CALIGARI'S HEIRS

CINEMA OF FEAR

Edited by STEFFEN HANTKE
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Michael Hanke ist nicht hier einheimisch. Twice over, actually. For the great Austrian film director would appear to be an ill-fitting, as nicht hier zu-hause, in an anthology about German cinema since 1945 as in an anthology about horror films, a category under which none of his works would traditionally be classified. And yet, hier ist er. The not-quite-German, not-quite-horror director is both familiar and strange to this anthology, unheimlich to its very workings—a positional parallel to the concerns imbricated in his films from the past fifteen years. Less a matter of life imitating art, this is life unimitating, unmatched, unlinking art. This is precisely, where we begin—outside the text, stranger to Germany, stranger to horror cinema, stranger to the anthology. Rest assured, the heimlich-strange always becomes the heimlich-familiar, but, of course, at a certain cost.

When Freud wrote of “the narcissism of minor differences” in Das Unbehagen in der Kultur (Civilization and Its Discontents)—“a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, by means of which cohesion between the members of a community is made easier”—he was referring to the aggression levied by nations with adjoining territories against each other in the desperate attempt to locate difference where, precisely, there is little to begin with: North and South Germany he mentions, and, of course, we might now any Austria and Germany (Freud, Discontent 27). But genre in the field of film studies is no less national in structure than nations proper, bound together in shared difference from others. Genre: kind, in like kind; etymologically saturated to gender, that primary system of differences, that primary system of aggressivity. Horror films no less virulently bind their boundaries, defend their borders, than do nations, ever more threatened by the seemingly tiny differences, the insubstantial flow of refugees from elsewhere into the Heimat. Horror is not only about the home (that dual heimlich, which means both “familiar” and “threatening”), but as a genre, it also is a home, vulnerable to invasion, penetration and violation from without. Freud’s prescient pronouncement about the violent lengths to which nations will go to distinguish themselves from their proximate
and similar brethren is more relevant than ever in the era of globalization. Likewise, never has genre been under greater threats of dissolution than in the anarchic free-for-all of the postmodern. Difference for horror is now dependent on ironic distance, the paradoxic dimensions of the genre reflecting fully invested performances of horror in the desperate attempt to hold on to nothing more than one's own final gasps at distinction. Thus, we find ourselves in the early twenty-first century at a moment when one can speak of the difference between Austria and Germany, but find great difficulty locating precisely what or where that difference is—it is no longer, for example, dependent on any materially real boundaries. One may speak now of horror as bounded, finite, different from, but locate oneself in the same epistemological dusk as above, desperate to distinguish, able to do little more than point mutely and stare with hollowed-out critical eyes. Into this void, I emplace Michael Haneke—not quite, a little off, close but not identical to the very categories bounded by this anthology, the visitor might reveal a hidden truth about the very home into which he bursts, intentions unknown.

Perhaps it is not so surprising to begin to rethink horror from the site of the home, given not only the centrality of the home (its recesses and secrecy; hidden terror and exposed perversion) to the genre as traditionally formulated but also, of course, the truest horror implied by the uses of the term Heimat in the twentieth century. Heimat was itself a genre in 1930s Germany, designed principally to provoke patriotism and its obverse, virulent racism against die heimlose Juden. But Heimat, also, in a way, underlies all generic attempts to find and defend a formal and historical homeland. Returning to Freud—it seems as if the insistent return of horror to psychoanalysis makes all horror, at heart, Austrian—in his 1919 essay “Das Unheimliche” (“The Uncanny”), we find that Freud begins his reading of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s “The Sandman” by criticizing aesthetic studies “which in general prefer to concern themselves with what is beautiful, attractive, and sublime—that is, with feelings of a positive nature,” and it is this turn to negative affect that has made this essay so potent for the studies of horror in literature and cinema (Freud 194). Freud locates in the etymology of heimlich two entirely compatible meanings which nonetheless stand in opposition to each other. The term suggests home, hearth, family, the familiar, the pleasant and comforting; it also suggests that which is concealed, hidden, strange, malicious, gruesome. The word is not emptied of significance through this turn of self-negation. Rather, it becomes full, excessive, paradoxical—a locus of surplus precisely where one would expect a semantic canceling out. Freud spends much of this famous essay in a structure of return, repeating himself, creating nuances, insisting on difference where none appears to be (minor differences, no less), while still never fixing on one thing that we might point to and call “the uncanny.” It is precisely the place of that nothing, that absence of knowledge and affect that comes to characterize, through the performance of the essay, the terms it un-describes.

Freud identifies key features of the uncanny, talking around rather than naming precisely this aspect—the central trait of the term itself is a dimension of non-reciprocity, a relation “incapable of inversion” (Freud 195). During the etymological digression on the correspondence of heimlich (homely) and unheimlich (unhomely), Freud notes that “we are tempted to conclude that what is ‘uncanny’ is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar. Naturally, not everything that is new and unfamiliar is frightening however” (195). In other words, if the uncanny is frightening because it is not known, this does not imply that all unknown things are uncanny. Yet Freud ultimately sees a conversion of meaning—heimlich comes to mean unheimlich: “among its different shades of meaning the word ‘heimlich’ exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, ‘unheimlich.’ What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich” (199).

The temporality of the uncanny, its historical gesture, is one of return, the non-reciprocity of the intrusive past into the present. The uncanny comes to name “nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and long-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (217). I begin here not, actually, to use this essay or its workings to talk about horror or even Haneke—indeed, much, perhaps too much, has already been written in horror studies on the uncanny “return of the repressed”—but for one reason, one reason in two letters.

When Freud makes his case for the unheimlich naming what was once familial (the mother’s body, in his analysis), he writes “the prefix un- [‘un-‘] is the token of repression” (Freud 222). What Freud takes from his language, I take mine. In proper uncanny form, Freud’s familiar “un-” will become unfamiliar in this essay and yet insistently return to defend its boundaryless boundaries. For what Michael Haneke’s films do, I contend, is problematize the very language by which we describe horror films, German or otherwise, though certainly the question of description and definition is never far from the question of a national cinema. This problematization takes the form not of the prefix un- but otherwise, in its linguistic double, Doppelsinnigkeit and strange to itself, in a displaced suffix. For Haneke, not horror films— as I have said, he is not heimlich in this collection—but horrible films, and it is the suffix -ible that marks the workings of his particular brand of cinema as much as Freud’s token of repression characterizes Hoffmann’s stories. That mark of repression indicates the temporality of return, repression always contracting for the future guarantee of its eruption. So too does Haneke’s suffix indicate a temporality (though not of return, we will see) and a tension of presence/absence. Crucially, though, displaced into the afterthought of the word, it hides itself at the moment of its appearance, secreting away its pernicious workings—the making-strange of the very word it attaches to like a parasite, bloody and hungry for meaning. This is not, I insist, I insist this is not a question about genre, but a problematization of that very taut family of films that must be read symptomatically as a primary working of the horrible. For if un- makes impossible an epistemic certainty about the term it precedes, -ible makes impossible a semantic certainty about the term it displaces, heralding its vampiric attachment at the very moment one safely thought the word had neared its articulated end. Writers on Haneke unanimously struggle against the bounded space of genre definition (see,
for example, Christopher Sharratt’s insistence, expressed in his interview with Hanke, that his films are works of “contemporary horror” because of their focus on the bourgeois family in dissolution, pointing to the absence of monsters for the overpresence, thereof, in the threatening quotidian—rest assured, both observations retain a similar error at their core or the relatively thwarted visibility of acts of violence in his works. These defenses—and the more vocal they are, the more they do precisely this—effect little more than securing the entity “horror films” against intrusion by ways of imagining that very field otherwise. For in defining Hanke’s films against, one simply secures the present opposite. The horrible is not the opposite of horror; their relation is not one of similarity, contiguity, opposition or even proximity. It is another relation altogether, and precisely in formulating it, one sees the dangerous workings of the terms rubbing against each other, a frictional frisson that is, itself, horrible.

Hanke positions his films as enacting a troubled relationship to genre, characterizing, in separate interviews, but with identical language, his 1997 Funny Games as “a parody of the thriller genre” (Sharratt, Interview) and his 2001 La Pianiste (The Piano Teacher) as “a parody of a melodrama” (Foundas, Interview). He elaborated in the latter interview: “the genre film is, by definition, a lie. A film is trying to be art, and therefore must try to deal with reality... If films are just business, then you can lie” (Foundas, Interview). The problem with genre, for him, resides in a problem with the cynical marketing of expectations as a palliative for an unthinking, uncritical audience. But the status of truth is at stake here as well, as his films are positioned as counterparts to the “lies” of genre. It is tempting to read in this doubled articulation of “parody” a carte blanche to the postmodern camp to locate in his films playful irony, the triumph of the simulacrum, and the dissolution of the category of the lie (correspondingly, of course, the breakdown of truth as well)—but this would be a great error. For his quibble seems not to be with the lie that genre sells (the lie of coherence) but the lie of genre as the locus of a privileged formal truth. We might lose control of this term very quickly—from genre to gender to like kind to race to species. But grasping it at the very moment it looses its hold, we can insist that far from positioning his films within a genre (horror, melodrama, the thriller, the art film, new Austrian cinema, postwar German cinema, postmodern cinema), we would be wise to note how his films challenge the hegemony of the concept itself. This is not to propose an alternative schema—would that not identically lead us back to classification, to genre proper? Rather it is to insist that classification is itself suspect in relation to the field of truth that Hanke expounds. One final insistence: this is not to fall back yet again into the argument for Hanke as a postmodernist; as parody is as stable and fixed a term as any other, but rather as something else, something marked by the deferred temporality of the suffix that forever changes the word and world that came before.

Hanke, as a former student of philosophy, and native speaker of German, philologically privileged as it is with an overabundance of concepts, has named as one of the primary gestures of his films Entwirkung, which might be translated as reality losing its reality. Inextricably linked with this feature is what I term Entgreselung—horror losing its horror-ness. That loss is what is re-found in the supplement -ble. Crucial to the movement of both terms, the -ung, is a process, a movement, a perpetual unbecoming and undoing. The suffix -ble is etymologically derived from the category of -ble suffixes, which form adjectives that bear the meaning “given to, tending to, likely to, fit to, able to” (OED 144). Horrible thus terms an ability, likeliness, or tendency of its root horror. The same text indicates that “adj. in the -bill, -ble, were originally active (and neuter) as well as passive,” and it is this twin identity as bringer about of horror and passive plane for the reception of the conditions for its existence that so troubles the agency of the horrible. The horrible implies a realization in a potential and future time and place, a condition for the possibility of horror. Its temporal logic is precisely the opposite of the retrograde repression/eruption of heimlich—the horrible is squarely placed in the temporality of what is likely, able, or fit to come; as opposed to the reemergence of what has formerly remained hidden (unheimlich), the horrible names the potential bringing into existence of what has formerly remained hypothetical and unrealized. The question of unstable epistemology on which the unheimlich so resolutely depends is rendered, here, a question of ontology, of the conditions for the very being (its Dasein) of horror.

Horror suspends, it delays its own abstract conditions as a noun—it holds its own meaning at bay. The horrible, saturated with the burden of its suffix, its word-past and word-future, indicates not a repression but a realization; it brings into existence the very plenitude by which the horror genre insists on its own lack. But if horror delays and the horrible insists, what takes up the space of that temporal suspension? What structural gap in horror films is violently realized, closed and brought far too close, in horrible films? We will approach an answer obliquely, tracing the contours of the conditions for possibility so resolutely refused in the one case, so resolutely and cruelly rendered real in the other, through Hanke’s cinema. In its overapproximation to the horrible, we glimpse more correctly what must have gone missing from horror, so threatening in its newly formed realization. This thing that has gone missing is nothing less than the primacy of the cinematic image itself.

After many years directing numerous programs for television—not an uncommon beginning for Austrian film directors—Hanke stakes his claim for an an-cinematic legacy with his 1999 Der Siebente Kontinent (The Seventh Continent), a ninety-minute exposition, rich in detail, that traces the gestures of an Austrian family as they destroy their possessions and prepare for a shared suicide. Properly modernist in its self-consciousness—from the shocking thickness of time as a formal category itself, to the use of Alban Berg’s violin concerto, dedicated “To the Memory of an Angel”—it was the first film in his three-part trilogy devoted to the portrait of “emotionale Vergletscherung” (“emotional glaciation”), followed by Benny’s Video in 1992 and 71 Fragmente einer Chronologie des Zufalls (71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance) in 1994. Like all of his works, these films are formally obsessed with close-ups of hands, quotidian gestures of domestic business (performing chores, daily tasks, etc.), Austrian
music, the status of representation—in particular, television—and the ever-in-process dissolution of the bourgeois family (Austrian, at times, though not universally). These concerns are continued in 2001's La Pianiste (The Piano Teacher) and 2003's post-apocalyptic Le Temps du Loup (The Time of the Wolf), both of which mark his partnership with French screen diva Isabelle Huppert, and a more general production move to France. An extension of his aesthetic language of fragmentation to the increasingly fractured world of globalized Paris is found in Code incomme: Récit incomplet de divers voyages (Code Unknown), released in 2000.

Between the emotionale Vergletscherung trilogy and his more recent work in France came a strange little film from 1997, Funny Games, which begins as many horror films do—though this is entirely irrelevant—as a family leaves the city for the country. In their house by the water, mother, father, son and their dog are terrorized by two well-dressed young men whose intrusion into the house is universally mischaracterized in Hanek's criticism. The point is that they are invited in by the family when they arrive to "borrow some eggs," as social rules dictate. The two men play a series of sadistic Spiele with the family, ranging from betting that the family will be dead in twelve hours (a wager shared, in a close-up aside and with, with the audience), to dares involving the mother's undress, childlike "warm/cold" alternations in a hunt to find the murdered family dog, and a vicious game of hide and seek with the young son, who escapes only to be caught and then indifferently shot minutes later. The son is murdered off-screen as we watch one of the visitors make a sandwich. The father, wounded from the beginning, is casually dispensed with; and the mother, despite escaping, is returned and, without fanfare or triumph, drowned at the end of the film, as the two killers politely approach another family to begin their "funny games" anew. Logic and causality are not central to the narrative—and criticism that attempts to draw strict lines of plausibility inevitably turns sour with frustration. Nor is this a canonical horror film in any regard, as the victims...
Throughout *Funny Games*, voices are insistently severed from their loci of enunciation. Numerous scenes in the opening of the film allow us to hear voices of characters, but without seeing their mouths, lips, teeth—the messy materiality of articulation. At times, the voice sources are off-screen entirely, the camera lingers on an empty hallway or space anticipating visual plenitude. At other times, the hands of the speakers, busy with domestic duties, are shown in close-up while their presumed owner partakes of spoken language. This severely limited visual field effects a double parsing: of the body, newly fragmented into zones of labor, and of the voice from the face. Language comes to exist completely in the realm of epistemological doubt, for there is always a gap (temporal, spatial, epistemic, at the very least) in which the non-coincidence of voice and image is possible. Here a mistake may be made, and the visual image may play a primary *Spie:le* the body we take to be enunciating may turn out not to be the speaker’s body after all. What we suppose to be a saturated whole—mind and body, voice and mouth—comes to be unmade, then, into a series of partial objects, available for re-description and re-appropriation. The image no longer guarantees a certainty about speech and language; it no longer can be found to offer a match between what is spoken and who speaks. In other words, Haneke’s aural universe confuses a model of subjectivity in which there is an irreducible division between the language that is enunciated and the subject of any spoken statement. It implies an atmosphere that inevitably comes to privilege language as a representation for being, a subjectivity whose first move is to rend the subject in two, tortuous, murderous, a violence in loss that necessarily makes impossible the return of the subject to the self. Is it not a torture on par with the wound to the flesh when one of the killers demands of the Father “What’s this?” (answer: a golf ball), forcing him to produce speech—produce, that is, the loss that constitutes his status as a subject alien to itself? We begin, then, with this loss. It will not always be a loss.

The son is murdered, having won a child’s game of painting—this “win” is misrecognized by the less viciously intelligent of the two killers, Peter (sometimes called Tom by his partner), as a loss, the most vicious loss of life reduced to a misrecognition of the rules. When it happens, we are in another room, with the other intruder, Paul, as he calmly fixes himself a sandwich. We hear the shot, the mother’s scream, a struggle—all the time, seemingly held at bay from the scene of horror. When we return with Paul to the room in which the family is being held captive, blood covering the TV screen fills out the narrative for us in a sudden shock. The film seems to too quickly come to an end—“So: have a good evening... bye...” rush the killers and they leave the house. The son’s body lies in a corner, unremarkable really, and unrelentingly distant, as the camera refrains a close-up, to the point that his form is nearly lost in the imagery, and must be hunted for, located, searched out. Time passes. The son, dead in the right corner, father limp, wounded, shocked, in the left, bookends to the horrors of the room. The long take is so very long, so very long, so very long—it is a repetition you just read, thick not with suspense but with the unbearable load of finitude’s irreversible certainty. We wait. Time passes. Time expands, expansive, so very, very long. It has taken seconds—maybe thirty in all—since you read above of the boy’s end. In the film, it takes endless minutes—a paradoxical phrase, no doubt, but you will have time to figure it out. The mother, still bound, makes her way to the television set to turn off the sounds of car racing. The room becomes a field for a different relation to visibility. Forms are made out where there were none. The enormous blood splatter on the wall takes on the fuzzy certainties of a Rorschach blot. Silenceundoos itself, amplifying the tiniest rustle. The father’s growing wills and moans fill the void of the time that passes, which remains otherwise vacant. Agony, awful, anguish—true horrors are impossible to coerce alongside other people’s pain. And yet it goes on, it goes on—there is no producing here the experience of time listening to parents grieving. There is no formulation in language proper to the taut nausea of trauma. You cannot imagine it either; reading this essay, you will falter in the face of any description and cannot go in search of its meaning. You must experience it; the parent’s pain must find you.

Of course, it is not a moment—there is no antonym for moment, for one has to excerpt oneself from whatever that unnamable thickness is to name it as such, returning to the moment proper—but this un-moment (unmomentous) experience of time appears often in Haneke’s work. In *Le Temps du Loup*, various scenes that consist of little more than women screaming hysterically—screaming in and at time, unlike the silty punctuated shriek of traditional horror—produce aura the claustrophobia that the gray mise-en-scène produces visually. *Le Temps du Loup*, as well, regularly refuses to show the subject enunciating—bodies are cloaked in prohibitive darkness, faces are turned away from the screen, hands take the place of the face in the close-up, etc.—instead producing speech that cannot be tied to any specific body. The visceral waiting of a mother at the death of her child in the post-apocalyptic chaos goes on, again far too long—as does, let us admit, all grief to those who endure its witnessing. The temporality of horror is the temporality of the moment (the shock, the surprise, the sudden); the temporality of the horrible is the temporality of grief—a temporality of already-too-long, a temporality that can never catch up to its origin, a temporality unproductible to itself.

The centrality of time to Haneke, or sound to Haneke, cannot be stated, for it is the centrality of time to sound and sound to time that his work takes on, already partnered, already heavy with the burdens of the other’s meanings. Throughout *Funny Games*, sound is connected to the unendurable sense of time itself as a formal principle. The heaviness of silence when the family first enters the house is punctuated by the mother’s observation that the clock has stopped. Time has become impossible in its progressive dimension, but not in its affective one. Though the killers keep asking each other what time it is and though the film itself is structured by the twelve hours of the death wager, this concept of time as a marker of difference is a red herring for the more significant indifference of time—the mother is killed before her twelve hours are up, just because. And it is this question of the affect of time that binds it so insistently to sound.
Sound ought not to be reduced to language in either Haneke’s corpus or the psychoanalytic one: the centrality of language to Lacan cannot be overstated—and indeed, the impotent Che vuol? to the Big Oher is everywhere apparent in *Funny Games*: “Why?” insists the modernist family; “Why not?” reply the postmodern psychopaths. But it is not in language that we turn to Lacan, that we might return to Freud and the uncanny. Rather, we must look to his work on the invocatory drive, for adding to the legions of thinkers who have noted the peculiar status of the ear as that which cannot lid itself shut, defending against or ignoring external influences, Lacan insists on one thing more—it is not simply that the ears have no lids, and thus that they cannot close shut against the world. But more so, being perpetually, constitutively open, the ears are the privileged organ in relation to the unconscious. In his 1964-65 Seminar XI, *Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse* (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis), Lacan intones that “the invocatory drive, which has, as I told you in passing ... the privilege of not being able to close” (Lacan, *Fundamental 200*) is thus “the closest to the experience of the unconscious” (104). The total vulnerability of the ear, its inability to defend against penetration from without and the insistence of its message to effect affective causality, creates a phenomenally different (and I mean this very literally—it is phenomenologically different) mode of horror address, a mode that resides at the rotting heart of the horrible. Emptying out the realm of the visible, and thus refuting Krauss’s mandate to *show all*, Haneke relocates meaning in a barrage of aural puncta.

It would be disingenuous to say that what happens after the son’s death, what occurs next in the narrative, is this the mother tries in vain to get the phone to work, gets dressed, leaves the house to find help, escapes over the fence, hides from a passing car, tries to chase down help, and then is returned by the killers to the husband in order to determine the outcome of the bet. It would be disingenuous not because that is not what takes place, but because the narrative is but punctuated by—and not at all dependent on or even very interested in—this brief reprieve. The mother’s return to the house is not a narrative progression but inevitable from the very beginning. The scenes of escape are mere distractions from the work of the film, which is a game—and games are centered, simple, and repetitive; they do not have narrative depth, but simply insist on the cruel binary of winners and losers. Insisting that “we want to offer the audience something,” and asking the audience in direct address “Is that enough?”, Paul determines that the audience would prefer a “real ending,” locating this decision in the look to the camera, a complicity not unfamiliar to the horror genre, invested as it is with the ethics of watching violence. Paul establishes a final game, “The Loving Wife,” in which the mother/wife is offered the chance to take the husband’s place and/or determine the weapon used to finish him off. At a crucial moment—the Final Girl’s first, and final, appearance—the mother grabs the gun and shoots Tom with what the narrative presents as the last bullet. Paul grabs the remote control for the family’s television, rewinds the film, unmasking the “final girl’s role in the narrative through repetition, grabs the gun this time and shoots the husband instead.

There are four moments when Paul address the camera directly: when playing the “warm/cold” game to find the family’s dead dog he winks at the camera and the audience, after making the central wager of the film—that in twelve hours the family will be “lupurrt”—he asks us: “Who will you bet on? Do they have a chance?” Before the rewinding scene, he asks us: “Is that enough?” And finally, at the end of the film, when the mother is unceremoniously dropped into the lake behind the house, as the two men approach the next house to “borrow some eggs,” again he smiles and looks out into our world. These asides are routinely identified in Haneke criticism as moments of Brechtian distanciation that produce a critique of our own investment in violent films such as Haneke’s. Such readings entirely miss the point and the conservative function of such eruptions in the totality of the film. For though seen as offering a moment of spectral anxiety (one has been “seen” by the film, and implicated in the otherwise protective darkness of the theater), in reality, these asides to the audience situate together the very thing rendered asunder in the course of the film: body and voice. The *méconnaissance* of these moments as eruptions of the real operates in ignorance of the more radical proposition that these moments are indeed defenses against the anxiety that constitutes the majority of the film. In returning the voice to the seen material body, verified in the close-up on Paul’s face during these asides, these four scenes return to the film—perhaps solely to make the remainder just bearable enough. They return language to the speaker. In doing so, as opposed to effecting a rending of representation, they bring about a return to a scenario of lack. This is the lack of the speaking subject in relation to his or her enunciation. The specific election of this film not to show us that lack means, in essence, to eliminate lack, produce the lack of lack in relation to a fullness of some affect, in some elsewhere. *Funny Games*, for most of its duration, is thus overproximation to some presence that has comfortably gone missing in normative voice/body dualisms and in normative horror. Properly traumatic, this overproximation matches precisely Lacan’s formulation for anxiety. Opposed to Freud’s assertion that it takes no object (unlike fear), Lacan reads anxiety as taking as its object nothingness. Nothingness—I will soon argue—is the material void of the scream.

The significance of anxiety—that affect which “does not deceive,” and is the realization of a “complete response” (Lacan, *Anxiety* 10)—to Lacan’s thinking cannot be overemphasized: he dubs it the nodal point, we might say the navel, of his psychoanalysis, and locates in this affect a significant revision of the subject’s relation to the Other. In his Seminar *X: L’angoisse (Anxiety)*, he radically rejects Freud’s notion that anxiety does not take an object, proposing rather that the object of anxiety is precisely the void, the objet petit a. This punctum, which touches on the real, erupts in the symbolic as frustrated representation. In his return to Freud, in the move from anxiety to the uncanny, Lacan finds in das *Heimliche* that moment in which “man finds his home in a point situated in the Other beyond the image of which we are made and this place represents the absence where we are” (Lacan, *Anxiety 5*). What the uncanny exposes is precisely the subject’s current place as absence—for it is elsewhere he is found. At stake
make these forces visible through their effects on flesh" (xxix). Deleuze argues that Bacon was drawn to the idea that “a man ordered to sit still for hours on a narrow stool is bound to assume contorted postures. The violence of a hiccup, of a need to vomit, but also of a hysterical, involuntary smile...” (xxix). There is a material trace in Bacon’s paintings of the “there is” of real pain. There is the sensation of the wound inscribed onto the paintings and then produced anew in the viewer. Deleuze identifies a violence of representation in Bacon’s work (“spectacles of horror, Crucifixions, prostheses and mutilations, monsters” (xxix)) as well as a violence of sensation. Both Bacon and Deleuze derive the violence of representation for being cheap and degraded and pandering, and celebrate the violence of sensation.

The body in Bacon, crucial to this project of a violence of sensation, undergoes a particular type of deformation: “Bacon thus pursues a very peculiar project as a portrait painter: to dismantle the face, to rediscover the head or make it emerge from beneath the face” (Deleuze 19, italics in original). This dismantling of the face—though Deleuze would not precisely characterize it as such—is also a dismantling of the face’s relationship to speech production, to being a source for and yet unable to defend against sound. Deleuze writes,

This is what Bacon means when he says he wanted “to paint the scream more than the horror.” If we could express this as a dilemma, it would be: either, I paint the horror and I do not paint the scream, because I make a figuration of the horrible. Or else, if I paint the scream and I do not paint the visible horror, I will paint the visible horror less and less, since the scream captures or detects an invisible force. (51)

Realism does not imply an opposition here to symbolism, simply an affinity with sensation. And indeed it is not in realism, but in the Real, that we locate Hanke’s contribution to the cinema of sensation. Deleuze figures a rendering visible of the trauma in Bacon as this radical gesture: “not to scream before or about, but to scream at death” (52). This interest not in representing or approaching violence (the raison d’être of horror—the violence of representation), but in engaging with it on a sensorial level and encountering it directly is as close as Hanke gets us to true affect, the mark of the horrible, the conditions for possibility suspended in horror delayed no longer. Lacan’s Real is that which resists (no reason not to bring him and Deleuze together on the plane of Hanke’s films, as their twin contributions give us the scream and its affect), and as the horrible resists horror, so too does it insist on its own production of affect (the violence of sensation), of an experience in and of time that does not deceive, that does not suspend, but that arrives, all too soon, all too insistant in its fierce fullness. This arrival should remind us to look at our own departure more closely: for although Hanke ist nicht hier et ahlemisch, this in no way means that his intrusion is unwelcome. We have, after all, invited him in ourselves.

in anxiety is not what we normally think of as fear-provoking: it is not the integrity of the body or even the imaginary defenses of the ego, but rather the status of the subject itself.

Anxiety threatens from, and takes as its object, the place of nothingness. It is not a response to the lost object (the mother’s lost/absent penis, the mother herself) but arises paradoxically when lack fails to appear. Anxiety occurs in relation to an overapproximation to something from which a symbolic distance is normally maintained. Thus, the famous Lacanian explanation for anxiety’s impetus—“when lack is lacking”—has to do with the disappearance of an otherwise normative gap: “if all of a sudden all norms are lacking, namely what constitutes the lack—because the norm is correlative to the idea of lack—if all of a sudden it is not lacking... it is at that moment that anxiety begins” (12). As an experiment, let us take Lacan literally:

It is this emergence of the Seinlilch in the frame that constitutes the phenomenon of anxiety. And this is why it is wrong to say that anxiety is without an object. Anxiety has by a completely different sort of object to any apprehension that has been prepared, structured, structured by what? By the grill of the cut, of the arrow, of the unny trait, of the “that’s it” which always in operating as one might say closes the lips—I am saying the lip or the lips—of this cut which becomes the sealed letter on the subject in order to send him off under a sealed cover to different traces. (6)

These words betray the true subject of the discourse—not in the frame, the cut, the language of cinema, but in the closing of the lips. Anxiety resides in the opening up of the cut, the opening that reveals some unexpected token of the real. The scream, sound in time, unlinked to a wailing, bloody body, is the locus of a properly Lacanian anxiety in Hanke’s films. It is this mark that fully severs horror films from horrible films. The disembodied scream produces an overapproximation to the plenitude of speech normatively absent in punctuated yells and discourse, no matter how fragmented or tortuous. The site of anxiety in Funny Games is specifically not in the scenes in which Paul talks to the camera (conducting a normative production of the lack of language in relation to its speaker), but where such lack disappears, where lack goes missing in the speaking without a source, in the scream without a body. This is trauma: the scream with no origin, and hence, no end. And in our impossible relation to sound, our inability to shut it out, we receive not the affect proper of horor (not bristling hairs) but the anticipatory arrival, the coming into being of the Real—that resistance to the symbolicizing work of the film, that resistance to horror’s suspension, that bringing into being of the truly horrible.

In his meditation on painter Francis Bacon, The Logic of Sensation, Gilles Deleuze writes that what “directly interests [Bacon] is a violence that is involved only with color and line: the violence of a sensation (and not of a representation), a static or potential violence, a violence of reaction and expression,” and that “this is not the relationship of form and matter, but of materials and forces; to
Notes


3. Tarja Laine writes, for example: "well-educated young men...force their way into the holiday residence...", in ""What are you looking at and why?": Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* with his audience," *Kinoeye*, vol. 4, no. 1. Accessed October 20, 2005. Available at: www.kinoeye.org/04/01/taine01.php.

4. In *Le Temps du Loup*, the same breakdown of contractual language is seen: the father says to the intruder in his house, "What I propose is this..." promising a future cooperation, and is shot point blank—not in answer, but as a filling in of precisely what the father leaves unsaid.

5. One is tempted to read in this scene a political allegory about the twentieth-century failure of containment and reconciliation.

6. This is a recurring trope in Haneke's work, a modern fairy tale corpus, no doubt.

7. Throughout, the killers insist—not unlike the analyst—that the family freely produce speeches: "You really can speak to us openly," Paul implores. Producing speech in the other comes to signify the first, primary violence, replicated in later scenes on the flesh.

8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau writes, in *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (Essay on the Origin of Languages): "these [musical] accents, which cause us to shudder, these accents to which one cannot close one’s ear and which by way of it penetrate to the very depths of the heart, in spite of ourselves convey to it the emotions that wring them, and cause us to feel what we hear" (Paris: Flammarion, 1993: 58). See, for example, Laine.


11. I return to Haneke with this language—this need to vomit—as an alternative to disembodied speech is performed in nearly all of his films, most dramatically in *Funny Games* and *Le Temps du Loup*, with a scene where a woman vomits uncontrollably, surprisingly, as a reaction to the loss of speech—or, properly, vomit is another form of speech.

Works Cited


