

# Movie review on the white ribbon film review

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The White Ribbon is a German-Austrian film released in 2009 and directed by written by Michael Haneke. It is a black and white film depicting a fictitious society just before the First World War in a Northern Germany. The village is a protestant village named Eichwald and the event takes place between July 1913 and August 1914 and depicts the village being led by a pastor, a doctor and a baron. (Grundmann 3)

The pastor has puritanical tendencies and is wont to making children feel guilty over trivial offences. The name of the film comes from the fact that he hands the children white ribbons to remind them of the purity they are supposed to uphold which they have according to him strayed from. In one instance, he has his son's hands tied to a bed after confessing to indecent touching. The doctor on the other hand is kind to children but sexually harasses his housekeeper and sexually exploits his teenage daughter. The baron on the other had mistreats his mostly immigrant employees often underwriting their harvest festivities.

A string of mysterious events follow first with a terrible fall of the doctor from his horse after being trapped between wires, his wife dying in the sawmill after the rotten floorboards collapse an event which triggers the husband to commit suicide. The baron's son is found after going missing for one day in the sawmill bound and having been whipped. As is that is not enough a barn belonging to the baron is burnt down under mysterious circumstances. The pastor's parakeet is severely impaled after it hits the letter opener that his daughter had in hand while opening the cage. The steward's daughter has a bad dream regarding the midwife's son and attacks him and in the process nearly blinding him. The midwife leaves the village apparently seeking to

inform the police of some evidence given to her by her son but disappears together with her son never to be seen again. It is also on the same day that the doctor leaves his premises. (Grundmann 25)

The schoolteacher points out to the pastor that his children are in the habit of bullying other children in the society an accusation the pastor does not take kindly. He warns him of possible punishment if he makes the accusations again. It is at the end of the film that the declaration of war on Serbia happens and is the day when the narrators father in law visits. He also leaves the village never to be seen again.

The White Ribbon is stories of moral decline with the men in leadership positions i. e. the pastor, the baron and the doctor perpetrating detestable acts to children, women and their workers. Some of the children, seen as having been influenced by their superiors, display deviant behaviour as seen in the ugly acts they perpetrate against other children. They may be seen as being prepared unwittingly prepared for the Nazi Germany where they would carry out serious atrocities against innocent victims. The film in effect tries to locate the roots of Nazism in authoritarianism as espoused by the baron and religious hypocrisy as portrayed in the pastor.

## **Work Cited**

Grundmann, Roy. A companion to Michael Haneke. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2010. Print