

# The Appeal of Action Films Containing Violence:

*Kill Bill Vol. 1*- a Case Study &  
a Spectator's Psychophysiological Responses

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# Abstract

On the first part of this Thesis, different theories on the appeal of action films containing violence are expounded in three categories: (a) inherently appealing properties of violence; (b) variables confounded with violence; and (c) post-viewing gratifications. Theories advancing the notion that violence is inherently attracting are dismissed as indefensible or unsubstantiated. The second part features an analysis of *Kill Bill Vol. 1* by Quentin Tarantino as a case study. Different elements of *Kill Bill*'s attractiveness are considered in order to assess the applicability of the aforementioned theories. Chapter Three describes the Practice based Research on the somatic responses and psychophysiological performance of a spectator watching *Kill Bill*. This result of this practical research is included in a DVD videoart project called *Where did Violence (almost) Go? or the Footage missed by Alejandro while Watching Kill Bill*.

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# Introduction

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Representation of violent images (such as shooting, killing, fighting etc) is highly popular on cinema and is increasingly gory nowadays with the support of sophisticated technology and special effects. If we consider for example the Cinematic box- office successes one could easily ascertain that images of violence, mayhem and horror are a large attraction. Zillmann (1998) contented that this “phenomenal appeal is not limited to audiences in the Western world, but universal. The attraction of superviolent entertainment is evident cross culturally” (180). It is puzzling, then, why we, or some of us, are interested in going to the movies to watch portrayals of barbarous violence, why we want to share this consumption experience with our friends and why we bombard our children with brutal fairy tales. The appeal of violence seems counterintuitive at first because when choosing violence, horror or mayhem images we intentionally place ourselves in peril of great emotional anguish

Some scholars, on the other hand, believe that violence is not as popular as other forms of entertainment and that it has a very limited appeal. According to Goldstein, (1998) violence is attracting to some boys or men. “ But for many, it may not be the violence per se but other satisfactions that are its main attractants. For the majority of consumers of violent imagery, the violence is a means to ends, an acceptable device valued more for what it does than for what it is” (213).

Indeed, there is not sufficient evidence proving that we like watching violence and it seems very difficult for scientists and theoreticians to agree on this point. What the box office numbers prove, however, is that whatever the popularity of violence per se may be, many films depicting extreme or soft violence in many forms sell. Traditionally, research on violence in media has been concentrated on the repercussions and effects for the viewer of such violent images but it has been neglected to question why these images exist in the first place and what the reasons are for viewers flocking outside cinemas featuring violent imagery.

Therefore, the scope of this thesis is not to prove whether the projection and viewing of violent imagery has repercussions in our behavior nor do I try to establish that

violence is attracting. On the contrary, my main focus is, if we like watching action films that include violence and we take their appeal for granted, what could be the reasons for this attraction.

But before proceeding, some further clarifications on the scope of this research should be made. First of all, when I mention violence I mean what Harris (1994) has defined as “intentional physical harm to another individual” (186) or Gerbner (1980) explained as “the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self or other) compelling action against one’s will on pain of being hurt and/or killed or threatened to be so victimized” (11).

Furthermore, this research distinguishes between the terms violence and images of violence, especially violence staged for the purposes of entertainment. In this research I only focus on the latter, namely the dramatic images of staged or mediatized violence, and not on violence in general. Therefore, when the two terms are used in the course of this thesis, they both refer only to the representation or reenactment of violent actions.

In addition, I do not consider violent imagery as a single concept. It would be wrong to consider that all violent imagery comes from the same source or has the same purpose. As Bloch (1998) contended, for example, ritual violence requires a different explanation than violent entertainment because the barrier between participant and spectator is less clear. For this purpose, this research does not focus on the violent imagery in general. Its specific focal point is on action films. By the term action film I mean the film genre that features:

a propensity for spectacular physical action, a narrative structure involving fights, chases and explosions, and in addition to the deployment of state-of-the-art special effects, an emphasis in performance on athletic feats and stunts. (Neale, 2000, 52)

Chapter A includes an analysis and evaluation of the different theories that have been put forward by theoreticians and psychologists for explaining the appeal of violence in films. This research is not proposing a single theory as a prevalent one for explaining the appeal of violent imagery. On the contrary, effort has been given in discovering, examining and measuring different and some times contradictory theories in order to explain the complex initial hypothesis: if we accept that we like watching action films that include violence, what would be the reason for that.

Theories are divided in three categories according to the ways enjoyment of violent entertainment happens. The first category features theories that propose that violence has inherently appealing properties, meaning that one might enjoy a violent movie or performance precisely because the violent images per se evoke pleasure. The second category of theories suggests that one might be attracted to a violent film but find the violent scenes themselves to be unpleasant. And the third category deals with the appeal of post-viewing gratifications, meaning that one enjoys a violent movie because of the “various gratifications that are indirectly related to the viewing of the images and are actually experienced after the images themselves are viewed” (Sparks & Sparks, 2000, 74). Chapter B is a case study on *Kill Bill Vol. 1* by Quentin Tarantino to discover the applicability and pertinence of these theories. In this Chapter, I provide with a study of those elements of the film that make it interesting for me personally to watch it. Chapter C is a research on the psychophysiology of an audience member while watching *Kill Bill* with a specific focus on his somatic responses during the violent scenes in order to draw an inference about the appeal of violence. The final product of this research is included in a DVD at the end of the thesis under the title: *Where did Violence (almost) go? or the footage missed by Alejandro through blinking while watching Kill Bill*.



# Chapter A.

## Theories about the appeal of violence

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### **A. I. Inherently Appealing Properties of Violence**

The *New York Times* film critic's review of Sam Peckinpah's 1969 film *The Wild Bunch*, wrote "We're alternately horrified by the butchery and exhilarated by the orgiastic energy his balletic spectacles stir up" and that the director "first highlights the horror of the mindless slaughter and then—and this is what really carries horror—makes it beautiful, almost abstract." (71) Roger Ebert, a famous US film critic, wrote with regard to Tarrantino's exceptionally violent *Kill Bill Vol. 2*: "exuberant celebration [...] headless joy [...] a virtuoso celebration of fight choreography."

According to this line of thought, violence is inherently attractive, beautiful and enjoyable, at least when presented with cinematic conventions that critics deem appropriate, and therefore there is nothing more to explain about its appeal. Zillman (1998) contended that such an assumption is a vicious circle. Claiming that some people like watching violence because violence is beautiful does not really explain why these people find violence beautiful. "Conceptually, equating aesthetic appeal in roundabout fashion with appeal in general seems a moot exercise". (181)

Sparks and Sparks (2000), tried to identify and articulate more precisely what the inherent properties of violence could be that make violence appealing. They suggested that they are associated with sensory delight, novelty, and sensation seeking (75).

#### **A.I.1. Sensory Delight & Aesthetic Theory of Destruction**

According to this theory, images of violence and mayhem such as the color and movement of volcanic lava flow may provide for sensory delight<sup>1</sup>. These sensory

satisfactions are linked to what is strictly visual or oral, irrespective of the plot, the narrative, the characters etc. If the goal of human behavior is the maximization of “sensory pleasure” (Kagan, 1996), then this theory tries explain why individuals are motivated in watching violent imagery.

Allen and Greenberger (1979) advanced a somewhat similar proposal. They proposed an “aesthetic theory of destruction” in order to explain the motivations behind a destructive behavior. More specifically, they suggested that human beings find pleasure and “stimulation in the destruction of an object” (94). Accordingly, we go and watch “demolition derbies, disaster movies, and burning buildings” (94) because it satisfies our need for destruction.

It is exactly this theory that has given rise to strongly opposed opinions about the morals of this perspective. Duncum (2006), for example, argues: “Should we adopt the position of the Marquis de Sade and Nietzsche, and simply find pleasure in and celebrate violence: the joy of cruelty, the thrill of horror . . . all reproduced in the safe playground of art?” (23)

Despite the ethical questions rising from this theory, any attempt to evaluate the relative merits of this explanation for the appeal of violent imagery is severely limited by the lack of critical research. There are mainly two reasons why I believe that this theoretical explanation is weak; (a) its major problem is the fact that it takes for granted that human beings are instinctively thirsty for blood and destruction, but fails to assess whether such instinct exists in the first place; and (b) it assumes that when people gain sensory satisfaction in the view of blood or lava, they fail to take into consideration and integrate other relating information such as context, plot and consequences. This last assumption treats human beings as a species lacking in intelligence of composing and combining data and considers that we are simply driven by our sensorial instincts.

### **A.I.2. Novelty & Habituation**

This theory suggests that appeal to violent imagery can be explained by the fact that images of violence, destruction and aggression are unusual or novel and therefore they command our attention and elicit our curiosity (Carroll, 1990). Sparks and Sparks (2000) trace this attraction to novelty in the evolution of the human mankind.

Dangers often arise from a disruption of the status quo and those who

survive best are those who can efficiently and quickly identify new and unusual events in the environment. (77)

Consequently, this theory tries explains the phenomenon of habituation to the exposition of violent imagery. Persons who initially respond to depictions of violence with great emotional intensity will experience a fading of this intensity. In the extreme, persons with massive exposure to depictions of violence will not respond affectively at all. The consequence of such habituation is that these persons, as they find nothing exciting in the displays in question, will be blasé about the drama that features such displays.

The problem with this theory, according to me, is that it fails to distinguish between alertness and attraction. The fact that human beings might be more alert in situations that are novel to them does not mean that they are attracted by them or that they constantly seek in being in such situations. Furthermore, a theory that explains our alertness to a life-threatening situation is too specific to be generic and to explain all moments in our lives that we are attentive. Or differently said, being attentive does not necessarily mean that we are alert. Moreover, if habituation to violent action films diminishes the pleasure we gain from them, why then some people continue going to movies to watch action films ?

### **A.I.3. Sensation Seeking**

On the other hand, we can consider that habituation does not only mean the fading of intensity but also the desire to repeat the experience in the chase of sensation. Zuckerman (1994) defined sensation seeking as a trait characterized by the chase for “varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience” (148). That means that violent movies may be “enjoyed by some viewers because of their intrinsic capabilities to satisfy the need for arousing stimulation” (Sparks & Sparks, 2000, 77) .

For Zuckerman(1996), sensation seeking is related to an individual’s optimal level of arousal, with high sensation seekers feeling better at higher levels of stimulation and arousal. From this perspective Zuckerman assumed that high sensation seekers can also enjoy stimuli that elicit negative emotions, such as fear, because the intensity of these emotions helps them reach their optimal level of arousal, and because these people interpret the experience of these emotions positively, whereas low sensation

seekers regard them as unpleasant. If Zuckerman's assumption about the enjoyment of negative emotions (such as distress and fear) in view of violence in action films holds true, it certainly cannot be applied to the majority of the audience members of action films. I do not necessarily think that this theory is not applicable in some cases, but I have a difficulty in believing that I and a big part of the rest of the audience that enjoys action films have masochistic drives and that we seek for those negative emotions that violence on screen produces in order to be aroused.

## **A.II. Violence confounded with other variables**

Until now, we have examined reasons why violent entertainment can be inherently appealing. There are, however, other features and elements that happen simultaneously with violence in films, that increase violence's appeal. "It is not the violence per se that appears to be the prime attraction but other attributes of violent fare" (Duncum, 2006, 23). Sparks and Sparks (2000) share their experience:

Both of us have occasionally sat through a movie that we wanted to see because of the actors, storyline, or artistic acclaim, but we chose to avert our gaze from the screen during particularly horrific or violent moments. (81)

For violence to be attractive, there have to be clues of its unreality, such as music and sound effects, choreography, exaggeration or distortion of reality, sexually explicit imagery and comedy, coloration, editing, etc. When violence is perceived as real, then it is threatening and therefore distressing and not pleasurable. Let's take the example of *Happy Tree Friend*, an online, weekly, adult, short cartoon series shown on YouTube: Obviously as a cartoon, Happy Tree Friends can not be mixed with reality. However, that only does not explain its popularity. An important part of the creative process is the creation of sounds effects that can exaggerate the happiness in the beginning and the splatter slaughtering in the end. Some YouTube users have changed the soundtrack of the cartoons with Heavy Metal or other Hardcore Rock. The comments underneath these modified YouTube videos report a massive disgust and disapproval of the violence on screen, whereas similar comments on the original versions were very limited.

Fantasy, perceived as the ultimate distortion of reality, is the most attractive feature of entertainment media. As Goldstein (1998) argues "violent entertainment may be enjoyed repeatedly because it lends itself to imaginative experiences and to a temporary loss of self consciousness" (219).

Furthermore, the environment and the architectural frame, where the performance, film or video game takes place, play a seminal role in the attraction of the audience. The protective frame of the black box of the cinema and the 4<sup>th</sup> wall of the theatron, the familiar and safe environment of the living room that ends where the glass of the TV screen begins, allows the spectator to detach from the event, to feel that the danger is imaginary, and that it set in another time- past or future (Duncum, 2006). The second violent scene in the *Clockwork Orange* happens in an old theater where a gang of youngsters is ready to rape a girl. Apart from Beethoven's joyous Symphony that accompanies the scene, Kubrik has deliberately chosen for a camera angle where the curtains of the theatre are in the frame. Kubrik manages thus to confuse the audience with the reality and unreality of the scene (or at least give some comment on the reality or unreality of the proscenium), and ultimately allow the spectator to sit comfortably back in their armchair whilst extreme physical violence takes place in the theatrical context.

Sparks and Sparks (2000) go further in this line of thought wondering whether violent films, such as *Kill Bill*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Die Hard* etc., have really become popular because of their appraised scenes of physical conflict. "If the scenes containing explicit gore, brutality, bodily injury and so on, were shortened or eliminated altogether" (81), they believe, the films would still be attractive if not more attractive to watch.

According to this theory, then, we should consider each film separately trying to discover what the constituent elements of attraction might be. I personally find this theory more reasonable because it does not try to generalize a specific perspective in all cases, it takes the focus away from the dubious assumption that violence is a site of interest and puts it back in other parameters that are have been proven as appealing.

### **A.III. The Appeal of Post- Viewing Gratifications**

In this category of reasons of the attractions of violent entertainment, I have tried to include theories that support post- viewing gratifications where the audience reports overall viewing enjoyment and a desire for future encounters of the same type of material. The common ground of these theories is the fact that enjoyment comes from viewing the film and not from the film per se. Theories included are the dispositional

alignment, violation of social norms, the catharsis doctrine, desensitization and “flooding”, social constrictions on age and gender, excitation transfer, evolutionary conceptions, and protective vigilancy and curiosity.

### **A.III.1. Dispositional Alignment**

The biggest majority of violent entertainment is anchored by some sort of a narrative that involves transgression followed by retribution. These narratives allow the exercise of moral judgment. When watching, we are constantly monitoring the behavior of characters to judge their actions as right or wrong against our own moral standards. “The outcome of this scrutiny cultivates character-related dispositions that promote morality-based viewer expectations” (Tamborini, 2003, 427). Dispositional Alignment towards the different characters is then three folded:

- (1) A favorable, positive disposition develops for characters whose actions are deemed good and right. Eventually they are regarded and treated as friends.
- (2) An unfavorable, negative disposition develops for characters whose actions are deemed evil and wrong. Eventually they are regarded and treated as enemies.
- (3) A neutral, indifferent disposition is maintained for characters whose actions are deemed (a) neither good or right nor evil or wrong or (b) equally good or right and evil or wrong. (Zillmann, 1998, 201)

Character development is thus very important for spectators to align with one or another side and predicts how they enjoy the performance or film. And it is exactly for this reason that explains the popularity of this theory in marketing strategies in order to predict the choices of the consumers.

According to dispositional alignment theory, the confirmation of expectations brings great pleasure, whereas their disconfirmation causes distress. The villain character is expected with great anticipation to be severely punished for his actions. When this happens, theory suggests that we are satisfied and when it is delayed or never happens we are distressed or disappointed.

Satisfaction then comes from seeing our judgments being materialized. This pleasure in judging derives, according to Zillmann (1998) from our desire to live in a safe world. When we believe that safety is in peril we accept violence as a means for securing public wellbeing. When we are negatively disposed against a character we are free to enjoy punitive violence. As we have thoroughly condemned a villain for raping and maiming, for instance, we are free to hate such a person, can joyously anticipate his execution, and openly negatively disposed against a character it. As a

result of that, Zillmann (1998) explains that

because those who help to restore social harmony tend to be deemed purveyors of justice, their usually excessively violent action, as it apparently serves the 'common good', can be morally sanctioned. The means are justified by the ends, even when the brutality of these means obtrusively exceeds the brutality of the actions to be punished. In the moral mediation of reactions to displays of violence there is little deliberate pondering of ethical principles. Perpetrators rarely have recourse to mitigation and easily lose their right to live. (203-204)

However, I believe that for the spectator to enjoy this poetic, retaliatory justice, the degree of appropriateness and fairness of the punishment is pivotal. Since, I don not believe that when watching a film there is an established and common rule for all of what fair and appropriate is, the final judge remains the individual spectator, but in any case one can agree that any gruesome retributive violence needs to be preceded by an equally or more gruesome, transgressive violence.

For the Dispositional Alignment theory then to be applicable it needs at least a narrative of transgression and retribution. And this is exactly where the problem rises because the theory is applicable to a very restricted style of films. More precisely, it cannot explain cases (a) where "the menace [is] vanished but not vanquished, while the hero is left weak and frightened instead of triumphant" (Tamborini, 2003, 428); (like *Halloween*, *Friday 13<sup>th</sup>*, *The Blair Witch Project*, etc) (b) where the narrative is inexistent or at least when narrative does not help in assigning positive and negative affect dispositions; and (c) where people take the part of the bad characters.

### **A.III.2. Violating Social Norms & Aggressiveness**

It cannot be neglected that often spectators bear positive affective disposition with regard to the villain characters of a narrative. As McCauley (1998) has correctly noted, often the violation of norms "holds a fascination for people to the extent that they rarely see these violations in everyday experience" (149).

A possible explanation is that if the societal system of norms is perceived as oppressive then it makes perfect sense for people to enjoy transgression. Norm violation then is perceived as a moment of liberation and exhilaration.

It has been argued, for example, that in the *Clockwork Orange* by Stanley Kubrik viewers are encouraged to form positive dispositions with the main character who makes a habit of violating social norms in the first part of the film because in the second part they discover the oppressiveness and absurdity of the system. Such a

theory, however, could only be used to explain the attraction to the scenes of murdering, raping, hitting and kicking of the first part, only at the aftermath of watching the whole of the film. It cannot explain why some people might have enjoyed the first part, since they could not know what the second part was all about.

In order to surpass this obstacle, Fenigstein and Heyduk (1985) contended that only aggressive individuals are attracted to villain characters. For them, individuals who are preoccupied with aggressive thoughts and fantasies are more interested in viewing perpetrators of justice. They believed that these aggressive individuals might like violent content because it enables them to justify their own behavior and feel less guilty about their actions.

If that is correct, then my criticism is that this theory renders children either anarchic or aggressive for sympathizing with the Coyote in the famous cartoon series *Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner* by Loonie Tunes and Merry Melodies. But as Tatar (1998) argues “there is no hard evidence for the view that children have an innate tendency to act aggressively [...]” (71).

### **A.III.3. Catharsis Doctrine**

Feschbach (1971) was one of the first theoreticians that tried to explain the psychology of the spectator of violent entertainment. He advanced the notion of symbolic catharsis, inspired by Aristotle’s theory of Catharsis where a tragedy could get the audience to experience fear and pity, which would thus be consumed (purged, eliminated). Similarly, Feschbach’s doctrine suggests that exposure to filmed violence has potentially therapeutic properties for individuals with anger and aggressive tendencies. By watching images of violence that other people enact, it is held, presumably, that individuals would leave the entertainment experience with their pent-up fears or phobias and aggressive tendencies purged or cleansed (Rocket, 19988). Liebert and Sprafkin(1988) provide a graphic example

If the individual is rewarded often enough for fantasy aggression (he pushes his boss off a bridge in thought and feels better afterwards), he gets into the habit of using fantasy aggression to “cathart” (drain off) his aggressive feelings (76).

Although, hopeful about the potentials of violent films, the application of the concept of catharsis, the question is whether exposure to violent imagery has the power to provide for such relief. A number of studies revealed that when angry individuals were exposed to media violence, their aggressive tendencies increased, in direct



opposition to the theory's major prediction (Sparks & Sparks, 2000). As Zillmann (1998) very clearly maintained:

The evidence concerning cathartic effects of exposure to expositions of violence, fictional as well non-fictional, is entirely non-supportive. Consumption of violent material has not been found to provide relief from ill emotions and motivations. If anything, these states are intensified and the likelihood of antisocial behavior is facilitated. With regard to fear of violent victimization specifically, fictional and nonfictional violence are likely to exacerbate this fear. (186)

#### **A.III.4. Desensitization and “Flooding” in the Context of Horror**

As explained above, if the principle of catharsis does not apply in the case of aggressive and antisocial spectators, I believe that there is still some space for a catharsis-type process in the context of horrific or frightening media. The theory suggests watching frightening films in order to diminish our fears. Popular beliefs maintain that repeated exposure and habituation to the source and image of our fears can reduce the affective impact of the fear, and so the sensation fades out. Indeed, we have already proven above about the consequences of habituation.

Indeed, this possibility of violent imagery has been vastly used in fairy tales for children's education. Raising our children in a culture and pedagogy of fear does not necessarily mean that it is the optimal method for maintaining our goals. As Alan Richardson (1994) has pointed out, “an affectionate relationship between parent and child” can be an “even more effective and durable form of discipline” than coercion, for it facilitates the internalization of habits and values (48).

#### **A.III.5. Excitation Transfer**

Another explanation of people's enjoyment of violent imagery relies on the shift of negative emotions to euphoria that follows a satisfying resolution to a threat. According to Zillmann (1998) individuals cannot or do not perceive differences in the physiological arousal produced by different sources. Consequently, arousal from suspenseful scenes carries over and intensifies the viewer's positive response to a satisfying resolution, thus producing a rewarding, enjoyable emotional experience. Conversely, if the resolution is unhappy and produce sadness or disappointment, the residual arousal produced by suspense should intensify the viewer's dysphoria.

There can be little doubt that righteous violence, however brutal but justified by the ends, will prompt gloriously intense euphoric reactions the more it is preceded by patently unjust and similarly brutal violence. In other

words, displays of monstrous gratuitous slaughter and distress they evoke are necessary prelude to the portrayal of righteous maiming and killing that is to spark euphoric reactions. Without such prelude, violence cannot be righteous and, hence, is rendered unenjoyable- at least for nonsadists, who should constitute the vast majority of the drama-consuming public. (Zillmann, 1998, 208)

Tamborini (2003), in fact, argues that it is for this reason that today's violent and horror movies aim at maximizing excitatory capacities with techniques such as "Dark rooms, sharp objects, poison, pits, and killers" and "when you add shrieking sounds, eerie music, and disquieting visual effects, elevated levels of arousal are inescapable"(430).

However, I believe that Zillmann's model of suspense cannot easily account for enjoyment of scary programs that (a) do not end happily, such as *X-files* and *Hannibal* where the threat of extraterrestrial life and governmental pressure still remains; or (b) where sympathetic characters undergo severe trauma and death, such as in the *Lord of the Rings II*.

#### **A.III.6. Rites of Passage and Gender-Socialization Theory of affect**

Zillmann and Weaver (1996) proposed another theory to explain the appeal of violent entertainment. According to them, theatrical and cinematic violence and horror function as a replacement in contemporary culture for ancient tribal initiation rites of adolescents that served to bestow the status of adult or man to boys.

Zillmann (1998) explains the differences and similarities between the formal and contemporary societies. He explicates that formerly boys were subjected to physical torment or asked to perform life-threatening tasks. In case they showed their fear, they were ridiculed and punished for crying and their families were shamed into seclusion. With the time passing, surrogate conventions and institutions emerged to regulate the expression of fearlessness. Tatar (1998) argues that one of the new practices is horror tales that supposedly prepare the child to adulthood and allows control to chaperons. Horror movies and other violent staged performances are the latest manifestation of terrifying tale-telling. As Campos and Barrett (1984) have argued the developing of coping skills "can help children transform negative emotions into pleasurable feelings of efficacy" (251).

Furthermore, Zillmann and Weaver (1996) maintain that there are very few circumstances nowadays where youth can develop and demonstrate mastery of

gender-appropriate emotional behaviors. They suggested that horror films provide such a context for adolescents, in which boys can

prove to their peers, and ultimately to themselves, that they are unperturbed, calm, and collected in the face of terror; and girls must similarly demonstrate their sensitivity by being appropriately disturbed, dismayed, and disgusted (83)

Accordingly, watching violent and horrific imagery provides an opportunity for males to demonstrate their mastery over the various images and for females to demonstrate their relative helplessness and high levels of fear. To the extent that males and females are able to perform their appropriate roles in the context of frightening entertainment, the overall experience is pleasant. This pleasure in achieving the appropriate social displays is misconstrued as enjoyment of frightening films. Notice that this account of pleasure in the wake of media threats applies mainly to adolescents rather than other population groups because adolescents are the most conscious of assuming their appropriate societal roles (Sparks & Sparks, 2000).

Furthermore it is interesting to notice that going to horrific entertainment performances or films is a social event, we rarely go alone. Zillmann (1998) explains that

The fact, that male adolescents are known to invest considerable efforts into getting female adolescents to accompany them to terrifying movies would seem to suggest that they have a notion that their 'scared' companions might snuggle up to them during the scary scenes. (198)

Gender-socialization-theory of affect shows that young men enjoy watching horror films more when viewing with frightened females and young women enjoy when they watch with young men displaying mastery. That means that performance of gender-appropriate behavior increases attraction to opposite-gender companions (Tamborini, 2003). Fearlessness for men has double effect; elevate the social status in terms of respect in the homosocial context and increase attractiveness in the heterosocial context. Performance (whether felt or intended) of squeamishness, distress and helplessness for girls and women, Zillmann (1998) argues, makes them look more attractive and “romantically desirable” than if they were self-confident and independent.

Accordingly, “reward comes from performing gender-appropriate behaviors” and not from “pleasure derived from attributes of film content” (Tamborini, 2003, 430).

## A. IV. Conclusions

The train of discussion in this chapter leads to the conclusion that if action films featuring violence are attracting, then explanations should be sought not in the inherent qualities of violence *per se*, but on the pleasure derived from other variables happening simultaneously and usually confounded with violence and also from post-viewing gratifications. Theories supporting the appeal of action films because of the inherent qualities of violence as beautiful, novel and sensational are indefensible and unsubstantiated. Therefore, I do not believe that it is violence that attracts us to the cinemas.

The theory advancing the notion that parameters confounded easily with violence (but not violence *per se*) are the reason for the appeal of action films featuring violent imagery, I have come to the conclusion that there are no specific variables that apply in all films and in all spectators, but a case-by-case examination is needed. Examples of these variables are: humor, unreality, fantasy etc but their degree of influence differs in each film.

The degree of applicability of the theories supporting pleasure of action films derived from post-viewing gratifications depends on the psychology of the individual spectator and therefore it is not appropriate to make generalizations about the total of the audience.

Therefore, I find it more appropriate to proceed with this research on the appeal of violence in action films by analyzing a specific violent action film that I, personally, find interesting and by trying to identify those constituent elements that dictate possibly my attraction to it.

## Chapter B.

### Kill Bill Vol. 1 – A Case Study

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For the purpose of this research, I would like to dedicate the following Chapter in analyzing *Kill Bill Vol. 1* by Quentin Tarantino as a case study. I chose for this specific action film, because I personally find it attracting and provided my interest in it I would like to assess the applicability of the theories explaining the appeal of violence.

The film was directed in 2003-2004 by Quentin Tarantino and was presented as film in two parts (each part every year). The plot unfolds around a woman called “The Bride” and played by Uma Thurman. “The Bride” was a member of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad, lead by her lover Bill/ David Carradine. Upon realizing she was pregnant with Bill's child, “The Bride” decided to escape her life as a killer. She fled to Texas, met a young man, and on the day of their wedding was gunned down by an angry and jealous Bill (with the assistance of the Deadly Viper Assassination Squad). Four years later, “The Bride” wakes from a coma, and discovers her baby is gone. She, then, decides to seek revenge upon the five people who destroyed her life and killed her baby. The saga of *Kill Bill Volume I* begins. The story unravels in both Volume 1 and 2 and therefore certain elements (such as the reason why Bill tried to kill “The Bride” etc) are only learned on Volume 2.

The film has received a plethora of both positive and negative critics who praised Tarantino’s aestheticization of extreme violence<sup>1</sup>. Here are three examples what film reviewers wrote about the film:

the most brilliant aesthetic achievements in recent film, elegantly blurring the distinction between beauty and violence (Morales, 2003)

Quentin Tarantino's love of movies is exceeded only by his love of violence. "Kill Bill: Vol. 1" is an indulgent, outlandish, and thoroughly entertaining ballet of blood. (Snider, n.a.)

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<sup>1</sup> For an almost exhaustive database of reviews on Kill Bill, check the website : [http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/kill\\_bill\\_vol\\_1/](http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/kill_bill_vol_1/)

And since his love of brutal violence and gore generally offend and even frighten me, I'm alarmed to find myself saying that *Kill Bill: Volume 1* is a psychotically enjoyable murderous massacre of epic proportions. (Rock-Richardson, 2003)

Some of the elements that made for me the violent scenes in *Kill Bill Vol. 1* be interesting to watch or at least to study are: (I) The gratifications of the “cultural capital”; (II) the Narrative; (III) The sexual connotations and the empowerment of women’s role; (IV) Drawing from and pointing to the unreal: Anime and Exaggeration; (V) The mythical and phallic sword; and (VII) Humor as a camouflage.

### **B.I. The Gratifications of the “Cultural Capital”**

*Kill Bill*, like all Tarantino movies, is homage to other films and pop culture, both obscure and obvious. Aaron (2004), a martial arts choreographer, writes even that *Kill Bill* “is strikingly post-modern in the sense that it deliberately plays with the audience’s knowledge of its source material”. Holm (2005) wrote a book called *Kill Bill: An Unofficial Casebook* where he provides for a comprehensive analysis of *Kill Bill*’s references<sup>2</sup>. Some of them are the following:

- ✓ The opening shot when “The Bride”/ Uma Thurman is lying down on the floor and shot in the head by Bill/ David Carradine is a reference to a similar scene in *The Good The Bad and The Ugly* (1966) by Sergio Leone in which Tuco/ Eli Wallach points a gun at Blondie/ Clint Eastwood, who is near-death from dehydration and being out in the sun for hours and hours;
- ✓ O-Ren Ishii/ Lucy Liu is a character largely inspired by the Japanese film *Lady Snowblood* (1973) by Toshiya Fujita. Furthermore, scenographically speaking, both films have a duel in the snow in a garden, and the blood leaves red traces on the shiny white snow;
- ✓ Chiyaki Kuriyama who plays Gogo Yubari (the psychic girl dressed in school uniform) featured also in *Battle Royale* (2000) by Kinji Fukasaku. The film tells the story of some classmates who were taken in a deserted island and were obliged to kill each other in order to survive;

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<sup>2</sup> Other similar books: Page, E. (2005). *Quintessential Tarantino: The films of Quentin Tarantino*. Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd.; and Greene, R. (2007). *Quentin Tarantino and Philosophy (Popular culture and Philosophy)*. Open Court.

- ✓ Hatori Hanzo is played by Sonny Chiba—who played several incarnations of that same character in the 1970s series *Shadow Warriors / Kage No Gundan* and also in the famous film *Samurai Reincarnation* (1981) by Kinji Fuasaku;
- ✓ The martial arts advisor of *Kill Bill* is Yuen Wo Ping who also choreographed *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) by Ang Lee. Yuen Wo Ping’s choreographic signature is the “flying” fighting that is done on wires;
- ✓ The House of Blue Leaves shadow fight (with a blue cyclorama) looks similar to the red cyclorama opening sequence in *Samurai Fiction* (1998) by Nakano Hiriyoyuki;
- ✓ “The Bride”/ Uma Thurman’s yellow track-suit is a direct homage to the one worn by Billy Lo/Bruce Lee in *Game of Death* (1978) by Robert Clouse;
- ✓ The tune whistled by Elle Driver/Daryl Hannah in the corridor of the hospital is the same that Martin Durnley/ Hywel Bennett whistles in the film *Twisted Nerve* (1968) by Roy Boulting;
- ✓ *Black Sunday* (1977) by John Frankenheimer includes a sequence where Dahlia Iyad/ Marthe Keller disguises herself as a nurse to kill Maj. David Kabakov with a poisoned syringe, exactly like the sequence with Elle Driver/Daryl Hannah;
- ✓ The scene where “The Bride”/ Uma Thurman tries to make her legs recover from muscle atrophy comes from the episode ‘Breakdown’ of TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*;
- ✓ The anime is done by Production IG who also did the anime of *Kite* (1998) featuring again a little girl orphan who becomes a killer;
- ✓ Many images are referring to films that Tarantino has directed himself in the past such as *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994); and many more

The reason for Tarantino’s allegiance to violent imagery from pop culture can be explained in Baudrillardian terms. In his book *The Consumer Society* (1998), Baudrillard argued that the Marxist emphasis on the primary role of economic factors and production in social development was incapable of adequately explaining both pre-capitalist societies and modern capitalism. In place of the production process and the analysis of the commodity that stood at the centre of Marx’s analysis of

capitalism, Baudrillard elevates the role of consumption and the consumer in modern society. Accordingly, Baudrillard argues that the modern system of classes is not defined in production terms but in consumption ones. For Baudrillard (1998), consumption is “a process of signification and communication”, “a process of classification and social differentiation”, and by participating in it we are able either to “affiliate” to our own group or to mark ourselves off from it “by reference to a group of higher status”. (61) For example, the decision to buy a Mercedes instead of a Fiat is more linked to the idea of social status than meeting basic needs of transportation and therefore production. Bourdieu (1984) with his theory on “cultural capital” explains that tastes in food, culture and presentation are indicators of class because trends in their consumption seemingly correlate with an individual’s fit in society. That means that the same holds true for those people who want to be identified within the sophisticated class of film connoisseurs and in our case action film connoisseurs. To become and to remain a member of the class of action film connoisseurs, one has to constantly consume all the relating products. These products include not only action films but also comic books, anime, soundtracks, video games, posters, books etc. Possession of this material is not enough. Knowledge of their content is the threshold of inclusion into this cultural class. The ignorant is secluded. Successful demonstration of this expertise is essential for the inclusion of the person in the class that results in gratification of the efforts and change of status.

In the case of *Kill Bill*, much has been written on the references that the film uses and almost every film review refers to Tarantino’s attraction to and influence by Asian low-budget action films. Numerous connoisseurs’ websites and discussion have been created online to unravel their expertise in these references making long list of films from which they believe Tarantino has borrowed, been influenced or at least bear a similarity with his film. One of these websites explains therefore the pleasure for them when watching *Kill Bill*.

Kill Bill has often been described as a movie-geek's movie. A movie for people who know all the genres and the films that are referenced to in Kill Bill. A movie for people who'll shout out in excitement "Ah, that's from Leone, did you see that?" when they see it. Of course Kill Bill is entertaining for everybody. But you get the movie-encyclopedic kick out of it if you know what's behind Kill Bill. (Haselbeck & Roberts, n.d.)

Whether Haselbeck and Roberts’ statement over the appeal of the film to everybody holds true, what can be said is that pleasure for a certain amount of people derives



from the recognition of the iconographic and thematic references that run throughout the whole film. And that pleasure then is linked to the gratifications of inclusion in a class and the assignment of a desired status within the society. By utilizing the theory of “Cultural Capital” of Bourdieu and bringing analogies of the violent film industry and clientele, I have tried to identify another possible explanation for the appeal of violent films to certain people. This explanation of the “cultural capital” gratifications is linked by its nature with issues of socialization and therefore I include it in the third category of our theories: the appeal of post-viewing gratifications. A major problem of this theoretical explanation is not so much that it addresses a minority of the audience but the fact that these people, identified here as connoisseurs or fans of action films, would enjoy the violence whether Tarantino included references to other films or not. Indeed, one who cannot bear watching the film because of its violence, would never discover the referential value of the film. The theory can, however, on a theoretical level, at least, explain the cases where people become fans of this style and begin consumption of similar products. Therefore, I move to say that this theory explains one *additional* reason why people who enjoy watching violence can enjoy it even more and/or the progression of spectators into fans.

## **B.II. Narrative**

Some of the theories explaining the appeal of violence (Chapter A.III.1., A.III.2. A.III.3.) advance the idea that many people’s interest in violence has less to do with the violence per se than with the potential power of the narrative. As Anderson (2004) argues “violent imagery—especially that connected to Asian martial arts—functions as one of the primary cinematic languages for character description and plot progression in modern action films.” It is, thus, important to discover how narrative is constructed through violence and how this narrative serves.

### **B.II.1. The pleasure of justice**

In the opening scene, we watch a blood covered bride being shot in the head. One second before the gunshot, “The Bride” informs her assassin, Bill that he is the father of her baby. That already establishes a close relationship between “The Bride” and Bill. More importantly however it serves later to clarify why “The Bride” wants to take revenge on Bill for having killed her baby, husband and friends. It is her maternal instincts and sorrow that serve as a cry for revenge and bring justification to her rage.

Another moment of retribution of justice is when during the second chapter of the film, “The Bride” exercises a great amount of violence on one of her nurses, Buck/ Michael Bowen, in the hospital by repeatedly smashing the door on his head leaning on the doorframe. The reason for this violent act comes when we become aware that Buck was taking advantage of her comatose state to use her body for his sexual satisfactions and raped her during the four years of her hospitalization. Anderson (2004) argues that this information of sexual harassment against an impuissant “gives the viewers permission to enjoy the visceral thrill of watching a rapist get his head crushed”. “The Bride”’s visceral violence is righteous and brings justice to the despicable wrong inflicted to by corrupted people holding positions of power.

### **B.II.2. The noble fighter with maternal qualities**

The next moment of fight happens at the quiet house of Vernita Green/ Vivica Fox. Because of “The Bride’s” flashback when they meet in the doorstep we learn that Vernita Green had assisted Bill in the assassination of “The Bride’s” beloved people the day of her wedding. “The Bride” has come for revenge and that leads to prolonged martial arts fight. For their ability to avoid each other’s hits and their inventiveness in using everyday objects (fire iron, frying pan, kitchen knife, bookshelf etc) to fight, we understand that they are both experienced and good fighters. The fight pauses when Vernita’s daughter, Nikkia Bell/ Ambrosia Kelley, enters the house. The two fighters quickly hide their knives and try to convince the little girl that “The Bride” is just “an old friend of mommy”. The situation is meant to be funny but it also helps to convey two important traits of “The Bride’s” character. Although “The Bride” is trained as an assassin and is full of rage for revenge (a) she “has maternal qualities that extend even to the child of her enemy” (Anderson, 2004), and (b) she has the power and ability to master her emotions in her personal quest for revenge. This latter comes in contrast later in the film with other characters that fail to control their violent emotions. Furthermore, “The Bride” differs from the other members of the Deadly Vipers because she has decided to kill not for money or pleasure but for a higher reason: revenge for the loss of her child, husband and friends. It is for this reason that “The Bride” only kills people who obstruct her journey for attribution justice whereas her opponents are merciless (for example Gogo Yubari/ Chiyaki Kuriyama kills a guy at the bar just because he was flirting with her). “In the shorthand of martial arts films, this fairness marks “The Bride” as a deliberately honorable person, since a “bad”

character would have tried to kill the child as well” (Anderson, 2004). And the same applies in the case of the last remaining member of the Crazy 88 clan who is very young and too afraid to fight. Instead of killing him too, “The Bride” decides to spank him for his impishness.

This reading of the violent imagery in *Kill Bill* that aims towards a discovery of a narrative that justifies the actions of “The Bride” and renders her an admirable character, can be used to find application in the theory about dispositional alignment: by identifying her as a good character we take her side and want to see the best for her. However, the problem with the idea of retribution of justice is the fact that the wrong inflicted to “The Bride” is incomparably smaller to the massacre she causes for her revenge. If the Deadly Vipers killed nine innocent people and managed to put “The Bride” in a four-year coma, “The Bride” kills approximately ninety two people in the first volume of the film alone<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, putting the incident of the hospital rape aside, the “Bride’s” reason for revenge is something we slowly learn during the whole film and from the beginning; in fact we will only learn the whole story in *Kill Bill Vol.2*. In that sense, I believe empathetic alignment towards “The Bride” happens more because of her being the main character of the film than because of the narrative pointing to the correction and punishment of injustice. What I mean is that the possible lacunae and infirmities in the script to support “The Bride’s” character, are covered up by the characterization of the film as a conventional action film where the main actor is the good character.

Furthermore, the theory of excitation transfer, although very much linked to the concept of narrative and retribution of justice, is not applicable in *Kill Bill Vol. 1*. The reason why I state that is because in the film (a) there is either no twist in the script where violence in the beginning is depicted unjust and in the end as righteous or (b) these twists are too small, scattered in the whole movie and they refer to the same event that we never really understand until we see the second volume. In any case, however, the level of ferociousness and suspense of the aggressive and unjust violence (if that indeed exists in this film) was not enough in my case to cause in me a dysphoric emotional reaction (such as fear or distress) that could consequently turn into euphoria in the end of the film.

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<sup>3</sup> Rough estimation includes: Vernita Green (member of the Deadly Vipers), Buck (the nurse), her unsuccessful rapist, 87 members of the Crazy 88 (one is spared his life for being coward), GogoYubari (O-Ren Ishii’s guard) and O-Ren Ishii (member of the Deadly Vipers),

### **B.III. The sexual connotations and the empowerment of women's role**

A very important characteristic of *Kill Bill* is that all central fights in the film are made between women. In fact the only main character that is male is Bill whose face we do not even see in the first volume. On the one hand one can argue that the film is a part of the contemporary trend that wants action heroes to be sexy females, such as *Tomb Raider* (2001), *Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* (2003), *Resident Evil* (2002). Such a consideration is partially wrong however because women have always held a prominent place in Chinese action films<sup>4</sup>. Irrespectively whether *Kill Bill* follows the trend or serves as a reference to Chinese martial arts films, is equally important to see how female is represented and how this representation is perceived by the audience both female and male.

“The Bride” is a beautiful, blond woman dressed in tight yellow uniform and tough enough to kill everyone. Vernita Green is a black housewife dressed in black tight pants and athletic top. She has resigned from the tough world of assassins although that was her individual choice and she seems ready to go back to it when needed. Elle Driver and Gogo Yubari are perhaps the most explicitly sexually dressed in a nurse and schoolgirl uniform. And O-Ren Ishii in the cartoon she wears a red latex unitard and later in the film a traditional kimono that adds to her character the mysterious and exotic demure look of the unexpected woman. All of them appear tough and with extremely violent- almost sociopath- tendencies. This description fits precisely Burke's (2005) description of the contemporary female action heroes:

Pleasure may also be derived from the depiction of fit (youthful) bodies - both as the source of action, and as an erotic appeal. While men, good and bad, still dominate the action, women have served as the primary sources of an erotic appeal. Indeed, action heroines are often presented paradoxically, being both tougher and stronger than most men, while remaining slender, feminine, and alluring to them. In other words, their actions must be coded masculine, while their appearances may be even hyper-feminine - with slender arms, legs, and waists, ample breasts, and long hair. (12)

Pleasure in this case derives from the pornographic touch of the film, which is a variable outside violence (check paragraph IV). If pleasure comes for the heterosexual male because of the overtly sexual depiction of the female, pleasure comes for female by watching women performing tasks previously attributed to men. Whenever a

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<sup>4</sup> In fact the first martial arts film star, male or female, is Chin Tsi-ang who in 1925 made her first film (dressed as a man). Yu So Chaw is perhaps the best known female arts actress of the 50's and 60's. She starred in over 170 martial arts

female character succeeds in a violent confrontation, she also succeeds in marking herself as powerful. Empowering the female position can be argued to be a post-feminist perspective. “From this perspective, action heroines could have a ‘destabilising’ influence, challenging essentializing notions of female meekness and vulnerability” (Burke, 2005, 12)<sup>5</sup>.

Burke’s theory in fact lends itself from the theory of dispositional alignment. The spectator –and mainly the female one- identifies herself with the main character and therefore gets pleasure by watching this empowerment of the female gender. In that sense, the theory of identification and dispositional alignment does find application in *Kill Bill*.

#### **B.IV. Drawing from and pointing to the unreal: Anime and Exaggeration**

Tarantino designed *Kill Bill* to look like homage to other films including Japanese anime. In fact, “Chapter 3: The Origin of O-Ren” in its entirety is an anime of extreme violent imagery. Through this anime and with a voice over we learn about O-Ren’s past and her drive to kill. In the first frames we see O-Ren’s mother kept hostage by some mafia men, holding a knife on her throat. Her father defends himself against some armed men when one of them stabs him with a Hatori Hanzo on his back. When his killer removes the sword from his back, a blood spring bursts in the whole room dropping blood drops on the face of O-Ren who is hiding under the bed. O-Ren watches from a close up her father’s facial expression when he gets fatally stabbed for the second time while lying on the floor. After that, the Boss of the clan, Matsumoto Yakuza, throws her mother on the bed. Through a slow puddle of blood we understand that her mother has been speared with the sword. The puddle slowly spreads to cover the whole frame, then dribbles down to O-Ren’s like rain. Some years later, O-Ren takes revenge from her parents’ murderer by driving a sword into his chest and creating a veritable blood fountain. There is so much blood that the full screen becomes red for a second.

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<sup>5</sup> Personally on that point I disagree because what the film does is to empower the female position by attributing to it male characteristics. In that sense, I do not believe that the film advances the equality of the two genders but on the contrary underlines once more the supremacy of the male stereotypical characteristics.

As Christian McCrea(2008) explains, anime have a long tradition with bloodthirsty violence showing bodies erupting, exploding and contorting. For McCrea this exaggeration of the effects of violence has to do with the fact that drawing and making cartoons and anime allow much easier to delve into the impossible than the live action of cinema. Because of this overt exaggeration the result is to make violence unrealistic, almost fake. “The experience of watching bones splinter to thrash metal refuses psychology's primacy and transforms it into a kind of pure ornament.”

(9) Let me go a bit further before I address this point.

Tarantino, apart from using an anime in his movie, he borrows the aesthetic technology from anime in order to construct *Kill Bill's* iconographical aesthetic of blood. For example, when O-Ren Ishii decapitates Boss Tanaka for having insulted her Chinese heritage, a “garden sprinkler” style blood fountain explodes from his decapitated neck. And the same happens when “The Bride” amputates Louise’s arm. Likewise, the whole dance floor and pool in the Blue Leaves turns slowly into red after she butchers the Crazy 88. The argument that was used by McCrea before diminishing the impact of violence in anime can also be applied in the case of *Kill Bill* and other grind house movies that end up with extreme bloody spattering images.

This argument is at least scary to agree with, because it takes for granted that we know for sure how people are supposed to bleed when they are amputated or decapitated. If we don’t have an established idea of how bodies bleed in such cases, any image can be perceived as realistic. However, I do not want to totally dismiss the argument because, indeed, there is an established common understanding of how people die<sup>6</sup>.

What is necessary is to distinguish between the act of violence and the effects of violence. Stabbing someone with a Hatori Hanzo is a violent act, watching a fountain of blood is the effect of that violent act. Exaggeration (perceived here as “fakeness”) of the violent effect is only visible when the act of violence is not exaggerated. If both cause and effect are extreme, then the image will undoubtedly look realistic. For example, throwing a candy bar to someone’s face can be a violent act although not of a mortal level. If the effect of this act is to see a veritable fountain of blood going in all directions and with such a force that pushes all other participants in the scene far

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<sup>6</sup> And that is of course mainly constructed by cinema and TV.

away, then that effect is overtly exaggerated. And only in this case, some people could read its comical spirit of black humor.

The unrealistic of the violence in anime comes from the very fact that anime are drawings, creations of an artist. We know for sure, that the violence in them has never happened, unless the cartoonist informs us that what we see was a real event that he is trying to depict. Even so, we are not staring at the real event but only to an artistic composition. Disgust, fear or distress comes only when we fail to detach the cartoon from reality, when we consider that these things can happen or indeed have happened in reality. Anime play in a fantasy world and that is their main argument for depicting violence. In this line, the same should also hold true for the cinema. Since the movies are artistic compositions and no one really gets hurt in the Hollywood shootings, one should not feel dysphoria. And is certainly not the case for many of the audience.

## **B.V. The mythical and phallic sword**

In *Kill Bill 1*, the fights between the main characters happen with the use of swords. Swords, in the history of theatre, retain such a prominent place amongst other props that one can talk about them being a fetish<sup>7</sup> of both actors and audience. Fetish in both Freudian and Marxist terms is the desire for a material object when this object stands for something else. The Hatori Hanzo swords in the case of *Kill Bill Vol. 1* stand for (a) the rich, exotic and mystical far-eastern philosophy and culture, and (b) power.

### **B.V.1. Mythology**

For Anderson (2004) boys already from a young age get interested in playing with swords not only for the tactile and sensorial richness of their materiality (weight, texture etc), but mainly because of the mythology and imaginary worlds they carry within them (and this desire for swords remains within the person even when he is an adult). In other words, “swords give place and substance—an embodiment—to otherwise esoteric ideas. In this way the ‘samurai’ sword comes to represent the entire mythos of Japanese and sometimes an even broader ‘Asian’ philosophy and history”.

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<sup>7</sup> In the original, anthropological sense of fetishism coined by Charles du Brosses in *Du culte des dieux fetiches* (1760), actual material objects are endowed with supernatural power and worshipped. In Marx's *Capital*, fetishism is a metaphor standing not for the actual object but for the commodity that is fetishized. For Freud, on the other hand, fetish became personal, idiosyncratic signifier of desire for something the subject lacks. All three perspectives are employed here when I use the term fetish.

From this perspective, the violence that the Hatori Hanzo's inflict are enriched by the mythology and exotic legends of Far East. This is exactly the case where attraction to violence is confounded with the variable of fantasy and it is not violence per se that is appealing.

### **B.V.2. Phallic Power**

The first time we see someone holding one is when Bill calls Elle Driver to command her not to kill "The Bride". The frame is a close up on Bill's hand stroking a sword in its case. Here the sword symbolizes Bill's power as the leader of a clan and therefore it holds phallic dimensions, representing male generative powers. Judith Butler (1993) in her discussion on the *Lesbian Phallus* she notices that if Freud enumerates a set of analogies and substitutions that rhetorically affirm the fundamental transferability of the phallus from the penis elsewhere, then any number of other things might come to stand in for the phallus (62). She insists on this transferability of the phallus from the penis to the other objects or concepts because it allows possession by females too. Indeed, later on, we discover that "The Bride" travels to Okinawa, Japan, to meet the legendary sword-maker Hatori Hanzo to forge a blade for her. "The Bride" can only begin her "brave" journey for justice once she holds this legendary Japanese powerful phallus. The serene ritual of Hanzo handing over the sword to "The Bride" together with his words retain a seminal position in the film because they hold a symbolic value.

"I've completed doing what I swore an oath to God, 28 years ago to never do again. I have created 'Something that kills people.' And in that purpose, I was a success. I've done this because philosophically, I am sympathetic to your aim. I can tell you with no ego, this is my finest sword. If on your journey, you should encounter God, God will be cut."

"The Bride", depicted until now as weak, victim of an assassination and rape, acquires equal power to the most powerful man of the system in order for her to accomplish her brave aim. The spectator in this case can identify with "The Bride" who is about to correct the injustice of the social system. If Bill represents the oppressive and powerful system (the tyrannical boss, the despotic father, the merciless government), "The Bride" holds the hope for change or at least the pleasure derived from the violation of the norm. Therefore, from this perspective attraction to violence can be explained through the theories of dispositional alignment and violating social norms. The problem however with *Kill Bill* lies exactly in the argumentation of this very last point. "The Bride" can be considered either a Robin Hood or a one of the



ruthless assassins who kills for her own personal reasons and not for the general well-being of the society. Interpretation of her intentions and subsequent dispositional alignment is left entirely to the spectator much more than in other Hollywood films<sup>8</sup>.

## **B.VI. Humor as a camouflage**

In communication studies, humor is acknowledged as a powerful tool for influencing, persuading or manipulating audiences (Meyer, 2000). Quentin Tarantino, who in his first steps in the show business worked with comedies<sup>9</sup>, must have a good understanding of humor's potentials. In the next paragraph, I will identify how humor is deployed during violent scenes and I will try to explain its effects on the portrayal and reception of violence. What is important to mention before is that humor is "situationally dependent" on the transmitter and the destination. That means that what can be considered as humorous for one person may only be brutal for another (Meyer, 2000). Therefore, my task is not to convince the reader that this or the other scene might be comical, but to explain how humor works for those people that find it humorous<sup>10</sup>.

### **B.VI.1. Relief**

Beginning with a scene, which I, personally, find funny; at the end of a very long and gory fight with the Crazy 88 clan, where "The Bride" has butchered almost all 88 members of the clan, "The Bride's" only remaining opponent is a young man who is left completely terrified at the view of this battle and the painful certainty that he will also have to face "The Bride". Much to our surprise, when "The Bride" realizes the man's terror, instead of killing him too, she decides to spare his life and spank him for his impishness while screaming in a furious mother's, semi-didactic tone:

This is what you get for fucking around with Yakuza's! Go home to your mother!

This unexpected twist in the script is put very wisely at the end of a very blood spattering battle, in order to relieve or minimize audience's distress. This

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<sup>8</sup> For example *Spiderman* (2002) acquires supernatural powers that he uses later not to his own end but to save the world from the Green Goblin

<sup>9</sup> The list includes: *My best friend's birthday* (1987) that he also directed, two episodes from *Golden Girls* (1988-1990) where he starred as an Elvis impersonator, *Four Rooms* (1995), *Curdled* (1996) etc

<sup>10</sup> It goes without saying that all these different interpretations of the function of laughter might be applicable in the single case when the spectator laughs or find the elements of the film amusing. I suggest this statement is taken for granted so it needed not be repeated in every subparagraph.

manipulation of audience's emotions is very crucial at this moment of the film, because increased suspension may lead to a loss of audience's sympathy with the main character. Humor then, with its relieving qualities, is needed for two reasons:

- (a) It serves as a safeguard of our affinity with "The Bride". As Meyer (2000) argues: "the appreciation of a sense of humor is an important part of growing and deepening relationships with people, as mutual uncertainty is reduced." (318). This perspective is enhanced by the fact that "The Bride's" wisecracking line underlines her motherly qualities and her attitude as "good" hero who, in contrast to her enemies, would not kill for any reason defenseless people. Humor, thus, functions as another strategy for identification with the hero. It proves that "The Bride" is a good and fair character with mother qualities and a sense of humor. A personal question that I have concerning this point is that sociopaths also have a sense of humor and they laugh during moments of slaughter, but we do not laugh with them; what distinguishes, then, "The Bride" from Gogo Yubari or any other sociopath? The only explanation I can come up with is that it is the audience's earlier dispositional alignment and urgent need for relief that favors reading "The Bride's" wisecrack as humorous and not as sociopath.
- (b) If we use Zillmann's Excitation Transfer Theory, humor modifies the residual arousal caused by the distressful violent scenes of fight into an equally exciting state of euphoria. That means that the emotional intensity is maintained at the same level whereas the emotion has shifted from dysphoria to euphoria. Humor, hence, helps us forget any negative emotional responses or by substituting them with the more desirable emotion of joy and delight. In that sense, humor is one of those variables that is confounded with violence and makes some of us believe that violence on action films is appealing.

Another similar moment, already mentioned earlier, is when Vernita's daughter arrives home and "The Bride" and Vernita Green stop their fight and hide their knives behind their backs.

### B.IV.2. Parody and Schema

I have already discussed earlier about the iconography of blood and how and why it is intentionally made to look fake. Here I want to revisit the use of blood not in terms of its verisimilitude but as a parody. In respect to blood, for example, Anderson (2004) finds that the anime bloodthirsty aesthetic “is played *for laughs*” during Tanaka’s decapitation. Later on, he finds “the large battle sequence at the House of Blue Leaves [...] as a slightly *comic* homage to countless Japanese action films that used similar blood effects.

Other than expressing the very obvious idea of desensitization to violence and “flooding” (theory explained earlier on Chapter A) Anderson implies that the iconography of blood gives a parodic character to the film. Tarantino himself at an interview with BBC (2003), he declared:

I have done violence before but never in such an outrageous way [...] It is the standard staple of Japanese cinema to cut someone's arm off and have them have waterhoses for veins.

It is important therefore to see closely at the creation of parody and understand why it makes us laugh. For Mikhail Bakhtin(1984), parody is the natural development in the life cycle of any genre. “Parody introduces . . . a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one” (193). In parody there is thus a hidden polemic that ridicules and critiques the conventions of its corresponding genre. Laughing, in the case of parody, is an act of feeling some sort of intellectual superiority and primacy (Gruner, 1997; Meyer 2000). The functions of such a laughter is to “form a bond and simultaneously draw a line” (Lorenz, 1963, 253). It reinforces unity among those who laugh and leaves outside those who don’t. The implications of this humor are clearly social and laughing is an act of violence. When parody happens at action films, violence is not only represented on screen but also enacted on the audience. The spectator is forced to decide whether to laugh and therefore be a member of this intellectual mafia of connoisseurs, or not laugh and risk being considered as being an ignorant or not having a sense of humor. As a consequence, laughter (even during scenes where violence is represented) stands for a criterion of the process of socialization as explained earlier in the paragraph of the gratifications of the “Cultural Capital”.

Furthermore, one can say that today parody of mainstream cinema has become a style/ genre of its own. A strong indication of this is the fact that many films are

categorized and sold as *parodies*<sup>11</sup>. The same happens with comedy. We need very little time to identify a film as comical or parodical. This is what is called in cognitive studies a *schema* - “organized sets of expectations and rules that we use as tools to help us make sense out of otherwise patternless experiences”<sup>12</sup> (Potter & Warren, 1998, 41). According to the schema theory “when we encounter something in the social world, we retrieve a relevant schema and use it as a kind of template to guide us through the experience” (Potter & Warren, 1998, 41). Consequently, we have developed a schema about parodies and comedies. Theory goes on to explain that in low involvement situation- such as watching a comedy film- we tend not to revise our schema, to take all cases as similar and not to focus on discrepancies. What is demanded for us as a reaction during a comedy or parody is simply to laugh and enjoy. What happens thus in the case of *Kill Bill* is that because we place *Kill Bill* within a humorous context, we fail to focus on the violent aspect itself. Priming models entertained by Jo and Berkowitz (1994) suggest that putting together amusing content and violent imagery may simply activate related amusing thoughts and reactions regarding the violence. As King (2000) notes, “humorous cues [...] signal that the events toward which the humor is directed should not be taken overly seriously” (8).

What this line of theories suggests is that humorous cues in action films serve as an invitation to discount the violence in the film. Or differently said schema theory contends that those people, like Anderson, that find *Kill Bill* comic or parodic, do not really enjoy violence, because they do not really see it. This can be perceived then as an alternative to the theory that justifies appeal of violence because of other variables. The problem with the theory of schema can be spotted in the arbitrariness of the definition of high and low involvement tasks and how rigid this is in the course of watching a film. Of course, there might be people that can identify *Kill Bill* as a comical, cheesy or kitsch film and I have no reason to object to that. I do not think however that when violence gets increasingly gory, these people will continue being in a state of low involvement without revising their schema of what comedy means

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<sup>11</sup> Some famous films that declare themselves as parodies are: *Scary Movie* (2000), *Shrek* (2001) and *Meet the Spartans* (2008)

<sup>12</sup> This is a theory that Fiske and Taylor (1991) advanced in 1991. According to which we are all born without interpretations of the social world. Interpretations are developed as we come into contact with the world. We therefore organize experiences into cognitive structures called schema.

for them, especially in the case of *Kill Bill* when the wisecracking lines occur quite infrequently.

### **B.VII. The coward Crazy 88 – the fearless spectator**

Let me take again the example when “The Bride”, after having killed nearly all members of the Crazy 88 clan in the House of the Blue Leaves, faces a young boy who is undoubtedly afraid of her. Laughing at the cowardice of this boy provides the spectator with the chance to demonstrate a feeling of superiority and fearlessness. Laughter thus is a device to reflect ease and fearlessness. “The Bride”’s line when spanking the boy on his bottom is directed at both the boy and the spectator. To paraphrase “The Bride”’s line, Tarantino challenges the audience by stipulating to them that if they can’t stand watching it then they better “go home to their mother”. And the easiest way for the audience to convey their ability to endure watching the violent fare is by laughing. This challenge is exactly what the theory of the Rite of Passage suggests. If cinema has become the contemporary equivalent of primitive rituals where the accession to manhood was assessed, then laughter is the criterion that marks the success of the test.

What this implies is that humor, in this case, functions as a social norm corrective. Disciplining by laughter was one of the functions of the royal fool throughout the ages. Foolish antics were laughed at to show that such behavior or beliefs were unacceptable in serious society (Apte, 1985). This explains also the dominant position of violence in fairy tales. As Maria Tatar (1998) notes: “we instrumentalize narrative violence in order to discipline and socialize children in the name of guiding them and healing them” (71). That means that we are raised in a culture of fear that aims at the desensitization to violence through the extensive “flood” of violent imagery.

### **B.VIII. Conclusion**

In this chapter I have tried to analyze certain elements in *Kill Bill* that could shed some light in the appeal of action films featuring violence. My list of these elements was not trying to be exhaustive. On the contrary, I tried to give focus to specific that I find interesting and where I could evaluate the validity of some of the theories mentioned in Chapter A. I have therefore spoken about (a) identification and dispositional alignment in terms of the empowerment of women’s role; (b) norm violation when discussing about “The Bride”fighting against the system; (c)

desensitization and flood of violent images in the context of the referential power of the film and the education aspect of humor; (d) dispositional alignment in the use of narrative elements that point towards the nobility and fairness of “The Bride’s” goal and her maternal qualities; (e) excitation transfer when perceiving humor as a pill for relief; and (f) rite of passage in the antithesis of the coward member of the 88 and the challenge for the spectator to be fearless. In some of these cases I have also expressed some of my doubts over their efficacy to explain the appeal of violence. Only in one case I have totally dismissed the correctness of a theory, namely the excitation transfer paradigm in the context of scarce images of villain’s violence. I have also put forward one more explanation that deals with socialization and the gratifications of inclusion in a group. Furthermore, I have tried to identify and analyze some variables that are accompanying violence and give the impression of the appeal of the latter. Some of these variables include humor, fantasy, exaggeration and pornography. This does not imply in any case that there are no other variables or that the above theories can not be found in other moments of the film. The impact of the theoretical disputes is that any example of the film can be readily explained by the perspective of one’s choice, based on the “theoretical sunglasses” through which one chooses to peer. Consequently, I do not suggest that any of these theories is applicable to all audience members. On the contrary, I suggest that this is an explanation of my own experience as an audience member and I think that only some, if any, are applicable to the specificities of other spectator’s cases.

## Chapter C.

# The Psychophysiological Performance of a spectator of *Kill Bill Vol. 1*

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*[...] Every moment spent with you is a moment I treasure  
Dont want to close my eyes  
I dont want to fall asleep  
Cause Id miss you baby  
And I dont want to miss a thing.  
(Lyrics for the song  
"I don't want to miss a thing"  
by Aerosmith)*

### **C.I. Background**

I was interested, thus, in observing the somatic responses of the spectator of such films. Psychophysiologicalists, such as Lang (1994) and Ravaja (2004), have proved the credibility of psychophysiological measurement as a powerful insight into how mind and body respond to messages. By knowing what the body is doing on the unconscious level, we can better understand psychological events (Clark, 1997). That is because “consciousness provides the illusion of control” (Bradley, 2007, 8). We can always lie to our friends that we were not scared when the villain character jumped suddenly on the screen, but our body cannot do that so easily.

In 2003, David Bordwell, cinema theoritician wrote an article titled *Who blinked first? How Film Style Streamlines Nonverbal Interaction*. In his article, Bordwell starts by noticing that despite the great amount of discussions on the Gaze and “visuality”, there has been little understanding on how the eye behaves in cinema. He then goes on in unpicking the look of the characters of several films. More precisely, he observed and counted the blinking rate of the characters in films from different cultures and he discovered that they almost never blink. For Bordwell, main characters avoid blinking, or at least the film avoids including frames of blinking because blinking weakens their character and renders them “as more nervous and less intelligent than one who blinks rarely” (51). He also explains that in order for the actors to convey their alertness and attention to what is happening -and thus

communicate to the spectator that they need to do the same-, they blink less. Blinking, then is a lower human need that the main characters have supernaturally overcome. The spectator can blink in the dark black box, but if he wishes to be as powerful as the main character, he should also keep his eyes wide open, at least in the moments of great action. Whether or not Bordwell's theory holds true, his suggestion that a low blinking rate happens during moments of attention was very interesting to my research on the appeal of violent entertainment. If something is a repugnant sight, then we avoid watching it and therefore we are not at all attentive to it. If, however, one is looking at and paying attention to a violent scene, that means that there is a certain degree of attraction. And if that is not true, then what is our reaction while watching a violent film?

Elizabeth McAlpine, a visual artist, made a film in 2003 called *The film footage missed by the viewer through blinking while watching the feature film 'Don't Look Now'*. The entire length of the thriller *Don't Look Now* has been watched and the frames where the viewer blinks are compiled together while the film footage that is seen by the viewer is removed. The entire film is portrayed in 7 minutes and 15 seconds of the unseen parts of the film. In her footage McAlpine reveals

that blinking, far from being an interruption to conscious understanding, is in fact the moment of cognition, the moment when the mind gets to process the information it's received and understands it – the moment conscious understanding is gifted to the mind. (Wood, 2007, 44)

For McAlpine, a blink is a resting point, we blink when we have understood something. Film, from its very construction and means of showing, through to the structure of narrative, is a series of hidden patterns and repetitions. By highlighting and drawing these to attention, Elizabeth McAlpine exposes film's manipulative nature, and reveals a new relationship between the viewer and the footage.

Inspired by McAlpine's work I decided to work on almost the same process in order to assess the somatic responses of the spectator of a violent film. My specific focus of research is to observe whether the spectator blinks less frequently and for less amount of time during the moments of violence or, differently said, whether the blinking rate and the blinking period is lower than in other moments. Therefore, a major difference between McAlpine's work and mine is the fact that duration of blinking is an important aspect in assessing the performance of the spectator. Whereas McAlpine assigned the same amount of time for each blink because she was interested solely in



the frequency of blinking (in order to demonstrate in her artistic product that we blink more often in moments of cognition and understanding), I am interested in keeping the variable of frequency but enriching my video creation with the perspective of the duration of the blinking performance as well.

Another difference with McAlpine's creative process has to do with the validity of the resulting performance. McAlpine had asked from herself to be the performer and in a degree, I believe, her familiarity with the target of this research (aiming to demonstrate something through the blinking movement), must have influenced drastically the execution of this performance. Therefore, in contrast to McAlpine, I decided not to be myself the performer but to ask someone else to perform for my video. Moreover, as the film I had selected was *Kill Bill Vol.1* (2003) by Quentin Tarantino, for the reasons explained on Chapter 0, I gave special emphasis when choosing my performer on him/her not having previously seen the footage in order to include in my resulting video the element of surprise.

## **C.II. Preparation Description**

The first person that I asked to help me and who had not seen *Kill Bill* before is my sister, Louiza Kountouriotou. Louiza, though, had a critical cerebral surgery six years ago that has influenced today her blinking rate in an unexpected pattern. Therefore, I asked for another person to contribute to this project, a very close friend, Alexandros Nasiadis [hereinafter called Alejandro] who had also not seen the film before.

To make sure that the performer feels comfortable, the project took place at my living room, a place familiar to both participants. The screen was a 37 inch flatscreen TV connected to a 5.1 dolby surround home cinema in order to make sure that the quality of sound and image was of excellent quality. A video camera was put opposite of the face of the performer in a visible but not prominent place. The performer was given water to drink during the viewing of the film<sup>13</sup>. Alejandro was left single in the room in order to deliberately avoid any social influences when watching the original footage of *Kill Bill*. In the middle of the film there was an interval where he had a break of five minutes whilst I was changing the tape on the camera.

I explained to Alejandro that the camera was there for reasons of documentation of the project and I asked him to forget its existence. Although I had explained to him

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<sup>13</sup> Snacks and fizzy drinks were also suggested but Alejandro refused.

that the focus of this performance was on his movement of blinking, I asked him to forget about his blinking and I avoided explaining to him in detail what my hypothesis goal was (namely to demonstrate that in moments of action we blink less) in order not to influence his blinking execution.

### **C.III. Video Processing**

#### **C.III.1. Strategy of Sampling and Editing**

After Alejandro's performance in front of the camera, I imported the taped material onto my computer in order to edit it (Image 1). I put Alejandro's footage on one timeline track and *Kill Bill* on another timeline track and I tried to perfectly synchronize them. As a cue for this synchronization I used the sound, so that in both films (Alejandro's face and original footage of *Kill Bill*) the same sound comes through without and echo effect. The choice to put Alejandro's video on a timeline track higher than the *Kill Bill* timeline track was made so that I cannot see on the screen which moment of the film I am editing on the video<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> *Kill Bill* video was put on the background, 'behind' Alejandro's face. The Program Monitor is set to project only the video that is in front, or differently said on the highest track.

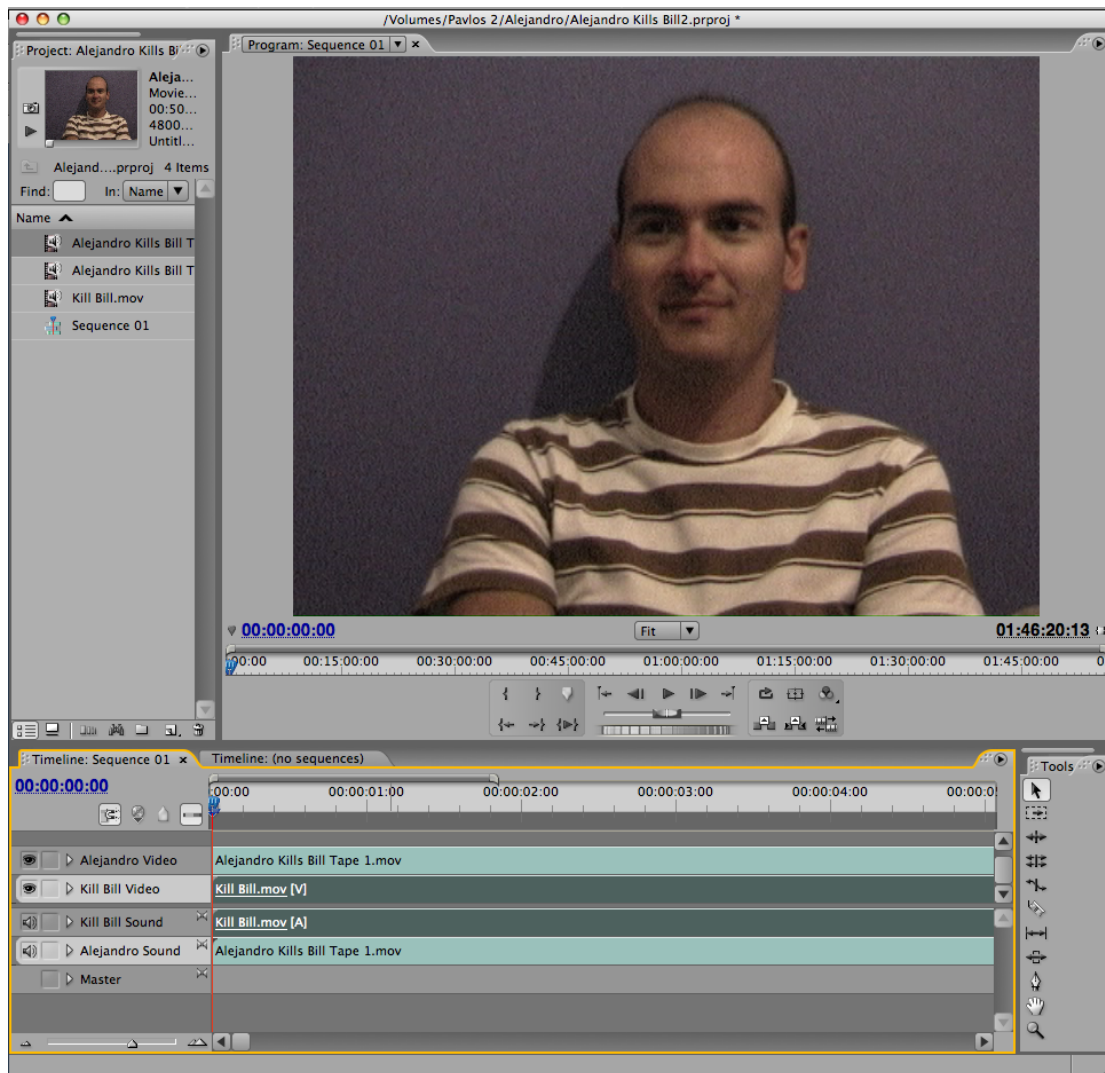


Image 1 :Photo of the whole working panel showing on the bottom Alejandro’s footage (lighter green) and Kill Bill video (darker green) as put on two separate timeline tracks and synchronized, and on top the image of the corresponding frame where the timeline indicator is situated.

My next task was to move the cursor frame by frame<sup>15</sup> in the timeline and discover the moments when Alejandro’s eyes are blinking. Crucial at this point was to define when blinking actually happens. Therefore, I decided that for me blinking is the frame when both Alejandro’s eyes are shut down and it last until the frame when both of them are about to open. On Image 2,for example, blinking happens precisely between frames 3 and 8. That means that this blinking movement lasts for 6 frames. Other blinks last for less or more amount of time and therefore, I had to be very pedantic with my choices for each one of the 149.594 frames.

<sup>15</sup> Since the film was made for a PAL screen, each second consists 25 frames.



Image 2 A moment of blinking shown between frame 3 and frame 8

Once identified in which frames the blinking movement happens, I cut with the razor tool both Alejandro's and Kill Bill footage on those in and out points in order to create small extracts as shown on Image 3.

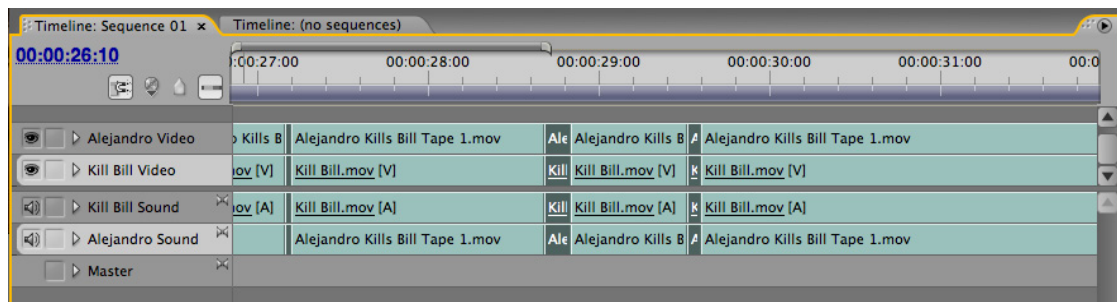


Image 3 Three different blinking moments after having been cut from the rest of the video. Each blink has a different duration.

After having worked on the whole 1 hour and 39 minutes of the film, the next step was to remove the whole footage from Alejandro, so that only the *Kill Bill* video remains. After that, I removed all those moments that Alejandro did not blink as shown on Image 4.

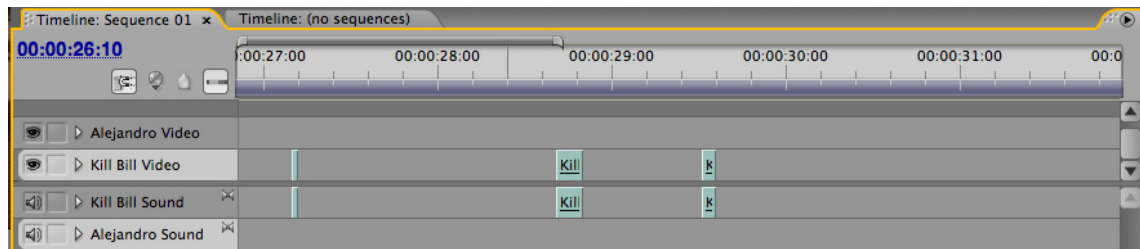


Image 4 The Timeline after having removed Alejandro’s footage and all the moments from *Kill Bill* footage that Alejandro did not blink.

The last step was to assemble all the little blinking snippets of the *Kill Bill* footage together by moving them to the beginning and leaving no blank moment is left in between (Image 5)

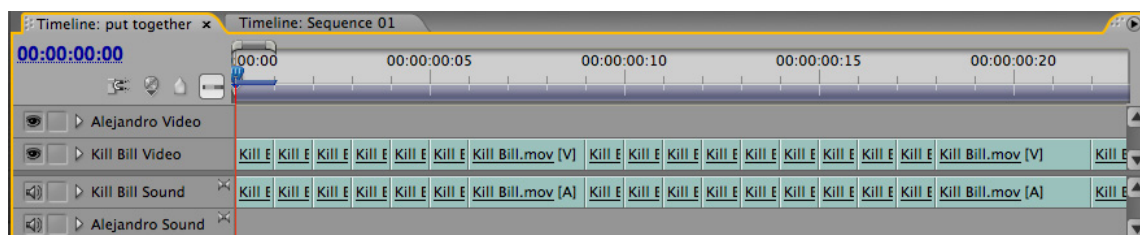


Image 5 All blinking moments put together

### C.III.2. Imagery and Aesthetics

Because of this strategy and methodology explained above, the result looks like a badly edited video and some of the frames change so fast that it is difficult to follow, whereas in other sequences there is the chance to watch entire snippets of the film lasting for more than two or three seconds.

As explained in detail above, the video is not made with an aesthetic choice of fast cutting or choosing which images to make last longer and which less. On the contrary, it is following and serving a structure that I personally cannot manipulate. It is the performance of the blinking frequency and duration that dictates the editing process. In that sense, I think that the video is pointing more to the transparency of the concept than on the beauty of the images or the virtuosity of the editor<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> I have arrived to this editing process after passing through different levels of experimentation on how to show the work. Initially I had thought that I would keep the whole film and then just remove the moments of blinks. There were two problems: (a) the focus was put on the film and the blinks looked more like a side trick; and (b) the video was too large for people to understand the results. In order to address (a) I thought of keeping only the moments of blinking and having a black screen during the rest of the time. In order to address (b) I fast forwarded the movie to become 10 minutes (instead of 100 mins). The feedback that I received was that (a) the image quality has been severely deteriorated; (b) many blinks that lasted for one frame had been excluded; and (c) also the concept is still not given so clearly since since ten minutes is a long time to be able to collect all the information and put them all together. This is when I thought of coming to connect all the frames together.

## C.IV. Video Outcome

The video result of Alejandro's performance after my subsequent editing process lasts for three minutes and nine seconds and is included in a DVD in the back of this Thesis called "*Where did Violence (almost) go? or the footage missed by Alejandro through blinking while watching Kill Bill*".

### C.IV.1. Where did Violence (almost) go?

"*Where did Violence (almost) go? or the footage missed by Alejandro through blinking while watching Kill Bill*" is a three minutes and nine seconds version of *Kill Bill Vol. 1*, made out of the moments that Alejandro missed through blinking. The narrative of *Kill Bill* is slightly distorted through the somatic practice of Alejandro. More precisely *Where did Violence (almost) go?* is made out of the visual text that Alejandro's body unconsciously decided to miss. Therefore, the video is a product of what is missed and not what there was. It is shedding light to what was decided to be left in the dark. It is an interesting journey to what the body set aside. It is the negative photo of what the body, conceived as a photographic machine, decided not to film.

Direct consequence of this is the distortion of the script by assigning different durational importance to each scene. For example, the scene where "The Bride" goes to the attic to marvel at the Hatori Hanzo swords was an unnecessary detail in the original footage. In *Where Did Violence (almost) Go?*, this scene features as an essential element in the interpretation of the new film, giving a ritualistic and fantasy overtone.

Most striking for me is the almost complete lack of scenes of violence that in the original footage covered a significant amount of time. This drastic change occurred because Alejandro's somatic interaction with the violent content of this action film was to blink less frequently in order to miss as less visual material as possible. Furthermore, it seems that the duration of blink during those scenes was relatively much smaller than in other scenes.

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Another suggestion was to extract frames from the movie in a regular way so that the ending result would look like a stop and motion movie or a flipbook. This suggestion however excluded Alejandro's performance. Although aesthetically beautiful and able to demonstrate the idea of "blinking", I considered it conceptually weak and driven more by the motivation for an aesthetic result than serving the concept of somatic reality.

## C.IV.2. Quantitative Results

### C.IV.2.a. Data

I decided therefore to collect all information from the edited and original footage in order to assess more clearly how different scenes had changed in terms of quantity.

On Table 1, I gathered the quantitative results of Alejandro's blinking performance. I divided the film in 62 chapters unequal in duration. The division of chapters was done according to the different narrative, with a specific focus on the amount and type of represented violence. In order for a scene to be qualified as violent, there had to be action for more than 3 seconds<sup>17</sup>. Grey color are the scenes containing explicit violence for more than 3 seconds. On the first four columns (Hour, Minute, Second, Frame), we read the specific moment in time where each chapter finishes and the next one begins in the original film. On the TF column we read the corresponding number of frames. On  $\Delta F$  we read the amount of frames each chapter lasts for<sup>18</sup>. For example Chapter 4 begins on the 7635<sup>th</sup> frame (TF<sub>3</sub>), finishes at the 8388<sup>th</sup> frame (TF<sub>4</sub>) and lasts 753 frames ( $\Delta F_4$ ).

The edited version of the film is the outcome of Alejandro's performance. It consists of the frames that were missed by Alejandro through blinking while watching the original footage of *Kill Bill 1*. The frames were put then altogether and were also divided in the same chapters. On the next three columns (minute, second, frame) we read the corresponding moment in timeline where each chapter ends in the edited version. Right next to that on the Tf column we read the corresponding frame number and on the  $\Delta f$  we read the amount of frames each chapter lasts in the edited version. That means that  $\Delta f$  shows the duration of time that was missed through blinking. As an example: a blinking moment that occurred during the sexual harassment scene (=Chapter 13), is on the edited version in between the 1069<sup>th</sup> frame (Tf<sub>12</sub>), and the 1122<sup>nd</sup> frame (Tf<sub>13</sub>). The whole Chapter 13 in the edited version lasts for 53 frames ( $\Delta f_{13}$ ).

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<sup>17</sup> Vernita Green's shooting against "The Bride" and "The Bride's" stubbing happened in less than three seconds, therefore, I kept this scene together with the rest of the scene in the kitchen, as it was extremely small.

<sup>18</sup> Each second has 25 frames

#### C.IV.2.b. Data Process

On Table 2 I process the quantitative data in three different ways. The column  $\Delta f/\Delta F$  shows then the percentage of the duration of the missed frame in comparison to the duration of the same chapter in the original film. The bigger the percentage, the more time Alejandro had his eyes closed, the more time he missed from the original footage. On the 24<sup>th</sup> Chapter (Titles of the 4<sup>th</sup> Diegetic Chapter),  $\Delta f_{24}/\Delta F_{24}$  equals 8.73% which means that Alejandro blinked for more time than on the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter where  $\Delta f_{21}/\Delta F_{21}=0.66\%$ .

Column B shows the amount of blinks per chapter. During the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter for example, Alejandro blinked 75 times ( $B_{10}$ ). What I call the Blink Rate ( $B/\Delta F$ ) is the frequency of blinking, or differently said, is the rate of the amount of blinking times per each chapter of the original movie. In the 48<sup>th</sup> Chapter for example ( $B_{48}/\Delta F_{48}$ ), Alejandro blinked for 7.59% of the whole chapter. That means that he blinked more frequently than in Chapter 37 ( $B_{37}/\Delta F_{37}=0.50\%$ ).

The last column is the Difference in the Representation Rate and it is equal to the percentage of time each chapter has in the original version subtracted by the percentage of time the same chapter holds in the edited version. That means that DRR calculates how big each chapter was in relation to the original footage and how small it has become in the edited version after Alejandro's performance. If the number is negative ( $DRR_x < 0$ ) then the percentage of time of the chapter in the edited version ( $\Delta f_x/Tf_{49}$ ) is comparatively bigger than the percentage of time of this chapter in the original version ( $\Delta F_x/TF_{49}$ ) and *vice versa* when the percentage is positive. For example, the chapter when "The Bride" goes to the Japanese Restaurant and meets Hatori Hanzo (Chapter 25) was relatively less important, durationally speaking, in the original footage than in the edited version. And that is indicated by the negative symbol and the high value (-6.425). The DRR, therefore, is dependent both on the duration and frequency of Alejandro's blinking performance.

Grey color are the scenes containing explicit violence for more than 3 seconds.

#### C.IV.2.c. Quantitative Analysis

Table 3 features all chapters and their corresponding Lost Rate ( $\Delta f/\Delta F$ ) in an order showing on the top those chapters where Alejandro missed as little as possible from the original footage and on the bottom those chapters that Alejandro missed more



through blinking. Grey color are the scenes containing explicit violence for more than 3 seconds. Most of the violent scenes are found on the top of this list with a relatively small distance within each other in comparison to the rest of the scenes. This means that Alejandro's blinking lasted less amount of time than in other scenes. Only the scenes of fight with O-Ren (chapter 55, 57, 59) are not in the top of the list. Asking Alejandro how he found the battle with O-Ren, he replied that he found it less physical and/or violent than expected. In that sense, these scenes do not qualify for Alejandro as explicitly equally violent. The moment when "The Bride" spans the coward young boy for being a member of the Crazy 88, is also found at the top of the list. Alejandro explained that he found the scene quite entertaining and comical. On the contrary, Alejandro found that the scenes in the garage (chapters 15, 23), the whole discussion in the Japanese Restaurant with Hatori Hanzo's swords (chapter 25) and the ending titles (chapter 62) where the chapters that Alejandro reported as most boring and indeed these scenes are found on the bottom of the list. It seems therefore that there is a similar way in which Alejandro responds in scenes he finds violent and scenes he finds entertaining.

Table 4 shows the chapters in order of the corresponding frequency of blinking rating from no blinking (on top) to more often blinking. The results are almost the same as in Table 3. Quantitatively, therefore, there is no difference whether I assess Alejandro's performance in terms of duration or frequency.

Table 5 shows the DRR of every chapter in an ascending order. That means that chapters that have become relatively longer in the edited version (and therefore Alejandro blinked more frequently and for a longer period of time) are on top of the list. The majority of violent scenes are again found on the bottom of the list which means that the edited film has relatively less of these scenes than the original film. However, this table features a more vast distribution of scenes which results in the edited film having *almost* the same narrative with the original.

Last but not the least, the Timeline on the back of this thesis shows the density of the blinking moments in the whole timeline. This timeline is the graphic representation of Table 1 and Table 2 in terms of time. Therefore, dense are the moments where Alejandro blinked more frequently and for a longer period of time. On the chapters where violence occurs, the density is quite low.

### C.IV.3. Attentiveness

Both the qualitative and quantitative results show that Alejandro blinked less during the violent scenes. The fact that Alejandro has missed almost nothing from these scenes indicates that Alejandro's optical and visual attentiveness was higher during those moments.

This link between frequency/duration of blinking and attentiveness has been the subject of scientific research and experimentation especially in the cases of drivers. Many scientists have proven that when drivers show prolonged and frequent blinking, their attentiveness on the road has been diminished and therefore the possibility of a car accident is bigger (Beideman & Stern, 1977; Cramon & Schuri, 1980; Crawford, 1994; Galley, Schleicher & Galley, 2003; Mecacci & Pasquali, 1980; Pfaff, Fruhstorfer, Peter, 1976; Stern, Ranney, 1999).

The results however cannot prove whether this attentiveness is a result of attraction, desire, curiosity, anxiety, fear or distress. What the performance and its analysis have been able to demonstrate is solely the fact that during violence on film, Alejandro was more attentive. The research and its results do not allow me either to make conclusions about Alejandro's emotional state, nor to generalize Alejandro's case and contend that the same somatic responses would happen in all spectators of action films.

I have been able however to prove that Alejandro is highly observant, alert and focused during the scenes of violence in *Kill Bill*. If that attentiveness is the result of his attraction to violence then the two previous chapters can give explanations about this attraction.

## Chapter D. Conclusions

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This research has helped me to understand the reasons that might be behind the possibility that we like watching action films featuring violence. As explained above, it is not violence *per se* that makes these films appealing but other parameters lying (a) in the film itself, such as humor, fantasy, unreality, choreography, music etc and (b) in the psychology of the spectator.

It has also been explained that different theories apply in different cases and therefore generalizations for the appeal of violence should be omitted. *Kill Bill Vol. 1* by Quentin Tarantino provided, thus, a base for assessing the pertinence of some of the theories and allowed for the suggestion of one more about the gratifications of socialization and inclusion in an elite group.

*Where did Violence almost Go ?* is a videoart demonstrating the somatic responses of a specific person while watching *Kill Bill Vol. 1*. The research has proven that there is a relationship between frequency/duration of blinking and watching violent imagery in action films. In the case of Alejandro the responding psychophysiology in the view of violence on screen was alertness and or attractiveness that was demonstrated by the fact that he blinked more rarely than in other scenes. In that respect, the video puts the focus of research back to the body and its performance.

The research on Alejandro's psychophysiological performance proved that there is an emotional tension and arousal while he is watching violent scenes during *Kill Bill*. However, it was unfortunately not possible, to assert any conclusions whether these emotions were positive or negative. On the other hand, one can argue that if Alejandro had found the violence in *Kill Bill* extremely distressful and upsetting he could have chosen to protect himself by closing his eyes or switching off the television.

I personally believe, after this research, that there are sufficient reasons for being attentive to action films featuring violent imagery but whether that is attraction or alertness it lies in the psychology of the individual.

# APPENDIX

## Table 1 Quantitative Data

Ch	Description	ORIGINAL FOOTAGE					EDITED VERSION					
		H	M	S	Fr	TF	ΔF	m	s	fr	Tf	Δf
1	70s Grindhouse Preview Title	0	0	59	9	1484	1484	0	2	1	51	51
2	Blood Spattered Bride & Gunshot	0	2	23	0	3575	2091	0	3	13	88	37
3	Titles	0	5	5	10	7635	4060	0	8	14	214	126
4	Pasadena Street House, Doorbell	0	5	35	13	8388	753	0	9	7	232	18
5	Memory I	0	5	46	21	8671	283	0	9	10	235	3
6	Fight with Vernita Green	0	7	14	7	10857	2186	0	10	23	273	38
7	Nikki's Arrival & Kitchen Discussion	0	12	55	3	19378	8521	0	19	9	484	211
8	Gunshot, Witness, Kiddo's Blog	0	15	29	5	23230	3852	0	23	10	585	101
9	Chapter (2) Title	0	15	37	9	23434	204	0	23	10	585	0
10	Sheriff, Death Scene, Kiddo alive	0	18	59	22	28497	5063	0	29	3	728	143
11	Comma, Elle Driver poisoning	0	24	16	17	36417	7920	0	38	8	958	230
12	Wake Up, Crying	0	26	38	2	39952	3535	0	42	19	1069	111
13	Rape	0	28	15	13	42388	2436	0	44	22	1122	53
14	Killing Raper & Punishing Doctor	0	31	0	21	46521	4133	0	46	11	1161	39
15	Garage	0	33	42	22	50572	4051	0	54	0	1350	189
16	Deadly Vipers	0	34	30	13	51763	1191	0	54	19	1369	19
17	Chapter (3) Title	0	34	35	14	51889	126	0	54	21	1371	2
18	Intro to Cartoon	0	34	58	6	52456	567	0	56	10	1410	39
19	Cartoon: Parents' Assassination	0	39	21	7	59032	6576	1	0	10	1510	100
20	Cartoon: Revenge	0	41	4	14	61614	2582	1	1	2	1527	17
21	Cartoon: World's Assassin	0	41	56	18	62918	1304	1	2	15	1565	38
22	Cartoon: Killings of Kiddo's beloved	0	42	23	19	63594	676	1	3	6	1581	16
23	Garage II, Ticket to Japan	0	43	23	20	65095	1501	1	6	24	1674	93
24	Chapter (4) Title	0	43	32	24	65324	229	1	7	19	1694	20
25	JP Resto, Hatori Hanzo, Ritual	0	56	16	11	84411	19087	1	43	22	2597	903
26	Chapter (5) Titles	0	56	30	12	84762	351	1	44	7	2607	10
27	Mafia meeting, Oren Ishii's Clan	0	57	42	17	86567	1805	1	45	18	2643	36
28	Gogo's Ruthlessness	0	58	6	14	87164	597	1	46	6	2656	13
29	Mafia	1	0	21	0	90525	3361	1	50	13	2763	107
30	Tanaka's Decapitation	1	0	55	10	91385	860	1	50	21	2771	8
31	"Sweet" Talk	1	1	57	16	92941	1556	1	52	6	2806	35
32	Tokyo	1	4	22	19	96569	3628	1	59	0	2975	169
33	Memory II	1	4	38	8	96958	389	1	59	16	2991	16
34	House of Blue Leaves, Arrow, WC	1	10	39	12	105987	9029	2	12	8	3308	317
35	Challenge for fight	1	11	13	6	106831	844	2	13	8	3333	25
36	Memory III	1	11	22	5	107055	224	2	13	15	3340	7
37	Louise's Amputation	1	11	38	8	107458	403	2	13	19	3344	4
38	Public Fear	1	12	18	6	108456	998	2	15	9	3384	40
39	Fighting with Miki (First Subordinate)	1	12	36	9	108909	453	2	15	12	3387	3
40	Sending 3 more- exhanging looks	1	12	47	6	109181	272	2	15	20	3395	8
41	Fighting 3 subordinates	1	12	58	9	109459	278	2	15	22	3397	2
42	Waiting for more	1	13	7	2	109677	218	2	16	13	3413	16
43	Fighting with Man and Woman	1	13	12	2	109802	125	2	16	13	3413	0
44	Moment of preparation of Fight	1	13	19	19	109994	192	2	17	0	3425	12
45	Kill the man	1	13	24	0	110100	106	2	17	2	3427	2
46	Walking slowly with woman	1	13	42	15	110565	465	2	17	15	3440	13
47	Fighting with woman	1	13	57	23	110948	383	2	17	20	3445	5
48	Talking with Gogo	1	14	10	14	111264	316	2	19	17	3492	47
49	Fighting with Gogo	1	17	18	8	115958	4694	2	21	11	3536	44
50	Talking with Ken Ishii, Gathering of 88	1	19	32	2	119302	3344	2	24	21	3621	85
51	Fighting with 88	1	24	5	23	126148	6846	2	27	22	3697	76
52	Chicken	1	24	42	19	127069	921	2	28	4	3704	7
53	Battle with the chief of the 88	1	25	25	20	128145	1076	2	28	7	3707	3
54	Talking to survivors & O-Ren Ishii	1	28	50	24	133274	5129	2	39	2	3977	270
55	Fighting O-Ren Ishii I	1	30	18	11	135461	2187	2	42	10	4060	83
56	Talking with O-Ren Ishii	1	31	12	19	136819	1358	2	43	24	4099	39
57	Revenge Battle	1	31	24	20	137120	301	2	44	13	4113	14
58	Asking forgiveness	1	32	45	16	139141	2021	2	47	9	4184	71
59	Death of O-Ren Ishii	1	33	4	6	139606	465	2	48	3	4203	19
60	Post Mortem	1	34	35	23	141898	2292	2	52	20	4320	117
61	To be continued	1	39	7	19	148694	6796	3	3	16	4591	271
62	Closing Titles	1	39	43	19	149594	900	3	8	7	4707	116

## Table 2 Data Processing

Ch	Description	Lost Rate	Blinks	Blink Rate	D.R.R
		$\Delta f/\Delta F$	B	B/ $\Delta F$	
1	70s Grindhouse Preview Title	3.44%	38	2.56%	-0.091%
2	Blood Spattered Bride & Gunshot	1.77%	28	1.34%	0.612%
3	Titles	3.10%	77	1.90%	0.037%
4	Pasadena Street House, Doorbell	2.39%	11	1.46%	0.121%
5	Memory I	1.06%	2	0.71%	0.125%
6	Fight with Vernita Green	1.74%	21	0.96%	0.654%
7	Nikki's Arrival & Kitchen Discussion	2.48%	107	1.26%	1.213%
8	Gunshot, Witness, Kiddo's Blog	2.62%	48	1.25%	0.429%
9	Chapter (2) Title	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.136%
10	Sheriff, Death Scene, Kiddo alive	2.82%	75	1.48%	0.346%
11	Comma, Elle Driver poisoning	2.90%	96	1.21%	0.408%
12	Wake Up, Crying	3.14%	29	0.82%	0.005%
13	Rape	2.18%	24	0.99%	0.502%
14	Killing Raper & Punishing Doctor	0.94%	24	0.58%	1.934%
15	Garage	4.67%	59	1.46%	-1.307%
16	Deadly Vipers	1.60%	9	0.76%	0.393%
17	Chapter (3) Title	1.59%	1	0.79%	0.042%
18	Intro to Cartoon	6.88%	15	2.65%	-0.450%
19	Cartoon: Parents' Assassination	1.52%	45	0.68%	2.271%
20	Cartoon: Revenge	0.66%	10	0.39%	1.365%
21	Cartoon: World's Assassin	2.91%	20	1.53%	0.064%
22	Cartoon: Killings of Kiddo's beloved	2.37%	5	0.74%	0.112%
23	Garage II, Ticket to Japan	6.20%	19	1.27%	-0.972%
24	Chapter (4) Title	8.73%	6	2.62%	-0.272%
25	JP Resto, Hatori Hanzo, Ritual	4.73%	277	1.45%	-6.425%
26	Chapter (5) Titles	2.85%	4	1.14%	0.022%
27	Mafia meeting, Oren Ishii's Clan	1.99%	20	1.11%	0.442%
28	Gogo's Ruthlessness	2.18%	6	1.01%	0.123%
29	Mafia	3.18%	42	1.25%	-0.026%
30	Tanaka's Decapitation	0.93%	4	0.47%	0.405%
31	"Sweet" Talk	2.25%	16	1.03%	0.297%
32	Tokyo	4.66%	56	1.54%	-1.165%
33	Memory II	4.11%	7	1.80%	-0.080%
34	House of Blue Leaves, Arrow, WC	3.51%	141	1.56%	-0.699%
35	Challenge for fight	2.96%	13	1.54%	0.033%
36	Memory III	3.13%	3	1.34%	0.001%
37	Louise's Amputation	0.99%	2	0.50%	0.184%
38	Public Fear	4.01%	18	1.80%	-0.183%
39	Fighting with Miki (First Subordinate)	0.66%	3	0.66%	0.239%
40	Sending 3 more- exchanging looks	2.94%	3	1.10%	0.012%
41	Fighting 3 subordinates	0.72%	1	0.36%	0.143%
42	Waiting for more	7.34%	8	3.67%	-0.194%
43	Fighting with Man and Woman	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.084%
44	Moment of preparation of Fight	6.25%	6	3.13%	-0.127%
45	Kill the man	1.89%	1	0.94%	0.028%
46	Walking slowly with woman	2.80%	7	1.51%	0.035%
47	Fighting with woman	1.31%	3	0.78%	0.150%
48	Talking with Gogo	14.87%	24	7.59%	-0.787%
49	Fighting with Gogo	0.94%	20	0.43%	2.203%
50	Talking with Ken Ishii, Gathering of 88	2.54%	36	1.08%	0.430%
51	Fighting with 88	1.11%	43	0.63%	2.962%
52	Chicken	0.76%	5	0.54%	0.467%
53	Battle with the chief of the 88	0.28%	3	0.28%	0.656%
54	Talking to survivors & O-Ren Ishii	5.26%	88	1.72%	-2.308%
55	Fighting O-Ren Ishii I	3.80%	38	1.74%	-0.301%
56	Talking with O-Ren Ishii	2.87%	8	0.59%	0.079%
57	Revenge Battle	4.65%	5	1.66%	-0.096%
58	Asking forgiveness	3.51%	27	1.34%	-0.157%
59	Death of O-Ren Ishii	4.09%	8	1.72%	-0.093%
60	Post Mortem	5.10%	37	1.61%	-0.954%
61	To be continued	3.99%	40	0.59%	-1.214%
62	Closing Titles	12.89%	17	1.89%	-1.863%

### Table 3 Lost Rate

Ch	Description	Lost Rate
		$\Delta f/\Delta F$
9	Chapter (2) Title	0.00%
43	Fighting with Man and Woman	0.00%
53	Battle with the chief of the 88	0.28%
20	Cartoon: Revenge	0.66%
39	Fighting with Miki (First Subordinate)	0.66%
41	Fighting 3 subordinates	0.72%
52	Chicken	0.76%
30	Tanaka's Decapitation	0.93%
49	Fighting with Gogo	0.94%
14	Killing Raper & Punishing Doctor	0.94%
37	Louise's Amputation	0.99%
5	Memory I	1.06%
51	Fighting with 88	1.11%
47	Fighting with woman	1.31%
19	Cartoon: Parents' Assasination	1.52%
17	Chapter (3) Title	1.59%
16	Deadly Vipers	1.60%
6	Fight with Vernita Green	1.74%
2	Blood Spattered Bride & Gunshot	1.77%
45	Kill the man	1.89%
27	Mafia meeting, Oren Ishii's Clan	1.99%
13	Rape	2.18%
28	Gogo's Ruthlessness	2.18%
31	"Sweet" Talk	2.25%
22	Cartoon: Killings of Kiddo's beloved	2.37%
4	Pasadena Streect House, Doorbell	2.39%
7	Nikki's Arrival & Kitchen Discussion	2.48%
50	Talking with Ken Ishii, Gathering of 88	2.54%
8	Gunshot, Witness, Kiddo's Blog	2.62%
46	Walking slowly with woman	2.80%
10	Sheriff, Death Scene, Kiddo alive	2.82%
26	Chapter (5) Titles	2.85%
56	Talking with O-Ren Ishii	2.87%
11	Comma, Elle Driver poisoning	2.90%
21	Cartoon: World's Assassin	2.91%
40	Sending 3 more- exhanging looks	2.94%
35	Challenge for fight	2.96%
3	Titles	3.10%
36	Memory III	3.13%
12	Wake Up, Crying	3.14%
29	Mafia	3.18%
1	70s Grindhouse Preview Title	3.44%
34	House of Blue Leaves, Arrow, WC	3.51%
58	Asking forgiveness	3.51%
55	Fighting O-Ren Ishii I	3.80%
61	To be continued	3.99%
38	Public Fear	4.01%
59	Death of O-Ren Ishii	4.09%
33	Memory II	4.11%
57	Revenge Battle	4.65%
32	Tokyo	4.66%
15	Garage	4.67%
25	JP Resto, Hatori Hanzo, Ritual	4.73%
60	Post Mortem	5.10%
54	Talking to survivors & O-Ren Ishii	5.26%
23	Garage II, Ticket to Japan	6.20%
44	Moment of preparation of Fight	6.25%
18	Intro to Cartoon	6.88%
42	Waiting for more	7.34%
24	Chapter (4) Title	8.73%
62	Closing Titles	12.89%
48	Talking with Gogo	14.87%

## Table 4 Blinking Frequency

Ch	Description	Blink Rate
		B/ $\Delta$ F
9	Chapter (2) Title	0.00%
43	Fighting with Man and Woman	0.00%
53	Battle with the chief of the 88	0.28%
41	Fighting 3 subordinates	0.36%
20	Cartoon: Revenge	0.39%
49	Fighting with Gogo	0.43%
30	Tanaka's Decapitation	0.47%
37	Louise's Amputation	0.50%
52	Chicken	0.54%
14	Killing Raper & Punishing Doctor	0.58%
61	To be continued	0.59%
56	Talking with O-Ren Ishii	0.59%
51	Fighting with 88	0.63%
39	Fighting with Miki (First Subordinate)	0.66%
19	Cartoon: Parents' Assassination	0.68%
5	Memory I	0.71%
22	Cartoon: Killings of Kiddo's beloved	0.74%
16	Deadly Vipers	0.76%
47	Fighting with woman	0.78%
17	Chapter (3) Title	0.79%
12	Wake Up, Crying	0.82%
45	Kill the man	0.94%
6	Fight with Vernita Green	0.96%
13	Rape	0.99%
28	Gogo's Ruthlessness	1.01%
31	"Sweet" Talk	1.03%
50	Talking with Ken Ishii, Gathering of 88	1.08%
40	Sending 3 more- exchanging looks	1.10%
27	Mafia meeting, Oren Ishii's Clan	1.11%
26	Chapter (5) Titles	1.14%
11	Comma, Elle Driver poisoning	1.21%
8	Gunshot, Witness, Kiddo's Blog	1.25%
29	Mafia	1.25%
7	Nikki's Arrival & Kitchen Discussion	1.26%
23	Garage II, Ticket to Japan	1.27%
58	Asking forgiveness	1.34%
2	Blood Spattered Bride & Gunshot	1.34%
36	Memory III	1.34%
25	JP Resto, Hatori Hanzo, Ritual	1.45%
15	Garage	1.46%
4	Pasadena Street House, Doorbell	1.46%
10	Sheriff, Death Scene, Kiddo alive	1.48%
46	Walking slowly with woman	1.51%
21	Cartoon: World's Assassin	1.53%
35	Challenge for fight	1.54%
32	Tokyo	1.54%
34	House of Blue Leaves, Arrow, WC	1.56%
60	Post Mortem	1.61%
57	Revenge Battle	1.66%
54	Talking to survivors & O-Ren Ishii	1.72%
59	Death of O-Ren Ishii	1.72%
55	Fighting O-Ren Ishii I	1.74%
33	Memory II	1.80%
38	Public Fear	1.80%
62	Closing Titles	1.89%
3	Titles	1.90%
1	70s Grindhouse Preview Title	2.56%
24	Chapter (4) Title	2.62%
18	Intro to Cartoon	2.65%
44	Moment of preparation of Fight	3.13%
42	Waiting for more	3.67%
48	Talking with Gogo	7.59%



**Table 5 Difference at the Representation Rate**

Ch	Description	D.R.R
25	JP Resto, Hatori Hanzo, Ritual	-6.425%
54	Talking to survivors & O-Ren Ishii	-2.308%
62	Closing Titles	-1.863%
15	Garage	-1.307%
61	To be continued	-1.214%
32	Tokyo	-1.165%
23	Garage II, Ticket to Japan	-0.972%
60	Post Mortem	-0.954%
48	Talking with Gogo	-0.787%
34	House of Blue Leaves, Arrow, WC	-0.699%
18	Intro to Cartoon	-0.450%
55	Fighting O-Ren Ishii I	-0.301%
24	Chapter (4) Title	-0.272%
42	Waiting for more	-0.194%
38	Public Fear	-0.183%
58	Asking forgiveness	-0.157%
44	Moment of preparation of Fight	-0.127%
57	Revenge Battle	-0.096%
59	Death of O-Ren Ishii	-0.093%
1	70s Grindhouse Preview Title	-0.091%
33	Memory II	-0.080%
29	Mafia	-0.026%
36	Memory III	0.001%
12	Wake Up, Crying	0.005%
40	Sending 3 more- exchanging looks	0.012%
26	Chapter (5) Titles	0.022%
45	Kill the man	0.028%
35	Challenge for fight	0.033%
46	Walking slowly with woman	0.035%
3	Titles	0.037%
17	Chapter (3) Title	0.042%
21	Cartoon: World's Assassin	0.064%
56	Talking with O-Ren Ishii	0.079%
43	Fighting with Man and Woman	0.084%
22	Cartoon: Killings of Kiddo's beloved	0.112%
4	Pasadena Street House, Doorbell	0.121%
28	Gogo's Ruthlessness	0.123%
5	Memory I	0.125%
9	Chapter (2) Title	0.136%
41	Fighting 3 subordinates	0.143%
47	Fighting with woman	0.150%
37	Louise's Amputation	0.184%
39	Fighting with Miki (First Subordinate)	0.239%
31	"Sweet" Talk	0.297%
10	Sheriff, Death Scene, Kiddo alive	0.346%
16	Deadly Vipers	0.393%
30	Tanaka's Decapitation	0.405%
11	Comma, Elle Driver poisoning	0.408%
8	Gunshot, Witness, Kiddo's Blog	0.429%
50	Talking with Ken Ishii, Gathering of 88	0.430%
27	Mafia meeting, Oren Ishii's Clan	0.442%
52	Chicken	0.467%
13	Rape	0.502%
2	Blood Spattered Bride & Gunshot	0.612%
6	Fight with Vernita Green	0.654%
53	Battle with the chief of the 88	0.656%
7	Nikki's Arrival & Kitchen Discussion	1.213%
20	Cartoon: Revenge	1.365%
14	Killing Raper & Punishing Doctor	1.934%
49	Fighting with Gogo	2.203%
19	Cartoon: Parents' Assassination	2.271%
51	Fighting with 88	2.962%

**Reduced Scale Timeline showing the Density of the Footage missed by Alejandro through Blinking while watching *Kill Bill Vol. 1***



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