytical discourse.

1.3.3 Creative storytelling along with meticulous filmmaking reveals great much about modern society.

1.4 Objectives

To critically analyze the motifs of actors in Haneke's movies.

To study the deeper societal surroundings that are created in his movies.

To somehow evaluate the ethics and moral code of the characters.

To analyze the semiotics of the Haneke's treatment to such stories

1.5 Significance of the Study

To unveil the unseen parts of ground ethics and morality of the movie to understand what drives the characters. To understand it will result into us finding the flaws of our society of which we derive these foundational features of metaphysics and metaethics. We live in an individualistic society where reasoning and rationality are keys factors that drives the motifs of individuals. The movie choice was simple due to its extreme focus on one character and his moral compass.

1.6 Background of the Study

The background of the study looks first at the Genealogy of the formative morality that had been rejected in the post-modernist societies. The reason for this being the flat resting ground for the study is to understand the rejected social structures, individual dealings with oneself and societies and the conflicts that result out of it. The restructuring in the contemporary world where every metaphysical structure is revalued, we must look at both the certain idea of globalized worlds beliefs and compare it to the specific world where the movie takes place in.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish*.

In Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, an analytical view of the history of Punishment and the evolution of public view of shame, guilt and punishment is studied. In the later parts of his essay, he puts forth his criticism against the newer forms of punishment, while showing power dynamics in action. He argues that the transition of punishment as a public spectacle – where shame factor plays ruthlessly – to it being something dastardly, surely makes the State (and their power image) as merciful and empathetic – but can also be misleading.

Punishment going from public shame to individual guilt can make a society (and its individuals) meek, he argues. Punishment and its disappearance in eyes of public (and society), Foucault states, can turn the power dynamics against the society, and can go on to favor the power abusers.

In this study, the death of Majid (*Hidden*, 2005), and the cover-up of murder by Benny (*Benny's Video*, 1992), shows these factors at play on micro and macro scale, making Foucault's '*Discipline and Punish*' the foundational literature for this study.

2.2 Kant, I. (2007). *Critique of Pure Reason*.

In the metaphysical grounds of the book by Immanuel Kant, the foundational ideas of human actions lie in the view that humans are rational beings. Laying the basis of modern philosophy and its metaphysical nature, Kant intends to state that, 'Morality is grounded in something which is absolutely binding on us. Something that comes from within us that has this universal status which we cannot get rid of.'

On the broader terms of morality, the human construct – combination of individual morality and universal morality – Kant’s ideas of action and reason gets into the skin of moral phenomenon such as guilt, authority of morality and deliverance of reason.

Selected studies of this rather massive discourse are a force to understand driving factors of Haneke’s characters.

2.3 Freud, S. (2004). *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

In the realm of psychological dimension and pathology – and their understanding of the state of mind, Freud explains (and believed) that ‘the primary sources of guilt were, fear of authority and fear of loss of parental love, which eventually becomes one’s conscience. Civilization than reinforces the sense of guilt and maintains order and stability.’

On these grounds, primacy of the question arises, ‘Internalization of moral values from a voice of conscience: How does it get there?’ Here Freud contrasts with Kant’s idea of inner morality. In case of *Hidden (2005)*, collective guilt and its Freudian view holds a strong ground. While in case of *Benny’s Video (1992)*, both arguments must collide in order to study the peculiarities of guilt in a young boy in a society that is constantly invaded by non-conscience transfixing technology.

2.4 Nietzsche, F. (2008). *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*.

Developmental dynamics of morality is traced by Nietzsche in this book, where in his second essay (Vol II – “Guilt”, “Bad Conscience”, and the Like), Nietzsche goes on to examine, ideas of Guilt and Bad Conscience in historical context. Here he traces the origins of these concepts (including Punishment), showing that originally, they were not based on any sense of moral transgression. Rather, guilt simply meant that ‘a debt was owned and punishment was simply a

form of securing repayment.’ Only with the rise of slave morality, did these moral concepts gain their present meanings.

Further questioning the role of Christianity and their thoughts, we can go on to understand the Western world as it is today, where the religious ideas and political sentiments are critically questioned, while exploits of capitalism and drastically growing class distinctions are overlooked.

2.5 Levin, T. Y. (2010). Five Tapes, Four Halls, Two Dreams: Vicissitudes of Surveillant Narration in Michael Haneke's Caché.

This essay explores the aesthetical values and its use in narrational structures and how Haneke achieved all of that right while preserving the intentions of the story. Further the important scenes and the aesthetic choices (such as, the video surveillance – long static recording imagery) are analyzed to understand the aesthetic politics of the films’ *mise-en-scene*.

Hidden or Caché moves with some distinctive narrational choices that can be hard to grab hold of. While some fragmented imagery (like the end long-static scene, where children are shown leaving the school) can be fit in any timeframe of the movie, the narrative decisions taken adds more to the film’s complex economy of surveillance. Once this economy is grasped the story makes whole lot more sense to audience of all kinds.

2.6 Hediger, V. (2010). Infectious Images: Haneke, Cameron, Egoyan, and the Dueling Epistemologies of Video and Film.

This essay critiques the pernicious effects of new mediums and new media. The author here analyses the new media and entertainment and their means and ways of generating social pathologies that further subverts the individual user’s capacity to act morally and responsibility. This discourse is achieved by approaching *Benny's Video (1992)*, to read it as a piece of Kulturkritik ^[1] (DEU. Critique of (our) culture) in the guise of media critique.

Furthermore, to study the ways of narrational aesthetics and Haneke's commentary of media the analysis is done on the basis of Raymond Bellour's, concept of the way films unfolds in-between two images.

2.7 Blümlinger, C. (2010). Figures of Disgust.

Disgust as aesthetic phenomenon and the study of it in the movies is minimal. Movies of Michael Haneke uses every form of humane phenomenon with astounding depths of known understandings; as disgust is something always present. Indestructibility of cultural threshold with this emotion and its interaction in this study is analyzed on the scales and studies of Freud and Winfried Mennighous. The necessity of disgust in the narrative and characters is stated to show the true nature of actions that lies between judgement and effect, also between repulsion and attraction in the fields of tension.

Deriving the conscience understanding of individual morality by seeing the 'downright other' side of beauty, we can understand the traces of disgust in judgements of the characters.

2.8 Chion, M. (2010). Without Music.

The world of *Caché* - according to the author - is not our world. While Cinema and its power of evocation of waves of feelings, emotions and understanding of metaphysical elements is achieved by many filmmakers with excessive use of every media element, Michael Haneke purposefully eliminates one crucial aspect of cinema – Music in *Caché* (2005). The hidden layer of the movie's aesthetic to not use sound might be a choice without strong intention, author argues, but he argues that the avoidance of sound and separation of it from the thematic structure misaligns the story from the sonorous fabric of world. Does this act add on to the cinematic economy of *Caché* or subtracts the viewer's attention? is the prime intention to understand through this essay.

2.9 Thuswaldner, G. (2010). “Mourning for the Gods Who Have Died”: The Role of Religion in Michael Haneke's Glaciation Trilogy.

This essay picks on a theological and mythological take on the ideas of Jansenism. Taking in focus Haneke’s Glaciation Trilogy (The Seventh Continent, Benny’s Video, 71 Fragments of Chronology of a Chance) this essay goes to semiotically analyze the religious symbolisms and narrational inspirations from Jansenist ideas. Moving further to our study focus, the author seeks the aspects of guilt, sin and the thought conflict of predestination vs. free will.

This essay lists out the very idea of Haneke’s spiritual cosmos that consists of ideas derived from mythic angles and symbolic signs of Biblical images and dialectic ideas in context of Austrian Catholicism.

2.10 Schwartz, P. J. (2010). The Void at the Center of Things: Figures of Identity in Michael Haneke's Glaciation Trilogy.

A meticulous semiotic study, this essay goes on to analyze certain frames and derives the constructive intentions of mise-en-scene. Along with the frames the semiotic values of objects and their relation to the characters is well described on the scale of universal symbolisms and also of personal meaning of these symbols. Furthermore, the aesthetical treatment of these object and its value addition to the thematics of the trilogy is praised. To derive the wider intentional meaning of these complexly designed cinema structure in these movies, takes us to the roots of the motivation of the filmmaker and their characters – how they develop the perception from obtuse sides the narratives.

2.11 Lykidis, A. (2010). Multicultural Encounters in Haneke's French-Language Cinema.

Moving to sociological angles of character intentions, this essay is the study of Haneke’s movie that focuses on multiculturalism as its subject. The rise of immigration and multiculturalism

in contemporary western European societies became the topic of attention when migration became a crisis in 2015, raising tons of arguments regarding the rights and wrongs of migration, its effects on the nations of Europe, effects on the people of Europe, vis-à-vis, effects on migrants in Europe. The focus here lies on the French produced movies of Michael Haneke: *Code Unknown* (2000) and *Hidden* (2005). While France being in the backdrop of these movies also makes a significant difference compared to other nations of Europe – which is also one of the center focus of the study, which further goes on to attend the specificities of the narrational angles. The two stories (movies) goes through the bourgeois milieu and the dealings, effects, and actions of this particular sect due to multiculturalism.

2.12 Kline, J. T. (2010). The Intertextual and Discursive Origins of Terror in Michael Haneke's Caché.

The author believes that the video is a form of terror in Haneke's movies. Here, the question is emerged: 'What is cinema?' and how does it conduct against the characters in the movie? As newer mediums are redefining cinema, it is also redefining the ontology. The protagonist of *Caché* – Georges Laurent (Daniel Auteuil), is shown as a TV talk show host; does this imply something? The imagery of TV in the movie, the aesthetical use of surveillance imagery all in itself in the movie, shows the nature of cinema and film to be something that always needs to be questioned. This essay questions the interconnectedness between politics of state terror and the very nature of vide. How the control, dissemination, and manipulation of images - have become features of governance to feed ideologies that are questionable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

At the anchor points of a narrative, lies the central aspects of character conscience which tells him/her what to do – given in certain scenarios. The actions taken by these characters (derived from fragments of reality) stems from basic human tendencies like aggression, guilt, and how they deal with their drives – Eros and Thanatos (in Freudian terms), life and death drives. In addition to inert functioning and dilemmas faced by these characters, external factors also plays their own parts: Discontent of civilization, according to Sigmund Freud (Freud, 2004); Moral dilemma and reasoning in metaphysics according to Immanuel Kant (Kant, 2007); or Genealogical study of guilt being part of conscience, as mentioned by Friedrich Nietzsche (Nietzsche, 2008); or by analyzing guilt as a tool of political infliction for power dynamism of the State to manage social relation, as argued by Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1995)– study of psychological and philosophical grounds on which these characters go in the narrative of Michael Haneke’s cinema – and the aesthetical dialect of his cinema – will be the direction of pursuit of this study.

3.2 Research Design

Though the central aspect of the study is ‘guilt’ and its affects and impacts on the story, there certainly would be a wider view analyses of human actions splurging out directly from an individual or indirectly through the social, economic, historical occurrences and contexts. Furthermore, classification of these factors under facades of guilt would be the need of the study

to extract the intentional, non-intentional, as well as, communicative language of cinema that Haneke uses in the movies that this study aims to understand.

3.2.1 Content Analysis – Textual Analysis

Due to the nature of the subject being esoteric in fields of human nature and cinematic preferences which, in this case, can or may strongly be a choice of individual taste, understanding, and interpretation, the study will only focus on qualitative method of data collection. The selection of data looks forward to the idea of modern-western philosophical works (from as early as 1781 – Critique of Pure Reason (Kant, 2007) to the recent work of Discipline and Punish, (Foucault, 1995)), in the hopes of understanding Haneke's concepts and ideas on foundational level of western civilization. These ideas would further be supported by an important work in psychological ground (psychoanalysis, to be precise) that supports metaphysical ideas with real world consideration of human mind and its relation with civilization.

Furthermore, multiple essays focusing on aesthetics, semiotics, narrational aspects of cinema are chose that describes how the play of elements is composed by Michael Haneke for impact. Moreover, one important fact that rests undeniable, is the amount of work and study conducted on Haneke's movies, due to the strange and enigmatic nature of his story. Contains of which can have very subtle links and comments on theology, mythology, regional beliefs and so on. To extract some of these ideas surrounding our study subject, few works are also considered. By no means, such themes can be picked from unreliable sources which might have baffling mixtures of personal comments and perspectives. Henceforth, important pieces of work are selected.

3.2.2 Situational Analysis - Movies

The study subject of this paper would be Michael Haneke's two movies that are different from each other in many possible ways. First movie, 'Benny's Video (1992)' is from his earlier works – from film series of three movie known as 'The Glaciation Trilogy' – that is about 14-year-old Benny (Arna Frisch) who is obsessed with violent movies and video technology. Followed by his 2005 French produced movie, 'Caché (Hidden)', which shows the rising turmoil in a family that starts receiving surveillance tapes of their daily lives. Even though the movies have a pathos of difference in context, collectively they show multiple dimensions of guilt as human conditioning. Even though Haneke's movies are situationally centered stories, he uses these situations on-screen to peel the layers off of the human nature, while also deconstructing the drives and desires of humans involved in the situation. Furthermore, these situations are complexly designed to stretch the character's actions and tendencies. In understanding these one looks beneath cinema to find basic impulsive forces – in our case guilt.

3.2.3 Character Analysis

A celebrated TV talk-show host, dwells into a disturbing event from the past when he starts receiving surveillance tapes of his daily private life. His worries are deepened when he – along with his family member - starts receiving disturbing images of the fragments from the past event he's stuck in. All that he thinks about always takes him to a person involved – in fact, affected by the event. Where does the guilt lie?

To understand the conscience of these characters their inter-connectedness must be known. In case of 'Benny's Video', the internal fears of guilty conscience – as Benny's parents intends – are not supposed to be exposed. This presupposed guilt drives the characters to action. What are the intentions of such guilt? But when the actions (and events) points to certain roots of guilt – as shown in 'Caché (Hidden)', what is the nature of such guilt? Who is to be blamed when the guilt

is held by number of people? The study will further pursue the conflicts of these individuals touched by the idea of guilt (of any kind).

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The variables mentioned above are intended to examine the movie *Caché* (2005) through a series of the factors that are evident to lay viewer, and how these concepts translate the entropic discourse of the questioning of contemporary western morality and fits it in a 118-minute time frame. To move to the deeper aspects of morality, we will look it through certain filters that are related to macro and micro scales of collective and individual morality. The reason for this approach is because it helps us distribute narrative pieces in a more understandable format. In this process, we will understand a situation from top-down approach, where understanding a complete view of the situation will work in our favor to unveil adages of the world of *Caché*.

Furthermore, as we will examine all the important scenes from the movie, we will look at the bigger picture where understanding the contemporary plain of morality would be the final aim.

4.1 Video Tapes

The movie begins with a still frame, the movements inside the frame are all stationary and we see texts starting to appear in small sizes, which goes on to create a structure with the complete information. As we can see in (IMG 1), the text exists in a rectangular frame, is it supposed to be a reference to the nature of film? To understand it we need to understand the whole shot in this frame. Once the title credits are over, we see one the main characters of the movie Anne (Juliet Binoche) walk out of the house shown at the center of the frame; we see her walk out from the left of the frame, followed by a moving cyclist on the street, we realize that the frame isn't just an image but a video which is being 'watched' when we hear a voice of a woman in conversation with a man. There are more movements in the frame until we hear the opening of a door which

cuts to a man – Georges (Daniel Auteuil) – walking out of the same house towards the location from where the camera might be recording. Now, we see hints of meta cinema, where the characters in the movie world are looking for the means from which they are being recorded. Although, this movie shows no signs of using metacinematic narration, what it does show is the fact that the image we thought of as the beginning of the movie, is actually a video surveillance recording. In this context, the title frame of the movie shows a informative frame within the frame: a screen?

Establishing the first shot of the movie as a videotape recording, it shows what the tapes (later shown) indexes is not simply what it depicts but rather the fact of its status as something being viewed. (Levin, 2010, p. 77)



IMG 1 Completed title card of the movie that exists in a rectangular frame of reference.

The tapes footage continues after Georges walks back into his house. This time more information is provided about the narrational choices of the movie. The footage starts at the normal pace, which is then put on a fast-forward by Anne while she also mentions the fact the footage runs for 2 hours. The aesthetics of the image is few lines of glitch noise with scratches on the

image. Unlike, other movies where surveillance, or recorded footage is shown with the different image quality than that of the overall movie, or by showing the recorded information to show the viewer the fact that it is a recorded footage, here we see no distinction of image aesthetics. Images here are as sharp, clear and informative as the movie image itself. Haneke intends to put the viewer in the same headspace as the lead character, we know just as much about the surveillance recording as Georges or Anne. Moreover, it also implies that we are the viewers of the lives of these characters. As the movie progresses, we see a splitting path of the foundational morality of the whole situation that the movie talks about. That puts us in a position where we have to confront not only the reality of the tape but of the world that is shown around our characters – which is not a pretty one.

We then see the family having dinner which provides exposition on the number of members in the Laurent family: A father (Georges), a Mother (Anne), a son (Pierrot). Strangely, we then see Pierrot in his swimming session – which is also an important shot, discussed later – before we have more information about the characters we were introduced earlier with. Following this shot is a night time frame of Georges walking back home. In (IMG 2) we can see, that it is the same frame as the surveillance recording. Although, we do not see any frame further that confirms it to be a surveillance recording. The nature of movie in this frame is vague, where Haneke puts forth the fact that we are the primary viewer of the narration.

The characterization of video is extensive and meticulous in the movie, where the whole nature of its usage in the real world is questioned. To show the dimensions of video, Georges is shown as a TV talk show host, which we get to know in the scene that follows the scene from (IMG 2).



IMG 2 Georges returning back home



IMG 3 A closing monologues of Georges' TV show, which is a pull-out frame.

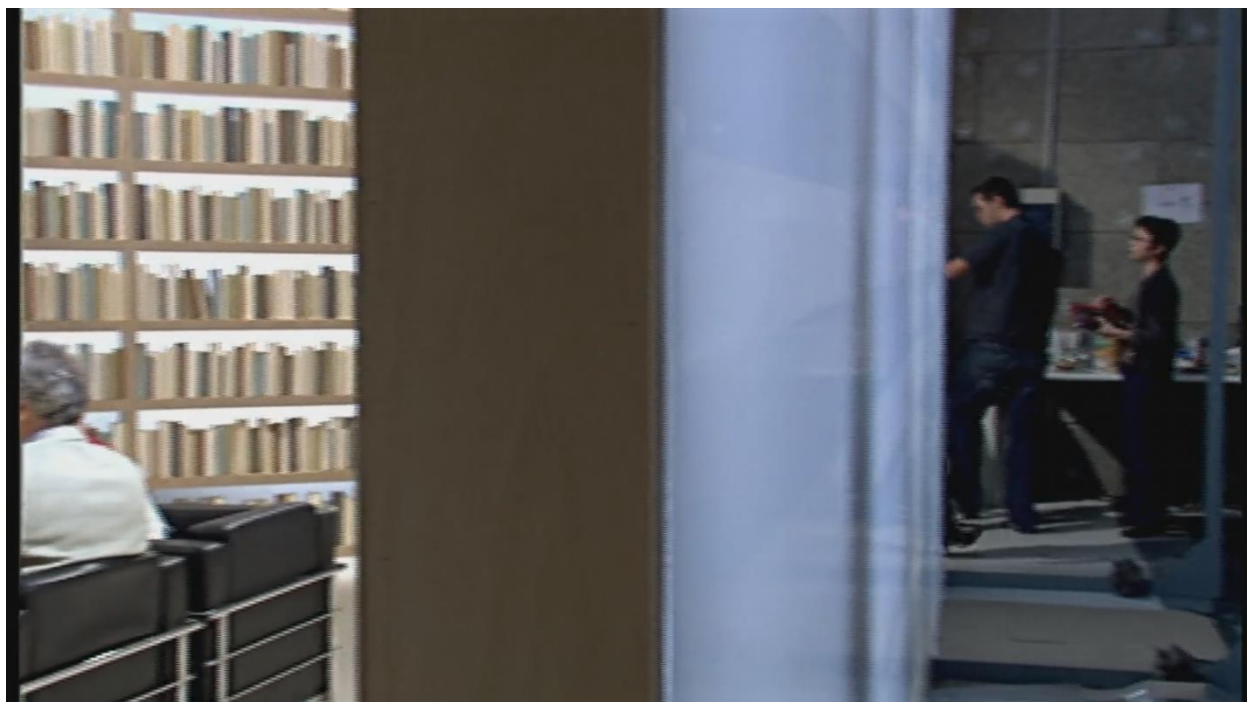
The aesthetic choices made by Haneke in *Caché* are a description of great control and understanding of the film language. The image above (IMG 3) is the starting point of a pull-out shot which goes on to expose the TV show set, as Georges finishes his closing monologue. The

shot informs us that we are going to look at a bigger picture of a person who is always seen by everyone in a fixed, controlled video frame. The choice of the lead character as someone who is seen and believed to be known widely is a comment on the blunt ignorance of the new media culture, where subjective beliefs about the visual lives are only as informative as the video tapes that Laurent family receives and perceives. To realize this one does not have to wait for further information to know the blunt aspects of media culture. Haneke wastes no time in showing the grandiose nature of showbiz to set a ground for the contrast to look hurtful, it is as quick as the change of a TV channel.



IMG 4 End frame of the pull-out shot of Georges' closing monologue

This scene exposes the current personality of broadcast video aesthetically, where after the closing monologue, Georges has to receive a call from Anne – in which she informs him about the arrival of the second surveillance tape from this anonymous sender. The shift of the aesthetic mood is nakedly evident.



IMG 5 Georges goes backstage to receive Anne's call. The pole separates the two worlds, and is a dolly slide shot from left-to-right.



IMG 6 Georges talks to Anne. The color palette and of backstage is completely contrasting to the white and beige of the TV set, whereas the backstage is all grays and blacks.

The perplexing criticism on video is evident throughout the movie, but there is an extremely harsh exposure about the nature of video's role in collective morality, shown in the first act of the movie. This exposure not only resurfaces Georges' memories but it also shows us – the

viewers – the controlling forces of video, especially in the scene that followed the call discussed above.



IMG 7 Shot that follows the TV show scene and the beginning of Tape 2 footage.

This is the scene that follows the scene explained above. It begins with the shot above (IMG 7) that shows three important elements: a drawing of a mouth spilling blood, a VCR remote, and TV remote. The show of two remotes shows the two different nature of Video, where one is allowing control of the footage, other does not. This factor is emphasized further in the movie, where the TV is showing the world news, but in every instance the characters are not looking at it, but allowing it to run in the background. The tape (#2) shows the footage that precedes the talk show scene (IMG 2), which intends to confuse the viewer. Haneke wants to bring forward the indexicality of viewer's subjectivity, where he established the fact that the individual's understanding or viewer interpretation can be treacherous in nature. Yet, the current world chooses to blindly believe in video and subjective reasoning with the psychologized image of world. The way Georges psychologizes the tapes and generates dissonances and distance with the objective moral world, where Majid is not wrong, and the interpretation of the idea of being watched is not

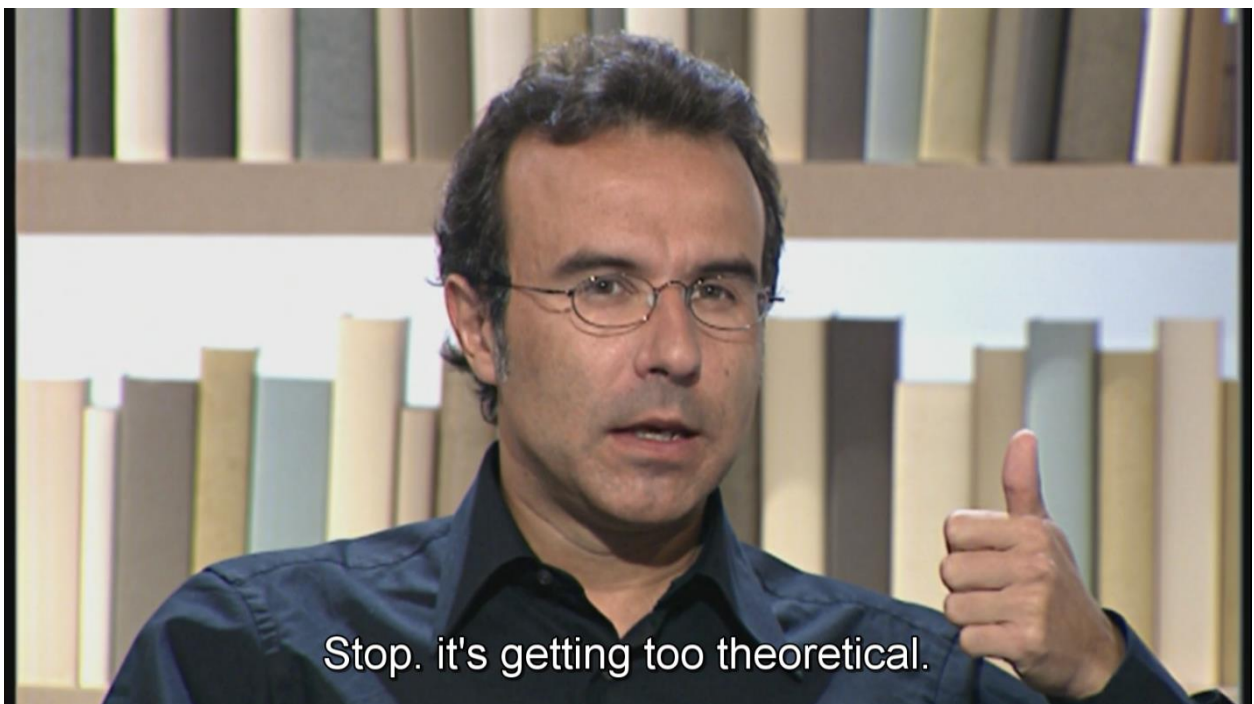
of vengeful nature, but of a form where video is revealing the objectivity, shows Georges' insecurities against the factor of shame rather than of a guilty conscience. The very idea of him being recorded outside his world where he cannot control the information makes him inwardly blind and non-rational to the collective morality.

Although, this is an interpretive study of the movie, and not the fact confirmed by Haneke, he ensures that the viewer figures out the anarchy created by our shifting reliance on video as more reliable communicative medium instead of words – we will be looking at the instances of miscommunication, lying, silence, and other factors where Georges' shows the shift mentioned in worldly situations.

One scene that brazenly points at these flaws of video as a reliable 'communicative' medium is the one that precedes Majid's suicide. This scene begins at the tv studio – which we recognize by now – in a pixelated, less vibrant colored image, hereby it is evident that the video is a tv broadcast and not the current happenings. We see Georges with few guests where they are having a discussion (IMG 8). Later, we see a profile shot of one of the guests saying his view on a book that they're talking about, followed by a profile shot of another guest, who seems to agree with the views of the guest that preceded him. The viewer here is not thinking about the footage as something of utmost importance on screen, until the footage stops, when the guest speaking, tries to add his own view additionally. It happens when we hear Georges' voice over the footage where he says, 'Stop, it's getting too theoretical' (IMG 9). Furthermore, he asks the editor to cut it and start at some other footage (IMG 10). This scene ends with Majid's call (IMG 11), which proceeds to the part where he kills himself. This ironic play of timeline is what points out the deceptiveness of video communication.



IMG 8 Georges' TV show



IMG 9 Pause of the footage with Georges' command.



IMG 10 Georges' command to editor. Here Georges is asking to cut the remaining part where the guest in the frame tries to say his opinion.



IMG 11 Georges in the editing room. He gets a call from Majid, asking him to visit him home.

4.2 Sounds of Caché

There lies a disturbingly stable aesthetical harmony in Haneke's use of film language. Though, the movie fictionalizes the occurrence of the morality play in the situations he wrote for screen in a distant plain away from collective beliefs of their physical societies, the non-visual element ensure that the disconcerting reality must stick to the viewer's way of dealing with it (reality). In a film, soundscapes are created to give an additional emotional tonality for viewers to perceive it as a feeling, something that is of a universal nature. Without the soundscapes the movie morphs its conventional forms from something worth enjoying or learning from to a discourse which is alien natured to the viewer; an information that feels strange. This strangeness correlates to the oddity of a being. The oddity of reality is the non-existent meanings of internalized sounds. The internalization of this sensory language (sounds), is what makes sounds an intense tool to evoke emotional responses from insides of an individual. The evocation of meaning of internalized sounds are subjective but the creative process of creating a soundtrack of movie is meticulously fabricated to fit the story, to generate the right conscientious response in the audience. The question here arises, does the sounds infuse morality in the narrative?

Michael Haneke's *Caché*, does not have a soundtrack. Neither, it has any form of soundscape that one might call music. This factor brings us close to physicality of sounds and its interaction with an individual. The question here arises, when the viewer leaves the cinema, does he carry the soundtrack along with him? Does the intentionally natured language of sound add on to any individual understanding of the moral dilemmas of the movie? Or does it merely act as a recall of the other cinematic element?

Although, we might not be delving deeper into the nature of aesthetic elements but a look on the behavioral functioning of sounds in the realm of this narrative might bring us to the metaphysical world of these movies. In analyzing the world of *Caché*, one might meet a paradox concerning auditory perception as a subjective imperative.

The movie does not contain a soundtrack. In this view, two arguments arise: The lack of soundtrack takes away the emotional scale of the movie, against, the lack of music being a raw view of the world which an individual deal with in one's physical conversion with his conscience. Michel Chion, in his essay '*Without Music: On Caché*' argues, that the world shown in the movie 'is not our world. It's a video recording of the world.' (Chion, 2010, p. 163). Taking his views into consideration we can see a parallel framing of cinema elements, where the video, as discussed above, prevails as a language over the wider plain of a film. Additionally, the narrative does take place in an uncertain realm of cinema, due to the ambivalent nature of the cinematic elements. The tapes are something that is being viewed in the future, the video occurrences are discussed after it has happened.

To assimilate the role of sounds in *Caché* for lay audience is to define it as factor that differentiates the world of video and the present world shown in the movie. In a carefully structured use of the video tape footage, memories & dreams, and reality, the absence of music pulls one into the situation. Haneke does not want his viewer to feel the reactive emotions of the character, but rather he wants them to face the thoughtful outcry of the situations that the viewer witnesses. To put this explanation in context, we must analyze the amount of screen time given to show each of the character's emotional responses. The movie steeply inclines to show us the reactive situational responses of the Laurent family, especially of Georges and Anne, compared to the accused: Majid. This screen time economics will be discussed in-depth with examples, but here we can see the operation of sound in the lens of emotional rhetoric of Haneke's film language.

While the sound for the movie is developed, sounds for physical elements of the story are also taken into consideration, as to give them a sort of character. For example, sounds for a familiar café, soundscapes for fancy places, sounds for uncertain and scary places, et cetera – this factor is overtly evident in mainstream cinema, but the reason one should take this cinematic component into focus is because *Caché* lacks different soundscapes for different place – the Paris of *Caché*

sounds same regardless of any preconceived notions shaping the sounds of these places. As one might notice as we go along the movie, the bourgeois house of the Laurents', the housing project areas of suburban Paris where Majid lives, the country house where Georges spent his childhood, all of these places have a dark narrative undertone which rejects the viewer a rough feel to the places – which a viewer impulsively feels and characterizes. Due to such ambiguity the viewer remains unsure about his opinion; or the movie rejects it as it moves in time.

Before moving forward, we must add one more matter to remember, is the demeanor of the human word as the part of sounds in the editing structure of the movie. On a wider scape we might see the movie as an opinionated comment of the video tapes by the Laurents, where bigger narrative of the movie would be European bourgeois melodrama against factual acceptance of guilt and shame. In this view of thought, the movie is a biased trail of privilege vs. reason, juried on the basis of video tapes and movie. One for the world of *Caché*, other for the world of cinema.

4.3 World of Caché

To glance into the moral realms of the characters, we must recognize them as individual (first) in the given information of their world view, dealings, ethics, beliefs, etc. The study will look at this particular movie as a situational documentation, which it intends to be if one removes the narrational twists in film language. This helps us dissect the information in anatomical nature, where a separate look into metanarrational aspects of the situation will create two parts to look in: Individual and Society. The critical aspects of which will give us a look into the metaphysics of Haneke's world.

4.3.1 Individual

When we delve into character studies, we can see the loopholes that leaves the viewer on his own to question the missing bits of the character. The questioning of subjective nature confronts

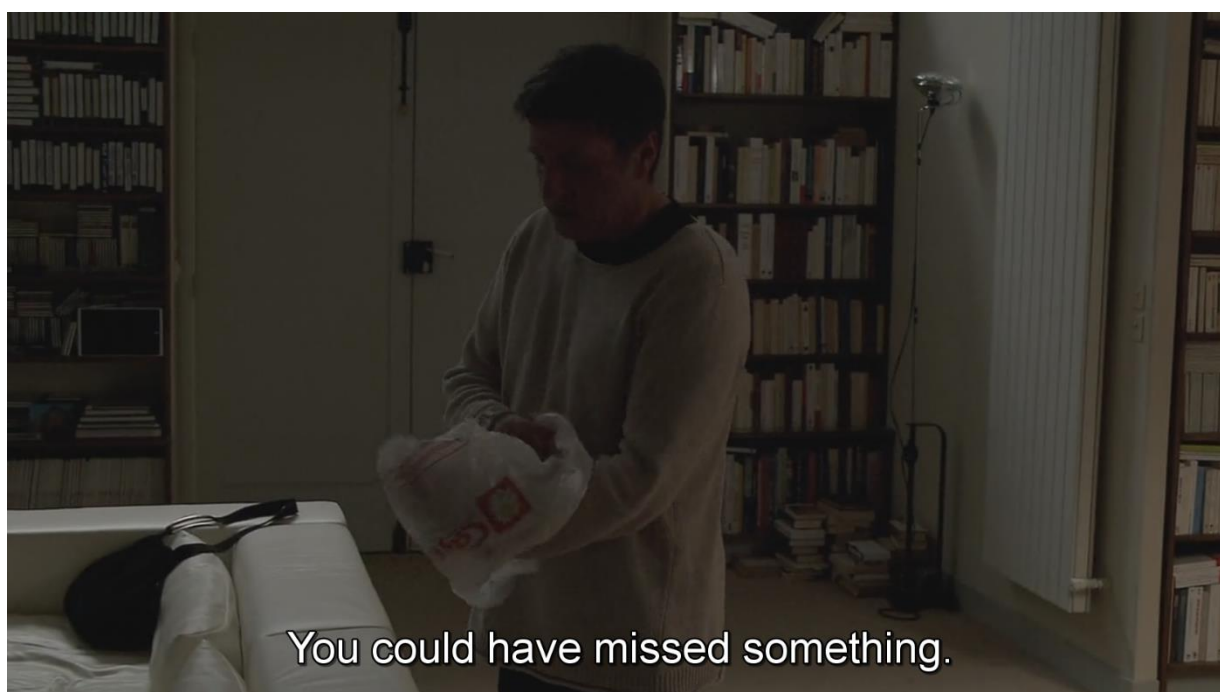
us the established world views that the viewer had built his conscience. Meanwhile on the utilitarian idea of some aspects lying between good and bad might not be the first reaction while the scene unfolds in this movie. Haneke ensures that the impulsive reasoning of the viewer stick with him even after the scene ends. This method of story is built by giving you the events in objective forms, while also restricting the certainty of a thought by showing us the false proximity of the subjective reality. What this means is for every objective situational truth shown in a scene has a subjective conceit, that restricts the viewer to reach any conclusion before contriving his opinions about the scene. The cinematic language here is acute, as it takes the viewer's thoughts in the direction Haneke wants them to move; but that does not mean it is an informative discourse. Whenever, the narrative incline towards the concurrent subjectivity, we realize that the objective truth is fragmentary. The resulting opinion at the end of the movie cannot be anything but the discursive questions that the writer has raised.

As the study defines earlier, *Caché* in a way is about Georges' commentary on the video tapes, and therefore the characterization of Georges and his ideas is far more focused than other character – this is true also in regards to the actual screen time given to Georges' character, compared to others. In his case, the truth is overlapped by his dreams and memories that baffles the audience to build one's subjective opinion that opposes that of Georges. When this factor is looked at with an eye on the whole narrative one can observe these dreams and memories as conscientious confrontations that gets heavier on Georges' belief of self, that he rejects to accost.

Meanwhile, the characters that surround Georges are, in my opinion, just the illusory ideas of the viewer that stems from one's world as a being. These characters that are incomplete in the narrative are the answers of every discursive questions, but are also the metaethical notions of someone's (Georges') ignorance, prejudices and predefined notions. Study of these notions will be focused on that will help us develop the unfinished parts of the characters.

4.3.1.1 Georges

In the first scene of the movie we see Georges as a controlled bourgeois man who is having a look at the tape that he just received, which showed surveillance footage of his house from the outside. We do not see him react frenziedly about it, although he does walk out of the house to see the possible location of camera from which the surveillance had been recorded. At first, he rejects the seriousness of the event by considering the act as a joke by Pierrot's (his son) friends. Although he seems relaxed and guileless in the beginning, we see a strange hint of self-centeredness when he checks the parcel bag even after Anne's (his wife) assurance (IMG 12).



IMG 12 Georges checking the bag, for note of some sort, in which they received the tape.

In this character, Haneke has put forth a conundrum about the way this person can be. Avoiding in-depth semiotic analysis of every scene of his, the derivation of the surface information must be compiled in a shorter brief, which will help us spotlight the ethical viewpoints of the character. From the very beginning the movie shows us the bourgeois intellectual environment of the family, with the first frame showing their house (IMG1, 2), where later frames reveal the inside of the house (IMG 13). As we move further into the narrative, we see Georges as a TV talk show host, about a program that discusses, reviews the books and the ideas of them. Strangely we never

see Georges read a book – which I believe is some of the hints by Haneke that points to the melodramatic morality of Georges.



IMG 13 Inside of the house

The further we progress into the narrative the more we realize that the person (Georges) bounces between the polar points of individual dealings. The individual dealings here are termed as the inner decisive thoughts that reason their ways through primary cores of oneself vs. the social construct that is part of the any individual's development. This can be seen more and more in the narrative as he starts forming the idea that Majid is the responsible entity for the acts – that are more about Georges' inner fears compared to actual fear of vengeance. Following the second tape and first thought glimpse of Majid, Georges decides to talk to his mother (social construct – talking to someone), but when he does talk to her we see a strong internal resistance in him that stops him from getting into the details, even after her mother noticing his inner dilemma, and asking him to be open to her about it (individual reasoning). Furthermore, we see Georges as someone who does take actions to deal with the events that happen in the movie, but with every later event in the timeline, as he is getting sucked into the whirls of confrontational details of the events that

happened in the past, we see him reasoning less with the outer world. In such scenes, we see that he can only give fragments of his ‘beliefs (not truths)’ to his wife Anne, to the outer world he is just a blunt individual. In the movie, we see him confronting Anne first where he does not give her the complete information. In the later parts where other people are involved, we see him restricting the information, talking concretely about his own beliefs on the events – without any proofs (lying, basically), and later avoiding the aftermath of what Spinoza termed ‘*morsus conscientiae (pangs of conscience)*’ of Majid’s death by avoiding a talk with Majid’s son and taking sleeping pills. All of this points to the fact that his morality sinks into self-reasoning and ‘ressentiment’. To justify it we must look into the role of Dreams and Memories in the narrative framework of *Caché*.

4.3.1.2 Dreams and Memories

The viewer starts raising question on their own sympathetic ideas about Georges when the narrative unfolds the depths of his conscience and the way his dreams and memories are unveiled in the narrative. Unlike the commercial cinema, it does not emphasize the event as a plot milestone, even though it is. The aesthetic choices here decide to leave the audience with the blunt nature of the narrative. We do not see the conventional bits of cinema that we see in most of the commercial cinema. A wave of shock that is being transmitted from the character to the viewer, paired with non-diegetic soundtrack that pushes the viewer on edge of his emotional conscious, where one starts questioning the entirety of the narrative. Not the conscientious imagery of Georges. Although one does question every moral inclination of oneself after these headspace scenes, it is not exciting, neither is it lively, to use an analogy where commercialized plot reveal is a surprise built to baffle the viewer, *Caché*’s dream reveal is a mockery pointing at the viewer ignorance and beliefs. One does not feel amazed of the realization, but insipid, flat, sometimes a bit remorseful about finding that their own moral ground and that of Georges are lateral. It is Haneke’s genius that sends tremors in the narrative, when we realize that Georges’ reactions are not parallel to that of the viewer, all

the while the viewer waits Georges' morality coincide with theirs – but that happen at the end is an enigma.

4.3.1.2.1 Dream 1

As we start knowing the primary characters of the movie and the birth of problems that they will be facing, we are provided with just a glimpse of Georges' headspace. This image is seen after the Laurents receive the second surveillance tape (IMG 14). Although it was just the second tape, a madeleine to the whole past event (focus of the story), is given to Georges with a drawing that acts as a memory trigger. As we see the image of boy with blood on his mouth (same as the drawing) we associate both of these elements with a memory that might have had happened in the past with the character. At this time in the narrative we feel that whatever be the situation, it is linked to something that the character is related with. Automatically we link the 'act of surveillance' to something that is done intentionally, by someone who is aware about Georges' past, yet we are not shown the details about the event from the past.



IMG 14 A glimpse (of Georges' memory) that we see while the Laurents are watching the second tape.



IMG 15 A drawing in which the second tape is wrapped in.

4.3.1.2.2 Dream 2

Before we reach the second dream of Georges in the narrative, Haneke induces gravity to the viewer's assumptions about the 'intentional act of surveillance' being a mawkish exchange of antipathy, the reason of which is unknown to us, but yet serious. Post-second tape scenes are designed to induce paranoia that builds on to ones' fear regarding the graveness of the 'tape senders' intentions. Following the scene of Georges and Anne watching the second tape, we see Anne, next morning, where she gets two calls, one is a work call for Georges, followed by an unknown caller that keeps on asking for the man Georges' Laurent. Later, we see a frame of what seems to be an office desk on which we see a post card, with a drawing of a boy spilling blood out of his mouth – the drawing of just a face has now more resemblance to the boy that we see in DREAM 1 (IMG 14).



IMG 16 The postcard that we see on Georges' desk

The scene that follows shows Georges and Anne walking out of the police station frustrated, as the police does not perceive the acts as dangerous yet (later explored). Followed in the same scene is him arguing with a man of African descent. All of these acts as a societal exposé where we see the loopholes of the individualist society, where we by this time we are shown that the Laurents are on their own unless something happens to them. This is also reflected in their dialogues at the end of the scene. Adding to the exigency of the identity of the ‘unknown – potentially vengeful antagonist’, is the reason that drives the next scene, where we see Georges outside the school to pick up Pierrot back home, which is unusual – realized by Pierrot’s reaction – where he (Pierrot) later shows Georges the same kind of postcard that her received earlier.



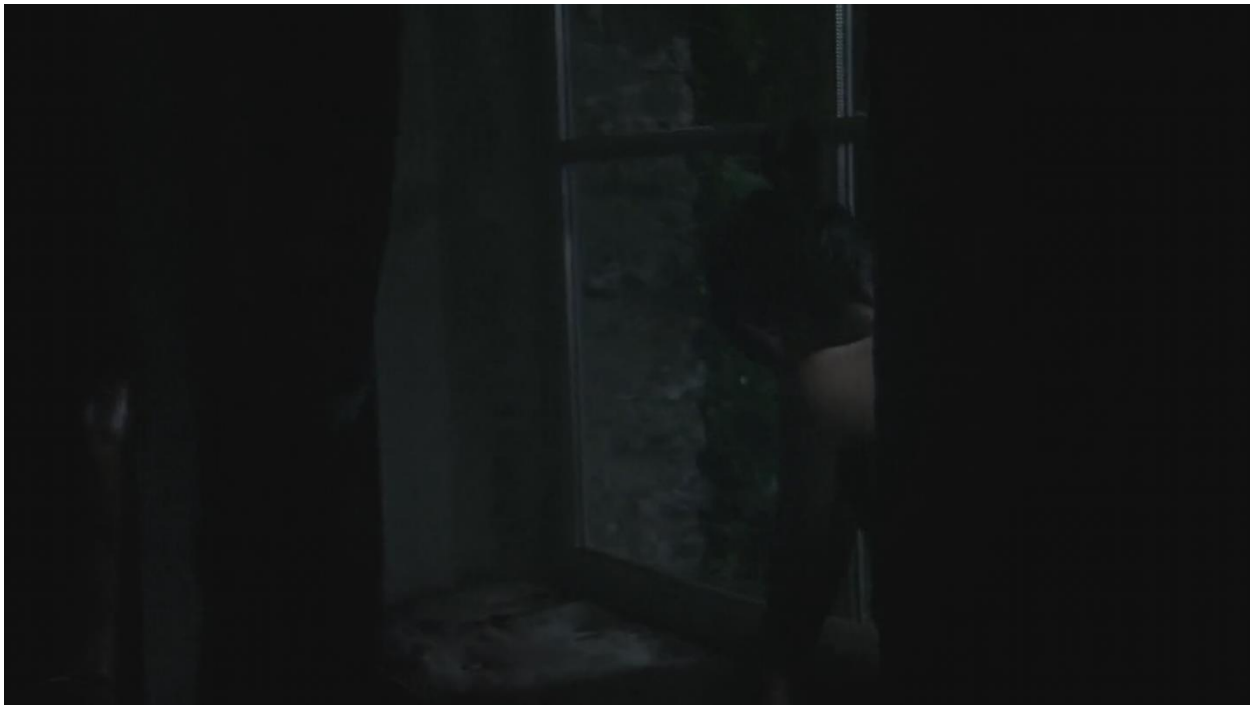
IMG 17 The postcard that Pierrot shows to Georges - same as the one he received earlier.

The second dream is a pivot from where Georges' conscience moves against his actions and rationality. Haneke sets a premise for the dream, using a place as a reference, at the end of the film, distinguish the dream from memory. Following the scene shown above (IMG 17), we see a still view of the street from the room (which we later find out is Georges' room). This composition of the frame is done in a way that shows the street in-front of Georges' house, the place from where the surveillance recording device records the house (IMG 18). An ineffable satire lurks in positioning of what the window looks at. We visit this view one more time after Georges finds himself hiding in this very room after Majid kills himself. This frame is also linked to certain enigmas that are linked to the Laurents, which will be discussed further.



IMG 18 The still frame that shows the view of the street facing Georges' house.

In the next frame, we see a POV shot of an unknown source that walks to the 'boy coughing blood' (IMG 19 – IMG 20). The boy we see the glimpse of earlier. The play of flashback imagery works fairly well in setting the course of belief in memory as a reliable source to set the decisive course of actions, which fails Georges in understanding the dimensionality of the scenarios, but mostly is tricks us viewers into walking the same path as Georges.



IMG 19 a POV shot of the room where we see a boy sitting, while we listening him coughing as the camera moves in.



IMG 20 As the camera stops the boy turns to the camera before the scene cuts.

We have now been made to believe that the acts of surveillance are driven by personal motif of someone who is somehow known by Georges. This sets the premise for next scene to help us look into inertness of Georges as we see him failing to deal with the situations. As the narrative has set a high threshold of suspense till now by limiting the information and yet showing the

ground factor of the probable root cause, the third dream unfolds seamlessly to show the polarity of Georges' headspace.

Before getting to the dream, let us look at the situation where Tape No. 3 reveals the new clue. We see a casual get together dinner at the Laurents', here as the scene continues, we hear the doorbell that sparks a worried reaction out of Anne as she looks to Georges. He walks out to find no one, where he was sure that it would be the sender. He finds the tape on his feet as he is walking back in and hides it in the coat hanging by the door, as he does not want more people to know and get involved – presumable. At this point in the timeline we believe that it is a normal act of keeping private problems from more people.



IMG 21 Get Together dinner at Laurent's before they receive the Third Tape.

As the scene continues Anne innocently talks about the problem, they are facing to which we see a passive aggressive reaction by Georges as he walks out to get the tape and play it on the TV while everyone watches. Although, this time the tape does not contain the surveillance footage that we see in the preceding tapes, but rather a footage from inside the car that shows the house Georges' grew up in (IMG22).



IMG 22 A still from the footage of the Third tape that the Laurents receive.

The tape footage enlarges to cover the whole screen before we see the frame above. Strangely, after we see the still shown above (IMG 22), we cut to Georges sitting at his mother's place (presumably in the same house shown above) (IMG 23). We do not see the dinner scenario after the end of the tape, neither do we see the reactions of their (Laurent's) friends, as Georges walks to get the tape, or chooses to play the tape. The obtuse social dynamics that does drive the drama for audience and provide details about the character's impulsive conscience laps that helps the viewer derive the personality features and characters flaws, are completely avoided. Although, the alternative would have provided an intricate look into Georges collective morality and his dealings of societal shame, Haneke does not want the viewer to resolve the greater anomaly regarding collective guilt rejected by individual morality. Moreover, the discursive narrative about guilt discussed here runs in the same course of film language as the formative restructuring of the suspense discussed earlier, that unfolds in the scene where Georges' visits his mother, where he discusses about Majid for the first time to anyone.



IMG 23 Georges meets his mother.

To delve into their conversation (Georges' and his mothers') we might find multiple factors of moral flaws in the conversation, but what we do need to look at deeply is that the conversation semantically favors in building the character of Georges and his background (family) on the basic utilitarian apparatus. The conversation is innocent but also straight-forward – a viewer does know that Georges lied about his true intent of him visiting her. We are now brought to the fact that whatever the situation be, it is from the childhood period, where ones' sentimental inclination is clearly towards the seemingly honest innocent guy. This factor is emphasized as we see the dream that we see later.

4.3.1.2.3 Dream 3

Unlike the previous two dreams where the viewer cannot differentiate its nature as being a complete visual random imagery or a resurgence of something that actually happened, the third dream is perceived by audience as a dream. Although, it is not. Haneke here plays with the clues that rises from ones' conscience, the visual forms of indescribable feelings that collide with ones'

foundational metaethics. Moreover, the decisive interpretation of the viewer is the paradox that the dream unfolds. The obvious claims of the dream, tricks audience more into building onto the utilitarian idea of good and bad, where Georges is the prior and the dream version of young Majid is the ‘other one’.

We see Georges staying the night with at his mother’s house. The scene is followed by Anne’s book launch party, where she is talking on the phone with Georges. Although, the soundscapes are not emphasized in the movie at all (as discussed above) (1.2.2), the two hard blows (IMG 24) of the axe on the chicken’s neck in the very next frame resulting into blood splatter on young Majid’s face (IMG 25), is a stinging use of diegetic sound, where the sharp, violent nature of the blow puts young Majid in a very precise spot for the viewer. Majid is perceived as vicious and powerful, especially after we see a young boy (Georges) cold, after witnessing the slaughter of the chicken (IMG 26, IMG 27, IMG 28). Further, young Majid walks towards Georges with the Axe in his hands, covered in shadows, we can barely see his face (IMG 29), but the close-in of the shot different from the composition of (IMG 26), makes Majid look like a direct threat as we also see the fear of him getting closer on Georges’ face.



IMG 24 Starting frame of the Third Dream of Georges



IMG 25 Blood splatters from the chicken onto young Majid's face.



IMG 26 Chicken flapping through his last breaths. POV shot of Georges, as we see him in the following frame.



IMG 27 Young Georges watching the chicken die, with a strange fear of the act.



IMG 28 His than looks at Majid with hateful look - as him being the killer of the chicken.



IMG 29 Young Majid walks towards the boy (Georges) and struck a blow of axe at him. POV shot.

The created anticipation regarding the identity of the suspect unfolds here with a frightful suspicion that lies extremely close to certainty, as we now identify the probable suspect as an unknown dire figure whose vindictive reasoning might stem to the event we just witnessed. Although, the structure of the visual implementation makes us see the event as a dream, the content of it seems closer to a memory from the childhood. This is due to fact that we see the previous dreams as memories, and this is where we try to align the linearity in the narrative structure, but that is what Haneke's narrative structure demands of, of the viewer. Unfolding the narrative of dreams, is the hint that points to the fact that lurks around in the second act of the film, where Anne finds out about the Georges meeting Majid through the fifth tape that shows the conversation of the confrontation that Georges had with Majid at his place. Anne questions him to know everything that is going on. Although, it seems like Georges is not able to tell her the complete truth, and that correlates with the nature of his dreams and memories, they tell us the fragmentary truth, besides the fact that one cannot differentiate the character of the visual imagery.

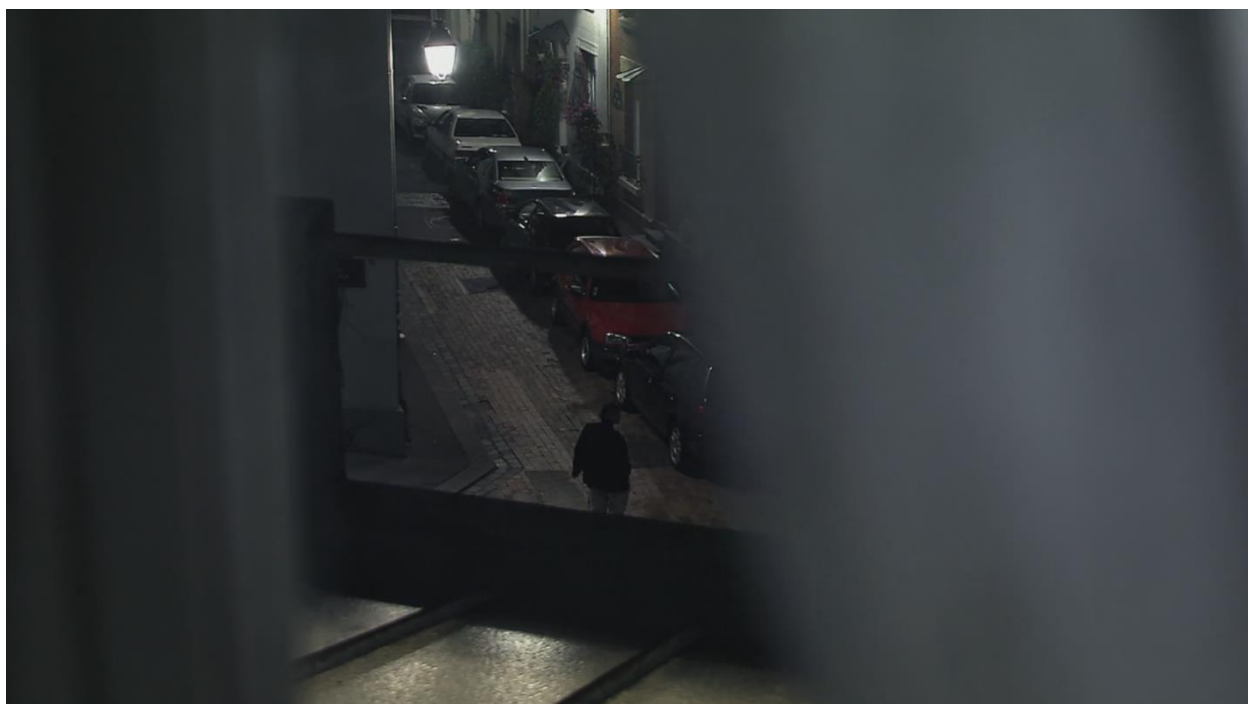
When asked about Majid, Georges tells Anne about the things happened in the past (IMG 30), Majid's role in the Laurent family, about the 1961 Paris Massacre, and that he (Georges) was not happy by the fact that he had to live with Majid which made him create lies about Majid to his parents – the lies that drives Majid to the feelings of revenge, in present (in Georges' opinion) – an analogical narrative metaphor about colonial sentiments of past, that restricted the French to accept their liability regarding the French Massacre. These very feelings are reflected in the conversation Georges have with Anne during the same scene, where Georges seems a bit obtuse about the past and about Majid.

When asked about the gravity of the lies, Georges seems inquisitive and is unable to tell the actual lies he told about Majid, which makes him lie again to Anne. This is where Georges' actions are put into question for the first time, not with any grave seriousness but due to the fact that we are told about Majid just as much of what Georges knows about him, in fact, a bit less due our inability to differentiate his dreams and memories.



IMG 30 Anne questioning Georges to know everything about whatever he knows about the events that leads to him suspecting Majid.

It is not until the third act after Majid kills himself, do we find out that he was not the one sending tapes, or avenging for his past suffering, and the reason for the opposite belief persist in Georges is his morality, a glimpse of which we see in his dreams and memories. After Georges return to his home in the third act, he confronts Anne with the complete truth, the actual lies he told about Majid, which further shatters the judgements that viewer had, that had almost been crushed by the death of Majid. Before we hear the lies though we see Georges looking out of the windows as he told Anne to send the guests back home (IMG 31). The same windows place (IMG 18) that is unidentifiably placed in the first act of the film, the frame is directly followed by a dream, which we considered to be a memory (IMG 19, IMG 20). Although, there is no flashback to the image, the ambiguity added earlier seemed intentionally placed to trick the viewer. Yet, it acts as a clear mix into one's conjecture that what was believed to be a childhood memory, never actually happened.



IMG 31 Georges watches the guests (in-frame: Pierre) leave, from the same window we see in the first act.

Preceding the scene further the confrontation between Anne and Georges makes it clear that the imagery we perceived as memories were actually the dreams of present day Georges, about

the images of the lies he told as a young boy. The lies about Majid being sick and coughing blood, the images from first memory flash (IMG 14) and second POV flashback (IMG 19, IMG 20), which were complete lies but has been shown as memories. Georges goes on to tell Anne that his parents did not believe him, which pushed him to create false scenario, where he asks Majid to slaughter a rooster stating that his father asked him to. As we see Majid does slaughter the rooster. But is it a memory?

It is Georges' memory which convinces him that the other half of the dream is something that might happen due to the fact that it was a complete setup by Georges to convince his parents that Majid is not well, which was not the case but still he was able to convince his parents. It was the rise of his fear and conscientious recognition of one's responsibility in an act, but is shown as an obvious dream, compared to other past imagery. Does this imply that Georges do finds himself guilty? Or is it just an inner recognition to hide the resulting implications if they do resurge in the society completely? Does that point the case towards rise of shame driven morality and a lack of guilty conscience?

4.3.1.2.4 Dream 4

The questions raised above are vital parts of the narrative discourse, but the placement of the fourth dream refuses to comply with any defined forms of guilt and shame. In the last few minutes of the film we see Georges go to sleep which is followed by the image from the past, a recall of pure memory, is it Georges' dream? Or is it Haneke showing us the truth about past?

Let's assume it is Georges' dream. A complete memory recall. Does that points to the fact that it is a sign of guilty conscience? As much as the viewer wishes at this point in the narrative for Georges to have at least a hint (show) of guilt, Haneke would not resolve the inner conflict of the audience, and therefore we see Georges' inner conflict. Before he goes to sleep, we see him take two sleeping pills, about which he mentions in the same to his wife on the phone. There lies a certain melodramatic factors in the metaphysical foundations of the civilization after the death

of post-modernist dealings of the societies and individuals. The non-resolutely aspect of the dealings of new morality is the exact plain where *Caché's* characters rest, especially Georges. The last dream is the confrontation of the past truth that he sees – and is shown to us – the scene shows young Majid being taken away by children house (probably) (IMG 32). It is a still frame composed similar to that of the third dream where we see Majid slaughtering a rooster (IMG 26), which, in that case, was a POV shot from young Georges' view. The probability of this scene being Georges' dream, compared to the third dream (IMG 26), can be seen as a replacement of the rooster, where Majid is the one sacrificed. Is it an empathetic view? Or is it a cynical acknowledgement – like the Parisian Police department did in 1999, 2001, and 2007?



IMG 32 Young Majid been taken away by people associated with some (unknown) institution.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Haneke's *Caché* discursive approach of storytelling does not intent to tell a story that lets one stand on stand still on one ethical ground throughout the narrative. Although, the shift feels like a narrative plot that baffles the audience, its sole purpose does not intent to entertain the idea of entertainment at the cost of character's moral dilemma but that of the viewers. Particularly in *Caché*, it is the characters' ease of moral reasoning with oneself that brings the primary themes of moral dilemma straight to the audience. Derivative shift off of the main characters works in a thriller and does on a seismic scale when Majid kills himself, yet it does not have the same effects as that of the other suspense dramas where viewers feel betrayed at the end while thinking about how did the storyteller got the best of them, but instead, in *Caché*, treachery is a small factor opening a gateway to the wider scape discourse of the new world morality. Although, the layered metaphoric narratives aim at the certain contemplative historical events in question, it also critiques the globalized individualist foundations of ethics and reasoning.

The genealogical outline provided in the introduction might or might not help the reader see the micro shifts of the current world morality, but to align the epistemology of the individual's motifs one might see that the reliance on the new world communications has also completely shattered the stems of modernism and the promises of individualistic dreams. Considering Haneke's oeuvre, we can see a pattern of thematic changeling over the years, 'The Glaciation Trilogy' – his movies made in Austria – heavily criticized the video culture and the world that rested on it, but in those films, there was the resolution to the narrative. The narrative was developed as a story not as a discourse, which was changed in his French produced films. There

are no hopeful resolutions to the narratives. In the case of *Caché*, three acts are in place but there are fragmented bits that do not reach a verdict, yet support the whole narrative economics. These movies, in terms of emotional values, does not show a moral tenacity, but instead entitles the viewer to carry on the discursive question raised in the narrative, especially after the plot.

5.1 Guilt and Shame

The ethical driving factors of the individual has been looked into, even though not with immense attention of the exact factors that point to the signs of guilty conscience, it is not something that is completely missing. Certain actions of the characters in the movie show motifs that rise from guilt, but seems to drive themselves to the faculty of ignorant individualistic reasoning, which fears the factor of collective shame instead of what we call ‘pangs of consciousness’. The loopholes of conscience that lets guilt in, seems to fail short in the face of individual reasoning, that same reasoning the is shown in abstract nature in the dreams and memories of Georges, where the clarity of memory is reached after the death of the problem – a destructive resolution that does is not resolution of the problem but a mere shadowing of it.

5.2 New Morality

The role of current collective morality, Haneke argues, seems to work in the same direction, where he argues such dilemmas with the show of polarity of communicative means of individuals. Is Georges watching young Majid leave in the last dream (due to the same image composition)? Does Georges take sleeping pills as he has trouble sleeping? Is Majid’s son really the one keeping a surveillance on the Laurents? If not, who is sending the tapes? Compare it to current world scenario, in second decade of the century we are deep into the roles of unknown accusations and universal viewing of individual living. Georges being a TV anchor, all the while he faces a threat through video tapes, is the enigmatic problem that is bigger than a short term ripples of a certain

event. Although, it is not the way of today's communicative dealing, the shorter dealings of the events are overlooked overtime just as the news playing in background at the Laurents' house in multiple scene where all of them are just consumed and enslaved by their own first world privileged reasoning while the world 'inside the TV' has problems like wars and pandemics to deal with (IMG 1).



IMG 33 News on the TV showing some conflict in Middle-East, while Georges and Anne are doing their stuff (calling Yves (Pierrot's friend) to find out about Pierrot, as he is not home.

5.3 Resolution

Michael Haneke's *Caché*, is a discursive mammoth narrative that is meticulously layered into events that the Laurents' deal with in the runtime of the movie. But as we dissect the narrative, aesthetics, and metaphysics of the film world we are delivered a set of ideas that are vital arguments for and against current values of our civilization. The intent of the study was to understand complex moral key drivers of the narratives, which seemed to be a task worthwhile, but to do that seems, by the end of it, to be a mountain to climb and endless arguments to unveil the possible arguments that might show us a better look at today's world, as well as, puts us on the wet ground of metaethical uncertainty that lies as we walk with the same unresolved ideas towards the future.

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Footnote

¹ (German) **Kulturkritik**: *Study of (our) culture*