King's Research Portal

Link to publication record in King's Research Portal

Citation to published version:

Andersson, J. (2013). Variations of an archetypal scene: the Paris Métro confrontation in Michael Haneke's Code Unknown. ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING D.

This version:

https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/variations-of-an-archetypal-scene-the-paris-metro-confrontation-in-michael-hanekes-code-unknown%28666e8136-a71e-41cd-a4ad-3dd71fc79f8d%29.html

Andersson, J. (2013). The definitive, peer-reviewed and edited version of this article is published in ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING D, 2003.

Variations of an archetypal scene: the Paris Métro confrontation in Michael Haneke's *Code Unknown*

Michael Haneke's film Code Unknown (2000) depicts an interracial confrontation on the Paris Métro, which the critical literature has tended to discuss as a comment on European multiculturalism. In this essay, I argue that this scene must also be understood as a variation of a string of similar interracial subway scenes that emerged in the New Hollywood-era of American cinema in the late 1960s and 1970s. Reflecting interconnected changes in the American city and film industry, this subterranean scene constitutes a key example of a new form of graphically violent urban cinema. As an ardent critic of American entertainment violence, Haneke's appropriation of this particular scene provides a useful example to evaluate his counter aesthetic in ways that bridge thematic and auteurist approaches, and which takes into account the crucial role of the spectator.

Introduction

In modern art and popular culture, the claustrophobic and densely packed spaces of public transportation have emerged as key metaphors for social relations. Not least in urban cinema, subway carriages have often been depicted as testing grounds for class relations, and with cities becoming more multicultural as sites of inter-ethnic tension. This essay is concerned with variations of one such scene, which consists of a confrontation between two or more subway passengers who stand in as types for larger groups in the city. Specifically, the focus is on Michael Haneke's film *Code Unknown* (2000), in which the white female protagonist Anne (Juliette Binoche) is verbally harassed and spat on by a young Beur man (Walid Afkir) on the Paris Métro. This long tense scene, which is shot in real time, has explicit class, gender and racial overtones and is situated within a film that has typically been viewed as a comment on contemporary European multiculturalism. Yet, rather than analysing *Code Unknown* in isolation, I want to examine its Métro scene in relation to a string of thematically similar confrontations on underground rail in both American and French cinema. Thus, the essay has two interconnected aims: first to draw on a range of films and interdisciplinary urban literature to illuminate how subterranean public transport has become a key allegorical setting for interracial encounters in cinema. Secondly, against this backdrop, to contribute to discussions of what Catherine Wheatley (2009: 5) has called "Haneke's critical aesthetic" by analysing the formal innovations that distinguishes his Métro scene from its predecessors. While doing so I will remain sensitive to the limitations of Haneke's formalism by highlighting ways in which *Code Unknown* ultimately reproduce problematic discourses of urban space.

I begin with a genealogy of the interracial subway scene, which first emerged in American cinema

in the late 1960s and 1970s, where above all, it became a stock feature of films set in New York City. Following this, I discuss how variations of this scene appear in French films in the 1980s and 1990s, often directly influenced by American cinema, but also reflecting changes in Paris's underground transport infrastructure. Considering that Haneke is a vocal critic of American(ized) entertainment violence, it is, then, potentially productive to place his Métro scene directly in relation to the type of cinema he purports to critique. Having described his oeuvre as "a protest against the mainstream cinema" and in explicit opposition to "American cultural imperialism" (Badt, 2005), Haneke has specifically suggested that his films should be viewed as "polemical statements against the American 'barrel down' cinema and its dis-empowerment of the spectator" (cited in Frey, 2010). Thus, my analysis will pay particular attention to the crucial role of the spectator in the Métro scene and in Haneke's formal repertoire more broadly.

Often considered "the last 'grand' auteur of European art cinema" (Grundmann, 2010: 26), Haneke's films are engaged with on very serious terms and *Code Unknown* is no exception in this regard. In a review essay specifically highlighting Haneke's deployment of modernist formalism to problematise the relationship between representation and reality, Richard Falcon (2001) called *Code Unknown* "the most intellectually stimulating and emotionally provocative piece of European cinema of recent times". In a similar vein, an early scholarly essay by Robin Wood (2003: 1) deemed it "perhaps the most important film of the past ten years" and argued that it should be viewed as a progressive critique of the fragmentation and individualisation under late-capitalism. In France, as Wheatley (2009: 129) has discussed, *Code Unknown* was interpreted specifically as about contemporary French politics and appropriated by groups on both the left and right wings of the political spectrum. These polarised interpretations, she argues (2009: 124), were made possible by the film's "lack of a defining directorial authority coupled with a failure to cement the link between the disaffected climate of society and Haneke's critique of the cinematic medium".

Through a focus on the Métro scene, I want to explore this political ambiguity further and try to illustrate how it arises principally from the tension between the film's thematic focus on interracial antagonism in urban space and the formalist devices Haneke deploys to convey a sense of reflexive spectatorship. The ethnic stereotyping of the Métro scene is clearly not without risks in the immediate political context of the film (the rise of neo-fascism and the electoral successes of the Front National in the 1990s and early 2000s) and the casting of Binoche (the female embodiment of French culture and beauty) as victim may seem particularly

irresponsible. Yet, as I will discuss at length in the second half of the essay, the visual strategies Haneke deploys in the Métro sequence complicates a straight-forward reading of this scene as simply another instance of interracial violence on the screen/train.

Before looking specifically at Haneke, the starting point for my reading are the interconnected cultural and economic changes in the American city and film industry, which coalesced to give rise to the interracial subway scene in the late 1960s. By emphasising how the economic reorganisation of the city has impacted on the production and mise-en-scène of urban cinema, my analysis here aligns itself with recent work on film and urban restructuring, which has paid particular attention to the relationship between New York City's fiscal crisis and the postclassical American cinema of the late 1960s and 1970s (Clutter, 2009; Webb, 2010; Corkin, 2011).

The political economy of the subway scene

In June 1966, New York City's newly elected Mayor John Lindsay (1966-1973) took a pioneering initiative when he established the Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting, encouraging directors and producers to use the city as a context for film and television products. Key aims of the new Office were to simplify the bureaucratic process of obtaining permission for on location shooting and to abolish any interference in the scripts from city agencies. While in a long term perspective, Lindsay's initiative can be considered part of a remarkable success story of urban branding (to this date, New York City remains one the preeminent settings of American commercial cinema), the short and medium term implications were more contradictory. On its own narrow terms the Office was an immediate success: in 1965 thirteen films were filmed in New York City whereas in the eight years of Lindsay's mayoralty 366 films were shot in the city (Sanders, 2001: 343-4; see also Clutter, 2009). Yet this increase in movie production took place in the context of deteriorating public finances and infrastructure, racial tensions, rapid demographic change, and rising crime rates – a social backdrop that would shape New York cinema across New Hollywood genres as varied as drama, post-apocalyptic science fiction, Blaxploitation and vigilante thrillers (Greenberg, 2008: 150-58). Furthermore, in the same year as Lindsay set up the Mayor's Office of Film, Hollywood's system of self-censorship under the so called "Production Code" (also known as "Hays Code" or simply "the Code"), effectively ended when studios began to release films without its approval. These changes in censorship unleashed a wave of films that depicted violence in unprecedentedly graphic ways, and which, courtesy of Lindsay's Office of Film, often used New York City as a setting, benefitting from easy on location permits and minimal interference. Ironically, then, the short-term consequences of Lindsay's initiative

3

illustrate some of the innate contradictions of laissez-faire urban restructuring: aimed at replacing New York City's diminishing tax base with revenues from movie production, the proliferation of anti-urban films may instead have accelerated "white flight" and diminished the tax base further.

In this new graphically violent cinema, the subway system often took on a metonymic status for the city as a crumbling whole. Michael Brooks (1997: 5) has even suggested that it became "the official logo for the urban crisis". Part of the explanation for this unflattering status is found in the subway's decaying aesthetics: disfigured by persistent leaks and "deferred maintenance", the city beautiful ideals and Beaux-Arts architecture of the early stations turned into ornamentals of grime, emblematic of New York's crisis. Although a directive from the Lindsay administration prevented the city's departments from refusing cooperation with film companies on the basis of the content of individual scripts, the Transit Authority (TA) immediately recognised the risks of such negative representation and evoked its status as an independent agency to refuse some films permission to shoot in the system. Shortly after the establishment of the Mayor's Office of Film, *The New York Times* reported that both Anthony Harvey's *Dutchman* (1967) and Larry Peerce's *The Incident* (1967) had been denied permission to film in the subway with the TA quoting a longstanding ban on depictions of violence or crime in the system (Canby, 1966; Weiler, 1967). The interior subway scenes of these films were instead shot in studios while exterior scenes in stations were filmed with concealed cameras in the tradition of Walker Evans' still photography of subway passengers that had just been published in book form as *Many Are Called* (1966). *Code Unknown* references Walker Evans in a scene where Anne's partner Georges (Thierry Neuvic) takes black-and-white portraits of unknowing passengers in the Métro, while the confrontation in which Anne is taunted by the Beur youths mirrors themes in *Dutchman* and *The Incident*. Haneke may not have seen those particular films, but both are early prototypes for the type of interracial subway confrontation he appropriates in *Code Unknown* (although they are unusual in the respect that almost the entire films are set in the subway).

Dutchman was based on a polemical play by LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka), in which a white woman stabs a black man to death in a subway car after teasing him with an apple. In the stage directions for the play, it is stated that the subway is "heaped in modern myth" (Baraka, 1965), and the film clearly incorporates itself into a grander allegorical narrative: the apple is a reference to Adam and Eve, but also to the Big Apple and the play/film can be read specifically as a comment on race in New York (Sanders, 1988: 146). As David Pike (2005: 302) has observed in his book on underground infrastructure in nineteenth-century Europe: "The class-based vertical

metaphors of Victorian Paris and London returned in New York City as a representation of race relations" (see also Lesser, 1987). Furthermore, this utilising of the subway's subterranean location to incorporate narrative sequences about social relations into larger mythological (or allegorical) contexts draws on similar metaphoric strategies in literature and the social sciences. In her book on the technological imagination of the underground, Rosalind Williams (1990: 48) notes how both Freud and Marx depended on underground metaphors, and how readings of the subterranean have tended to stress either the unconscious or the vertical symbolism of class hierarchies. Influenced by both psychoanalysis and Marxism, Marshall Berman's (1982: 148) term "primal modern scenes", which refers to everyday occurrences that "carry a mythic resonance and depth that propel them beyond their place and time and transform them into archetypes of modern life" is specifically useful in relation to many of these subway scenes as symbolic examples of social relations.

The use in cinema of New York's subway as the site of such archetypal encounters, however, should not merely be understood with reference to the symbolic connotations of the subterranean, but also as a reflection of an ethnically segregated city. As Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan's controversial, but in the policy and academic debates of the 1960s hugely influential, *Beyond the Melting-Pot* (1963) had illustrated, New York was a fragmented city in which communities lived dotted side by side without significant interracial mixing. Yet within this mosaic of fragmented communities, the subway, which cut through neighbourhoods, provided one of New York's most racially integrated spaces. *The Incident* draws on the notion of the subway as a microcosm of the city and portrays two nihilistic young white men who terrorise a group of subway passengers who represent various stereotypical demographics: different generations and ethnicities, a gay man, an alcoholic, and an African American couple, who in turn, schematically represent the tensions between Black Nationalism and the Civil Rights movement at the time. The inability of these various types to protect each other becomes an allegory of New York's social fragmentation, and as Brooks (1997: 195) has pointed out, it is highly significant that the one passenger who eventually stands up to the tormentors is the only non-New Yorker in the car.

Many of the dystopic anti-urban films, which proliferated in the 1970s and early 1980s, also centred their social critique specifically on New York as a symbol of societal breakdown.[i] The most emblematic of these films is Michael Winner's vigilante thriller *Deathwish* (1974), in which the protagonist Paul (Charles Bronson), a liberal architect turned right-wing vigilante after the

murder of his wife and rape of his daughter, shoots several muggers in the subway system. *Deathwish* tapped into popular sentiments at a time of rising crime rates, and its subway sequences can be read as an intertextual response to the passive timidity of the passengers in *The Incident*. In his essay 'Violence and the media', Haneke (2010: 576) refers to *Deathwish* as an example of entertainment violence in which there is an "*intensification* of one's living conditions and their jeopardization, which allows the viewer to approve of the act of violence as liberating or positive". Although immediately characterised as a "despicable film" by liberal critics (Canby 1974), the racially divisive Bernard Goetz-case in the 1980s, further tarnished *Deathwish's* particular brand of right-wing populism. In 1984, Goetz, who the tabloid press labelled "the Deathwish shooter", shot four young black men in the subway, but was convicted only of carrying an unlicensed weapon after a criminal trial judged that he had acted in self-defence.

In spite of its dubious reputation, *Deathwish* forebodes new ideologies of crime prevention that would become influential in revanchist political discourses in the 1990s. As Stanley Corkin (2011: 143) recently has noted, the thugs who murder the vigilante's wife and rape his daughter, inexplicably spray-paint graffiti at the scene of the crime. This detail, which links minor forms of vandalism to serious violent crime, is a premonition of the "broken windows theory" (Kelling and Wilson, 1982) that the Rudy Giuliani administration (1994-2001) would adopt as part of its zero tolerance policing and crack down on minor offences. Although the exact causes remain disputed, crime fell spectacularly throughout the 1990s and 2000s and gradually the cinematic image of New York and its subway changed. Released in the year homicide rates peaked, Abel Ferrara's *King of New York* (1990) can be seen as the operatic grand finale of New York dystopia, but its variation of the interracial subway confrontation offers a radically different form of urban governance to *Deathwish's* vigilante character (and the real life Goetz): confronted by three black men who want his money, the allegorically named protagonist White (Christopher Walken) does not shoot, but recruits the muggers to his drugs cartel. British writer, Iain Sinclair (2002), has described *King of New York* as a "memento mori of the century's ultimate city in meltdown" and a "parodied" take on the whole period of American urban cinema from the late 1960s. Specifically, the film's blunt allegorical depiction of race relations appears like an echo from a different era at a moment when contemporary Hollywood increasingly developed post-racial themes or tended to rebalance or recode entirely scripts open to charges of racial stereotyping.[ii] As a result of these changes in both the cultural image of New York and in the representational conventions of Hollywood, the interracial subway confrontation was gradually phased out from the cinema of the city in which it had first emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. In French film, on the other hand,

variations of this scene set in the Métro gained cultural significance in the 1980s and 1990s, partly in the context of a more violent Americanized cinema, but also reflecting changes in Paris's underground transport infrastructure.

Paris souterrain

While American cinema following the abolishing of "the Code" in the 1960s began to depict interracial urban violence in new graphic ways, no significant similar trend can be detected in French cinema at this time. Unlike Hollywood's history of self-censorship, the French film industry has been regulated directly by the state and censorship was particularly stringent during the Algerian War (1954-1962) (Hayward, 2005: 33), when, for example, Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Petit Soldat* (1960) was banned. Although the failure of French cinema to provide political criticism during this violent period of decolonization was clearly linked to censorship, it has also been attributed to an "emotional climate" (Lanzoni, 2004: 199), which Ann Stoler (2011) recently characterised as a form of "colonial aphasia" (e.g. more about the difficulties of finding an appropriate vocabulary than "collective amnesia"). This aphasic cultural climate has continued to shape not only the arts, but the intellectual sphere, where postcolonial perspectives have been slow to gain currency in the French academy (see Mbembe, 2011). Haneke's later Parisian film *Caché* (2005), which centres on the 1961 massacre of Algerian demonstrators, is a response to this cultural climate with its emphasis on a hushed down shameful episode, and its insistence on the intertwined nature of individual and national guilt. *Code Unknown's* interracial confrontation must perhaps be seen in the same light: as an attempt not to shy away from the difficult topic of race which quite literally in the Métro scene is "hidden" under the surface of the city.

In Paris, the organisation of urban space has, in fact, been integral to the state's rendering invisible of a "race problem". To discourage identity politics based on cultural difference, ethnic mapping of the *Beyond the Melting-Pot*-variety (which caused such debate in 1960s New York) has been seen as incompatible with France's secular and egalitarian ethos. Moreover, these attempts to conceal and contain ethnic difference (or viewed more sympathetically, such refusal to accept this reductive categorisation) are mirrored in Paris's segregated urban form, which unlike New York is not a mosaic of different communities dotted side by side, but structured as a citadel and historically surrounded by defensive walls of which the last, Thiers wall, is the site of the contemporary ring road, Boulevard Péripherique. The construction of the Péripherique (1958-1973) coincided with France's decolonization and the erection of *grand ensembles* [large housing estates/projects] on the outskirts of the city. Initially, these estates accommodated stable mixed-

income populations, but with housing finance reform in the 1970s (which enabled middle-class populations to leave) and the simultaneous influx of foreign workers (recruited to cover France's labour shortages), Paris's historical form as a fortress became ethnically coded (Dikeç, 2007: 38-41). Furthermore, unlike in other cities, where subways connect the periphery with the core, Paris's Métro did not extend far outside the Péripherique and only reinforced this segregated pattern with many *grand ensembles* suffering severe transport poverty.

In contrast, then, with many of the New York subway scenes from the 1960s and 1970s, films set in Paris in this period rarely portrayed the Métro as the symbolic locus of interracial confrontations. Rather than the claustrophobic entrapment of films such as *Dutchman* and *The Incident* in which the subway functioned as a microcosmic container, key representations of the Métro in thrillers and neo-noirs such as Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samouraï* (1967), Henri Verneuil's *Peur sur la ville* (1975) and Wim Wenders' *Der amerikanische Freund* (1977), instead stressed its labyrinthine quality of escape. Thus, these films borrowed from an earlier cinematic convention in films such as Sam Fuller's *Pickup on South Street* (1953) and Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959), where criminals used subways to disappear in the crowds. An exception is the Métro sequence in Godard's *Masculin Féminin* (1966), which includes an interracial encounter and quotes dialogue on American race politics from LeRoi Jones' play *Dutchman* (1964) on which Harvey's 1967 film was based. Unlike its American counterparts, however, this scene is not tense or scary, but played out in an absurd vein, although importantly in the context of French censorship, it illustrates an emerging tendency to link race discourse with America rather than France's own decolonization and demographic transformations.

Yet with the opening of the R.E.R. (Réseau Express Régional) in 1977, the Métro was finally integrated with the suburban rail network and its symbolic connotations began to reflect the new underground rail system's capacity to bring the banlieue into direct contact with the affluent centre. The construction of the R.E.R. constitutes a key moment in the modernisation of Paris, when the radical ideas for a "subterranean city" first presented by architect Édouard Utudjian at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris, and later elaborated in his book *L'Architecture et l'urbanisme souterrains* (1966), were partly realised (Wakeman, 2007: 59-60). The new rail system centred on vast interchange stations in central Paris with Châtelet-les-Halles and its connected shopping mall becoming the world's largest underground rail complex. As anthropologist Marc Augé (2002: 33) has suggested, the R.E.R. came to "to mask the reality of [Paris's] segregation by locating the triage stations in the heart of the metropolitan machine". Thus, when the journalistic

treatment of the banlieues shifted in the 1980s and 1990s to "become a synonym of alterity, deviance, and disadvantage" (Hargreaves, 1996: 607), the cultural meaning of those central locations most associated with the people from the banlieues underwent a similar transformation. While architectural accounts of the redevelopment of Les Halles in the 1970s have often been characterised by a preservationist ethos in which Victor Baltard's demolished glass and iron arcades are mourned, it is difficult to disentangle descriptions of Châtelet-les-Halles as "scary" and "truly awful 1970s dystopia" (Ayers, 2004: 382) from the racialized fears often projected on an underground station in which the R.E.R. lines from the banlieues converge into a quasi-public indoor space. The metaphoric connotations of the subterranean, which not least Edward Said's work on Orientalism drew on to capture "the ideological construction of the low-Other" (Stallybrass and White, 1986: 5), it seems, have a distinct material manifestation in Paris's underground transport network (where the horizontal relationship between periphery and centre takes on a vertical dimension with the RER lines to the banlieues running deepest below the ground).[iii]

The new cultural meaning of the Paris underground can be detected in the *cinema du look* of the 1980s although Métro films such as Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Diva* (1981) and Luc Besson's *Subway* (1985) continue the Godardian model of appropriating American racial iconography in Parisian settings. In his essay on *Diva* as the first postmodern French film, Frederic Jameson (1982: 116) placed its representation of urban space within a new post-national order "of which the cultural originality of the United States – primarily of New York City and of California – is the emblem". The diva of the film's title is African-American and similarly in *Subway* some of the racial types are more American than French, while the title refers to New York's subway rather than the Paris Métro in which the film is set. This Americanization of French cinema can be understood partly in relation to the urban processes of the historical period sketched out above. To compensate for declining domestic revenues following post-war suburbanization, and gradually competition from television (Gomery, 1985), American film companies tried to increase distribution in Europe where suburbanization had developed along different lines (Storper, 1989: 283). In France such attempts were first of limited success and with some fluctuations the French and American shares of the cinema market remained fairly stable from 1967 and throughout the 1970s (Jeancolas, 1998: 53), although the franker more explicit American films that followed from the abolishing of "the Code" increasingly marginalised European art cinema in America (Balio, 1998). Between 1981 and 1991, however, the domestic share of the French film market dropped from 50% to 30%, while the American share grew from 35% to 59% in

spite of pro-active attempts by the Mitterrand government's Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, to protect national cinema (Hayward, 1993: 384-85). Tellingly, French films that were successful commercially in the 1980s such as *Diva* and *Subway* often emulated the fast-paced editing practices of Hollywood, and drew inspiration from the racial imagery of American cinema, advertising, and MTV.

In parallel with these Americanized films, French-born director of Algerian descent, Mehdi Charef, began to use the Métro setting for scenes that spoke directly to contemporary issues around immigration and racism in France. In his debut *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* (1985), two boys from the banlieue steal a man's wallet on the Métro, but although the actual thief is white, his Beur companion is immediately assumed guilty when the crime is discovered in a tense and claustrophobic confrontation on the train. In Charef's second feature *Miss Mona* (1987), the Métro plays a symbolic role throughout the film and in the final scene, the North-African protagonist is caught paperless on a platform by two policemen (Tarr, 2005: 39-40). This thematic focus on racial profiling and *sans-papiers* (topics that also feature in *Code Unknown*) forebodes the "new realism" of French cinema in the 1990s (Powrie, 1998), which for international audiences is most closely associated with Mathieu Kassovitz' *La haine* (1995) – a film that includes its own intra-class confrontation on the Métro when one of the protagonists from the banlieue verbally abuse a beggar. *La haine*'s eerie black and white representation of Châtelet-les-Halles sharply contrasts with how the same station is portrayed in *Subway*, where Alexandre Trauner's set-designs have been described as "a sort of underground space station, with the emphasis on colour and form rather than on graphic realism" (Berry, 2000: 14). Yet, in spite of breaking with the visual language of *cinema du look* and addressing topical French issues, *La haine* – with its winks to Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and Charlie Ahearn's hip-hop and graffiti film *Wild Style* (1983) – is very much an homage to American cinema and popular culture. In contrast, Haneke's *Code Unknown*, to which the remaining of the essay is devoted, must be understood as an attack on American cinema (and its influence globally), not least in the ways in which its Métro scene subverts the aesthetic conventions of Hollywood.

The spectator in Haneke's Métro scene

The Métro scene in *Code Unknown* is an intertextual variation of the American subway scenes discussed above (and to a lesser extent some of the French variations) not merely because it is an interracial confrontation set in a Métro car, but also because some of those films can be viewed as examples of the type of entertainment violence Haneke purports to critique. While his critique

tends to focus on the representational techniques that make violence thrilling or cathartic, the thematic similarities between the Métro scene and some of these earlier films are striking. When the scene begins, two young Beur men enter the train and one of them (Walid Afkir) immediately starts to whistle and make mocking flirtatious remarks directed at Anne who is further intimidated by his intrusive body language. Thus, the gendered encounter of *Dutchman* (in which a white woman aggressively pursued a black man) is juxtapositioned with the white bourgeois woman as victim. While the scene clearly articulates class and race resentment ("For the lady to be in the subway with the tramps", "I'm just a little Arab looking for affection"), the gendered dimension of this encounter is arguably the most emotive, but in contrast with *Dutchman* where the white woman (through Biblical allusions) was misogynistically depicted as the origin of sin, Anne is a rather pure symbol under attack from immigrant youths (problematically casted in Orientalist terms as hassling, over-sexed and aggressive).

In its basic set-up, therefore, Haneke's Métro scene is not dissimilar from films such as Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980) in which a white woman is chased through the New York subway by a transgendered serial killer while a group of "black punks" threaten to rape her. Yet while such films were often accused of irresponsible stereotyping, *Code Unknown* has largely escaped similar charges although Peter Brunette (2010: 86) has highlighted the scene's potential "right-wing implications". Apart from the ethnic stereotyping, these "implications" must be understood in relation to the broader trope of the dystopic city, which has dominated twentieth-century cinema (Clarke, 1997; Shiel and Fitzmaurice, 2001; 2003), and whose emphasis on quotidian urban violence has frequently been linked with reactionary politics.[iv] A pivotal element of the initial critique of *Deathwish* as a "movie to cheer the hearts of the far-right wing", for example, was its representation of New York as "filled with vandals, would-be muggers, rapists and the like" (Canby 1974). While *Code Unknown* is infinitely more sophisticated and nuanced in its attempts to lay bare the complexities of racial and social antagonisms in the city, its portrayal of public space follows in the same dystopic tradition, and critical responses have in ambiguous terms stressed how the film foregrounds "the failure of public space" (Cowan, 2008: 6) or even "questions the cohesiveness and, ultimately, the viability of an emergent multiethnic and transnational society" (Naqvi, 2007: 237).

Yet what distinguishes Haneke's Métro scene from its predecessors is a shift in emphasis from the experience of being attacked (an emotional perspective which is likely to generate a visceral populist response in the audience) to the act of witnessing violence (which in contrast raise

questions about complicity and responsibility). This shift in emphasis does not primarily take place on the level of plot or dialogue (thematically films such as *The Incident* and *Deathwish* pose similar ethical questions), but instead relates to the ways in which *Code Unknown* formally visualises the ethical dilemma of witnessing an attack on public transport. Although the various subway scenes discussed here are not shot in the same way, certain formulaic commonalities prevail including sound effects, counter-shots and close-ups to show facial expressions of fear on the person under attack (and in some instances, sadistic pleasure on the face of the perpetrator). Counter-shots, which alternate between the two, often stress the height difference of the perpetrator standing up and the victim sitting down, favouring the point-of-view of the latter to capture what it *feels* like to be under attack. In contrast, *Code Unknown* is shot in a fixed stationary style without any camera movement or non-diegetic sound effects.

Specifically in the Métro scene, the static camera is placed roughly halfway through the carriage while Anne initially sits at the far end of the train. When the harassment gets increasingly aggressive, Anne leaves her seat to sit down next to an older Arab man (Maurice Bénichou) in a more crowded part of the carriage, now directly in front of the camera which remains static. The Beur youths follow, but throughout the scene, Anne refuses to respond not only to the mocking verbal advances ("Don't you talk to commoners?"), but also shuts them out from her vision by staring out in space. Eventually, when the level of threat intensifies, the scene turns into one of those cinematic morality plays – much like in *The Incident* – where the question is whether a fellow passenger will step in and help. Finally, after Afkir's character has spat Anne in her face and is about to leave the train, the older Arab man, who has until then been reluctant to intervene, kicks out at him (and thereby to some extent pacifies the negative ethnic stereotyping in this scene). When the younger men return, a tense stand-off follows and the older man hands over his glasses to Anne in anticipation of violence (although symbolically this gesture also underlines his refusal to look clearly at the younger men who throughout the scene have been blocked out of vision by everyone on the train). After some further intimidation, the young men leave at the next stop, and Anne thanks the older man before she breaks down in tears.

According to Fatima Naqvi (2007: 245): "The lack of camera involvement" throughout this scene "mimics the lack of communication and solidarity among the figures", whereas Roy Grundmann (2010: 401) has suggested that: "The absence of shot/countershot patterns, which honor point of view and underscore the notion of dialog, indicates Haneke's intention to eschew the corresponding mandate of a 'balanced' presentation of conflict". However, the static camera

should perhaps not be understood as an *absence* of point of view, but rather as an additional *presence*: it introduces the perspective of a third person, namely that of the film audience as fellow passenger. Scholarship responding to Laura Mulvey's (1975) influential essay on gender and spectatorship (for overviews see Mayne, 1993; Aaron, 2007) has often discussed the audience's "secondary identification" with characters on the screen (in this context "primary identification" refers to the spectator identifying as subject in the context of film projection, see Metz, 1982 [1975]). In relation to *Code Unknown*, Wood (2003), for example, has suggested that his students exclusively identified with Anne as victim, while Lisa Downing and Libby Saxton (2010: 19) argue that the audience is "co-opted into sympathizing with the white middle-class woman" because of Binoche's star status and the privileging of Anne's backstory in the filmic narrative. Yet the formal aesthetic of Haneke's Métro scene does not so much encourage identification with Anne (or any of the other on-screen characters) as with the off-screen point of view the camera most closely resembles: that of a fellow passenger.

Through the refusal of the static camera to look up, the spectator of *Code Unknown* becomes personally implicated in the ethical question of whether one has a moral obligation to intervene and protect a fellow citizen, but also in the refusal to look up and acknowledge the Beur youths. Much of the scholarly work on Haneke has been concerned with how his critical aesthetic implicates the spectator, and the Métro scene can be seen as one illustration of what Wheatley (2009: 5) describes as the relationship between "formal reflexivity" and "moral reflexivity": the moral refusal to look up and intervene and/or acknowledge the "Other" is mirrored by the static formal position of the camera. Thus, through an interpersonal encounter, the Métro scene actualises (both thematically and formally) the subaltern demand for recognition, which quite literally in this instance is a demand to be *seen*. In some respects, this emphasis on vision turns the Métro scene into a contemporary variation of Baudelaire's famous prose poem 'The eyes of the poor' (1869), which in Marxian geography has come to represent the "bourgeois anxiety" that arose on Haussmann's newly-built boulevards (Harvey, 2003: 220), and more prophetically been seen as "a proto-gentrification narrative" (Smith, 1996: 34). In Haneke's Paris, however, the embourgeoisment set in motion by Haussmann has been completed and fortified by the Péripherique. Yet, underground transport blurs the otherwise clearly demarcated boundaries between privileged centre and banlieue and below the city's surface, the repressed "out-of sight, out-of-mind" approach to everyday urban navigation (and urban policy) falls apart.

The limits of Haneke's formalism

Paradoxically, the same auteurist innovations that enable Haneke to merge in content and form the avoidance tactics of the gaze in urban space, simultaneously rub up awkwardly against more overarching aspects of his aesthetic project. The static camera angles, for example, draw attention to another crucial aspect of Haneke's critical aesthetic: namely the ways in which his films deliberately highlight the staged character of cinema. Haneke's films deploy a range of illusion-breaking techniques including Brechtian distancing effects, but the most striking device used in *Code Unknown* is "the film within the film". Anne is an actress and interspersed in the diegetic narrative are a number of scenes from her latest film whose cinematic style is conspicuously formulaic. A key argument about the aesthetics of *Code Unknown*, therefore, has been that the film-within-the-film deploys very conventional modes of representation, which contrasted with the diegetic narrative's use of static camera angles and long takes, constantly reminds the audience of the staged character of cinema. Hence, the argument goes, the spectator is forced to critically reflect on the mechanics and manipulation of image-making (Wood, 2003). However, the counter-argument would be that the staged character of the film-within-the-film only heightens the realism of the diegetic narrative, which, in turn, would explain why some critics have described the Métro scene as "uncomfortably real" (Gates, 2001) and "spine chillingly authentic" (*Time Out*, 2000).

This notion of Haneke's Métro scene as "real" and "authentic" is not, however, merely a question of genre conventions and cinematic techniques, but also stems from the fact that it taps into existing discourses around race in Paris. When Walid Afkir's character refers to himself as "Beur" – the colloquial term for a French-born person with parents from the Maghreb – he immediately puts this confrontation in a specific postcolonial context. Similarly, some of his mocking remarks expose racist discourses with particular resonances in Paris: "Do I smell?" could been seen as an allusion to Jacques Chirac's notorious speech as Mayor of Paris, in which he complained about the "overdose" of immigrants and their "smell" (Mayer, 1998: 22) while the sarcastic reference to "racaille" prophetically points to the controversy surrounding the then interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy's, use of the same term in 2005. The ways in which this particular vernacular around race serves as a marker of realism and to some extent authenticates the Métro scene as "representative example" arguably undermines Haneke's parallel critical attempts to reveal cinema as staged manipulation. Moreover, since Haneke's critical aesthetic is somehow dependent on a pre-text from which it can distinguish itself by self-consciously breaking representational conventions, there is a risk that the ideological motifs of those earlier scenes (not least the links between public transport and interracial violence) are reinforced rather

than deconstructed.

Furthermore, in common with urban exploitation cinema, and in contrast with banlieue films such as *Le thé au harem d'Archimède* and *La haine*, *Code Unknown* provides no psychological insights into the motivations of the perpetrators of the attack on the Métro. In that respect, it resembles *The Incident* whose "major weakness" according to Brooks (1997: 195) "was a complete failure to explore the psychology of the two young men terrorizing the passengers". In *Deathwish* this failure takes on a racist dimension: white criminals look scruffy and marginal while the black muggers the vigilante shoots in a subway underpass have just eaten in the same restaurant as him and wear trendy clothes (hence black criminality is pathologised rather than explained with references to poverty and racism). *Code Unknown* cannot be accused of similar neglect in articulating the causes of resentment of the Beur youths on the Métro, yet it does so primarily through abstract symmetries between the film's narrative fragments rather than through individual psychology. Thus, *Code Unknown* is similar to *Caché* in which Paul Gilroy (2007: 234) has highlighted how Arabs never "develop into deeper, rounded characters" and argued that the film ultimately perpetuates "the white, bourgeois monopoly on dramatizing the stresses of lived experience". This is also true of *Code Unknown* where sequences set outside France are dramatically flat and the non-French characters lack psychological depth (in fact this tendency is so stark that it could be considered deliberate in order to underline a metropolitan imperial gaze in which non-western characters mostly remain shadows in the background).

Recent French films that have used public transport as a symbol for multicultural Paris – notably Claire Denis' *35 rhums* (2008) and André Téchiné's *La fille du RER* (2009) – have instead centred on the psychology and emotional lives of protagonists who live outside the centre. *35 rhums* portrays the daily life of a R.E.R. driver and his daughter in terms which deliberately question the perceptual category of the banlieue as synonymous with violence and rioting, while *La fille du RER* is based on the real case of Marie Leonie Leblanc – a young woman who falsely claimed to have been assaulted in an anti-Semitic attack on the R.E.R. Asked in court why she had blamed the invented attack on North Africans and black people, Leblanc said: "When I watch the telly, they are always the ones who are blamed" (Henley, 2004), thus, illustrating the conflation of discourse and reality in the geographical imagination of particular urban spaces and populations as inherently dangerous. Unless Haneke's illusion-breaking devices are supposed to reveal everything as staged manipulation (in which case they are ultimately too vague to be effective), *Code Unknown* in contrast, never challenge the cultural tropes surrounding public transport and

the banlieue. On the contrary, it casts its inhabitants in their most stereotypical role in the bourgeois imagination: that of intruder entering Paris from below to terrorise the centre.

Conclusion

This essay has examined how the interior space of the subway carriage emerged as a key setting for interracial confrontations in American and French cinema. The initial appearance of this often violent scene in the late-1960s must be understood in the context of new Civil Rights and Black Nationalist politics, but also in relation to the diminishing role of censorship in Hollywood and new laissez-faire regimes of on-location shooting in New York City. By exploring how the templates for this scene emerged at the critical historical juncture when interconnected changes in the American city and film industry gave rise to new forms of graphic violence, it has, then, been possible to discuss the Métro scene in *Code Unknown* directly in relation to the type of entertainment cinema Haneke purports to critique.

While *Code Unknown* never fundamentally alters the basic dramaturgical premise of those earlier genre films – namely that of underground rail as characterised by everyday interracial antagonism – it challenges the representational techniques of entertainment violence by abandoning non-diegetic sound effects and point-of-view shots. Instead, Haneke's use of the long-take and static camera creates an ethical and aesthetic effect, which conflates the position of the spectator with a fellow passenger and directly implicates the cinema audience in the interracial encounter on the Métro. This effect is, if not entirely dependent on, significantly heightened by the ways in which Haneke defamiliarizes and subverts the representational expectations of this standard scenario in the repertoire of urban cinema. By placing the spectator *in* the scene, Haneke creates a reflexive aesthetic effect where the cinema audience is forced to ask introspective ethical questions of how to appropriately respond as witness to interracial urban violence. Yet, ultimately this effect also creates a non-didactic openness – where the different subject positions of the audience will determine the ethical response – which in turn explains how both the political right and left in France could appropriate *Code Unknown* for their own means.

Bibliography:

Aaron, M. (2007) *Spectatorship: The Power of Looking On*, London and New York: Wallflower.

Augé, M. (2002) *In the Metro*, Conley, T. (transl.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ayers, A. (2004) *The Architecture of Paris*, Stuttgart and London: Edition Axel Menges.

Badt, K. (2005) 'Family is hell and so is the world: talking to Michael Haneke at Cannes', *Bright Lights Film Journal*, 50. http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/50/hanekeiv.htm.

Balio, T. (1998) 'The art film market in the new Hollywood', Nowell-Smith, G., Ricci, S. (eds.), *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95*, London: BFI Publishing.

Baraka, I. A. (1965) *Dutchman and The Slave: Two Plays*, London: Faber.

Berman, M. (1982) *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London: Verso.

Berry, D. (2000) 'Underground cinema: French visions of the Métro', Konstantarakos, M. (ed.), *Spaces in European Cinema*, Exeter and Portland: Intellect Books.

Brooks, M. W. (1997) *Subway City: Riding the Trains, Reading New York*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Brunette, P. (2010) *Michael Haneke*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Byg, B. (2010) 'Class conflict and urban public space: Haneke and mass transit', Grundmann, R. (ed.), *A Companion to Michael Haneke*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Canby, V. (1966) 'Subways are not for filmmaking, producers of 'Dutchman' told', *New York Times*, October 26.

Canby, V. (1974) '*Deathwish* hunts muggers: the cast story of gunman takes dim view of city', *New York Times*, 25 July.

Clarke, D. B. (1997) *The Cinematic City*, London and New York: Routledge.

Clutter, M. (2009) 'Imaginary apparatus: film production and urban planning in New York City, 1966-1975', *Grey Room*, 35 (Spring): 58-89.

Corkin, S. (2011) *Starring New York: Filming the Grime and the Glamour of the Long 1970s*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cowan, M. (2008) 'Between the street and the apartment: disturbing the space of fortress Europe in Michael Haneke', *Studies in European Cinema*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 117-129.

Dikeç, M. (2007) *Badlands of the Republic: Space, Politics, and Urban Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Downing, L., Saxton, L. (2010) *Film and Ethics: Foreclosed Encounters*, London and New York: Routledge.

Falcon, R. (2001) 'Code Unknown', *Sight & Sound*, May.

Frey, M. (2010) 'The message and the medium: Haneke's film theory and digital praxis', *On Michael Haneke*, Price, B., Rhodes, D.J. (eds.), Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Gandy, M. (1999) 'The Paris sewers and the rationalization of urban space', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24, 1: 23-44.

Gates, A. (2001) 'The universality of racial tension', *The New York Times*, 30 November.

Gilroy, P. (2007) 'Shooting crabs in a barrel', *Screen*, 48, 2: 233-35.

Glazer, N., Moynihan, D. P. (1963) *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, MIT Press: Cambridge Massachusetts.

Gomery, D. (1985) 'The coming of television and the "lost" motion picture audience', *Journal of Film and Video*, 37, 3: 5-11.

Graham, S. (2010) *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*, London and New York: Verso.

Greenberg, M. (2008) *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World*, New York: Routledge.

Grundmann, R. (2010) 'Introduction: Haneke's anachronism', Grundmann, R. (ed.), *A Companion to Michael Haneke*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Haneke, M. (2010) 'Violence and the media', Torner, E. (transl.), Grundmann, R. (ed.), *A Companion to Michael Haneke*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Hargreaves, A.G. (1996) 'A deviant construction: the French media and the "Banlieues"', *New Community*, 22, 4: 607-618.

Harvey, D. (2003) *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, London and New York: Routledge.

Hayward, S. (1993) 'State, culture and the cinema: Jack Lang's strategies for the French film industry 1981-93', *Screen*, 34, 4: 380-91.

Hayward, S. (2005) *French National Cinema*, 2nd edition, Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

Henley, J. (2004) 'Woman sentenced for anti-Semitism lie', *Guardian*, 27 June.

Jameson, F. (1982) 'On *Diva*', *Social Text*, 6 (autumn): 114-119.

Jeancolas, J-P (1998) 'From the Blum-Byrnes agreement to the GATT affair', Nowell-Smith, G., Ricci, S. (eds.), *Hollywood and Europe: Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95*, London: BFI Publishing.

Kracauer, S. ([1946]2003) 'Hollywood's terror films: do they reflect and American state of mind?', *New German Critique*, 89 (Spring/Summer): 105-111.

Kelling, G.L., Wilson, G.Q. (1982) 'Broken windows', *Atlantic*, March.

Lanzoni, R. F. (2004) *French Cinema: From its Beginning to the Present*, Continuum International Publishing Group: London and New York.

Lesser, W. (1987) *The Life Below the Ground: A Study of the Subterranean in Literature and History*, Boston and London: Faber and Faber.

Mayer, N. (1998) 'The French National Front', Betz, H.G., Immerfall, S. (eds.), The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies, London: MacMillan Press.

Mayne, J. (1993) *Cinema and Spectatorship*, London and New York: Routledge.

Mbembe, A. (2011) 'Provincializing France?', Roitman, J. (transl.), *Public Culture*, 23, 1: 85-119.

Metz, C. (1982[1975]) *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, Britton, C., Williams, A., Brewster, B., Guzzetti, A. (transl.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mulvey, L. (1975) 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', *Screen*, 16, 3: 6-18.

Naqvi, F. (2007) 'The politics of contempt and the ecology of images: Michael Haneke's *Code inconnu*', Schindler, S.K., Koepnick, L. (eds.), *The Cosmopolitan Screen: German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*, The University of Michigan Press.

Pike, D. L. (2005) *Subterranean Cities: The World Beneath London and Paris, 1800-1945*, Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press.

Powrie, P. (1998) 'Heritage, history and "new realism": French cinema in the 1990s', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 4: 479-491.

Rhodes, J.D. (2006) 'Haneke, the long take, realism', *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 17-21.

Sanders, J. (2001) *Celluloid City: New York and the Movies*, New York: Alfred A. Knopp.

Sanders, L.C. (1988) *The Development of Black Theatre in America: From Shadows to Selves*, Louisiana State University Press.

Sharrett, C. (2004) 'The world that is known: Michael Haneke interviewed', *Kinoeye: New Perspectives on European Film*, 4, 1. http://www.kinoeye.org/04/01/interview01.php

Shiel, M., Fitzmaurice, T. (2001) *Cinema and the City: Film and Society in an Urban Context*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Shiel, M., Fitzmaurice, T. (2003) *Screening the City*, London: Verso.

Smith, N. (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, New York and London: Routledge.

Sorfa, D. (2006) 'Uneasy domesticity in the films of Michael Haneke', *Studies in European Cinema*, 3, 2: 93-104.

Stallybrass, P., White, A. (1986) *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Stoehr, K. (2010) 'Haneke's secession: perspectivism and anti-nihilism in *Code Unknown* and *Caché*', Grundmann, R. (ed.), *A Companion to Michael Haneke*, Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Stoler, A.L. (2011) 'Colonial aphasia: race and disabled histories in France', *Public Culture*, 23, 1: 121-56.

Storper, M. (1989) 'The transition to flexible specialisation in the US film industry: external economies, the division of labour, and the crossing of industrial divides', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 13: 273-305.

Tarr, C. (2005) *Reframing Difference: Beur and Banlieue Filmmaking in France*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Time Out (2000) 'Review: *Code Unknown*', http://www.timeout.com/film/reviews/69447/code-unknown.html

Wakeman, R. (2007) 'Fascinating Les Halles', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 25, 2: 46-72.

Webb, L.M. (2010) 'Restructuring and representation: cinematic space and the built environment in the 1970s', PhD thesis, King's College, London.

Weiler, A.H. (1967) 'On the Woodlawn local: subways are for shooting?' *New York Times*, July 16.

Wheatley, C. (2009) *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethics of the Image*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Williams, R. (2008) *Notes on the Underground: An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination*, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Wood, R. (2003) 'In search of the Code Inconnu', *CineAction* (Summer).

---

[i] Alan Arkin's black comedy *Little Murders* (1971) and Frank D. Gilroy's *Desperate Characters* (1971) both include dystopic scenes set in the subway, while later exploitation films such as Edward Bianchi's *The Fan* (1981) and Abel Ferrara's *Fear City* (1984) specifically centred on women as victims of unprovoked attacks in the subway system. In Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980), this gendered motif is racialized – a group of 'black punks' threaten to rape a white woman – in ways that thematically resemble Haneke's Métro scene. In parallel with these films, a number of feature films including Walter Hill's *The Warriors* (1979) and graffiti and hip-hop films such as Charlie Ahearn's *Wild Style* (1983) and Stan Lathan's *Beat Street* (1984) portrayed the subway in more playful terms as an interracial playground.

[ii] Examples of films that tried to problematize "race" or develop post-racial themes (albeit in rather superficial terms) in the subway genre include Joseph Ruben's action comedy *Money Train* (1995), where the black and white protagonists are adopted brothers (and the white character rather than the black is exhibiting all the stereotypical behaviours of the "hood") while in Taylor Hackford's *Devil's Advocate* (1997), Milton (Al Pacino) is beyond ethnicity and speaks all languages although the tough guys who threaten him with a knife on the subway are stereotypically casted as Latinos. A recent example of recoding is Tony Scott's remake of *The Taking of Pelham 1 2 3* (2009), which clearly plays on post-9/11 fears of Islamic terrorism, but in which a subway train is hijacked not by a Muslim, but by a Catholic.

[iii] Ranging from day-to-day media reports of violent crime to more spectacular episodes including the Groupe Islamique Armé's bomb campaign of the Métro in 1995, and the televised clashes in Gare du Nord between riot police and youths from the city's northern banlieues in 2007, a set of symbolic events have continued to shape this topography of fear. In relation to the disturbances in Gare du Nord, Stephen Graham (2010: 113) refers to the "widespread discourse of 'barbarians' now being within the gates, not just of the city, but of the iconic city of Western modernity". These contemporary subterranean anxieties also resonate historically. In an essay on the sewers in Second Empire Paris, Matthew Gandy (1999: 34) noted how: "Underground urban infrastructure became a kind of repository for untamed nature, within which the innate tensions behind capitalist urbanization became magnified and distorted through the lens of middle-class anxiety". While Gandy's analysis emphasised the gendered aspects of the nature/culture nexus, his reference to "untamed nature" could in late-twentieth-century Paris equally be understood as a racialized (post)colonial trope of 'uncivilized Others' terrorising the underground transport system.

[iv] Already in the 1940s, Siegfried Kracauer ([1946] 2003: 106; 110) warned that in Hollywood's "terror films" (in effect noirs *avant la lettre*), the "predilection for familiar, everyday surroundings as the setting in which crime and violence occur" could create an "emotional preparedness for fascism". Similarly, one of the key criticisms levelled against the anti-urban films of the 1970s concerned their portrayals of the public realm as consistently violent. Apart from the Métro scene, a string of other sequences in *Code Unknown* invariably portray Paris as a space of racial antagonism (a notion further reinforced by the fact that all scenes set in Romania, Mali and rural France, in contrast, are non-violent). Moreover, since the violent encounters in Haneke's Paris are inter-racial, the film subliminally feeds the nostalgic illusion that the streets were safer prior to multiculturalism (highlighting a direct parallel with the New York films of the late 1960s and 70s, which often implicitly linked the rise in violent crime with the growth of the city's black and Puerto Rican population).