Załącznik

Cultural Studies Appendix – English Issue 2019/2

MUSIC AS A MEANS OF NARRATION IN SELECTED FILMS BY MICHAEL HANEKE (*FUNNY GAMES*, *THE PIANO TEACHER*, *AMOUR*)[1]

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INTRODUCTION: ON THE AUDIBLE LANDSCAPE OF CINEMA

O, you of the feelings
changing into what? – into an audible landscape.
Rainer Maria Rilke, *To Music* (transl. S. Horton)

When Georges, one of the characters in Michael Haneke's *Amour*, makes attempts to catch a pigeon – a street intruder in a model-decorated bourgeois apartment – the viewer is left alone for a good few minutes with a flapping bird and a panting old man. Zygmunt Kałużyński (1998: 97), evoking the pioneer years of the sound film almost one hundred years earlier, wrote in his essay: 'Pigeons would sit on the glass roof of the atelier, interrupting dialogues with their cooing: special officers were on duty to chase the birds away with sticks'. The association of these two points in the history of cinema – situated on the two poles of the sound film – allows us to see Haneke not only as a specialist in 'audience-shocking' stories or a go-to moralist, but as an artist organically connected with the development of cinema and its means of expression. Sound is one of those means, whose special variation is music, which is worth paying special attention in the case of Michael Haneke's films.

[1] The article is a reviewed and abbreviated version of an MA thesis written under the supervision of Professor Katarzyna Taras and defended at the Faculty of Humanities of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

Let us reflect a little more upon the scene with the pigeon being completely devoid of music as it allows us to look at Haneke's ways of narration from the perspective of the method, or the 'technique' applied (Shklovsky 1917). The scene is provocative, in terms of both form (it seems to be falling out of the rhythm of the film, dragging so disproportionately in relation to its whole length that it can irritate and upset the viewer[2]) and content (it sets a trap of interpretative coercion, i.e. the symbolic mode (Umberto Eco's notion), a trap in which, for instance, Tadeusz Sobolewski fell suggesting the relation of the pigeon with the Christian symbolism somewhat too easily)[3], The provocation is all the more effective that not only has Haneke been labeled as a perfectionist whose tapes are deliberately recorded in every second, but also as a director whose play with the viewer does not assume the equality of both parties, but an intellectual and emotional advantage of one of them, which simply means the viewer is being manipulated by the director. While it is true that some of Haneke's films, including *Funny Games*, may confirm his reputation of a 'manipulator'[4], such works as *The Piano Teacher* or *Amour* – which may be proved[5], among other phenomena, by extreme discrepancies in their evaluation – show that things may also take a different course: events and heroes break free from the director's strict control; they become able to self-determine, and the viewer – to confront a cinematic world, which is multidimensional

[2] 'The worst part of it were the long, even dragging scenes which, instead of delighting, were horribly boring. The apogee of my impatience came when Georges began to hunt a pigeon, no one knows why' (Piechocka, Kortus 2003).

[3] 'The pigeon banging on the walls of the Paris flat also symbolizes the spiritual struggle of modern man after the loss of the former religious compass' (Sobolewski 2012).

[4] 'Excellent knowledge of what the audience expects allows the creator to manipulate their feelings and reactions, making their hopes instantly collapse like a house of cards' (Dudkiewicz 2013).

[5] 'Haneke made one of the most beautiful films about death, but also about the title love' (Błaszczak 2013). 'Pardon my recalcitrance, but I think this film is a festival of sexless obviousities dressed in a thick layer of pseudo-ambitism, additionally covered with unconvincing symbolism. The understatements of the script do not pose questions we would not know. The heroes' decisions give no answers that could lead to honest and new thoughts' (Rezmer 2013).

enough to go beyond the 'moral anxiety' understood as a standard way, or the binding "social pedagogy" determining the message[6].

This achievement of freedom through film events and heroes is largely owed to the music chosen for the films. I mean, above all, the so-called classical music, i.e. music written in past ages, then performed in specific circumstances as well as historical and social contexts (it could be defined, from a modern perspective, as 'music which has been through an ordeal' – and I am going to use this expression again as it opens an important gateway for interpretation). Emancipation of music in the Austrian director's subsequent films, its less and less schematic use, putting it into the 'shoes' of a narrator, commentator or analyst of the film events with increasing courage, all confirm even that there is no such person as just one Michael Haneke, dried like a leaf between the pages of the cinematic encyclopedia. He is a living cinema artist who changes and evolves, as does the art he practices.

In this work, I want to analyze the role of music in three films by Haneke: *Funny Games*, *The Piano Teacher* and *Amour*, in order to demonstrate how and why it takes the role of a narrator in the face of the events presented. Doing so either in parallel with a traditional cinema narrator, i.e. the image, or on its own, it reveals those aspects of the story that the eye of the camera does not perceive. I choose precisely those three films by Haneke because, first of all, the director uses there a large number of musical narrative tricks (the recognition of which favors a better insight into the story told on the screen, as well as an in-depth interpretation of the film) and, secondly, because they show how, over a dozen or so years, music's narrative role has changed in Haneke: towards a more and more profound insight into the lining of the events, a richer commentary on the film action and, lastly, towards the liberation of cinema from the visual surveillance of the camera. This happens to enable the film – like a poem in Andrzej Sosnowski's work[7]

[6] '– But I do not mean to say that my film is any kind of message. You send messages at a post office, not on the cinema screen (laughs).
– You defend yourself against being labeled as a »moralist«.
– A moralist is a bore, a teacher who thinks he knows everything better' (Chorostecka, Niedziela 2001).

[7] 'A poem leaves home and never returns' (Sosnowski 2003).

– to 'leave home': break out from the artist's guardianship, instead of merely instrumentally serving (an idea, a message, a warning, etc.).

I intend to analyze how the gradual emancipation of music in the studied films influences the emancipation of heroes and events (as the soundtrack is assigned more roles than just 'illustrating theses' or 'showing attitudes'). Sometimes listening to the musical narrator can even change the attitude towards the whole film. I will suggest the possibility of such a situation using the example of *Funny Games* (although the participation of music in this film is small in terms of volume, limited almost exclusively to the first scenes), in which the analysis of the pieces introduced at the beginning – in terms of the cultural order they represent – makes it possible to change the attitude towards the following part of the film. It is precisely music that will lead me to the conclusion that the family subjected to violence is not as 'innocent' as it is commonly assumed in discussions about *Funny Games*, and the terror happening to is by no means 'anonymously' totalitarian as its source gushes alarmingly close to such institutions as opera or philharmonic. I want to show even more complex changes in the perspective of the perception of the film, using the example of music from *The Piano Teacher* and *Amour* – equally pointing out the significant fact that, when choosing to use the so-called classical music, i.e. one that has existed for centuries and ingrown in the tissue of Western culture (and not composed specially for the film), Haneke broadens the space for possible interpretations of the film, not necessarily consistent with the director's intentions.

Baroque and post-Romantic music in *Funny Games* and compositions from the era of musical Romanticism in *The Piano Teacher* leave a much stronger 'semantic echo' (Lissa 1948) than their purely auditory presence in films. This 'echo', carrying extensive senses and meanings, may be even more interesting for the viewer when Michael Haneke uses music as if against its original character, in spite of the context imposing itself, including the stereotypical, well-established rules of the use of musical compositions in commercial cinema[8] (doing this e.g. with a piece by John Zorn, jamming opera arias in *Funny Games*, and with Schubert's composition sounding in

[8] Wojciech Kilar said: 'What I consider as a disgusting form of film music is one that apparently accompanies the film, duplicating other elements of it and drawing its strength from specific, physical screen events. It means that if a horse

the background of the sex shop cabin in *The Piano Teacher*). Thanks to this, Haneke, as if casually, ennobles his works bringing them to higher levels of film art.

In the present work, I will try to show why Michael Haneke's musical narration has a decisive influence on the artistic rank of his films. I will risk the hypothesis that, as much arbitrary power the director loses, so much the film gains in terms of subjectivity of its characters and the depth of the story being told. This does not apply, besides, to the director only because even the composer is unable to control all the meanings generated by the music they create, all the more that, after the editing process and the final meeting of the sound with the image, new levels of meanings arise (Wojciech Kilar spoke in this context about the unconscious, not intended beforehand, and very important influence of music on the action of the film [see: Polony 2005]). According to Michel Foucault, modern subjectivity (the modern 'I') arose from visual subjugation, from the continuous observation that everyone is subjected to. The sad effects of this state of affairs are shown in Haneke's films but, at the same time, the music which appears in them – sometimes inconsistent with the camera's point of view and sometimes even 'plotting' against it – acts as riotous and rebel against the eye supervising the film. Michael Haneke moves away from the public interpretation of his films, letting them live their own life: one of open, artistic works. In my work, I want to show that one of his allies in this strategy is the music used in films and that its emancipation entails the emancipation of the characters and of the entire film reality. From a closing within the frame to an opening towards the world.

is galloping – we get themed rhythms; if it is a rough sea – we get glissandi on a harp; if it is a love scene, a violin is a must' (Cegiełła 1976: 82-83).

1. *FUNNY GAMES* OR MUSIC AS AN INSURANCE COMPANY

Skilful selection of music makes the narrative in Haneke's films start up as if on its own[9], and we find the story already commenced, under way[10]. with enough speed that the director does not have to explain anything[11]. It has worked out exceptionally well in the opening of *Funny Games* – with the family listening to compositions from a car player. No sooner do the opening credits pass, than the viewer knows quite a lot not only about the heroes and their stable, prosperous life, but also about the fragility of this idyll (it is enough to change the radio channel or disc); not only about the past (not as much personal as cultural), but also about future events; not only about the bare facts, but also about the symbolic order in which these facts are immersed. Every immersion causes – as it has been known from the times of Archimedes – the effect of pushing out, and perhaps the rest of the film is the very thing being pushed out.

So, what kind of music do Anna and Georg – the heroes of *Funny Games*, a couple driving with their son Schorsi to their plot by the lake – listen to? The most classic of classical opera arias can be heard from the player: exquisite baroque *Care selve* from the opera *Atalanta* by Georg Friedrich Haendel and *Tu qui santuzza* from the opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro

[9] 'The whole story of *Funny Games* is summarised in the opening credits. A family is travelling by car and playing opera riddles. We hear Mozart, Puccini, and Macagni. Idyllic landscapes can be seen outside the window. All of a sudden, heavy metal explodes. Along with the title on a red background. It's the Naked City band, with John Zorn screaming his saxophone hoarse. Obviously, the goal is not a trivial opposition between bourgeoisie and aggression, but the effect of shake and thrill' (Topolski 2010).

[10] 'Haneke himself is a musical erudite, which he proved compiling the pieces for his following film. Kept down by her mother and oppressed by the system, the *Klavierspielerin* (original title) has to work as a *Piano Teacher* (English title of the book). The temple of tradition, the conservatory, turns out to be a hell on earth, full of mess-ups and Losers (Bernhard). How current is here the dispute between the classical and the modern, i.e. hierarchical tonality and free atonality' (Topolski 2010).

[11] 'I loyally warned you I would not answer any question regarding the interpretation of my films' (Felis 2013).

Mascagni, orchestrated in the lush nineteenth-century fashion[12]. Between Haendel's flowery bombast and Mascagni's post-romantic mannerism, we can situate a piece heard in the film for a moment and somewhat more modest in its expression: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet in A major*; its sophisticated melodicism also refers to the operatic singing tradition[13] and the entire history of European art connected to it.

Of course, if we look at the music by Handel and Mascagni more closely (and it can be assumed that Anna and Georg, playing their 'funny games' and puzzles, are quite knowledgeable on this subject), we will find there a lot more than aesthetic charm. Relatively lesser-known – beyond the milieu of opera lovers – Pietro Mascagni is considered as one of the first representatives of the so-called verism, or late nineteenth and early twentieth century art movement (a continuation of naturalism) that aimed to show" the social reality along with tensions and problems accompanying it in a 'natural' state. First of all, however, the Italian composer, just like many other verists (including Stanisław Moniuszko, the author of *Halka*), was burdened with certain superficiality and a tendency to condescension in bending, from his heights, over the fate of 'the commons'. Secondly, Mascagni's verism was quite superficial and related rather to the contents of the libretto than to the structure of the composition, which did not go beyond the genre patterns of the previous musical era, and its ambitions were by far different from capturing any social realism[14]. Thirdly, Mascagni's opera unluckily had the misfortune of having been performed in a manner marked with the cliché charm of 'classical music hits'[15], which is important for its location on the symbolic map of culture.

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[12] '*Cavalleria rusticana* was an instant hit with audiences around the world' (Rye 2003: 460).

[13] 'Mozart exploits the clarinet's mellow quality to the full (…) writing long, aria-like melodies for it' (Rye 2003: 180).

[14] 'Mascagni's realistic aspirations are manifested almost exclusively in the content and in the character of dramatic action; in musical terms, *Cavalleria rusticana* is generally maintained in the traditional conventions of Italian opera' (Kański 1985: 203).

[15] 'Perhaps he was a better composer than it is commonly believed today: his most popular opera *Cavalleria rusticana* is indeed affected by rather superficial

It follows that the family car is carrying the heirs of three centuries of European culture and, if we look at them carefully (expensive car towing a trailer with a yacht and heading towards a plot with a house by a mountain lake) and more critically, we could say that they are bourgeois beneficiaries of the culture of consumption and social conservatism. Their musical erudition (the spouses play riddles about the performances of each piece) does not change the fact that they move around the safe area of art, which is so familiar that it verges on banality or that such art fulfils the role of an aesthetic guide for them.

This game of musical riddles suggests one of several possible interpretations of the title of the film. The game takes place in an atmosphere of merry verbal skirmishes and illustrates the idyll of cordial familiarity combined with economic well-being. But then comes the breakthrough moment: as if somebody's hand changed the song in the player; suddenly the loudspeakers gush with the cacophonic clamor of Naked City's song *Bonehead*, suspended between heavy metal, noise and free jazz. The entrance of this music is as sudden and violent as if it were a physical blow, but its dimension is much deeper than the auditive aggression.

The leader of the Naked City band is a saxophonist John Zorn, who explores the whole area of contemporary music, without division into styles or genres[16], and who also underlines his own Jewish origin (with its historical background of course) in several projects he directs (including in the Masada group). In such a context, it is difficult to settle for a simple interpretation that even if the goal is not 'opposing bourgeoisie and aggression'; it is simply an effect of 'shake and thrill' (Topolski 2010). The juxtaposition of Zorn's radical artistic philosophy (a synthesis of various currents of musical tradition and extremely modern means of expression) with quite clichéd 'classical music hits' (symbolizing a specific order prevailing in Europe for several centuries) may suggest a collision of orderly existence under a glass bell of media and consumption – with a different reality, stripped like a city

performing traditions which makes it an easy goal to be pointed out as an example of miserable taste and opera cliché' (Łętowski 1997: 136-137).

[16] 'My musical world is like a little prism. You look through it and it goes off in a million different directions. Since every genre is the same, all musicians should be equally respected' (words of John Zorn quoted after: Niweliński 2011).

in the name of Zorn's band. The scratch which appears due to the music – both on the socio-economic foundation of Europe and on the identity of its inhabitants, funded by Descartes's rational gesture – will turn into a ruinous crack in the scenes to follow.

The sudden changes in the mood and 'direction' of the musical narrative are, moreover, among the basic features of Zorn's creation. The musician refers here to the inspiration with Carl Stalling's motifs, composed to popular cartoons from Warner Bros' 'Looney Tunes' series (their characters include Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Road Runner). These animations owe their incredible vitality, narrative firmness and timeless humor largely to Stalling's music, based on extreme contrasts of tempo and dynamics. They were smoothly assimilated by mass culture as early as in the first half of the twentieth century because they fit the cartoon world, which was grotesque and full of black humor. Zorn, inspired by Stalling's compositions, moves his 'turn-on-a-dime schizophrenia' (as a journalists of the „Rolling Stone" put it[17]) from the safe land of cartoon grotesque into a world dangerously close to human everyday life. It shows how well it matches the mechanical hubbub and informational chaos around us.

In the violent turn of the musical action at the beginning of *Funny Games*, we can therefore experience how the fundamentally cinematic composing technique – first 'taken away' from the cinema by Zorn, and then 'restored' by Haneke where it originally came from – reveals its deeper aspect and changes the music into a specific 'sociological commentary'.

Haneke himself, when asked directly about John Zorn's music, sends us to yet another parodist and ironic context of the artist's work (according to Haneke, Zorn turns out to be a kind of 'über-heavymetal', with all the Nietzschean baggage of the neologism), whose 'over-stress' and noisy 'over-exaltation' match with the form of *Funny Games* as an extremely exaggerated thriller[18]. Zorn's works used in the film are, moreover, accompanied by titles in which we can find examples of irony or pastiche

[17] www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-100-greatest-metal-albums-of-all-time-w486923/naked-city-torture-garden-1990-w487068 (accessed: 30.05.2019).

[18] 'I see in John Zorn a kind of über-heavy metal, an extreme and ironic accentuation of that form just as the film is an extreme inflection of the thriller' (Sharrett 2010).

of the heavy-metal convention (*Bonehead*, *Hellraiser*). Remembering the solemn seriousness with which the bourgeois culture celebrates classical music – and, according to Haneke, even appropriates it, overestimating its own merits in the history of culture[19] – we can hear in Zorn's music sounds of a racy slap in the face of the 'well-fed bourgeois'.

If we look closely at the initial sequence of the film, however, we see that the piece by John Zorn – unlike those by Mascagni and Handel – is located out of the diegetic sphere (meaning only the viewer, not the characters can hear it), just like a few later actions of two murderers do not necessarily fit in the on-screen *diegesis* (questions addressed directly to the viewer or the rewind of the film action using a television remote control). And since the family did not listen to the first call to repentance, the director sends them a second admonition in the form of two murderers. Michael Haneke's irony proves here – contrary to 'moralistic' appearances – similar to irony practiced by Quentin Tarantino, who does not hesitate to 'argue' using human corpses either.

If we treat the initial sequences of *Funny Games*, enriched with music, as a kind of overture to the film – remembering that, from the eighteenth century onwards, the overture contained short motifs taken from the opera to follow, in order to introduce the atmosphere of the main work – we can see that what happens in an abridged form during the first few minutes of the movie, will then be replayed, already in full duration of one and a half hours. The 'overture' nature of the initial, musicalized part of the film allows us to ask to what degree all the rest of it is realistic (even if it would be catalogue-like verism taken from Mascagni), and up to what point it is unceremoniously 'operatic' (when the studied brutality of the film could be associated with brutality originating from Sergio Leone's Western-style 'horse operas')? Artificially exaggerated both in terms of the outfit and behavior, the characters of the two murderers, seen in the 'operatic' context, will prove more than appropriate. We will also begin to suspect their dialogues – written like arias, where harmony or contrasts prevail over the real meaning driving the action forward – of deliberate questioning of the realism of the film (as it is questioned by the elaborately absurd

[19] 'Of course, there is a certain irony here in the way that the bourgeoisie has insinuated itself in cultural history' (Sharrett 2010).

dialogues of the couple of murderers Vincent and Jules from Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*).

A confirmation of the attempt against the realism of the film reality of *Funny Games* comes from the opposite end of the film when, in one of the final scenes, on the boat, just before the murder of the last of their victims, the psychopathic aggressors have a characteristic conversation:

> Paul: But isn't fiction real?
> Peter: Why?
> Paul: Well, you can see it in the movie, right?
> Peter: Of course!

This dialogue can be looked at from several perspectives. First of all, as a bitter meta-cinematic joke shared by Haneke[20], who plays with film conventions all the time (a thriller about a bandit attack, a horror movie – with the atmosphere growing denser as it leads to the inevitable massacre, but also a documentary or a paradocumentary, where the course of criminal events is analyzed in a boring, yet meticulous way[21]) and, at this point, the conversation implies that we, as viewers, are subject to the rules of the media spectacle the moment we contact it, since the medium – according to Marshall McLuhan's famous maxim – is a message. What proves here to be significant is the division, made by the Canadian scholar, into the 'hot' media (which appropriate and control the recipient's emotions more easily) and the 'cold' ones (which do not have the power to do it on their own). McLuhan includes film to the 'hot' media, those which connect with the human senses with 'high resolution' (in other words, just like non-film reality does). According to McLuhan (2003: 31): 'the effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance'.

[20] 'An anti-genre film, a parody. The action evolves like a thriller action, it has a structure of a thriller, but the film comments on itself at the same time'. Michael Haneke interview by Serge Toubiana, www.youtube.com/watch?gl=PL&hl=pl&v=roOl9PvEPjs (accessed: 30.05.2019).

[21] An example could be the crime program *997*, broadcast on Polish Television from 1986 to 2010 and enjoying great popularity during those twenty-four years.

This context allows interpreting the absurd dialogue of the murderers even more boldly: the inhabitant of the civilization of the so-called West is kept in the same illusion of 'reality' by its image created by culture (not only its mass variation – as the director suggests through Handel or Mozart presented at the introduction). That state is shown well both by the opening of the film (the high-class family car seems to be equipped with airbags and the ABS system) and by the manner in which the director develops the action giving the viewer hope, every now and then, that the characters will get out of trouble – using the schemes on which the genre cinema is based. The heroes also believe in their safety because they believe in the durability and tightness of the structure in which they were brought up: in the culture whose symbol and peak achievement is the music by Handel or Mozart.

This is also the case of the viewer: they believe in the possibility of saving heroes from the hands of the psychopathic couple because they believe in the structure of the film convention and, more broadly, in the structure of the culture surrounding them. In its – as Peter Sloterdijk metaphorically put it – 'crystal palace', which has recently gained a new dimension: globalization. Thanks to the film convention, even in the bloodiest horrors one of the heroes usually manages to stay alive (in this case it would be Anna, who makes the last attempt of salvation on the boat – but the director cuts this thread of hope too). The convention, therefore, promises a guarantee of life, and sticking to the formulaic schemes means – both for the hero and for the viewer identifying with him or her – a license to survive (such a policy taken out has been labeled as a 'happy end'). In *Funny Games*, Haneke shows that the insurance is double: the viewer is assured that everything is in order by genre patterns, but also by the musical sphere represented by flagship pieces of classical music, thus a highly authoritative voice.

It can be said that the music listened to by the characters extends the false guarantee of security and reliability: it is not only about the phoniness of film conventions, without which we quickly become helpless (suggestive opinions about *Funny Games* posted on film portals testify for the audience's emotional and intellectual helplessness after those conventions are negated)[22],

[22] 'I am a sensitive person and, for some reason, it did not make me reflect, the film is flat, devoid of emotions, and why is it so? because it is so stupid that it hurts. Two psychos play with the viewer and make a fool of them, laughing in their

but about the phoniness of the whole contemporary culture, with its illusion of universal security and the ever-higher price that has to be paid for it. Arguments justifying the necessity of making the transaction and then the increase of the premium rate are provided on an ongoing basis by the media, which are full of reports of all possible attacks, natural disasters and crises[23].

In this context, we can try to look differently not only at the victims (whose guilt turns out to be 'inherited' from the centuries of Western civilization, whereas the sin is somewhat 'original', not washed away with any baptism or authentic rite of passage), but also at the couple of murderers. It will then turn out that they are not in the least external envoys, inhuman functionaries of terror, the sources of which we have no chance to know. Despite the rules of a thriller or a horror film, the viewer cannot feel as an innocent victim of violence or identify emotionally with the family in a mortal danger because they also have features which bring them nearer to the criminal couple. Peter and Paul's aseptic neatness can be perceived as a love for order and cleanliness, reflected in a distorting mirror (behold two perfect housemen) and imposed on us, obviously, by media and cultural patterns.

Peter and Paul may then prove to be envoys of our own conflicted interior (which comes to clean up the mess outside), emissaries of frustration and anger overtaking whole societies. That would mean that they represent us, the viewers, not an external reality of terror and horror[24]. The shadow cast by Peter and Paul – just like the shadow cast on Mozart and Handel by John

face. My thoughts? A lemon someone wanted and probably managed to snatch money with, mostly from teenagers and pseudo-intellectuals, he wanted to make a drama, and the outcome was a parody of the thriller'. An internet user's opinion posted on: www.twojefilmy.pl/funny-games/ (accessed: 30.05.2019).

[23] 'On the occasion of the premiere of *Funny Games*, the director warned against a false picture of the world presented by the media and blamed them for creating reality instead of describing it, for their tendency to simplification, generalization and relativization. Where he saw it as particularly dangerous was in questions related to violence which, thanks to television, became a subject of entertainment' (Wolanin 2009).

[24] 'I turn the viewer into the killers' accomplice'. Michael Haneke interviewed by Serge Toubiana, op. cit.

Zorn's guitar-saxophone clatter – is a shadow falling from the inside, not from the outside.

Haneke seems to allow the audience to sympathize with the victims (only to mock the viewer and their hopes in the end), but if we constantly follow what the director expects (i.e. if we break the stereotypical view of both film art and reality) and what is suggested by the music introducing us into the film events (that, as users of culture, we come into the world with its original sin and it is not an unchastized one), it may result in a paradoxical comprehension for the two murderers' deeds. These deeds turn out to be not as psychopathically irrational as they may seem. The entire film should then be seen again.

In this context, the boyishly graceful murderers with impeccable manners, brought to life on the screen, deserve a closer look. Certainly (which would please Michael Haneke) they do not appear to be natural born killers – they are the director's construct (a bit 'operatic' in their artificial exaggeration at that). As a comparison, we could evoke a similar couple – in this case, female, not male murderers – assassinating a staid bourgeois family in Claude Chabrol's film *A Judgment in Stone*. The list of similarities between the films by Haneke and Chabrol is, besides, much longer: in the French director's work, the murdered family is at least as well off and – a very significant affinity – at least as fond of classical music which accompanies the climax of the film. In *A Judgment in Stone*, however, the heroines are the most real: they have expressive, credibly portrayed personalities, and both their initial, even childish carelessness and gradually increasing frustration have been cleverly observed in real people.

Of course, Haneke is deliberately allegorical (just like the opening scene with listening to music is: Haendel, Mascagni – good and safety, Zorn – evil and horror), while Chabrol, in line with the style practiced for years, chooses discrete metonymy. The heroines of *A Judgment in Stone*, Sophie and Jeanne, come from a lower social class. Their murderous act against the angelically harmonious but also sinister music of Mozart (the family listens to the opera *Don Giovanni*), referred to entire social groups, shows the destructive power of the 'revolt of the masses' (i.e. the 'triumph of hyperdemocracy' predicted by José Ortega y Gasset). Regardless of the meta-message of both films, Haneke's ideas from *Funny Games* verge on the director's showiness when set against the background of the precisely sketched personality of the protagonists

and Chabrol's observant perception of nuances and half-shades in social relations (Jakub Majmurek wrote about the French director's 'subtle tools of social criticism'[25]).

On the other hand, it must be kept in mind that the full title of Mozart's opera is *Il dissoluto punito ossia il Don Giovanni*, which means in English: 'The Libertine Punished, namely Don Giovanni', so Chabrol – who has the haughty bourgeois executed by shooting – could be accused of being too coarsely metaphorical here as well. However, as far as Haneke is concerned, he will soon (*Funny Games* and *The Piano Teacher* are separated by four years) prove his ability to give music a *much* broader narrative competence in a film. This change did not mean cutting off from the past because the director did not give up brilliant ideas verging on recklessness, like the one from *Funny Games*. The bottom line is, however, that he was able to give music – or let it give it to itself – a much more important dimension.

2. *THE PIANO TEACHER* OR MUSIC AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION

Unlike in *Funny Games*, we watch the beginning of *The Piano Teacher* in total silence and darkness, and the first scenes (a strongly separated prologue exposing the fundamental problem of the film: a pathological relationship between the heroine and her mother) are used without music, which is all the more surprising in the context of the title. The latter appears only after a seven-and-a-half-minute introduction. It is only then – as if preceded by dramatic, emotional and physical struggle between the characters – that

[25] 'The home of a wealthy, snobby, provincial, middle-class family is observed here from the point of view of an illiterate servant (Sandrine Bonnaire). Chabrol perfectly shows here that bourgeois culture is based on distinction and exclusion; middle-class cultural values are values only in so far as they are contrasted with someone who is excluded from participation in them (servants, but also the proletariat or an illegal immigrant). The maid makes friends with a post office employee living quite a hippie-style life, the ex-mistress now rejected by the master of the house. In the ending, both women take a revenge in the world which has cast them aside and, using expensive hunting utensils, they murder the employers' family while the latter are watching a staging of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* on TV' (Majmurek 2010).

piano music explodes on the screen with romantic phrases of Frédéric Chopin's *Fantasia* in F minor. This could suggest that the director did precisely the opposite than before: this time, music is not going to anticipate the further development of the action but keep a chronicle of events (largely related to love). However, the way the following works are presented proves that their place in the dramaturgical tissue of the film is not determined permanently. The compositions will become a comment or a deeper analysis in other cases. They can introduce a simple contrast or, alternatively, a complex counterpoint.

That was also the case for the construction of film characters. The opening scene – tersely and explicitly familiarizing the viewer with the pathological relationship between the heroine (played by Isabelle Huppert) and her mother (played by Anne Girardot) and showing the family home as a hell of emotional terror (Haneke, as it is known, is quite clear about his perception of family as a source of suffering[26]) – seems to be musically commented only later, that is – let us emphasize – using works of composers with difficult family experiences. These composers are: Franz Schubert, whose beloved woman, obeying her family's decision, married a baker, Robert Schumann who, as a fifteen-year-old, faced his sister's suicidal death, and later was forced by his mother to study law, against his musical aspirations and Ludwig van Beethoven, whose numerous diseases and sufferings could be caused, according to many researchers, by the so-called congenital syphilis, i.e. one obtained in a genetic heritage.

I deliberately quote facts from the biographies of romanticist composers, whose music builds the action of the film in parallel with the events from the lives of its characters because one of its main threads is precisely the hypothetically suggested interdependence, that is a symbolic bond between the artist's complex psyche (the title piano teacher) and the composers who lived two centuries earlier and whose music is performed by the artist[27].

[26] 'I wanted first of all (…) to establish the family as the germinating cell for all conflicts, (…) the everyday site of war in the family is as murderous in its own way, whether between parents and children or wife and husband' (Sharrett 2003).

[27] 'It is difficult to say if there is a correlation between the neurosis of Erika Kohut and what could be called the psychogram of a great composer like Schubert' (Sharrett 2003).

Such a perspective allows us to refrain from treating the relationship 'film events' – 'musical comment' from the perspective of temporal consequences or cause and effect relationship, and to begin to see a relationship between the action of film and music similar to what exists between semantics and syntax. Music from *The Piano Teacher* can thus be considered as 'grammar' which faces a 'dictionary' of events or the characters' emotions, and only when put together, do they form a flexible language of this extraordinary film presenting an – apparently contemporary and, in fact, old as the very humankind – drama of loneliness, domination, non-fulfillment, the schemes of which have been inscribed in the notes of romantic music.

After such an initial recognition, let us take a closer look at how the music from *The Piano Teacher* accompanies the development of the film action or enters into relations with particular events. As the first piece – appearing under the fingers of a playing pianist practicing at a conservatory where Erika Kohut, the title character of the film, teaches piano – we hear Frédéric Chopin's *Fantasia* in F minor, a work whose creation in October 1841 was commented on in the composer's letter to Julian Fontana with the famous fragment 'Today I finished the *Fantasia* – and the sky is beautiful, there's sadness in my heart – but that's alright. If it were otherwise, perhaps my existence would be of no worth to anyone. Let us hide ourselves until after death'[28]. Although Michael Haneke chose a fragment of this work due to the fact that its character is typical of the Romantic era, rather than owing to biographical or musicological nuances, it does turn out to be significant in the context of the development of the action in *The Piano Teacher* (we already know about the crisis situation in her family home, and we are about to discover the dark secrets of her work at the conservatory and the heroine's perverse erotic life). In this way, the music used in the film speaks independently of the director's intentions.

Chopin's 'sadness in his heart' (Erika Kohut also turns out to be chronically depressed and not very present in her own body; even during sexual contact, her hands hang limp like those of a puppet), is followed by a melancholic sentence: 'If it were otherwise, perhaps my existence

[28] Quoted after: http://pl.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/genre/detail/id/21 (accessed: 30.05.2019).

would be of no worth to anyone'[29] and, finally, the very poetic: 'Let us hide ourselves until after death' all turn out to be important for the film. As we find out soon, Erika, who is hiding from her mother, her colleagues from the conservatoire and the circles of Viennese music lovers an extremely important part of her personality which is a penchant for sadomasochistic practices, drastic voyeurism, finding erotic pleasure in humiliating forms of contact, conceals, in fact, what matters most for her, that is the ordinary desire for love hidden under the layer of perversion. The piano teacher hides her true personality and real life from her environment, and in life that she lives officially, in accordance with the commonly accepted social norms, it is getting extremely too late to do anything.

If we look under the lining of Chopin's *Fantasia* in F minor not from the perspective of the composer's biography, but considering the type of his work, we also come across facts that appear to be important for the events in Haneke's film (especially in the context of the norm-defying structure of the composition[30], to which *Fantasia* owes its vital energy and organic power). Erika's personality is also built on contradictions (the performer of the soulful music of Johann Sebastian Bach turns out to be a fan of brutal sex; as an authoritative lecturer of the conservatory, she turns

[29] As the genre scenes shrewdly observed in the Vienna Conservatory suggest us in *The Piano Teacher*, the condition for achieving musical perfection is the arduous path *per aspera ad astra*, full of suffering and repression; it is certainly not the joy of life which stands at the source of the heroine's pianistic talent. As the director himself states: 'Vienna is the capital of classical music and is, therefore, the center of something very extraordinary. The music is very beautiful, but like the surroundings can become an instrument of repression' (Sharrett 2003).

[30] 'Musicological interpreters of the piece, unaware of this particular principle of the genre, could not cope with the form of the *Fantasia* in F minor for a long time. Niecks found »enthralling strangeness« and »chimerism« of the form in the *Fantasia*. Leichtentritt read the form of the work as »unclear«, affected by »lack of logic and continuity in structure«. For some, it was barely »a series of stunning pictures presented in great exaltation«, »moving before the listener's imagination at a frantic speed«. For others, a transformed, specifically distorted form of the so-called sonata allegra, rondo, or the result of hybridization of both forms' (M. Tomaszewski, *Fantazja f-moll*, http://pl.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/composition/detail/id/112 [accessed: 30.05.2019]).

back into a daughter hiding her vices and offences from the harsh mother), and the features of her character, which apparently exclude one another, reach the opposite poles of not only professional, but also human morality (the impressive competence of the piano teacher go hand in hand with the tendency to brutal malice, cynical derision, and even acts of mutilating violence). This is due to internal conflicts which have been tearing Erika for so long that they have basically become an irreplaceable part of her psyche and corporality. It does not change the fact that this neurotic forty-year-old, addicted to hard pornography and held back by maternal terror at the emotional level of an unruly student of a secondary school, remains, to a great extent thanks to Isabelle Huppert's creation, a fascinating woman. Huppert penetrates her heroine deeply enough to characterize her in a suggestively brief manner in one of her interviews: 'Erika is someone who denies her body, but her body awakens against her will. She is, in a way, a woman who flees and leaks. And she leaks everything: blood, urine, and vomit. It is a body closed in a corset that is, at the same time, wide open. This duality intrigues' (quoted after: Arata 2011). Chopin based his *Fantasia* in F minor on a similar dialectic of form (including the sonata) and its denial.

I intentionally devote so much attention to the piece which appears in *The Piano Teacher* for only a dozen or so seconds and is essentially irrelevant to the surface layer of the story. First of all, however, I want to point out what serious implications –independent of the director's intentions – arise from the use of romanticist 'music which has been through an ordeal' and, secondly, I want to show how the nuances in the reception of Haneke's film can change depending on the country where it is watched, that is a Polish viewer will naturally be more heavily 'burdened' with Chopin's music (with all its musical, biographical and cultural richness)[31], while an Austrian will be more heavily 'burdened' with works of the Viennese composers, Schubert

[31] 'Chopin did not use a quotation in *Fantasia* in F minor. Neither literal, as once in the *Fantasy* in A major with Polish themes, nor approximate, as in the *Scherzo* in B minor with the carol *Lulajże Jezuniu* or in the *Mazurka* in E minor, with the song *Tam na błoniu błyszczy kwiecie*. *Litwinka* appeared in the *Fantasia* in F minor not through a quote, but through an allusion. She is present in the work, but in a discreet way. She has to be heard in it' (M. Tomaszewski, op. cit.).

and Beethoven (with all the aura evoked by that city)[32]. The latter 'genetic burden' also applies to Haneke himself, thus all the contexts that the music from *The Piano Teacher* reveals not so much in accordance with or against but, simply, beyond the principle of directing omnipotence, appear to be all the more important.

Since I have shown the scheme according to which music interacts with the film (making it an 'open work' that is constantly ready for reinterpretations), I will discuss the following fragments, where music plays an important role, in a more direct relation to the action of the film. The first scene with the music accompanying the protagonists for a longer time is the scene of a home concert, where Erika Kohut meets her future student, Walter Klemmer (a rather likeable character of Walter is the element in which the film differs most from Elfriede Jelinek's novel after which it was created)[33]. In a duo with another pianist, Erika plays for the guests the *Fugue* from the *Concerto in C major for Two Pianos* by Johann Sebastian Bach. This work, being full of enthusiastic energy, perfectly reflects the mood of the concert (the aura of snobbery does not exclude mutual affection and authentic love for music), also becoming a mirror reflecting Erika's first conversation with Walter.

A gallant welcome ('I hope it's not too forward of me to kiss the hand that plays such Bach') continues in a conversation where the musical erudition of both creates a thread of understanding between the characters (Walter 'precociously' talks about music', and the fact of being a student of an engineering school does not deprive him of respect for the 'tradition of recitals', while Erika can pick up the ironic convention that has nothing to do with the rigid philharmonic canons), but also immediately suggests

[32] 'Yes, it can be said that music works in this way, but additionally one must be aware that in the film we are watching specific Austrian realities' (Sharrett 2003).

[33] 'Christopher Sharrett: Walter Klemmer seems to be the hero of the film, but then becomes a monster.
Michael Haneke: You need to speak to Elfriede Jelinek [*laughs*]. All kidding aside, this character is actually portrayed much more negatively in the novel than in the film. The novel is written in a very cynical mode. The novel turns him from a rather childish idiot into a fascist asshole. The film tries to make him more interesting and attractive' (Sharrett 2003).

significant differences. Walter reveals a tendency to provocative disinvolution and breaking conventions ('Now, at best, academics stamp their feet in time to the trumpety-trumps of Bruckner'), while Erika prefers keeping both feet on the ground and more scrupulous university knowledge ('Have you read Adorno on Schumann's *Fantasia* in C Major?') although she also suggests what the dark sources of her pathological family situation may be (Erika: 'It's Schumann, and he's bound to go mad. He knows he is losing his mind. He's being aware of what it means to lose oneself before being completely abandoned'. Walter: 'You talk about things as if it was your life'. Erika: 'Schubert and Schumann are my favorites. Since my father died completely mad in Steinhof asylum, I can talk easily about the twilight of the soul').

Although the undertones of these confessions seem disturbing, the whole scene is maintained in a cordial atmosphere, exactly like the *Fugue* from Bach's *Concerto*, just played. That cheerful atmosphere, contrasted with potentially dark content, can be referred to the basic differences between Bach and Schubert or Schumann, from the perspective of their music and their lives. It is connected with the 'mythical' presence of these composers in the Western tradition and culture. This 'myth' is thoroughly explained through music, which in Bach is mostly bright and clear, while in Schubert or Schumann, prone to dark lyricism and neurotic shiver, and, in Haneke's film, it engulfs the heroes (immersed up to their ears in Vienna's musical milieu) with its cultural shadow. As it soon turns out, Erika's life dramas revolve around family and sexual-emotional problems, and so do the composers' life dramas o surrounded with a 'romantic' nimbus. For now, Walter does not know about it, but he is clearly moved by Erika's personality, and when it turns out that he is also performing at the concert (being a science student he posseses a surprising talent for music), he makes a significant decision: instead of playing the planned piano miniature by Schönberg, he states: 'I will play my favorite piece by Schubert: the *Scherzo* from the *Sonata* in A major'.

We can already see how music accompanies the film heroes either directly (anticipating or commenting on their individual steps) or from a cultural distance, making allusions addressed directly to the viewer, who will first think about the 'mythical' Vienna – the city of Beethoven and Freud, but also

of Wolfgang Přiklopil – to make their own comparisons and syntheses)[34]. This variability of the musical narrative perspective (especially in the first half of the film because in the second one Haneke leaves more initiative to the camera) and the freedom to switch between various levels of music that functions as the narrator (this applies both to chronology of events and vivisection of personalities) both make *The Piano Teacher* an absolutely unique work in terms of musical narrative.

The most similar effect to the one from *Funny Games* – a radical shortcut, and at the same time a striking shortcut – perhaps is obtained by the director when the lyrical theme of the *Andante* from Schubert's *Piano Trio in E-flat major* accompanies Erika Kohut's visit in a sex shop. A phone call from her mother, full of harsh admonitions addressed to Erika, is a significant prologue to this scene. After a while, we see how three intent musicians rehearse Schubert's piece (the heroine of the film plays the piano), after which the subtle melodic line – after an editing cut in the image sphere, but not in the soundtrack – remains with the heroine when, in a Viennese sex shop full of men, she picks films to watch them in a video booth. The sophisticated lyricism of the violin, cello and piano collides first with the expressions of the men, who watch the only woman in the sex shop, and then with the moans and cries of actors of a porn video watched by Erika. It is only then that the *Andante* dies down, giving in to the pressure of contrasting sounds.

The scene is edited extremely smoothly – with a great sense of time and rhythm of individual takes – thanks to which Schubert's melody comments, in an aesthetically perverse manner, on the duality of Erika's personality[35]. At this point, it is worthwhile to consider the similarities and differences between Haneke's film and Jelinek's book again, yet this time in the context most interesting to us: the use of music in the narrative. In the case of both authors, the mood or emotional expression of the composition tone in not

[34] 'In the creator's assumption, *The Piano Teacher* is a provocative accusation of the Viennese bourgeoisie. However, it enters on more universal issues. A film shot in the districts and apartments of the Viennese elite might as well be happening in Warsaw or Tokyo' (Arata 2011).

[35] 'In her case, higher feelings are mediated in a pathological relationship with her mother, in music and in pornography. The high and the low, the lofty and the pathological intertwine inseparably in her' (Sobolewski, 2009).

only with the content, but also with the form of their works: in Haneke – with the way of editing the takes and scenes, whereas in Jelinek – with the rhythm of language and the way it 'enters' the characters' heads. The book has a third-person narrative; the narrator turns out to be a very supercilious proxy of the author: descriptions of the heroes' struggles with fate and their own feelings are presented in a tone of ruthless mockery but, also thanks to the presence of music, we can also notice their sensitivity. Here is an example of such a mixture of tenderness and derision 'driven' by the music of Schubert and Schuman: 'Now the two of them delicately pass across the loose dust of intermediary tones, intermediary worlds, and intermediary realms, for this is where the middle stratum feels at home. Schubert's descent into madness opens the dance – like the darkening, as Adorno describes it, in Schumann's *Fantasia* in C Major. It flows into the far distance, into nothingness, yet without wearing the apotheosis of conscious fading' (Jelinek 2010: 71-72)!

Haneke has certainly more affection than derision for the protagonist, as demonstrated already by the casting decision (in the film, Isabelle Huppert, endowed with subtle beauty, plays a woman who, in the book, is referred to as 'this shapeless cadaver, this piano teacher, whose profession is as plain as the nose on her face (…) This pathologically twisted joke of a creature (…) clutching her ideals' [ibid.: 65]), it is the approach to music, however, that matters more for the present work, and it should be noted that both Haneke and Jelinek make use of the way of presence of classical compositions in culture and social myths associated with their composers. In Haneke, we have the subtly lyrical Schubert resounding in a sex shop (and the cinema audience's stormy response to the drastic realism of the subsequent part of the scene, when Erika sniffs wipes used by masturbating men), while Jelinek explores the contrast between common social health (enjoyed, after all, by enthusiasts of both literature and cinema – equally inclined to pass moral judgments) and the ailments of the artists' bodies and spirits. Let us look at this passage, for instance:

> The fading of Schubert's, of Schumann's, life-light is the extreme opposite of what the healthy masses mean when they call a tradition healthy and wallow in it luxuriantly. Health – how disgusting. Health is the transfiguration of *status quo*. The hacks who fill up the playbills for the Philharmonic

> Concerts are the most repulsive conformists. Just imagine: They make something like health the chief criterion of important music (ibid.: 72).

But let us go back to the film, as the musical narration clearly thickens in this part. During Erika's visit at the sex shop, Schubert's *Andante* fades out after a few minutes, nonetheless the music leaves the film action only for a moment, because even before Erika leaves one of the booths, another piece by Schubert – the song *Im Dorfe* – breaks through the voices and groans in the film; after the transition, it turns out that the song is being sung by one of the students during a lesson with Erika. From the sex shop, we return to the conservatory as smoothly as we left the concert there (at this moment, Haneke clearly intensifies the visual and musical metaphor of the film, as the moment to introduce us to the heart of the story approaches). A characteristic sounding motif in *Im Dorfe* is a dull rumbling of the piano chords accompanying the tenor's singing, and that rumble is merged – another trick by the director's, this time negligent yet efficient in terms of content – with a knocking on the door. The lesson is suddenly interrupted; it is Walter who enters and, despite Erika's reprimand ('At the Conservatory, no one interrupts lessons!') he declares that he would like to become her student. This is one of the main turning points in the film.

From that moment on, the story of the film is divided into two themes. In one of them, the viewer discovers subsequent episodes from Erika Kohut's secret erotic life (visits at a drive-in cinema, where she masturbates while peeping at couples and acts of self-mutilation in her intimate areas), which have one thing in common: poignant loneliness[36]. In the other one, we observe Walter and the steps he takes to get closer to the woman he is fascinated with. For Erika, this feeling may be the last chance to break free from the sadomasochistic trap and pathological dependence on her mother, nevertheless, we already know how much a possible opening up to love is going to cost her. All the events that we can watch as well as the hidden thoughts and feelings of the characters – are attentively accompanied with music.

[36] 'Erika cannot bear closeness and physical contact, she is relieved by peeping others and BDSM rituals. The most striking scene is the one in which the piano teacher sits on the edge of a tub to »play« and cut her labia with a razor while her mother potters around across the wall, making dinner' (Arata 2011).

The scene of Walter's entrance examination for the conservatory perfectly illustrates all the nuances of the situation. Before a commission, where Miss Kohut sits too, young Klemmer presents several compositions – in the film, these are edited into one piece against which develops the drama of Erika's hesitation (she knows that Walter's admission will mean further contact with the young man). Klemmer begins with a work by Arnold Schönberg (the *Klavierstücke* op. 33b which he had planned to play at the home recital, but changed his mind after the talk with Erika), and the structure of the composition, rationally cogitated, far removed from romantic exaltation, reflects Walter's nature. Then, the *Klavierstücke* smoothly or, actually, imperceptibly for someone who does not know these works, passes into the *Prelude* No. 5 by Rachmaninov who, in spite of being a contemporary of Schönberg, musically represented rather the previous epoch with its post-romantic baggage of pathos and sentiment. At the beginning the camera observes, alternately, Walter playing and Erika listening yet, from the beginning of Rachmaninov's work, it focuses mainly on Erika's face – as if her facial expression is a kind of score for the music we are hearing. When the young man passes (again, with no cut, as if it was one composition) to the third piece, the *Scherzo* from the *Sonata* in A major by Franz Schubert, the emotions visible on the pianist's face are so strong that they do not leave doubts about two things: firstly, that Walter plays brilliantly and, secondly, that the work touches Erika Kohut much deeper than the questions of technical execution or compositional principles could reach.

A moment later, the committee meeting takes place and all the members express admiration for Klemmer's play – except for Erika who objects, stubbornly multiplying technical objections ('histrionics' breaking the academic rules of the game) and commenting on his decision to join the conservatory with pungent irony ('I feel unable to nurture the artistic temperament or virtuosity of Mr. Klemmer'). We know, of course, that Erika's resistance is due to other reasons (Walter's performance undoubtedly gained her recognition), so when we finally see the name 'Walter Klemmer' on a sheet with the names of admitted candidates – the camera holds up that moment for a long time, celebrates the zoom on the secretary's door – it is a sign of Erika's surrender. A portent of the escalation of her tension and fear, but also of the awakening of hope for fulfillment in love.

This turbulent conflict of erotic desire with fear and guilt comes to the fore in a few moments of the film, resulting with either masochistic reflexes or aggression vented on other people. We see the latter case when Erika catches one of her pupils browsing through porn magazines with his colleagues at a kiosk and then 'takes revenge' on him (and, in a way, also on herself) during a lesson at the conservatory. The teacher finds the pretext and foundation for expressing moral outrage in musical principles. She starts by pointing out the student's mistakes in playing ('Don't pick out the inner voices so much! Do you know where the melody is?'), and then redirects her anger, combining both threads: the musical and the sexual one ('What made you want to study music? Your meagre talent? I assure you it's not worth it. Take a job playing in a strip joint and stop wasting my time'). However, the scorn shows that even such a surge of 'moral anxiety' does not free Erika from feeling guilty ('Or because all women are bitches for making you a pig?').

Thus, we see that, in Erika Kohut's life, music plays the role of a specific moral or ethical counterweight for sinful deeds. But that is not all, as it seems to embrace each level of the piano teacher's life. When Erika listens to Schubert played by a student, we hear her comment on the part of the score being performed ('Dreaming of what they don't have, replenished of good and bad. And next morning, all flown away. And here, the mood switches to irony') and we know that both the piece and interpretative hints concern her own life. When, after a while, we hear a harmonic change in the piece, it is also accompanied by a keenly seized interpretation ('That's the obstinacy of the complacent middle-class'), behind which is the piano teacher's own life, stuck in the clutches of stiff Viennese bourgeoisie.

Music has so much power that, sometimes, it acts as a guardian of morality (in the first lesson Walter hears a firm: 'You should forget Schubert. Schönberg is all!', pronounced in the tone a girl uses to defend herself from undressing during the first date), however sometimes its two-edged blade cuts in the opposite direction. This is shown in one of the key scenes of the film: the one in which Erika sneaks into the locker room and puts broken glass into a student's pocket to prevent the mutilated girl from playing, although the most important performance in her career is approaching. In the conservatory auditorium, the young pianist is supposed to accompany a tenor singing songs of Franz Schubert; someone has to turn the pages of her score and (unfortunately!) it is Walter who makes a cordial

gesture of help towards the girl. This gesture is so insignificant that only one pair eyes in the auditorium can see it. Erika Kohut's eyes. The couple of students begin to perform the piece. Walter turns the pages, everyone listens but, in the auditorium, there is a pair of ears for which Schubert's music means something more than for the others. Erika Kohut's ears.

In a long shot, the camera stops on Erika's face (Haneke premeditatedly applies static takes, triggering in the viewer a type of focus which differs from the one required by television or popular Hollywood cinema)[37]. Emotions grow in the delicate twitching of her mouth as strongly as almost imperceptibly (Grażyna Arata [2011] has captured the paradoxes of Isabelle Huppert's creation, writing about the 'shocking subtlety of her on-screen interpretation'), when she sees Walter sitting next to the girl (she does not know yet whether she loves him, but is already jealous of him, as if jealousy was a forerunner of love) and hears the song *Der Wegweiser* by Franz Schubert (its narrator, wandering along an unfrequented path to the rhythm of the piano imitating tired steps, finds himself in the snowy mountain wilderness and there, desperate, he desires to die alone). This combination – hope for fulfillment with Walter, threatened at that moment by another woman, and a dramatic song about losing oneself in loneliness – acts like an igniter: Erika suddenly leaves the hall. Then she is alone, with only the camera looking at her; in the locker room, she can commit the extremely low-down trick, which is not only an act of jealousy and vengeance, but also a proof of the causative power of music.

[37] 'Christopher Sharrett: You seem very interested in the long take. There is a number of static shots in your films (…) the many shots of Erika's face (…). Michael Haneke: Perhaps I can connect this to the issue of television. Television changes our habits of seeing. It accelerates the assimilation of images. Look, for example, at advertising in that medium. The faster something is shown, the less able you are to perceive it as an object occupying a space in physical reality, and the more it becomes something seductive. And the less real the image seems to be, the quicker you buy the commodity it seems to depict. Of course, this type of aesthetic has gained the upper hand in commercial cinema. Television accelerates experience, but one needs time to understand what one sees, which the current media disallows' (Sharrett 2003).

When Erika returns to the auditorium, the tenor is already singing another song by Schubert – *Im Dorfe*, practiced earlier during the lesson, in which the protagonist, wandering through a village at night and listening to dogs bark, mocks the dreams of the residents of the homes he's passing by because he knows how vain these dreams are. Most of the students in the auditorium might not know the text of the song and thus listen to it carelessly, yet at least one person knew these words well and perceived them very personally: it was Erika Kohut.

In this way, we come to the question of place and meaning of Franz Schubert's *Winter Journey* song cycle in *The Piano Teacher*. Schubert composed those twenty-four works to the poems by German poet Wilhelm Müller. It is from there that both songs sung in the film come from, and the whole – rooted in culture as a fundamental work about loneliness and search for one's own life path[38] – was in some way 'overlaid', like a cartographic grid, onto a map of film events (I will readdress the way of such 'overlaying' further on). However, it should be emphasized that Haneke remains ironic and cautious in that procedure, thanks to which the knowledge of neither the cycle nor the correlation itself is necessary when watching the film[39]. At this point, we get back to the possibility, indicated in the first conversation between Erika and Walter (with the words 'You talk about things as if they were yours' said as comment on the story of Schuman) – of a timeless spiritual relationship between composers who died two centuries ago and contemporary artists, i.e. imposing psychological types, or even individual

[38] Numerous references to *Winterreise* can be found in the 19th- and 20th-century art, both literature (*The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann) and cinema (*In the Presence of a Clown* by Ingmar Bergman).

[39] 'Christopher Sharrett: Schubert's *Winterreisse* seems central to *La Pianiste*. Some have argued that there is a connection between Erika and Schubert's traveler in that song cycle. This goes back to the broader question as to whether music represents the healthy side of Erika's psyche or simply assists her repression.
Michael Haneke: Of course, the 17th song holds a central place in the film, and could be viewed as the motto of Erika and the film itself. The whole cycle establishes the idea of following a path not taken by others, which gives an ironic effect to the film, I think' (Sharrett 2003).

character traits of Schubert or Beethoven (both of whom spent a large part of their lives in Vienna) onto the protagonists of *The Piano Teacher*[40].

It is also here that the Polish theme turns out to be useful once again; so is, namely, the book of poetry by Stanisław Barańczak entitled *Winter journey* (published in 1994), where the poet added new texts to existing music of the Schubertian cycle; strictly adhering to its melodic and rhythmic patterns, he created an entirely new quality in terms of content[41]. The concept goes far beyond the paraphrase, despite the rich network of references to the original texts, because in the poetic sphere, Barańczak creates an entirely new quality. In the original, it was an unrequited love that pushed the hero of the song to wander (which was close to Schubert's personal experience), while in the case of Barańczak, the journey has rather religious reasons. Müller's literal winter through the real snow through which the narrator wades, becomes a metaphor for the Polish poet; the bitter frost can be, at choice, an existential or political one (after all, the communism had just ended in Poland at the time of publication). The procedure used by Barańczak is sometimes called 'intersemiotic stylisation' (as music and literature are two separate systems of signs [Hejmej 1999]) or – in accordance with the nomenclature coined already in the nineteenth century – contrafactum, i.e. adding new text to pre-existing music (which was a popular practice among medieval and Renaissance artists [Poprawski 2008]).

Sticking to this definition and its historical determinants, it is worthwhile to remind that – while maintaining the complete integrity of music and fidelity to its record – contrafactum made it possible to change the means

[40] 'Of course there is a great sense of mourning in Schubert that is very much part of the milieu of the film. Someone with the tremendous problems borne by Erika may well project them onto an artist of Schubert's very complex sensibility' (Sharrett 2003).

[41] 'The poems contained in this book are, with one exception, original works – not translations of the lyrics by the Romantic poet Wilhelm Müller (…). Although the connection between my works and Schubert's music is more intimate and strict, my ambition was to write lyrics which could be sung to a specific melody and, at the same time, read apart from music, as independent poems'. www.wydawnictwoa5.pl/Podroz-zimowa-Wiersze-do-muzyki-Franza-Schuberta;s,karta,id,174 (accessed: 30.05.2019).

of expression and the aura of music; in the realities of the Middle Ages or Renaissance, this allowed to transfer it from the sacred to the profane sphere or in the opposite direction. Thanks to that, creators could initiate a sophisticated play with artistic, social or religious conventions, which often provoked outrage and scandal among the audience. Barańczak's book is also close to these characteristics of contrafactum, since, while maintaining the appearance of a contemporary paraphrase submissive towards the original[42], it firstly questions various stereotypes regarding the approach to old works (including the inviolability of their character) and, secondly, while treating Schubert's compositions with deference, enters into an ironic dispute with Müller's romantic poetry and, in a sense, with the very spirit of Romanticism (which, after one hundred and fifty years, still remains disturbingly alive in the general reception of literature). As Marcin Poprawski (2008) remarked: 'The *Winter Journey* carries Schubert's music from the sphere of the *profane* into the *sacred*, as Barańczak's poems clearly reveal the key tone of prayer which is almost absent in Müller'[43]. On the other hand, it might be rightly pointed out that we can understand the question conversely: Schubert's music, treated by connoisseurs as sacred, is broken up by the 'deletion' of the German text and undergoes a particular form of desecration.

Obviously, *The Piano Teacher* is not a contrafactum in this sense (although the film as a text of culture undoubtedly constitutes a system of signs, which makes such a procedure possible)[44]. However, the intersemiotic character of Haneke's work stems from the use of its elements. The film applies certain the features of contrafactum: a change in tone, a multi-level dialogue with the original or, finally, an indecent nature aimed against social rules, which entails a scandalous aura. In the case of *The Piano Teacher*, such aura arose

[42] '[Barańczak] spreads various thematic allusions throughout the entire cycle, making them a reference which generally matches the atmosphere and mood of Müller's cycle' (Poprawski 2008).

[43] 'This compatibility is easily discernible, but only superficial at the same time: lined with Barańczak's irony, polemics, protest and low evaluation of Müller's poetry! And the similarities by no means serve acceptance here' (Poprawski 2008).

[44] 'Cinematography, like other arts, is a specific system of signs' (Eichenbaum 1972: 60).

around the heroine's obscene preferences and behaviors, the assessment of which – prevalent in the spontaneous reactions by the audience[45], as well as in numerous reviews and discussions by critics[46] – firstly, pushed the other problems raised by the film into the background and, secondly, led the discussion in the direction of stereotypic culture/nature, human/animal dichotomy[47].

Expressions of indignation or the eagerly moralizing tone of numerous reviews indicate that the provocative and subversive properties of the contrafactum have been captured (or preserved) particularly well in *The Piano Teacher*. Although the defense of the film and justification of the drastic scenes could be left to the director himself, it is definitely better to look for the explanation inside, not outside the film and let the work defend itself. This is precisely what will happen if, above all, we look at (and listen to) *The Piano Teacher* as a purposeful encounter of two systems of signs or 'overwriting' contemporary cinema images and an extremely drastic history on the music created a century and a half earlier. Such a look allows to see in the film not a picture of pathological relationships – within a family and between a man and a woman – set against the background of oppressive Austrian bourgeoisie (there are significant differences between the film, displaying peculiar understanding[48] even for the worst features of its characters, and Elfriede Jelinek's novel, full of accusatory fury) and not a melodramatic story in obscene realities (although, if indeed it is obscene in the sense proposed by Jean Baudrillard [1990], it casts a significant light

[45] 'He is sick! – I heard after the festival screening' (Sobolewski 2009). 'To shock the audience and get them interested in the problem, he decided not to avoid obscenity and show Erika's sadomasochistic inclination with the necessary explicitness' (Wolanin 2009).

[46] 'But this is not a refinement, this is a descent into the gutter!' (Kałużyński, Raczek 2001).

[47] 'This is the heroine's problem: the gap between culture, which is her world, and animality, beasthood, hideosity of sex. (…) This is a conflict between the spiritual and the animal part of the human being. Because man is a monster, Sir' (Kałużyński, Raczek 2001).

[48] 'He is sick!' heard by Tadeusz Sobolewski in the cinema hall is, in a way, due to Haneke's approach, far from moral judgment.

into the darkness of the souls of the film characters[49]). Instead, Haneke shows, first of all, a story of revealing the individual human truth which encounters social resistance (especially if the truth in questions concerns a woman) – regardless of whether we are in the nineteenth-century Vienna or in contemporary liberal Europe.

The use of music from two centuries ago and the strangely 'contrafactory' adding a new, deliberately drastic and shocking story, shows that Erika's truth is subsequently disapproved by her mother (treating the woman as if she were a teenager), Walter (who reacts to Erika's bold exposure with aggression and contempt) and finally the viewers themselves (hence a well-based question whether they are not – as in the case of *Funny Games* – the actual hero of the film).

A good example of 'adding' the fate of Erika to existing musical pieces can be found in the scenes presenting the first two lessons taken by Walter with the new piano professor. At the very beginning, she announces decidedly: 'You should forget Schubert.Schönberg is all!', which carries a double meaning: firstly, it is meant to temper the young man's 'romantic' gestures directed towards her, and secondly, to direct her own thoughts onto a more 'Schönbergian' track: intellectual, meticulous, neatly and clearly structured – as opposed to 'Schubertian' emotional notes, carrying too many associations with his biography and love. However, the attempt to purify their relationship, to bring about the student-teacher order, proves ineffective.

The musical alternative – either Schönberg or Schubert – turns out to be the symbolic core of the film events. Soon afterwards, another turn of action takes place: the first act of intimacy between Erika and Walter in the conservatory toilet. This is one of the key scenes of the film, with high emotional intensity[50] (the frame with the compulsive kiss on the floor was selected for the poster promoting the film). Walter seeks a 'normal' sexual contact, but Erika cannot overcome her qualms and yields to emotions

[49] 'Obscenity (…) contains an element of transgression, provocation, or perversion. It plays on repression, with fantasies of violence' (Baudrillard 1990: 29).

[50] 'Awareness of a crippled fate, hidden cynicism and lonely consumption of sexual turn-on, explodes in the film several times, working like dynamite' (Arata 2011).

typical in such a situation, one could say: 'Schubertian' (with the whole romantic baggage of stereotypes following Schubert's music), which remain within the circle of the socially accepted 'sexual tonality'[51]. The woman has been reprogrammed (through the prolonged practice of perverse acts) to an extremely sophisticated mode of sexual experience, associated with control, pain, domination, beyond the well-established 'tonality' of erotic relationships – and, therefore, 'Schönbergian' (Schönberg being one of the precursors of atonality in music)[52].

In the famous scene from *The Piano Teacher*, we witness therefore, not only an unsuccessful undressing date by the engineering school student ('since the recital (…) I've had you stuck in my mind like a nut on a bolt. I apologize for being so technical') with a music teacher, immersed in the world of piano masterpieces (with no antidote in the form of a fulfilled performing career)[53], but also a symbolic encounter of the socially accepted cultural tradition with the avant-garde, revealing its 'perturbing' power.

During Walter's second lesson with Erika – already after the event in the toilet, yet still before any verbal codification of their relationship – against the background of lyrical sounds of the *Andantino* from Schubert's *Sonata* in A major (thus Schönberg lost the symbolic duel), we observe Erika's struggle with her desires. She fights, trying to brace herself on her expert knowledge ('Schubert's dynamics range from scream to whisper'), as well as the music-driven intuition in digging every recess of the composers' souls ('Brahms would say: *con intimissimo sentimento*'). She also possesses another kind of weapon: scorn supported by knowledge ('Schubert was quite ugly.

[51] 'Tonality, tonal music: a term describing the harmonic conventions of most Western music (…) from the 18th century to the present. Tonal music is music organized around a center, called the »tonic«, and the scale of which the tonic is the principal tone. Also known as »functional harmony« and »common-practice harmony«' (Cox, Warner 2004: 416).

[52] 'Atonality, atonal music: describes a wide range of compositional styles that do not rely on the conventions of tonal harmony and, specifically, do not organize pitches around a tonal center' (Cox, Warner 2004: 408).

[53] 'Or maybe, Sir, what she searches in sex is the degree of sophistication that she achieves in art, in music? Maybe she is incapable of having ordinary sex – I love you, kiss me, let's go to bed' (Kałużyński, Raczek 2001).

Did you know? With your looks, nothing can ever hurt you'). In the end, however, Erika gives Walter a meticulous list of her erotic wishes (it is, in fact, a shocking catalog of sadomasochistic practices), which the young man is not supposed to open until he is alone. In this way of playing out the game of love, Erika Kohut's two personalities meet again. One of them is a lecturer at a conservatory, buried in the catalogs of opuses, strictly respected musical tempos and moods (*allegro*, *largo*, *cantabile*), while the other is a pornography fan with her tireless cataloguing of human sexual behaviors, so that every desire can be put on the appropriate shelf in the shop (BDSM, pissing, dogging). Erika transfers the characteristics of both her personalities to the intimate relationship with Walter, giving him a list as precise as the notes in a score and as bulleted as a commercial order. At the end of this scene, Erika orders: 'Now, get stuck in to Schubert. That's all you may do in this room', while Walter returns to the *Andantino*, the subtle melody of which is contrasted with the envelope containing her secret desires, observed by the camera.

Interestingly, it is the last moment when music in *The Piano Teacher* engages so effectively in the narration of the film– until erotic intimacy takes place – and then, when the events already roll by force of emotional inertia (towards the defeat of the heroine, the appearance of Walter's different face and the crash of their affection), the compositions withdraw to the background of the events. The last scene of the film (another static take) is accompanied only by the noise of street traffic surrounding the Viennese conservatory.

Michael Haneke will tell us why the music stops in another film.

3. *AMOUR*, OR WHY THE MUSIC STOPS

An even longer static take, devoid of music, opens the film *Amour*. For a few minutes, the camera watches the audience waiting for a piano recital in a philharmonic, and the couple of the main characters – though played by well-known, well-recognizable actors – may not be spotted by the viewer at all at the first watching of the film. Such a way of putting the viewer's patience to the test is typical of Haneke: the wide-angle take simulates the director's absence and the camera gives an impression of being permanently installed in front of the audience. The case is the same for the audio layer, filled with natural rustles, taps, snatches of voices, the prolonged presence of which

(definitely above the commercial film measure) makes the first chords of Franz Schubert's *Impromptu* No. 1 in C Minor sound even more clearly.

Initially, the *Impromptu* sounds in a diegetic reality: listened by the audience during a concert. The characteristic theme at the beginning of the piece (catchy even to an ear not necessarily armed with musical knowledge) proves itself perfectly as the film's opening theme. After the 'anti-romantic' noise in the prologue, we listen to the 'romantic' melody announcing the further course of action. This also carries a deeper meaning, because – as we remember – in the first take the camera does not 'notice' the protagonists at all: they are just a statistical couple in the crowd (two occupied chairs in the room, two tickets purchased, two items in the box office report after the concert), and only the following events will subsequently present Anne and Georges in an ever-closer perspective – until it reaches its most personal, most intimate level.

This intimacy is related to the reality inside the film (for two hours, we will be watching closely Anne's progressing severe illness of, which leaves her with the right part of her body paralyzed after a stroke and her gradual psychological and physical degradation, but also the Georges's daily sacrifice, who, in spite of his advanced age, keeps looking after his wife), and contexts beyond the film as well. *Amour*, in fact, has been inspired by the fate of the director's 92-year-old aunt who, suffering from an incurable disease, kept asking others to take her life away[54]. Haneke's emotional involvement is confirmed by the fact that some of the furniture and paintings from the couple's Parisian apartment are the director's private property, while the apartment itself is modelled, sometimes with meticulous precision, after his parents' place. Although, of course, the translation of life into a work of art is not that simple[55].

[54] 'I told her I could not help her, because firstly, I would go to prison, and secondly, I would not be able to do it – says the director. – Then my aunt tried to commit suicide, but I took her to hospital soon enough. She was angry at me. Why did you do this to me? – she kept asking. Two years later she managed to take her own life. *Amour* is a film for her'. www.canalplus.pl/film/news-michael-haneke-dedykuje-milosc-ciotce_40195 (accessed: 30.05.2019).

[55] 'He did not hide that *Amour* was inspired by events from his own life. But although he recreated the apartment belonging to his parents (with details

Nonetheless, Schubert's piano theme opening *Amour* reaches not only into the protagonists' future, but also into their past. First, we find the already familiar solution with the editing cut in the image layer, without interrupting the sound: the *Impromptu* in C minor from the concert goes on, although the characters are returning home, and the phrases of the piano are seamlessly harmonized with the swinging of the bus and the movement of passengers' silhouettes. The stage is edited with similar dexterity as the one from *The Piano Teacher* where Schuberts' *Andante* rehearsed at the conservatory accompanies the heroine later in the sex shop, only here it is used much more discreetly, without radically metaphorical ambitions, even though it is just as important for the film. In a few moments, we are suggested how deeply can music be rooted in the consciousness of both Anna and Georges and what an important role it will play in further events.

After they return home, the piece played at the concert still absorbs the characters' attention, although, from the viewer's point of view, it no longer exists in its auditory form (the film reenters the sphere of reality and we can hear, with details, the sounds of home bustle). Between the banal taking off her coat and doing something in the kitchen, Anne says with clear excitement in her voice: 'Weren't those semiquavers in the *presto* incredible? Don't you agree?' (thanks to this we find out that the characters are not just a two elderly music lovers, but they have much more to do with music), to which Georges responds with a question – a rhetorical one, noticing the enthusiasm in his wife's voice – 'You're proud of him, huh?' (which reveals a bond between Anne and the young pianist at the concert). Just like in *The Piano Teacher*, we can observe how Haneke narrates through music in two ways: first, by means of its 'physical' presence, its audibility for the viewer, and secondly, by means of various contexts related to the pieces, which can be placed in the sphere of images, dialogues, or even conjecture – trusting the viewer's cultural knowledge.

On the other hand, there is also a significant difference: the first conversation about music in *The Piano Teacher* – when Erika tells Walter about the fate of Schumann, referring to his own experiences – carries

like furniture from the 1950s, a stereo set from the 1960s) in the Paris studio, he emphasizes that he is not addressing experiences related to their passing away' (Sadowska 2012a).

a baggage of 'romantic' contexts (contained in the words: 'losing his mind', 'being completely abandoned', 'to lose oneself' and, finally, 'the twilight of the mind') which, as we know, are to be 'reproduced' in the 'here and now' of the film: the dramatic romance which the heroes will soon initiate. Conversely, the first conversation about music in Amour does not refer to the romantic roots of Schubert's work at all (we hear the words 'semiquavers' and '*presto*', their dry technical and executive aspect being counterbalanced with the emotional word 'incredible') and takes place not during a talk, sparkling with mutual fascination, between an erotomaniac and a handsome student, but in a stale dwelling of an elderly bourgeois couple.

Not less significantly, in *The Piano Teacher*, after the scene of the home recital where we hear Bach played on two pianos, the music takes over the narrative with increasing audacity, resounding frequently and assisting the development of the action, especially during the first hour of the film. Conversely, in *Amour*, after Schubert's *Impromptu* played at the beginning, the music goes silent for nearly an hour: almost half of the film.

The music stops, it does not mean, however, that the director relieves it from its narrative duties. The effect of music, as a result of its physical, auditory 'absence', becomes more discreet, subtler, distanced from cinematic schemes (just like love mentioned in the title turns out to be far removed from common ideas). It appears, for example, in the form of objects (stereo equipment placed in such a way that it becomes a natural background for several key scenes in the film, or the book about conductor Nicolas Harnoncourt who, in the 1960s, – thus, in the years of both heroes' creative youth! – revolutionized the thinking about music). Even the fact that the part of Anne's student is played by an authentic pianist, Alexandre Tharaud, may have a metaphoric meaning when we know that it is Tharaud who recorded the pieces for the soundtrack of *Amour*. And the soundtrack is a special one, because – unlike in commercial productions – the album does not contain entire tracks, but their snippets: exactly as we hear them during the screening[56]. This is a case of consciously ruined joy of listening, so that

[56] 'Whoever buys a soundtrack for Michael Haneke's *Amour* before watching the film, may have an impression of a funny mistake having occurred in the director's approach to music. The point is not that the list of works is incomplete, because we

the experience of the suddenly stopping music – which fails to disappear from our head at that moment – can also be achieved after returning home from the cinema. Then, it turns out that we are close to Carl Dahlhaus's reflections on phenomenological aspects of the duration and reception of music, as well as his conviction – important from the point of view of the present work – of the multilevel nature of music, resulting in multilevel reception and interpretation[57]. The title originally invented by Michael Haneke for the film – *The Music Stops* – has consequences which go far beyond the story.

So do also certain musical threads in *Amour,* which seem to refer to the events from the director's previous films (showing similar situations or states, although in a slightly different light). For example, when Anne and Georges are visited by their daughter Eva, we hear – as part of a story of a *tour* during which she and her husband perform John Dowland's music – a story of artistic and erotic perturbations in their relationship. The story of the husband's stormy affair with a violinist, ending in the mistress's attempted suicide, can be perceived as a shadow of the chronicle of amorous accidents from *The Piano Teacher* (the more so as it is Isabelle Huppert that the director cast in the role of Eva; a question arises: to which extent is it Haneke's typical irony?). Meanwhile, Georges listens to his daughter's story with stoic calm, as far from being surprised or outraged by such a turn of events in the 'artistic' marriage as from any moral evaluation.

We know that Eva is a musician too, nonetheless, besides that, her relationship with her parents (specifically with Georges as Anne is already ill and bed-ridden) is rather cold, full of subdued distance instead of spontaneous cordiality. Many critics, as if still longing for the 'old' Haneke,

find both Schubert and the selection of Beethoven's bagatelles here. Yet, after a short time of playing, each piece in the album is interrupted with a sudden cut or with the words »Turn it off«. (In the working version, the film was entitled *The Music Stops*)' (Gilbey 2012).

[57] 'Dahlhaus also reflects upon the problem of music as an auditive phenomenon, passing in time, considered in the categories of phenomenology. This includes engaging in a critical discussion with Roman Ingarden's concept, undermining his thesis of the single-layer structure of music and claiming that »Just as fruitless an attempt to count the layers is, it cannot be denied that the sentence about single-layeredness is wrong«' (Jarzębska 2009).

present it as a proof that the director's 'claw' of social criticism has not gone blunt[58] and that his passion for revealing bourgeois hypocrisy has not died out[59] but, in the father's conversation with his daughter, we can also see the opposite: trust hidden behind the distance (the same as in the relationship between Georges and Anne), which results in honesty and calm openness[60] – i.e. a relationship opposite to the nature of Erika's relationship with her mother in *the Piano Teacher*. The director showed those two characters ruthlessly and sharply, in a completely different way than Eva and her father are portrayed in *Amour*[61] It is, perhaps, because Haneke looks at her with the eyes of Georges who, in turn, looks at his daughter with the wise eyes of Jean-Louis Trintignant (whose influence on the form of the film went far beyond just great acting)[62], sitting in a chair behind which stands an old-fashioned, though high-quality music player set.

The set, composed of a CD player, turntable and amplifier (with characteristic needle indicators showing the dynamics) is in fact one of the main characters in the film: its advanced age (it comes from the 1960s) proves that it remembers the heroes' youth, and thus the flowering of their

[58] 'The daughter of the elderly couple no longer knows the art of proper behavior, either. When she comes to see her parents (which does not happen frequently), she marks her presence with outbursts of narcissistic suffering. She strives to shock her tired father with a face full of reproach, swollen from tears' (Świrek 2012).

[59] 'I think about the moments in which I can sense most falsehood: about the relationships with the daughter typical of Haneke's style: cold and formal, saturated with alienness and kept within the strict framework of the convention with a semblance of mutual openness' (Sadowska 2012a).

[60] 'In a nice way, Haneke makes it clear at the very beginning how important physical closeness used to be in their lives: the daughter mentions the sounds from the parents' bedroom in a conversation with her father'. (Frankowska 2012).

[61] 'The daughter – pressing her father for a »serious talk« about her mother's health and, at the same time, significantly silent after his ironic question: »So, are you taking Mom to your place?«. It is a measure of this outstanding film's great humility that Haneke is not tempted to criticize Eva for her inability to give real aid' (Oleszczyk 2013).

[62] 'It was Trintignant who invented the title. The director fulfilled the request by the actor for whom – as he declares – he invented the part of Georges' (Frankowska 2012).

love (mentioned by their daughter) and their careers as musicians (perhaps not only teachers). On the other hand, the fact that it is still working allows using it to intertwine old-time and contemporary threads, past and present, memory and reality. This was excellently used in the scene when Alexander sends a disc with recordings to his teacher. The album begins with Schubert's *Impromptu* in C minor which we already know; however, after the first few phrases on the piano, Anne firmly says to Georges: 'Turn it off!'.

This scene is, perhaps, the key to the whole film. Perhaps the point is that, when turning the recording on, Georges began reading a letter from Alexander, in which he writes about his compassion for Anne's terrible illness – and the woman did not want to combine those two orders, she wanted to devote herself entirely to music and memories related to it. Perhaps the point is that the sounds of a well-known composition (probably it was the teacher who had first presented it to her pupil) made Anne realize that, in her state (a stroke resulting in a paralysis of the right side of the body), she was, actually, no longer the same person who used to play it on the piano. Another reason can be the poignancy and penetrating power of music which touches us deeper than words or physical suffering ever could. In the film, anyway, what matters more than music – which sounds only for a moment – is its sudden stop and the take following it (a model example of the effect described by Siegfried Kracauer [2008] as 'silence charged with tension'[63]). The take – long and static, obviously – shows Anne and Georges sitting still with the CD player turned off. They are both very old.

Schubert's piece, suddenly going silent, appears more or less in the middle of the film (which may also suggest it plays the role of the film's axis), yet, the return of music as a physically present musical narrator takes place a few minutes earlier, on the occasion of a visit that Alexander pays to Anne and Georges. The artist, more or less the same age as the young hero of *The Piano Teacher*, loves Franz Schubert's music just like Walter does ('My whole life revolves around Schubert at the moment'), but although he speaks about it with some exaltation, he has more humility ('I'm developing the sonatas. Not the late ones, I think I still need a couple more years for those'). Like most late works by great masters (e.g. *Die Kunst der Fuge* by Bach or Beethoven's last

[63] 'The effect is increased when the music suddenly breaks off at the moment of the greatest tension, leaving us alone with the image' (Kracauer 2008).

String Quartets), also Schubert's late sonatas are held in exceptional esteem both as extraordinarily mature musical works and philosophical meditations on the essence of music and human life; therefore, it is downright improper for a young, barely debuting artist to engage in them. As if to confirm this rule, Anne asks Alexander to play the piece he performed during a lesson with her when he was a twelve-year-old boy: the *Bagatelle* in D minor by Ludwig van Beethoven.

This relatively simple, cheerful composition performs two functions in the film narration. Firstly, it allows Anne to make a journey in time to when she was still full of vital and artistic strength and, secondly, the piece with its lightness and unpretentiousness removes from the whole scene the burden which would be undoubtedly emphasized by any 'later' piece by Beethoven or Schubert, philosophically brooding on existence. Meanwhile, Haneke plays out Anne's drama differently: the sound of the piano in Beethoven's *Bagatelle* smoothly transitions into the hum of an electric wheelchair, which the woman is learning to drive in the following scene, and the editing of the takes is intentionally a fraction of a second late in relation to music. After a while, the same operation – interweaving sounds from the order of art and order of life, the smooth transition of what is artistically elevated into what is trivially mundane – is repeated, only in the opposite direction, and the noise of the wheelchair in the corridor of the apartment turns into the sound of the piano which Georges plays, sitting alone in the living room. However, the phrases played are completely different: instead of the vigorous *Bagatelle*, we hear a piano rework of Johann Sebastian Bach's serious and reflective choral prelude *Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr Jesus Christ*.

The title 'I call to You, Lord Jesus Christ' says much about the mood and message of the composition, while the fact that it is played by Georges – who displays no signs of religious faith throughout the film – testifies to the depth of Bach's rooting in culture and to the very unobvious position which Haneke's film takes towards the Christian religion and its ideas. To understand the ambiguity of this scene, we need to arm ourselves with the knowledge of the film's ending in which Georges, in the face of Anne's complete collapse (the woman confined to bed loses contact with the world and stops eating), smothers his wife with a pillow. After the murder, Georges arranges for Anne a symbolic funeral ceremony, poignant in its intimacy, after which he lays down on the bed to commit suicide, spread over time, by

starvation. While observing those acts (full of quiet methodical action rather than expressive drama, except for the pillow scene), we should have in mind one of the scenes, taking place immediately after Anne's illness is diagnosed, when she asks her husband not to leave her in case of deterioration (i.e. not to put her in a hospice, for instance) as, in that context, Georges' deeds gain the dimension of a kept promise. Not only the one from the beginning of the film, but also the much earlier one, from the time before the film events – about fidelity and not leaving till death did them part.

Let us now get back to Bach's chorale prelude and the religious thread in the film. If we discard extreme interpretations – both allegations of radical anti-religiousness (mainly rather superficial accusations[64] frequently using the ideologically marked word 'euthanasia'), as well as overeager connotations with Christian symbolism (like the one connecting the pigeon and the 'religious compass', mentioned in the introduction to the present work), we still have quite a large 'in-between' area left to contemplate. What seems the most intriguing in it are the suggested traces of strong and mysterious ties between religion and art (which, in a way, took on the former responsibilities of theology and religious philosophy[65]), as well as observations about love, in which the Christian aspect can be seen from a completely non-doctrinal side[66]. The essence does not lie in whether that

[64] 'In terms of form and means of artistic production, Michael Haneke's film *Amour* is very simple. In the emotional sphere, it is torture. In the sphere of the message – a real bomb that should be called anti-Christian to the bone' (Gociek 2012).

[65] 'I do not intend to prove that Haneke takes up theological content in his film; even if some people find them, the artist probably did not place them there. However, he practices art at such a high level, searches so uncompromisingly for the truth about man, that the most important issues of a philosophical or theological nature appear in his works in an autonomous manner. They are not, however, an interpretation of a particular religious doctrine or philosophical current' (Jabłońska, Luter 2012).

[66] 'His *Amour* is a bold proposal to step into the very centre of love, which means… into a wound. Because »True love – as Wiesław Myśliwski says in *Traktat o łuskaniu fasoli* [*A Treatise on Shelling Beans*] – is a wound. You can only find it inside yourself when someone else's pain hurts you as your own«. Perhaps, then, there is a justification for the hope that if someone's pain hurts me like it hurts

was the original intention by Michael Haneke (who tends to stall journalists asking about metaphysical aspects in his films[67], without denying, in the least, the high aspirations of music[68] in them), but in the fact that the use of Bach's choral prelude (like, earlier, Schubert's *Winter Journey*) moves the film into such a wide sphere of contexts, onto a chessboard with so many figures of cultural tropes and topoi that the Austrian director, with all his erudition, would not be able to foresee or consciously compose all of them into the film game.

At least as important as the very use of *Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr Jesus Christ* in the film, is the way in which the piece influences the development of events. Ferruccio Busoni's piano transcription of Bach's piece (composed for organ) is often used in musical education, so Georges, perhaps, used to play it in professional situations; this time, the circumstances are quite different, though. That may affect his performance which suddenly stops. We do not know if Georges is embarrassed by the work he has reached for (bearing a strong religious mark), or overwhelmed by sudden desolation – because here has just seen two faces in a musical mirror from ages ago: his own and the terminally ill Anne's. We only know that the piece falls silent. Again, there is 'silence charged with tension', this time, however, the camera – unlike in Siegfried Kracauer's model example – is somewhere else: in Anne's bedroom; she asks him to continue playing. Her call, however, remains unanswered.

There are two levels which make the scene important for the film. The 'metaphysical' one I mentioned in the previous paragraphs, and

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the one who suffers, it becomes a sort of a bridge that leads us to each other?' (Jabłońska, Luter 2012).

[67] 'The pigeon is from there, it appears like a mystical ornament hitherto absent in this director's works; like a sign to be interpreted, disturbing for some, irritating for others. Haneke himself, asked about it, answers simply: »There are a lot of pigeons in Paris«' (Sadowska 2012b).

[68] 'Great music transcends suffering beyond specific causes. *Die Winterreisse* transcends misery even in the detailed description of misery. All important artworks, especially those concerned with the darker side of experience, despite whatever despair conveyed, transcend the discomfort of the content in the realization of their form' (Sharrett 2003).

the opposite, quite mundane, related to the heroes' prosy everyday life. It seems that, until the illness, it was Anne who had a more active and dominant role in that marriage – a relationship certainly going far beyond house chores and social conventions[69], This is visible in small details, voice and gestures, but some of these little things combine with the most important motifs of the film – for example, the command to immediately turn off the player with Alexander's CD or a reminder that Georges would take the cloak in the final, metaphorical scene of the film (when both are already dead, which is manifested in the fact that they simply leave the apartment, yet, they leave it as they used to be before the disease appeared). From a moment, however, after Anne's stroke, her husband takes over the right to mental dominance and gradually begins to take the initiative not only in matters directly related to care. Interrupted Bach's chorale despite his wife's protests, may thus be an expression of the husband's emancipation, who was somewhat 'henpecked' earlier, and is becoming more and more aware not only of the seriousness of the current situation (so he takes on more and more responsibility – to the final boundary at the end of the film) but also, looking back, of the nature of the whole fifty-year-long union.

Georges's transformation may be suggested by another key scene in the film. The man listens to Anne sitting opposite him, at the piano, playing Schubert's *Impromptu* in G flat major. The song is full of joyful energy and, therefore, strongly contrasts with the events we have just seen. Nevertheless, suddenly, Georges turns away, turns off the player behind the seat – and then the music stops and his wife disappears. We are left alone for a long while with the man staring at the lonely piano (Jean-Louis Trintignant's bitter face seems to say: no sentimentalism). The scene is expressive and striking but – although it can be compared to the scene with John Zorn's clamor drowning out the respectable classical piece in *Funny Games* and with Schubert's *Andantino*, moved by the heroine of *The Piano Teacher* from the sophistication of the conservatory into the vulgar realities of the sex shop – it has been shot with such suggestive moderation and poignant

[69] 'They are like one organism, which can be seen as soon as they appear in the frame. For the first time, we see them in a distant plan in the philharmonic. They sit in the crowd, in the audience, yet they do stand out. There is no doubt that they are together, even when they are not looking at each other' (Frankowska 2012)

laconicism of the means of expression that we remain with an impression that it is not only Georges who has changed. So has Haneke himself[70].

Besides the basic meanings (brilliantly captured functioning of the mechanisms of memory or the expression of the 'anti-melancholic' message of Haneke's film), Schubert's *Impromptu* suddenly falling silent can be seen as a proof that it is Georges who now has initiative or even power in the home[71]. And he plucks up courage to stop his wife's play. It is too late to actually do it in the real world – where Anne no longer moves out of bed, plunged in delirium – so Georges imagines her against the background of the playing disc. It is difficult to judge whether the turning off of the player by Georges is more an expression of taking over the power (not so much over Anne as over the merciless memory) or, more modestly, a declaration of independence (again: not from the other person, but from his own melancholy). However, it can be assumed that the firm gesture fits not only inside the reality of the film – it is also a gesture towards the viewer who, while the music was played, did not realize they were watching only the imaginary Anna at the piano. The sudden silence is like a violent dispelling of illusion. Unmasking of both film heroes' and cinema viewers' fantasies and illusions has always been Haneke's *spécialité de la maison*, although he rarely did it in such an artistically sophisticated way[72].

[70] 'A specific feature of Haneke's previous films was their explicitness, turning into a kind of attractiveness. (…) In *Amour*, Haneke only once allows himself a scene meant to trigger a predefined reaction of the viewer. At the end of the film, we watch Anne play the piano. A few seconds later, the camera shows Georges, who is sitting in the same room, watching his wife. After a moment, the man turns off the player behind him, and the music stops immediately. Such a simple scene, cumulating emotions, yet still testifies to the Austrian director's extraordinary skillfulness – devoid of sentimentality, is much more impressive than a thousand images of slow agony which could be used to represent the story' (Fortuna 2012).

[71] 'Of all the love relationships in his films, this one seems to be the most »human«, devoid of egoism, based on mutual devotion. But something dark is creeping in here too. Isn't there something secretly sadistic in Georges' sacrifice? Some cruel surplus? By refusing to place Anna in a hospice (…), he makes her fully dependent on his help and care. Anna is in his power' (Majmurek 2012).

[72] 'I do not know if *Amour* is Haneke's best film, but it is definitely the subtlest of them' (Fortuna 2012).

The interpretative gates which the musical narrative leaves in *Amour* are contained in understatements and suggestions. This is because the film – unlike even *The Piano Teacher* – is based on a play of contrasts between music and silence, on the dialectics of sound and silence (according to Carl Dahlhaus, extremely important for music[73]), which Haneke deftly placed in common realities. It allows the viewer (as the plot itself is truly 'simple') to probe the subsequent meanings both 'inside' the story being told (in the events and heroes' behaviors), and 'outside' it, in the cultural tropes found.

As for the latter, meta-film sphere, it is particularly interesting that the same chorale prelude *Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr Jesus Christ* by Bach was used by Andrei Tarkovsky in his film *Solaris*, based on Stanisław Lem's novel. The first association is a tribute to the Russian director whose approach to editing music in the film (its 'natural' presence – as a sound from the world, the content essence of events, and not their formal framework) certainly influenced Haneke.

However, when we look at both films more closely, it turns out that both share the key motif of loss of a loved one (in *Solaris* it has already happened: astronaut Kelvin travels to an alien planet after the death of his wife Harey, while in *Amour* it is happening before our eyes) and their – supernatural – return. In Tarkovsky's film, Harey's resurrection or, in fact, her carnal hologram, is owed to the ocean which occupies the entire planet Solaris and evinces quite deific abilities. In Haneke's work, Anne's 'resurrection' happens through Schubert's music: its subliminal waves have access to Georges's memory and imagination. Interestingly, neither Kelvin nor Georges accepts such a solution: they destroy what seems to be the salvation from death: the phantasms of Harey and Anne planted to them. They both know that their beloved ones, seized from the embrace of death, are dummies, products of longing and memories, not real women. Death irreversibly confirmed the truth of their lives. This is precisely where Bach appears with all the Christian background and its central figure: Jesus Christ, who died to live. In *Solaris*, Kelvin says: 'You love that which you can lose'; in *Amour*, Georges turns off the music to make the false Anne disappear.

[73] 'The keynote of all his considerations was the deep conviction that we only see a specific problem when it is presented in opposites' (Jarzębska 2009).

Bach's chorale prelude appears in various places of Tarkovsky's film, even as a background for credits, and is played in its original arrangement for a pipe organ, thus it sounds dignified and lofty, tightly filling the space. The impression of tightness is enhanced by the suggestive arrangement by Eduard Artemiev in which electronic sound effects create the background for the organ. Their specific thickening evokes an atmosphere of a metaphysical mystery (additionally enhanced by the camerawork, especially in the scenes when the main character returns to the house by the pond and familiar terrestrial landscapes seem to drop the mask of reality and enter the symbolic sphere), which helps to see theological or even Gnostic tropes in Tarkovsky's work. While it is true that such motifs can be found in Lem's novel as well[74], the writer's style in *Solaris*, despite the science-fiction convention, is closer to the style of a psychological novel. However, Tarkovsky's use of Bach's chorale – moreover, in Artemiev's version, processed for a 'mystical' sound – is not only a radical breakup with Lem's convention (incidentally, the list of the Polish writer's allegations against the Russian director was long), but also the abandonment of modest psychological realism – even in the face of the 'miracles' worked by the Solarian ocean – in favor of sublime spirituality.

Against such background, the piano adaptation of Bach's chorale in Haneke's film turns out to be all the more discreet and the fact that the sounds do not come from off-camera but – in the ephemeral, fragile form – from under the hero's fingers, testifies both to the completely different position of the film towards the religious and philosophical tradition and to a difference in the language chosen by the Austrian director.

Haneke seems to be paying homage to Tarkovsky, however, he is questioning his work. Apparently, in *Amour* he does not reach such sublimation of spiritual experiences as the Russian director but, in fact, he

[74] 'So how does the Solarian Ocean reappear to them? As a germ of a handicapped or crippled God whose possibilities and abilities overwhelm his consciousness and rationality. Or as a God of great potential, but the psyche of a small child; a child who meets all the conditions to grow up. We can see, then, that the new understanding of the Ocean has already exceeded the strictly scientific scheme. It is conceived rather as a being from two paradigms: the natural and the theological one at the same time' (Dobkowski 2001).

may be going even further, where the arbitrary tone of truths of faith or epoch-making works of art falls silent in the face of an individual, humble human truth. In *Amour*, Bach's choral prelude tells us the same thing as in *Solaris* and, at the same time, thanks to significant directing corrections, it speaks from another source, in a different language.

This language is also spoken by the music in the scene in which it obtains a poignantly human dimension: when Georges sings the song *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* with his wife. The voice of the dementia-ridden, aphasic woman can barely capture the melody of the song, breaking in an almost literal sense, and yet we can see, for the last time, a flash of joy on Anne's face. This is her last touch with reality: the melody of a children's song about dancing on the bridge, which – just like human life – stops short in the middle of the river[75].

After the scene of singing, half an hour still remains to the end of the film. Still, neither Schubert nor Beethoven will be heard any more. The piano in the living room and the old-fashioned *hi-fi* set behind the armchair will be silent. Michael Haneke involuntarily and strictly follows Krzysztof Komeda's *creed* according to which there should rather be too little music in the film than too much. The children's song is the last thing music has to say in *Amour*.

EPILOGUE: ON RECIPROCITY

now that the interior surrounds us
like the most practiced of distances
Rainer Maria Rilke, *To Music* (transl. S. Horton)

According to my analysis, music in Michael Haneke's films can be considered in three basic contexts. These are:

1. Connections of music with the events and ideas presented in the film.
2. Connections of music in different films by the Austrian director.

[75] Pont Saint-Bénézet (Eng. Bridge of Saint Benedict), also known as the Pont d'Avignon – a medieval bridge over the Rhône river in Avignon (Provence, France), preserved partially. Tradition has it that the bridge was not completed and never reached the other bank.

3. Connections between music in Haneke's films and music in works by other directors.

In each of the films I have developed on, these three kinds of connections can be found in varying degrees, yet they always expand the interpretation framework and inspire the viewer to an active, intellectually engaged reception of the work. Observing the changes in the use of the works between individual films, one can conclude that the director himself has been inspired, through music (which has accompanied him since childhood and was his first educational choice)[76], to change his style or approach to the film matter, including the compositions used, throughout his career[77]. These changes are visible at all three levels of the presence of music in his films. Let us summarize them briefly.

When it comes to the relationship between music and the film in which we hear it, in *Funny Games* music was conceived as a kind of overture (announcing the course of events, concisely portraying the characters and suggesting important introductory assumptions). In *The Piano Teacher*, it accompanies, closely and persistently, the development of events (for which it is either an extra comment or a counterpoint allowing the viewer a different view) and vigilantly assists the characters (deepening the insight into their motivations and actions). In *Amour*, in turn, it remains constantly present in the film, yet, it's presence is quite special: less 'bodily', i.e. through the sound being heard (which very often falls silent), and more 'spiritual': as silence after a stopped sound (turning out to be a very significant silence).

[76] 'I always wanted to be a musician, preferably a composer or conductor. I did not have enough talent though' (Felis 2013).

[77] 'You can see that, for some time, he [Haneke – M.W.] has been looking for new means of expression, afraid that his style will otherwise solidify into a mannerism. It was already very visible in the *White Ribbon*. *Amour* is Haneke's most »classic« film. There are no »strategic viewer-confusing« techniques known from his previous works. From the beginning, the camera clearly outlines the action space (a bourgeois apartment) and precisely describes the characters. There is a prevalence of static takes shot without camera motion, shot-countershot editing, means which allow the actors, the characters they impersonate and their emotions to »resound«' (Majmurek 2012).

As far as the relations between the three films are concerned, it is clearly visible from the perspective of music how Haneke changes his approach to the film created (at the level of narrative history, as well as insight into the characters' psyche), abandoning the excess of arbitrariness and director's power. While the music at the beginning of *Funny Games* – the security built by Handel and Mascagni and abruptly ruined by John Zorn – results in a rapid course of the subsequent action and, in a way, 'toughens' the customs (of the murderers-heroes and the director abusing the viewer alike), the music in *The Piano Teacher* – like Schubert's *Andantino*, accompanying the heroine in a porn cabin – softens both the course of action and the customs. What disappears in the process is also the former haughty look – present in the director's earlier films – of a prosecutor (finding guilt) or a surgeon (finding degeneration)[78], no longer possible in such a broad field of associations and emotions as the one opened up by the music of Schubert or Chopin. Music contains the 'romantic' matrix of Erika Kohut's behaviors, her personality at odds with life – and, in this sense, music is one of the main heroes of *The Piano Teacher*[79].

The emancipation of music from the director-demiurge can be seen even more clearly in *Amour* where works by classical composers – as if in contrast or even in a polemic with *The Piano Teacher* – appear much less frequently. Both the ephemeral presence and the ambiguous silence of music in this film suggest transferring the story being told above the dimension of serving any preconceived idea or message[80]. Haneke did not try to 'direct' the natural old age wrinkles on the faces, the hunched silhouettes of Emmanuelle Riva

[78] 'Haneke always puts himself above his own characters, playing out their deviations, fears or cruelties not to get to know his characters better, but to prove to the viewer that he has long seen through them all – and that he was not mistaken in his grim diagnosis' (Oleszczyk 2009).

[79] 'In Haneke's film, the music is not just an illustration of the plot: it is the real subject of the story' (Arata 2011).

[80] 'Haneke is a master of subliminal insinuation which sometimes swells into questionable historiosophy (like in *White Ribbon*), in *Amour*, however, it serves a sober suggestion that we are watching a couple with their own past, a certain set of memories, wounds and claims provisionally seen off which are a *sine qua non* of any coexistence' (Oleszczyk 2013).

and Jean-Louis Trintignant, nor the presence of Bach's choral prelude. It appears in the physical (or audible) space of the film only for several seconds, yet it 'continues' at a deeper level. The ending of *Amour*, like the final scene of *The Piano Teacher*, has no background music at all, but the two heroes' preparations – after their death already – to leave the apartment, the banal washing of the last dishes to leave things in order, or taking their coats off a hanger, carries a special 'echo of meaning' of the music we heard earlier.

What we 'heard earlier' turns out to be important not only within the film or the director's previous works, but also in the context of the world cinematography classics. Bach's choral prelude in *Amour* is a kind of 'posthumous correspondence' between Michael Haneke and Andrei Tarkovsky, who used the same piece in *Solaris*. As a film, *Solaris* is missed in many aspects of technique and adaptation[81], which does not change the fact that, knowing the contexts of the use of Bach's composition by Tarkovsky, we can better understand Haneke's motivations: metaphysics 'should' be equally inadmissible in the sci-fi reality of a space station and the apartment of the heroes of *Amour*, typical inhabitants of Western European big cities, agnostics or religiously indifferent people. In addition, Tarkovsky's *Solaris* was filmed under the watchful eye of the Soviet regime, hostile towards religion, which confers on Bach's *Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr Jesus Christ* a metaphorical dimension also beyond the film itself. Hearing the same choral prelude in Haneke's *Amour*, one should keep in mind to which extent this music 'has been through an ordeal'.

Looking for a formal key by which music can penetrate deep into the film, I have pointed out, in the present work, the features bringing *The Piano Teacher* near a contrafactum (i.e. a kind of 'translation' of music into the language of film). They are noticeable when the music follows the characters' thoughts and feelings or the changing dramaturgy of events (just like, for example, in Miloš Forman's *Amadeus*, with its violently

[81] 'Tarkovsky (…), disregarding Lem's protests, which he reduced to the misunderstanding of the essence of filmmaking and creative transformation, was unable to realize that the on-screen version of *Solaris* means – at the level of staging logic and direct reading – the adapter's intellectual fiasco which could not be remedied by pronouncing adages like »clarity is not the most important thing«' (Garbicz 2000: 488).

glooming ending, after Mozart is commissioned to write the *Requiem*), but also when it introduces elements of contrast and irony (like in Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract*, where the director remains faithful to the realities of the old era while striking them with a pastiche of baroque music composed by Michael Nyman).

This is not the case for *Amour* where the intensity of most of the formal means of expression is reduced and the director turns the brilliance of his skills into discretion (or perhaps he just becomes brilliantly discreet). Music appears here only as an organic element of the film diegesis, interwoven between events, activities, objects so much that none of the works gets an opportunity to resound in a 'satisfactory' way. This strategy of Haneke's interestingly corresponds to Bohdan Pociej's (1994) thesis that, thanks to music, the film approaches its 'nature', which – according to the author – is 'gravitating downwards, towards naturalism, down to the level of (…) pre-art'. For their endearingly natural life, compositions pay with what usually serves to pay for life: with fragile mortality.

We become familiar with the fate of the heroes of *Amour* from the perspective of a camera showing their everyday life up close, but also from the perspective of Beethoven's or Schubert's works which – unlike the camera and the entire cinematic skillset – are neither external to the film history (since they sound 'there' in the Paris apartment or in the characters' memory) nor to the viewer (since they had two centuries to penetrate the cultural and social fabric and 'get into our heads'). What comes from afar, from the history of music, is heard in the cinema viewer's thoughts and emotions, and what the viewer considers as their own, personal, turns out to be present in distant notes, written a long time ago. The Austrian director certainly knows the poem devoted to that topic and written by Austrian poet Rilke.

In the three films I have discussed, Michael Haneke gradually emancipates music from the position of a narrator acting inside the film to the position of a meta-narrator speaking outside of it: in a shared cultural memory and in every viewer's head. Through the use of music, the director enlivens the film story, gives it the naturalness of real life, but also does the opposite: using film art, he enlivens compositions from centuries ago, triggering their creative possibilities and causative power. As Carl Dahlhaus (1988: 283) noted: 'The history of the impact of music (…) is not »external« to the works

themselves, but penetrates their essence, which should, therefore, be understood as historically variable'. Haneke, a would-be musician who happily returns to scores and instruments as a director, knows that well. This fulfilled, cordial reciprocity of music and film art is, perhaps, Michael Haneke's greatest achievement.

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Summary

The author of the article analyzes the narrative role of music in Michael Haneke's films. In terms of content, three movies are discussed: *Funny Games* (1997), *The Piano Teacher* (2001) and *Amour* (2012). The selection of films was made on the basis of diversed musical plot devices used there. Additionally, these films show how role of music evolve over the years into more profound view inside events horizon, full-bodied commentary to film's action and liberation from optical invigilation of camera. The goal of this paper is to show why narrative resource has crucial impact on artistic weight of Haneke's films. The director renounces interpretation of his films by giving them their own life – the life of the open work. The article rises the argument that music supports the strategy of director. Moreover, it indicates that emancipation of the music entails the emancipation of heroes and diegetic reality.

Keywords: Michael Haneke, *Funny Games*, *The Piano Teacher*, *Amour*, film score, film narrative