

Interview about violent images

Frédéric Cusset interviewed by Fleur van Stratum

OK so I wanted to ask you a few things about images and how they impact you. First question was like what's the memory of the first image you saw. Do you have a childhood memory of an image that marked you ?

I don't have really a memory about an image, about video maybe.

OK what type of video ?

I remember I was watching cartoons on TV.

Okay. What type of cartoons ?

I don't know if I can say the name of the channel, it was on cartoon networks.

OK. And why do you think you still remember that or why did those images impact you ?

I think it was because I liked the cartoons I was watching.

OK so it was like a pleasant moment that you remember. And I guess the moment.

Yeah yeah. There was a pleasant moment.

And about the content of the cartoon could you still be able now to tell what the messages were, what it was telling ? Or can you just remember the vibe and the the feeling you had watching them ?

It usually was a hero and a bad guy and the hero beating the bad guy. That's it.

OK. And would you identify with the hero ?

Yeah

OK. So you're talking about like kind of a fight between a hero and a bad guy. Were the images also showing the fight or was it more suggested ?

No it was showing the fight.

And how old were you when you were looking at those cartoons ? Approximately.

If I remember I was like five or six.

And do you remember if at the time you were thinking those images were violent ?

No.

And if you're looking, thinking back at it now were they violent for a young kid ?

Yeah I think it was violent. But it was kind of an innocent violence.

OK can you maybe elaborate why it felt like that ?

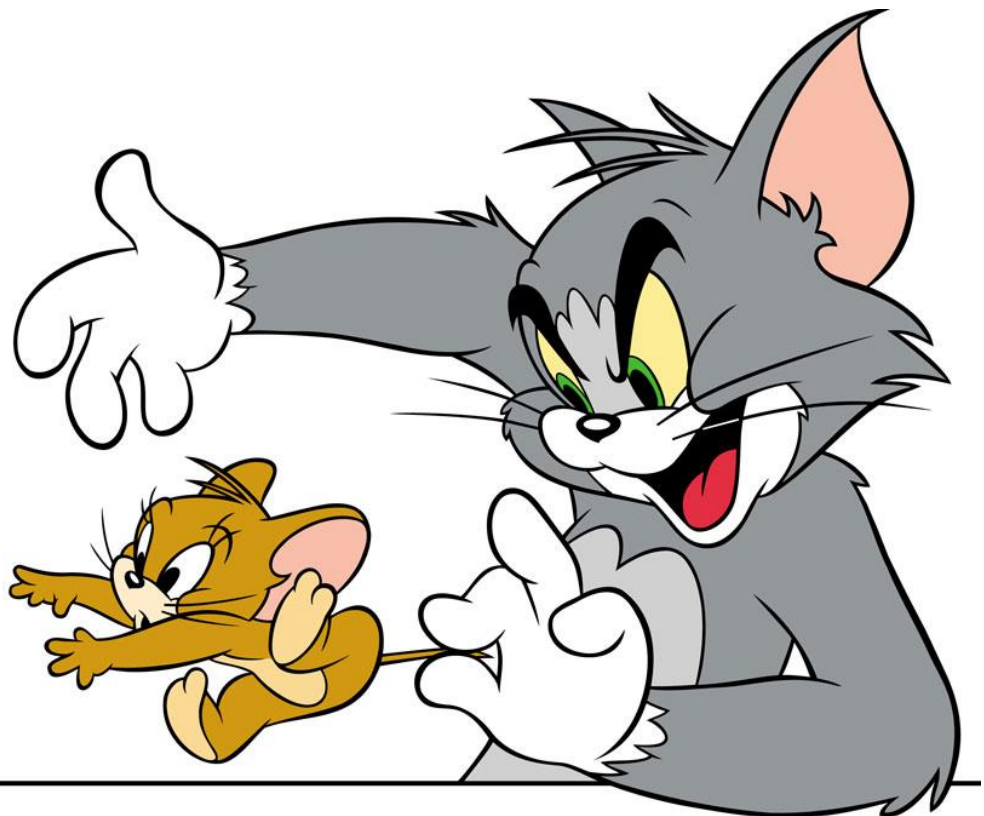
because I don't know how to explain it but like in a cartoon when the good guy is beating the bad guy it usually is like with a trick like a trick that make us laugh.

OK. So the the fact that you're always looking in a perspective of the hero maybe also. So you're always on the good side when the images filmed in the in from the good side. Maybe is that something ?

No there is also the side of the bad guy.

So it's more about the humor like those tricks that you're talking about.

Yeah. It was Tom & Jerry.



OK, for example. Yeah. OK so the violence is like taken away by humoristic images.

Yes.

OK. So that's more when you were a child, is there later on if you had to to tell me an image that you did consider violent and that you remember is there one in particular ?

Hum an image like what ?

well it can be a still image or a video but something that you've seen in your life and that you do remember that at the time you found it violent in the opposition of the cartoons that you thought were more fun even if there was violence depicted. Is there an image during your lifetime that you did feel was violent ?

I think it was on the TV too.

Okay.

I was watching TV, I was going through all the channels and I end up watching the movie doom, it's like in a spaceship and everything and it was violent and gory at the same time.



OK. So there would you say that the story was violent or the images itself were violent ?

I didn't, still now it's not my type of movie so I don't really know what was the scenario of the movie.

OK. And at the time you didn't understand it you just saw the images and the images felt violent so it's a visual violence ?

yes

OK. So that's interesting because: it's being a kid, you have those cartoons where the scenario made you think that the images were not violence because the scenario was funny and then you had those other images that are oppositely where you only remember the visuals. Maybe the scenario was also violent but you don't even remember it. And is there something maybe later on in life like this year or maybe as an adult right now that you see or that you remember being a violent image ? in 2019 or maybe a little bit before but now as an adult.

I don't really know if I saw some violent image because usually I kind of try to avoid them, so ...

OK and what do you avoid then for example what do you know exists but you didn't watch ?

hum terror attacks.



OK videos of attacks of terrorism.

Yeah.

OK. And you decide to not watch the images but do you read maybe about the stories? do you try to stay informed ?

I try to stay informed but like the minimum like just knowing. Yes something happened. Yeah that's it.

OK. OK. So even reading about it it feels too violent for you ?

yeah it's violent but in the way of mm I don't know how to explain it. I know this is violent. If it was a movie I would have been: Yeah it's a movie. But I know it's in real life so I know it really impacts something in the real life.

OK. So there's no filter anymore. OK. And that's why you try to avoid it ?

Yeah.

You would watch this kind of images if they were fictional. You could watch movies with attacks.

it wouldn't bother me.

OK so then there is the fact that you know what's true and what's not in a certain way and that creates a filter for you in fiction. OK that's interesting. And well maybe the ways that are offered to you now are not compatible. But would you like to have more knowledge about for example those attacks if it wasn't in the way that their information is given now if it was maybe less violent or a completely different experience would you be interested in having more information or is that not something you're looking for ?

No it's not something I'm looking for.

OK. OK. That's interesting. I don't have any more questions for you right now. I might come back with you if I have a special image or that I want to show you. I might send it to you and we can exchange about that if you're OK with it.

OK. Thank you.