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## Violence as art experience

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### Abstract

*The article discusses Nicolas Winding Refn's film Only God Forgives (2013), and focuses on questions of artistic representation and reception in relation to such cinematic elements as genre film, style, mise-en-scène, graphic violence and art experience. The arguments for the analyses are supported by John Dewey's theory of art as experience where he claims that aesthetic experience is essentially infused with emotions that provide for a unifying quality cementing diverse constituent parts of the artwork. The article also takes into consideration Refn's standpoint on the use of violence in art. While violence is a way of externalizing emotions, as Refn claims, it may not necessarily be the real experience viewers want to entertain; however, through an art experience, which is integral and complete as Dewey asserts, they are able to perceive and detect meanings that were "scattered and weakened in the material of other experiences".*

The experience of the contemporary world problematizes what can be perceived as real. We are exposed to a deluge of experiences, multiple opportunities, and openness of possibilities mediated mostly through images and information that eventually stay between us and the real experience. The growing feeling of discontinuity and fragmentation is fuelled by what we learn about the world, very often as a result of the ways we choose to reside in it. The world has shrunk; communication is fostered by a number of social networks; everyday experience transmitted by the media often reaches the level of intelligibility. As a result we live in a world that has lost its intimacy, and we are exposed to total transparency.<sup>i</sup>

It is not surprising then that memory, the ephemeral private world where the past blends into the present in intricate ways, can serve us as the experiential link between the world of total transparency and the private premises of our mind. It can recall the past, but more importantly it can be used productively as the organizational quality individual memory

possesses. By understanding the mechanisms via which we remember the past we can learn something about the ways we understand the present.

The ways in which our minds organizes our memories is very similar to the mechanisms of narration in prose, film or dreams, because in the process of remembering we summarize, construct, interpret and condense. These processes help us to organize incompatible, incongruent elements into narratives that materialize our self-identification with the real. No wonder that art has always searched for and used memory as a creative potential whether in form or content. Western and noir films, two film genres that originated in the United States, can be good examples of this.

Film noir as a film style emerged in American cinema in the 1950s. Economic affordability, the cult of film stars, and specific artistic language that could cross over cultural barriers and differences contributed to the huge success of film as a medium, especially in the United States (Fluck, 1999). The new art form very ably represented the idealized qualities of American culture, namely progress, pragmatism and freedom. In spite of the optimism that the 1950s brought about in terms of social and economic development, however, new types of films appeared. Their poetics corresponded with war nihilism and later with postwar trauma. After WWII French critics noticed Hollywood films had acquired a new poetics that differed from mainstream Hollywood production (Schrader, 1999).

Film noir, as Vivien Sobchack and Paul Schrader have it, corresponds with a feeling of uncertainty, ambivalence in social values and changing gender roles. It decanonizes the cultural tradition of America. The sources of formal memory for film noir mostly come from artists – immigrants who in the 1930s arrived in Hollywood and brought with them the poetics of German expressionism. Some of them had fled Nazi Germany; some of them had immigrated earlier. Among them there were directors such as Fritz Lang (*The Woman in the Window*, 1944), Otto Preminger (*Fallen Angel*, 1946), Billy Wilder (*Double Indemnity*, 1944) and Edgar G. Ulmer (*Detour*, 1949) whose oeuvre was fully recognized only after his death (Mayer - McDonnell, 2007, p. 4).

These films were literally dark, in mood and form, situated in dark alleys with no direct sunlight, in private places lit by daylight coming through venetian blinds only. Their style symbolically corresponded with the pessimistic postwar situation, the loss of innocence, and abrupt disillusionment. At the same time, metaphorically they spoke for the dark, undisclosed and unexamined places of the individual's mind, for things invisible and under the surface. As Silver and Ursini assert, the two most important themes were "the haunted past" and "the fatalistic nightmare" (2004, p. 15). Films noir undermine the myth of American innocence

that American art in large measure had supported. In spite of the open promise America, and the United States, as an unexplored land and historically young country embodied, the real situation was more complex. The realist tendencies that characterize film art after WWII also influenced American directors. Character types and plot were offered by fiction of "marginal importance": pulp novels that could have been bought for a few cents, crime fiction by the hardboiled school of authors such as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Ernest Hemingway. Protagonists usually stood outside of normative social structures, without customary bonds, thrown into fatalistic existential situations (Sobchack, 1998).

Elements of style such as photography, lighting, editing and voice over, in spite of the normalizing dominance of production studios that aimed at the manipulation of film aesthetics, enabled directors to work with topics that had been taboo, or marginalized before. Classical film noir draws viewers into the liminal space on the verge between the real and the dream. Such qualities are transmittable in other cultural circumstances as well and therefore they made it possible for film noir poetics to resurface in American film and other film traditions even later.<sup>ii</sup>

As I have noted the film situation that film noir represents speaks about liminal space. It moves between the present and the past, dream and reality, undermines the familiar concepts of what home, as an existential root for an individual, represents. A similar existentially unstable situation lies in the background of another American film genre, the Western.

The iconography of the Western is rooted in American history and geography; it is more a mythic than realistic reconstruction of what is conceptualized as the West. The Frontier, a significant notion of American cultural history, can be understood as a zone where the familiar meets the Other (Anglo-American culture faces American Indians; civilization encounters wilderness), however, at the same time also as a limit to the Anglo-American civilization coming from the East and its encounter with its "uncivilized" double in the West. The genre of the Western can be therefore understood as a metadiscourse on what the American home can be and what its constituents are. If a white Anglo-American enters the land of the Wild West and wants to reconstitute there order and the language of the law, what values does he represent and what territory does he move around? In this respect mythologizing is a useful term, because it refers to historical memory reconstructed in the film genre of the Western and attributes positive, almost heroic values glorified and hyperbolized in new renderings.

The film *Only God Forgives* (2013) by Danish director Nicolas Winding Refn creatively follows the poetics of both film genres.<sup>iii</sup> Following the success of his film *Drive*

(2011), Refn presented the film *Only God Forgives* at the Cannes Festival in 2013. The film received a mixed response. Andrew Anthony in his review for the US edition of *The Guardian* tries to balance the views and on one hand admits that he sympathizes with the critic from *Hollywood Elsewhere* who felt “violated, shat upon, sedated, narcotised, appalled and bored stiff” upon seeing the film, but also has a respect for Peter Bradshaw’s opinion who described the film as “emotionally breathtaking, aesthetically brilliant” (Anthony, 2013).

Both characteristics, however conflicting they may be, speak about the act of reception as a strong emotional experience. This is very much in line with Dewey’s theoretical concept of art as an experience that he developed in his seminal work *“Art as Experience”* (1934). Dewey warns that if we judge the artwork as a product of itself, in its solidified canonized form and only as a source of admiration and conventions, in the process of aesthetic evaluation we create a barrier that stands in the way of a new, original perception. Therefore I ask together with Dewey: to what extent is the art experience a part of the everyday reality of the recipient? Is it possible to perceive the artwork as separated from existence and the experience of the world? Dewey sees the perceiver of art and its creator as two sides of a mutually interrelated process. In the same way that in the creative act the artist anticipates the recipient, the recipient in the act of reception becomes the creator. Therefore the enjoyment of art and the creative act form an integral process, a conscious experience where “doing” and “undergoing” cannot be separated. Art becomes an experience specifically when it is a complete, integrated experience; in other words the artwork possesses such qualities that make up for its unity and are integrated into the experience through an active process of perception. In the act of reception, Dewey claims, consciousness becomes fresh and alive; it involves a complex investment of motor elements, ideas and plunging energy so that, pervaded by emotions throughout, new experience forms (1987, 2008, p. 50 - 59). I argue that Refn’s film provides for such an integral art experience. As Dewey says, the representation goes beyond literal representation; with the referential function he sees the act of representation also as a process in which the artwork says something to those who enjoy it (or do not enjoy it) about the essence of their own experience through a new piece of experience that they go through, because “the product awakens in other persons new perceptions of meaning of the common world” (1987, 2008, p. 88).

In the following part I would like to examine how Refn’s film under my scrutiny creates a complete experience, infused with emotions. Therefore the analysis focuses on its constitutive elements, which form the qualitative unity of the artwork. In a horizontal way Refn’s film is a banal narrative – a story abstracted from a gang and gangster setting. Julian, a

outwardly respectable person from the criminal underworld in Bangkok runs a boxing club while smuggling drugs with his brother Billy. When Billy gets slaughtered at the beginning of the film, their mother, the matriarchal leader of a network of smugglers, arrives in Bangkok. She forces Julian to avenge his brother's death. Julian hesitates in performing the act of revenge and therefore faces the ultimate trial. Can he resist the mother who emotionally abuses him?

The linear narrative of the story does not surprise the viewer. It intertextually follows other similar stories that the viewers are familiar with from film or literary narratives. The director admits that in the process of creation he prefers a linear story where he can watch the story unfold and affect its evolution: "I knew that I wanted to make a movie that was pure and simple. I wanted to do an acid trip. I went to Thailand to prepare everything, and then I continued to minimize the film and scale it down to just a waterfall of images that would create a story. I shoot film in chronological order, so I could really control it, as much as possible, along the process."<sup>iv</sup> (Radish, 2013)

"The waterfall of images" that creates the film narrative is technically achieved by the manipulation of light, colour and the shot frame. It throws the spectator into a strange world that is rather oneiric (real daylight is used in the film only once, in a few shots of harsh morning light in the streets of Bangkok). The setting of the film includes bizarre places, such as a karaoke bar, the private salons of expensive restaurants, dimly lit rooms and the corridors of a one-night-stand hotel; the settings are embellished with excessive, kitsch decorations. It thus comes as no surprise that the viewer may perceive the film as "glitteringly strange" and "mesmeric" (Bradshaw, 2013). The uncompromising, rigid logic of linear montage dislocates the motivation of characters. The viewers are exposed to emotional, violent situations; the interconnectedness between the scenes, however, the viewers have to find for themselves.<sup>v</sup>In the introduction to the film Refn openly admits Alejandro Jodorowski's influence. The experienced viewer can also read obvious references to other directors, among them Roberto Rodriguez, Quentin Tarantino, Gaspar Noe and David Lynch.

The working principle for Refn's aesthetics is contrast. On one hand the austere minimalism of plot construction and reduced character motivation, on the other hand strong visuality. In a discussion for the Film Society of Lincoln Center Refn admits that his focus is to "tell [his] story with camera" (Refn, 2013). All Refn's cinematic works pay careful attention to the composition of individual frames. When the film is decomposed vertically into individual shots and carefully analysed the examination of the camera work reveals the appropriation of other artistic forms.

The dominance of certain colour combinations in individual scenes approximates Refn's film to the visual arts. Similarly to the classical film-noir style Refn employs the contrast between shade and light, with a slight difference – the colour scale is enlarged. Instead of the chiaroscuro created as a contrast between black and white, the colour combinations include red, black and blue hues and thus support a symbolical reading where in the course of the story red stands for blood, passion and revenge, black for death, and blue for dream.

The composition of individual shots goes beyond simple realism. It is highly stylized and in that way approximates the film to the performing arts; some scenes seem to be theatrical tableaux – they acquire the ceremonial quality of a ritual that resonates with the cold scale of emotions.<sup>vi</sup> For example in one of the scenes that immediately precedes the dramatic and disturbing climax of the film, the mother of the protagonist, Crystal (Kristin Scott Thomas), is situated in the dead centre of the shot speaking to some imaginary audience including the viewers. In her monologue she rationalizes her relationship with Julian. In a cross-cutting the viewers can see policeman Chang (Vithaya Pansringarm) – the self-constituted avenger – standing aside as if he were waiting to perform his part on a stage while another character finishes her monologue. The visual and spatial fragmentation of the *mise-en-scène* enables the viewer to recognize the emotional distance of the speaking character (Crystal) not only because she tells lies, but mainly because she appears to be disinterested by her own words. The vanity of her action comes to full light when the policeman ritually decapitates her in an act of revenge and self-constituted justice. It is so abrupt and sudden she succumbs almost voluntarily.

The representation of *mise-en-scène* is among the most remarkable qualities of the film. The camera angles and types of shot form and the framing simulates a vertiginous feeling where multiple layers of interconnected worlds emerge and boundaries between them blur. These visual qualities work significantly with the logic of the story that follows two protagonists. On one hand it is Julian (Ryan Gosling), drug dealer and the owner of a sports club, a foreigner to exotic Thailand; on the other hand Chang (Vithaya Pansringarm), policeman and self-appointed executor of justice. As Julian moves between two different worlds, one of which is the world of crime, Chang moves seamlessly among several disparate worlds. He is a legitimate guardian of order in his homeland in his official status, but he is also a mysterious, silent, communally respected vigilante avenger, a sensitive father bringing up a little girl, and a popular karaoke singer, in his private life.

Each of Chang's worlds is brilliant in its visuality. Bizarre scenes from the karaoke bar where he performs are inserted between scenes full of brutal, explicit violence. The karaoke

bar scenes stylistically build up the links with the classical noir setting: a cocktail lounge. They work through sound and image, and symbolically refer to a home that otherwise had been devoid of its original meaning.<sup>vii</sup> It is important to note that Refn goes beyond the imitation of a classical film noir atmosphere and setting; his bar scene moves between the bizarre and kitsch and is almost as ominous as the openly violent scenes. Chang's subordinates create a Greek-like silent chorus petrified by Chang's emotionally charged performance. Lyrical songs tilt on kitsch; however, the overall scene acquires a sense of sublime beauty precisely through its juxtaposition with the brutally violent scenes.

The viewers' perspective falters. One asks questions such as what space did I find myself in, and what am I looking at? The overall ambiguity is accentuated by the use of sound. The sound does not come out of the scene directly; it comes from an unknown source as a soundtrack and just reaffirms the alienation effect. Defamiliarization grows deeper as the incomprehension is carried out through the conflicting language barrier. The western spectator does not understand the lyrics of Thai songs; what they, however, understand is the nostalgic sentimental tone; in that way two worlds meet and the karaoke bar represents the liminal zone between the dark world of crime (implicitly represented by police uniforms and the static postures of policemen entranced by the sound of music) and the sublime world of beauty (the musical production stops the mundane routine world and imbues the listeners with a sense of beauty - though kitsch-like). The multiple layers of these incompatible worlds are symbolically represented by Chang's shadow in the segment of light. Thus the scene escapes the realist representation of one-to-one correspondence and opens up to the logic of the dream.

In the topos of Chang's house the multiple layers are represented by the framing of the *mise-en-scène*. The camera leads the spectators from one space into another – from one room into another. The perspective of the shot allows the recipients to look at and follow the characters in deep perspective. Even though the characters, the baby-sitter and Chang, for example, communicate with one another, each character remains physically and existentially in their own worlds. All in all, the viewers recognize the thresholds and openings between individual rooms as liminal zones between various systems.

Chang is Julian's counterpart, a character from the other side of the moral spectrum, a haunting *doppelgänger*. It is, however, Julian's perspective that glues the film together. Presenting Julian, Refn goes to an extreme. Julian as a film character almost disappears. The function of this character corresponds to other means of expression of the film, such as space. The vertical division of the *mise-en-scène* represents the architecture of Julian's mind. These

are labyrinths created by the fragmentation of space and its perception – empty corridors, mirrors, vistas of spaces charged with otherness (Julian's room with a view through the industrial structure of a gymnasium), liminal placement of characters on the threshold<sup>viii</sup>, or view-throughs into a succession of spaces where the character moves around. These, frame in a frame, picture in a picture, simulate infinite vertigo<sup>ix</sup> diving into the depth of Julian's mind. The film leads us through an oneiric space, somewhere between being asleep and awake, between night and day. Only a few film scenes take place in full daylight and the story as it is delineated by the characters and their action invites a brief psychoanalytic interpretation: as the body is a "house" where a soul can reside, then in the film the body residing in a certain space is the elementary and inherent particle of that space, and in this way the space in which the body is "imprisoned" is the interpretation of the mind of that particular character (this representational logic works also in classical film noir). In other words the body of the protagonist loses its iconographic insistence, and this function is taken over by space.

In an interview for the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York, Nicolas Winding Refn spoke about the origin of the film. When talking to a producer he made an offer that for the amount of 6 million dollars he would make two genre films. One of them became *Only God Forgives* (2013).<sup>x</sup> Refn said he would make a Western situated in Bangkok. Arriving in Bangkok he encountered another culture that fascinated him, and thus attempted to link the tradition of the Western genre with that of the Thai gangster film. Conceptually moving between the dichotomies of civilization and wilderness, the film poses questions about law and justice generated by the excess of violence. The dichotomy is symbolical – civilization represented by Julian (Ryan Gosling), a Westerner, confronted by Chang (Vithaya) a self-constituted avenger, from an exotic wilderness. The exotic world, which Julian uses as a place of refuge to perform his illegal activities, strikes back since Julian is unable to read and recognize its laws. In that sense the encounter between "civilization" and "wilderness" familiar from the Western film genre takes place, though civilization does not connote the privileged supreme standpoint anymore; the film rather speaks for the discontinuities and ruptures Anglo-American civilization may represent – corruption for example.

The biggest problem viewing the film is the reception of violence – violence that is graphic, explicit and undisclosed. Refn claims to be a "pornographer", however, he is not one any more than those of us who can have dinner and watch mutilated bodies of war conflicts or news of terrorist attacks at the same time. The violence he presents is often unmotivated and highly stylized; it almost reaches the level of eroticized fetish. The minute precision he



uses while filming violent scenes, however, touches upon emotional revelations deeply buried in the spectators' minds.

Refn's cinematography thoughtfully leads the viewers gaze. He makes it clear that what they can see and how they see it is important. As I have pointed out above the sense of uncertainty and the suspense but also the effect of defamiliarization are achieved through the mediation of gaze. What Refn combines here is the acceleration of suspense, necessary for a fight film (whether it is the Western or the gangster movie) and the voyeuristic pleasure that separates the viewers from the immediacy of the action.

Film, in general, creates an unreal, fabricated world. Refn works with the prerequisites of genre films – constructed world premises, at the same time with the help of strong visual narrative mediates emotions and experience that in the form of articulated stylization overlap with abstract human experience. In the talk for the Film Society of Lincoln Center he speaks about this: "Violence is a very odd element when it comes to fantasy because art consists essentially of two motions that are constantly at odds with each other, which is sex and violence, desire and fear; those are the two things that constantly fight... where sex is harder to fantasise about because in the end it's the act that is very instinctual and normal for most people to do... violence on the other hand which is equally a part of our DNA is pure fantasy because it is a part of our mentality that we know is wrong to do but we have it; so we fantasise about it that's why violence in fiction whether it's been literature, or painting or music or cinema or whatever is very much a dominating force; it is a way of externalising emotions" (Refn, 2013). Refn admits that the use of violence in his films is not for the sake of entertainment. He reveals here a careful psychoanalytic approach that goes under the layers of rational perception or projections. He speaks about primeval emotions that each of us have and the way he uses the film medium to work on those emotions.

The criticism on film *Only God Forgives* I alluded to above compared the act of reception to the act of violence. And it is exactly the position Refn takes. He admits that his "art is an act of violence" (ibid.). He accentuates that violence in art may be inspiring precisely because it is able to disclose emotions and urges that in contrast to the expectations of society remained hidden and suppressed.<sup>xi</sup> It is necessary to add that in the act of reception while watching Refn's film there comes a cathartic moment when on one hand the viewers recognize the "fictional" quality of the film and at the same time the aesthetic form of the film makes for the acceptance that our primeval urges became our fantasies.

Recently, various forms of art have reconsidered how memory and history are linked together. Therefore literature, as well as film, the visual arts and opera work with blank pages

of our history, specifically those the official history refuses to present. These are mostly strong stories carrying deep human emotions and moral statements. These artworks are *pari pro toto* for grand historical narratives; they are memory that in reality is able to modify official history.<sup>xii</sup> Many of them are unspeakable, almost unrepresentable, however, in artistic form very impressive.

Reviewers have reproached Refn's work for its great amount of violence, its lack of motivation, redundancy, disquieting moral statements and empty aestheticization. I would like to oppose that criticism. As Dewey says "...the work of art has a unique quality, but that it is that of clarifying and concentrating meanings contained in scattered and weakened ways in the material of other experiences" (1994, p. 210). Therefore it is possible to read Refn's *Only God Forgives* as the representation of micro stories that may not be related to any specific historical events but are more embedded in archetypal structures of the human mind. Those are emotions or states of mind that exist in each of us as a certain form of our emotional memory, maybe unadmitted, suppressed or only experienced in the abstract world of our mind – states of mind that may surprise us as thinkable but not accomplishable. They are not a specific story to tell. To materialize them Refn takes over the story from something as banal as a genre film and employs stunning, persuasive visual language. Is it a real art experience?

Real – compared to what? Refn's film is an abstraction with some simplifications that such representation withstands; in spite of that, it effectively discloses the incommensurability between the beauty that each of us desires and the violence that everyone rather avoids. As beauty always remains unattainable and present only in ineffable moments, violence is omnipresent – whether we admit that fact or not.

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#### Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> For more details see: Jean Baudrillard and his works *The Ecstasy of Communication* (1988), *The Perfect Crime* (1996).

<sup>ii</sup> It is possible to speak about the revival of noir poetics in the 1980s. So-called neo-noir films emerged in the 1970s, and since then there have been many fine examples that creatively employ the poetics of classical film noir (among them *Taxi Driver* (1978) by Scorsese, *The Shining* (1980) by Kubrick, *Chinatown* (1974) by Polanski, *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Lost Highway* (1997), *Mulholland Drive* (2001) by Lynch, *L.A. Confidential* (1994) by Hanson, *The Dark Knight* by Nolan, *Drive* (2011) by Refn). For more information see Mark Conrad: *The Philosophy of Neo-Noir (Philosophy of Popular Culture)*.

<sup>iii</sup> Although it was the film *Drive* (2011) that opened the way for Nicolas Winding Refn to huge commercial and critical success, and Hollywood recognition, he had shot critically acclaimed films before: among them the *Pusher* trilogy (1996, 2004, 2005), *Bronson* (2008) and *Valhalla Rising*

(2009). Mads Mikkelsen, with whom he frequently cooperated, was awarded the Award for Best Actor at the 2005 Bodil Awards for the film *Pusher II*, and the film actually brought Mikkelsen to fame. The film *Bronson* won the Award for Best Film at the Sydney Film Festival and was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

<sup>iv</sup> For me, it's an evolution of my own creative obsession. And it's a way to free myself from what people want and expect. <http://collider.com/nicolas-winding-refn-only-god-forgives-barbarella-interview/#3peJw2Jv8GQifmdP.99>

<sup>v</sup> In a traditional linear narrative it is linear causality that enables recipients to understand the logic of the plot. There are still many viewers who prefer this straightforward type of narrative. Refn focuses predominantly on the visual experience; the logical continuity of individual shots is therefore left for viewers to develop. In this way he works with the participative almost performative role of the viewer and their ability to substitute missing motives, or as the case may be to go beyond conventional reception and acquire the art experience sensually.

<sup>vi</sup> Those specifically are scenes with Crystal, daemonic matriarch. Kristin Scott Thomas is cast against type.

<sup>vii</sup> The karaoke bar scenes build on the imagery and atmosphere of similar scenes well-known from films noir, for example it is the opening scene in a New York bar in Edgar G. Ulmer's film *Detour* (1949) and David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* performance by Isabella Rossellini in the film of the same name (1986).

<sup>viii</sup> A scene that elaborates on a citation from *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968) presents Julian and his assistants standing in doorways; the camera moves from one shot to another and the audience sees them scattered standing in various places, near doorways, always on the threshold between the open space and indoor environment, waiting for the man who killed Julian's brother. The scene refers to the Western iconography where villains are waiting for a train to arrive, in other words for the confrontation with the Other in the act of vengeance. Refn complicates the situation in *Only God Forgives*; Julian waits to take revenge, however, the one who he is waiting for is already a broken, mutilated man, and thus not an equal rival. In the following scene Julian leaves the man untouched. The old Thai man whose daughter Julian's brother had abused and brutally murdered killed Julian's brother in despair. He in turn was punished by Chang who ritually cut his arm off for allowing his young daughter to work as a prostitute.

<sup>ix</sup> For example, the final scene in Chang's house.

<sup>x</sup> The other one was the successful *Drive* (2011).

<sup>xi</sup> "I used to say 'art is an act of violence' meant to penetrate you and it can do that of course and it is a big difference between seeing violence and being violated by what you experience so where you say that in reality is a destructive medium which only destroys but in art violence can inspire and I am not talking about people killing each other in terms of entertaining but the act that you see something can violate you is what I find interesting it's a sense of penetration it's the closest thing to the act with the viewer becoming a two way experience and if you look at our own physicality we were born with violent behaviour out of necessity we have parts of our body can be used for violent acts out of self-preservation over the years of man evolution those became our normality and acceptance that we find for our society the way to function our violent urges no longer work with our necessity to survive because society created our basic need but that does not mean the urge of our DNA went away suddenly the parts of our body that were violent became our fantasies instead and it's more of an acceptance of that."

<sup>xii</sup> A few examples: Toni Morrison: *Beloved* (1987), M. H. Kingston: *Woman Warrior. Memoirs of A Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1976), Michael Ondaatje: *Anil's Ghost* (2000), Ian McEwan: *Atonement* (2001), *Atonement* (2007), directed by Joe Wright, etc.

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