

# From Inside Us: Experiencing the Film Actor in Michael Haneke's *Caché*

**By Joerg Sternagel**

**Keywords:** *Caché*, Michael Haneke, Daniel Auteuil, Juliette Binoche, film acting, spectatorship, phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty

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At the press conference presenting *Caché* at the Cannes Film Festival 2005, Michael Haneke points out: 'I always say that a feature film is twenty-four lies per second; the lies may be told to serve a higher truth, but they aren't always. I think the way the videotape is treated here shakes the viewer's confidence in reality. The first sequence you see in *Caché* is ostensibly reality, whereas it is actually a stolen image filmed with a camcorder. Of course, I am wary of the reality we are supposedly seeing in the media'.<sup>1</sup> At this conference, Haneke is supported by his leading actors Juliette Binoche, Daniel Auteuil and Maurice Bénichou. Juliette

Binoche stresses: 'I was a little bit paranoid, because Haneke told me absolutely nothing. I figured that he wasn't especially interested in my character, and I was doubtful and hesitant. After a month of this, I finally asked him why he hadn't said anything to me. The question surprised him. After that, for the last two weeks of the shooting, he wouldn't leave me alone. I almost wished I hadn't said anything to him! As a director, he is extremely specific, but he gives his actors the freedom they need. His precision reminds me of music: he likes brief pauses, and long breaths.' Daniel Auteuil continues: 'I avoid asking the director questions as much as I can. I like working with directors who tell me where

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**'I always say that a feature film is twenty-four lies per second...'**

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to enter, where to exit, how fast I should go. That's as much information as I can manage.' Maurice Bénichou agrees: 'I don't think it would be interesting if we were instructed on what to do. We'd be liable to act out the explanation instead of interpret the scene. As Daniel said, we make our entrances and exits, speak softly or loudly, move quickly or slowly. When a director has an important story to tell, those

are the only clues he gives you. In the end, the screenplay, which is their written instruction, is what is interpreted by the actor's body.'

### Acting and spectatorship in film

Each attempt to analyze acting in film raises a set of questions that are both essential to academic discussion and research in studies of the moving image, and that are far from being answered easily: 'How can acting in film be defined?', 'What constitutes screen performance, acting on and for the screen?', 'What is the signification of the film actor?' (Wojcik 2004: 8-11) and 'How is the film actor on the screen experienced by the spectator in front of the screen?'

Questions like these go with Paul McDonald's challenging and significant claim for the acknowledgement of the actor's importance in the analysis of film: 'Analyzing film acting will only become a worthwhile and necessary exercise if the signification of the actor can be seen to influence the meaning of film in some way. In other words, acting must be seen to count for something' (McDonald 2004: 26). In this context, aiming at an understanding of the significance of the actor and the significance of film, every aspect in film and every means of film except the actor should not be stressed exclusively - the emphasis should not be solely on, among others, the screenplay, the camera-work, the lighting, the *mise-en-scène*, the editing, the makeup and the costume. The starting point for an understanding of the significance of the actor and film should rather be to shift towards the analysis of the actor, his voice, body and movement, the significance of them, according to McDonald, 'when the actions and gestures of the performer impart significant meanings about the relationship of the character to the narrative circumstances' (McDonald 2004: 32). Moving forward with the attempt to understand acting and spectatorship in film, it is also helpful to adjust to the suggestion of Cynthia Baron, Diane Carson and Frank P. Tomasulo, stressing the significant features of film acting and, as a result of this, shifting towards the signification of the actor:

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Regardless of who originates or selects a particular performance choice, and in spite of

performance elements having a basis in intention and (sometimes serendipitous) chance, it is the actor's voice that carries the paralinguistic features that create nuances of meaning in their intonations, inflections, rhythms, tone, and volume. Similarly, it is the bodies of actors that provide (at least the basis for) the facial expressions, gestures, postures, and various gaits film audiences encounter. (Baron, Carson and Tomasulo 2004: 12)

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The core aspect of the interrelation between the performance of an actor as staged and set in scene for the screen, and the event of watching the performance as experienced by the viewer, have to be considered when analyzing contemporary screen performances and their effects. In front of the screen, the viewer is confronted with the image of a dynamic film creation reaching him through the representation of the moving bodies of the actors, or, as James Naremore points out in his pioneer study *Acting in the Cinema* from 1988:

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Clearly films depend on a form of communication whereby meanings are *acted out*; the experience of watching them involves not only a pleasure in storytelling but also a delight in bodies and expressive movement, an enjoyment of familiar performing skills, and an interest in players as *real persons*. (Naremore 1988: 2)

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Where meanings are 'acted out' and 'organic unities of acted images' are created in the process of film-making, within an understanding of 'the job of acting to sustain the illusion of the unified self', where performances are set, the enjoyment of the spectator watching these performances on the screen, the appeal in the final cut, in fact, does not exclusively lie in the pleasure of following the plot, but in watching the actors themselves and their performances (Naremore 1988: 5). As Naremore does in his work, it is useful to reconsider the writings of Russian theorist and filmmaker Pudovkin who convincingly identifies the film actor, and also the film type, to play a part on the film: 'one must possess a sum of real qualities, externally clearly expressed, in order to attain a given effect on the spectator' (Pudovkin 1948: 107). Watching the actors themselves and their performances attain effects on the

spectator, as they are outwardly expressed. Adding to Pudovkin, for understanding acting in film and its effects, it is not sufficient to analyze the actor and his role as a star, to sum up certain mannerisms the spectator is used to watching, or to look at the use of the actor's qualities by the director. On the contrary, scrutinizing the form of communication, the experience of watching, as Naremore suggests, serves as a means for analyzing acting in film. Part of the enjoyment of film is certainly based on following 'familiar performing skills' of the film actors, whereas the interest is definitely intended towards the film actors as 'real persons' (Pudovkin 1948: 108, Naremore 1988: 2-4). Within the assumed communication process, also initiated by familiarity and interest, where meanings are 'acted out', the given effect is that of an affect thoroughly elicited by the experience with elements of human material, both by the actor and the spectator. The spectator watches the film, he feels and comprehends it, and responds to it with all his senses. He communicates with the film actor who elicits sensory responses from him: the actor significantly guides him through the film and simultaneously enables him to think through the actor's body as well as through his own body. In the process of communication, the film actor develops and decisively turns out to be a well-known companion for him.

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### The signification of the film actor

Consider a quote from the chapter 'Performers and Onlookers' in the renowned book *Movies: A Psychological Study* written by Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites in 1950: 'It is a function of drama generally to give the audience a feeling of release and exoneration in relation to the acts of violence and forbidden love which they see the characters in the drama perform. The audience can feel: they did it, we only watched.' (Wolfenstein and Leites 1950: 245)

Wolfenstein and Leites ground their assumption of the feeling of 'release and exoneratation' by the cinema audience on ready-made and shared day-dreams which 'occupy a larger place in the conscious experience of most individuals than their more fugitive, private, home-made

day-dreams' (Wolfenstein and Leites 1950: 12). While such a psychoanalytically motivated approach marks one approach to analyze film and spectatorship, and this certainly represents the general concern of the authors, the notion of 'they did it, we only watched' becomes an interesting, if contradicted, observation of the relationship between 'performers and onlookers' when heading towards a phenomenological description and understanding of the signification of the film actor. Certainly, the film actor, the 'performer', is 'incapable of see-

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ing' the spectator, the 'onlooker'. At the same time, the spectator, in the cinema, appears to be 'insured against reaction or reproof' from those he watches. But, let alone his possible wish to 'see the actors as they really are' and to become interested in the life of stars, he finds himself related to and affected by the film actor. He actively responds to the film actor, does not passively 'become invisible' and energetically acts within a visual, auditory and tactile field. Here, the contrast to the argument of Wolfenstein and Leites can be emphasized by claiming that there is not less, but more than meets the eye, while watching and experiencing film and the film actor (Wolfenstein and Leites 1950: 246-62).<sup>2</sup> Their approach can be related to, while analyzing film acting and spectatorship, their use of psychoanalytic hypotheses, as done, for example, by Norman H. Holland:

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The actors, in short, can't fight back, and that is one way the film seems a 'passive' medium. The other side of the coin is that we can't provoke the actor [...] We are powerless, as we were when we were children, to change the doings of the 'big people'. Now, though, we are immune; the giants on the screen cannot affect us, either. Our regression is safe, secure, and highly pleasurable. (Holland 1963: 24-27) 3  
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Even if the actors certainly cannot 'fight back' to us, it is argued that these 'giants on the screen' do affect the spectator, us: that our 'regression' changes to our progression, that appears to be challenging and is, indeed, 'highly pleasurable'. Acknowledging a progression rather than a regression in the process of actively watching actors on screen, the analysis initially turns towards the body, both of the film actor and the spectator, and subsequently understands embodied experiences by pointing out their resonance. While claiming that there is more than meets the eye, the analysis of how to make sense of the film actor correspondingly focuses on the body, the corporeality of actor and spectator or, as Vivian Sobchack puts it (having chosen film actor Jim Carrey to understand and describe forms of 'being on the screen') the 'corporeal intelligence' and 'corporeal comprehension on both sides of the screen': 'Here, then, I am particularly interested in quite literally thinking through Jim Carrey's body – that is, trying to match this extraordinary performer's complex and critical "corporeal intelligence" with some form of analysis and description adequate not only to it but also to our own "corporeal comprehension" of it as his audience' (Sobchack 2004a: 277).

In the general experience of film, which is permanently accompanied by the perception of the own lived-body, with the own whole intentional being, the spectator faces an immediate experience of the image developing more and more corporally. When drawn into the scene, while watching and experiencing, his/her body grasps vibrations resonating as energetic impulses from the screen. As the intentional subject, he can see as well as be seen, and can touch as well as be touched. The analysis of these immediate experiences created by images of the other's body (the film actor's) invites close focus on both on the perception of the film actor's body and the spectator's body; the spectator goes, sees, feels, and senses beyond the vision of the actor in an experience of proximity. By thinking through the actor, the spectator regards him as an agent, whereas by only thinking about him, the spectator reduces him to a mere object. He recognizes that the film actor's, or rather the film agent's, body guides thought as well as his own body does: while making sense through the film actor, the spec-

tator additionally makes meaning out of bodily sense and affectively reconsiders his own bodily being. The spectator is deeply informed by, in Sobchack's words, 'the full history and carnal knowledge of our acculturated sensorium' (Sobchack 2004b: 63). Consciously dealing with this acknowledgement of bodily interaction between actor and spectator, film performances can be closely analyzed. In the overall context, the forms of communication, and its different visualizations and realizations, define acting in film and constitute acting for the screen.

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### Knowledge and experience, involvement and participation

Watching films, the spectator consciously and subconsciously knows of specific effects the motion picture as a whole, and moving images in particular, provide for him, due to the specific stylistic organization of each film. Identifying this overall knowledge and experience, another particular knowledge and experience can be assumed; the spectator is moved and more often than not, he knows why he is moved – the film actor teaches him to be moved. He watches and becomes involved through his own bodily knowledge and becomes part of an energetic experience; actor and spectator meet in a close interrelation, the performance of an actor correlates with the event of watching the performance as experienced by the spectator. The spectator faces the image of a dynamic film creation reaching him through the representation of the moving body of the actor. Such a process of making sense through the film actor closely operates with the knowledge and acknowledgement of perception on both sides of the screen. As a result of this, going in the direction of the analysis of acting and spectatorship in film, as an analysis of performances, defines performances as filmic elements that create meaning and sensual, as well as physiological, effects. In making overall sense of the experience of film and the actor, of bodily activity and of perception, in linking image, mind and body, the analysis is supported by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Re-reading the script of his 1945 lecture 'The Film and the New Psychology' enlightens about the experience of film: '[Movies] directly present to us that special way of being in the world, of

dealing with things and other people, which we can see in the sign language of gesture and gaze and which clearly defines each person we know' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 58). Film is existentially embodied perception. Its experience resembles a system of communication, a system that, as Sobchack remarks, 'entails the visible, audible, kinetic aspects of sensible experience to make sense visibly, audibly, and haptically' (Sobchack 1992: 9). The close analysis of the corporeality of the actor's body considers the connection between actor and spectator in a system of energy transference seeking to optimize the effect of a direct, immediate experience: the spectator watches and becomes involved. His 'body is wherever there is something to be done' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 291), where action and perception point to 'a perceptual ground; a basis of my life, a general setting in which my body can co-exist with the world' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 292). This makes the body an active part of experience with film and its perception and expression of time, space and subjectivity, its perception of the visual and the visible. This involvement and participation allows us to think of performance, by drawing upon Lesley Stern and George Kouvaros, 'as entailing a notion of reception and thus incorporating [us] the audience' (Stern and Kouvaros 1999: 25-26). There is a circulation of bodily affect between actor and spectator: 'energy is deployed and transmitted by and through the body' - a process that Stern and Kouvaros identify as a 'loopy system' of relation and affect, circulating in an erratic manner among actor, film, and spectator without 'privileging psychological or mimetic principles' (Stern and Kouvaros 1999: 26).<sup>4</sup> The performance of the actor correlates with the event of watching the performances as experienced by the spectator. The performance mode elicits sensory responses from the spectator, whose analysis marks the phenomenological approach to study screen performance and its elements. These elements, which are integral to film, correspond to what Cynthia Baron stresses at the beginning of an essay on human movement in motion pictures, while working with the film *Adaptation* (Spike Jonze: 2002): 'close study of essentially any screen performance elements are as integral to a film as its framing and editing selections' (Baron 2006: 48).

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## Caché

At the beginning of the reconsideration of the film *Caché* in particular, and of the cinema of Michael Haneke in general, it helps to present a quotation from this director, taken from his contribution to 'Film als Katharsis' ('film as catharsis') a book on Austrian film of the 1980s:

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My films are intended as polemical statements against the American 'barrel down' cinema and its disempowerment of the spectator. They are an appeal for a cinema of insistent questions instead of false (because too quick) answers, for clarifying distance in place of violating closeness, for provocation and dialogue instead of consumption and consensus. (Haneke 1992: 89) 5  
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One example of the 'cinema of insistent questions', of challenging uneasiness and unknown codes, of 'twenty-four lies per second', is the film *Caché*, starring Juliette Binoche and Daniel Auteuil as the couple Anne and Georges Laurent, threatened by the past, the past of Georges. Receiving anonymous videotapes, which are wrapped up in drawings resembling horrifying children's illustrations, and which capture their daily lives, the couple is led to Georges' long-repressed act of childhood cruelty - a cruelty directed toward an Algerian boy called Majid (played by Malik Nait Djoudi, and, as an adult, by Maurice Bénichou) who was adopted by George's parents and who Georges, in acts of jealousy, successively drove into corners until he, in return, was repudiated by them. In *Caché*, filmmaker Haneke is interested in miniaturizing the debate on a massacre taking place in Paris in 1961 when French police killed hundreds of Algerian immigrants who were protesting against a curfew. The director offers a film, as he claims, 'on guilt', specifically about an adult who has to deal with 'something' he did in his childhood (Haneke 2005). Within this context and these contents, watching *Caché*, the spectator is constantly challenged to question his own experience in a process of uncertainty where hidden images, such as the image in **figure one**, demand his active participation. At this point, the frequent



transitions from video to film images are not exclusively stressed, as done by a lot of writers in many reviews of the film. Moreover, throughout the work, it is noteworthy that the spectator faces and simultaneously experiences performances of multiple-coded aesthetic effects that, at first, create deliberate confusion. By thinking through the performances, in particular through the ones of Binoche and Auteuil, however, the spectator manages to get along with this film. He reads the performances to know what the characters do and what the characters feel. He directly learns of the displayed relationship of Anne and George, which appeals to his senses. He watches and becomes involved. In the selected scene of a dinner with friends, though, he becomes involved in the daily life of the protagonists that is presented by a very familiar situation of hospitality, a situation of having dinner with friends. In this situation, the spectator also becomes aware of the uncanny sense and philosophy of this film, with that scene functioning as a foreshadowing of the moment of shock later on – the suicide of Majid, a deed the spectator is not able to foresee, but which is equivalent to his sense that something beyond his expectation will happen in the film. Focusing on the characters of Georges and Anne Laurent, it is obvious to the spectator that they are emotionally distant from each other, lack intimacy and show a sense of nervousness and insecurity. In terms of the film experience, linking the actor's and the spectator's body, the practice of description of these actors focuses on them as themselves, on the actors' bodies, even if their emotional distance is also technically reached by framing them individually or showing them in two-shot sitting opposite each other. In minimal manners, the actor's bodies

move and express themselves, and enable the bodily responsive and intentional as well as active spectators to follow and to understand what he sees and feels. Set at the table in the town house in Paris, he joins three couples having dinner, and experiences, at first, moments of enjoyment and tension. While united by the enjoyment of food, red wine, and conversation, as visualized in **figure two**, the uncanny sense of the film is made clear by an anecdote told by one of the guests of the Laurent's. Elaborating on an older woman the narrator once met by chance, the spectator learns that nothing is what it seems. This notion is strengthened at the point of the story's resolution: the woman identifies the narrator as the reincarnation of her passed away dog. Participating in the situation of having dinner with friends, the spectator identifies this narrative device as a moment of foreshadowing, and, simultaneously, becomes aware of the appeal of it: sensing the familiar situation of hospitality also means to sense the insistency of the unfamiliar situation of the Laurent's. Such an appeal is directly emphasized in the next shot of the scene, when, all of a sudden, the doorbell rings. Georges, with an insecure gaze, questions the identity of the late visitor, and pretends to be solely surprised in front of his wife and guests. Anne, however, reacts with a sorrowful look on her face, and seems alarmed, while the other couples react with instant curiosity about the late interruption. Following Georges outside, we learn that there is another videotape delivered, which is wrapped up in another drawing, resembling another illustration of childhood cruelty, but, again, for Georges and us, it is too late to meet the supplier, at whom Georges desperately shouts in the dark. Having hidden the cassette



in his jacket, hanging on the coat rack of the cloakroom, the husband re-enters the dining and living room, behaving secretly, and, immediately faces the challenging gaze of his wife, depicted in **figure three** with the reaction of Georges following in **figure four**. In contrast to her, Georges does not want to reveal the situation of threat they deal with in front of their friends. Anne, for that reason, breaks the moment of silence between them, while serving a meal, and decides to let their guests take part in the family's unpleasant state. Her lone decision provokes Georges to react with a mixture of irony and honesty directed towards his wife; a reaction that is followed by moments of silence and the embarrassment of all participants. As shown in **figure five**, the group looks down at their dishes and prefer to say nothing altogether. Georges' state of anger and insecurity successively rises and finally culminates in the presentation of the only just delivered tape to their guests. The dinner scene consequently closes with the video image of the house of Georges' parents in the country, as presented in **figure six**, and leaves the spectator behind as empowered. The spectator sensitively, as well as intentionally, responds to the performances, follows the actors and understands what he sees and feels in every shot. Watching this particular scene means that

there is more than meets the eye, and, at the same time, that there is more than 'the act of storytelling that produces a particular relationship between narrator and listener' (Macallan and Plain 2007). It also means that there is a considerable signification of the film actors, whom the spectator encounters with his sensorium. Their bodies, their precise expressions, gestures, and postures catches the spectator's eyes; their moving bodies attain effects on the spectator, and teaches him what cinema is also about: 'Cinema is not only about telling a story; it's about creating an affect, an event, a moment which lodges itself under the skin of the spectator' (Rutherford 2003). Scrutinizing the affect, the event, and the moment of watching *Caché*, especially the dinner scene, the moving and touching effect turns out to be an experience with elements of human material, both with the actors and with the spectators. The spectator responds to the whole work with all his senses, because of the film actors; he communicates with George/ Daniel Auteuil and Anne/ Juliette Binoche as well as their guests, who all elicit sensory responses from him. The actors significantly guide him through the film. In the process of watching these actors, he understands them: he understands these forms of 'being on the screen' (Sobchack 2004a: 277). He learns that

Haneke's work of art in particular, and film in general, are 'peculiarly suited to make manifest the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 58). He realizes the process of watching and understanding as one of resonance and affect, and isolates it from framing, editing and narrative explanation. The spectator remembers Binoche as Anne and the experience of her challenging and sorrowful gazes, frequently directed at her husband. He considers Auteuil as Georges and, for example, the notions of his first suppressed anxiety and the following insecure reaction which leaves his wife and friends puzzled. He feels the resonance to and the affect of both Binoche's long breaths and frequent pauses, and Auteuil's petrified facial expression and sudden outbursts of anger throughout the film. He remembers the other scenes showing the couple in their daily routine at work, at home, and in and outside town, occasionally accompanied by friends, colleagues and their son Pierrot (Lester Makedonsky). He refers to his own bodily knowledge within the circulation of bodily affect between these actors and himself, and imagines himself having dinner with his friends. He imagines facing challenging and sorrowful gazes from his friend, husband or wife and understands being first unable to express a certain anxiety.

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### From inside us

There is only one way to make the film *Caché* mean: it can be made meaningful out of bodily sense, rather than out of textual clues. Shifting towards the analysis of the actors, their voices, bodies, and movements, and the significance of them, represents the basis for the realization of the process of watching and understanding film and its acting cast as one of resonance and affect. Watching the actors themselves and their performances affect and resonate with spectator, as they are outwardly expressed. Being in the house of the Laurent family, and joining them for dinner with friends, provides the spectator with moments of enjoyment and tension. Facing the challenging gaze of Anne, for example, as displayed by Binoche, initiates the affect of having felt this before. Noticing the immediate insecure reac-

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tion of Georges, as visualized by Auteuil, gives rise to the affect of a well-known experience.

The analysis of making sense through the film actor introduces an approach that does not acknowledge narrative as the organizational control of film. It maintains communication and comprehension in the film experience to originate in the mutual exchange of the personal intentions of the viewer and the movements of others, including the actors on the screen. Dealing with movement and the sense of gestures, Merleau-Ponty interestingly grasped the meaning of the body both as expression and speech. This a quote from his 1945 *Phenomenology of Perception*: 'The gesture presents itself to me as a question, bringing certain perceptible bits of the world to my notice, and inviting my concurrence in them. Communication is achieved when my conduct identifies this path with its own. There is mutual confirmation between myself and others' (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 215). Referring to a bodily knowledge in the circulation of bodily affect between actor and spectator, the process of imagining oneself having dinner with friends, facing challenging and sorrowful gazes from a friend, husband or wife, and being first unable to express a certain anxiety deepens an understanding for embodied experiences. Remembering the body, both of the film actor and the spectator, and understanding embodied experiences by pointing out their resonance, it is possible to learn that the body is comparable to a work of art, and to gain the experience, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, that it is 'a nexus of living meanings, not the law for a certain number of covariant terms' (Merleau-Ponty 1964:175). From the film actor's point of view, going on the screen, these 'living meanings' are encountered in perception, because, as Paul Crowther points out in an article on Merleau-Ponty and perception into art, the artist is 'a person whose approach to life has been signifi-

cantly defined by a relationship to a medium such as painting or writing. He has learnt an affinity between his body and the handling of a specific medium' (Crowther 1982: 141). This affinity subsequently leads to enabling the

**'...we always fill the screen with our own experiences. Ultimately, what we see comes from inside us' (Haneke 2005)**

artist's 'body to continue the creative stylizing process begun in the artist's perception itself' (Crowther 1982:142). From the spectator's point of view, returning from screen back to seat, these 'living meanings' are encountered in perception, because the embodied self of the spectator, as placed in the world, grasps the way of being in the film, visualized by the film's cast and speaking to all senses at once. Linking these two points of view on the grounds of a unity of human style, with film making manifest 'the union of mind and body, mind and world, and the expression of one in the other' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 58), enlightens us about the phenomenological experience of proximity. In the circulation of bodily affect between actor and spectator, the spectator perceives himself, for example at dinner with friends, and his understanding, as a result, deepens this perception, drawing him into the particular scene and into the work of art in general. He understands embodied experiences and points to their resonances, even if they are different in every body.

The given effect is that of an affect thoroughly elicited by the experience of elements of human material, by both the actors and the spectator. Gradually intensified, the experience appears, in Anne Rutherford's words, as 'a vehicle by which an affective charge is translated from film-maker to audience', from film actor to audience, while 'the role of the material elements of the film... [functions as] the means to produce this experience' (Rutherford 2002: 65). The affective embodied experiences are limitless and stress the materiality of film, as Merleau-Ponty has directed attention to: 'The meaning of a film is incorporated into its

rhythm just as the meaning of a gesture may immediately be read in that gesture: the film does not mean anything but itself [...] A movie is not thought; it is perceived' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 58-59). Meaning in film is experienced, and originates in the mutual exchange of the personal intentions of the spectator and the movements of others, including the actors on the screen. The absorption in the film experience is a form of a mutual absorption in the world. The spectator makes sense through the realization of the other's body, the actor's moving body, his accurate expressions, and controlled gestures. He makes meaning out of bodily sense and affectively reconsiders his own bodily being. Similar to the actors' bodies on stage, his body relates to the bodies of the actors on the screen, and responds to the experienced world as well as to the imaginary world. What he experiences with their bodies on the screen is what he realizes as a possibility for himself off the screen. His body is drawn into the accurate expressions and controlled gestures of the actors' bodies. In this way, he is bodily linked to the actor who becomes his companion in cinema, especially in a 'cinema of insistent questions', and particularly in films like *Caché*, *Ulysses' Gaze* (Theo Angelopoulos, 1995), *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), *Dogville* (Lars von Trier, 2003), *Batalla En El Cielo* [*Battle In Heaven*] (Carlos Reygadas, 2005) and *Inland Empire* (David Lynch, 2006). The actor on the screen is at once regarded as an active and acting agent. The actor in film is not reduced to a passive and imaged object. Acting in film can now be better seen, and even be felt, to count for something. The spectator off the screen is re-empowered and provoked as a human bodily being. The spectator's senses are all evoked. He is appealed to and challenged by this cinema of insistence and multiple codes. He too is active and acting.

Shaken by the confidence in reality through means of hidden images, being in the house of the Laurent family, and joining them for dinner with friends, provides the spectator with moments of enjoyment and tension. While making sense through the film actor in Michael Haneke's *Caché*, the spectator realizes that there is even more to the experience of film than narrative comprehension and interpretation involving the construction

of meaning through textual clues. He experiences their bodies on the screen and realizes this experience with bodily linkage as a possibility for him off the screen. He further notices that he is constantly challenged in the process of watching the film and its cast, and immediately perceives that there is even more than meets the eye, or, as Haneke elaborates, that 'we always fill the screen with our own experiences. Ultimately, what we see comes from inside us' (Haneke 2005).

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### Endnotes

1. The statements of Haneke, Binoche, Auteuil and Bénichou can be found in a clip in the archive of the Cannes festival's homepage. Accessed 01 September 2007. A shortened version of the conference is still in the festival's online archive: <http://www.festival-cannes.fr/en/media-Player/8493.html>. Accessed 17 April 2008.

2. Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, pp. 246-262. By comparing comedy with melodrama, and American with French

film in particular, the authors are interested in the relation between those who look and those who are looked at. They call the first part of the relevant chapter 'There Is Less than Meets the Eye'.

3 Relating to Wolfenstein and Leites, Holland discusses the 'certain feeling people have, that looking at a film is somehow passive'. He examines 'puzzling movies' like *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (Alain Resnais, 1959) and *La Dolce Vita* (Federico Fellini, 1959): 'these films take us back to the child's frame of mind' (Holland 1963: 24). This regression to the 'safe but powerless child' represents the reason for 'people feeling that watching a film is somehow passive' (Holland 1963: 27).

4 Stern and Kouvaros (1999: 22-26) as well as Sobchack, in her essay on Carrey (2004a: 277), relate to Jodi Brooks who focuses on the body and raises the attention given to the body by the camera, representing 'both a re-sensitization of the spectator's body and a refiguring of the imaged body': Jodi Brooks (1998), *Writings on Dance*, no. 17, p. 17.

5 Quotation borrowed from and translated by Mattias Frey, 'Michael Haneke – A Cinema of Disturbance: The Films of Michel Haneke in Context', *Senses of Cinema*, online: <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/haneke.html>. Accessed 17 April 2008.

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