

A Companion to Michael Haneke

Edited by Roy Grundmann

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A Companion to Michael Haneke

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Contents

Notes on Contributors	viii
Acknowledgments	xiv
Introduction: Haneke's Anachronism <i>Roy Grundmann</i>	1
Part I Critical and Topical Approaches to Haneke's Cinema	51
1 Performative Self-Contradictions: Michael Haneke's Mind Games <i>Thomas Elsaesser</i>	53
2 Five Tapes, Four Halls, Two Dreams: Vicissitudes of Surveillant Narration in Michael Haneke's <i>Caché</i> <i>Thomas Y. Levin</i>	75
3 Infectious Images: Haneke, Cameron, Egoyan, and the Dueling Epistemologies of Video and Film <i>Vinzenz Hediger</i>	91
4 Tracking <i>Code Unknown</i> <i>Tom Conley</i>	113
5 Michael Haneke and the New Subjectivity: Architecture and Film <i>Peter Eisenman</i>	124
6 Games Haneke Plays: Reality and Performance <i>Brigitte Peucker</i>	130
7 Figures of Disgust <i>Christa Blümlinger</i>	147

vi CONTENTS

8	Without Music: On <i>Caché</i> <i>Michel Chion</i>	161
9	Fighting the Melodramatic Condition: Haneke's Polemics <i>Jörg Metelmann</i>	168
10	"Mourning for the Gods Who Have Died": The Role of Religion in Michael Haneke's Glaciation Trilogy <i>Gregor Thuswaldner</i>	187
Part II The Television Films		203
11	A Melancholy Labor of Love, or Film Adaptation as Translation: <i>Three Paths to the Lake</i> <i>Fatima Naqvi</i>	205
12	Michael Haneke and the Television Years: A Reading of <i>Lemmings</i> <i>Peter Brunette</i>	227
13	Variations on Themes: Spheres and Space in Haneke's <i>Variation</i> <i>Monica Filimon and Fatima Naqvi</i>	243
14	Projecting Desire, Rewriting Cinematic Memory: Gender and German Reconstruction in Michael Haneke's <i>Fraulein</i> <i>Tobias Nagl</i>	263
15	(Don't) Look Now: Hallucinatory Art History in <i>Who Was Edgar Allan?</i> <i>Janelle Blankenship</i>	279
16	Bureaucracy and Visual Style <i>Brian Price</i>	301
Part III The German-Language Theatrical Features		321
17	Structures of Glaciation: Gaze, Perspective, and <i>Gestus</i> in the Films of Michael Haneke <i>Georg Seeßlen</i>	323
18	The Void at the Center of Things: Figures of Identity in Michael Haneke's Glaciation Trilogy <i>Peter J. Schwartz</i>	337
19	How to Do Things with Violences <i>Eugenie Brinkema</i>	354

20	Between Adorno and Lyotard: Michael Haneke's Aesthetic of Fragmentation <i>Roy Grundmann</i>	371
21	Hollywood Endgames <i>Leland Monk</i>	420
Part IV The French-Language Theatrical Features		439
22	Class Conflict and Urban Public Space: Haneke and Mass Transit <i>Barton Byg</i>	441
23	Multicultural Encounters in Haneke's French-Language Cinema <i>Alex Lykidis</i>	455
24	Haneke's Secession: Perspectivism and Anti-Nihilism in <i>Code Unknown</i> and <i>Caché</i> <i>Kevin L. Stoehr</i>	477
25	The Unknown Piano Teacher <i>Charles Warren</i>	495
26	Discordant Desires, Violent Refrains: <i>La Pianiste (The Piano Teacher)</i> <i>Jean Ma</i>	511
27	Civilization's Endless Shadow: Haneke's <i>Time of the Wolf</i> <i>Evan Torner</i>	532
28	The Intertextual and Discursive Origins of Terror in Michael Haneke's <i>Caché</i> <i>T. Jefferson Kline</i>	551
Part V Michael Haneke Speaks		563
29	Terror and Utopia of Form: Robert Bresson's <i>Au hasard Balthazar</i> <i>Michael Haneke</i>	565
30	Violence and the Media <i>Michael Haneke</i>	575
31	The World That Is Known: An Interview with Michael Haneke <i>Christopher Sharrett</i>	580
32	Unsentimental Education: An Interview with Michael Haneke <i>Roy Grundmann</i>	591
	Filmography	607
	Index	619

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Introduction

Haneke's Anachronism

Roy Grundmann

If there is a dominant characteristic that can be said to mark Michael Haneke's path as a filmmaker, it is that of anachronism. But in contrast to what the term's comparative logic implies, Haneke's anachronism did not develop gradually over the course of his by now four decades-long career. It seems to be one of its long-standing attributes, having been inscribed into his formative years as a critic, screenwriter, and script editor, and having accompanied the evolution of his filmmaking through numerous phases. In 1989, in the first important critical essay on Haneke as a filmmaker, Alexander Horwath singles out anachronism as the very quality that characterizes Haneke's late transition into theatrical feature filmmaking and that distinguishes his artistic status across this transition. Citing examples from Haneke's TV films and his 1989 theatrical feature film debut, *The Seventh Continent*, Horwath places Haneke among a dwindling group of filmmakers who continue to occupy a middle ground between mass commercial entertainment and the marginal avant-garde and experimental scene (1991: 39). Thematically, Haneke's films remain concerned with central problematics of modernity; aesthetically, they do not constitute radically new territory, but they do pervasively re deploy and combine stylistic idioms of four decades of European art cinema. Since *The Seventh Continent* premiered at Cannes, Haneke's image of being a hold-out from another period has also been cultivated by the director himself. When the same festival, twenty years later, awarded its *Palme d'or* to *The White Ribbon* – an austere, two and a half hours-long, black-and-white film about a German village on the eve of World War I – it reconfirmed this image.

But if the 2009 Cannes trophy has ensured that Haneke's image as a representative of a past era remains current, adding to his cultural capital and public esteem even as it triggers a certain amount of critical ambivalence, Haneke's anachronism also adds to the factors that make him a rewarding subject of academic study. His body of work invites the full spectrum of approaches the field of cinema studies has brought to the analysis of narrative film. Consisting of twenty-one feature films¹ that were made over four decades in two media, in several countries, different

languages, and divergent production contexts, Haneke's career is marked by detours and deferrals, belated debuts, and retroactively bestowed memberships. It constitutes a fertile case study for film historians and theorists alike. For historians Haneke's films exemplify the intertwined relations between television and national cinema on the one hand and transnational auteurism and art cinema on the other. For theorists, they raise intriguing questions regarding narrative structure, genre, spectatorship, and the ontology of the image, while also proving of interest to broader debates on the relationship between aesthetics, philosophy, and history, and presenting an intriguing challenge to aesthetic and philosophical periodization. While evincing strong affinities with philosophical and cinematic modernism, Haneke's films also address phenomena associated with postmodernism. Notwithstanding Haneke's own modernist posturing and postmodern critics' eagerness to take him by his word, it may be his films' dual referencing of the modern and the postmodern that merits further interest in them.

Born in 1942, Haneke is too young for his modernism to be based on generational membership. Instead, he has assimilated modernism through academic exposure to a broad literary and artistic canon. He has been influenced by a range of authors that include Stéphane Mallarmé, Jean Améry, Joseph Roth, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, and Ingeborg Bachmann; by composers Franz Schumann, Alban Berg, and Arnold Schönberg; by philosophers Theodor W. Adorno, Lucien Goldman, and Albert Camus; and, of course, by the filmmakers of the high modernist generation, specifically Robert Bresson, Ingmar Bergman, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Andrei Tarkovsky. Haneke's age sets him two generations apart from these directors, and still one full generation from most proponents of the various European new waves, whose more playful and irreverent films, together with those of the high modernists, formed the apogee of European art cinema, a period that lasted approximately from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s.

This period constitutes Haneke's formative years as an intellectual and his early phase as a director, which is accounted for in detail in Horwath's essay. In the early 1960s, after abandoning a career as a concert pianist, Haneke studied philosophy and literature at the University in Vienna. He worked as a feuilleton critic and, from 1967 to the early 1970s, as a script editor for television. But this job did not lead to any opportunities for directing films. He wrote his own screenplay, which garnered a major film subsidy award but went unproduced, which caused him to leave television and find work in theater. His growing reputation as a stage director finally earned him a directing commission from his erstwhile employer, the regional southwest German network SWF (Horwath 1991: 15). His first film, *After Liverpool* (1974), was a low-budget two-person drama based on James Saunders's play about the oppressive dynamics and entropic patterns of relationships, paying particular attention to the onset of routine, non-communication, alienation, and malaise. These issues would become standard Haneke themes.

Haneke's choice of source material suggests his critical interest in the bourgeoisie.² But in contrast to, say, Rainer Werner Fassbinder or Jean-Luc Godard, who also

came from a bourgeois background, Haneke did not become politically radicalized during the 1960s. Instead of understanding contemporary politics through Marxist models of thought, as was highly common during this period, he was interested in more traditional humanist issues, in metaphysical themes and what he perceived as Western civilization's pervasive spiritual crisis. Thus, he remained closer to Sartre and Camus than to Mao and Marx and he took a particular interest in the religious philosopher Blaise Pascal. Though he developed a keen eye for the problems of his own class, his work did not focus on class struggle, imperialism, or the oppression of third world countries. While eager to work creatively in film and theater, he neither founded a political cinema collective (as Godard did with the Dziga Vertov Group), nor did he join any radical experimental theater group (such as Fassbinder's Antitheater). Instead of fighting the state, whether on the streets or in front of the Cinémathèque Française, he went to work for it, reading scripts for state-funded television. In the early 1970s Haneke quit his full-time job at the network, but his relationship to television would have a lasting impact on his career. Not only would TV remain a central source of film funding for decades to come, but it also in complex ways defined Haneke's status as a national and transnational filmmaker.

Television, Auteurism, and National Cinema

Although the heyday of the new waves was over by the time Haneke got to make his first film, their German variant had produced a second generation of filmmakers who were Haneke's age or slightly younger. By the mid-1970s, these directors, most notably Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Wim Wenders, were becoming international art house directors, making what was called the New German Cinema the decade's dominant European art cinema and, in fact, one of the last national cinemas in Europe to stand in this tradition. However, while the New German Cinema relied heavily on television for the financing and exhibition of many of its films and while most of Haneke's TV films of the 1970s and 1980s were made either exclusively by or with coproduction monies from various German television stations, Haneke did not become part of Germany's national film culture. Of course, we need to acknowledge that Haneke, while born in Germany, grew up in Austria and has lived there most of his life. But this statement does not, in and of itself, constitute an argument about the nationally specific aspects of Haneke's filmmaking. The question of national identification (in which citizenship is, in any case, only one aspect) is rather complex, because it tends to raise more questions than it answers about the national as a discursive category and about the cultural, institutional, and historical registers in which it gets debated and defined.³ Raising these questions is partially the purpose of this introduction, and, as we have just started to see, looking at European cinema from the 1960s on means taking into consideration the institution of state-sponsored television.

The significance of television for Haneke's pre-theatrical feature career is twofold: it provided relatively steady employment for him as a filmmaker and it kept his films from being defined in terms of national cinema. Instead of becoming a nationally identified filmmaker (in either country) with the consequent effect of gaining international auteur status, Haneke during the 1970s and 1980s remained a sought-after theater director (more on this shortly) and a moderately well-recognized television director in both countries. Given the institutional nature of his TV films, they were treated as in-house commissions, holding the same for-broadcast-only status as most made-for-TV films.⁴ Foreclosing theatrical distribution and also, at least until the mid-1980s, any opportunities for film festival participation, the modality of the in-house commission also made subsidy monies less visible, so that these funds, in Haneke's case, never acquired the status of distinct and publicly acknowledged awards. In Haneke's career, film subsidy did not become a factor of publicly bestowed prestige or publicly debated merit – his films never became politicized as art funded with taxpayers' money.⁵ And while a small number of negative reviews vaguely echoed the populist attacks on state-funded art that were regularly leveled against the New German Cinema, Haneke's TV films never reached the level of attention accorded the New German Cinema's star directors, nor did the press associate him with this cinema even in general terms or in passing. This does not mean that Haneke did not share some of this cinema's proclivities, such as the construction of a self-conscious *mise-en-scène* that probed film's capabilities for producing both truth and illusion, as well as a preoccupation with such topics as postwar historical amnesia and the postwar generation's historical isolation and psychological alienation. Haneke also shares the New German Cinema's acute awareness of the profound impact of American movies and pop culture on postwar Europe – but in contrast to Wenders's and Fassbinder's complicated love-hate relationship to Hollywood, Haneke has been considerably more critical, to the point of categorically rejecting Hollywood's function as provider of entertainment.

Most of Haneke's TV films have been coproductions between Austrian and German television stations. In briefly outlining their characteristics in terms of nationally related themes and contexts, it should be noted that their status as coproductions in and of itself ensured a binational cultural legibility and an overlap of themes related to both national contexts. If Haneke, despite this dual legibility, can ultimately be read more or less clearly as an Austrian filmmaker, this argument, too, requires the kind of detail I want to provide below. By way of initial overview, we note that Haneke's career as a TV director veered from predominantly Austrian concerns in the 1970s to more German or international concerns in the 1980s and back to a more Austrian frame of reference in the 1990s. *Three Paths to the Lake* (1976), which the director himself has characterized as his first "real" film, adapts Austrian author Ingeborg Bachmann's story about an Austrian professional woman's melancholic return to her hometown in Carinthia, in the course of which the film develops a dense system of references to twentieth-century Austrian history.

His next film, the two-part drama *Lemmings* (1979), is a portrait of Haneke's own generation of Austrians, who came of age during the postwar decades. He depicts them at two historical moments, the late 1950s and the late 1970s, at which point the unacknowledged shortcomings of their youth, partially caused by Austria's inability to deal with the mid-century tension between tradition and modernity, have evolved into more pervasive dysfunctions. While *Three Paths to the Lake* and *Lemmings* were Austrian–German coproductions, two of the three television films Haneke made during the 1980s were exclusively produced in Germany and all three are explicitly related to German settings, topics, and cultural attitudes. *Variation* (1983), produced by a Berlin TV station (SFB), is a semi-comic story about a man and a woman's illicit love affair that is set in Berlin. It takes Goethe's drama *Stella* (about a triangular relationship) as its point of departure and its spectatorial address probes questions of the public sphere and TV's role as a consensus-building artistic medium. The Austrian–German coproduction *Who Was Edgar Allan?* (1984), though set in Venice and based on the book of Austrian novelist Peter Rosei, had the thematic and stylistic hallmarks of an "American Friend"-type story, replete with the kinds of nationally inflected Oedipal overtones, identification patterns, and meta-cinematic phantasmagorias that the New German Cinema became famous for. *Fraulein* (1986), an exclusively German production, is the story of a woman who runs a movie theater in a small town in post-World War II West Germany and who has to deal with her husband's release from a Russian POW camp ten years after the war. It was intended as a response to Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* (1979). Haneke's three TV films of the 1990s are once again related to a more specific Austrian context: the Austrian production *Obituary for a Murderer* (1991) is an experimental collage of an episode of a well-known Austrian talk show that dealt with a horrific killing that had shocked Austria the previous year. *The Rebellion* (1992), another exclusively Austrian production, is an adaptation of Joseph Roth's novel about a war veteran's failed integration in post-World War I Vienna. *The Castle* (1997), which was coproduced by Austrian Television, Bavarian Broadcasting, and the Franco-German network ARTE, is an adaptation of Franz Kafka's unfinished novel about a land surveyor's paralyzing social and professional entanglements in the fabric of a rural town. It has a specific Austrian frame of reference below its pan-national relevance.

Before discussing the specifically Austrian dimension of Haneke's work, we ought to understand the broader impact that television had on Haneke's evolution as a filmmaker and his status as an auteur. Haneke perceived television's emphasis of its communicative function and educational mission as a confinement of artistic possibilities. That his television films regularly constituted departures from, in some cases overt violations of, the medium's mandatory embrace of realism is self-evident. But their proto-cinematic aesthetics notwithstanding, these films, at the time of their broadcast, garnered neither the institutional definition nor the cultural trappings of cinema. This also affected Haneke's auteur persona: while his *de facto* creative efforts and his staging of authorship may have been no less defined

by gestures of heroism, self-sacrifice, and rebellion against his main sponsor than were common for the directors of the New German Cinema, these gestures went unnoticed. When *Who Was Edgar Allan?*, which has a distinctive art cinema look, was invited to screen at the 1985 Berlin Film Festival,⁶ the moment was marked by one of the ironies that have accompanied Haneke's artistic path and that constitute, as it were, his anachronism: just when he was poised to enter the institutional circles of art cinema, the kind of art cinema that he had been adulating and had found worthy of engaging was about to vanish. Its end was not merely metaphoric. Bergman officially retired in 1984 after making *Fanny and Alexander*; Antonioni had started to work for television, the medium Haneke was trying so hard to transcend; Fassbinder died in 1982, Truffaut in 1984, and Tarkovsky in 1986. But no matter the significance one might want to attribute to these individual markers of demise, just as important is the fact that, in terms of actual film output, modernist art cinema had already been superseded by a new, more adamantly postmodern European cinema that had little investment in upholding a divide between art and popular film. It was made by a new generation of filmmakers who were Haneke's juniors. They included Pedro Almodóvar (*Dark Habits*, 1982; *Labyrinth of Passion*, 1983; *What Have I Done to Deserve This?*, 1984), Stephen Frears (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, 1985), and Jean-Jacques Beineix (*Diva*, 1981; *The Moon in the Gutter*, 1983; *Betty Blue*, 1986).

But in what constitutes a further ironic twist, by the late 1980s it was arguably the very disappearance of the kind of art cinema with which Haneke had identified, but to which he stood at a historical remove, that created a vacuum for Haneke to step into, a need to which he could respond by more or less self-consciously assuming the persona of the last modernist. Its subtending attributes comprise the image of someone whose films resist pretty pictures and a slick commercial look; of someone whose films have controversial topics and idiosyncratic treatments, but eschew shock value for its own sake; of someone projecting a moral conscience that defines any assault on the spectator as an invitation to engage an argument – and, in this sense, of someone who proposes ethics not only as a topic of his films but as a central vector defining the filmgoing experience itself.⁷ Thus, if Haneke's theatrical features since *The Seventh Continent* have incurred such labels as difficult, didactic, rarefied, abstruse, and excessively dark, I would argue – without detracting from Haneke's artistic project – that these adjectives say less about the films themselves than about art cinema as a cultural construct. Its nomenclature is eagerly taken up by distributors, particularly if the label in question helps generate controversy and aids the promotion of the film. And it tends to emerge in close interrelation with the persona of the filmmaker as auteur with whom the film forms a product package in the circuits of international art film exhibition.

When Haneke's auteur image fully emerged around the release of *The Seventh Continent*, which, in addition to screening at Cannes, received awards at the Flanders International Film Festival and the Locarno International Film Festival, it

instantly threw into relief an auteur persona's requisite features, which are structured in terms of oppositions. On the one hand, the status of auteur, particularly if freshly bestowed, signals a sense of freshness, of being new, unused, and innovative, and it also implies provocation, perhaps even rebelliousness – all of which signify a break with the status quo. On the other hand, auteurs tend to project artistic, cultural, and, in some cases, political expertise, all of which also imply a certain authority that, in turn, already invites their alignment with tradition (if only at some point in the future, when they can be assimilated into lineages and are worthy of retrospectives). Haneke instantly fits the bill: *The Seventh Continent* was provocative, but not brattish. Its minimalism and its putatively nihilistic ending were controversial and confrontational, yet it projected gravitas – just like the artist himself, who was appealingly new and unknown, while also reassuringly middle-aged and “serious” about his work, so that authority itself could become a central part of his image. In this sense, Haneke's auteur persona is not simply the work of a self-fashioned self-promoter, but the result of a complex dialog between the auteur in question and film festival organizers and audiences, film and television producers, feuilleton critics, and “the public,” to the extent that the latter pays attention to these discourses by following the arts pages in newspapers and their counterparts on late night television.

If Haneke in the decades after his first Cannes appearance would cultivate the persona of the serious artist, it was not the least in order to meet the public on the level it had designated for him. To this day, during audience Q&As and at press conferences, Haneke has no problem letting the audience know if he is dissatisfied with their questions. His answers can be teasingly short or elliptical, or they tend to take the form of counter-questions, or he answers a specific question with a more general, often parable-like story or by drawing on literary or philosophical references. By acting this way, however, Haneke is far from being uncooperative. “Difficulty” becomes a generic expectation. Add to this the inevitable observation that Haneke looks like a continental intellectual (full beard, gray hair, pensive expression), that he dresses like a continental intellectual (mostly in black), that he speaks like a continental intellectual (French and German; no English, please), and that he generally behaves like a continental intellectual (he is a careful listener; his demeanor ranges from the measured to the reticent; he tries to be polite and frequently smiles).

But the carefully fine-tuned anatomy of Haneke's auteur persona should not be seen exclusively against the background of the film world with its specific economic pressures, cultural protocols, discursive rituals, generic expectations, and psychological dynamics. What most commentators have thus far missed in assessing Haneke's persona and artistic development is the fact that he has, to a very significant extent, also been a theater director, and a rather prolific and prominent one at that. In contrast to Fassbinder, whose theater work quickly took the back seat to his filmmaking and was always firmly identified with bohemian radicality and considerable controversy, Haneke, with increasing success as a stage

director, came to occupy a kind of middle position in German and Austrian theater similar to the one that would mark his status as a filmmaker. He situated himself between the radical experimental scene of urban subcultures and alternative spheres and the commercial orbits of musical theater, folk theater, and boulevard comedy. All through the 1970s and into the 1980s, he systematically pursued engagements at prestigious houses in the theater centers of Germany – Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Darmstadt, Berlin.⁸ Building a reputation with his direction of bourgeois classics and the modern repertoire rather than authoring or staging experimental plays, he became appreciated among the educated bourgeoisie because he provoked audiences with intellectual arguments and with his solid professional skills (evident, most importantly, in his famously creative and precise direction of the actor) rather than through improvised performance pieces, absurdist scenarios, neo-dadaist shock experiments, or Marxist-inflected manifestos that were the domain of the politically radicalized avant-garde of the 1960s and 1970s.⁹ Haneke's detour into theater ended up having a lasting impact on his career, as it significantly contributed to an intermedially defined persona and, indeed, an intermedially defined body of work. By this I do not mean that Haneke's films looked "stagey" or were structured like plays. Rather, his exposure to theater further broadened his already considerable and very precise understanding of the inherently textual nature of art and the literary possibilities of expression that can inform the medium of film. A further irony thus lies in the fact that, while Haneke's long years in the theater seem to underscore the anachronistic qualities of his emergence as a film director, it is this enforced sojourn outside of film that has made his films formally more advanced.

A final aspect should be considered with regard to the anachronism of Haneke's auteur persona, and it returns our discussion to the context of national cinema. Haneke's artistic identity never became determined by the same Oedipal dynamics that so heavily shaped the French New Wave and the New German Cinema. For filmmakers of both these cinemas, who had to overcome their own historical disconnectedness from earlier cultural and cinematic traditions, it became *de rigueur* to select in demonstrative, even ritualistic fashion a coterie of surrogate father figures either from Hollywood's studio era or from among the ranks of European modernist artists and intellectuals, whose work and influence had been disrupted by fascism and the war. New wave directors' adoption of such figures was widely perceived to be an act of historical bridging and, thus, a successful negotiation of burdensome historical legacies, which, in turn, made them and their work altogether contemporary and redemptive. It is not that Haneke's films and his artistic identity are free from Oedipal issues – a point I will discuss shortly. But in Haneke's case, these dynamics played out differently – and I believe there are two reasons for it.

First, because of the close association between auteurs and national cinemas, filmmakers' Oedipalized attempts to grapple with issues of generational succession and artistic legacy are intertwined with imaginary and actual negotiations of

nationhood, national history, and national identity. But precisely to the extent that these dynamics are contingent on specific national histories and were played out among a particular generation of filmmakers, Haneke represents an uneasy fit. With Haneke being too young even to be a new wave filmmaker, and being neither fully German nor fully Austrian, let alone French, artistic identification with(in) specific national contexts was hampered by a lack of membership in any of the groups that constitute national cinema as a historical and socio-cultural formation. As became clear in the cases of the New German Cinema and the French New Wave, the dynamics of obtaining symbolic membership in a national project of reconstructing cultural lineages and realigning artistic traditions pivoted on highly publicized acts of transference that were the product of filmmakers' personal friendships, mentoring relations, elective affinities, and fate-wrought affiliations with past artistic and intellectual leaders and role models.¹⁰ In Haneke's case, however, there was no attempt to compensate for his generational distance to European modernism by seeking out personal relations to figures such as Adorno or Bresson.

Certainly, Haneke's transnational status has not prevented his identification with both German and Austrian cultural traditions and legacies – which is most overt in Haneke's literary adaptations. But if one looks at the films themselves as an index of such national identification, and particularly at the way this identification is filtered through the director's imaginary relation to the paternal and the filial, we see the second reason why Oedipal issues in Haneke's films play themselves out differently from the new wave films. In contrast to Wenders, Herzog, and Truffaut, Haneke does not imagine himself on one level with his filial characters. With the exception of *Lemmings*, their purpose is not to become more or less direct stand-ins for the director himself, and, as it were, to invite the audience to empathize with him through them. If one wanted to look for biographical details about Haneke and his generation as inscribed in his films, one would have to note that Haneke, more than anything, seems to identify himself with the prominent postwar figure of the absent father. Here I don't even mean to refer to any actual depictions of initially absent but suddenly returning, inevitably dysfunctional, and ultimately failing fathers. While these certainly have a presence in Haneke's cinema, what I have in mind is the condition of paternal absence as such that Haneke has come to identify with.¹¹ This condition of absence – which is extendable to a range of experiences of loss that characterize modernity as the period of the decline of master narratives – structures Haneke's films on a very basic level. It determines their visual *dispositif*, their spectatorial address, and the fragmented state of their diegetic world.

Individually and as a body of work, the films function as an edifice, a house of sorts, that all protagonists get to live in as "children" – along with us, the audience, who become their siblings of sorts. When the kids become naughty – when they start wrecking the furniture, kill off a few guests, other home owners, random strangers, or even themselves, or, to cite an alternate scenario, when outsiders break into the house and pose a threat – the father remains aloof. He leaves it up to his

audience to figure out why and how we, as puzzled and perturbed siblings and as menaced “co-tenants,” should care about these goings-on. In this sense, Oedipal issues do assume a political-allegorical dimension in Haneke’s cinema. But with the exception of *Lemmings*, they constitute a departure from, or even reversal of, the well-known filial dynamics of (self-)identification so common to other national cinemas and auteurs, for whom the part of fictional son and/or quasi-orphan became a place holder on whom they projected their own self-image as heirs to a disrupted history (Rentschler 1984: 103; Elsaesser 1989: 207; Kaes 1989).

However, the fact that the transnational nature of Haneke’s personal and professional pedigree does not as easily fit the mold of a single nation’s lost, exiled, or orphaned son did not mean his auteur persona became altogether lost to the discourse of national cinema and its twin projects of revising history and bridging historical discontinuities. In Haneke’s case, however, his relative anonymity as a TV director for some time kept these twin projects from being officially attributed to the artistic labor of an auteur. When the auteur eventually emerged, this attribution, as is by no means unusual within the discourse of auteurism, had to proceed backwards. In fact, the construction of Haneke as an auteur was partially contingent on critics’ appreciation of the construction of history in his films. Both were acts of reconstruction and, in their combined effort, led to a third axis of reconstruction: Critics and scholars who focused on reading Haneke’s films as reflections on Austrian history also read these works as constitutive elements of Austrian film history. Haneke’s belated and retroactive construction as an auteur thus went hand in hand with the overdue reconstruction of Austrian film history in terms of national cinema.

It is here that Haneke’s anachronism generated another irony: Haneke’s emerging auteur status became explicitly linked to the concept of Austrian national cinema at the moment when the very category of national cinema began to lose its significance, a process which was ushered in by the globalization of film financing structures and the rise of transnational cinemas, and which occurred more or less concurrently with the demise of art cinema and its great names. In this sense, even as this multilayered process of re/constructing the auteur and his national cinema was coming under way in the form of career overviews by critics such as Horwath, Haneke’s emerging persona became heavily inflected by a new set of terms. These marked the era’s shift away from expressing authorship through narratives of exile, return, and sacrificial heroism towards demonstrations of professionalism and a virtuoso command of film’s artistic resources, capacities, and potentials (Elsaesser 2005: 51). In other words, the traditional figure of the auteur as a nation’s prodigal son – a compendium of the divine bestowal of creative genius and the vicissitudes of biography – was left behind in favor of a self-conscious performance of the author as a globally recognizable craftsman, storyteller, and stylist.

The 1989 premiere of *The Seventh Continent* thus became a cumulative index of the anachronisms and ironies that mark Haneke’s status as auteur and representative of a national cinema. One of three Austrian films in the Cannes program,