



# 'I feel PEOPLE need to WAKE UP'

◀ M3

I don't think I am a child of Tarantino. I think I am a child of Scorsese who fantasizes about Tarantino.

But I think there is a new generation – I call them the generation of Torrents. They had no money in their pocket, but they wanted to have access to cinema from the world, which our country and distributors would never release. And Torrents gave them access to it.

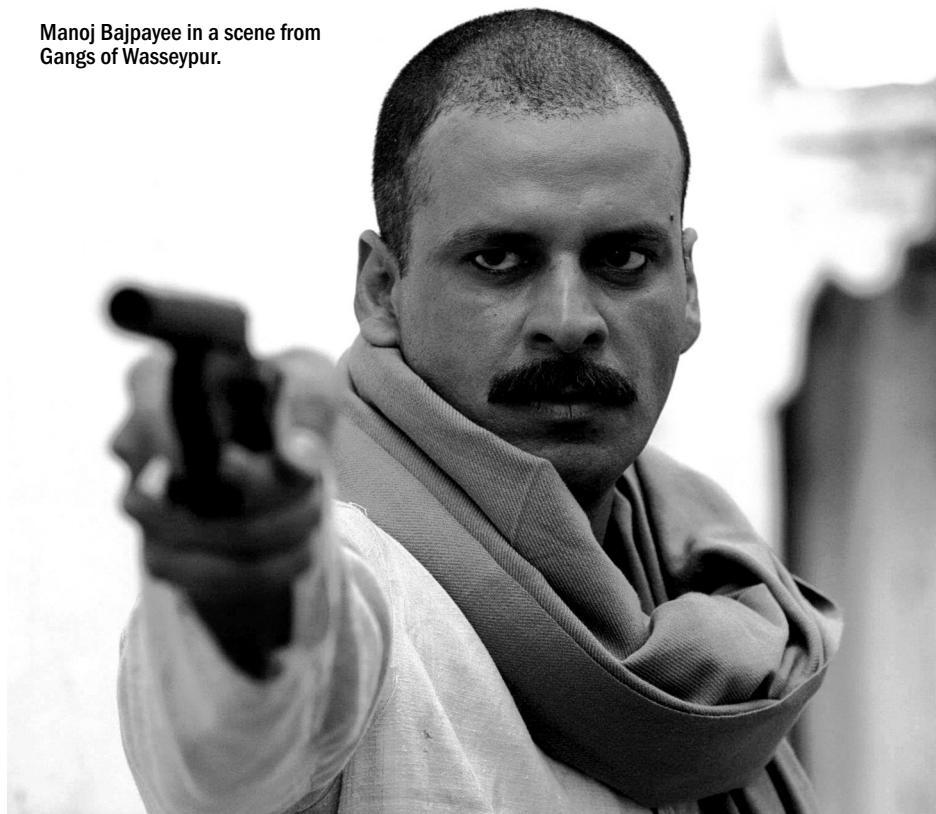
You go down to Tamil Nadu and see the incredible movies being made there. This generation is changing cinema. That is also now happening in Hindi films. And Tarantino wasn't the only one making violent films. They started watching Korean and Chinese films.

But it is true that post-*Pulp Fiction*, suddenly many people started playing with structure a lot. And Tarantino being a geek, he empowered the geeks who are making the best films now.

**But are these films organic to Indian storytelling?**

There is more Indian story telling in regional cinema. What Marathi cinema is doing is real India. And what Tamil cinema is doing is - portions of it are hard to deal with, when see you works of Vetrimaaran or Sasikumar's *Subramaniapuram*, they are talking about a South India, which is obsessed, with cinema and at the same time they have violence in their everyday life.

Manoj Bajpayee in a scene from *Gangs of Wasseypur*.



It's different with Hindi films because that cinema has become more urban and most of the Hindi filmmakers write in English. So their films tend to be more

influenced by the West, barring a Tigmanshu Dhulia who is very rooted.

Also unlike Hindi filmmakers Tamil directors are not aware of an international

audience. They only care about the local audience. Hindi filmmakers want to reach out to a larger audience and so they may have a western way of storytelling.

**In *Gangs of Wasseypur 2*. How did you decide how far you would go with the violence?**

It's based on a true story. The man was killed with 700 bullets and when the police came to pick up the body, the hand just came off. They had to eventually pick up the body with shovels. They refused to do the postmortem.

Even Manoj Bajpayee's killing in the first part is inspired by real life. Munawar Khan was shot just like that and he went on a rickshaw with a bullet in his head. He died in the rickshaw. And it happened at a marketplace. So it was all a recreation of what actually happened.

I just made it more dramatic and cinematic.

The reality is that violence is power. The whole beheading actually took place in the marketplace as people were walking around.

**You spoke about off-screen violence. In Michael Haneke's *Funny Games* there is a scene where the kids are being beaten up, but you don't see the violence, you hear the sound and the blood splashing.**

That is actually more violent. Because the human mind is much more imaginative and darker than what we see on the screen. And people are bothered by their own possibilities. ■

## 'It is a long fight'

Anurag Kashyap laments the Indian film censor board's interference with creative freedom.

Arthur J Pais listens in

**T**here were little children watching this film," an anguished mother said after the screening of Anurag Kashyap's gritty drama of moral corruption *Ugly* at the New York Indian Film Festival. "They will surely have nightmares. Even I will find difficult to get over this dark film."

Kashyap, in conversation with NYIFF director Aseem Chhabra, said he did not consider his characters dark. They were complex, he said adding each of us have moral complexities.

He also recalled how kidnapping of children is widespread across India, and his story had drawn from real life incidents. When the parents of a kidnapped child



A scene from Nagesh Kukunoor's *Lakshmi*. The film's Indian release was stalled in January after it ran into trouble with the censor board. It finally released in India March 21.

have money, he said. "Greed lures. Even those who do not have anything to do with the kidnapping suddenly begin exploiting the situation."

Over the years, Kashyap has had many problems with the Central Board of Film Certification — India's regulatory film body — but in *Ugly*, a scene with an unlit cigarette at the end of the film, caused trouble.

Kashyap refused to follow the government's mandate

of placing an anti-smoking message on the screen during the cigarette scene.

He filed a complaint against the censor board in the courts, arguing the message wasn't necessary because the actor was holding an unlit cigarette.

"Nobody in India, neither the government nor the judiciary, cares for cinema," Kashyap said. "Whatever work we do, it's not taken seriously by anyone. It's a joke. So it's a long fight."

Filmmaker Nagesh Kukunoor agreed with a bitter laugh that it was bad enough to raise money to make a film like *Lakshmi* and see it stalled because of censor issues.

The film missed its January 17 Indian premiere date because its daring subject matter of child prostitution and human trafficking, caused problems with the censor board. It finally released March 21 in India.