

Barriers in the Banlieue:
La Haine by Mathieu Kassovitz (1995)
and *Divines* by Houda Benyamina (2016)

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What's my Thesis about?

My thesis is about French cinema. The two primary sources I study, *La Haine* and *Divines*, are two French films which portray social constraints in the banlieue, or, suburbs, outside of Paris. The social constraints that the characters experience, however, are enforced not just by themes of the films (racism, police brutality, etc...) but cinematographically through physical and visible barriers. Through a series of analyses of screenshots, my thesis finds these specific scenes, and analyzes the physical barriers which separate characters such as Vinz, Said, Hubert, Dounia and Maimouna and the others in the banlieue from those outside of it.

Let's look at some examples: *La Haine* (1995)

Although Vinz' determination to kill a cop and avenge their friend who fell victim to police brutality is present throughout the entire film, Vinz is fed up with the way the public negatively views members of the banlieue. When a journalist and news reporter stop by a playground to ask Vinz and his two friends about the riots which happened the night before, Vinz loses his cool, and gives the media what they want. He is caught on camera aggressively yelling and throwing rocks at the reporters. Not only do their social classes keep them apart, an actual railing and wall does too. The wall and railing, which acts as the physical barrier in this example, keeps the members of the banlieue and the media separated from each other. (Image is on the next slide) The presence of a physical barrier here makes it even more difficult for Vinz and the media to be on good terms.



Divines (2016)

Despite sharing the same socio-economic status, Dounia desperately wants to earn the respect of Rebecca to become one of her drug runners. Rebecca has risen in status due to her success in earning money in the drug trade. One of the first scenes shows Dounia observing Rebecca paying some of her obedient drug runners, a role she desires for respect and money. They are physically separated from each other by a gate that Benyamina strategically places on screen (Image is on the next slide). Dounia quickly overcomes this barrier by proving herself worthy of being a drug runner for Rebecca.



Other examples of physical barriers in both films

