




KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER:  
*The Wave (2008, Gansel, Germany)*

Social and Historical Contexts:

Hitler gained power in 1933-1934. The Nazi party had absolute control of the government. The party used propaganda to <b>indoctrinate</b> people into obeying the Nazis and idolising Hitler.
Hitler ordered Nazification – the imposition of Nazi values – on all aspects of German life. The lives of young people were controlled both in and out of school to turn them into fanatical Nazis.
Germany became a country where it was unsafe to do or say anything critical of the government. SS soldiers patrolled the streets and the Gestapo (secret police) potential threats to the regime, imprisoning or killing anyone who did not follow the Nazi rules
Some people did resist Nazi control. Sophie Scholl from the White Rose group printed and distributed literature as a form of <b>rebellion</b> to try and convince people to push back against this control. Sophie was arrested and executed.
The film is based on a real life experiment of a school in California in the 1960s. The students did not understand how Hitler convinced the public to follow him, so the teacher, Mr Jones turned his classroom into an <b>autocracy</b> . The experiment became out of control so he shut down the experiment, telling the students it was an experiment to show how easy <b>indoctrination</b> is within society.

Key characters:

<b>Wenger</b> At first follows the typical convention of the rebellious teacher, but seems to believe the autocratic views he is teaching once he sees how it transforms the students. He does not see that The Wave is getting out of hand until it is too late.	
<b>Karo</b> At first follows the typical convention of the popular girl, but becomes the outsider when she refuses to follow the rules of The Wave, including refusing to wear their uniform. Her red <b>costume</b> contrasts to the others dressed in white. She is excluded from the rest of the group, just like other groups were excluded in Nazi Germany. She attempts to make people aware of the dangers of The Wave, and is an allegorical symbol of Sophie Scholl.	
<b>Tim</b> At first follows the typical conventions of the outsider – he is isolated and does not have any friends or a supportive family, but finds meaning and friendship through The Wave. He is so invested in the experiment that he feels he needs to protect Wenger and tries to become his bodyguard. Once he realises The Wave is ending, he feels he has nothing and commits suicide.	

Key Sequence 1: Opening Sequence










Introduction to Herr Wenger driving to school. First insight into the school environment and his place within it.







Cinematography and Lighting

At the beginning of the film Wenger is represented as a **non-conformist**.

**Close ups** of Wenger singing to punk music (usually associated with **anarchy**) when he is driving to work convey him as being **rebellious**.



 <b>Fast paced tracking shots</b> show him walking to school, he is walking against the students (showing he is used to going against the norm).	
<b>Mise-en-scène</b> <b>Costume:</b> Wenger's <i>Ramones</i> t-shirt and leather jacket symbolises his personality. He is a <b>rebellious</b> teacher who does not follow the rules. The black contrasts with the white shirt he wears later on, showing his transformation.	
 Herr Wieland's traditional suit (and the other teachers' clothes) stand in contrast to Wenger's relaxed and youthful choice of clothes, emphasising how he tries not to fit in with the other teachers.	
Slouched body language, cluttered desks, fizzy drinks and distractions signify the student's <b>apathy</b> . Students on phones and not paying attention to the lesson.	
<b>Editing</b> <b>Cutaways</b> are used to juxtapose Wenger to the rest of society around him. This creates an 'us vs. them' feeling and establishes him as unconventional.	
 The <b>fast-paced editing</b> whilst driving to work is juxtaposed with the rest of the staffroom, which is slow-paced. Compared to Wenger, the other teachers are boring and sedate.	
<b>Shot reverse shots</b> convey the relationship between Wenger and the students. At first they are argumentative and disengaged, which changes later on.	
<b>Sound</b> Wenger is listening to <i>The Ramones</i> 'Rock and Roll High School' loudly whilst driving to school – the lyrics and style of the song represent his <b>rebellious</b> character.	
The <b>non-diegetic music</b> once he goes into school stops when he greets his partner. There is a clear transition here between his life outside and inside school.	
<b>Key Sequence 2: Tuesday (27:14 – 31:28)</b>	
<b>Cinematography and Lighting</b> The shots are mostly <b>long shots</b> of the entire class. This allows us to see the initial diversity of the group before they begin the experiment.	
 The <b>long shots</b> alternate between Wenger's <b>POV</b> (establishing him as the leader of the group) and those of students from the back of the classroom, making us feel as if we are a member of the group, too.	
These are intercut with <b>close-up</b> shots of their feet marching to <b>medium shots</b> of individual students, so we can see their reactions: from Tim's enthusiasm to Mona's reluctance.	

<b>Mise-en-scène</b> <b>Costume:</b> the students are still wearing their own individual choice of clothes, thus showing their individuality. This diversity contrasts with the unity they show when marching..	
<b>Editing</b> 'Day of the Week' <b>intertitles</b> are used to keep track of time and often surprise us how quickly things are escalating.	
<b>Cross-cutting</b> is used to show the responses of the class below and to contrast the marching students having fun with the passive, bored students in Wieland's group.	
<b>Sound</b> Wenger's <b>dialogue</b> is used to show the more positive and optimistic 'autocratism': "A rhythm like this can cause bridges to collapse" exhorts the power of united action. The booming of the group marching creates excitement.	
His declaring Wieland's group as the enemy reflects how the Nazis united outside groups by creating a common enemy (eg. Jews in Nazi Germany).	
<b>Key Sequence 3: Rampage</b> This sequence shows how <i>The Wave</i> has swept up lots of the young people. We see the impact that their behaviour has on the wider community and the power of the movement.	
<b>Cinematography and Lighting</b>  The camerawork in this sequence is mostly <b>handheld tracking</b> shots and placed amongst the teenage characters, encouraging us to feel like we are part of the Wave, too. As the scene continues, the <b>cinematography</b> becomes far <b>jerkier</b> reflecting the excitement and restless energy of the characters	
<b>Mise-en-scène</b> The Wave <b>logo</b> symbolises youthful rebellion and a force that will wash away the 'old order'. Links to how the Nazi party took over.	
 Using the logo, the group can show their new collective identity across the town. We see it on shop windows, walls and buses. The placing of the logo over existing symbols (the 'enemy' anarchists, police car etc) reinforces their emerging power and influence.	
<b>Editing</b> The speed of the <b>cutting</b> increases to an almost frantic pace as the scene progresses. Combined with the <b>handheld</b> cameras, it expresses the energy and excitement of the group.	
 There is a <b>montage of jump-cuts</b> of the stickers being stuck onto buildings or spray-painted. During this we do not see any of the characters' faces, showing how they are now a collective group, rather than individuals like the previous sequences.	
<b>Sound</b> Fast rock music is used to <b>soundtrack</b> the scene and add to the excitement. It adds to the feeling that the characters and the viewer are being swept along by the movement.	
<b>Dialogue:</b> "Anyone can join who believes in the cause", shows how The Wave members do not have any political aim or objective apart from being united– typical feature of fascism.	

Specialist Focus: Representation

- How characters are represented
- How gender/age/ethnicity is represented
- How time and place is represented

<b>Young people</b> are presented at first to have <b>apathy</b> towards learning about WW2 and the Nazis. They are bored of hearing about WW2, and do not fully understand the consequences of <b>autocracy</b> . This means they are happy to go along with The Wave, and suffer the same <b>indoctrination</b> as the Germans did by the Nazis. The film shows the struggles and themes central to <b>adolescence</b> : sex, drugs, parents.
<b>Adults</b> in the film are generally presented as <b>liberal</b> , wary of any <b>authority</b> that could control their children. They are initially dismissive of the experiment and are not <b>represented</b> as being there for their children. Marco's mother is seen as drunk and promiscuous – he finds substitute parents in Karo's mum and dad, who are inappropriate with each other. Tim's parents are <b>dismissive</b> and do not want to hear about his excitement in the project. Wenger is the <b>contrast</b> to the other adults – the students look up to him – he transforms from the <b>unconventional</b> , rock music fan teacher to fulfilling the role of a <b>leader</b> like Hitler.
<b>Gender</b> At first, the film <b>conforms</b> to the <b>teen genre</b> by including teen <b>stereotypes</b> : popular girl (Karo), jock (Marco), the outsider (Tim) etc. As the experiment progresses, these roles (particularly Karo and Marco) are reversed: Karo becomes isolated because she refuses to follow the experiment, whereas Tim is able to fit in with the experiment, and becomes the leader of the teenagers. As <i>The Wave</i> progresses, the stereotypical gender roles become more apparent. The boys do the heavy lifting to protect the group.

Key Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
<b>adolescence</b>	The period of life when a child develops into an adult
<b>anarchy</b>	Refers to the state of a society without authorities or governing bodies – resulting in chaos
<b>apathy</b>	Showing or feeling no interest, enthusiasm or concern
<b>authority</b>	The power to give orders, make decisions for others or tell them what to do
<b>autocracy</b>	A system of government by one person with complete power
<b>conform</b>	To obey or follow something or someone
<b>dictatorship</b>	A ruler with total power over a country – usually obtained through force
<b>indoctrination</b>	To be brainwashed into believing certain ideologies
<b>nazification</b>	Social process of adopting (and being forced to adopt) Nazism
<b>rebellion</b>	Fighting against authority or control
<b>representation</b>	Showing a person or group of people in a particular way
<b>social commentary</b>	Writing about issues in society, usually in a way that promotes social reform
<b>stereotype</b>	A common but often unfair belief about a certain type of people
<b>subvert</b>	To go against the usual way of doing something