
Constructing Violence, Constructing the Juvenile: Representation and Ideology in We Need to Talk About Kevin

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Abstract: This study analyzes the depiction of violence in the film We Need to Talk About Kevin (2011) utilizing the theoretical frameworks of Social Construction Theory and Violence Representation Theory. Directed by Lynne Ramsay and adapted from Lionel Shriver's novel, the film examines the intricate interplay of individual psychology, familial relationships, and cultural attitudes in the formation of violent behavior. The narrative illustrates that violence is not merely an individual act, but is shaped by social expectations, parental duties, gender norms, and public discourse, which all influence the interpretations of aggressiveness, guilt, and responsibility. Utilizing Social Construction Theory, the study examines how Kevin's identity is shaped through interactions within the family and the wider culture, highlighting that perceptions of deviance and normality are socially negotiated rather than inherently established. Concurrently, Violence Representation Theory is utilized to examine the film's visual language, narrative structure, symbolism, and emotional framing, demonstrating how cinematic approaches shape audience perceptions of violence beyond overt acts of brutality. The video interrogates traditional media portrayals by emphasizing the psychological repercussions faced by victims, offenders, and their families, therefore prompting viewers to scrutinize the social and cultural contexts of juvenile violence. The study employs qualitative textual analysis to examine the film's narrative, character progression, cinematography, sound design, and symbolic imagery. The findings indicate that We Need to Talk About Kevin depicts violence as a socially created issue intricately linked to identity, power, stigma, and media discourse. This study enhances film and media scholarship by merging social construction and violence representation perspectives, illustrating how digital cinema can challenge prevailing narratives regarding crime, motherhood, adolescence, and social responsibility, while promoting critical reflection on the depiction of violence in modern society.

Key words: Social Construction Theory, Violence Representation Theory, Juvenile Violence, Motherhood, Family Dynamics, Media Representation.

Introduction

The We Need to Talk About Kevin (2011), directed by Lynne Ramsay and adapted from Lionel Shriver's 2003 novel, is a lauded psychological drama that examines the intricate dynamics of violence, parenthood, identity, and social duty. The film recounts the tale of Eva Khatchadourian, a mother tormented by the catastrophic repercussions of her son Kevin's participation in a school shooting. The film depicts violence not as an abrupt or isolated occurrence, but as a prolonged process influenced by psychological, familial, and social variables. We Need to Talk About Kevin, through its non-linear narrative, symbolic visual language, and emotional intensity,

compels spectators to reevaluate traditional beliefs regarding the roots of violent behavior and societal attributions of culpability.¹

Violence has increasingly emerged as a critical focus of examination in media and culture studies, as cinema not only portrays violent events but also shapes interpretations of violence through representation. Films shape public perception by contextualizing violence within specific cultural, moral, and ideological frameworks. According to Hall (1997), representation is the mechanism by which meaning is generated and communicated within a society. Media texts do not only mirror reality; they actively manufacture it by selecting, organizing, and presenting pictures, language, and storylines that influence viewer perceptions. In *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, violence is depicted not through explicit imagery but through silence, disjointed recollections, visual symbolism, emotional distress, and psychological strain. This narrative technique helps audiences to perceive violence as a socially significant occurrence rather than simply an act of physical hostility.²

This study utilizes Social Construction Theory as a principal theoretical framework to comprehend the social production of violence meanings. Berger and Luckmann (1966) contend that reality is not inherently static but is perpetually produced by social interaction, cultural beliefs, institutions, and collective experiences. Social norms, attitudes, and expectations shape individuals' comprehension of concepts including family, childhood, motherhood, crime, and deviance. In the film, Eva's maternal identity is influenced by societal expectations of caregiving, but Kevin's violent behavior is analyzed through socially constructed narratives related to juvenile delinquency, masculinity, and parental inadequacy. The community's inclination to blame Eva exemplifies how social institutions formulate reasons for violence by attributing moral culpability based on dominant cultural views.³

The film additionally mirrors extensive discussions over the depiction of violence in modern cinema. The Violence Representation Theory posits that cinematic violence serves not only to entertain viewers but also acts as a cultural discourse conveying ideological significances on power, identity, terror, morality, and social order. The film prioritizes the emotional repercussions, psychological anguish, confused memories, and social isolation faced by Eva, rather than concentrating solely on the massacre itself. This representational method redirects focus from the act of violence to its enduring repercussions, enabling viewers to critically contemplate the societal conditions that foster violence instead of merely perceiving it as a visual spectacle.⁴

Stuart Hall's Representation Theory offers a significant analytical framework for comprehending the film's creation of meaning. Hall (1997) contends that representation functions through systems of signs and cultural codes that shape audience interpretations of social realities. Meaning is not intrinsic to visuals but arises through speech and interpretation. The film employs recurring visual motifs, such as the symbolic usage of red, fragmented editing, mirrors, silence, facial expressions, and subjective narration, to convey complex themes of guilt, trauma, motherhood, alienation, and violence. These cinematic features compel audiences to engage in evaluating the causes and implications of Kevin's actions instead of adopting a singular interpretation. Moreover, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* poses significant sociological inquiries concerning societal interpretations of excessive juvenile violence. Public discourse often ascribes such instances to inadequate parenting, psychiatric disorders, or moral degradation. Social Construction Theory posits that these explanations are socially generated through institutions like family, school, religion, legal systems, and media (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The film examines prevailing narratives by revealing the intricacies of violence and challenging simplified notions of blame and accountability. It illustrates that violence cannot be comprehensively understood without examining the social mechanisms that generate, disseminate, and reinforce meanings.⁵

This study analyzes *We Need to Talk About Kevin* through the lenses of societal Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory to explore how the film generates meanings related to violence,

motherhood, guilt, identity, and societal duty. This research seeks to illustrate that cinematic depictions of violence are socially and culturally produced through an analysis of narrative structure, visual symbolism, and representational tactics, rather than being objective reflections of reality. This study enhances the existing literature in film studies, media studies, and cultural studies by elucidating how cinema influences public perceptions of violence and its connection to wider social and ideological frameworks.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how violence is socially constructed and represented in *We Need to Talk About Kevin* through the perspectives of Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory.
2. To examine how the representation of Juvenile violence challenges dominant social discourses regarding the causes of violent behaviour and criminality.
3. To contribute to the understanding of how contemporary cinema constructs meanings of violence through representation, discourse, and ideology using the theoretical perspectives of Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory.

Review of Literature

The depiction of violence in cinema has been extensively analyzed in film studies, cultural studies, and sociology, as films not only depict violent events but also influence public perceptions of violence through narrative, visual symbolism, and ideological discourse. *We Need to Talk About Kevin* has garnered significant academic interest for its psychological examination of juvenile violence, parenthood, guilt, and social duty. The film encourages audiences to explore the intricate interplay between individual behavior, familial dynamics, and overarching social frameworks, rather than depicting violence as a mere isolated criminal act. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) assert that reality is socially produced via ongoing human interaction and institutional activities. Their theory posits that meanings are not inherently stable but are constructed, sustained, and validated through cultural norms, language, and social institutions. This viewpoint is especially pertinent to *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, because the identities of Eva and Kevin are influenced by societal expectations on parenting, childhood, morality, and deviance. The film illustrates that societal perceptions of violence are shaped not just by the violent act but also by culturally ingrained beliefs about parental accountability and familial dysfunction. Stuart Hall (1997) posits that representation is an active process wherein language, visuals, and cultural codes generate meaning, hence elucidating the connection between media and meaning. Hall refutes the notion that media merely mirrors reality, proposing instead that media fabricates reality through the selection of specific narratives and symbolic representations. His constructionist methodology is especially effective for analyzing *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, since fragmented editing, repeated color symbolism, silence, and subjective narration force audiences to navigate various interpretations of violence, trauma, and guilt. The video serves not just as a narrative concerning school violence but also as a cultural artifact that generates interpretations regarding fear, parenting, and social responsibility. Researchers of violent portrayal contend that movie violence serves significant ideological and cultural purposes. John Tulloch (2014) asserts that media depictions shape societal perceptions of violent events by contextualizing them within specific moral and political narratives. Instead of depicting violence objectively, films frequently influence emotional reactions and either uphold or contest prevailing societal attitudes. In *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, the massacre itself is afforded minimal screen time, with the story emphasizing psychological damage, memory, and emotional repercussions. This representational method redirects the audience's focus from dramatic violence to the social and emotional consequences, fostering critical thinking rather than passive consumption. Studies on maternity and gender have also shaped readings of the picture. Adrienne Rich (1976) contends that motherhood constitutes both a personal experience and a social institution influenced by cultural norms. Society frequently assigns mothers the primary responsibility for their children's moral development, establishing unreasonable

benchmarks for maternal achievement. This theoretical perspective is evident in Eva's experience, as she becomes the subject of public condemnation following Kevin's violent actions. The film demonstrates that motherhood is socially manufactured through cultural ideals rather than assessed through objective conditions.⁶

Research on juvenile violence also underscores the significance of social context. Jeffrey C. Alexander (2004) contends that traumatic events acquire cultural significance through social interpretation rather than the occurrences themselves. Communities create narratives that elucidate violence, attribute accountability, and form collective memory. This viewpoint is seen in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, when Kevin's behavior is analyzed through conflicting narratives of psychological instability, parental inadequacy, and social deviance. The film illustrates that violence derives significance via language and collective judgment rather than existing as an isolated phenomenon.⁷

Film experts have observed that Lynne Ramsay's cinematic approach defies traditional crime tales by withholding a conclusive rationale for Kevin's behavior. The film utilizes a fragmented chronology, visual symbolism, sparse language, and subjective recollection to depict violence as ambiguous and psychologically intricate. These tactics push audiences to scrutinize deterministic interpretations that ascribe violence exclusively to biology, parenting, or individual disease. Thus, the picture conforms to modern cinema theory perspectives that perceive violence as a cultural representation rather than an objective portrayal.

Current scholarship has thoroughly analyzed issues of parenting, trauma, and psychological conflict in *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. Nevertheless, a limited number of research amalgamate Social Construction Theory with Stuart Hall's Representation Theory to examine how the meanings of violence are generated through cinematic representation. Most prior research focuses on psychological explanations or feminist interpretations, neglecting a comprehensive examination of how cultural narratives, institutional norms, and representational practices influence public perceptions of violence. This theoretical void underscores the necessity for an interdisciplinary examination that integrates sociology, media studies, and film theory.

This study explores *We Need to Talk About Kevin* utilizing Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory to fill the existing gap. It examines the construction of violence, motherhood, guilt, identity, and social duty through story, visual language, and cultural discourse. This study enhances scholarship on the representation of violence by illustrating how contemporary cinema engages in the social construction of meaning and shapes audience views of violence in contemporary society.

Analysis

We Need to Talk About Kevin transcends a conventional psychological thriller concerning a school shooting; it serves as a cultural artifact that examines the societal comprehension, interpretation, and attribution of meaning to violence. Directed by Lynne Ramsay, the film intentionally refrains from depicting Kevin's violent behavior as stemming from a singular clear reason. It frames violence as a socially constructed problem influenced by familial dynamics, societal expectations, gender norms, institutional reactions, and public discourse. The film can be comprehended via the lenses of Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory, illustrating how violence is socially constructed and culturally represented rather than merely portrayed.

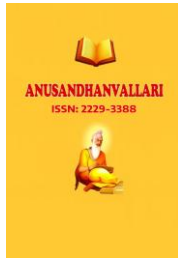
Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) assert that reality is socially produced by quotidian interactions, institutional procedures, and collective cultural significations. Humans see social events through acquired beliefs rather than empirical truths. In *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, violence is elucidated not merely through Kevin's character but also through societal frameworks that interpret violent behavior. Throughout the film, Kevin exhibits behaviors that contest traditional notions of youthful innocence. He eschews emotional attachment, manipulates his parents, and deliberately annoys his mother. The narrative refrains from offering a medical or psychological diagnosis, allowing these behaviors to remain subject to interpretation. This



uncertainty illustrates Berger and Luckmann's assertion that societies derive meaning by interpreting behavior in accordance with cultural norms and institutional expectations. Following the school shooting, the community promptly designates Eva as the principal instigator of Kevin's aggression. She experiences social isolation, public humiliation, physical attack, and is held accountable for perceived maternal shortcomings. These replies demonstrate that violence is perceived through culturally endorsed attitudes about motherhood and parental responsibility rather than through objective evidence. Society formulates a narrative attributing Kevin's conduct to mother failure. The film illustrates that violence is not merely an individual act but also a socially constructed phenomenon. Public judgment, media discourse, community responses, and institutional expectations collectively shape a picture of Kevin's violence that transcends the incident itself.⁸

A primary theme of the film pertains to the cultural formation of motherhood. Society frequently characterizes motherhood as inherently loving, emotionally gratifying, and ethically accountable for children's growth. These assumptions are socially constructed rather than biologically predetermined. Eva's character persistently resists these ideals. Prior to Kevin's birth, she experiences professional achievement, travel, and personal autonomy. Upon becoming a mother, she encounters emotional alienation, frustration, and uncertainty. The film depicts motherhood as a challenging societal role rather than an inherent identity. Kevin's intentional favoritism towards his father disrupts the equilibrium of familial connections. Franklin perceives Kevin as an average child, whilst Eva discerns his manipulating tendencies. Nevertheless, Eva's apprehensions are consistently disregarded due to prevailing societal norms that categorize women as caregivers rather than as witnesses of abuse. Subsequent to the slaughter, Eva epitomizes the concept of failing parenting. Neighbors deface her residence, unknown individuals assault her, and society collectively denounces her. These comments illustrate Berger and Luckmann's assertion that social institutions uphold cultural realities by reinforcing collective expectations. The criticism aimed at Eva illustrates society's perception of motherhood rather than factual proof regarding Kevin's motivations.

Stuart Hall (1997) posits that media does not only mirror reality but actively produces meaning through representation. Representation operates via language, images, symbols, and discourse, allowing audiences to interpret social phenomena in accordance with cultural rules. In *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, violence is depicted obliquely. The massacre constitutes but a small segment of the narrative. Ramsay underscores disjointed recollections, stillness, emotional distress, facial expressions, visual symbolism, and psychological repercussions. This representational method converts violence from a physical spectacle into an emotional and cultural experience. Audiences allocate significantly more time to seeing Eva's remorse, isolation, and anguish than to witnessing Kevin's acts of violence. Thus, the significance of violence is shaped by memory and trauma rather than by explicit visuals. Hall contends that audiences actively engage in the negotiation of meaning rather than merely accepting it passively. The film declines to provide a conclusive rationale for Kevin's behavior. Viewers are required to analyze conflicting alternatives related to genetics, upbringing, psychiatric disturbance, social alienation, and individual choice. Consequently, violence transforms into an open debate instead of a closed story. A prominent representational method utilized in the film is color symbolism, notably the recurrent application of red. The opening sequence illustrates Eva engaging in the La Tomatina fiesta, enveloped by squashed tomatoes that resemble blood. Red is a recurring motif in the tale, manifested through paint on Eva's house, things in Kevin's bedroom, domestic interiors, food, lighting, and costume design. In Hall's framework, colors serve as cultural symbols rather than just cosmetic features. Red signifies violence, guilt, blood, trauma, rage, emotional distress, and psychological instability. The color's presence before and after the slaughter connects past memories with present trauma, indicating that violence perpetually influences Eva's identity long after the occurrence. Instead of explicitly depicting murder, Ramsay uses color to convey emotional significance. Violence is visually integrated into daily environments, exemplifying Hall's assertion that representation shapes societal significance through symbolic frameworks. The disjointed narrative structure illustrates the psychological effects of trauma. The film frequently alternates between past and present rather than adhering to



a chronological sequence. Joyful family moments are abruptly disrupted by terrible recollections, resulting in emotional instability for both Eva and the spectator. This editing approach embodies modern trauma theory, which posits that painful memories seldom manifest in a linear order. The viewer progressively reconstructs Kevin's existence, reflecting Eva's endeavor to comprehend events in hindsight. Hall's thesis posits that the structure of narrative inherently generates meaning. The disjointed structure hinders viewers from pinpointing a singular cause for Kevin's violence, thereby confirming the film's dismissal of easy interpretations.⁹

In contrast to several films depicting mob violence, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* downplays overt physical assault. Prolonged intervals of quiet characterize the dialogues between Kevin and Eva. Kevin often conveys his intentions using facial expressions, sustained eye contact, sarcasm, and emotional manipulation instead of physical aggression. This demonstrates that violence transcends physical injury. Emotional abuse, fear, intimidation, and psychological domination constitute equally serious types of violence. The video thus broadens traditional perceptions of violence by illustrating that emotional anguish yields enduring repercussions for individuals and families.

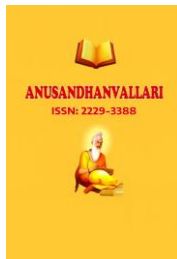
Social Construction Theory posits that institutions shape public perceptions of reality. Throughout the film, educational institutions, neighborhoods, families, and communities play a role in shaping Kevin's identity. Prior to the tragedy, adults consistently overlooked warning flags or misconstrued Kevin's behavior as typical childhood defiance. Subsequent to the disaster, the same institutions swiftly generate a collective narrative attributing blame on Eva. The change illustrates that civilizations reevaluate historical events following instances of violence. Actions hitherto disregarded are thereafter recognized as indicators of malicious intent. This process exemplifies Berger and Luckmann's assertion that social reality is perpetually reconstituted in accordance with evolving cultural perceptions.

The film examines ideological beliefs around violence. Mainstream media often elucidates school violence through simplistic storylines centered on mental illness, familial instability, or criminal pathology. Ramsay intentionally rejects these explanations. Kevin's motivations remain ambiguous throughout the film. The lack of conclusive answers compels audiences to acknowledge the intricacy of violent behavior. Hall contends that representation is intricately linked to ideology, as cultural meanings can reinforce or contest prevailing ideas. *We Need to Talk About Kevin* contests prevailing beliefs by abstaining from depicting Kevin as a mere archetypal monster or a psychologically explicable offender. Violence arises as a cultural phenomena influenced by language, interpretation, memory, and social judgment.¹⁰

Through the lenses of Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* illustrates that violence is socially constructed and culturally represented rather than simply portrayed. The film conveys interpretations of violence via motherhood, familial dynamics, visual symbolism, fragmented narration, silence, trauma, and societal judgment. Instead of providing conclusive answers for Kevin's behavior, it illustrates how society constructs narratives of culpability, accountability, and deviance through cultural ideologies and institutional practices. Ultimately, the video contends that violence cannot be comprehended exclusively through individual psychology. It arises from the interplay of individual experience, cultural norms, media portrayal, and societal dialogue. The film utilizes symbolism, memory, and emotional impact to depict violence, prompting audiences to critically analyze the construction of violence's meanings in modern society.

Discussion

The examination of *We Need to Talk About Kevin* illustrates that violence is not depicted as an isolated act of human pathology but as a socially created phenomena impacted by family ties, cultural expectations, media narratives, and institutional reactions. The film illustrates how societal meanings of violence are generated, negotiated, and perpetuated via the lenses of Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory and Stuart

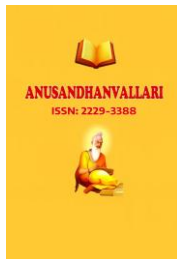


Hall's Representation Theory. Berger and Luckmann (1966) assert that reality is socially created through ongoing interactions between individuals and society. In the film, Kevin's identity develops inside a multifaceted web of social ties rather than solely through biological determinism. Eva's emotional detachment from motherhood, Franklin's denial of Kevin's behavioral issues, and society's idealization of the "perfect family" all shape Kevin's social identity. Instead of providing a simplistic rationale for Kevin's violent behavior, the film posits that aggression emerges from interactions characterized by emotional neglect, ineffective communication, and discordant parental expectations.

The discourse further elucidates that motherhood is a social construct. Eva's experience of motherhood diverges from conventional cultural norms, contesting prevailing ideas that depict mothers as inherently loving and emotionally satisfied. Her failure to promptly bond with Kevin is perceived by others as a maternal shortcoming, illustrating how society delineates and governs acceptable expressions of motherhood. Berger and Luckmann's thesis elucidates that these expectations are not inherent facts but rather constructs of cultural and historical processes that affect social reality. Stuart Hall's Representation Theory offers a significant perspective for analyzing the picture. Hall (1997) contends that representation does not just mirror reality but actively shapes meaning through language, imagery, and discourse. *We Need to Talk About Kevin* refrains from depicting Kevin as a conventional film antagonist. The disjointed storyline, symbolic color usage, quietness, and subjective viewpoint push audiences to scrutinize naive interpretations of violence. Kevin is portrayed concurrently as a child, victim, manipulator, and offender, resulting in various interpretations instead of a singular, static character. The film depicts violence through psychological strain instead of explicit spectacle. The majority of violent events are depicted off-screen or indirectly, redirecting the audience's focus from physical brutality to mental pain and its enduring repercussions. This representational method contests the mainstream media's propensity to sensationalize violence for entertaining purposes. The video emphasizes loss, guilt, isolation, and psychological distress, enabling viewers to contemplate the wider social settings that foster violent behavior.¹¹

The film's media representation exemplifies Hall's theory of encoding and decoding. Following the school massacre, Eva becomes the focus of public animosity, social ostracism, and media scrutiny. Society primarily defines her identity as the mother of a murderer, diminishing her individuality to a singular social designation. This illustrates Hall's assertion that media representations influence public comprehension by ascribing cultural significances to specific identities. Eva's experiences illustrate how representation affects social perception and reinforces ethical judgments. The discourse further emphasizes the function of ideology in the formation of violence. Prevailing societal views foster the notion that violent individuals are intrinsically malevolent or psychologically atypical.¹²

Nevertheless, the film undermines these preconceptions by depicting Kevin's behavior within a wider context of familial dynamics, emotional experiences, and societal expectations. Hall's theory posits that these representations contest dominant ideologies by revealing the precariousness of widely accepted rationales for violence. An additional significant discovery pertains to the audience's participation in the construction of meaning. The film's non-linear narrative and ambiguous characterization necessitate that spectators actively interpret occurrences instead of passively absorbing information. Hall contends that audiences interpret literature variably based on their cultural contexts and ideological stances. Thus, viewers may perceive Kevin as either naturally inclined towards violence, shaped by contextual factors, or as embodying a synthesis of both viewpoints. This interpretative freedom signifies the film's defiance of definitive meanings. The discourse suggests that violence transcends Kevin's physical conduct. Emotional violence, psychological manipulation, familial discord, societal rejection, and institutional silence are depicted as interrelated manifestations of violence that influence personal experiences. These representations correspond with sociological perspectives that violence manifests not solely via physical injury but also via social structures and symbolic interactions.



The film endorses the perspective that violence is socially constructed and culturally expressed. Berger and Luckmann's theory elucidates how social institutions, familial connections, and cultural norms facilitate the creation of identity and aggressive behavior. Stuart Hall's Representation Theory illustrates how cinema generates meanings regarding violence through narrative structure, symbolism, and visual language. Collectively, these perspectives demonstrate that *We Need to Talk About Kevin* challenges reductive interpretations of violence, portraying it instead as a complex social and cultural phenomenon. The film pushes viewers to reevaluate prevailing notions on criminality, motherhood, accountability, and the societal construction of violence, rendering it a crucial work for examining modern depictions of violence in cinema.

Summation

This study analyzed *We Need to Talk About Kevin* using Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory and Stuart Hall's Representation Theory to comprehend how the film constructs and depicts violence in modern society. The analysis reveals that the picture transcends traditional cinematic depictions of violence by framing it as a multifaceted social, cultural, and psychological reality rather than just a consequence of individual criminality or inherent malevolence.

According to Social Construction Theory, the film demonstrates that identities and behaviors are formed via ongoing interactions among people, families, institutions, and society. Kevin's character cannot be comprehended merely through biological or psychological frameworks; rather, his growth is shaped by tumultuous familial dynamics, emotional aloofness, inadequate parental communication, and societal demands placed upon both parents and offspring. Likewise, Eva's experiences illustrate how motherhood is socially created through societal norms that characterize the "ideal mother" as inherently nurturing, emotionally satisfied, and wholly accountable for a child's conduct. The video interrogates widely accepted preconceptions by revealing the discord between personal experiences and cultural expectations.

Utilizing Stuart Hall's Representation Theory, the analysis illustrates that the film actively generates meanings around violence rather than merely portraying violent occurrences. The fractured story structure, symbolic imagery, subdued color palette, and controlled depiction of violence invite audiences to interrogate prevailing prejudices regarding offenders, victims, and parental accountability. Violence is depicted not just as physical devastation but also as mental anguish, psychological coercion, social alienation, and communal pain. These representational tactics oppose sensationalism and encourage critical thought on the cultural processes that shape the understanding of violence.

The research emphasizes the influence of media and public discourse in molding societal attitudes of violence. In the aftermath of the school tragedy, Eva faces social ostracism and is publicly labeled as "the mother of the killer," exemplifying the construction of social identities through media portrayal and communal judgment. This discovery substantiates Hall's assertion that representation shapes public comprehension by generating specific interpretations of individuals and events instead of impartially mirroring reality. The findings suggest that *We Need to Talk About Kevin* serves as a potent critique of reductive explanations for violence. The video prompts viewers to examine the interrelated influences of familial dynamics, social institutions, cultural ideas, and representational techniques in producing violent behavior and societal reactions, rather than attributing guilt solely to the person. This study integrates Social Construction Theory with Representation Theory, illustrating that violence is both a social reality and a cultural construct, with its meanings perpetually negotiated through interpersonal relationships, institutional practices, and cinematic representation.¹³

In conclusion, *We Need to Talk About Kevin* substantially enhances academic discourse around violence, identity, motherhood, and media representation. The video compels viewers to transcend binary divisions of innocence and guilt, nature and nurture, or victim and offender, urging them to acknowledge the intricate nature of violence as a socially constructed and culturally depicted phenomenon. This multidisciplinary approach



enhances the comprehension of contemporary cinema as a domain where social realities are created, challenged, and altered, while also providing significant insights for future inquiries in film studies, sociology, media studies, psychology, and cultural studies.

Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this Research paper. To the best of my knowledge this paper contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This paper has been done with proper citing and the ethicality of the research is followed. I acknowledge that I haven't presented or published the work elsewhere.

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