

## **Module 3.5**

### **Semiotics, Media and Communication: Cultural Representations in Filmic and Photographic Documents**

# **FILMED VIOLENCE: FIGHTS “CAUGHT ON VIDEO”**

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**Lugano, 30.11.2009**

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## 1/ Introduction

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We have chosen to examine how social face is presented in “caught on video” fights. Our survey is limited to amateur videos of fights that involve only human beings – not animal fights, not fights that take place during televised events (like sports), not accidental violence, etc. We want to look at an author's purpose to film a fight. Is this a new reflex to certain situations that just happen in reality, a sort of sensational journalism, a sort of voyeurism (like pornography)? Violence as entertainment is not new to human history – the Roman gladiators and public executions are probably the most prominent examples one can think of.

“[V]iolence as 'fun' and (sexual) lust (masochism, sadism) (viz. the Abu Ghraib and many other prison realities; concentration camps; detention centers,...)” and the “aesthetic appeal of violence (e.g. [the] film *Clockwork Orange* (1971) by Stanley Kubrick, book by Anthony Burgess)” are more modern versions of the same theme. (Stockinger 2009) With the democratization of public online video-sharing network sites, the human delight and glorification of violence can be shared and watched openly, with few restrictions.

Our technique and intention of analysis is to look at who does this – who films and shares videos of violence (i.e. videos of fights in this case). To limit the scope of our analysis we are focusing on the actors in a video, the author included. Our unit of analysis is the social actor in order to analyze the social agency in a certain type of interaction that is physical fighting. In the video the verbal fighting isn't the main interest of the author but only the hint that physical violence, the real goal of filming, may follow. We start our analysis of a video from the moment of physical violence. Because we don't know the language or the sound is bad or nonexistent in many fight videos, we can only judge the role of the social actors on their physical behavior – the same physical behavior that is the author's purpose of the filming.

For organizational reasons we have already classified the following videos in four categories that are explained after the video analyses in section 4.2.

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## 2/ Analysis of a filmed fight

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### 2.1/ Reference Video

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In order to analyze this type of amateur sensational journalism, we randomly selected a video of a filmed fight “caught on video”. The analysis of this first video will serve as a reference on which we will build the analysis of other similar videos.

**Video 1.1** : “Girls fighting in the streets of india lol !!!!!” by varunkhoday  
(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62N5IzLTaVc> )

**Scene** (Video 1.1)

This video is one continuous shot, a 'raw' recording – spontaneous, unprepared/unmodified (but well filmed!) It is probably film with a mobile phone, because the sound is bad.

Do the fighting girls notice being filmed? Could there have been a possible conspiracy between the author and the aggressor?

The recording doesn't take place in India (even though the video's title says “India”). Maybe Indonesia. The surrounding place and the police officer/security guard uniforms may be indicative of the video's location. Comments on the YouTube video said “Berjaya Time Square, Kuala Lumpur”, but it could have taken place anywhere. Indeed, the fighting could be anywhere, a spontaneous, sudden 'human' reaction.

**Theme** (Video 1.1)

This video's figurative theme, seen in its iconic item, is the fight, a conflict between youngsters. There are violent and non-violent actors, but the video's overall theme is that the author condones/supports violent solutions to conflicts. It can be seen as a type of voyeurism.

**Pro-filmic situation** (Video 1.1)

What is the reality? The video is a “cat fight” between two girls, that doesn't take place in India. Somewhere, sometime, it could be anywhere.

**Social face/self-representation** (Video 1.1)

The fascination is with violence, because the author does not stop filming in order to stop the fight; we get the impression that s/he wants to see more even. What was the author's original intention/hope to have started filming in the first place? The author is saying that physical violence is an acceptable means/way to solve problems/disputes, even entertaining.

The author does not implicate her/himself in the conflict!

<b><u>Actors</u></b> (Video 1.1)	
author	Unknown person (who is not implicated in the video). One can ask if s/he is with the group (a possible conspiracy between the author and the aggressor?) because s/he is filming very close to the action, on what seems to be a mobile phone – the sound is bad, the quality is grainy and the image is unstable.
aggressor (initiator)	The girl speaking English, who seems to be from Southern Indian origin. She seems to have initiate the verbal argument and does initiate the physical violence.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	The girl who screams in what sounds like an Eastern Asian language. She does more than simply defend herself, she fights back, to become a “co-aggressor”.
Samaritan (intervenor)	The girl wearing a headscarf (in Indonesian style) who tries unsuccessfully to stop the fight. Is she with the girls fighting? Is she with the person filming? She seems to be part of the group.
Samaritan (victim)	The boy who at the beginning of the video is in the background looking in the direction of the arguing girls, who then comes to stop the fight and receives a punch in the face for his effort/good intention. He leaves the scene after this. Did he go get the police officers/security guards?
by-stander (passive)	The man who quickly enters the filming and leaves just as quickly after having recuperated his bag next to the potted plants in the background. He seems scared and worried, and not implicated (not willing to be implicated) in the violence.
authority figure (effective)	Two police men/security guards in uniforms who arrive and separate the fighting girls. The fighting girls seem to recognize their authority because they do stop fighting and accept to be separated by these two actors, as opposed to the two Samaritans who tried to stop the fighting but were unsuccessful.

In the following videos, we will briefly describe the scene only because our focus is on the roles of the actors.

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2.2/ Similar videos

**Video 1.2** : “teacher & Student Fight In (School)-jordan” (0:18) by saifoo90  
(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEKtzx5ddtI> )

**Scene** (Video 1.2)

The video title says that it takes place in the country of Jordan. The posting of this video on the web is culturally pertinent because in some cultures/societies such a video would be censored and part of a legal matter. It comes from a culture/society where teachers are probably permitted to physically discipline their students.

The video was probably filmed with a mobile phone because the image is unstable and the sound is bad. It is one unedited shot.

<b><u>Actors</u></b> (Video 1.2)	
author	Unknown student (who is not implicated in video). The author starts filming when he knows/suspects (through past cultural knowledge) that physical violence may occur as the teacher approaches the seated student in the back of the room. The author doesn't move to help and separate the fighters as do other students, but continues filming. He does not move but seems to stay seated during the whole video. He does not stand nor approach the 'action' to better film.
aggressor (initiator)	The teacher who initiates the physical violence (but we don't know who initiated the verbal aggression) by approaching the seated student with whom we can assume he has been arguing, by aggressively removing his belt that he then wields as a weapon and by grabbing the seated student by the ear.

aggressee (co-aggressor)	The seated student who stands and fights back energetically after the teacher grabs him.
Samaritan (intervener)	Three students who stand and go to separate the fighters after the seated student stands and pushes back the teacher while throwing punches at the teacher. We can see a fourth student who has stood to maybe help as well. These students appear to come from seats at the front of the classroom.
by-stander (passive)	The classmates who stay seated and do nothing to stop nor encourage the fighting.
authority figure (non-effective)	In this case, one would expect the teacher to be the authority figure, but the student pre-emptively attacks him. Do the Samaritan students try to separate the fighters in support of the teacher or the student?

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### Video 1.3 : “Fight between a student and teacher” (0:23) by kels027

(Web link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_MYLIppqac&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_MYLIppqac&feature=related) )

#### Scene (Video 1.3)

The teacher is again the physical aggressor (we believe from what we can see in the video) but no one moves to separate the fighters because they separate on their own accord. There is a lighter, funnier mood than in Video 1.2. Again the video was probably filmed with a mobile phone because the image is unstable and there is no sound.

<b><u>Actors</u></b> (Video 1.3)	
author	Unknown student (who is not implicated in video). We are not sure why the author starts filming, maybe because of a simple verbal argument, maybe already after a first physical aggression. The author stays seated like all the other students. The other students give the author a smile of amusement (or discomfort) after the end of the fight.
aggressor (initiator)	The teacher who initiates the physical violence (but we don't know who initiated the verbal aggression) by energetically pushing the student who stands up from his seat. The fight ends after the teacher steps away holding his hurt head. He follows the student as the student leaves the room.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	The student who stands and punches back once with his left hand then a second time with a book bag in his right hand.

by-stander (passive)	Nine classmates (that we can see in the video) who stay seated and do nothing to stop nor encourage the fighting. After the fighting student leaves we can see two students who smile and laugh.
by-stander (author)	Another student who, at the end of the video, turns and smiles at his classmates seated behind him, who may have also filmed the fight.
authority figure (non-effective)	In this case, one can say that the teacher is the authority figure because the other students stay nicely seated in their places, and the fighting student seems to leave the classroom after the teacher points in the direction of the door. However, the teacher was not an effective enough authority to prevent the student from hitting him.

**Video 1.4** : “Bad day at the office - Crazy office fight man” (2:50) by superschotje  
(Web link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0\\_\\_De4La0&NR=1&feature=fvwp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0__De4La0&NR=1&feature=fvwp) )

**Scene** (Video 1.4)

There is doubtful authenticity of this video because many such themes and scenes have been exploited in TV commercials. However, the event seems real. It is one long, unedited video shot from a high stationary position. Rock music has been added to the video.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 1.4)	
author (NA)	An author did not film this video. The video is survey camera footage that was merely cut/edited by the author who also added music.
aggressor (initiator)	The office worker who has papers from his desk knocked on the floor by a passing coworker. He initiates the physical violence (even though his clumsy coworker picks up the fallen papers, although sloppily) by hitting the clumsy worker on the head with his keyboard and by then pushing down onto the floor his seated colleague who shares a cubicle next to him and throwing his computer screen at the (female) coworker sitting across the walkway from his desk. He continues on a violent rampage throughout the office.
aggressee (victim)	Three coworkers who are initially attacked, but don't fight back. One coworker seems to try to talk to the aggressor who nonchalantly picks up the papers fallen from his desk which the aggressor then throws at him; he could have the role of a Samaritan depending on what he said (but there is no sound recorded). The aggressor also tackles one of the office workers he noticed filming his rampage.

by-stander (passive)	Over twenty office workers who cower out of the way of the aggressor's rampage. It is surprising that they don't flee the office; a few leave the office, mostly women, but late in the rampage.
by-stander (author)	Three people who film the violence on a mobile phone from the side and continue to film even when the aggressor approaches them. One person filming is even attacked.
authority figure (effective)	Two security guards who subdue the aggressor.

## **Video 1.5** : “Fight on SF Muni Bus in Chinatown - HIGH QUALITY ORIGINAL”

(2:33) by pereljon

(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx6FRSemW38&feature=related> )

### **Scene** (Video 1.5)

The video is one continuous shot with one large movement to change the angle of the camera to better film the action, in which we can see the author (unlike the other videos). It is filmed on a moving bus with a mobile phone (according to the author himself) and the sound is of medium quality. According to the author's comment on YouTube.com, the author's intention of filming was to document recurrent violence, of which he was a victim in the past, in order to raise awareness of the violence that he says is ignored by authorities.

The author's comment copied from YouTube.com:

“Oct 7, 2009 10am, Chinatown San Francisco. This fight occurred on the Muni Stockton route (the 9 i think) just before the stockton tunnel. As you can see, a simple argument about seat-hogging quickly turned into a full blown brawl. It's pretty clear who threw the first punch, you can see the bus' serial number, and the exact time in the video. By the way, this is the same bus where I was attacked 3 weeks ago, so I thought documenting the event was the most important thing I could do. This fight was NOT reported by the driver OR by the MUNI person who happened to be at the final stop (Stockton and Sutter). I'll be walking to work for a while. THIS IS FROM THE FULL QUALITY DOWNLOAD FROM MY IPHONE. ©2009, All Rights Reserved”

<b>Actors (Video 1.5)</b>	
author	The author who films himself in the video. The author makes a comment while filming.
aggressor (initiator)	The woman from “African” origin who punches the “Asian” woman in the face after both of them have been arguing loudly.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	The “Asian” woman who looks out and tries to appeal for support from other riders in the bus while verbally arguing with the aggressor. She fights back energetically.
Samaritan (intervener)	Another woman of “Asian” origin who manages to separate the fighting women by blocking the way of the aggressee after flees off the bus.
by-stander (active)	Three women riding the same bus who verbally try to calm the fighters. One woman constantly feels uncomfortable with the women quarrelling and later fighting behind her back and says something to the fighters.
by-stander (passive)	The rest of the people who are present on the bus at the time of the argument.

## **Video 1.6** : “Why You Never Hit A Girl” (0:41) by NothingToxicExtreme

(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX1nX0jbyPw&feature=related> )

### **Scene** (Video 1.6)

This video is of a fight between a man and a women in a swimming pool that is joined by many others in order to defend the woman against violence. The video's edited introduction conveys the message that hitting a woman is not the right thing to do and that a man deserves to be beat if he does aggress a woman. The video is one shot with an edited introduction and an edited slow-motion and repeated segment. The use zoom while filming means that it was probably filmed with a hand-held video camera. The sound in the video is good.

<b>Actors (Video 1.6)</b>	
author	Unknown person who filmed and edited the video. S/he uses the technique of zooming while filming and post-filming editing – slow motion and repetition of certain movements of actors in order to emphasize the moment when many men went to beat up the aggressor.

aggressor	Possibly the man who is fighting with the woman, judging from what can be seen in the video. The filming begins after the fight had already started so the initiator of the physical violence is unknown/uncertain.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	Possibly the woman who does fights back. (Our interpretation of the man as the aggressor and the woman as the aggressee are socially stereotypical. It can of course be the woman who aggressed the man.)
Samaritan (intervener)	Many - approximately fifteen men who rush to defend the woman by first separating the fighters and then attacking the aggressor.
by-stander (active)	Many people who are standing around the pool where the fight is taking place and shouting or otherwise reacting to what they see.
by-stander (passive)	Many people who are standing around the pool but not visibly reacting to what they see. There seem to be fewer passive by-standers than active.
by-stander (author)	Other people who are standing around the pool also filming the fight.

**Video 1.7** : “grannys fighting” (0:56) by dasweety  
(Web

link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeR1BlkjTVA&feature=PlayList&p=8A6E965A8E7100CD&playnext=1&playnext\\_from=PL&index=5](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeR1BlkjTVA&feature=PlayList&p=8A6E965A8E7100CD&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=5) )

**Scene** (Video 1.7)

Two old women sitting on the steps in front of an apartment block house are filmed using zoom. The video is out of focus in the beginning and the image remains grainy. Use of zoom and adequate sound means that it was probably filmed from a newer mobile phone. Comical music has been added over the author's comments and laughing.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 1.7)	
author	Unknown person whose voice is heard in the video. A male voice is heard, possibly the author's voice or the person standing with her/him, saying jokingly “Break grannies, break” in Russian. Much laughter can be heard from the author's side of the camera.
aggressor (initiator)	The old woman in red who initiates the fight by hitting the other “granny” with her bag. However, it is not clear whether it was the very beginning of the fight or the continuation.

aggressee (co-aggessor)	The old woman in blue who hits back using the same technique as the old woman in red.
by-stander (passive)	A man who passes by before the camera.

### 3/ Contrasting videos

**Video 2.1** : “Student Gets Angry and Slaps Classmate Resulting in a KO”  
(0:28) by eurovictor  
(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PwuzlTsTy0&NR=1> )

**Scene** (Video 2.1)

This video takes place in a classroom setting, where it seems that a debate-type discussion or a practice lesson is being filmed. The original intent of the video is not a fight, however, the author indicates the change in focus from the discussion/lesson to the fight with the movement of the camera rather early in the video. The image is stable and the sound is adequate, indicating that it was probably filmed from a stationary video camera.

There is an additional role here – antagonist/provoker. The aggressor, the first to hit/move/throw a punch, acts out towards an innocent who has been set up by the provoker. It is a manipulated triangle of aggression.

The act of taking one's shirt off before fighting may be culturally unique – signifying the desire or readiness to fight, a seriousness to fight, as a sign of masculinity or masculine challenge.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 2.1)	
author	Unknown person (who is not implicated in the video). The author shifts the scene to the left to follow the fight.
antagonist/provoker	The student who taps the other student on the back of the head blaming it on a third student seated behind them.

aggressor	The duped student being hit on the back of the head who seems to lose his temper, stand up and knock down the third student he has been led to believe is the one hitting him on the back of the head.
aggressee (victim)	The third student who is falsely blamed for hitting the other student sitting in front of him on the back of the head.
by-stander (passive)	Five other students, of whom two girls in the back of the room react as if they are shocked upon seeing the student knocked to the floor.

## Video 2.2 : “Rap Battle Fight!” (0:55) by pontelucas

(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYX64VP3xRw> )

### Scene (Video 2.1)

The recording is originally of a rap (verbal) battle filmed on the stage of a sports gymnasium, that becomes a physical battle after one rapper punches his opponent and their supporters all start fighting together. The video may have been filmed with a hand-held video camera, however the image is pixelled when quick movements are filmed. The sound in the video is good.

<b><u>Actors</u></b> (Video 2.2)	
author	Unknown person (who is not implicated in the video). When the fight breaks out the author begins to take distance by stepping back to eventually move quite far away from her/his original position of filming.
aggressor (initiator)	A rapper who feels insulted and punches his verbal opponent.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	The second rapper who stands his ground and is punched by his verbal opponent even after having taken a step backwards.
gang	About fifteen supporters of the two opponents who join the battle when it becomes physical. Some audience members may have also become involved in the fighting as the fighters spread out from the stage.
by-standers (active)	Some audience members who verbally encourage the fighters
by-standers (passive)	Many audience members seem to take a distance (like the author) so as not to be involved in the physical fighting.

### **Video 3.1** : “After School Fight” (2:14) by (unknown)

(Web link: [http://www.fightsinschool.com/fights/after\\_school\\_fight.php](http://www.fightsinschool.com/fights/after_school_fight.php) )

#### **Scene** (Video 3.1)

A group surrounds the fighters who are the spectacle/show, on a deserted road in the woods. The author starts filming in anticipation of the beginning of the violence. Many people other than the author are filming. The spectators laugh and joke. A Scandinavian language, like Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, is spoken in addition to English.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 3.1)	
author	Unknown person (who is not implicated in video, except for comments in an unknown language). The author starts filming when he knows/suspects that two boys will start fighting. The author doesn't move away from the fighters, his purpose, accepted by the fighters and the other spectators, is to film the violence. As the fight progresses and becomes 'dull', we can hear comments by the author and another spectator, who cracks a joke that makes the author laugh. The author films from a stationary position, focusing on the fighters as they move around.
aggressor (co-aggressor)	Both fighters take a fighting pose and begin at the same time. Their fight was pre-arranged.
by-stander (active)	About 15 other youngsters, mostly boys, 2 or 3 girls. (All of the by-standers are considered active by their mere presence because they would not be at the appointment to fight if they did not want to watch and encourage the fighters.)
by-stander (author)	3 or 4 of the spectators who also film while they watch the fight.

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### **Video 3.2** : “Skinny Girl Beats up Fat Boy 2” (2:45) by xoKPx3xo

(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJg82re9Bf4> )

#### **Scene** (Video 3.2)

Like a family home video, this fight was a family event in a home's back-yard (with balloons), encouraged by the parents or other family members. The children fighting are probably imitating moves seen on TV or in a movie, which are appreciated by the author and/or spectators. The presence of a toddler in the shot was bothering the spectators who didn't want

her in the shot, seeing her as preventing the fighting. The video is an example of the banalization of violence even among children.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 3.2)	
author	Unknown person (who is not implicated in video, except for comments). The author starts filming when she knows that the two children will start fighting. The author's stated purpose, accepted by the fighters and the other spectators, is to film the violence. The camera moves to better focus on the fighters from a better angle.
aggressor (co-aggressor)	A girl and a boy. Both fighters take a fighting pose and begin at the same time. Their fight was pre-arranged. They begin relaxed and barefoot (indication of preparation to fight?). There is not a lot of aggression, as if they are imitating what they have seen on television. The girl smiles and giggles during the fight. There is laughing at the end as she "wins".
by-stander (active)	Unseen adults/parents whose voices can be heard, saying comments, suggesting what "hold" the fighters should try "this time", implying that this is a repeated event. One adult says he "can't miss", i.e. wants to see/watch. The adult voices cheer as the fight progresses. One child/toddler with her doll and a balloon (indicating maybe a party) who enters the scene at three different moments (and is told to get "out of the way so they can fight", to get "out of the way before you get hurt", etc.)
by-stander (passive)	2 or 3 other children's voices can be heard. One child/toddler with her doll and a balloon (indicating maybe a party) walks into the scene twice. A second even younger child, also with a balloon, wanders into the background near the end of the fight.
authority figure (non-effective)	One would assume that the adults/parents heard out of scene would act to stop the fight, but they are perhaps the ones who instigated/suggested the fight take place. More than condone, they encourage the fight. One woman is heard saying, "Alright come on that's enough. Come on. Uh-oh." near the end of the fight. Was this directed to the fighters or the toddlers wandering about? The man's voice suggesting the "holds" in the beginning seems to say disappointedly "Alright. Fights over. He already lost." This seems to be directed at the woman who had already said, "enough" to stop the fight.

## Video 4.1 : “highschool fight” (0:22) by tmstunts

(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFbueshLnYE&NR=1&feature=fvwp> )

### Scene (Video 4.1)

This video is like video 3.1, but it is a choreographed/directed video. For example, the spectators start encouraging the fighters all at the same time as if on cue. The video is edited into three scenes shot from two different angles, with added sound-effects.

<u>Actors</u> (Video 4.1)	
author	Unknown director. The author films a choreographed fight shot with three edited scenes from two different angles. Hitting noises, cheering and booing sounds are added and a voice-over has been added at the end, about “a date with a chick”.
aggressor (co-aggressors)	Two young men who meet in a designated place (surrounded by a crowd) in order to fight a pre-arranged fight.
by-stander (active)	A circular crowd that starts to agitate as if on cue at the beginning of the video. 3 or 4 spectators film the fight, one with a hand-held video camera, the others with mobile phones. At the end 4 or 5 spectators move into the circle to take pictures with their mobile phone of the loser knocked-out on the ground, while others point their fingers at him.
by-stander (author)	Several spectators who film on mobile phones and hand-held cameras, in imitation of what happens at real-life fights.

## Video 4.2 : “He "Fights" After Sneeze?” (0:43) by funnyd00ds

(Web link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9D5gF\\_P67g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9D5gF_P67g) )

### Scene (Video 4.2)

This video is a film with a directed scenario, maybe even dialogue, with a plot that leads to violence.

<u>Actors</u> (Video 4.2)	
author (director)	Unknown director. The author films a directed scenario. Noises – screams, animal noises, bangs for the punches, are added at the end of the recording.

aggressor (initiator)	One student seated in the front row who while “taking an exam” is spit on (by the aggressee's fourth sneeze).
aggressee (victim)	The student who is sneezing because of “allergies” in the back row.
Samaritan (intervener)	Third student who says “Bless you” after the first sneeze and “Shhhh” after the third sneeze. He tries to separate the fighters.

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**Video 4.3** : “fighting in kongfu college of china(暴强武术学校学生在食堂打架)”  
(1:25) by immelmanalex  
(Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIgXEXNEFbw> )

**Scene** (Video 4.3)

This video contains choreographed fighting and directed shooting/filming. There are two long shots from two different angles with the action always well centered. There are four actors with a plot/storyline filmed in a cafeteria.

<b>Actors</b> (Video 4.3)	
author (director)	Unknown director. The author demonstrates a professional use of zoom and action-following techniques. The characters and action is always well framed, which leads us to believe that the scene was choreographed. There is also dialogue (in an unknown language) but no sound editing.
aggressor (initiator)	The girl who throws a bottle that hits a boy talking on the phone. She slaps his hand down when he approaches her talking to her about the bottle and pointing at her. The girl leaves finally at the end, holding her sore cheek, with her “hero” after he defeats the others for her.
aggressee (co-aggressor)	The boy who attacks the girl with martial arts and the girl fights back but falls to the ground, beaten. He also attacks a second boy who helps the girl.
Samaritan (“hero”)	A second boy who helps the fallen girl to a seat and then pulls the first boy by the shirt collar in the direction of the exit. The first boy fights back and the two boys have a well choreographed martial arts fight.
gang (small)	A third boy who attacks the second after the second has defeated the first, continues to fight the second in a well choreographed martial arts fight.

by-stander (passive)	30 to 40 diners who watch the spectacle. Some stand to better see the action, some stay seated, but none participate.
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## 4/ Actors and Categories

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### 4.1/ Actors in Filmed Fights

By looking at the roles of the actors in the videos of fights we think that we can see that the role of the author is pertinent, because by taking on the role of the author filming a fight, by elimination of choice, the author does not assume another possible social role. By stepping out of the scene in order to film the author has altered the scene and therefore reality. The identity and roles of the actors are based on what is seen in the video and / or what can seem to be logically inferred.

We differentiate between an author who we assume films, edits, etc. and an author who edits only (e.g. surveillance video 1.4). We cannot interpret if the person who posts the video is also an author due to the nature of public online video-sharing network sites and the lack of informal intellectual property rights.

The following table presents the roles and the sub-categories of the roles of the actors in each video.

Actors	Sub-categories	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	2.2	3.1	3.2	4.1	4.2	4.3	TOTAL
Author	Unknown	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√				<b>9</b>
	Known					√										<b>1</b>
	Director												√	√	√	<b>3</b>
Aggressor	Initiator	√	√		√	√		√	√	√				√	√	<b>9</b>
	Uncertain initiator			√			√									<b>2</b>
	Co-aggressors										√	√	√			<b>3</b>
Antagonist	Provoker								√							<b>1</b>
Aggressee	Co-aggressor	√	√	√		√	√	√		√					√	<b>8</b>
	Victim				√				√					√		<b>3</b>
Samaritan	Intervener	√	√	√		√	√							√		<b>6</b>
	Victim	√														<b>1</b>
	“Hero”														√	<b>1</b>
By-stander	Passive	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√	<b>10</b>
	Active					√	√			√	√	√	√			<b>7</b>
	Other author			√	√		√				√		√			<b>5</b>
Gang fighters	Big group									√						<b>1</b>
	Small group														√	<b>1</b>
Authority figure	Effective	√			√											<b>2</b>
	Non-effective			√								√				<b>2</b>

The difference between a gang and Samaritans is that a gang has pre-established affiliations to sides and membership, whereas, Samaritans are not acquaintances of the aggressors. Where a traditional authority figure does not assume a role of an authority figure, they either take the role of by-standers (e.g. video 3.2) or aggressors or aggressees (e.g. videos 1.2 and 1.3). As in any fight, battle or war not only are the aggressees victims, but there are also collateral victims (e.g. video 1.1).

## 4.2/ Categories of Filmed Fights

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We have developed four different categories based on the reason why the author of a fight video films the fight. The contrasting categories of fight videos are:

Type of video	Sample videos
1) spontaneous violence	1.1 – 1.7
2) unplanned violence	2.1 – 2.2
3) staged violence	3.1 – 3.2
4) choreographed violence	4.1 – 4.3

### **1) Spontaneous violence**

The author of this type of videos of filmed fights normally starts recording after the beginning of the dispute/fight, the yelling/argument having attracted her/his attention. Both the fight and the act of filming are spontaneous. These usually occur in public, in the 'street' (e.g. police brutality) and include fights in school between teachers and students, video surveillance (e.g. office fights), etc.

### **2) Unplanned/unexpected violence**

The author of this type of video is usually recording something else when a fight breaks out and this fight becomes the new focus of the recording.

### **3) Staged violence**

The author of this type of video has planned to record a fight, the fight having been scheduled/planned/known of in advance. The fight is normally recorded from its beginning. These videos usually include a group encouraging the fighters (e.g. youngsters, school fights, home-video fun fights (e.g. families, friends, “sexy girls”, etc.), etc.).

### **4) Choreographed violence**

The author of this type of video and the actors/fighters have coordinated the filming and the fighting. This is normally amateur filming that imitates professional films. There is normally also a type of storyline.

## 5/ Conclusions

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Most of the fight videos analyzed here are raw/brut footage, due mainly to the 'spontaneous' nature of violence. Raw footage has a more authentic appeal; most videos are left un-edited in order not to miss any of the 'action'. Most of the fight videos are simply one continuous shot that follows the fighters, change of focus/view being unplanned. Even the staged videos of fights are not highly edited. Editing can change the author's purpose by changing the focus of the video. Depending on the editing, the content of the video is changed. In fight videos, editing can draw attention away from the brutality of the 'action' and it is this brutality that the author wants to convey to its fullest. Fights are usually filmed as one long shot so as not to miss any 'action'. Most videos are short because violence is to some degree socially unacceptable, and should be stopped. (Certain videos of fights are censored, in certain countries, for example when they may be part of a legal matter.) There are different degrees of acceptability and concepts of normality that concern violence, e.g. from the illegality to physically discipline one's child in Finland to the social acceptability of domestic violence in certain countries.

Not only is it pertinent why the author filmed the fight, but also why that the author or acquaintance posted the video on the internet for everyone to see. This is a desire to share the fight experience with others, indicating a glorification of fighting and violence. This is a type of voyeurism like other socially censored events (e.g. pornography). It is the creation of the virtual networks that allows the authors to share their videos and it is also because of this that authors are filming more and more today so that they can share their personal work and creation. By sharing videos they acquire a notion of a celebrity because they can survey how popular their creations are. Authors can access statistics of how many visits or hits that a video posting has received. They can also receive comments and visitors' impressions of their videos. The more the visitors watch a video, the more the author will consider the reactions and demand of her/his public, therefore, tailoring future creations in order to attract the largest public possible.

On public online video-sharing network sites, like YouTube.com, DailyMotion.com, Vkontakte.ru, etc., authors can freely post their videos with little censorship. The motivation

to post a video on such a site is unremunerated, however there exist sites that will pay to have the right to diffuse certain types of videos, usually the most shocking videos – where we can see people seriously injured, mortally wounded, and dead (e.g. TooShocking.com, ToxicJunction.com, Yikers.com, etc. to only name a few of the hundreds (in English – perhaps thousands in all different languages)). There is also a mixing of professional and nonprofessional/amateur journalism when formal-sector news reporting networks pay amateur authors to have the rights to use the content of their videos, the amateur authors often being the first witnesses to many events that they can record with their widely-used video recorders (e.g. almost all mobile phones today have filming capacities). A more noble motivation to filming and posting fight videos would be to make a sort of statement of social responsibility and awareness, so that authorities and the general public can become aware of possible recurrent violence in certain areas. (See Video 1.5, Comments)

The pro-filmic situation of an amateur video is different from professional videos in which the author is separated from the scene by her/his directing responsibility. In reality, the author of an amateur video is often not a “director” and is not separated from the scene, i.e. reality. However, a new human reaction is developing because of the motivation to post videos on the internet; there is a new motivation, other than simple voyeurism, to watch people fight, and even encourage/instigate fights so that they can be filmed. Because the author desires to see a fight in order to film it, s/he will not become involved in the scene, separating her/himself from the scene, as is a director, to the point of encouraging the fight by condonation. The author will not try to stop the fight, but rather basks in its violence. The amateur author has become a new social role in many diverse pro-filmic situations. By filming the author has created her/his identity in the situation.

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## 6/ Reflections

Another topic of analysis would be why the author stops filming when s/he does. Is there a limit to the thirst for violence? Do outside factors prevent the author from continuing to film, like the arrival of an authority figure? Does the author become bored and believe that there is nothing more of interest to film?

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## 7/ Bibliography

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Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62N5IzLTaVc>

Video 1.2 : “teacher & Student Fight In (School)-jordan” (0:18) by saifoo90

Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEKtzx5ddtI>

Video 1.3 : “Fight between a student and teacher” (0:23) by kels027

Web link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_MYLIppqac&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_MYLIppqac&feature=related)

Video 1.4 “Bad day at the office - Crazy office fight man” (2:50) by superschotje

Web link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0\\_\\_De4La0&NR=1&feature=fvwp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG0__De4La0&NR=1&feature=fvwp)

Video 1.5 : “Fight on SF Muni Bus in Chinatown - HIGH QUALITY ORIGINAL” (2:33) by pereljon

Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx6FRSemW38&feature=related>

Video 1.6 : “Why You Never Hit A Girl” (0:41) by NothingToxicExtreme

Web link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX1nX0jbyPw&feature=related>

Video 1.7 : “grannys fighting” (0:56) by dasweety

Web

link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeR1BlkjTVA&feature=PlayList&p=8A6E965A8E7100CD&playnext=1&playnext\\_from=PL&index=5](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeR1BlkjTVA&feature=PlayList&p=8A6E965A8E7100CD&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=5)

Video 2.1 : “Student Gets Angry and Slaps Classmate Resulting in a KO” (0:28) by eurovictor

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Video 2.2 : “Rap Battle Fight!” (0:55) by pontelucas

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Video 3.1 : “After School Fight” (2:14) by (unknown)

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Video 3.2 : “Skinny Girl Beats up Fat Boy 2” (2:45) by xoKPx3xo

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Video 4.3 : “fighting in kongfu college of china(暴强武术学校学生在食堂打架)” (1:25) by  
immelmanalex

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