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Outsiders and bystanders in Erik Skjoldbjærg's *The Pyromaniac* (2016)

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the Norwegian film *The Pyromaniac* (Erik Skjoldbjærg 2016) as an artistic attempt to come to terms with terrorism, and as a cinematic treatment of the Norwegian terror attacks of 22nd of July 2011. The film is discussed in relation with several written accounts on 22nd of July and focus is on the role of the individual, the family and the society when it comes to guilt and shame following incomprehensible events.

KEYWORDS

Cinema; terror; guilt; shame;
22 July

On 22 July 2011 Norway experienced the worst events in its recent history. Extremist Anders Behring Breivik detonated a car bomb at the Government quarter complex, killing eight people and wounding approximately 200 people. Two hours later, he continued his terror attacks by systematically shooting participants at the Workers Youth League (AUF) summer camp at the small island Utøya. There, he left 69 more people killed and 33 wounded, most of them teenagers, making his attack the deadliest to occur in Norway since the Second World War (“Dom i 22. juli-saken” 2012).¹ Because Norway is a small country with only five million inhabitants, and the camp gathered youth from all over the nation, it has been estimated that, on average, one in four Norwegians knew “someone affected by the attacks” (Skjeseth 2016).

During the first days of shock and horror, the notion that Norway would never be the same was prevalent, even among those who mainly experienced the terror as a mediated event. In the weeks that followed, Norwegian citizens reported a new awareness of community and togetherness, a phenomenon embodied most clearly in the large marches (the so-called “rose-tog”) that gathered more than 400,000 participants all over Norway. However, according to a study, a year later this feeling was gone, leaving neither a collapse of Norwegian society as we knew it, nor a permanent “rose-tog”,² but a society somewhat less secure (Wollebæk et al. 2012).

In the aftermath of the attacks, and particularly during and after the trial against terrorist Anders Behring Breivik in the spring of 2012, Norway was seemingly torn between two different approaches to the terrible events: The urge to forget and move on versus the need to understand and remember. A clear example of this can be seen in the conflict

surrounding the planned memorial “Memorial Wound”, a celebrated work of art by Jonas Dahlberg. Plans were scrapped because neighbours started a legal process against the Norwegian state in an effort to avoid having their own memories and wounds kept open and on display.³

Processing terror through cinematic treatment

In this article, I want to discuss how a film can function as an artistic treatment of such terrible events, even when it is not explicitly about terrorism, and argue for art’s value as a means of processing trauma and as a contributor to our understanding of terrorism, its causes and consequences.⁴ I will investigate one cinematic example, which I consider an oblique artistic treatment of the Norwegian terror attacks of 22 July 2011.

In 2016, Norwegian director Erik Skjoldbjærg, in collaboration with scriptwriter Bjørn Olav Johannesen, adapted Gaute Heivoll’s prizewinning novel *Before I Burn* (*Før jeg brenner ned*) (2010), about an arsonist in a small Norwegian town, into the feature film *The Pyromaniac*.⁵ The story about the son of a fire chief who sets woods and buildings on fire during the night, before helping put them out, is almost unbelievable, but it is a true one.⁶ Whilst the book was based on historical events from 1978 and written and published before the Norway 2011 attacks, I argue that the film found new resonance in the events of 22 July 2011.⁷

Others have made the connection between Skjoldbjærg’s adaptation and the dual terror attacks. Reviewer Guri Kulås, for instance, wrote the following:

Because the adaptation was produced after the 22 July, it is impossible not to think that this little story is relevant to the big debate about homegrown terrorism. This perspective is latent in Bjørn Johannesen's script, where the pyromaniac's, partly deliberate, partly unwanted, outsidership is foregrounded, but the film is also an unusual open account in the context of contemporary Norwegian cinema (Kulås 2016).⁸

Skjoldbjærg has stated that he began the project before July 22, but that making this film felt more urgent in the aftermath of the attacks (Smedsrud 2016). Responding directly to questions about this, he has said: "The terror attack changed everything within me, as someone preoccupied with telling stories about who we are today, and how we came to be like this. It is like a slow landslide."⁹ If you want to make a movie about who Norwegians are today, these acts of terrorism are part of that picture. And so, as Skjoldbjærg felt the need to understand the terrorist attacks and the terrorist, and address questions like: "How could this happen?", the film he was making changed as he had himself been changed. The question of how some people become outsiders, and what the consequences of their othering can be, was more urgent than ever.¹⁰

In the following, I will discuss how *The Pyromaniac* deals with such questions, particularly regarding the outsider. How can a society like ours raise such perpetrators, and where should we place the blame for such events? The film is structured chronologically, starting at a crime scene and continuing until the case is solved and the arsonist is in police custody. Since we follow the pyromaniac from the first to the last scene, his guilt, in the legal sense, is not in question. But in this article, I will investigate the different potentially guilty parties responsible for creating his outsidership: the perpetrator himself, the family, the bystanders or the whole community (or nation).

I am influenced by perspectives from adaptation studies that argue that adaptations should be viewed not only by its result, but seen as a dialogical process (Bruhn 2013). In this specific case, I am interested in how 22 July influenced the film, but also in how the terror attacks might have influenced a Norwegian audience watching the film. Because Norwegians, shortly before the film, had witnessed a violent political attack committed by an outsider, spectators might be encouraged to view new narratives about outsidership in a different light, considering anew their role as bystanders. Thus, I want to discuss whether the film might make spectators share feelings of guilt and shame with the central characters: the son, the mother and the father. I am here working with a theoretical viewer in mind, a viewer situated in Norway who has acquired a general knowledge about 22 July.

In this I will also be drawing on literature about the terror attacks, as well as film theoretical work on emotion in film, empathy and shame in particular (Smith 1995; Vaage 2010; Laine 2011). My aim is to show how the film sheds light on personal, interpersonal, and communal guilt in times of terror.

Portrait of a perpetrator: individual guilt

During the trial against the terrorist behind the 2011 attacks, Anders Behring Breivik, several male journalists felt the need to compare themselves and their lives with the terrorist and his background. Their most urgent question was: Why him, and not me? In their coverage of the trial, several reporters asked themselves if being a man of the same age, from the same place, made it possible to understand the perpetrator, and how something so horrible could happen in their own community (See for instance Schau 2012; Østli 2013; Holthe 2012).¹¹

One of the most explicit reflections in this vein was formulated by Kristopher Schau, who covered the trial for the newspaper *Morgenbladet*.¹² When looking back at his first reactions to the attacks, he remembered all the questions that went through his head: What, Why, Who? More than anything, the question constantly on his mind was *who*: who was the terrorist, and why did he do it?

Could I have become like Behring Breivik? We are both white men, born during the 1970s, raised in Oslo. Why did we turn out so different? Anders Behring Breivik has, during the whole trial, tried to create the impression that we created him. That the nation of Norway has created him, and that he is our fault (Schau 2012, 33).¹³

In this quote, Schau addresses the complicated and debated question of whether guilt can be attributed to other members of a community beyond the perpetrator himself. This comparison of the terrorist and a collective "us" also runs through Åsne Seierstad's documentary portrait of Behring Breivik, several of the Utøya victims and Norway, as indicated by the title *One of Us* (Seierstad 2013); by contrast other portraits (such as Borchgrevink 2012) have focused instead on the personal story and the perpetrator's individual psychology.

The Pyromaniac is, amongst other things, a portrait of a culprit's psychology, asking the same questions as Schau above: How could this happen?; why him? Heivoll's novel is even more explicit in its quest for answers to the same questions: could this be me? The narrator in *Before I Burn* gives his own proximity to the events depicted as his reason for telling the story. In the novel's present, the autobiographical character named Gaute returns to his rural hometown to investigate the story of

20-year-old pyromaniac Dag, as well as the history of 20-year-old law student Gaute. Why did Dag, the quiet, gentle, talented and beloved boy, become an arsonist? How did Gaute, so similar in many ways, escape the existential crisis he experienced on the threshold of adulthood?¹⁴

Whilst the book tells the stories of both Dag and Gaute Heivoll, filmmakers Skjoldbjærg and Johannesen chose to focus on the pyromaniac, his relationship with his parents, and the family's relationship with their local community.¹⁵ The movie has been described by critics as a portrait (VG), a thriller (*Aftenposten*), and a combination of the two (*Dagsavisen*) (Selås 2016; Rogne 2016; Sæverås 2016). How and why Dag (Trond Nilssen) became an outcast is not explicitly explained in the film, but the viewer is given insight into what it feels like to be on the outside. We are encouraged to engage empathically with the emotions pushing Dag towards his extreme actions, particularly his feelings of loneliness and shame. Murray Smith and Margrethe Bruun Vaage, among others, have argued that cinema has different ways of aligning spectators and characters (Smith 1995; Vaage 2010). Point-of-view structures, close-ups, voice-over, and other cinematic devices can be used to create what Bruun Vaage calls empathic understanding (Vaage 2010). She distinguishes in her work between two different forms of empathy: embodied and imaginative empathy. In the former, the process of understanding a character is described as "latching onto the other's sensuous, bodily or affective state and understanding this as his state" (Vaage 2010, 167). The latter is a more distanced form of empathy, based on viewers' imagination rather than a bodily response; "imagining what it would be like to be the other and understanding this as his state" (Vaage 2010, 167). Because the film provides limited access to and information about Dag's mind and his background, spectators must fill in the blanks on their own. Knowledge about Anders Behring Breivik might influence this process. Although I will not be doing a close reading of the emotional impact of the scenes in question it seems to me that the film combines the two, and in the strongest scenes achieves embodied empathy.

In *The Pyromaniac*, the intense experience of loneliness is rendered through a mixture of sound and images. The scenes depicting Dag's nocturnal drives, where the viewer can feel something grating inside him, are examples of this. Getting close to Dag is a result of the spatio-temporal connection (Smith 1995) we have with our protagonist; we spend the most time with him, and although his emotions and thoughts are hard to read on his face, proximity to him over so much time creates a

connection between him, as the protagonist, and us, as the viewers. The most important element here is the car. Although it serves as a vehicle for him to move around in the landscape, the physical boundaries of the car also encapsulate and isolate him from the environment around him.

The film depicts a young, introverted man who is talented (we are told), but lacks interests or friends outside his family. He seems unable to communicate with others, whether they be his former classmates, his parents, his neighbours or his co-workers at the local post office. We also witness Dag's different attempts at getting attention: Helping his father with extinguishing fire and taking care of the fire-fighting equipment and taking local girls for a drive in the fire engine. In a revealing scene, he is showing off for the girls, pretending he can walk on water, but is left standing alone in the middle of the lake when some other boys come and pick them up. This incident is painful to watch, and creates a mixture of empathy and embarrassment in the viewer. He is humiliated again when he, having first been chastised by his superior, is forced to deliver a letter to an isolated cabin. Once there, he is taunted and threatened by its recluse occupant, who even makes up abusive verses based on his name.

His eagerness to be recognised and respected puts him at risk of being subjected to more humiliation and of his nightly secrets being exposed. His attractive neighbour Elsa (Agnes Kittelsen) gives him a compliment ("You can become what you want to") that means the world to him, but so little to her that she has forgotten the whole thing a couple of days later. He almost doesn't bother to hide his guilt from his parents, and even draws attention to himself by seeking out the local chief of police (Henrik Rafaelsen) with suggestions about who the dangerous arsonist may be.

There are several similarities between Dag and descriptions of Anders Behring Breivik as they were distributed to the Norwegian public through news media and literature (Seierstad 2013; Borchgrevink 2012). Under the name Anders Berwick, he related his own version of his upbringing and youth in his manifesto. Growing up, he and his mother had little contact with other people and never really bonded with anyone else (Seierstad 2013; see also Christensen 2013). When telling his own life story, Behring Breivik describes his estrangement from his father as his father's choice, and although he had some friends, he also felt left out in circles where he tried to be recognised, such as the Oslo graffiti scene and the Progress Party (Seierstad 2013). Both men lack communication skills and someone to talk to, and they both share a combination of a narcissistic need to be seen and a strong sense of being overlooked.

With this comparison, I do not mean to imply that Dag is analogous with Behring Breivik, but that the different portraits of the terrorist available to the public might influence how a Norwegian audience receives the depiction of the pyromaniac and vice versa.

Portrait of Norway: the guilt of the community

The film almost casts its setting as a character in itself, and accordingly, it captures an important element in Heivoll's novel: you are who you are because of where you come from. Put differently, the place or the community is a potential guilty party. Place is also a strong component in Seierstad's (2015) *One of Us*, as indicated in the subtitle of the Norwegian edition: *A Story about Norway*.¹⁶ Her book is as much a portrait of Norway as it is a portrait of the terrorist, and the role of places and community is important in her book as it is both in Heivoll's and Skjoldbjærg's depictions.

The Pyromaniac is a portrait of a less affluent Norway, the Norway that used to be or an idea of a Norway that used to be. The beds were harder and lunch (or rather the traditional Norwegian version "formiddagsmat") consisted of crispbread with brown cheese. The style and setting of the film feel both authentic and nostalgic; this was how homes, cars and bikes looked in the 1970s, and although the film tells a tragic story, it is also a portrait of rural Norway at its most beautiful, a picture that is contrasted with the brutality of not belonging.

On the one hand, *The Pyromaniac* shows us the bright side of small places; places where the sense of community is strong. The portrayal of the volunteers in the local fire brigade comes across as a clear argument for the importance of standing together, and the Norwegian tradition of "dugnad".¹⁷ The men take turns at the hardest jobs, and are pictured standing shoulder to shoulder in the local newspaper. Their collaborative efforts are shown to be hard work, but also as having beauty and importance, and being a catalyst for their sense of belonging. The countryside

is a place where you can go to your next-door neighbour for aid. It is the woods, the empty roads, the mist and the morning dew in green grass, birches, currant bushes and thimbleweed.

Although the fire brigade stands out as the incarnation of traditional community values, their chief is old and tired and short a successor. As indicated above we also get to see the flipside of a strong, homogenous community: what it feels like to be on the outside. When the inhabitants gather in the schoolyard on Constitution Day to sing the local anthem, "My sweet hamlet of birth I have always in mind, always she welcomes me smiling and kind", it becomes apparent that not everyone is included.¹⁸ As Dag approaches the other youths, one of them asks: "Are we going to Stig's party this weekend"? Though the camera's focus is on Dag, he is invisible to the others, and the question is not meant for him. Here, the film exposes the role of bystanders in creating an outsider. In the scene mentioned above, where Dag is left alone in the lake, shame and embarrassment can be seen in the faces of the girls leaving him behind, but it is evidently not enough for them to take his side. As philosopher Arne Johan Vetlesen has argued non-involvement should be considered an ethical-position and inaction entails complicity (Vetlesen 2005, 235–238). Through his argumentation, he foregrounds the responsibilities and guilt of the bystanders (Figure 1).

"Everyone else thinks it is someone from the outside who sets things on fire", says the local police chief. This echoes early reactions to the bombing of the Government quarter in Oslo, where both experts and the general population were quick to suspect Islamists and foreign terrorists.¹⁹ Skjoldbjærg himself has also admitted to first thinking the terror must have been committed by a foreign perpetrator: "In the first hours after, I was immediately sure that the attacks were committed by foreigners. It was hard to fathom that our society could have fostered such aggression, and the will to act on such an emotion." (Smedsrud 2016).²⁰ However, in the case of both the fires and the terror attacks, it was not someone from the outside, but an outsider.



Figure 1. The arsonist Dag (Trond Nilssen), at the same time "one of us" and an outsider. © Glør Film

Portrait of a family: between shame and guilt

Drawing on Jean Paul Sartre's notion of intersubjectivity, film scholar Tarja Laine argues that the feeling of shame is the result of "being conscious of negative exposure to other people, even if this exposure is only imagined" (Laine 2011). I will argue that this "spectatorial logic of shame" comes into play in *The Pyromaniac*. Shame is a feeling that occurs when someone feels exposed. The same event can create feelings of both shame and guilt, and although both of these feelings relate to the relationship between the self and other people, there are differences between them. Guilt is felt on behalf of others, people we might have hurt, while shame is felt for ourselves (Burgo 2013). But while we can feel guilty in solitude, shame requires the eye of a bystander, as Laine also points out; it needs a shaming gaze.

James Mensch describes guilt as a lonely feeling, and shame as a feeling felt when with others

Shame, by contrast, usually does require a face-to-face. I am ashamed before the actual other, i.e., before his or her concrete presence. It is this presence, rather than any generalized other, that I internalize... There is here a primitive, immediate, pre-linguistic type of empathy at work, one where I regard myself through the other's presently regarding me. This regard is painful. I do not want this other to see me in my present situation. In contrast to guilt, then, shame requires the real or, at least, the imagined presence of specific others to be activated. (Mensch 2005)

Both guilt and shame are at stake in the film, but as I will show, they play out differently for the two parents in the story.

First, however, a detour to the novel: Heivoll's novel opens with a brutal prologue: A mother is walking around, literally picking up the pieces of her son who has blown himself up: "I don't know if this story is true. However, it is something you can understand. If you sit down and reflect, you slowly understand. Ultimately, it was the only right thing to do. It is what you do. You have no choice. You walk around gathering all the fragments in your apron" (Heivoll 2013, 1).²¹

This quote cuts to the core of my interest in the relationship between the perpetrator and his parents: When crisis strikes, what do you, as a parent, do? You pick up the pieces. Bystanders, who don't feel that they are involved, might have different perspectives, however: Why did it happen? Could the crisis have been prevented? Were you to blame?

Motherhood is often treated as a site of conflict and crisis in cinema (Fisher 1996). As E. Ann Kaplan has discussed, mainstream cinema (particularly classic Hollywood cinema) tends to draw on four maternal archetypes: the "Good Mother", "The Bad Mother", "The Heroic Mother", or "The Vain, Silly or Weak Mother" (Kaplan 2000). While the bad mother may be evil or selfish, the weak mother can have more positive traits but still finds herself in difficult positions (Figures 2 and 3).

After 22 July, the attention given to the terrorist's mother Wenche Breivik and the public evaluation of her role in the crime was subject to much change. At first, the general attitude was to leave her in peace, but after the focus on Anders Behring Breivik's psychological health became an issue during the trial against him, that changed. In both newspapers and books, the role, and the potential blame, of the mother was given much attention. Behring Breivik's childhood, and possible experience of neglect, became an important topic in Aage Storm Borchgrevink's *En norsk tragedie. Anders Behring Breivik og veiene til Utøya* (*A Norwegian Tragedy Anders Behring Breivik and the Massacre on Utøya* (2012)), the first book that covered the attacks from multiple perspectives. Later, Marit Christensen published a controversial biography called *Moren* (*The Mother*) (2013), about Wenche Breivik, and her role is also discussed by Åsne Seierstad in her more acclaimed account of the events and what led to them.²² According to Seierstad, Wenche Breivik, when confronted by the police with the facts of her son's terror and asked whether she had any knowledge of his plans, said: "Is it right what they say, that a mother can have an intuition, a sickening feeling? I think it is. I sat there, wanting him to see those terrible things on



Figure 2. A mother's suspicion. © Glør Film



Figure 3. The mother's (Liv Bernhoft Osa) knowledge. © Glør Film

TV, and he didn't come home...and I thought...and I thought... Oh NO." (Seierstad 2013, Loc 5824.)

While these three books all could be said to negotiate the mother's guilt differently, but for the most part negatively, *The Pyromaniac* clearly asks the viewer to sympathise and empathise with her position. In the film, the mother, Alma (Liv Bernhoft Osa) also finds her son's behaviour strange; he comes home late, shuts himself inside his room, and talks to himself when alone. "He needs to get a job", the mother says about her son, who has been unemployed since returning from the military months ago. "You can be whatever you want", his neighbour told him, but this is not the case. Alma tries to relate her suspicions to her husband, but when he refuses to hear them, she does not act on what she knows. Not even when the police encourage people to come forward with any observed irregularities does she say anything. The same is true of the father, Ingemann (Per Frisch), who does not dare put words to his growing awareness of his son's guilt. Accordingly, the lack of communication is at the heart of the problem, and also a key reason for the father's feelings of guilt (Figure 4).

Both parents suffer in silence, even after Ingemann finds evidence (the lid to his own oil can) at the crime scene pointing directly towards his own garage. The most dramatic scene is when the mother finally acts on her suspicions, following Dag to a neighbour's house and witnessing him setting their barn on fire.

Unable to close her eyes any longer, she still does not speak a word, neither to her son nor to his father waiting at home. Instead of confrontation, the parents both choose lying in their bed, in the dark, in silence, staring into the ceiling.

When there is no turning back, we follow the father's point of view as he approaches the kitchen where Dag is sitting, eating his cereal and reading comics as if nothing has happened. As the camera closes in on Dag, the hymn on the radio in the background and the crunch of his cereal are overthrown by Ingemann's voice: "I know what you have done." The camera moves closer to Dag, seen from his father's perspective: "I wish I understood why, but I don't." Then the perspective switches, and we see the father and hear his voice: "You need to turn yourself in", and in a gentle voice: "If you want me to, I can come too." But his mouth does not move. He does not speak and he is not heard. The confrontation only takes place in Ingemann's mind. We hear one thing (his voice), and see something else (two people who are not able to talk to each other). When a more insistent "Dag!" is spoken, it seems that Dag might be finally listening, but he is not. He just asks, rather hostile and horrified, whether his father wants something, the latter uttering a resigned "no" and "nothing" before turning away.

Instead of addressing the problematic situation directly with his son, Ingemann seeks out his neighbour and gets him to notify the police. Because of his own feelings of guilt, he is not able to act on his



Figure 4. The father (Per Frisch) knows, but is unable to communicate his knowledge. © Glør Film

suspicion, and so this strong, stalwart man is broken by the knowledge of what his son has done. But Ingemann is portrayed as a man of few words even before crisis strikes; even when Dag does things to please him, he is silent. Clearly, Dag wants to be recognised and valued by his father, and more than anything he is portrayed as a boy longing to be seen, by other men, primarily his father, but also the chief of police and his neighbours. His mother seems less important to him. When Dag is taken away by the police, the camera stays with his mother as she breaks down. Where her son's face is closed, hers is an open book. When she is alone, the sense of guilt and sorrow overwhelms her, while her husband hides his feelings. In the end, neither the father nor the mother faces their guilt, but the film makes us see the guilt on their part, while at the same time making us empathise with them, most directly in the heart-breaking scene when Alma falls apart. Through her strong bodily reaction we are invited, not only to imagine what it must be like to be in her situation, but also to feel it in our own body (Figure 5).

The difference between the parents becomes most evident in the final scene. After Dag's guilt is confirmed, we drive together with Ingemann and Alma (the viewer/camera is positioned inside the car with them) on roads we have shared with Dag earlier on, but this time, the journey ends at the local grocery shop. The camera follows Ingemann as he leaves Alma in the car and enters the shop. The viewer is left on the outside. We can only watch through the glass door as he approaches Johanne, an elderly victim who lost her house in a fire that could easily have killed her. We cannot hear what they say and can only guess at his emotional strain. As other locals leave the shop, knowing glances shared among them, the camera moves back and stops at the car window, looking in at Alma, who crouches in her seat, trying not to be seen. The camera stays there, as Johanne comes out, and Alma finally steps out of the car to face her shame. Here, we get to see the mother encapsulated by the car, in a scene combining the

themes of outsidership and its consequences into a single emotional event.

Within the diegetic world, guilt is primarily felt by the father, while the mother experiences shame more strongly; however both feelings are combined in the spectator (Figures 6 and 7).

The guilt of the spectator

As I have tried to show, *The Pyromaniac* is a mixture of a psychological drama and a thriller, attempting to dig deeper than a traditional whodunit by offering up a detailed portrait of a perpetrator, his family and his community. It is first and foremost a film about outsidership, but through looking back on a different Norway, it also sheds light on contemporary Norwegian society. Accordingly, I consider *The Pyromaniac* an oblique attempt at coming to terms with the terror attacks of 22 July 2011.

On one level, the film is less complex than the novel, a difference manifested in the shift of focus from the fires burning inside a person to the physical fires set by a person in distress.²³ Whereas the novel foregrounds the individual psychology, the film favours the community, and the importance of belonging somewhere. Still, the film and novel share the same core: the pyromaniac is one of us, as was the terrorist who carried out the worst terror attack on Norwegian soil to date.

If the film gives any answers to why Dag became an arsonist, despite living in a seemingly safe environment, with opportunities at hand and parents who loved him, they are related to his need to be seen and his failure to be noticed, as well as his, and his parents', lack of communication skills. The film depicts an environment and a family unable to react to signs of danger before it is too late. In the end, the parents are forced to face the terrible truth, pick up the pieces of their shattered lives, and face their community, a community that should also take their fair share of the blame, and their shame. Implicitly, the film asks us, the spectators, to reflect on our own guilt and our role in creating outsiders in a homogenous society.



Figure 5. Parental shame, guilt and sorrow. © Glør Film



Figure 6. The mother as outsider. © Glør Film



Figure 7. The mother's shame. © Glør Film

Notes

1. 33 wounded at Utøya is the number that was included in the indictment in the trial against Behring Breivik, however this was a limitation set by the state prosecutor because of the scale of the criminal act. The total number of wounded was far larger.
2. The Norwegian term “Rose-tog” (meaning rose marches) was coined for the parades that took place, because everyone was encouraged to carry roses instead of banners and slogans, and the term was selected as the new Norwegian word of the year 2011.
3. The proposed memorial won a competition in 2014, but the contract was cancelled in 2017. See for instance: <https://publicartnorway.org/prosjekter/memorial-sites-after-22-july/> or Frearson 2016.
4. This article is part of a larger project investigating mediation of terrorism and its consequences through an analytical frame we have termed *Face of Terror, Critical Media Aesthetics*. In this project, we are interested in how media and art have given these (and other) terrorist attacks artistic treatment, in literature, photography, art and cinema (See also Gjelsvik 2016).
5. The novel was awarded the Brage Prize, Sørlandets litteraturpris (2010) and Sultprisen (2011). Director Erik Skjoldbjærg is an experienced adaptor. After his internationally acclaimed debut film *Insomnia* (1997) (written together with author Nikolai Frobenius, and remade in an American version (Nolan 2002), he has concentrated on adaptations: *Prozac Nation* (2011) (based on Elisabeth Wurtzel's novel), *En folkefiende* (*An Enemy of the People*) (2005) after Henrik Ibsen's play, the thriller *NOKAS* (2013) based on an authentic heist and *Pioneer* (2010) (inspired by true events related to the hazards divers working for the oil industry in the Nordic sea during the 1970s experienced). Overall, most of Skjoldbjærg's oeuvre can be said to have addressed ideas about Norwegian community and values, the latest example being the television series *Occupied/Okkupert* (2016) (See Bruhn in this volume).
6. See for instance (Fyllingsnes 2016) on the historical events. There have also been other cases where firemen have been disclosed as arsonists, so-called firefighter arson.
7. In English, they are often called the Norway 2011 attacks, but I will be using the date, which is how the events are commonly referred to in Norwegian (like 9/11 or 7/7).
8. ”Fordi filmatiseringa kjem etter 22. juli 2011, er det også uunngåeleg å ikkje tenkja på den «vesle» historia som relevant for den store debatten om heimeavla terrorisme. Perspektivet ligg latent i Bjørn Olaf Johannessens manus, der pyromanens dels uønskte, dels søkte utanforskap blir vektlagt, men filmen er òg ei uvanleg open forteljning—til norsk samtidsfilm å vera”.
9. ”Terroraksjonen forandret alt for meg som er opptatt av å formidle hvem vi er i dag, og hvordan vi ble slik. Den er som et langsamt jordskred” (Smedsrud 2016).
10. Quoted from my public interview with Eirik Skjoldbjærg (2017) at Tromsø International Film Festival 21.1.2017.
11. All three books are based on journalistic reports previously published in newspapers and later collected as books. See also Hverven as an example of this.

12. See Willassen (2016) for a discussion of *Morgenbladets* choice of this controversial comedian and rock star a reporter, and the newspaper's decision to not use photographs of the terrorist in their coverage of the trial.
13. "Kunne jeg ha blitt som Behring Breivik? Vi er begge hvite menn, født på 1970-tallet, oppvokst i Oslo. Hvorfor ble vi så forskjellige? Anders Behring Breivik har under hele rettsaken forsøkt å gi inntrykk av at det er vi som har skapt ham. At nasjonen Norge har skapt ham, og at han er vår skyld".
14. The novel is accordingly an example of the fictional autobiographical trend in contemporary Norwegian literature, most famously represented by Karl Ove Knausgård (*Min Kamp/My Struggle* 2009–2011) and Linn Ullmann (*De Urolige* 2015).
15. In an interview by Kjetil Lismoen i *Rushprint* Skjoldbjærg tells that it was never his intention to include the storyline about Heivoll (Lismoen 2016).
16. In the 2015 translation into English the title was changed to *The Story of Anders Behring Breivik and the Massacre in Norway*.
17. The Norwegian word "Dugnad" is used for voluntary communal work, usually done as a group.
18. "Aldri eg gløymer mi heimbygd så gild, alltid ho møter meg glad med sitt smil". This is the actual Finland hymn.
19. See for instance https://morgenbladet.no/samfunn/2011/analyse_i_kaos about experts' statements pointing towards al-Qaida. See for example <http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/terrorangrepet-22-juli-politikk-og-samfunn/kadra-muslimere-ble-jaget-nedover-gatene/a/10088913/> about on the general emotions generated in the hours after the attacks.
20. "I de første timene var jeg umiddelbart sikker på at dette var gjort av utlendinger. Det var vanskelig å forstå at vårt samfunn ikke bare har avlet en slik aggresjon, men også avlet viljen til å handle på en slik følelse."
21. Translated by Don Bartlett. In the Norwegian original: "Jeg vet ikke om det er sant. Men likevel går det an å forstå. Hvis man bare setter seg ned og tenke etter, da forstår man langsomt. Til sist framstår det som det eneste rette. Det er jo det man gjør. Man har ikke noe valg. Man går omkring og samler delene sammen i forkleet" (Heivoll 2010, 7).
22. Seierstad's book has in particular been well received outside of Norway, and it was selected by *New York Times* as one of the top ten books of 2014.
23. And the change of the title, *Beforel* burn to *The Pyromaniac*.

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