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## 7 A plea for do(ing) the right thing

### An ordinary dog day in Bed-Stuy<sup>1</sup>

*Anthony Pecqueux*

[DRAFT. Reference: Anthony Pecqueux, “A Plea for do(ing) the right thing. An ordinary dog day in Bed-Stuy”, in *Aesthetic Perceptions of Urban Environments*, Arundathi Virmani ed, Routledge, 2021, p. 127-137; for exact text and pagination, please refer to the published version]

*Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989) recounts the story of the affects of the hottest day of summer on the large Afro-American community of Bedford- Stuyvesant, Brooklyn (Bed-Stuy for its residents), New York. That Saturday, no one is working apart from the staff at the pizzeria run by Sal (Danny Aiello) and the Korean grocer across the street. In almost real time – and almost real heat too – the film maps the tribulations of various local characters, leading up to the inevitable tragic outcome: the death of a young black kid and the subsequent riot.

In this chapter, I will try to show that the main characters of the film (the music, the heat and the neighbourhood) play not only upon how Spike Lee’s shoots the film, through a sensitive camera, but also inflect his general purpose. This shows the non-linear links between an ambient determinism (the heat that leads to the riot) and forms of individual expressiveness, which give the film a political colour quite distant from its legend.

One of the key concepts used in this text is “life form” (as used by Ludwig Wittgenstein and his readings by Stanley Cavell, Veena Das or Sandra Laugier), deployed at the level of the neighbourhood, in order to reflect/examine its natural and social importance (see infra). Actor in its own right, the neighbourhood is hot, but also sonorous (musical and/or noisy); these are characteristics both of this hot day, and more broadly the ordinary and daily features that make this neighbourhood what it is. They are equally the basis of the residents’ attachment to the neighbourhood and part of what will lead to a riot.

#### **A portrait of Bedford-Stuyvesant**

*Do the Right Thing* caused quite a controversy when it was released, and it is still topical: witness the Black Lives Matter movement. For better or for worse – the Village Voice dismissed it as “Afro-Fascist chic” – it owes its reputation to various factors: one, an Afro-American film director explicitly addressing race relations in the United States in the late-1980s (in the context of two Republican presidents, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, but also a Democratic mayor of New York city, Edward Koch, who is the target of criticism throughout the film); two, a soundtrack, that makes liberal use of hardcore rap, specifically Public Enemy pumping out “Fight the Power”; thirdly, a police killing, followed by a “race” riot.

Viewing the film again today, its controversial reputation is a little surprising. It is certainly radical in the sense that it gets to the root of problems raised by racial interaction. But, *Do the Right Thing* goes out of its way to avoid providing a definitive answer. Ultimately – as I shall explain in the following pages – it runs contrary to its

purportedly revolutionary, immoral, Afro-centric stance, voicing a different political position. To bring out this aspect, my approach does not seek to interpret the work in the light of a predefined theory. On the contrary, it allows itself to be guided by what the film lets us see and hear.<sup>2</sup> Stated differently, in focusing mainly on the riot scene, most commentators miss out on the meaning of the film. Yet, it is right “under our noses”,<sup>3</sup> we are simply blinded by this spectacular scene.

After all, it could very well be a film on a race riot, or a police killing. It could also be a comedy of remarriage,<sup>4</sup> hinging on the shaky relationship between Mookie (Spike Lee) and Tina (Rosie Perez). Rather than suggesting a different type of understanding, this angle might shift the focus of our attention, in particular, to the form of conversation between characters. For that matter, *Do the Right Thing* could just be a portrait of Bedford-Stuyvesant, or a sensory description of a certain form of life. In fact, the film is all of these things, within the range of what its title advocates, which corresponds to a piece of advice given to Mookie at the start, by the “surprising” mayor of the local community. The advice goes unheard at that point, but is subsequently reiterated in various forms by Sal: “You gotta do what you gotta do”, and “You do what you gotta do”. In both cases, it reflects a form of relativism and individualism, wholly contrary to what may be deemed “right”. So, the “plea” at issue here – in reference to the pleading excuses described by John Austin<sup>5</sup> – has less to do with the film itself, which hardly needs it, and more to do with the way it is directed, with regard to a specific activity: do[ing] the right thing.

So, let’s take a closer look at this overheated neighbourhood. Sal, an Italian American in his fifties, runs the local pizzeria. On this particular day he is assisted by his two sons, Vito (Richard Edson) and Pino (John Turturro). Mookie, an Afro-American in his twenties handles deliveries. Mookie is friends with Vito but is on more uneasy terms with Pino, almost universally suspected of racial prejudice.

Various other characters crop up at regular intervals. Buggin Out (Giancarlo Esposito), also a friend of Mookie’s, objects to the fact that Sal’s wall of fame does not feature any Afro-American stars; it is full of Italian- American figures such as Franck Sinatra, Sylvester Stallone or Robert De Niro. Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn), yet another friend of Mookie’s, wanders endlessly round Bed-Stuy with his ghetto blaster stuck on Public Enemy’s *Fight the Power*. Tina, Mookie’s Latino partner, complains in colourful terms about his failure to take proper care of her and their young son Hector. Da Mayor (Ossie Davis) is an old drunk on a constant quest for a few dollars, to buy the next beer, and for winning the good will (and maybe more) of Mother Sister (Ruby Dee), a respectable old lady who watches over the district from her window. Mister Senor Love Daddy (Samuel L. Jackson) is the heart and soul of *We Love Radio* – to which everyone listens – commenting on local life as observed through his studio window. Smiley (Roger G. Smith), another Afro-American youth, has a stutter and is mentally retarded. He roams the streets, trying to sell a historic photo of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, all the while listening to recordings of their speeches on a walkman hanging round his neck. Forming a sort of chorus, the three “corner men” spend their time at the intersection between two avenues, seated on folding chairs under a parasol, cracking well-worn jokes.

We encounter all these characters as Mookie moves around the neighbour- hood, delivering pizza at various times. Initially, the mood is largely comical, building up to a festive attempt to cool down, mainly by busting open a fire hydrant. But the film gradually tips into tragedy as the heat takes its toll on bodies, making them tired and edgy. Social interaction sours and personal enmities take a racial turn.

In particular, having been sidelined by the rest of the community, Smiley, Buggin Out and Radio Raheem end up forming an unlikely alliance against Sal. An argument breaks out at the pizza joint late in the evening, and Sal wrecks Radio Raheem’s ghetto blaster. The strife spills out onto the sidewalk, and blows and death threats are traded. From this point onwards, nothing seems to be able to stop the violence from escalating. The police intervene, and throttle Radio Raheem in full view of the whole community. A riot erupts, targeting Sal’s business (which ends up bursting into flames), then turning on the firefighters and police who have come to the rescue. The next day, in the midst of the wreckage, a new hot day begins in the neighbourhood, without either the pizza joint or Radio Raheem, but with new certainties for several other protagonists.

## Sounds in the neighbourhood

A few more things need to be said to fill in on this portrait of Bed-Stuy, especially about its sonic dimension. One of the first musical presences in the film<sup>6</sup> is a nod to the artefact that will contribute to the decline of the ghetto blaster by the re-individualization of music listening, through the walkman (invented by Sony in 1979). This is the early arrival of Sal and his sons at the pizzeria in a Cadillac. As soon as he gets out of the car, Sal asks Pino to sweep the pavement; Pino conveys the request to his brother Vito, whom he assumes had not registered that Sal's order was in fact directed at him, since he was listening to the Walkman. In fact, Vito asks him to repeat, which Pino does twice, screaming louder and louder while Vito takes off his headphones: "See, Pop. Every single time you tell Pino to do something, he gives it to me".<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the anecdotal aspect, this highlights the sonic dimension of the sensitive order of interaction and its rootedness in popular lifestyles, namely a habit to be lived, if not in / by noise, at least in / by a relatively high sound volume – the volume of conversations being, for example, variously distributed, according to social affiliation. This sonic dimension is manifested, for example, in the scene in which Tina once again asks her mother to babysit her son for her. This is the occasion of a dispute between the two in the kitchen; they yell at each other while the television set blares in the background. They continue screaming in the adjoining room, as Tina holds her son in her arms; he sleeps soundly despite the high level of noise in his environment. Tina ends up carrying him up to his room, while also insulting Hector's father (Mookie); the child carries on sleeping, undisturbed. This is replayed the next morning, in bed, during an argument between Tina and Mookie, with Hector sleeping between them. Throughout the film, the child remains impermeable to noise, or even, a pure victim of noise, because he himself never emits any. If Spike Lee deliberately moves away from realism here (as at many other moments in the film, a strictly realistic reading of which would certainly fail, even if the dominant aesthetic vein of this fiction is realism), he nevertheless points to certain trends in lifestyles, in a neighbourhood such as Bed-Stuy.

Although these trends may surprise people who are not accustomed to this sonic dimension of interaction, order is clearly linked to a sense of value. From the beginning and throughout the film – except when he ultimately becomes Bed-Stuy's martyr – Radio Raheem is, for the members of the neighbourhood, the symptom of a social pathology, the manifestation of "insanity of place" or failures of the experience. His going wrong is examined by J. L. Austin as by E. Goffman.<sup>8</sup> For Spike Lee, he is clearly pathological. This is apparent from various comments the director may have made ("Radio Raheem, like the large majority of Black youth, is the victim of materialism and a misplaced sense of values"<sup>9</sup>) or from his name in the French version: *Radio Barjot* – here, "barjot" signifies "crazy". In the film, this sanction is more widely perceptible in the way in which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood systematically welcome Radio Raheem: everyone makes fun of him more or less explicitly, many ask him to stop his music, etc. In fact, only Buggin' Out and Mookie greet him normally like any other resident of the neighbourhood. And only Mookie gets him to behave in a civil way, that is, to turn down the volume very clearly to start a conversation – moreover, one of the only real conversations he will have, another being a hilarious purchase of batteries in the Korean grocery store (while his batteries are low and he can no longer hear his music).

A last observation about the neighbourhood: the film also takes care to specify another element of contemporary cities, especially American ones, namely the particular status of public space, or "ownership" by the community that occupies it. This does not mean that the community dictates its laws, but that it imprints a certain lifestyle, valuing certain practices and sanctioning others; institutions (e.g. of law and order) generally accepting them, all within certain limits. Thus, when teenagers hack into a fire hydrant to engage in collective water games during the heat wave, the two police officers, who intervene, laugh at the joke and gently lecture the community, until they see a Cadillac driven by a white man. Accommodation by institutions is of course no longer appropriate when the riot breaks out in Sal's pizzeria: because the boundaries of what is acceptable have then clearly been crossed.

## Staging a blistering hot day: central characters

Two important points need to be made about the characters. Firstly, apart from what happens during this twenty-four hour period, we know almost nothing about them. Only everyday talk, with its durative verbs, suggests the recurrence of (bad) habits picked up long ago, such as Da Mayor's drinking, or Mookie's reluctance to shoulder responsibility. The strength of this type of script consists of leaving characters free to develop in our imagination: they are open to all sorts of possibilities, past and future, and consequently in the present time as well. It is consequently difficult to lock them into any definite category. Secondly, this gallery is overloaded. It is full of relatively secondary roles, none of which really stand out as the action proceeds, apart from Mookie. The main characters – those who act as driving forces in the story (in contrast to the secondary characters who seem to be subjected to it) – operate on another plane. Three of them are present in every scene: music, heat and the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbourhood.

At a sensory level, two features stand out. First, music infuses *Do the Right Thing*. It is omnipresent, apart from a few verbal exchanges and except at Sal's, as he tells Radio Raheem when he first comes to the pizzeria, ghetto-blaster screaming: "When you come into Sal's Famous Pizzeria, no music. No rap, no music. Capisce? Understand?" It also plays a part in many situations, accompanying others simply as the soundtrack: "traditional" jazz by the band led by Bill Lee (the director's father), featuring Branford Marsalis on the saxophone. Furthermore, as a contributing factor to the police killing and the ensuing riot, music precipitates the storyline. Through Radio Raheem and Mister Señor Love Daddy, it takes on the status of a central character in the film, as they diffuse the music in various situations: in the first case, thanks to his ghetto blaster, in the second, by way of his "great black music" records, broadcast by radio to the whole neighbourhood. This, in turn, creates trends: We Love Radio and his eclectic selections indoors (the shops and flats where it is playing); Public Enemy outdoors (wherever Radio Raheem goes) and the Natural Spiritual Orchestra when the other music is not playing.<sup>10</sup>

Next, heat is obviously a key factor. It is perceptible in the sweat that appears on people's brows even in the morning, and even more so, in those who spend their day next to a pizza oven. But it comes through in the way people move, their bodies battling with the effort. It gets so bad that some wonder whether "it's too hot to fuck". The heat is perceptible too in the many attempts to cool down. Some seek the shade (of a building or a parasol), others resort to some sort of ventilation system (a simple fan or maybe a ceiling fan, air conditioning being a rarity in such neighbourhoods). Alternatively, they may apply some cool substance to the body, or take a shower (even in the street, collectively, by opening a rehydrant), wipe a cool can across their skin before drinking it, or apply ice cubes (in an extremely sensual scene between Mookie and Tina, a sort of remake of the scene from Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Mépris* with Brigitte Bardot and Michel Piccoli). One by one, Mookie celebrates various parts of his lover's body by placing an ice cube on it; in so doing, it chills but also raises the heat. Heat also makes itself felt in the manner of filming, in the interplay of light and shade (natural light is used throughout), in the blurring that high temperatures may cause, particularly over tarmac.

Lastly, the neighbourhood is one of the main characters in *Do the Right Thing*, in the sense of the community (what Lyn Lo and calls the "parochial realm",<sup>11</sup> a middle term between the public and private realm), but also in the sense of a certain architectural and spatial configuration. At no time does the film step outside the community. It unfolds in a single block of Stuyvesant Avenue, between Quincy Avenue at its northern end and Lexington Avenue to the south. The visibility achieved by this unity of place is heightened by architectural details: large windows light the two main interiors, mainly, Sal's pizzeria, and the radio studio. Moreover, the action often focuses on the entrance to interior spaces, on the threshold of the sensory (between public and private, contact and withdrawal): on the stoops typical of New York brownstones, or in a ground-floor window bay looking out onto the thoroughfare (Mother Sister's favourite spot). As a result, more than just visibility is at stake here, and the location gives rise to subtle variations in the conditions of hearing. This, in turn, plays a key part in many scenes, which start in the eatery and end up in the street: here the porosity is omnipresent (far from the confinement of double glazing, particularly regarding sound), giving further substance to music's role in the storyline.

## Ambient determinism

Heat and neighbourhood form the film's "natural" backdrop, in other words, they enable us to grasp it as a life form, going by Stanley Cavell's "vertical" reading of Wittgenstein's concept,<sup>12</sup> which gives it a bio-anthropological meaning, both natural and cultural. A life form results from (and is recognized in) recurrent practices, which end up becoming natural for those performing them. Such practices, apparent at several levels of observation (moving upwards from a single group to all humankind), thus correspond to the place where our agreements emerge and express themselves. Such agreements are not rooted in reason, through consensus of opinions, but in consensus of practices in the life form. Moreover, these life-form agreements consequently give rise to possible disagreements: the sanctions on practices that conflict with, or depart too greatly, from those on, and by which, agreement has been reached. For example, it may seem an integral part of Bedford-Stuyvesant to listen to Mister Senor Love Daddy, the voice of the community, and the eclectic music he airs at a reasonable volume on a ghetto blaster with one's friends, but it is no longer reasonable to listen to it at full blast, only always playing one song, over and over again, namely a rap anthem by Public Enemy. Indeed, listening to the ghetto blaster in public spaces results in two types of sanctions for musical practices that are *a priori* similar. But these two types draw upon different models of artefact use: that of the sound camp re vs. that of the sound storm. It is not a question of an opposition between *a priori* clearly circumscribed defined practices, but of a scale, along which music listening practices move, between music facilitating positive sociability, and forms of sound aggression. Such a scale also reminds us how sounds, in situations, are never or almost never qualified as such (in a neutral, objective way), but always or almost always, according to an evaluation (positive or negative), and an evaluation that can fluctuate, for example, from "noise" to "music".<sup>13</sup>

The scene between a group of young Latin Americans and Radio Raheem illustrates this scale and its movements, up to the potential struggles for the sound control of urban public space. In the middle of the day, after Mookie has delivered it, Mr. Senor Love Daddy selects a piece of salsa ("Tu y yo" by Rubén Blades), signed by Mookie to Tina. While the music is being heard, the camera moves from the studio to the street, stopping in front of a group of young Latin Americans. Sitting on the stairs of a building, they listen to the radio from a ghetto blaster placed on the roof of the car parked in front of them, and enthusiastically confirm this musical choice in Spanish. The volume is moderate. We then hear Public Enemy and next, we see Radio Raheem coming to stand in front of them, playing on a much higher volume. The young Latin American shouts at him: "Not so loud! I want to hear my salsa!". One of them, Steevie, asks the others to calm down and challenges Radio Raheem by raising the sound of his ghetto blaster; now salsa dominates. Steevie stares at Radio Raheem, who pushes the sound volume of his own ghetto blaster to maximum, Public Enemy masks salsa again. Steevie looks at him disillusioned and, despite the encouragement of his friends, turns off the sound when he yells: "You got it, bro". We then see Radio Raheem (and we hear Public Enemy) walking away by raising his fist in the air; a black child runs after him and claps his hand. We then hear salsa again; the angry young Latin Americans follow Radio Raheem with a string of insults: "Pendejo! [Asshole] Moricon! [Fucker]".

This quick description of the scene gives an idea of how Spike Lee's filming in *Do the Right Thing* is done: the camera follows the music (from the studio to the street), or the music is heard before the camera even moves. Similarly, Radio Raheem often "appears", first through Public Enemy: he is heard before he enters the camera field. All this indicates the importance of music in the film, sometimes even guiding the camera. And this goes beyond the sound dimension alone: Spike Lee director makes a sensitive camera obvious here, by which the sensitive (especially the heat) forms part of the explanation of the situations – to such an extent, that I speak of an "ambient determinism" at work here. We also see in this scene the two models of music listening: the Latin American sound camp re, which obviously does not bother anyone; the sound storming of Radio Raheem, which is as unexpected as it is unpleasant for those exposed to it; the ensuing struggle, which also places Latin Americans on the side of the sound storm; and finally, the only positive sanction given to Radio Raheem's music practices in the film, through a child, who greets the winner of this game.

Screen, starting with sensory saturation. We are penetrated through and through, coupled with full-on sound and vision. We are hit in the nose (Da Mayor refers to the only truly summer smell, that of trash), in the eyes and ears. Though we may seek refreshment, it is never enough, and the heat rises steadily. The other point is that sensory saturation leads to ambient determinism, the key to which is the clearly regressive nature of the heat – the original title of the film was *Heat Wave*. The motif of the causal connection of heat leading to the police killing and the ensuing riot is borrowed from the very end of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). In answer to the narrator's question as to why the riot broke out, the answer is clear: "Hell, man, it just exploded. These is dog [hot] days" (and the rest of the passage: "Dog days?" "Sho, this hot weather"). There seems to be an exact correlation between the outside temperature and that of the community, between the weather and what people do. An outcry by Mister Senor Love Daddy is emblematic of this. A scene follows in which several characters, one by one, look straight into the camera and pour forth racial insults targeting Blacks, Italians, Jews and Asians: "You need to cool that shit out".

To understand this, it must be stressed that one of the central elements of denunciation in the film concerns the lack of mutual recognition, between individuals and between communities. However, this recognition is also, and sometimes principally, auditory: to recognize the other, you have to hear him, let him speak (express himself); simply seeing him (for example, through one of the many windows of the film), does not rid you of your initial prejudices (racial, social, etc.). One scene among others makes this point clear: this is where the two white policemen's car passes in slow motion in front of the three black men standing at the corner, in an oppressive heat (perceptible by overwhelming light, the sun reflected in the sunglasses, the closing of the car windows, suggesting the air conditioning is working, etc.). The two groups meet for a long time and breathe the same mutual insult, without hearing each other, "What a waste!"; the "waste" is probably only in each other's inability to recognize themselves.

Heat goes to people's heads and gestures. Either they need to be "cooled", as the DJ advocates, or the inevitable will occur. There is no suspense and events culminate in the latter. And yet – and this is one of the film's merits – it does not stop at that, going on to suggest some of the possible consequences of the outburst. In other words, it does not restrict itself to ambient determinism, but enhances it through various forms of individual self-expression – in the same way that Cavell's perfectionist reading of Wittgenstein rejects the usual "political and social conservatism", while drawing attention to his appeal for transfiguration, which may be seen in terms of revolution or conversion.<sup>14</sup>

### **Forms of individual self-expression**

At least three characters experience a form of conversion during or by way of the evening's uproar. One, Radio Raheem, indirectly, graduates from the status of neighbourhood loony, mocked by all and sundry, to that of "brother", worthy of being avenged and commemorated, and carrying on today into Black Lives Matter. Two, Da Mayor finally lives up to his nickname, for at a time of crisis, he is no longer the drunk whom none of the local youths respect, but someone whose behaviour is a model of doing the right thing (prompting Mother Sister to forgive everything else).

Lastly Mookie changes, in at least two respects: puzzled at first by the sudden uprising; yet clearly resolute in his conversations the next day. Although he triggers the outburst when he throws the trashcan at the pizzeria window, but instead of following that up with further destruction, he stops. Later on, when the police arrive, he participates by hurling hostile slogans. But when the fighting breaks out, he stays put, sitting on the sidewalk and staring into space. In his case, if some form of conversion is underway, it is not apparent at the scene of the action. The last two scenes, the day after, are crucial in this respect. A new morning starts, almost identical the day before, with the voice on the radio filtering into sleepy ears, except that Mookie wakes up at Tina's place (and not at his sister's), their son lying between them. He quickly grabs his clothes, because he has forgotten to pick up his pay for the previous week. Tina does not believe a word of what he is saying, sermoning him just as she did the previous day ("Be a man"), giving no credence to his calm tone and assurance of his affections ("You don't care about me and you definitely don't care about your son"), dismissing it all as just one of his usual tricks to disappear. Still unflustered, Mookie goes off to find Sal, who is downcast at the destruction of his workplace.



Here again, the ensuing conversation is striking in the difference of its tone. Mookie is very calm, but firm too, in contrast to Sal, who alternates between disillusion, irritation and fury. Sal deplors the destruction of his life's work and the part Mookie played, almost coming to blows; in response, the latter repeatedly demands the pay he is owed, to such an extent that Sal finally asks him if he's sick. Clearly, he is no longer the retarded adolescent of the night before, endlessly cracking jokes, but it would be simplistic to see him as a family man who has accepted his responsibilities. Rather, he displays a different ego, a "better realized self",<sup>15</sup> as he starts the day, even if he does not entirely succeed in making it intelligible to others. Tina will need more proof (over and above the promises of which she is tired). Sal cannot hear him, all the more so, as he is not concerned by Mookie's new ego in this parting of their ways. At least Mister Senior Love Daddy is convinced by his new texture of being (Iris Murdoch) when he broadcasts his take on their separation: "Hey Mook [...] I see you walking down the block going home to your kid", not something one can see through a window pane with the naked eye.

To conclude, *Do the Right Thing* advocates doing just that, because it constantly touches on the opposite temptation, doing the wrong or possibly pointless thing (messing up action),<sup>16</sup> such as destroying a ghetto blaster with a baseball bat, or boycotting a pizzeria because of the pictures on its wall of fame. We can only become aware of this final, perfectionist theme if we also pay attention to the way the sensory conditions (heat, music, neighbourhood) have upset this life form. We may thus understand how, starting from an out-burst, caused by a particularly hot day, some actors, such as Smiley, have at least regained the ability to speak [normally], after stuttering for so long.

Lastly, I mentioned above the non-linear links between ambient determinism and forms of individual expressiveness: it would no longer be a question of opposing them. The various characters, who are now capable of a new expressiveness, are precisely those who did not let themselves be indistinguishably swept away by the crowd and who did not remain impassive in the face of events.<sup>17</sup> From this point of view, *Do the Right Thing* is not the political re that one thought one saw there, but this does not prevent it from demonstrating a leading political impact, insofar as this film contributes to densifying the moral complexity of our ordinary urban landscapes.

## Notes

1 This text is a translated and greatly expanded version of an article published in French (Pecqueux, 2016).

2 See, on this topic, Belkis and Peroni, 2015, on the film *Les Hommes Debout* by Jérémy Gravat.

3 In reference to Sandra Laugier and her insistence on "perception of what is important", which is not hidden but in full view, but that we must learn (again) to see; for example, Laugier, 2008a.

4 Cavell, 1981.

5 Austin, 1961.

6 After the opening credits (hip-hop dancer Rosie Pérez – who plays Tina – performing an energetic choreography to Public Enemy's song), and after the gradual awakening of the neighbourhood's residents through Mister Senior Love Daddy.

7 It is interesting to note that the documentary "Making of" of the film, included in the DVD and directed by Saint-Clair Bourne, shows a first version of the same scene where Vito wears the headphones around his neck and not screwed on his ears.

8 Goffman, 1969; Laugier, 2008b.

9 McKelly, 1998: 218.

10 For more detailed analysis of the music in this film, see Pecqueux, 2013 and Moore, 2009–2010: 193.

11 Lofland, 1998

12 Cavell, 2009: 58 sqq.; Veena Das and Sandra Laugier have done much to bring this reading to a broader audience. 13 Pecqueux, 2012.

14 Cavell, 2009: 61–63.

15 To borrow an expression coined by Cavell, 2003: 200, to define perfectionism.

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16 See on this crucial topic Laugier, 2013.

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17 See Quéfè, 2000, who introduces the term of "passionnité" in order to name this test.  
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