

Violence in Michael Haneke’s “glaciation trilogy”¹

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-5844202039>

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Abstract

By using a theoretical approach that makes use of a multitude of branches of knowledge, this piece of work seeks to understand the pictorial presentation of violence and its relations with the media in Michael Haneke’s “glaciation trilogy”, made up of the movies *The Seventh Continent*, *Benny’s Video* and *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance*. This essay defends that the way in which the Austrian director presents violence, explicitly in these three compositions, differs itself from the way that the media and genre cinema treat it.

Keywords: Violence. Media. Cinema. Image. Haneke.

Introduction

Michael Haneke is today part of the select group of filmmakers who have been twice awarded the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival (2009 and 2012). Such international acknowledgement, however, seemed distant at the beginning of his career. Between 1967 and the early 1970s, Haneke used to work as a television script editor when the growing reputation of his theater plays made it possible to produce his first film (GRUNDMANN, 2010). In 1974, the German television channel SWF financed the feature film *After Liverpool (...und was kommt danach?)*, an adaptation of James Saunders’ play.

Only in 1989, at the age of almost 50, Haneke made his film debut. *The Seventh Continent*, (*Der siebente Kontinent*) took part in the Cannes Film Festival and received awards in the international festivals of Flanders and Locarno. The first important essay on the director also dates from the same year. Horwath (*apud*. GRUNDMANN, 2010) highlights the “anachronistic” director as the last of the modernists: when he started working in cinema, Bergman had already retired, Antonioni had migrated to television, and Fassbinder, Truffaut and Tarkóvski had already died.

1 Translated by Larissa Stoner (Sunny Traduções) and revised by the authors.

The Seventh Continent composes, with *Benny's Video* (1992) and *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance* (*71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls*, 1994), the so-called "glaciation trilogy". Produced in a context of Austria's entry into the European Union, it introduces a central element to Haneke's cinema: violence. According to Capistrano (2013, p. 8), "Haneke exposes the trivialization of violence through images and the cushioned way in which the viewer usually receives it, with all the clichés and sensationalism attached to such visions".

Still in Capistrano's view (2013), the director questions, through his films, the fascination generated by violent images and, in doing so, forces the spectator out of his/her passivity and into a role of executioner rather than victim. It is this aspect that justifies the phenomenon that Elsaesser (*apud*. GRUNDMANN, 2010, p. 27) calls "irruptions".

These "irruptions" correspond to the turbulent reception the filmmaker's works had in Cannes. Walkouts, expressions of disapproval and provocative comments were common. His films had thus become veritable events, whether due to the expectation of prize winning or to the critics' response (GRUNDMANN, 2010).

In order to address violence in Haneke's cinema, this piece of work introduces Nietzsche's tragic approach (2007), Freud's psychoanalytic perspective (2009, 2010) and Adorno and Horkheimer's (2002) sociophilosophical thinking. Next, the writings of Debord (2014) and Baudrillard (1993) enrich the discussion around the media so as to delineate, in the final segment, a thematic analysis, but also an aesthetic and metalinguistic approach, of the relations between media and violence in the compositions, linking the mentioned thoughts to Nancy's considerations (2005). Would the film presentation establish a distinction, given its artistic character? The assumption of a positive response guides this study.

Creation and destruction: violence in Nietzsche and Freud

In his *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche (2007) questions the concepts of *good* and *evil*. For the author, these moral values, as human inventions, are subject to criticism, and their origin must be sought rather in the world itself than behind it. The etymology of the word *good* leads back in several languages to terms such as "noble", "aristocratic". It follows the premise that, while the noble man claimed the qualities for himself, the defects remained for those Nietzsche called "man of resentment".

That man of resentment, by drawing his own moral values from the opposition to an "evil enemy" – i.e., to the aristocracy - disguises the impossibility of revenge as a lack of desire to take revenge. In this way, he appropriates an ideal of justice and replaces hatred against the enemy with hatred against injustice. The origin of the judicial system, however, is itself violent. Through the technique of *mnemonics*, something was burnt in because "only something that continues to hurt stays in the memory" (NIETZSCHE, 2007, p. 38). Furthermore, punishment did not arise from the idea that "the criminal [...] could have acted otherwise", but "out of anger over some wrong that had been suffered [...] held in check and

modified by the idea that every injury has its equivalent which can be paid in compensation, if only through the pain of the person who injures” (2007, p. 40).

That system in which “the creditor could inflict all kinds of dishonour and torture on the body of the debtor” (2007, p. 41) was only possible, in the philosopher’s view, “to the degree that *to make* someone suffer is pleasure in its highest form” (2007, p. 42). Today’s criminal laws still retain traces of this effort to keep some elementary requirements of social coexistence present. The current notion of “guilt”, for example, originates from the material concept of “debt”. It implies, therefore, a relationship between creditor and debtor based on the assumption that “every thing has its price” (NIETZSCHE, 2007, p. 46). The role of justice, as opposed to revenge, is to divert feelings from immediate harm and to respect all points of view, not just that of the injured. There is thus a detachment from the human natural desire for power.

Punishment, however, does not generate “bad consciousness” and “guilt” as expected. Those feelings are man’s inventions “so that he can hurt himself, after the *more natural* outlet of this wish to hurt had been blocked” (NIETZSCHE, 2007, p. 63). Otherwise, the counter-pleasure of making suffer is sublimated, made subtler, transposed to the imaginative and psychic planes. From this hypothesis, a parallel with art is drawn.

Nietzsche advocates the separation between artist and work, a divorce from what is real, effective. He understands art as a terrain for the sanctification of lies, an empire of “the will to illusion”. Based on this thought, the question arises of how to artistically present suffering. Considering the distinction between the artist, his work and reality, violence should not be exposed as it is in everyday crimes. In which way, then, should it be transposed to the figurative field? And how can this “sanctified lie” promote a reflection about it instead of legitimizing it?

Having adapted Nietzsche’s writings on sensualism in art to this study, it is evident that violent stimuli are not suspended in the aesthetic state, but, being transfigured, they do not enter the consciousness as such - instead, they modify it. The pictorial presentation of violence can thus intensify a violent desire. In this case, the non-conjugation between Apollonian and Dionysian impulses would occur, as denounced by the philosopher in previous texts.

The strength of Dionysius, god of excess, creates in the artistic practice the power to approach the real by breaking with the Apollonian art, whose purpose is to replace the world of truth, or the truth of the world, with beautiful forms. The Dionysian state, however, may turn against itself when not conjugated with the force of Apollo, god of reason, of control. Art, therefore, depends on the conjunction of the two so as not to be limited to imprisoning stillness or uncontrolled destruction (MACHADO, 1999).

A similar proposal can be found in Freud (2009). In the view of the father of psychoanalysis, human instincts are divided into two: the erotic, which tend to preserve and unite, and the aggressive or destructive, which seek to destroy and kill. The distinction between them, however, is not absolute, since they coexist and satisfy each other. In self-preservation, erotic motivation can only be achieved with the use of aggressiveness, and in

past atrocities, such as the Inquisition, idealistic motivations justify the destructive nature. Throughout the civilization process, instincts shift to conform to the ethical code, and intellectual life gains strength.

On one hand, the voice of the weakest is allowed, since the strongest cannot use force to silence them. On the other hand, space is opened for uprisings, since some individuals internalize their aggressive impulses without being able to recognize or satisfy them in a sophisticated way (FREUD, 2010). Deviant behavior thus becomes possible even in a time marked by rationalism and the construction of institutions that preserve privacy and ethics.

The terrain of the arts, in contrast, offers an "exhaust valve". In it, the aggressive instincts go through a process of sophistication, through which they are directed to a higher condition, that of the aesthetic presentation. By using violence to satisfy the public, mainstream cinema exploits the marketability of the dialectics between destructive and erotic impulses, between Dionysius and Apollo. On the opposite path, the cinema advocated by this study seeks to provide the spectator with resources so that he or she perceives their role as an accomplice and begins to reason the images of violence or the violence of images.

Myth and reason: violence in Adorno and Horkheimer

Adorno and Horkheimer, Jewish and Marxist philosophers in a post-Nazi context, write about the absence of a truly human state. For them, because of the instrumental use of thought, humanity sinks into a new kind of barbarism. In other words, there is the ratification of the existing order and the curtailment of theoretical imagination for self-protection in a hostile environment. In this scenario, critical reflection is lost, and all otherness emerges under the form of an object to be dominated.

The project of enlightenment, i.e., "to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 1), was responsible for the equalization of power and knowledge and, consequently, for the use of violence. In this positivist endeavor, the mythical figures were reduced to a subjective conception and lost the character of truth. In the German authors' comprehension, the return to myth and Greek religion helps us understand the contemporary world. According to this conception, enlightenment is "mythical fear radicalized" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 11), since men presume to be free from fear when there is nothing else unknown.

In their analysis, the theorists return to outstanding works for European society, such as Homer's *Odyssey* and Marquis de Sade's *Juliette*. In this last character, for instance, they recognize a redirection of the energies connected with the sacrament towards the sacrilege. Juliette behaves in a destructive way, not with the naturalness of Protohistory, but already with the prohibition of a taboo, with the stigma of bestiality. In that way, "the joy of defeating civilization with its own weapons" is at stake, because the character, "in psychological terms, (...) embodies neither unsublimated nor regressive libido but intellectual pleasure in regression" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 74).

The calculating reason for the protagonist of Sade refers to the “secret creed of all ruling classes” in the naturalness of oppression, violence, cruelty, tyranny and injustice of the strong against the weak (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 78). This belief is maintained through bourgeois rigidity of moral principles, which “makes it easier for the privileged to look at what threatens them in the eye by dwelling on the suffering of others”. There is no room for remorse, since it “posits the past – which, contrary to popular ideology, has always meant nothing to the bourgeoisie – as something which exists” (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 75). Therefore, through the study of *Juliette*, the presence of violence in bourgeois capitalist society and in the artistic field can be perceived. To deepen the analysis, however, it is necessary to know what Adorno and Horkheimer understand about art and more specifically cinema, the object of this work.

The aesthetic appearance, through its refusal to act, retains elements of reality while opposing it. Contained in this dialectic, art establishes its own domain, as does magic, of which art is an heir. In this manner, it acts as an expression of totality and claims for the dignity of the absolute but may also suggest new paths. The passage of the *Odyssey* in which Ulysses ties himself to the mast to avoid surrendering to the song of the sirens is a symbol of the impelling character of aesthetic fruition. Music has the power of being irresistible and leading to surrendering to passions. If, on one hand, the tragic hero can be replaced in the work due to his dominant condition, the oarsmen, whose ears are forcibly covered, represent, on the other hand, the conformism that pushes thought away from the masses.

Still in the field of literature, as stated by the philosophers, epics describe episodes of violence with a narrative distance that could bring them closer to entertainment. They detach themselves, however, by means of interruptions in the narration. In this manner, the reader does not forget the atrocities presented. In cinema, Hollywood exercises a previous censorship in its images so that they confirm the public’s judgment even before it appears. This mechanism had already been anticipated by Kantian metaphysics. According to it, “the senses are determined by the conceptual apparatus in advance of perception; the citizen sees the world as made a priori of the stuff from which he himself constructs it” (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 65).

The use of film language advocated by this study, in contrast to the mass productions perceived by Adorno and Horkheimer, does not condition the viewer, but removes them from their place. And, by proposing a reflection on images, it approaches Greek tragedies and brings out the social dimension of art.

Media and violence: Debord, Baudrillard and possible connections

In early career writings, Haneke (GRUNDMANN, 2010, p. 28) discusses television and film as devices that shape, through their formal aspects, the audience’s awareness. Unlike the still image, which “shows an action’s *result*”, the moving image “shows *the action itself*”. The receiver of the latter, unlike with the former, stands in the position of a perpetrator, of an

accomplice. For this reason, the viewer can even connive with violence, since, with the intent of replacing the terror of reality, it is emptied of its real character and becomes consumable.

For the Austrian director, television, by adopting the dramaturgical and aesthetic forms of cinema, compels it to reinvent itself. When it comes to violence,

the producers of fictional violence were forced to compete against the sensation of authentic terror by upping the visual appeal. In the battle against it, journalistic ambition shed the last remnants of respect for the dignity of the exposed victims. (CAPISTRANO, 2013, p. 32).

Haneke's proposal, in opposition to the trivialization carried out by the media and genre films, consists in emancipating the viewer. In the words of the filmmaker, "The question is not: 'What am I allowed to show?' but rather: 'What chance do I give the viewer to recognize what it is I am showing?'" (CAPISTRANO, 2013, p. 33). The issues raised by this discussion refer to the thoughts of Debord (2014) and Baudrillard (1993).

Debord (2014) characterizes modern society as the society of the spectacle, with implications in different fields. In the social sphere, the life model is mediated by images: appearing counts more than being. In the economic domain, goods impose their command over the economy: "The real consumer has become a consumer of illusions. The commodity is this materialized illusion and the spectacle is its general expression" (2014, p. 19). Lifetime is also transformed in this spectacular society. Debord (2014) distinguishes "the time spent consuming images", which is the spectacle itself, from the "image of the consumption of time", which conveys desirable moments, such as leisure and vacation, in a spectacular manner. In this context, "the reality of time has been replaced by the *publicity* of time" (DEBORD, 2014, p. 83-84). If the society of the spectacle brings the individual closer to the commodity and moves him or her away from the whole, it creates likewise an illusion of integration.

Baudrillard (1993), in turn, diagnoses an "after the orgy" state in contemporary society. After "the moment when modernity exploded upon us, the moment of liberation in every sphere", today there is a "state of simulation", in which what was previously done is repeated (BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 3). References have been lost, and each category has been taken to the highest degree of generalization. The action itself has less importance today than the fact that it is produced. Such an idea leads the theorist to argue that "good communication (...) implies the annihilation of its own content" (BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 49). The lack of distance between the spectator and the screen makes him or her fall into a kind of "screen imaginary", surrendering more to the "spectacle of thought" (BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 51) and less to thought itself. The masses subject themselves to the strategy of "letting others want, letting others believe" (BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 169).

Even violence is part of that system of representation. It is "a simulacrum of violence, emerging less from passion than from the screen: a violence in the nature of the image"

(BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 75). And in order for it to be accepted by the spectator, it presents itself detached from its referent on this mental screen of television. In its turn, cinema, as an attenuated form of rupture of the image from the real, sketches the figure of a totality - unlike photography, which “records the state of the world in our absence” (BAUDRILLARD, 1993, p. 152). That justifies the dramatic use of the still image in the Seventh Art. Returning to Gombrowicz, finally, Baudrillard indicates a way out of the process of alienation promoted by contemporary screens: affectation. In other words, men must become aware of their state of artifice and confess it.

Images of violence and violence of images: Nancy and Art

In order to sustain the hypothesis that the presentation of violence in Haneke’s films differs from that presented on television and in genre cinema, it is necessary to establish a stronger connection between image and violence. Nancy (2005) points out two possible assumptions regarding images. The first is that images are violent, as the expression “advertising bombardment” demonstrates. The second one is that images of violence are omnipresent but indecent, shocking. For the philosopher, these perceptions imply the elaboration of ethical, legal and aesthetic demands to regulate the violence or the images or the images of violence.

Unlike Arendt (2009), for whom violence is ruled by the “means-end” category, Nancy (2005) does not believe in a set of goal-oriented forces. In the author’s conception, “violence does not transform what it assaults; rather, it takes away its form and meaning”, deforms and massacres. Therefore, it is a calculated and intentional absence of thought (NANCY, 2005, p. 16). Given its destructive character, it cannot, for Nancy (2005), function as truth. The theoretician believes, however, that truth also causes destruction because it cannot impose itself without suppressing a previously established order. Truth is therefore violent because it is true, while violence is “true” – i.e., it sustains its discourse - only insofar as it is violent. Once these distinctions are set, one must pay attention to the similarities between violence and the violence of truth. Both are governed by the same principle: that of the intractable, i.e., the impossibility of negotiating, ordering, sharing. It can act as the mark of truth’s opening - when it opens space for it to emerge - or of its closing - when it presents itself in a self-satisfied manner.

Nancy (2005) draws a parallel between image and violence by stating that violence always completes itself in an image. For the violent person, the production of the effect is indissociable from its manifestation. He or she wants to see the mark made on things or beings assaulted, and violence consists precisely in that excess. It desires to be demonstrative and “monstrative”: it shows itself and shows its effects. The image, for Nancy (2005), also has this character of self-showing, since, by emulating something, it rivals it: it does not reproduce it, but competes for presence. In the image, the thing is not content simply to be, but wants to show *that* and *how* it is, to position itself as a subject. It then retains a monstrous character.

The monstrosity of the image is in the terrain of excessive power in which it acts for *imagination*, that is to say, "it must extract from its absence the unity of force that the thing merely at hand does not present" (NANCY, 2005, p. 22). The image, then, "is the prodigious force-sign of an improbable presence irrupting from the heart of a restlessness on which nothing can be built" (NANCY, 2005, p. 23). This irruption, or emergence of the dispersed multiplicity, is itself violent. The image has yet the duplicity of a monster, since what it presents can keep it immobile or project it ahead. From this perception, Nancy (2005) derives two ways of treating violence: that of the art, which touches the real, and that of the blow, which is in itself its own ground. "Knowing how to discern a groundless image from an image that is nothing but a blow is an entire art in itself (...); way before or way beyond any aesthetics, this is the responsibility of art in general" (NANCY, 2005, p. 25).

In the same way as violence, therefore, the image is in excess of signs, a being full of signs. It is up to art, in Nancy's (2005) conception, to give a sign², to exceed signs, without, however, revealing anything other than this excess. The way out is in a "violence without violence", which can be achieved in two ways: through the revelation that does not take place but remains imminent, or through the revelation that there is nothing to reveal. Art, for the French theorist,

is not a simulacrum or an apotropaic form that would protect us from unjustifiable violence [...]. It is the exact knowledge of this: that there is nothing to reveal, not even an abyss, and that the groundless is not the chasm of a conflagration, but imminence infinitely suspended over itself (NANCY, 2005, p. 26).

Violence in anyone: characters in the "glaciation trilogy"

To understand the "glaciation trilogy" necessarily implies an analysis of its characters. *The Seventh Continent* and *Benny's Video* elect middle-class families as protagonists, while *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance*, despite its fragmented structure, allows for the observation of a few families. Work and study routines mark the portraits, and that is not an incidental approach. The privileged condition, as indicated by Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), prevents people, believing in the naturalness of oppression, from recognizing violence around them.

Through his characters' social class, Haneke seems to suggest that no one is immune to violence, an idea reinforced by the delay in revealing the faces. In *The Seventh Continent*, those of Anna, Georg and Evi are covered with foam in the car wash from the opening scene. Afterwards, the family is either filmed from the back, or from the front but with a

² Nancy refers to the German verb *winken*, better translated as to wave, to signal, to alert.

darkened image, or with their heads out of the frame. Benny, when shown for the first time, turns to the television set in his small studio, in the opposite direction of the viewer, while rewinding a tape. With their faces denied, they could be anyone.

The absence or generic character of names also draws attention. In *Benny's Video*, the boy's parents are identified in the credits only as *Vater* – “father” in German - and *Mutter* – “mother” in German. *The Seventh Continent*, in turn, adopts a strategy repeated in most of Haneke's scripts: the choice of the names Georg and Anna for a couple. In an interview with Clarke (2012), the director justifies it: “The important thing when selecting names is to ensure they don't have a meaning in real life. Because film is a realist medium I don't want them to have any hidden metaphorical meaning”.

The described mechanisms favor the identification between spectator and character. As suggested by Girard (1990), people, increasingly distant, are also increasingly closer in modernity. The obliteration of distinctions, in the conception of the French theorist, leads to the sacrificial crisis and the spread of violence within the community. One can thus understand radical choices for suicide and murder: the inability to produce difference favors the destruction of oneself and of others.

In one of the first sequences of *The Seventh Continent*, an alarm clock reads 5:59, and one minute later it begins to ring. It is the foreshadowing of a daily routine that repeats itself throughout the narrative. The wife puts her shoes on, gets out of bed, opens the window. Subsequently, her husband accompanies her. He brushes his teeth and gets ready for work; she wakes up her daughter, feeds the fish and gets coffee ready. They all eat together.

It is noticeable that the family leads an orderly life, conforming to the bureaucratic political system that Arendt (2009) points out as the trigger for violence³. In this context of deprivation of the power to act, the process of displacement considered by Freud (2010) necessary so that the destructive impulses do not turn against oneself is hindered. In the case of the film, the mechanization of everyday life has a negative effect on the family nucleus, with suicide as the ultimate consequence. Arendt's idea of the faculty of action frustrated by the obstacles of modernity also marks the character Maximilian B., murderer of the last film of the trilogy. Presented as another one among many - which is already expressed in the fragmentation suggested in the title -, the student behaves in a reactive way since his first appearance, when he gets angry for not being able to assemble a puzzle.

His posture gets radicalized in the final moments as a response to the worsening bureaucracy around him. He tries to pay for gas with a credit card, but the gas station does not accept it. He then goes to a bank branch, in which the cash machines are out of order. He tries to cross the line to explain the situation to a cashier, but is assaulted. When he returns to

³ In Arendt's conception (2009), violence is governed by the means-end category and, since the end of human action cannot be predicted, it involves an element of arbitrariness. It thus acts as an interruption of routine, an event before which modernity adopts two postures: repulsion or glorification. The first behavior, characterized by courage, willingness to act and confidence in the possibility of change, corresponds to the new left, to which Haneke belongs. The second, on the other hand, results from the deprivation of the faculty of action promoted by the typical bureaucracy in the modern world.

the station and hears swearing from a driver waiting to refuel, he loses his temper, freaks out, searches for a stolen gun that he had won in a bet and kills three other characters in the bank.

However, not only the killer suffers from the mechanized routine and the lack of interpersonal communication. The previous presentation of his victims indicates similar difficulties. A lonely elderly man, for example, fights on the phone with his daughter and asks to speak to his granddaughter in a shot that lasts more than seven minutes. The length of the scene and the denial of the reverse shot reinforce the banality and monotony of everyday action.

Also a killer, Benny, unlike Maximilian, uses the suffering of others as a means of gratification. This form of pleasure, already highlighted by Nietzsche (2007) in his *On the Genealogy of Morality*, is present in *Benny's Video* from the title. It's through horror movies and homemade death tapes, to which the protagonist watches with pleasure, that he gets his first contact with violence. This intimate relationship becomes even more striking when he himself commits a crime.

There are similarities in this logic with Juliette, by Marquis de Sade, studied by Adorno and Horkheimer (2002). In common, the characters share an intellectual pleasure in regression. Although the murder seems at first sight impulsive, since the boy only acts after being called a "coward", the hypothesis of premeditation gains strength in the last act. The final sequence reveals that he had filmed his parents talking about how to get rid of the body in order to incriminate them. This outcome eliminates any trace of compassion or empathy from Benny's character, confirming the previous evidence - he ignores an "I love you" from his father shortly before, for instance.

The ultimate consequence of violence: death in the "glaciation trilogy"

For Nancy (2005), as seen, the exit to art lies in presenting "violence without violence". This goal can be achieved in two ways: through the revelation that remains imminent or through the revelation that there is nothing to reveal. The investigation of death in the "glaciation trilogy" will allow us to diagnose how Haneke employs each method in his films.

The fact that the preparation for suicide stands out more than the final action in *The Seventh Continent* appears already as a strong sign of a revelation that there is nothing to reveal. The depiction of the protagonists' fate is postponed and, when it finally happens, it has less importance than the previous events. The images do not appeal to the spectator's feelings: they offer a critical distance so that he or she can reflect. In this way, they deny violence as a simulacrum and reconnect it to its correspondence in the real world.

The spontaneity with which the family deals with death also deserves attention. The title itself suggests an analogy between suicide and the exploration of a new place. Added to this foreshadowing, there are inserts of images of a beach in Australia, the "sixth continent". It is no coincidence that the characters refer to their radical decision as a journey: "We have decided to leave", Georg writes in a letter to his mother; "We are leaving the country", he and Anna say to a bank employee.

In facing death, the family does not distinguish it from everyday life. Instead, they decide to prepare it methodically – “I think we have to be systematic with everything”, says Georg - and, in their final moments, they watch music shows on television, an attitude that suggests the banality with which they face the moment. For them, suicide is, and so the film shows, only suicide. There is nothing more to reveal.

Off-frame action and off-screen choices in *Benny’s Video*, on the other hand, indicate an imminent revelation. Haneke does not merely film the murder scene for narrative purposes but reinvents it. The camera faces a TV set, through whose images Benny’s room can be seen. Added to this metalinguistic exercise, there are no cuts or movements to accompany the characters. The crime takes place outside the field of view of the spectator, who can only hear it. The spectacle of violence is denied to the viewer. When you see the body, it is already dead. The exploitation of suffering as a suspense, common in commercial cinema, is thus avoided.

This approach differs from Benny’s when he produces one of his homemade tapes. To him, someone violent, the production of an effect is indissociable from its manifestation. Nancy’s idea (2005) is materialised in the scene in which the boy films himself while erotically rubbing the victim’s blood over his body. In his video, the image of violence is like that of a blow because it does not look critically at reality but encases itself in its own core. Haneke, by incorporating excerpts like this in his film, brings the boy’s footage closer to those of sensationalist journalism and genre films and reaffirms the artistic character of his cinema.

On the presentation of the deaths in *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance*, finally, we could say that the revelation also remains imminent. In the scene in which Maximilian goes into the bank with a gun and shoots, there is no cut to the victims. The film denies the reverse shot, avoiding conventionalism. It thus frustrates the thirst for violence of the public, which realizes its condition as an accomplice for expecting to see blood from the first image⁴. Just as in *Benny’s video*, there is a later scene of a corpse lying on the ground. It does not contradict the hypothesis of imminent revelation, however, because it takes place after the action is over. Moreover, the image respects the victim rather than violating it: the man is facing downwards, and no sign of disfigurement is seen.

The vehicles of violent images: the media in the “glaciation trilogy”

Throughout Haneke’s films, the media, especially television, are ubiquitous. In the case of the three works studied, one can perceive a narrative arc in which the role of the media evolves. If, at first, it detaches itself from the “here and now” to offer an illusion of replacement, it then starts to compete with fictional productions and ends up losing its ethical commitment.

⁴ *71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance* opens with the note: “On 23 December 1993, Maximilian B., a 19-year-old student, killed three people in a bank in Vienna. Shortly after, he shot himself in the head”.

The aforementioned analogy between dying and travelling in *The Seventh Continent*, considering its initial establishment, provides material for media analysis. A shot of a touristic advertisement of Australia, right after the family leaves the car wash, shows a beautiful and quiet beach, an ideal place to escape. Advertising, however, is part of the economy of the spectacle pointed out by Debord (2014). Tourism is a commodity and, as such, is part of the set of illusions that dominate the imaginary. The image of time consumption in this idealized place generates frustration, since there is no possible correspondence in the real world. And while this "sixth continent", Oceania, does not offer the expected fulfillment, the protagonists seek the seventh one, which they discover to be death. Only in it, and not in life, can they achieve satisfaction. Another element of illusion incorporated by the film is television. The show that the family watches moments before dying symbolizes the evasion of the hardships and disappointments of the contemporary world. Once death, the ultimate escape, takes place, this distraction is no longer necessary. The TV then displays static - the noise that the old devices used to reproduce when they were off the air. Its content is annihilated: more than just theoretically - as in Baudrillard (1993) -, but literally.

If the final credits for *The Seventh Continent* appear over that static footage, so do the initials of *Benny's Video*. There is a noticeable connection between the two films, thus strengthening the hypothesis of the relational construction of a discourse about television. In the sequence in which Benny appears for the first time, a TV news program in the background announces racist attacks on soccer while the boy talks to his mother. The father arrives, looks at the screen, and asks:

FATHER: Any news?
 MOTHER: None.
 FATHER: What are they saying?
 MOTHER: I don't know. Nothing
 (GLACIATION TRILOGY, 1992).

The dialogue makes the family's indifference to the violence surrounding them clear. This attitude results from the phase, diagnosed by Haneke (GRUNDMANN, 2010), in which television and cinema competed for the sensation of terror. As a result, today the appearance of reality overlaps with reality itself (DEBORD, 2014), and Benny and his family cannot distinguish the horror films the boy watches from the horror of everyday life.

71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance, finally, radicalizes the discourse by incorporating excerpts from a TV news broadcast in its editing. The news mixes scenes from wars, such as those in Somalia and Haiti right at the opening, and celebrities, such as the interview with Michael Jackson at the end. These inserts exemplify Haneke's understanding (GRUNDMANN, 2010, p. 578) that "journalistic ambition shed the last remnants of respect for the dignity of the exposed victims". Weapons and torn bodies are placed in front of the

lenses without the slightest shame, in an audiovisual treatment closer to an action film than to a documentary record.

In addition, there is no pause for reflection - like the one promoted by Haneke with the use of the fade to black, an interruption in the narrative analogous to those perceived by Adorno and Horkheimer (2002) in the epics. One piece of news overlaps with another, and a tragedy seems forgotten the next minute. The images of the war produced by the television are, in short, those of a simulacrum of violence (BAUDRILLARD, 1993), detached from their real referent for the persistence of an uncritical posture. The task of the filmmaking this study defends, on the contrary, is to re-establish this connection.

Final considerations

This article is based on the hypothesis that the pictorial presentation of violence in Haneke's films differs from the sheer brutality often reproduced by the media and mainstream genre cinema. To corroborate or reject this idea, theoretical approaches from various branches of knowledge were employed.

Through their respective tragic and psychoanalytic conceptions, Nietzsche (2007) and Freud (2009, 2010) provided the theoretical foundation for understanding the reasons behind cruelty, both the guilt of existence and the internalization of violence. Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), with a sociophilosophical treatment based on literary criticism, provided insight into the incorporation of the subject in important works of Western culture: incredulity in history as progress points to a rationality that has been tamed by its principle of instrumental reason - leaving only the utopian horizon of art as criticism. Further on, we sought to differentiate the violence present in the media from that elevated by artistic creations. The understanding of the latter is related to Nancy's philosophy (2005), while that of the former could not disregard the studies of Debord (2014) and Baudrillard (1993).

The analysis of the works under the light of the concepts confirms that violence is treated differently in Michael Haneke's "glaciation trilogy". In order to better organize this stage, we tried to observe the characters' profiling, the presentation of death and the discourse about the media separately in each of the films. The characters' traits, both individual and collective, elucidate - in a thematic axis - the implications of violence manifestation in their lives. The images of death, in turn, corroborate - from an aesthetic point of view - the hypothesis of differentiated treatment, especially in the strategy that Nancy (2005) calls "violence without violence", either in a revelation that remains imminent or in that of which there is nothing to reveal. In a metalinguistic dimension, finally, the critical omnipresence of the media definitively moves Haneke's cinema away from the media simulacrum.

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Received on: 09.23.2019

Accepted on: 06.17.2020

