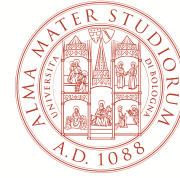




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ALMA MATER STUDIORUM  
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

***Visualising In/Equalities through Contemporary Documentary Cinema.  
A Diffractive Reading of Feminist Practices in Spanish and Italian Non-Fiction Films***

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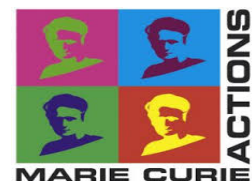
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*grace*  
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## Introduction

In October 2013, I completed the GEMMA-Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies with a dissertation about feminist interventions in documentary cinema.<sup>1</sup> On its last page, I described my master thesis as a point of arrival because it represented the end of my master studies, but also as a new starting point in my search for establishing dialogues between three areas that I consider to be strategic allies: feminist practices, cinema, and knowledge production.

My dissertation back then followed a specific debate in feminist film theory: the relevance of using certain modes of representations in feminist documentary filmmaking broadly summarised as belonging either to cinematic realism or formal experimentation. By analysing two case studies, I concluded that feminist documentary filmmakers could appropriate both approaches, since both can be used to perpetuate androcentric visualities or to demonstrate sexist oppressions, to question gender inequalities, to register subversive stories of gender non-conforming subjects and to introduce multiple voices in the public space.

After finishing my master studies I didn't follow the academic research path immediately. Instead, I worked for two years in the Mexican film industry. During this period, I experienced the extent to which social inequalities were normalised and/or reinforced in terms of most films' contents, forms, production practices, and/or reception conditions. This was evident in gender stereotypes and authoritative hierarchies on both sides of the camera, as well as in precarious labour conditions that had an even more violent impact on women and middle/low-class workers. The need for applying a feminist toolbox in a critical analysis of audiovisual productions became yet more urgent to me.

An opportunity to transform such discomfort into productive enquiries came with the GRACE-Gender and Cultures of Equality in Europe project, organised by the GEMMA consortium within the Marie Curie program in the framework of Horizon 2020. The goal of GRACE, whose principal investigator is professor Suzanne Clisby from the University of Hull, is "to systematically investigate the cultural production of gender equalities within Europe".<sup>2</sup> In order to do so, GRACE operates along five work packages, among which the one I applied for: "Textual and artistic cultures of gender equality",

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<sup>1</sup> *Intervenciones feministas en el cine documental. Conocimientos situados y (auto) representaciones de género en películas de Alina Marazzi y Maricarmen de Lara* (Calderón 2013). Dissertation supervised by Adelina Sánchez Espinosa (University of Granada) and Carlotta Farese (University of Bologna).

<sup>2</sup> GRACE project website. Date of access: May 2019. <<http://graceproject.eu>>.

whose principal investigator is professor Adelina Sánchez Espinosa, co-supervisor of this thesis with professor Rita Monticelli. I was hired in 2016 as an Early Stage Researcher, in order to work under the guideline “Visualising cultures of gender equality in Europe through art and screen”. I was then relocated as a transnational researcher in Spain (University of Granada) and Italy (University of Bologna).

This is part of how I have arrived at the writing of this dissertation. Its origins (or at least an important part of them) can be traced back to my encounter with feminist film theory as an undergraduate Communication student. And I have kept on building on what I started exploring in my aforementioned Gender Studies master thesis.

My **goal** with this PhD thesis has been to build a bridge between feminist documentary film theory and feminist new materialism(s), specifically Karen Barad’s diffractive methodology (2007), so as to describe how feminist material-discursive practices in contemporary documentary cinema (can) visualise gender in/equalities. The **research question** that has guided my enquiry process has been: what do feminist material-discursive practices in Spanish and Italian documentary cinema (produced during 2013-2018) do, on both sides of the camera and the screen, in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender?

My multi-layered **hypothesis** is that feminist material-discursive practices enacted either by documentary filmmakers, filmed subjects or film spectators, have effects on the visualisation of in/equalities in and through the films content and form, but also in and through their contexts of production and reception. In order to identify these effects, contemporary documentary cinema that deals with social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, can be analysed as a diffraction apparatus, i.e. technologies that create boundaries and make the world intelligible through intra-actions between human and non-human agencies of observation and objects of observation.

From this statement, I have derived **five specific objectives**: 1. Building a bridge between feminist documentary film theory and a diffractive methodology by approaching non-fiction cinema that deals with social inequalities as a diffraction apparatus. 2. Developing what I call a “feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze” by bringing together different insights from feminist film theory. 3. Identifying feminist material-discursive practices in a sample of documentary films produced in Spain and Italy over the last six years (2013-2018). 4. Analysing the effects that these feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema have, particularly in terms of visualising gender in/equalities on both sides of the camera and on both sides of the

screen. 5. Revealing patterns between the ten case studies by reading through one another (i.e. diffractively) insights raised in each one of them.

Thanks to the work carried out during my aforementioned master studies, I was aware that feminist practices in documentary filmmaking have the potential to politicise either expository-observational-participatory or poetic-reflexive-performative modes of representation. Therefore, I knew that one of my first challenges would be to build a theoretical-methodological framework that would allow me to address very different kinds of feminist interventions in documentary cinema. This was also necessary for my intention of establishing dialogues between films from two different contexts, Spain and Italy. Moreover, in my master thesis I had carried out a feminist close reading (Lukic and Sánchez 2011), which was very productive in my approach to each case study. But at this stage I also needed a framework that would allow me to bring various texts together.

Inspired by Spanish researcher Beatriz Revelles's PhD dissertation (2014)<sup>3</sup>, in which she employs a **diffractive methodology** to analyse the ways in which Toni Morrison's Facebook page (re)configures race and gender, I have decided to apply **diffraction** as: 1. A reading strategy of various insights; 2. A visualisation metaphor that moves away from reflection and acknowledges the effects of the observation apparatus; and 3. An onto-epistemological turn that has ethico-political effects.

In the first case, instead of conceiving different visions hierarchically or as completely separate and/or opposed to each other, a **diffractive reading** attends to "entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another" (Barad 2007: 30). Feminist practices in documentary cinema actually refer to multiple proposals, not only due to the diversity of contents and formal strategies, but also as a result of their filmmakers positions within the various feminisms that have informed non-fiction audiovisual productions.

Furthermore, diffractive reading focuses on what (film) texts become during the encounter with the reader/spectator and with other texts, so that reading is conceived as a productive and transformative event in itself. Birgit M. Kaiser defines diffractive reading as "radically performative" (2014: 281) because when reading various texts together, they become something they were not when read individually. Importantly, this does not mean "that every reading is valid, but that certain patterns produce certain

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<sup>3</sup> Revelles's thesis was also supervised by Adelina Sánchez Espinosa. Both are members of the same Research Group to which I belong, i.e. "Modes of Reception, Genres and Gender Issues in English Literature" (Ref. HUM-592).



material effects (such as the disruption of oppressions) and some other patterns produce other effects (such as the re-establishment of the oppressive order)” (Revelles 2014: 306).

The second way in which I apply diffraction, i.e. as a visualisation metaphor, has to do with a shift from representationalism to performativity. Documentary cinema isn’t understood as a representation of the so-called real world out there, which is then mirrored by the camera, but as a **diffraction apparatus** that makes boundaries within phenomena to make it intelligible in specific ways, through the intra-action of human and non-human elements such as the filmmakers, the camera, the screen and the spectators. This onto-epistemological turn has ethico-political effects, as it moves from “reflecting on representations” to “accounting for how practices matter” (Barad 2007: 90). Moving away from the representational paradigm in the analysis of documentary cinema changes the focus “from producing accurate and authentic representations to creatively contributing to the transformability of actual beings in the real” (Hongisto 2015: 12).

To render diffractive methodology operational in the field of documentary cinema, I propose three tools: **materiality**, **emotionality**, and **performativity**. These are the three areas in which I look for feminist material-discursive practices in documentary films. Materiality refers to how these documentaries are constructed, i.e. their “technologies, framing, editing, voice-over, use of realistic or fictional images and sounds, and use of different filmic strategies” (Olivieri 2012: 10). Emotionality indicates how they “name or perform different emotions” (Ahmed 2014: 13). And performativity explores how they co-create the realities they show, “bring about a new situation (...) [and] set into motion a set of effects” (Butler 2015: 28).

To do the analysis, documentary films are cut into four levels: **form**, **content**, **production** and **reception**. In order to explore form and content, I carry out a feminist close reading (Lukic and Sánchez 2011) that employs a response-able gaze toolbox<sup>4</sup> and a typology of documentary cinema modes of representation.<sup>5</sup> As for production and reception, the methods are interviews with filmmakers, close reading of reviews, and fieldwork at screenings. After examining each film separately, I diffractively read the identified feminist practices through one another.

I have envisioned these three tools and the four-level framework as flexible instruments that can be adapted for the analysis of documentary cinema in diverse contexts. In this dissertation, I focus on films from the **two Southern European**

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<sup>4</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Chapter 2. Theoretical Apparatus: A Toolbox for a Response-able Gaze

<sup>5</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4.1 Documentary Cinema Modes of Representation

**countries** in which my research project was physically located, Spain and Italy. Coming from the so-called Global South (I was born and raised in Mexico), I found it compelling to look at these two contexts through the frames provided by documentary films that deal with gender in/equalities. In this sense, this thesis is also a register of my encounter with these audiovisual texts in dialogue with feminist film theory: location specific films on the one hand, and a theoretical-methodological toolbox that is “not necessarily location bound” on the other hand (Alexander and Mohanty 2010: 27). Even though constant translation from Spanish and Italian into English became a major challenge while writing this dissertation, it was politically relevant in terms of what Sophie Mayer (2015) and Patricia White (2015) state as a pending issue for feminist film theory: looking beyond dominant cinema’s location, that is, Anglophone productions.

The **time framework** between 2013 and 2018 was a deliberate cut, necessary for narrowing the research scope to manageable terms and motivated by my desire to engage with current on-going feminist practices. For designing the **sample** composed of ten films (five per country), the criterion took into account two aspects: issues that have been prominent in Spanish and Italian feminist agendas as reflected on non-fiction audiovisual productions, and three theoretical guidelines. The first guideline is an awareness of the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities evident in the films, even if not openly expressed by the filmmakers. The second one is an understanding of feminist intersectional filmmaking as one in which the filmmakers tackle the creation of audiovisual representations as a political task (Ruido 2006: 2). And the third guideline pays attention to gathering diverse modes of representation so as to continue the aforementioned debate between realistic and experimental strategies in documentary feminist cinema.

The thesis is organised in **seven chapters**, plus introduction and conclusions. I also include five annexes: the information sheet and consent form that the interviewees read before taking part in this research project; the data sheets of the ten documentary films that are part of my sample; a list of 128 Spanish documentary films that deal with gender issues (1969-2018); a list of 127 Italian documentary films that deal with gender issues (1965-2019); and summaries of the dissertation in English, Italian and Spanish.

The thesis methodological framework is explained in the **first chapter: Documentary Cinema as a Diffraction Apparatus for the Visualisation of In/Equalities**. In the first section of this chapter, I develop the aforementioned idea of diffraction as a reading strategy and as visualisation metaphor. In the second section, I

summarise the narratives behind the waves of feminism identified by Clare Hemmings (2011), and I explain my approach to gender inequality in connection with building alliances from and against precarity (Butler 2015). In the third section, I describe my proposal of analysing documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus and feminist cinema as an eccentric technology of gender (de Lauretis 1987a; 1990).

The fourth section of the first chapter can be defined as a diffractive reading of Karen Barad's agential realism (2007); Ilona Hongisto's aesthetics of the frame (2015); Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of film experience (1992); Domitilla Olivieri's tools for a feminist study of documentary cinema, i.e. materiality and indexicality (2012); performativity (Barad 2003, 2007; Bruzzi 2000; Butler 1990, 2015); emotionality (Ahmed 2014); and Bill Nichols's typology of documentary cinema modes of representation (2010). The last part of the chapter summarises the research techniques with which this methodology is applied to the ten case studies.

As stated in its title, **Theoretical Apparatus: A Toolbox for a Response-able Gaze**, the **second chapter** brings together various insights from feminist film theory employed in my close reading of the case studies. The concept around which I organise the first section is that of the gaze. I start with a revision of visibility and counter-visibility (Mirzoeff 2011), upon which I develop what a possible feminist counter-visibility would entail. Then I follow a theoretical journey from John Berger's male western gaze (1972) and Laura Mulvey's male gaze ([1975] 1988) up to bell hooks's oppositional gaze (2000b) and Judith/Jack Halberstam's transgender look (2005). I also reflect on what a feminist gaze would entail. I close this section with an overview of contemporary data about gender equality in the European film industry. In the second section, following Olivieri (2012), I propose a working definition of feminist documentary cinema that focuses on what it does, rather than on what it is. Finally, I revise the debate between the realist documentary film tradition and feminist counter-cinema.

The aim of the **third chapter, An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production**, is to contextualise the production of Spanish documentary feminist cinema so as to trace a possible genealogy of contemporary non-fiction audiovisual productions made from a feminist perspective. The chapter is organised in chronological order, from the pioneers and the filmmakers of the Spanish Transition (1975-1985) up to the current situation. Taking into consideration the implementation of the Organic Law for Measures on Integral Protection against Gender Violence in 2004, I discuss the ambivalence of mainstream media attention to gender

violence and feminist responses to it. Another milestone taken into consideration is the creation of the Association of Women Filmmakers and From the Audiovisual Media (CIMA) in 2006.

Important sources for the construction of this non-fiction audiovisual feminist agenda are the catalogues of Feminist, Women and/or Queer Spanish Film Festivals. I also go over the documentaries that have been awarded the “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality” governmental distinction, created in 2011. Finally, I look at the limits of institutional feminism in Spain by analysing the arguments put forward by transfeminist critiques, which advocate for a political subject of feminism that questions the focus on white middle-class heterosexual women and denounces the precariousness in which most feminist documentary filmmakers work.

The **fourth chapter** is devoted to the five **Spanish Case Studies**: **4.1. *Cuidado, resbala* (2013)** is a collective film developed within a feminist economics framework which (re)positions care labour at the centre of the economic activities. **4.2 *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014)**, also a collective film, portrays the massive demonstration against a bill banning the right to abortion in Spain, and contributes to a genealogy of the feminist movement, establishing dialogues between a contemporary fight and those held by feminist activists decades ago. **4.3 *No existimos* (2014)** focuses on the violence suffered by women refugees in their home countries, during the transit, and in their host countries, while questioning the violence of representation in itself.

**4.4. *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015)** is a postporn transfeminist film, which shows sexually explicit images that seek to question mainstream ideals of desirability, as well as sexual practices framed by ableism and heteropatriarchy. And **4.5 *Serás hombre* (2018)** deals with the issues of sex trafficking and gender-based violence, but shifting the attention from women as victims to the role played by men in the perpetuation of violence in the context of the construction of masculinity within a patriarchal framework.

The aim of the **fifth chapter, An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Italian Documentary Production**, is similar to that of the third chapter. I contextualise the production of Italian documentary feminist cinema in order to trace a possible genealogy of contemporary non-fiction audiovisual productions made from a feminist perspective. Organised in chronological order, the chapter starts with a revision of the work by Cecilia Mangini, the first woman who managed to pursue a professional career as a documentary filmmaker in Italy. I then look into the Italian feminist movement of the seventies, discussing practices like the consciousness-raising small groups and “partire da

sé”, i.e. starting from oneself. Through the works of the “Feminist Film Collective”, the “Alice Guy Collective” and “The Nemesiache”, I discuss the audiovisual translation of such practices, which have also been recovered in contemporary productions.<sup>6</sup>

As in the Spanish case, important sources for the construction of this non-fiction audiovisual feminist agenda are the catalogues of Feminist, Women and/or Queer Italian Film Festivals. I follow Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo (2013) in their categorisation of films directed by Italian women in terms of how they have reframed the cinematic tradition, women’s history, and Italy. The precariousness in which most feminist documentary filmmakers work is discussed in light of data presented by the European Women’s Audiovisual Network (EWA) and Donne e Audiovisivo (Women and the Audiovisual-DEA). Finally, I go over continuities and ruptures in the dialogues established between so-called “historical feminists” and young feminists from the nineties, up to the transfeminist impact that the “Non una di meno” movement (Not One Woman Less/Ni una menos) has had at a national level since 2016.

The **sixth chapter** is devoted to the five **Italian Case Studies**: **6.1 Pays Barbare (2013)** is not explicitly located within the Italian feminist agenda. However, I argue that the material-discursive practices employed by the filmmakers to denounce fascism and the Italian colonialist project, provide spectators with many elements for an intersectional feminist reading. **6.2 Una nobile rivoluzione (2014)** is a compilation film which gathers footage from diverse time-spaces in a personal-political reconstruction of memories: the memory surrounding a specific character’s life (transsexual activist Marcella di Folco), but also the memory of a national movement for equal rights.

**6.3 Triangle (2014)** reads two tragedies through one another, revealing patterns of similarities and differences between them. While a fire in New York in 1911, in which 146 textile workers died, led to strikes and fights for labour rights, the collapse of a ghost textile workshop in Barletta in 2011, which caused the death of five women, led to impotence due to normalised precarious working conditions in the current neoliberal system. **6.4 Lunàdigas. Ovvero delle donne senza figli (2016)** gathers testimonies of dozens of women who reflect upon the social pressure that they have faced as a result of having decided not to have children. The directors put forward their claim for the right to exist and have a name. Finally, **6.5 Ma l’amore c’entra? (2017)** deals with gender-based

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, in *Lunàdigas* (2016). *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 6. Section 6.4

violence but, similarly to *Serás Hombre*, my Spanish case study, it shifts the attention from women as victims to the role played by men in the perpetuation of violence.

The **seventh chapter, A Diffractive Reading of Feminist Material-Discursive Practices in Contemporary Spanish and Italian Documentary Cinema**, brings together insights from the ten case studies so as to identify patterns of continuities and differences concerning feminist material-discursive practices at four levels: content, form, production and reception. In terms of contents, I detect two patterns in which feminist material-discursive practices may operate: enacting the right to appear or enacting the right to look back and/or against the grain. As for the forms, I exemplify how feminism can politicise all six modes of representation. My analysis of production practices is elaborated along my interviewees' self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions regarding four key concepts, i.e. documentary cinema, equality, gender and feminism(s). And in the case of reception practices, I identify patterns of affective identification and/or intellectual reflections.

In the **conclusions**, I go over my aforementioned hypothesis and research objectives in light of the results obtained along my research process. I also present a list of nine propositions for feminist documentary filmmaking that were elaborated in and through my intra-actions with the films and their filmmakers as my research project moved forward. Then I enunciate what I consider to be this **thesis' main contribution**, namely, the implementation of a feminist new materialist theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of feminist practices in documentary cinema. Such approach, I argue, acknowledges the complexity of the intra-actions taking place between the human and non-human agencies and objects of observation involved in any documentary film.

Among the **results** of this research project I have developed: a feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze; an analysis of documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus; a revision of feminist material-discursive practices and their effects at the levels of content, form, production and reception of ten documentary films; and a preliminary mapping of Spanish and Italian documentary films which deal with gender issues. In this sense, I hope that this dissertation will contribute to the strengthening of the link between feminist documentary filmmaking, feminist film theory and feminist new materialism(s).

The Spanish and Italian documentary films that I discuss in this dissertation have translated very urgent issues into the audiovisual language, resorting to documentary cinema not as a mirror reflecting any so-called reality, but as a complex apparatus that frames and cuts phenomena so as to make sense of real (and many times unequal)

conditions, while at the same time triggering directions of possibilities to promote changes. I have read these audiovisual texts from an intersectional feminist perspective, which is my own explicit intellectual and political agenda. Collective and horizontal practices, attentive intra-actions which reinforce care for each other in each encounter, affirmative critique and creative entanglements among humans and non-humans, I reckon that the analysis and production of feminist non-fiction cinema can have the potential to be all of that and much more.

## **Chapter 1. Documentary Cinema as a Diffraction Apparatus for the Visualisation of In/Equalities**

Advocating the mere tolerance of difference between women is the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives. Difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters. (Audre Lorde 1984; 2007: 111).

The aim of this chapter is to present the methodology that structures this thesis. The first part of the chapter is divided into four sections. Inspired by Spanish researcher Beatriz Revelles's PhD dissertation, in which she employs a diffractive methodology as a bridge between the Social Sciences and the Humanities (2014: 75), the first section introduces diffractive methodology as a reading strategy and as a visualisation metaphor. In the second section, I establish a dialogue between gender equality conceptualisations, narrative waves of feminism, and the potential of feminist cinema for building alliances from and against precarity. The third section develops my conceptualisation of feminist documentary cinema, firstly as a diffraction apparatus (Barad 2007), secondly as an eccentric technology of gender (de Lauretis 1987a; 1990).

The fourth section reads through Karen Barad's agential realism (2007), Ilona Hongisto's aesthetics of the frame (2015), Vivian Sobchack's phenomenology of film experience (1992), and Domitilla Olivieri's tools for a feminist study of documentary cinema, i.e. materiality and indexicality (2012). I then add three more tools: performativity (Barad 2003; Bruzzi 2000; Butler 1990, 2015), emotionality (Ahmed 2014), and Bill Nichols's typology of documentary cinema modes of representation (2010).

The second part of the chapter summarises how diffractive methodology is applied in this research project to the specific case studies of Spanish and Italian



documentary cinema produced between 2013 and 2018. In this section I also present the guidelines for the semi-structured interviews with the filmmakers.

### 1.1 A Diffractive Methodology for the Visualisation of Differences and their Effects

**Diffraction** is a concept used **in physics** to describe wave behaviour, i.e. how waves combine when they overlap, and their apparent spreading “when they encounter an obstruction” (Barad 2007: 28). As a **quantum phenomenon**, diffraction broke the paradigms of classical physics, since quantum physicists proved with the double-slit experiment<sup>7</sup> that “particles can sometimes behave like waves, showing in practice the indeterminacy principle, that is, that the ontology of anything cannot be determined without regard to the apparatus of observation, or else that the apparatus participates in the ontology of the thing observed” (Belia 2015: 14).

**In feminist theory**, particularly within the new materialist tradition, the metaphor of diffraction is employed “to denote a more critical and difference-attentive mode of consciousness and thought” (Geerts and Van der Tuin 2016).<sup>8</sup> The works of Trinh T. Minh-ha (1997), Donna Haraway (1992; 2004), and Karen Barad (2007) have given form to diffraction as a **critical consciousness** with the potential to move away from “the traditional modern Western philosophical approach in which difference is seen as to-be-captured, to-be-assimilated, and, eventually, to-be-wholly-eradicated” (Geerts and Van der Tuin 2016). As an alternative to this approach, Trinh T. Minh-ha resorts to a diffractive way of thinking:

A non-dualistic, non-separational model of identity and difference, in which identity categories, identified groups, and even identified single entities, diffractively crisscross, interfere, and co-establish one another, and differences are respected and allowed to exist and flourish. (In Geerts and Van Der Tuin 2016).

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Young performed the double-slit experiment with light in 1801. In 1927, Davisson and Germer demonstrated that electrons show the same behaviour: “The Davisson-Germer experiment showed that under some circumstances, matter (in this case electrons) exhibits wavelike behavior. Since the Davisson and Germer experiment, many other experiments have confirmed this result for other kinds of matter as well. That is, there is direct empirical evidence that matter -not just light- manifests wave behavior under the right experimental circumstances.” (Barad 2007: 83).

<sup>8</sup> The quotes from Geerts and Van Der Tuin (2016) are from the COST Action IS1307 New Materialism. Networking European Scholarship on “How Matter Comes to Matter” website. Date of access: November 2018. By May 2019, the website was no longer accessible. <<http://www.newmaterialism.eu>>.

Haraway proposes diffraction as an optical metaphor that can be more productive to think with than reflection, for it allows stepping out of problems such as that of the copy and the original. She asks us to consider what the physical phenomenon of diffraction can mean in epistemological terms. Thyrza Nichols Godeve defines it as a methodology that considers “both the history of how something came to ‘be’ as well as what it is simultaneously” (in Haraway 2000: 104). Haraway refers to the double-slit experiment in order to explain this:

...when light passes through slits, the light rays that pass through are broken up. And if you have a screen at one end to register what happens, what you get is a record of the passage of the light rays onto the screen. This “record” shows the history of their passage through the slits. So what you get is not a reflection; it’s the record of a passage (...). As a metaphor it drops the metaphysics of identity and the metaphysics of representation and says optics is full of a whole other potent way of thinking about light, which is about history. It’s not about identity as taxonomy, but it’s about registering process on the recording screen. (Haraway 2000: 103-104).

Following this proposal, Evelien Geerts and Irin Van der Tuin emphasise the potential that diffraction has for thinking with and from differences:

Thinking diffractively steps out of the phallogocentric, reflective logics of producing the Same all over again by acknowledging the differences that exist, while at the same time pointing at where the problematic reductions and assimilations of difference have taken place (...) it gives us the opportunity to become more attuned to how differences are being created in the world, and what particular effects they have on subjects and their bodies. (Geerts and Van Der Tuin 2016).

Apart from the optical metaphor, Barad also employs diffraction to describe her reading methodology, which reads insights through one another rather than in opposition. In so doing, it tackles the challenge that, in her opinion, ought to be assumed by feminist ways of thinking and producing knowledge:

Rather than employing a hierarchical methodology that would put different texts, theories, and strands of thought against one another, diffractively engaging with texts and intellectual traditions means that they are dialogically read “through one another” to engender creative, and unexpected outcomes (...) Rather than flat-out rejecting what has been theorized before, the foundations of the old, so to say, are being re-used to think anew. (Geerts and Van Der Tuin 2016).

Instead of conceiving different visions as completely separate and/or opposed to each other, **diffractive reading** attends to “entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another” (Barad 2007: 30). Diffraction stands for a kind of thinking that disrupts “linear and fixed causalities” (Van Der Tuin 2011a: 26). In reading various texts together, diffraction “places them in conversation in a way that attends to the relational ontology that is in the heart of the revolutionary paradigm quantum physics brought about, as well as in a way that does not prioritize the one over the other” (Belia 2015:14).

In her master thesis, in which she diffractively reads Alison Bechdel’s graphic novel *Are You My Mother?* with Virginia Woolf and Adrienne Rich, Vasiliki Belia points out what makes a diffractive reading different from comparative and intertextual readings. Reading texts together is frequently called a comparative method, while an intertextual reading involves reading a text “with the text’s intertextual references” (Belia 2015: 15).<sup>9</sup> Whether diffractive reading is a comparative method or not is contested ground. What Belia emphasises is that diffractive reading is based on a different ontology, one that departs from the representationalist paradigm of thought.<sup>10</sup> With the diffractive approach, “any reading of texts is a meaning-making practice” (Belia 2015:

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<sup>9</sup> Belia distinguishes two trends in intertextual reading: On the one hand, that of the poststructuralists, represented by Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes: “For Kristeva, any analysis of text must investigate the status of each word as belonging to a three dimensional textual space the coordinates of which are writing subject, addressee and exterior texts. The ontological presuppositions behind this method of analysis is that no text is closed, every text derives meaning through other texts, and texts can be anything that has acquired meaning through culture and in the social” (2015: 16). On the other hand, that of Jonathan Culler, Gérard Genette and Michel Riffaterre, which “attempts to put limitations to the infinitely expanding intertext of the poststructuralists, in order to establish some criteria that may enable the development of a method for the practical analysis of intertextuality in literature” (2015: 17).

<sup>10</sup> Following Bunnin and Honderich, Belia explains that “the basic tenet of the epistemological position of representationalism, also known as the representative theory of perception, is that subjective sensations, or else sense-data, are representations of physical objects, which are considered to be the causes of the sense-data (...) Representationalism is also known as epistemological dualism because practices of knowledge and the objects of knowledge belong in different planes of existence, are ontologically different” (Belia 2015: 8).

16). Rather than focusing on reflections of the world, a diffractive reading engages in the re-making of the world: “When texts are read diffractively, the knowledge produced is not about them, but is part of the texts’ re-making (...) diffractive reading enables us to read texts together in a way that transforms them” (Belia 2015: 19; 87).

The emphasis is on what the texts become during the encounter with the reader and the other texts, so that reading is conceived as a productive and transformative event: similarities and differences are produced when reading various texts together, turning them into something they were not when read individually. A diffractive methodology also avoids categorising and hierarchising texts “by considering one of the texts as the main object of analysis and the other as its context or frame of reference, or by assuming that influence follows a singular route from the oldest to the newest text” (Belia 2015: 18).

Apart from resorting to diffraction as my reading strategy for bringing together various films, I understand and apply diffraction as a **visualisation methodology**. My proposal of thinking about documentary films not as representations of any so-called reality, but as records of practices that have effects is inspired by Haraway’s aforementioned quote about the screen that shows the history of the passage of light rays through slits (Haraway 2000: 103-104). The epistemological move is from reflection to diffraction: “whereas reflection is about mirroring and sameness, diffraction attends to patterns of difference” (Barad 2007: 29). Moreover, these patterns do not only map where differences appear, but “where the effects of difference appear” (Haraway 1992; 2004: 70).

**Reflection** is coherent with “a scientific theory that takes observation to be the benign facilitator of discovery, a transparent and undistorting lens passively gazing at the world” (Barad 2007: 195). But this belief in “the independently determinate existence of words and things” (Barad 2007: 195), which can be objectively mirrored, is questioned by an approach that considers how the observation apparatus itself is entangled with the observer(s) and with whatever is being observed, thus establishing intra-actions that determine what comes to matter in each encounter: the aforementioned move from the paradigms of classical physics to quantum physics’ indeterminacy principle.

The metaphor of reflection in knowledge production has been widely referred to in critical discourses, as in the practice of (self)reflexivity. The problem that Haraway points out in this regard is that “reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and

really real” (1997: 16). What Belia explains is that, while self-reflexivity examines “what role the knower’s position in the world (gender, class, race, species, nation, and so on so forth) plays in the production of knowledge (...) [it] takes for granted such identity markers and the knower’s pre-established position as the subject in the practice of knowing” (2015: 8).

Haraway thus proposes diffraction as “a metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness at the end of this rather painful Christian millennium, one committed to making a difference and not to repeating the Sacred Image of Same” (1997: 273). Diffraction, as a visualisation metaphor for knowledge making recognises that, depending on how the observation apparatus (e.g. the point of view of the camera) is constructed, reality will emerge in specific ways, for which the observer has to be accountable. Apparatuses, Barad explains, “are not passive observing instruments. On the contrary, they are productive of (and part of) phenomena” (1998: 98). Diffraction reconstitutes our understanding of the subject’s position and “the relationship in which knowing engages both the knower and the known in unforeseeable ways” (Belia 2015: 8).

I resort to diffraction as my methodology in this dissertation because I consider it productive at the many levels that are developed over this chapter and throughout the thesis. Due to its emphasis on differences, diffraction can be an important critical tool to reflect on in/equalities, not in terms of becoming equal to a superior original, but in terms of how differences are made and where these differences have effects (for example, as legitimations of social inequalities). A diffractive reading can also be useful when looking at the material-discursive practices of different filmmakers, whose feminist positions vary considerably, but that can be productively read together. Both ways of applying diffraction, as a reading tool and as a critical visualising methodology, are further developed in the next sections.

### **1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism**

Equality and **gender equality** are contested concepts. Michelle Lazar explains that, within a liberal perspective, “equality implies ‘same as men’, where the yardstick is that already set by men. Instead of a radical shift in the gender order, women therefore are required to fit into the prevailing androcentric structures” (2007: 16). However, as Lazar also argues, the ideal of achieving equality remains “historically important for politically

disadvantaged groups of women who have been systematically denied equality under the law” (2007: 16).

The definition provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) stresses the importance of granting diversity, while striving for equal possibilities for everybody. It also acknowledges that equality ought to be considered not only in terms of economic sustainability, but also as a human rights issue:

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, thereby recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.<sup>11</sup>

In a European Commission joint statement on the occasion of the International Women’s Day 2018, gender equality is referred to as “one of the fundamental values of the European Union”, and it is located within a progress narrative: “Europe is one of the safest and most equal places for women in the world. But our work is not over –the path to full equality in practice is still a long one.” In this statement, the main areas identified as requiring further attention in Europe are: “access to education, equal pay for equal work, access to top positions in companies and politics as well as protection from violence.”<sup>12</sup>

In the European Commission’s approach to gender equality, we can detect what Lazar (2007) mentions as one of the traps of the equality discourse: The law recognises same rights for everybody irrespective of their sex, but gender binarism and the yardstick set within a male privilege framework remain unchallenged. The statement also mentions that the European Union provides assistance to women and girls abroad: “Gender equality is not just about fairness and justice in Europe –it is also a necessity to achieve

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from the Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus in the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1168>>.

<sup>12</sup> Document retrievable at the “European Commission Press Release Database” website. Date of access: December 2018. <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-18-1601\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-1601_en.htm)>.

sustainable peace, security, development, economic prosperity and growth around the world.”<sup>13</sup> In this sense, what Clare Hemmings warns against is the insistence on “Western gender equality as *the* marker of progress” (2011: 8). She explains that:

...the use of gender equality as a marker of an economic and regulatory modernity marks the subject of gender equality as Western, capitalist, and democratic, and the West, capitalism, and democracy themselves as sites that create the possibility of, and reproduce, rather than hinder, gender equality. Critically, they position the objects of gender equality as non-Western or post-socialist, and such contexts, and particularly cultures or economies, as creating and perpetuating traditional gender inequalities not part of the modern world (...) the subject of modern gender equality (...) is not only Western, capitalist, and democratic, but also heterosexual and feminine. (Hemmings 2011: 9-10).

The emphasis on **Western gender equality** as something already achieved in Europe, visible in the figure of the sexually liberated young Western woman, nurtures a postfeminist discourse that conceives feminism as an out-dated project in the so-called first world countries.<sup>14</sup> At a transnational level, the gender equality liberal discourse “is essential for the linked fantasy that a particular model of economic development will give rise to the universal good life, including women’s empowerment and opportunity” (Hemmings 2011: 138). She continues:

We may also be critical of cynical agendas of warmongers whose perverse and unsustainable interest in gender equality masks these economic interests. Further we may want to point to the ways in which the fetishization of particular female figures as “the most oppressed” by Western powers with little real interest in sustainable gender equality works against local and transnational feminist efforts to critique and intervene to transform power relations detrimental to women. (Hemmings 2011: 138-139).

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<sup>13</sup> “European Commission Press Release Database” website. Date of access: December 2018. <[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-18-1601\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-1601_en.htm)>.

<sup>14</sup> Iris Van Der Tuin describes postfeminism as both narcissistic and nostalgic: “it is predicated on a celebration of our current times as having reached equality between the sexes (read: as having transcended the need for feminism). This strategy is not necessarily different from a -what I would like to call- ‘nostalgic’ outlook. Nostalgia underlies the reduction of feminism to second-wave feminism (...) Thus, according to both narcissism and nostalgia, we are cut off from feminism in the here and now” (2011b: 16-17).

In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Judith Butler discusses **inequality in terms of precarity**, i.e. “the differential distribution of precariousness” (2015: 33). What we currently face on a global scale is that “precarity is unequally distributed and lives are not considered equally grievable or equally valuable” (2015: 96). Butler starts from a definition of the body as fundamentally interdependent and vulnerable, so that, under unjust socio-political and economical conditions, we are all at risk of destitution. She advocates for social movements that struggle from and against precarity, not to overcome interdependency or even vulnerability, but “to produce the conditions under which vulnerability and interdependency become livable” (2015: 218). The fact that we have to cohabitate with other humans and non-humans on which our lives depend, should make us “understand a global obligation imposed upon us to find political and economic forms that minimize precarity and establish economic political equality” (2015: 121-122).

Butler emphasises that we are all precarious and that “our precarity is to a large extent dependent upon the organization of economic and social relationships, the presence or absence of sustaining infrastructures and political institutions” (2015: 119). In this regard, vulnerability is not inherent to a particular group, but unequally distributed as an effect of power relations under specific conditions. When this is not acknowledged, vulnerability can be used by political discourses as a way to produce and naturalise forms of social inequality.

In feminist theory it has been argued that women face social vulnerability in a disproportionate way. What Butler warns against is the idea that “women have an unchanging and defining vulnerability (...) [since] that kind of argument makes the case for paternalistic provisions of protection” (2015: 140). Rather, she underlines that conditions such as the poverty and illiteracy faced mainly by women are caused by an unequal distribution of precariousness fostered by gender power relations and lack of adequate socio-political infrastructures. She also states that women are “at once vulnerable and capable of resistance, and that vulnerability and resistance can, and do, and even must happen at the same time” (2015: 141). The struggle, she adds, is to find a balance between the necessary demand for institutions to provide the conditions for livable lives, without resorting to modes of paternalism that “reinstate and naturalize relations of inequality” (2015: 142).

To think about inequality in terms of precarity also opens up the possibility for strategic **alliances** among different groups. In Butler’s words: “precarity is the rubric that



brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor, the differently abled, and the stateless, but also religious and racial minorities: it is a social and economic condition, but not an identity” (2015: 58). It is in this sense that I have considered it important to build my sample from an intersectional perspective, looking at documentary films that deal with social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender equality:

For the struggle for the rights of gender and sexual minorities to be a social justice struggle, that is, for it to be characterized as a radical democratic project, it is necessary to realize that we are but one population who has been and can be exposed to conditions of precarity and disenfranchisement (...). A politics of alliance (...) rests upon, and requires, an ethics of cohabitation (...). This does not mean that any of us give up existing rights, but only that we recognize that rights are only meaningful within a broader struggle for social justice. (Butler 2015: 65-66, 70).

When various minorities, whose alliance potential stems from their shared precarity, assemble in the streets and/or appear together in a media platform to demand their rights, they “enact another idea of equality, freedom and justice than the one that they oppose” (Butler 2015: 52). Moreover, their “gathering signifies in excess of what is said, and that mode of signification is a concerted bodily enactment, a plural form of performativity” (2015: 8).

The concept of **performativity**, as developed by J. L. Austin (1962; 1975), originally refers to linguistic utterances that bring what they state into being or make a set of events happen as a consequence of the utterance being made: “performativity is a way of naming a power language has to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects” (Butler 2015: 28). Butler explains that bodily acts can also be performative. Bodies that assemble in the public space exercise “a plural and performative right to appear, one that asserts and instates the body in the midst of the political field” (2015: 11). This is particularly relevant for minorities or populations that are deemed as disposable: When they act in alliance, they exercise “the right to have rights” (2015: 80); when they appear and act in the public sphere, they make political claims and mobilise precarity. Their actions acquire a performative dimension, for they bring their right to appear into being and they set into motion a series of effects.

Street assemblies may become more politically potent when there's also an audiovisual version of the scene, communicated live or in proximate time: "What bodies are doing on the street when they are demonstrating is linked fundamentally to what communication devices and technologies are doing when they 'report' on what is happening in the street" (Butler 2015: 93). Butler cites the case of Tahrir Square, Cairo, in 2011, where "the cameras never stopped; bodies were there and here; they never stopped speaking, not even in sleep, and so could not be silenced, sequestered, or denied" (2015: 98). This set into motion "the very activity of bonds of solidarity that emerge across space and time" (2015: 100). I'll come back to the performative potential of documentary cinema in the next sections.

In order to have the "critical tools to highlight the heterosexism and racism central to the contemporary mobilizations of gender discourse" (Hemmings 2011: 11), alliances from and against precarity are to be rooted in **intersectional feminism**. Feminism is defined by bell hooks as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (2000a: viii). Intersectional feminism recognises the need to go beyond sex/gender as the primary and/or exclusive signifier of difference (hooks 2000b: 517). Therefore, it considers the ways in which, in addition to gender, categories such as race, social class, sexual preference and other identity axes interact at various levels of social inequalities.

Joan Scott explains that the critique employed by feminism, is "not just criticism but the exposure of the contradictions and inadequacies of any system of thought. The blind spots that insure coherence and stability by ignoring or denying contradictions" (2008: 7). Feminists have exercised critique towards feminisms itself, in the revision of "the premises of their own beliefs, the foundations of their own movement" (2008: 7).

It is in this regard that this research project aims at exploring how diverse feminist material-discursive practices in contemporary Spanish and Italian documentary cinema visualise social inequalities, rooted in, but not limited to, gender. It is also due to the recognition of the limits of Western gender equality that I have decided to employ a diffractive methodology, which places the focus on differences and their effects, rather than on the reproduction of the same mirror image.

One area in which attention to differences becomes useful is within Western feminist theory itself, for the narratives with which its history has been told usually reproduce an oppositional way of thinking, which can even reinforce postfeminist beliefs. According to Iris Van Der Tuin, for example, with the wave model "feminism appears spatiotemporally fixed" (2011b: 15): On one hand, it is claimed that feminism is no

longer necessary because equality is said to have been reached in the so-called Global North; on the other hand, the seventies are frozen and essentialised “as the prototypical feminist times” (2011b: 17). In order to analyse the narrative waves of feminism, Clare Hemmings analyses six academic journals specialised in gender studies, across which she identifies three narrative strands: of progress, loss, and return.

In Western **feminist progress narratives**, the 1970s are imagined in negative terms due to the widespread idea of “woman” and “feminism” as unified categories. The progress is said to come in the 1980s, when the fixed categories are criticised by black and lesbian feminist theorists, leading to the current moment in which differences within women and feminisms are acknowledged and celebrated. From this perspective, in order to be “ethical subjects of feminism, we *must* leave the past behind” (Hemmings 2011: 57).

For Western **feminist loss narratives**, the 1970s are full of rich feminist activism, which is lost in the 1990s due to the conservative institutionalisation of a feminist theory that has lost its political potential. Queer theory is portrayed as less serious than “a feminist theory and politics with a disciplinary, materialist ground” (Hemmings 2011: 89). Moreover, the feminist movement is said to be over, totally devoid of its political goals.

Western **feminist return narratives** aim at bringing together the progress and loss strands by recognising the limits of both positions:

Unlike the subject of progress narratives, this positive heroine is not blinded to real-world inequalities by the pleasures of abstraction; unlike the subject of loss narratives, she is not nostalgic or hostile. Anyone can be the subject of a return narrative, provided they demonstrate the appropriate affect as well as commitment. This subject, like the narrative she authorises, is democratic as well as pragmatic. (Hemmings 2011: 106).

As further developed in the next chapter, feminist film theory shares similar narrative tendencies: a progress narrative that considers the first realist documentaries as naïve because of their focus on content, while counter-cinema is regarded as superior for it manages to challenge formal strategies; a loss narrative that criticises the lack of political effectiveness of abstract avant-garde counter-cinema, while it considers that the realist documentary manages to fulfil a necessary activist commitment; and a return narrative in

which both strands are recovered, recognising the materiality of the films in terms of how they are made, and in terms of how they relate to other bodies beyond the film text. Even though they are usually portrayed as sequential, I consider that these three narratives are more productively thought of diffractively, as overlapping waves. As Barad explains, in physics, waves “can overlap (i.e. interfere) with one another and occupy the same position at any moment of time” (2007: 100).

In order to look for a way out of the linear sequence where “Marxist or radical approaches give way to identity politics, which give way to deconstructivist critiques, which are replaced in turn by (new) materialism” (Hemmings 2011: 5), Iris Van Der Tuin proposes a specific use of the **dis-identification** method (2011b). The term dis-identification was introduced by Diana Fuss (1995) and became popular in queer theory due to the work of José Esteban Muñoz (1999). Following Astrid Henry (2004) and Liane Henneron (2005), Van Der Tuin claims the use of dis-identification for researching with waves in a productive, non oppositional nor essentialist way:

Dis-identification accounts for both continuity and for specific cases of inequality and difference between feminists (...) Henneron’s students (...) do not reason according to a postfeminism; they want to take up a feminist position, so they effect a present that is not characterised by gender equality. The material second-wave feminists transfer to their students is dis-identified with: it is studied and evaluated for the patriarchal here and now. On the basis of the nonlinearity and nondualism of dis-identification, it should be clear that the “third” of “third-wave” does not refer to what comes after second-wave feminism in a progressive manner. (2011b: 25-26).

In a similar vein, discussing generationality in feminism, Van Der Tuin argues that “diffractive reading is suitable for affirming and strengthening links between writers without fencing them away from each other in distinct temporalities, and for reading them through one another without hierarchizing one over the other” (in Belia 2015: 4).

By feminist documentary cinema I actually refer to multiple proposals, not only due to the diversity of contents and formal strategies, but also as a result of their filmmakers’ positions, who situate themselves, either explicitly or implicitly, in different

(though often overlapping) feminist waves.<sup>15</sup> While some advocate for women to have equal access to the filmmaking industry in the same terms as men, others advocate for feminist women, men and/or gender non-conforming subjects to approach filmmaking in an entirely different way.<sup>16</sup> These are “differences that matter” (Barad 2007: 36) and that have effects on the diverse visualisations of social inequalities in each film. For instance, while visibility and the right to appear of women and/or gender non-conforming subjects is regarded as crucial by some filmmakers, others decide to avoid their subjects’ visibility at all, since that would lead to their victimisation rather than to their empowerment.<sup>17</sup>

The data gathered about each film is first close read separately, but in a second stage, data from all the case studies is diffractively read. The aim of such a method is to move “away from habitual normative readings (e.g. coding) toward a diffractive reading that spreads thought and meaning in unpredictable and productive emergences” (Mazzei 2014: 742). The goal is to build knowledge in ways that do not reproduce rigid and confrontational paradigms. Rather, I look for possibilities to open up “feminist spaces of friendship, desire, affiliation, and productivity that produce variegated historical accounts whose subjects (of any age) shuttle back and forth between their own and others’ memories, representations, and fantasies of past, present and future” (Hemmings 2011: 149).

What a diffractive methodology helps identify is “how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter” (Barad 2007: 30). It also provides a way of visualising differences beyond oppositional dichotomies: when encountered with an obstruction, the waves only apparently spread, but they actually remain entangled, though moving in different, new directions. In this dissertation this is applied, for example, when modes of representation in documentary cinema that have been regarded as completely opposite are put into dialogue by means of contemporary films that incorporate both modes.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> To see my working concept of feminist cinema: *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1.5 Feminist Cinema(s) and Women’s Cinema(s)

<sup>16</sup> The first position could be exemplified by that of the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain (CIMA), while the second position is closer to that advocated by filmmakers such as Ana Solano and Leonor Jiménez. *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 3. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production and Chapter 4. Spanish Case Studies

<sup>17</sup> The first position could be exemplified by the film *Yes, We Fuck!*, while the second position is that of the film *No existimos*. *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Spanish Case Studies

<sup>18</sup> For example, *Yes, We Fuck!* is a realist observational-participatory documentary film that also resorts to performative modes of representation in various sequences. *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Spanish Case Studies

### 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus

As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, a diffractive methodology is potentially valuable for the analysis of documentary cinema due to its shift from the reproduction of the same to the production of patterns of differences. In accordance with a diffractive perspective, a documentary film is not conceived as the reflection of any so-called fixed reality out there, which is then mirrored by the camera. Instead, it is analysed as technologies that co-produce and record the processes through which human elements (e.g. the filmmakers) and non-human elements (e.g. the camera) intra-act with other human and non-human parts of the world (e.g. filmed subjects and objects, spectators, screens).

Ilona Hongisto has coined the expression “**aesthetics of the frame**” to refer to “an aesthetics that foregrounds documentary participation in the real” (2015: 14). She explains that **framing** is the main practice through which documentary films participate in “the real as process” (2015: 12) and engage “in a productive dialogue with the world in its becoming” (2015: 12). To frame is **to make cuts and to draw boundaries**. In documentary filmmaking, “framing encloses archival documents, actual bodies, and political events within a territory in a manner that makes them expressive of qualities that are not visible as such” (2015: 21).

Her approach is located within a new materialist perspective: “documentaries not only operate on a plane of signification, but also partake in the material processes that co-compose the real” (Hongisto 2015: 12). This idea can be connected with my conceptualisation of documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus that makes boundaries within phenomena and produces not reflections of the real as sameness but records of diffraction patterns where effects and affects of differences can be visualised.

Instead of “reflecting on representations”, diffraction focuses on “accounting for how practices matter” (Barad 2007: 90). Decisions such as whom to film, what to ask in the interviews, what to leave out in the editing or how to distribute a film, are to be considered as practices that have effects. These effects take place within the materiality of the film in terms of how it is constructed, and in how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). Accordingly, diffractive methodology moves **from representationalism to performativity**. Instead of analysing representations, the focus is on “accounting for how practices matter (...) [producing] specific material configurations of the world’s becoming” (Barad 2007: 90-91). Paraphrasing Butler,

performativity is a way of naming the power documentary cinema has “to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects” (2015: 28).

Moving away from the representational paradigm in the analysis of documentary cinema has an **ethical impact**, changing the focus “from producing accurate and authentic representations to creatively contributing to the transformability of actual beings in the real” (Hongisto 2015: 12). The connection that Barad makes between diffraction and scientific practices, can be translatable to documentary film theory: “Objectivity, instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies, and responsibility to the entanglements of which we are a part” (in Dolphjin and Van Der Tuin 2012: 52).

The separation between subject/observer and object/observed is replaced by an understanding that both are permanently entangled. The diffractive method does not take the boundaries of any subject nor object for granted, “but rather investigates the material-discursive boundary-making practices that produce ‘objects’ and ‘subjects’ and other differences out of, and in terms of, a changing relationality” (Barad 2007: 93). The primary unit of analysis from a diffractive perspective is not any independent object, but **phenomena**, which “do not merely mark the epistemological inseparability of observer and observed, or the results of measurements; rather, *phenomena are the ontological inseparability/ entanglement of intra-acting agencies*” (Barad 2007: 139). The term **intra-action** signifies “the mutual constitution of objects and agencies of observation within phenomena (in contrast to ‘interaction’, which assumes the prior existence of distinct entities)” (Barad 2007: 197).

Barad calls her epistemological framework, “**agential realism**”. According to this model, “agency cannot be designated as an attribute of ‘subjects’ or ‘objects’, but rather are constituted within specific practices” (1998: 116). It is “a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency is doing/being in its intra-activity (...) Agency is about changing possibilities of change entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production” (2007: 235). This conceptualisation leads to the strong connection between agency and accountability, as well as with responsibility understood as response-ability, i.e. “the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances” (Barad in Dolphjin and Van Der Tuin 2012: 55). In other words: “Agency is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in refiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production,

including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices” (Barad 1998: 116).

Hemmings argues that an alternative for telling feminist theory history in a different way can be achieved through the reconsideration of the subject/object relation, stemming from the concept of agency. Therefore, we can read Barad’s and Hemmings’ insights through one another, especially because agency also resonates with the move from reflection (Sacred image of same in Haraway’s words) to diffraction (patterns of differences and their effects):

Western feminist failure to see agency in unfamiliar others is characterized as one of two forms of myopia, then: a failure to see resistance in unfamiliar modes and an insistence that independent resistance is agency’s primary sign. In many respects this work to expand the meanings of agency has been highly successful, empirically extending the range of practices understood as indicative of agency and critiquing a Western feminist gaze that seeks only to recognize its mirror image. This work goes a long way towards challenging Western feminist presumptions about who needs saving, from what, and by whom. (Hemmings 2011: 208).

Similarly to how Butler attaches agency and resistance to vulnerability and precarity, Hemmings warns against defining agency as the opposite of oppression, “rather than as part of the negotiation of power relations in constrained circumstances” (2011: 209). Within the framework of agential realism, Barad conceives agency as a permanent doing/being of human and non-human elements in each intra-action. In a similar vein, speaking from her “aesthetics of the frame”, Hongisto emphasises that documentary cinema “operates in the real by framing it and, therefore, also engages with what remains beyond the frame” (2015: 135). She explains the consequences of this:

This endows documentary films with a particular agency in the real and issues them with a related ethical prerogative (...) Ethics intertwines with creating. Possible lives, resistance, and affective experiences are not preformed content for the documentaries to convey, but substance that the films create and release into the real. This movement is channelled through the capturing work of the frame and the expressions it lets out. The aesthetics of the frame, then, promotes ethics as an act that sustains the potential of becoming in the real. (2015: 135).



We can also read Karen Barad's agential realism through Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological approach to how cinema matters (1992). Sobchack emphasises the agency of the non-human elements of the film experience, especially due to the fact that a film is not only an object to be seen: "in terms of its performance, it is as much a *viewing subject* as it is also a *visible* and *viewed object*. Thus, in its existential function, it shares a privileged equivalence with its human counterparts in the film experience" (1992: 21-22). My proposal of understanding cinema as a diffraction apparatus and of applying a diffractive reading to a series of material-discursive practices in documentary filmmaking echoes the way in which Sobchack understands:

...a film not merely as a *visible object* (some "thing" already-seen, already-constituted), but also as a performative and communicative *act of vision* (a now-seeing, a now-constituting activity) that implicates a *viewing subject* (an always-perceptive and always-constitutive enworlded lived-body) engaged in the act of signifying (Sobchack 1992: 56).

She explains: "Seeing is an act performed by both the film (which sees a world as visible images) and the viewer (who sees the film's visible images both as a world and the seeing of a world)" (Sobchack 1992: 56). The seeing performed by a film is characterised by its framing: "The frame provides the *synoptic center* of the film's experience of the world it sees; it functions for the film as the field of our bodies does for us (...) the frame literally provides the *premises* for perception" (Sobchack 1992: 134). We can directly relate this explanation with Hongisto's aesthetics of the frame. In a way that resonates with Barad's approach to non-human agencies, Sobchack describes the agency of the camera, as well as that of the projector/screen:

For the filmmaker, the world (whether "real", drawn, or constructed in any other fashion) is experienced *through* the camera. It is seen and *felt* at the *end of the lens*. Or, more precisely, it is seen and felt at the *lens-world junction*. (...) the spectator can be said to experience the world of the film *through* the projector. The world is visibly expressed as perceptible for the spectator only *at the end of the projector's throw of light* –or more precisely, at the *light-screen "junction"* (...) the filmmaker must see *through* the camera and the spectator must see *through* the projector for a film to emerge as "the perception of an expression which is perceived" (1992: 175-176, 190).

The camera's materiality makes itself felt through its looking and moving in relation to what it perceives. Sobchack also describes the particularity of the cinematic language and its connection with the film experience:

...cinema uses *modes of embodied existence* (seeing, hearing, physical and reflective movement) as the vehicle, the “stuff”, the substance of its language. It also uses the *structures of direct experience* (the “centering” and bodily situating of existence in relation to the world of objects and others) as the basis for the structures of its language (...) a language that not only refers to direct experience but also uses direct experience as its mode of reference. (1992: 4-5, 11).

This is a key aspect of what we can call a **performative spectatorship**.<sup>19</sup> According to Sobchack, in order to understand the film experience, we must analyse such experience as located in the lived-body:

Watching a film, we can see the seeing as well as the seen, hear the hearing as well as the heard, and feel the movement as well as see the moved. As viewers, not only do we spontaneously and invisibly perform these existential acts directly for and as ourselves in relation *to* the film before us, but these same acts are coterminously given to us *as* the film, as mediating acts of perception-cum-expression we take up and *invisibly perform* by appropriating and incorporating them into our own existential performance; we watch them as a *visible performance* distinguishable from, yet included in, our own. (1992: 10-11).

Sobchack's phenomenological approach does not only recognise the agency of the film's body “as more than an inanimate mechanism, as more than a deceitful and self-effacing ‘apparatus’ used to delude and dominate those who encounter its visual and visible work” (1992: 304). Her theoretical position also underlines the agency of the spectator “as uniquely situated and intentionally active in the process and production of cinematic vision” (1992: 304). A possibility of affirmation and becoming in cinema is thus enacted in the intra-actions that take place within such film experiences.

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<sup>19</sup> The concept of performative spectatorship has been discussed by theorists such as Jan Campbell (2005) in relation to melodrama, and An Van Dienderen (2016) in the context of expanded documentary.

Something fundamental within Barad's agential realism is the inseparability of the **material-discursive**: "Agential reality is not a fixed ontology that is independent of human practices, but is continually reconstituted through our material-discursive intra-actions" (Barad 1998: 104). A new materialist perspective shifts the focus from representation to matter:

"Matter" signifies the subject matter of research and, more broadly, the material building blocks/forces of reality. It also points at (scholarly) processes of meaning-making ("to matter"). The innovativeness of new materialist approaches lies in that they provide ways for signification to be simultaneously material and semiotic; the scholarship is "material-semiotic" or "material-discursive."<sup>20</sup>

According to Barad, "*discursive practices are specific material (re)configurings of the world through which the determination of boundaries, properties, and meanings is differentially enacted*" (2007: 148). She understands difference as material:

Meaning is not an ideality; meaning is material. And matter isn't what exists separately from meaning. Mattering is a matter of what comes to matter and what doesn't. Difference isn't given. It isn't fixed. Subject and object, wave and particle, position and momentum do not exist outside of specific intra-actions that enact cuts that make separations –not absolute separations, but only contingent separations– within phenomena. (Barad 2014: 175).

A kind of subject/object boundary-making practice is exemplified by what Barad calls **apparatus**. These are technologies that make boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways. In each intra-action with the world, apparatuses "enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (Barad 2007: 148). Despite its complex definition, a **diffraction apparatus** can be as simple as a question, which places the focus on one aspect instead of another, or a camera, which frames only a portion of what stands in front of it. In the next section I elaborate on how documentary films that deal with inequalities and enact material-discursive feminist practices on the side of the

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<sup>20</sup> COST Action IS1307 New Materialism. Networking European Scholarship on "How Matter Comes to Matter" website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://newmaterialism.eu/about/cost-action-is1307>>.

filmmaker, the filmed subjects and/or the film spectators, can be regarded as diffraction apparatuses with the potential to visualise social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender.

### **1.1.3 Diffraction through an Eccentric Technology of Gender**

Culture is “a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings” (Hall 1997: 2). **Meanings**, Barad explains, depend on “an ongoing performance of the world (...) In its causal intra-activity, part of the world becomes determinately bounded and propertied in its emergent intelligibility to another part of the world” (2007: 149). A way in which a phenomenon becomes bounded and intelligible is through the operation of diverse diffraction apparatuses, i.e. technologies that make boundaries/enact cuts within the world, thus producing subjects and objects. Depending on how the diffraction apparatus is constructed, the phenomena will “emerge in particular ways, and through particular cuts” (Sauzet 2015: 41).

What I argue in this dissertation is that documentaries that deal with social in/equalities can be analysed as diffraction apparatuses, in and through which, feminist material-discursive practices might have the potential to visualise gender in/equalities. I refer to practices in which part of the world becomes legible to another part of the world, in ways that render visible and disrupt the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities, while also performing and enacting other forms of livable lives. Documentary films can do so, not just as a result of the topics they frame, but also by means of their responsible intra-actions with human as well as non-human elements, all throughout their production, distribution and reception stages.

A diffraction apparatus can be an apparatus for investigation or an object of investigation (Barad 2007: 73). In this dissertation, documentary films are considered diffraction apparatuses in both senses: 1) apparatuses for investigation, constructed by the filmmakers in order to make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world by means of an audio-visual text; and 2) objects of investigation, a sample of films analysed as registers of processes of different feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema.

To conceive feminist documentary films as diffraction apparatuses that “enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad 2007: 148) involves analysing how they intra-act with different parts of the world, the differences they make, and where

the effects of those differences appear. Approaching the films as objects of investigation, so as to identify what documentary cinema does, and what it can do, in terms of visualising gender in/equalities, means reading them as entangled with their filmmakers' positions, the production decisions surrounding them, and their contexts of exhibition. Therefore, I consider four levels of each film: form, content, production, and reception, e.g. what aspects are emphasised, who is interviewed, how they get financed, how they are distributed, where they are (not) exhibited, and what reading possibilities they open.

It's important to highlight that the diffraction apparatus-documentary cinema, does not refer only to the film itself. Rather, it involves textual as well as contextual elements. These apparatuses "are themselves material-discursive phenomena, materializing in intra-action with other material discursive apparatuses" (Barad 2007: 203). By **materialisation**, Barad means "*an iteratively intra-active process whereby material-discursive bodies are sedimented out of the intra-action of multiple material-discursive apparatuses through which these phenomena (bodies) become intelligible*" (1998: 108).

Following Michel Foucault's conceptualisation of the technology of sex as composed of social mechanisms (i.e. the various apparatuses that regulate and enforce sexuality), Teresa de Lauretis states that the construction of gender is carried out "through the various **technologies of gender** (e.g. cinema) and institutional discourses (e.g. theory) with the power to control the field of social meaning and thus produce, promote, and 'implant' representations of gender" (1987a: 18). She understands gender as a sociocultural-technological<sup>21</sup> production carried out in and through material-discursive practices, in arenas such as the media, family, religion and academy.

In a similar vein, the way in which this dissertation refers to gender visualisations (re)produced by cinema is not inscribed within a representationalist belief in the existence of some essential femininity or masculinity inherent to the bodies, that is then mirrored by words or images. Rather, I follow a gender-in-the-making definition that considers practices/doings/ actions in line with Judith Butler's proposal of **gender performativity**. As previously mentioned, in the linguistic context in which J.L. Austin originally coined the word "performativity", it refers to "a way of naming a power language has to bring

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<sup>21</sup> Technology cannot be distinctly separated from the sociocultural, and encompasses three conceptions: "In pre-modern societies, technology was understood mostly in the sense of human knowledge, while in modernity, technology's most important connotation was that of the artifact. Today, the contemporary dimension of technology as system and process becomes more and more important" (Weber 2006: 406).

about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects” (Butler 2015: 28).<sup>22</sup> When Butler translates the idea of performativity to gender theory, she refers to how “gender is itself a kind of becoming or activity (...) an incessant and repeated action of some sort” (1990: 112). She explains:

...to say that gender is performative is to say that it is a certain kind of enactment; the “appearance” of gender is often mistaken as a sign of its internal or inherent truth; gender is prompted by obligatory norms that demand that we become one gender or the other (usually within a strictly binary frame); the reproduction of gender is thus always a negotiation with power; and finally, there is no gender without this reproduction of norms that in the course of its repeated enactments risks undoing or redoing the norms in unexpected ways, opening up the possibility of remaking gendered reality along new lines (2015: 32).

As soon as we are born, we become entangled with a series of gender norms that produces us, “but not in the sense of bringing us into being, nor in the sense of strictly determining who we are. Rather, they inform the lived modes of embodiment we acquire over time” (2015: 29). We are forced to enact the gender that we are assigned, but in this repetition, something might go awry or queer, thus opening up possibilities for change. However, Butler points it out that choice in such deviations from the norm comes later in the process, for we are “gendered prior to understanding anything about how gender norms act upon and shape us, and prior to our capacity to reproduce those norms in ways that we might choose” (2015: 63).

Moreover, deviation from gender norms is punished rather than celebrated, as well as directly linked with precarity and unequal distribution of vulnerability, since “those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment, pathologization, and violence” (2015: 34). This is where the political dimension of gender performativity theory becomes evident:

To ask how these norms are installed and normalized is the beginning of the process of not taking the norm for granted, of not failing to ask how it has been installed and enacted, and at whose expense. For those effaced or demeaned

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<sup>22</sup> *Vid. Supra* Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

through the norm they are expected to embody, the struggle becomes an embodied one for recognisability, a public insistence on existing and mattering. (Butler 2015: 37).

As Haraway explains, gender is entangled with the organisation of social in/equalities: “Gender is a verb, not a noun. Gender is always about the production of subjects in relation to other subjects, and in relation to artifacts (...) It is an obligatory distribution of subjects in unequal relationships, where some have property in others” (2004: 328). Gender norms, Butler emphasises, have a strong impact in the regulation of the ways in which we are supposed to appear in public and private spaces. They condition “who will be recognizable and ‘legible’ and who will not” (Butler 2015: 38).

It is from here that she proposes alliances of those regarded as “illegible”, so as to “open up the norms that limit not only what is thinkable, but the thinkability of gender nonconforming lives” (2015: 38). She summarises the ultimate political aspiration of gender performativity theory as “to let the lives of gender and sexual minorities become more possible and more livable, for bodies that are gender nonconforming as well as those that conform too well (and at a high cost) to be able to breathe and move more freely in public and private spaces” (2015: 32).

Feminist material-discursive practices through a diffraction apparatus such as documentary cinema might manage to render visible gender performativity. Moreover, if we recognise the potential of documentaries to “co-compose the real” (Hongisto 2015: 12), we can envision their impact in the opening up of other possibilities for gender intelligibility. We can read the production of en-gendered bodies diffractively with Barad’s framework: it occurs through “a causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied as specific material configurations of the world (...) and specific material phenomena” (Barad 2003: 814). In other words, gender is (re)produced in the intra-actions of the technologies of gender/ diffraction apparatuses (such as cinema) that establish boundaries of the world/constrain what can be said/done on the one hand, and the material bodies/subjects and objects en-gendered within such boundaries on the other hand.

Feminism, in its interrogations beyond the essentialist binary opposition of femininity/ masculinity, has operated as **an eccentric technology of gender**, enacting a queer performativity of the norm and making possible the conditions of visibility for “an eccentric discursive position outside the male (hetero)sexual monopoly of

power/knowledge (...) an eccentric subject constituted in a process of struggle and interpretation, a rewriting of self” (de Lauretis 1990: 127, 144). Like Gloria Anzaldúa’s new *mestiza*, who moves across borders “developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguities” (2007: 101), the eccentric subject is capable of “movement in and out of gender as ideological representation (...) a movement back and forth between the representation of gender (in its male-centered frame of reference) and what the representation leaves out or, more pointedly, makes unrepresentable” (de Lauretis 1987a: 26).

The eccentric subjects that de Lauretis talks about can also be diffractively read with Haraway’s (1992; 2004) and Minh-ha’s (1986) proposal of inappropriate/d others, who “cannot adopt the mask of either ‘self’ or ‘other’ offered by previously dominant, modern Western narratives of identity and politics (...) [and are instead characterised by a] critical, deconstructive relationality” (Haraway 1992; 2004: 69). The **eccentric subject of feminism** thus, would be neither female nor male, neither Woman nor women, but a construct in progress.

Since the seventies, when the first works of feminist film theory were developed, the cinematic apparatus has been analysed as a powerful technology of gender, not only for the ways in which it co-creates representations of gender, but also in how such representations become “absorbed subjectively by each individual whom that technology addresses” (de Lauretis 1987a: 13). My proposal of analysing feminist documentary cinema as an eccentric technology of gender and as a diffraction apparatus that intra-acts with human and non-human matter in “agential and material-discursive environments” (Van Der Tuin 2013: 234) goes beyond analysing representations. The objective is to account for how feminist material-discursive practices in documentary film matter, and how the “cuts” they enact produce specific subject/object boundaries and reconfigure gender in/equalities in the world’s becoming(s) that they set into motion.

#### **1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity: How Documentary Cinema Matters**

Discussing Bertolt Brecht’s criticism of realism in the arts, Griselda Pollock asserts that feminist artists face a dilemma because, while “challenging dominant modes of realist representation which naturalise bourgeois hierarchies and service masculine fantasy, feminism is none the less committed, epistemologically, to realism. Political change must



come through concrete social struggle in the real world” (1988: 226). In a similar vein, Thomas Waugh explains that a committed documentary filmmaker “is not content only to interpret the world but is also engaged in changing it” (1984; 2011: 6). According to Waugh, filmmakers carry this out “by rooting their work within actively ongoing political struggles: by making films (...) not only about people engaged in these struggles but also with and by them as well” (1984; 2011: 6). In this sense, documentary films matter not only as final products, but also as processes along which human and non-human bodies, agencies and intra-actions are transformed.

In her PhD thesis, *Haunted by Reality. Toward a Feminist Study of Documentary Film: Indexicality, Vision and the Artifice*, Domitilla Olivieri argues that documentary cinema differs from fiction cinema because of its particular relation with reality, one of “contact and continuity” (2012: 35), which she defines as “haunting” (2012: 8). The term “haunting” is borrowed from Mary Ann Doane, who describes the indexical sign as one that is “haunted by its object” (2007: 134). Indexes are “signs founded on a ‘physical’ or ‘existential’ relation with their referent, a relation of copresence if not of contact” (2012: 36). In the case of documentary cinema, such referent is “an actual object that exists or existed in actuality and that has not solely been created for the camera” (2012: 37).

Documentaries cannot escape reality: “documentary film draws its power from its very difficulty, wholly derived from the fact that the real doesn’t give film the time to forget it, that the world presses on, that it is through contact with the world that cinema is made” (Comolli in Olivieri 2012: 1). Olivieri asserts that **indexicality** is particularly relevant for feminist practices within documentary cinema, in as much as its political potential to produce feminist effects lies mainly in the fact that the film establishes an indexical relation with reality. Such a relation operates at three interconnected levels, because the index works:

...as a sign that is in a relation of physical contact and co-presence in space and time with its object; as a trace that entails a previous temporal contact or existential connection with the object; as deixis, which occurs where the sign indicates the existence of, directs, or forces attention to its object (...) it points towards a presence, makes present the object it refers to. (2012: 41).

**Digital technology**, which makes it possible to manipulate colour, brightness and focus of each pixel of a digitised image, has led artists and intellectuals such as Lev Manovich

and William J. Mitchell to announce “the emergence of a ‘post-photographic era’, in which the photograph would no longer be considered indexical of exterior reality” (Mitchell in Mirzoeff 2009: 251). According to Manovich, digital media redefines cinema because lens-based recordings of reality are just one possibility to make a movie among many others, such as computer-generated images and digital compositing:

Cinema is the art of the index (...). But what happens to cinema’s indexical identity if it is now possible to generate photorealistic scenes entirely in a computer using 3-D computer animation; to modify individual frames or whole scenes with the help [of] a digital paint program; to cut, bend, stretch and stitch digitized film images into something which has perfect photographic credibility, although it was never actually filmed? (...) cinema can no longer be clearly distinguished from animation. It is no longer an indexical media technology but, rather, a sub-genre of painting (...). Once live action footage is digitized (or directly recorded in a digital format), it loses its privileged indexical relationship to pro-filmic reality. The computer does not distinguish between an image obtained through the photographic lens, an image created in a paint program or an image synthesized in a 3-D graphics package, since they are made from the same material -pixels. And pixels, regardless of their origin, can be easily altered (...) As a result, while retaining visual realism unique to the photographic process, film obtains the plasticity which was previously only possible in painting or animation (...) digital filmmakers work with “elastic reality.” (1995).<sup>23</sup>

However, as Nicholas Mirzoeff states, “far from being undetectable, the digital manipulation of photography is self-evident to amateurs and professionals alike” (2009: 251).<sup>24</sup>

Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin explain that, nowadays “all mediation is **remediation**” (1996: 346) in three senses. Firstly: “all acts of mediation depend upon other acts of mediation. Media are continually commenting upon, reproducing and replacing each other, and this process is integral to media” (1996: 346). Secondly, all

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<sup>23</sup>“What is Digital Cinema?” in Lev Manovich’s website. Date of access: November 2018.  
<<http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/what-is-digital-cinema>>.

<sup>24</sup> Mirzoeff doesn’t regard photography as an indexical medium, but as an exchangeable commodity, a form of currency: “Digital photography exemplified by the cell-phone generated image, can disseminate itself with extraordinary rapidity that expresses its form as the circulation of commodities. Photographs are a perfect commodity form because they most readily lend themselves to the fetishistic belief that things can mediate between people.” (2009: 254).

mediations are real as artifacts and maintain their contact with reality: “Despite the fact that all media depend upon other media in cycles of remediation, our culture still needs to acknowledge that all media reproduce the real. Just as there is no getting rid of mediation, there is no getting rid of the real” (1996: 346). And thirdly, remediation can also be understood as reform, for the goal of remediation: “is to refashion or rehabilitate other media. Furthermore, because all mediations are both real and mediations of the real, remediation can also be understood as a process of reforming reality” (1996: 346).

This proposal can be diffractively read with Hongisto’s assertion that the ethical move from representationalism to performativity in documentary cinema allows reorienting its work and ethical commitment: “from explicating what already is to facilitating the vibrant becoming of the real in its myriad manifestations” (2015: 17). The idea of remediation also echoes Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska’s understanding of (new) media in terms of **processes of mediation**. They stand for:

...a shift from thinking about “new media” as a set of discrete objects to understanding media, old and new, in terms of the interlocked and dynamic processes of mediation (...) [a] shift from thinking about media solely as things at our disposal to recognizing our entanglement with media on a sociocultural as well as biological level (2012: 1)

It is within this debate that I consider it useful once again to resort to Barad’s aforementioned agential realism, i.e. an epistemological and ontological framework that re-elaborates the concept of realism, with “the goal of providing accurate descriptions of that reality of which we are a part and with which we intra-act, rather than some imagined and idealized human-independent reality” (Barad 2007: 207). At the core of agential realism we find the material-discursive relation described in the previous section:

Material conditions matter, not because they ‘support’ or ‘sustain’ or ‘mediate’ particular discourses that are the actual generative factors in the formation of subjects, but because both discourses *and* matter come to matter through processes of materialization and the iterative enfolding of phenomena into apparatuses of bodily production. The material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity and enfolding. (Barad 2007: 255).

The way in which Olivieri approaches indexicality can be read diffractively with Barad's agential realism. For Olivieri, reality/matter/the material object/the actuality being filmed "is not just a passive unknown or unknowable" (2012: 41). Rather, it haunts documentary with its agency: "the filmed reality indeed inhabits, intrudes upon, and makes itself continually present in the filmic documentary sign" (2012: 8). Olivieri distances herself from a post-structuralist account that would render documentary film as "nothing else but a representation, a fiction, a narrative about reality" (2012: 45). Instead, she looks for a framework that "does not erase the referent, reality, the object, from the picture; then it can become possible to reclaim the promising specificity of documentary without falling into an essentialistic realism" (2012: 46).

Reading Olivieri's assertions through agential realism, she is talking about the entangled intra-actions of agencies on both sides of the camera, as well as the material-discursive practices that take place in each encounter with the world. Barad emphasises that agency is to be found in both ways: the "real object" haunts the film, but the camera and the filmmaker's gaze also "enact cuts" within it. The diffraction apparatus-documentary films "*are not mere observing instruments but boundary-drawing practices -specific material (re)configurings of the world- which come to matter*" (Barad 2007: 206).

For Barad, reality is "not a fixed essence. *Reality is an ongoing dynamic of intra-activity*" (2007: 206). Such an account of reality in-the-doing echoes Stella Bruzzi's definition of documentary as a performative act, for it is always "the result of the intrusion of the filmmaker onto the situation being filmed" (2000: 8). This, she continues, doesn't invalidate the authenticity of documentary. Rather, in her opinion, the idea of unmediated transparency is replaced "with a performative exchange between subjects, filmmakers/apparatus and spectators" (2000: 6).

I have previously mentioned that **performativity** originally refers to linguistic utterances that bring what they state into being or make a set of events happen as a consequence of the utterance being made.<sup>25</sup> Paraphrasing Butler, I would like to propose performativity as a way of naming the power documentary cinema has "to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects" (2015: 28). I have also discussed Butler's revision of bodily acts as performative, particularly their performative enactment of their right to appear when they assemble in the public space. I mentioned that, when

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<sup>25</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

recorded and translated into an audiovisual message, performative acts such as the 2011 demonstrations in Tahrir Square give strength to the bodily acts and enact “bonds of solidarity that emerge across space and time” (2015: 100). Therefore, the performativity of documentary cinema matters at various levels, from the way it frames realities, to the alliances it helps sustain on both sides of the camera and the screen.

Olivieri designs a “methodological framework to analyse documentaries that enables an account of what the specific feminist effects of documentary film are, what they could be and how they come about” (2012: 181). In order to do so, apart from the aforementioned indexicality, she proposes materiality and visuality as tools for film analysis. In the analysis of the documentaries, I also incorporate Sara Ahmed’s concept of “**emotionality**”, so as to describe “how texts are ‘moving’, or how they generate effects (...) [and] the way in which texts name or perform different emotions” (2014: 13).

Ahmed explains that emotions have effects in a performative way, since “they both repeat past associations as well as generating their object” (2004: 32). She exemplifies this with the emotions (fear, hate, disgust) that a white racist subject may experience in an encounter with a racial other, emotions that are shaped by histories of racism:

Hate may generate the other as the object of hate insofar as it repeats associations that already read the bodies of others as being hateful. Indeed, the loop of the performative works powerfully: in reading the other as being hateful, the subject is filled up with hate, as a sign of the truth of the reading. (2004: 32).

When Olivieri talks about the **materiality** of the documentary film, she refers to two aspects. Firstly, she argues for an approach that considers “the filmic representation in its material specificity, as an audio-visual product” (2012: 42). This involves going beyond the content (i.e. the narrative structures, the plot and subject matter), and paying attention to “how the film is constructed: its technologies, framing, editing, voice-over, use of realistic or fictional images and sounds, and use of different filmic strategies” (2012: 10).

Secondly, materiality “refers to the manner in which documentary film engages with bodies and with the matter of the world (...) the entire apparatus surrounding and shaping the filmic representations: the economic aspects, the production-distribution system, the audience reception, the disciplinary paradigms” (2012: 10, 42). This is in line

with a historical materialist analysis of art, which “involves admission of the social character of artistic activity taking place within specifiable conditions of production and consumption. Meanings are furthermore considered as being generated through social and historically variable signifying systems” (Pollock 1988: 220). It is in this sense that, as aforementioned, I look for feminist effects of each documentary film/diffraction apparatus at four levels: the film text’s content and form, but also its contexts of production and reception.

According to Hongisto the main practice through which documentary matters is through framing, “a double movement that both captures the real and expresses it” (2015: 17). We can read the practice of framing diffractively with Barad’s notion of the **agential cut**, which differs from the Cartesian cut because it does not take the distinction between subjects and objects for granted. Rather, “the agential cut enacts a ‘local’ resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy” (Barad 2012: 32). This has ethical effects, as explained by Kember and Zylinska:

If the cut is indeed “enacted rather than inherent,” and if its task is to enact “a resolution”, then we can see how this kind of agential cut has both an ontological and an ethical dimension: it is a causal procedure that performs the division of the world into entities, but it is also an act of decision with regard to the boundaries of those entities. Naturally, only some of these decisions will be true ethical decisions in the sense of having been made by (or with) a human agent, but the majority of them will have moral consequences (...) we thus want to suggest that a good cut is an ethical cut, whereby an in-cision is also a decision. Cutting well therefore means cutting (film, tape, reality) in a way that does not lose sight of the horizon of duration or foreclose on the creative possibility of life enabled by this horizon (2012: 82).

With the agential cut, Barad proposes a new approach to practices of differentiating, i.e. how differences are being created and what effects they have: “differentiating is not merely about cutting apart but also cutting together as one movement: **cutting together-apart**” (2012: 46). Agential cuts, she explains, don’t produce absolute separations, but an agential situated separability, “a ‘holding together’ of the disparate itself” (2012: 46). An important aspect of these agential cuts is that they enact relations of responsibility among the entities that are cut together-apart. We can ask ourselves about the potential of this framework to build feminist alliances against precarity: “What if we were to recognize

that differentiating is a material act that is not about radical separation, but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments?” (Barad 2012: 47).

Apart from the attention to framing and editing as agential cuts, another tool that I would like to propose for documentary film analysis is a revision of Bill Nichols’s modes of representation (2010). This is developed in the next section. As for visuality, the third tool applied by Olivieri (2012), what I carry out in the next chapter is an elaboration of a response-able gaze toolbox, starting from my definition of feminist countervisuality.

#### 1.1.4.1 Documentary Cinema Modes of Representation

According to the typology established by Bill Nichols (2010), there are six **modes of representation in documentary cinema**: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative. The boundaries between them are diffuse and they can be combined in one single film, so it is usually the dominant mode that is used to define the film’s mode of representation. Bruzzi has criticised Nichols’s typology (2000: 1-2) due to its rigidity and its tendency to place the most recent modes (i.e. participatory and reflexive) as more sophisticated, more complex, and overall superior to the previous ones (i.e. expository and observational). I take into account what Bruzzi points out, but i still find it useful to apply Nichols’s classification as part of my theoretical apparatus, as explained below.

Nichols himself has stated that the modes of representation “do not constitute a genealogy of documentary film so much as a pool of resources available to all” (2010: 159). The choice and combinations are up to each filmmaker. He also avoids thinking in terms of improvement, and rather advocates for a situated view or, in agential realist terms, for attention to how the diffraction apparatus is constructed in each circumstance: “New modes arise partly in response to perceived deficiencies in previous ones, but the perception of deficiency comes about partly from a sense of what it takes to represent the historical world from a particular perspective at a given moment in time” (2010: 160).

The two major classifications for documentary cinema that Nichols proposes are models and modes. **Models** are not exclusive of documentary cinema, but extend to other kinds of non-fiction discourse and include the diary, biography, essay, blog and manifesto. **Modes**, on the other hand, are specific to formal cinematic qualities: “Documentaries select and arrange sounds and images in distinct ways, using specifically

cinematic techniques and conventions. These forms did not pre-exist the cinema. Many have since carried over to television, digital production, and the Internet” (2010: 148).

It is important to note that the available technologies have often played an important role in the development of certain modes of representation. The introduction in the market of lightweight 16mm cameras, and of the Video8 and the Hi8 devices, made the observational and participatory modes of representation more popular in the sixties. Digital cameras, portable recording devices, non-linear editing programs and the Internet have opened up lots of creative possibilities for reflexive and performative modes.

Bertolt Brecht’s critique of bourgeois realism is also connected with the recognition of ideological implications involved in resorting to any specific mode of representation. Realist modes of representation (such as the observational one) tend to “present the world as if total knowledge is possible through empirical observation” (Pollock 1988: 234). Pollock continues: “Denying the fact of being a construction, being produced, the realist text offers itself as merely a picture of the world which does not depend for its sense on any other texts, references or information” (1988: 234).

For their part, the poetic, reflexive and performative modes of representation foreground their formal aspects, thus provoking different effects and embracing different ideological assumptions. For example, talking about her reflexive documentaries, Spanish visual artist María Ruido complains that a common critique directed towards this mode is that it leads to works that are “very difficult, hard to understand, not for the general public.”<sup>26</sup>

The **expository mode** goes back to the twenties but remains prominent in most of today’s television news, as well as in science and nature documentaries. This mode “addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that propose a perspective or advance an argument” (Nichols 2010: 167). The images are mainly used as illustrations for the spoken commentary. As a matter of fact, the voice-over as voice-of-God “serves to organise these images and make sense of them, similar to a written caption for a still image. The commentary is therefore presumed to come from some place that remains unspecified but associated with objectivity or omniscience” (Nichols 2010: 168).

When watching an expository documentary, spectators generally have the expectation of getting a rational account of the world with logical cause-effect

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<sup>26</sup> “muy difíciles, que no se entienden, que no son para el público en general.” María Ruido. Personal interview. September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz. Original interview in Spanish. All translations of interviews carried out in Spanish are mine and were revised by native speaker James Hayes.



connections between sequences and events, explanations and solutions. This mode exemplifies the epistophilia usually associated with documentary cinema: rather than visual pleasure, the spectator looks for the pleasure of getting to know something. It is actually common for this mode of representation to adopt a dramatic structure similar to that of suspense fiction cinema, where the solution to a mystery is required (Nichols 1997: 62, 72).

The **observational** documentary privileges observation of the social actors without comments or interventions from the director, whose presence is practically imperceptible. In editing and postproduction, filmmakers avoid adding voice-over commentaries, music, sound effects or inter-titles. Re-enactments are also eluded. It's the mode of the so-called direct cinema and is also frequently used in ethnography, aiming at some kind of "pure documentary uncontaminated by the subjective vagaries of representation" (Bruzzi 2000: 4). In fiction cinema, its equivalent could be Italian neorealism: "Social actors engage with one another, ignoring the filmmakers (...) We make inferences and come to conclusions on the basis of behavior we observe or overhear" (Nichols 2010: 174). But while in fiction, scenes are designed for spectators to oversee, in observational documentaries, scenes are made out of the lived experience of actual people, which poses ethical considerations, such as reinforcing a voyeuristic gaze.

Moreover, the non-participatory presence of the filmmaker and her/his camera brings about the question of response-ability. The filmmaker might not intervene directly, but her/his intra-action "invites debate as to how much of what we see would be the same if the camera were not there or how much would differ if the filmmaker's presence were more readily acknowledged" (Nichols 2010: 179). Another aspect to consider about the observational mode of representation is the break it enacts with classic cinema's editing, for an observational film tends to stick to the real duration of actual events.

On the opposite extreme, we find the **participatory mode of representation**, where the filmmaker no longer hides her/his presence, but "enters into the social actor's world through interviews, conversation, provocation, or other forms of encounter and has the power to alter that world" (Nichols 2010: 158). The filmmaker appears in the same reality as those being filmed, rather than on the detached world of commentator (expository mode) or witness (observational mode): "The viewer senses that the image is not just an indexical representation of some part of the historical world but also an indexical record of the actual encounter between filmmaker and subject" (Nichols 2010: 157). While observational documentary wants to convey the sense of being a fly-on-the-

wall, participatory documentary wants to give spectators the sense “of what it is like for the filmmaker to be in a given situation and how that situation alters as a result” (Nichols 2010: 181).

This mode of representation also appears in the sixties, when new technologies create the conditions of possibility for sync sound exchanges between the filmmaker and the subject being filmed. The participatory style of filmmaking is close to what Dziga Vertov calls “kino-pravda” and what Rouch terms “cinéma vérité”, i.e. film truth. This is not an absolute truth, rather: “Cinéma vérité reveals the reality of what happens when people interact in the presence of a camera. If there is a truth here it is the truth of a form of interaction that would not exist were it not for the camera” (Nichols 2010: 184). In line with my diffractive methodology, which reads insights through one another and pays attention to overlappings, it’s interesting to notice how Stella Bruzzi gives a very similar definition to describe all kinds of documentary cinema, which, as mentioned before, she defines as performative:

...documentaries are inevitably the result of the intrusion of the filmmaker onto the situation being filmed (...) they are performative because they acknowledge the construction and artificiality of even the non-fiction film and propose, as the underpinning truth, the truth that emerges through the encounter between filmmakers, subjects and spectators. (2000: 8).

Once the filmmaker becomes another social actor among the subjects s/he films, her/his “possibilities of serving as mentor, critic, interrogator, collaborator, or provocateur arise” (Nichols 2010: 184). But not all participatory documentaries stress this interaction. Some resort mainly to interviews, so that the filmmaker’s voice emerges from the editing of the various contributing voices. This mode of representation has come to involve the spectator as participant as well, for example, by means of interactive websites, web-docs and installations: “Such innovations suggest that the participatory mode is particularly ripe for exploitation in digitally based, computer-driven forms that grant far more control to the viewer than the standard fixed and unalterable structure of the film-based documentary” (Nichols 2010: 180).

The **poetic mode of representation** shares similarities with the modernist avant-garde, for it stresses “visual and acoustic rhythms, patterns, and the overall form of the film” (Nichols 2010: 150). The film form is as important as, or even more than, social

actors. Poetic documentaries gather their raw material from the historical world, but transform it in diverse ways. Instead of developing direct engagements with specific individuals, they explore formal patterns with temporal rhythms and spatial juxtapositions. Rather than factual knowledge or persuasion, this mode stresses mood and affect: “The rhetorical element remains underdeveloped but the expressive quality is vivid” (Nichols 2010: 162). As a result, the poetic mode of representation “is particularly adept at opening up the possibility of alternative forms of knowledge to the straightforward transfer of information, the prosecution of a particular argument or point of view, or the presentation of reasoned propositions” (Nichols 2010: 162).

The **reflexive mode** calls attention to documentary cinema’s conventions by exposing its constructed character and revealing its representational processes. The focus is no longer on the historical world, but on the text itself. In this sense, it challenges realism, as well as the so-called neutrality of the observational mode of representation. The reflexive character usually takes place at the formal level of the film, but it can also be present in its content. In terms of form, it subverts the general assumptions and expectations that we as spectators have towards documentary cinema, e.g. we generally accept that the interviews shown are authentic and spontaneous, nor scripted nor rehearsed. At the content level, the reflexive mode can take a political perspective, reminding us “how society works in accord with conventions and codes we may too readily take for granted” (Nichols 2010: 199).

A sub-genre of reflexive documentary cinema is the compilation film made with archive or stock footage. Laura Mulvey underlines that this kind of films are always “constructed around a gap or dislocation between the original archival raw material and the new reading offered by its rearrangement” (2011: 251). Compilation film “was born as political commentary” (Mulvey 2011: 254), with the pioneer works of Esfir Shub’s, *Fall of the Rumanov Dynasty* (1927), and Nicole Védre’s *Paris 1900* (1947). Compilation films made with colonial archives, such as María Ruido’s *L’oeil imperative/The Imperative Eye* (2015) or Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian’s *Pays Barbare/Barbaric Land* (2013), one of my case studies, open up possibilities for confronting the colonial gaze:

...the colonial archive has impressed on it the authority of its source: the films carry the impression of empire, as it were, like a stamp. On the other hand, the camera sees and film records beyond that authorising source, leaving on the

colonial film another impression, perhaps more like the more casual footprint. This impression is derived from imperialism's blind spot, and it is this material residue of a reality unseen (or overlooked) by its perpetrators that dislocates the stamp of colonial discourse. These are the visible signs and traces of the unequal relation between the coloniser and the colonised, the indigenous people and their invaders, that have been caught by the camera and are inscribed and preserved. (Mulvey 2011: 254).

Another example of compilation cinema is that of documentary films made with home movies. Alina Marazzi's documentaries *Un'ora sola ti vorrei/For One More Hour with You* (2002) and *Vogliamo anche le rose/We Want Roses Too* (2007) are interesting cases in which the filmmaker re-signifies, through her own gaze, materials that had been shot from a different perspective.<sup>27</sup>

The **performative** documentary, within Nichols typology, emphasises the subjective, embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world, as opposed to a so-called objectivity based on universal values. It frequently has an important autobiographical or imaginary element that is combined with real facts, which is why it usually employs resources such as flashbacks, repetitions, or frozen frames. In the performative mode of representation, information and facts yield to "an expressive quality that affirms the highly situated, embodied, and vividly personal perspective of specific subjects" (Nichols 2010: 203). It is close to the poetic mode of representation, but it is less concerned with formal experimentation in itself and, despite the centrality it gives to subjective experience, it always joins "the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political" (Nichols 2010: 204). One of the main mottos of feminism clearly resonates in this mode's stance.

Instead of presenting a "reality" that exists previously and independently, performative documentary cinema shows realities resulting from the action of the camera and/or the film production: situations created from the action itself of making a documentary film. The filmmaker produces performatively the reality that s/he films. This clearly reflects my proposal of understanding feminist documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus<sup>28</sup>, i.e. technologies that make boundaries and enact cuts within the

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<sup>27</sup> I analyse these two films in my aforementioned master thesis, *Intervenciones feministas en el cine documental. Conocimientos situados y (auto) representaciones de género en películas de Alina Marazzi y Maricarmen de Lara* (2013).

<sup>28</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus

world, so as to make part of it intelligible to another part of the world in specific ways (Barad 2007). What I propose for my analysis of the case studies is that, within the wider umbrella of documentary cinema as always performative (Bruzzi 2000), there are various ways in which reality can be framed and cut, and it's in this sense that the modes of representation typology can be useful.

The poetic, reflexive, participatory and performative modes of representation have several characteristics in common with feminist counter-cinema, while the expository and observational modes are closer to cinematic realism.<sup>29</sup> Through its self-awareness and self-questioning, reflexive documentary films achieve the estrangement and foregrounding effects that filmmaker and theorist Peter Wollen looks for in counter-cinema (1972; 2002: 74). By pretending an absence of the camera, observational cinema can maintain the apparent deceit of cinematic realism. What I analyse in this dissertation are the diverse ways in which contemporary documentary filmmakers working in Spain and Italy with a critical perspective towards gender, resort to the six modes, producing diffraction patterns where gender in/equalities might be visualised. In the next section, I explain my steps in the reading of the films and in the design of the interviews that conform my case studies.

## **1.2 Cuts and Methods: Constructing the Apparatus for this Research Project**

As mentioned in the introduction, Beatriz Revelles employs a diffractive methodology as a bridge between the Social Sciences and the Humanities (2014: 75) in her PhD thesis. She analyses the communicative process of writer Toni Morrison and her readers via her Facebook page, arguing that diffraction “offers the opportunity to read and analyse objects without presupposing a separate entity of their parts” (2014: 16). In this sense, what the researcher has to be aware of are the cuts enacted in the entangled continuum of the world so as to carry out any analysis. In this dissertation, I conceive each documentary film as a diffraction apparatus that necessarily frames issues in specific ways, excluding certain aspects while foregrounding others. I also cut each film into its form, content, production and reception contexts.

I regard documentary films as diffraction apparatuses made by the filmmakers from a situated perspective, but also as objects of investigation for analysing the

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<sup>29</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Chapter 2. Section 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

phenomena which lies at the heart of this dissertation: these films are registers of processes of different feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema that may have effects in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender. In order to turn them into such objects of investigation, I have had to enact certain cuts and to design a theoretical-methodological apparatus. These are the tools with which I am creating boundaries within entangled elements so as to facilitate the identification of diffraction patterns where the differences, and the effects of such differences, appear.

The theoretical apparatus, further developed in the next chapter, complements the methodology presented in the previous section with tools from feminist film theory, focusing on the concepts of (counter)visuality and the gaze. There is also a contextual revision of both, Spanish and Italian feminist documentary film production, within a wider European framework. Next, each documentary film of the sample is cut into four paradigms of analysis: form, content, production and reception. Such a division is in coherence with the aforementioned need to pay attention to how the films are constructed, i.e. their form and content, and how they engage “with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10), i.e. their production and reception contexts. For each level, I apply different qualitative methods.

The films’ form and content are analysed by means of a close reading as (re)appropriated by contemporary feminist methodologies. These establish a dialogue between formalist and poststructuralist approaches, starting from the text, but recognising “the *contextuality* and *historicity* of any reading” (Lukic and Sánchez 2011: 106). I aim at making explicit my gaze as a researcher, as well as the situated gazes of the filmmaker and the filmed subjects. In the case of the former, it is important to mention that, within a diffractive methodology, “the reader of a text cannot be seen as separate or separable from the (...) work she reads but is conditioned by it and becomes part of it” (Belia 2015: 9). The “I” that carries out a diffractive reading becomes always already entangled with the diffractive patterns s/he builds within and from the text, as Barad describes:

There is no ‘I’ that exists outside of the diffraction pattern, observing it, telling its story. In an important sense, this story in its ongoing (re)patterning is (re)(con) figuring me. ‘I’ am neither outside nor inside; ‘I’ am of the diffraction pattern. Or rather, this ‘I’ that is not ‘me’ alone and never was, that is always already multiply dispersed and diffracted throughout spacetime(mattering),

including in this paper, in its ongoing being-becoming is of the diffraction pattern. (Barad 2014: 181-182).

To approach the visualisation of gender in/equalities in the contexts of production, the main sources are interviews with the filmmakers.<sup>30</sup> In the particular case of *Serás hombre/You'll Be a Man* (2018), it was also possible to carry out participant observation during part of the shooting because the director, Isabel de Ocampo, is one of the expert advisors within the GRACE project. To analyse the reception contexts, I employed these interviews but also opinions expressed in reviews and, in most of the cases, after public screenings, including some that I organised at the University of Granada.<sup>31</sup>

The interviews, reviews and comments expressed by audiences undergo a close reading by means of a coding of open categories. Inspired by Valentina Genta's master thesis (2015), in which she adapts a grounded theory framework to analyse the interviews she carried out with men from a feminist collective in Chile, my coding enacts two levels of cuts in the transcriptions: Firstly, I look for the key concepts, i.e. gender, equality, feminism(s), and documentary cinema. Secondly, regarding each key concept, I code material-discursive practices, paying particular attention to three categories: self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions.

**Self-positions/situatedness** refer to the ways in which the interviewees situate themselves towards the human and non-human matter with which they intra-act, e.g. how they locate themselves within the different approaches to feminism(s). This is closely tied with their discourses, i.e. "groups of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking" (Rose 2016: 187), and their discursive formations, i.e. "the way meanings are connected together in a particular discourse" (Rose 2016: 188). In the interviews, this is exemplified by the opinions expressed on different topics, and the ways in which the interviewees build their arguments for holding such opinions.

When identifying the **tensions** and contradictions that arise in the interviews, especially when the interviewees are faced with **obstructions**, I have taken into account

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<sup>30</sup> The only case in which I was not able to carry out a direct interview was *Pays Barbare/Barbaric Land* (2013) because one of the two directors, Angela Ricci Lucchi, was very sick and passed away in February 2018. However, I gathered interviews from different sources.

<sup>31</sup> In October 2018, as part of a dissemination event for the GRACE project, we organised a seminar on feminist documentary cinema, in which we screened three of my Spanish case studies: *Cuidado, resbala* (2013), *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015), and *Serás Hombre* (2017). We also screened two Italian documentary films: *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (2002) and *Dalla testa ai piedi* (2007). And in May 2019 we screened and discussed the Spanish documentary film *Nadar* (Carla Subirana, 2008).

that, for Barad, diffraction patterns are interference patterns: “the apparent bending and spreading out of waves when they encounter an obstruction” (2007: 28). It is important to notice that she uses the word “apparent”, for waves behave differently from particles: while the latter may provoke impact or collision when they meet, “waves can coexist unhindered by each other’s presence; they can overlap in a common spatial region – indeed at a single point” (2007: 417).

All material-discursive practices have **effects**, i.e. changes that result “when something is done or happens: an event, condition, or state of affairs that is produced by a cause.”<sup>32</sup> Diffraction maps the “differences that our knowledge-making practices make and the effects they have on the world” (Barad 2007: 72). Linear causality, however, is put into question by agential realism, which takes as empirical evidence Niels Bohr’s demonstration that “identity is not fixed and inherent, but performative” (Barad 2012: 43). The identity that Bohr talks about is that of atoms, photons and electrons, which behave either like particles or waves depending on how they are measured. Barad calls this behaviour an example of “nature’s queer performativity” (2012), which shows that effects are not as predictable or self-evident as we tend to assume.

We can diffractively read Bohr’s account that “identity is not given, but rather performed” (Barad 2012: 41), with Butler definition of gender as performative, i.e. as something that occurs and gets sedimented in the repetition of acts and gestures: “the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief” (Butler 1990: 141). Barad explains that, within the agential realist framework, all bodies and phenomena:

...come to matter through the world’s performativity – its iterative intra-activity  
(...) Memory – the pattern of sedimented enfoldings of iterative intra-activity –  
is written into the fabric of the world. The world “holds” the memory of all  
traces; or rather, the world is its memory. (2012: 32, 44).

It is the constant repetition of gender norms in each intra-action with the world, which gives the appearance of substance to its materiality and creates the memory-pattern of sedimented enfoldings that co-composes what we take for granted as reality.

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<sup>32</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary website. Date of access: November 2018.  
<<http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/effect>>.



I also look at effects as closely linked to **affects** and **emotions**. The so-called “affective turn” emerged in the mid-1990s, out of the psychoanalytic work of Silvan Tomkins on one hand, and the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza as developed by Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Brian Massumi on the other hand (Boler and Zembylas 2016: 22). Paying attention to affects is in line with Barad’s queer causality enacted by the material-discursive intra-actions that make boundaries within phenomena, as Michael Hardt explains:

Affects require us, as the term suggests, to enter the realms of causality, but they offer a complex view of causality because the affects belong simultaneously to both sides of the causal relationship. They illuminate, in other words, both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between these two powers (...) the perspective of the affects requires us constantly to pose as a problem the relation between actions and passions, between reason and the emotions. We do not know in advance what a body can do, what a mind can think –what affects they are capable of. The perspective of the affects requires an exploration of these as yet unknown powers. (Hardt 2007: ix-x).

Sara Ahmed is critical of the clear distinction between affect and emotion because she doesn’t consider it helpful. As for why she decides to employ the word “emotion” rather than “affect” in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, she explains: “I was interested in this idea of movement that is explicit in its etymology. And it was also partly that I wanted to use the word that is used in everyday life” (Ahmed 2014: 97). Ahmed explores “how emotions work to shape the ‘surfaces’ of individual and collective bodies” (2014: 1). Her argument is in line with my understanding of cinema as a diffraction apparatus that enacts boundaries within phenomena through intra-actions. This is clear, for example, in the emphasis that she puts on the “press” within the word “impression”:

...it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the “I” and the “we” are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others (...) the surfaces of bodies “surface” as an effect of the impressions left by others. I will show how the surfaces of collective as well as individual bodies take shape through such impressions (...) emotions are not “in” either the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and

boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects. (2014: 10).

Therefore, when looking at the production and reception of the films, I ask for the impressions they cause in filmmakers and viewers, how their making/watching affect them. I conceive emotions as “effects rather than origins” (Ahmed 2014: 196).

The same process of close reading was performed separately for each of the Spanish and the Italian case studies. It is in the final chapter that we carry out a diffractive reading of the ways in which all of these films-diffraction apparatuses make gender in/equalities intelligible, i.e. the feminist material-discursive practices that make cuts, create boundaries and make the world intelligible in specific ways. Such practices range, for example, from framing and cutting to the political engagement with specific modes of representation.

I also diffractively read what filmmakers from both countries express, so as to identify superpositions as well as patterns of differences, concerning four key concepts: gender, equality, feminism(s), and documentary cinema. It is important to state that I don't look for closed definitions of any of these terms. Rather, I look at how the interviewees and their films illuminate diverse insights about them. I understand their discourses around the key concepts as open categories, which “are not merely ideas, but thinking technologies that have materiality and effectivity” (Haraway 2004: 335).

In this section I have presented the overview of the methods employed in this dissertation. However, a revision of how they are conceived and designed will be frequent in each of the following chapters, in coherence with the fact that a diffractive methodology also stresses the importance of constantly putting into question one's own research apparatus. Accountability from the part of the researchers is a permanent requirement because the knowledge that we produce is always dependent on the apparatuses we use, as well as on the exclusions and the cuts we enact within phenomena.

### **1.2.1 Interviews Guide**

The semi-structured interviews with the filmmakers were carried out following a general interview guide, which was adapted for the specificities of each case. This general framework was also the starting point I used for the interviews with film festival

organisers and film distributors; these encounters were useful for understanding the production and reception contexts.

The first contact with the filmmakers was through an e-mail, in which I attached a letter with a summary of the research project, so as to ask them for their informed consent.<sup>33</sup> Most of the interviews were carried out in person, though some were also via Skype and or WhatsApp; in each case, I specify the conditions of the encounter at the corresponding chapter. This guide was conceived as a flexible tool, but general blocks were taken into consideration. Hereby we present the basic scheme:

### **Life and career path**

- I would like to start with a broad question: Looking back at your life and career, could you identify milestones/landmarks that have led you to where you are now? What events, people, moments, would you consider key benchmarks that have had a significant impact on the course you have given to your life and in the decision to make this film?

### **Key topics (self-position, tensions/obstructions)**

- Are you a feminist? Why?
- Do you define your film as feminist? Why?
- Why/How did you become interested in gender issues?
- What does the expression gender equality make you think of?
- Is documentary cinema political? Why?
- What do you think about objectivity in documentary cinema?
- What do you think about the definition of gender equality as “a fundamental European value”?

### **Form and content of the film**

- How did you arrive at this subject matter?
- Other questions depend on the film

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<sup>33</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Annex 1. Information sheet and consent form

### **Production of the film**

- What kind of relationship did you establish with your filmed subjects?
- How was the film financed?
- Which equipment/technology did you use?
- Other questions depend on the film

### **Reception of the film**

- What do you think about film festivals?
- What reactions have you got from the public?
- What relation do you want to establish with your audience?
- What impression do you want to cause in your audience?
- What problems have you faced in the distribution of the film?

## Chapter 2. Theoretical Apparatus: A Toolbox for a Response-able Gaze

The question is not so much to produce a new image as to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a new seeing. (Trinh T. Minh-ha 2005: 13).

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical apparatus employed in the close reading of the documentary films that are part of the research sample. As defined in the previous chapter, a diffraction apparatus is a technology that makes boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways. In this sense, my theoretical framework can also be considered a boundary-making practice: It emphasises certain aspects (e.g. the gaze) and enacts specific cuts (e.g. women's cinema, feminist cinema), thus influencing the results of the close readings.

The first section develops what can be defined as a response-able gaze toolbox. It gathers diverse contributions from feminist film theory towards achieving the goal of “making visible the invisible” within an androcentric visibility regime (Kuhn 1994: 67). The second section makes a historical revision of feminist documentary cinema's practices, particularly within the context of the debate on realism vs. formal experimentation. Beyond the scope of this dissertation, with this theoretical apparatus I aim at providing tools for the producers of audiovisual messages, but also for their consumers, so as to become responsible (i.e. response-able<sup>34</sup>, able to respond about/to the messages) as creators and/or as spectators.

### 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses

Over more than forty years of feminist thought systematised around the seventh art, different methodologies from sociology, semiotics and psychoanalysis have been adapted for “making visible the invisible” (Kuhn 1994: 67). The goal has been to reveal oppressions, absences and contradictions naturalised by androcentric practices and discourses not only within the film texts, but also within their contexts of production, distribution and exhibition. Feminist film scholars have analysed classic films, an example of this being Tania Modleski's *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (1988). They have also reviewed the work of critical filmmakers

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<sup>34</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 1. Section 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus

such as Sally Potter, Chantal Akerman, Yvonne Rainer and Marleen Gorris, revised respectively by Sophie Mayer (2009), Marion Schmid (2010), Teresa de Lauretis (1987b) and Anneke Smelik (1999). In this section, I will go over feminist film theory insights concerning one of its central topics: the gaze(s).

Jacques Lacan's theory of the gaze has been widely cited in film theory. He locates **the gaze** at the centre of ego formation in the mirror stage, where "the infant learns to distinguish between itself and the (mother's) image by becoming aware of sexual difference" (Mirzoeff 2009: 171). The gaze "is a means of constituting the identity of the gazer by distinguishing her or him from that which is gazed at" (Mirzoeff 2009: 171). Moreover, "the gaze makes us aware that we may be looked at, so that this awareness becomes a part of identity in itself (...) the gaze brings into being that which says 'I' and names itself, the subject or self, as either male or female" (Mirzoeff 2009: 171).

The gaze is "a form of visibility that pre-exists the individual subject; it is a visibility into which subjects are born (...) the Gaze is culturally constituted" (Rose 2016: 170). It is not universal or biologically inherent, "for what we see is mediated by the cultural construction of our apparently natural perception" (Jay 1994: 389). **Visibility** is different from vision: while the latter refers to the physical processes of sight, visibility designs different historical manifestations of visual experience. **Visualisation** refers to "a discursive practice for rendering and regulating the real that has material effects" (Mirzoeff 2011: 476). It operates mainly at three levels so as to make the world intelligible in specific ways: naming, categorising and defining/aestheticising.<sup>35</sup>

Both concepts, "visibility" and "visualisation", have their origins in 1840, when conservative Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle used them to refer to how the processes of history are rendered visible through "the tradition of heroic leadership" (Mirzoeff 2011: 475). Visibility involves a way of visualising history that helped sustain a specific authority; for example, the overseer at the plantation complex, or the missionaries in the

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<sup>35</sup> Mirzoeff exemplifies these three operations as follows: Naming "was founded in plantation practice from the mapping of plantation space to the identification of cash-crop cultivation techniques and the precise division of labor required to sustain them. Next, visibility separates the groups so classified as a means of social organization. Such visibility segregated those it visualized to prevent them from cohering as political subjects, such as workers, the people, or the (decolonized) nation. Finally, it makes this separated classification seem right and hence aesthetic (...) the aesthetics of the proper, of duty, of what is felt to be right and hence pleasing, ultimately even beautiful" (2011: 476). The material effects of visibility include: "a deployment of bodies and a training of minds, organized to sustain physical segregation between rulers and ruled and mental compliance with those arrangements. The resulting complex has volume and substance, forming a lifeworld that can be both visualized and inhabited." (2011: 480).

conquered worlds, who were said to bring “light to darkness” (Mirzoeff 2011: 475). Paradoxically, as Mirzoeff argues, visibility is a political concept “to think with and against” (2011: 474). He emphasises the genealogy of the terms visibility and visualising, “in a period where once again leaders are claiming to be heroes, seeing what we cannot, and demanding our adherence to their vision” (2009: 92).

In his analysis of Michel Foucault’s “art of seeing,” John Rajchman argues that vision and knowledge are inextricably linked: We only see what is made “seeable” (1988: 91) within the constraints of thought in a specific period. This dissertation aims to see how feminist practices in documentary cinema(s) visualise gender in/equalities, a task that implies an analysis of visualisation itself, i.e. the “scheme through which things are given to be seen” (Rajchman 1988: 91). Seeing in a research process necessarily involves “trying to see what is unthought in our seeing” (Rajchman 1988: 96). Moreover, one of this project’s hypotheses is that feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema (can) produce new ways of seeing gender (and) in/equality.

What Mirzoeff opposes to the authority of visibility is “the right to look” (2011: 475): A refusal to allow authority to impose its way of seeing, “an exchange of looks in which all parties both look and are looked at in the mutual pursuit of an understanding of the other” (2009: 15). He coins the term **countervisuality**, structured around the tension between the “need to apprehend and counter a real that does exist but should not, and one that should exist but is as yet becoming” (2011: 477). Therefore, “it is the performative claim of a right to look where none technically exists that puts a countervisuality into play” (2011: 478). It is not a reflecting mirror of reality. Rather, countervisuality “tries to make sense of the unreality created by visibility’s authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative. It is by no means a simple or mimetic depiction of lived experience but one that depicts existing realities and counters them with a different realism” (2011: 485).

I argue that feminist documentary cinema can also be understood as a form of countervisuality, balancing between fact, i.e. the lived reality of the here-and-now, and fiction, i.e. imagined alternatives to the gendered hegemonies (Lykke 2010: 39). In my opinion, feminist countervisuality can manage “to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a new seeing” (Minh-ha 2005: 13), and in so doing, it might produce different material-discursive conditions for realities to take place.

Mirzoeff talks about “the look” rather than “the gaze” (2011). However, in this dissertation I have decided to keep the concept of the gaze, emphasising the importance

of being response-able for the power relations that traverse it: the gaze is always political (hooks 2000b: 510). From this perspective, the visualisation of in/equalities through feminist practices in documentary cinema might have effects on the development of oppositional and resistant gazes. In the following sections, I summarise theoretical contributions towards this goal.

### **2.1.1 The Gaze in Oil Painting and the Western Way of Seeing**

In *Ways of Seeing* (1972), John Berger describes some of the main characteristics of the gaze solicited by the traditional European oil painting, which trained the Western way of seeing between the sixteenth and the twentieth century. One of its main features, the use of **perspective**, “makes the single eye the centre of the visible world” (Berger 1972: 16), and in so doing, it elicits a beholder similar to a God who is not seen, but for whom everything exists to be looked at. Perspective is also an important element of the colonial gaze, since it was developed at the same time as America began to be colonised: “A way of seeing the world, which was ultimately determined by new attitudes to property and exchange, found its visual expression in the oil painting” (Berger 1972: 87).<sup>36</sup> According to Mirzoeff, the formation of the gaze is inextricably linked with the creation of overseas slavery:

The gaze is then necessarily “Western”, often but not exclusively male, and certainly “white”, although it was the very experience of deploying the gaze in the world that slavery built that formed a sense of being “white”. That is to say, the gaze has not been a permanent institution of “Western” culture and it did not emerge simply as a form of visual representation. Rather what we understand to be the domination of the gaze was a product of the particular form taken by colonial and slave-owning domination. (Mirzoeff 2009: 63).

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<sup>36</sup> Colonialism brought about an entire complex of visuality: “In many ways colonial power was about ordering the world. Integral to such an ordering was a ‘certainty of representation’, in which colonial power developed techniques of truth and representation that illustrated a colonial gaze of hierarchical difference, while mapping the world and human population groups into visual spectacles. In the nineteenth century, two forms of these visual spectacles became central to the colonial power’s ordering project. The first were the world exhibitions (...) The second form of visual spectacle was the colonial cinema” (Julien 2011: 277).



Along with colonialism, the domination of the gaze is also structured within a sexist gender division. In his analysis of the **nude**<sup>37</sup>, where the principal subject being depicted is always a woman, Berger argues that the centric beholder elicited by perspective is also gendered:

...men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (1972: 47).

Within the nude tradition, the naked bodies of women are turned into objects to be looked at by the spectator-owner of the painting, who is always conceived as ideally male. What Berger explains is that these conventions of the oil painting establish a way of seeing in which men remain subjects with an objectifying gaze directed outwards, while women are turned into things or abstractions, forced to adopt an internalised male gaze directed inwards. This operates as a kind of patriarchal **inner panopticon**<sup>38</sup> with which women “survey like men, their own femininity” (1972: 63). Such distribution of active and passive roles in our ways of seeing was to be one of the main issues tackled by feminist film theory since its beginnings.

### 2.1.2 Dominant Cinema, Visual Pleasure and Feminist Counter-Cinema

With the invention of the camera in the nineteenth century, Cartesian perspectivism was put into crisis: “Every drawing or painting that used perspective proposed to the spectator that he was the unique centre of the world. The camera –and more particularly the movie

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<sup>37</sup> The Guerrilla Girls, a group created in 1985 by American female artists whose identity remains anonymous, have tackled this issue in the twentieth century. In one of the thirty posters published in a portfolio entitled *Guerrilla Girls Talk Back* (1989) they state: “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female”. Guerrilla Girls website. Date of access: December 2018. <<https://www.guerrillagirls.com/chronology/>>.

<sup>38</sup> The panopticon is a prison designed by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, which is organised as a concentric building composed of ring cells surrounding a tower. From inside the tower, the guard can see and hear all the activity inside the cells without being seen by the prisoners; as a result, they self-regulate their behaviour by imagining themselves being monitored. Foucault elaborates on this concept so as to explain how human beings assume self-regulation practices in response to surveillance systems, even if these are not evident. Power has to be “visible and unverifiable” (Foucault 1977: 201), like the guard inside the tower, to spread the feeling of a watchful eye that each individual comes to internalise.

camera demonstrated that there was no centre” (Berger 1972: 18). But the (film) camera was immediately appropriated by practices that maintain the divine status of the androcentric eye.

The (film) camera’s eccentric potential was undermined through a process defined by Jean-Pierre Oudart (1977-1978) as **suture**: strategies such as the shot/countershot “stitch together the dispersed and contradictory subjectivities of the actual spectator into a falsely harmonious whole by encouraging him or her to identify seriatim with the gazes of the characters in the film, gazes which seem to come from centered and unified subjects” (Jay 1994: 474). **Dominant cinema** supports this closure by means of a classic narrative structure of rupture and resolution, as well as the use of realism, whose way of narrating is analogical representation.<sup>39</sup>

Psychoanalysis has been key in understanding the fascination with cinema, starting with Sigmund Freud’s concept of **scopophilia**, i.e. “the drive to pleasurable looking” (Kuhn 1994: 44). This is closely linked with **voyeurism**: being able to look into a private world, objectifying what is seen without the risk of being looked at. Anneke Smelik explains **identification** and **narcissism** with the aforementioned Lacan’s mirror stage, which refers to an early moment of “ego formation of the subject (...) [in which] the child learns to recognize itself in the mirror and develops the first inklings of self-consciousness by identifying with the specular image (...) the first awareness of the ego in its idealized form” (2007: 184). Identification takes place at two levels: primary identification with the camera itself, and secondary identification with the hero on-screen. “The mirror stage is thus a narcissistic gaze directed at the self, while the voyeuristic gaze is directed at the other” (Smelik 2007: 184).

What feminist film theory made explicit was that such pleasures were gendered as well. Published for the first time in 1975 in the British academic journal *Screen*, Laura Mulvey’s pioneer essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” asserts that visual pleasure is exclusively designed for a male spectator who identifies with the main character/active owner of the gaze, while the female characters occupy the passive position of objects to-be-looked-at.

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<sup>39</sup> Kuhn defines dominant cinema in terms of both: “the institutional frameworks surrounding the production, distribution and exhibition of films for world-wide mass markets, and also as the distinctive characteristics of the films themselves (...) Hollywood is usually considered to be the limit case, the ideal type, of dominant cinema, although of course the institutions and forms (...) are by no means confined to the Hollywood film industry. Indeed one of the principal features of dominant cinema is its pervasiveness as a model for modes of production and modes of representation in film industries all over the world” (1994: 21).

The Woman being displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of visual spectacle in mainstream cinema. But despite this objectification, she continues to evoke the threat of castration.<sup>40</sup> Thus, two strategies are used to neutralise her: turn her into a fetish (fetishism) or try to solve her mystery so as to finally devalue, punish or redeem her (sadism). According to Mulvey (1975; 1988: 58), **fetishism** fragments the female character into fetish images (such as legs or shoes) and is recurrent in the work of Josef von Sternberg, particularly in films starring Marlene Dietrich (e.g. *Der Blaue Engel/The Blue Angel*, 1930). **Sadism** is recurrent in Alfred Hitchcock films: In *Vertigo* (1958), for example, the power of the leading male character to turn the female character into the object of his questioning gaze is supported by a legal right, for he is a policeman and she has committed a crime (figures 1, 2 and 3).



**Figure 1.** Fetishism in *Der Blaue Engel*



**Figure 2.** Voyeurism in *Vertigo*



**Figure 3.** Voyeurism and sadism in Hitchcock's *Psycho*

Patriarchal desire projected from a Cartesian perspective organises space and time in dominant cinema. Its mechanisms are invisible due to the manipulation of the cinematic

<sup>40</sup> Freud and Lacan conceive the female body as inferior and bearer of a lack. Instead of this misogynistic notion of a castrated female body, Smelik proposes: "a more symbolical reading where the female body signifies difference in a culture of man (...) the woman constantly reminds the man of her otherness" (2007: 181).

codes (such as diverse shots, editing, and the shot/countershot system). The female spectator is caught between having to accept the masochistic position of the passive object and having to adopt the male gaze. The woman looking at herself being observed becomes a sight for someone else: can this woman look back instead of, or in addition to, being looked at?

For Mary Ann Doane, more than activity and passivity, the problem faced by female spectators is one of distance and proximity in relation to the image. The over-presence of the female star to-be-looked-at, traps female desire in “the narcissism entailed in becoming one’s own object of desire” (2000: 507). The strategy that she puts forward is the **masquerade**, i.e. an “excess of femininity” (2000: 507), usually attached to vamps and femmes fatales (and which could also be associated with drag queens). The masquerade can have the potential to subvert female iconography, generating the necessary distance for female spectators to avoid narcissistic over-identification.

What Mulvey proposes is a **deconstruction of the three gazes system** within the cinematic apparatus (1975; 1988): that of the filmmaker-camera, that of the spectator, and that of the characters onscreen. In dominant cinema, the former two (camera and spectator) are hidden and subordinated by the third one, the gazes exchanged by the characters onscreen. This is carried out by means of the aforementioned suture mechanism, which hides the fragmentation inherent to editing, eliminates the intrusive presence of the camera, prevents the audience’s detachment, and relieves the anxiety generated by the off-screen space.

One way to undermine this system is to raise **awareness of the camera**, e.g. moving from a shot in which a character sees the world in a certain way, to a shot where the camera sees the character and his/her world from another point of view, able to transform the character’s standpoint. In other words, Mulvey is calling for an eccentric point of view. Many of her proposals nourished the theorising and production of a **feminist counter-cinema**: a kind of “film practice which works against and challenges dominant cinema, usually at the level of both signifiers and signifieds” (Kuhn 1994: 152).

The invitation to think about feminist cinema in terms of counter-cinema is first elaborated by Claire Johnston (1973; 2000), one year after Peter Wollen’s publication of a prescriptive list of counter-cinema’s main features (1972; 2002: 74).<sup>41</sup> This kind of cinema resorts to antirealist strategies with the aim of analysing and subverting bourgeois

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<sup>41</sup> The features enlisted by Wollen are: narrative intransitivity, estrangement, foregrounding, multiple diegesis, aperture, unpleasure, and reality (1972; 2002: 74).

and patriarchal ideology (Kuhn 1994). Form itself has to be challenged: “in order to counter the aesthetic of realism, which was hopelessly compromised with bourgeois ideology, as well as Hollywood cinema, avant-garde and feminist filmmakers must take an oppositional stance against narrative ‘illusionism’ and in favour of formalism” (de Lauretis, 1987c: 128). Some examples (figures 4 and 5) are: *Riddles of the Sphinx* (Mulvey and Wollen, 1977), *Thriller* (Potter, 1979), and *Daughter Rite* (Citron, 1979).



**Figure 4.** Still from *Thriller*



**Figure 5.** Still from *Daughter Rite*

Feminist counter-cinema can be considered an example of countervisuality.<sup>42</sup> It intends to modify the relation between film text and spectator, moving from passive reception and complacent identification with monolithic and stereotypical characters, towards a critical and reflective attitude that confronts her/him with fragmentary subjectivities in permanent becoming. In this sense, counter-cinema also overlaps with Bertolt Brecht’s strategy of “**distanciation/defamiliarization**” and his “dis-identificatory practices”, whose “point was to liberate the viewer from the state of being captured by illusions of art which encourages passive identification with fictional worlds” (Pollock 1988: 223). I elaborate more on Brechtian distanciation when discussing the debate between the realist documentary tradition and counter-cinema.<sup>43</sup>

### 2.1.3 The Search for an Oppositional Gaze

Mulvey’s essay has been of great importance in understanding the gendered dynamics of the Hollywood cinema produced in the forties and fifties. However, it has various limitations, starting from the fact that it fixes visual pleasure within sexual difference,

<sup>42</sup> Vid. *Supra* Section 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses

<sup>43</sup> Vid. *Infra*. 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

conceiving subjects under universal and essential categories of Man and Woman. Its ahistorical psychoanalytic framework negates any possibility for a so-called female visual pleasure, same-sex or gender-radical desires and, as stated by lesbian and black feminist film critics, “it also neglects differences among women –of ethnicity, class, age and sexuality” (Smelik 1993: 77).

Theorists such as Ann Kaplan (1997), Mary Ann Doane (1999), Jane Gaines (2000) and bell hooks (2000b) have emphasised that fe/male gazes are not universal, but negotiated by other categories like race. As Kaplan asserts, “the ‘male’ gaze and the ‘imperial’ gaze cannot be separated within western patriarchal cultures” (1997: xi). Elaborating on the introduction written by Jean-Paul Sartre to *Black Orpheus*, an anthology of poetry by black men celebrating negritude, Doane emphasises that “the sensation of being seen is alien to the white man –his own privileged vision makes him effectively invisible” (1999: 452). For black male gazes, which have been “subject to control and/or punishment by the powerful white Other, the private realm of television screens or dark theatres could unleash the repressed gaze” (hooks 2000b: 512).<sup>44</sup> Black male spectators could then adopt the male gaze described by Mulvey, objectifying the white female character. In contemporary cinema, a black female body may replace the white one, so that no transformation in the gendered structure of looking takes place.

Black female spectators might have yet a different experience. The dominant cinema analysed by Mulvey denies their presence, thus opening up the possibility of dis-identification both, with the male gaze and with the passive white female character. This leads bell hooks to conceive “an **oppositional gaze** (...) [developed] via an understanding and awareness of the politics of race and racism” (2000b: 516). Such a gaze is not inherent to the fact of being a black female spectator; rather, it is the result of a position/situation that propitiates an active resistance towards the imposition of colonial ways of looking. An oppositional gaze thus sets the basis for “a theory of looking relations where cinematic visual delight is the pleasure of interrogation” (hooks 2000b: 519).

This pleasure derived from a resistant and interrogating gaze could be an alternative to the androcentric pleasures delineated by Mulvey and (re)produced in

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<sup>44</sup> This overlaps with the visuality of the plantation complex described by Mirzoeff, in which the right to look plays a key role. He refers to ancient and modern slavery, explaining that the practice of Scythians of antiquity to blind their slaves was turned into a practice of surveillance imposed on the slaves: “in the British colony of Jamaica the enslaved were forbidden even to ‘imagine the Death of any White Person’” (2011: 482).

dominant cinema. Moreover, hooks claims for an intersectional feminist film theory that goes beyond sexual difference as “the primary and/or exclusive signifier of difference” (2000b: 517). An approach that considers categories such as race, sexual preference and social class could expand the notion of spectatorship, visual pleasure, and other forms of representation. An example is the 1983 American film directed by Lizzie Borden, *Born in Flames* (figure 6), due to “its representation of woman as a social subject and a site of difference; differences which are not purely sexual or merely racial, economic, or (sub)cultural, but all of these together and often enough in conflict with one another” (de Lauretis 1987c: 139).



Figure 6. Stills from *Born in Flames*

Jackie Stacey argues for a model of spectatorship that separates “gender identification from sexuality, too often conflated in the name of sexual difference” (1999: 394). She also states that, most of the times, film texts produce “different gendered spectator positions (...) contradicting the unified masculine model of spectatorship” (1999: 391). In a similar vein, Kaja Silverman notes that: “Since the gaze always emerges for us within the field of vision, and since we ourselves are always being photographed by it even as we look, all binarizations of spectator and spectacle mystify the scopic relations in which we are held. The subject is generally both” (1992: 151). This approach is also closer to the one stemming from Karen Barad’s diffractive methodology, where every intra-action is conceived as “the mutual constitution of entangled agencies” (2007: 33).<sup>45</sup>

Judith/Jack Halberstam talks of a **transgender look**, “capable of seeing through the present to a future elsewhere” (2005: 77). S/he identifies it in films such as *By Hook or by Crook* (2001) and *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999). In *By Hook or by Crook*, the transgender

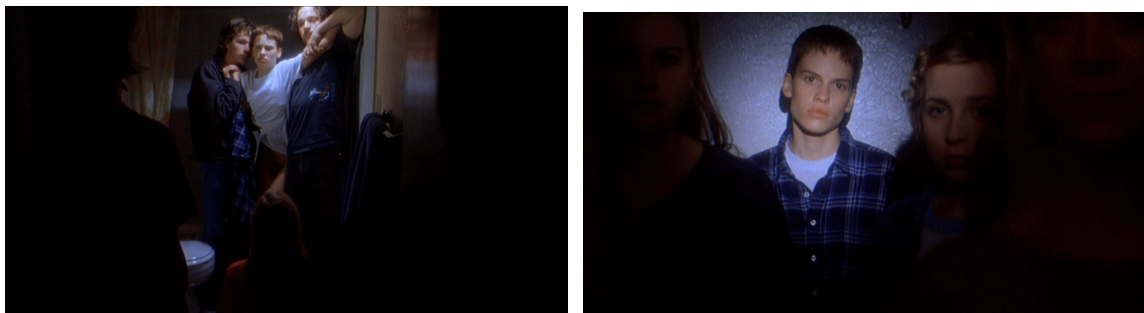
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<sup>45</sup> Vid. *Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus

look is elicited by means of the construction that directors, Silas Howard and Harriet Dodge, make of an almost entirely queer universe. Such a strategy “universalizes queerness within this specific cinematic space” (Halberstam 2005: 94). A transgender gaze allows to question the gendering of the gaze as always male or female, by opening up the possibility of heterogeneous ways of seeing that exceed fixed identity categories.

In the case of *Boys Don't Cry*, director Kimberly Peirce gives spectators access to looking “with the transgender character instead of at him” (Halberstam 2005: 78). Peirce manages to do so by threading a few fantasy shots in the realistic film, with which she creates a counternarrative to the tragic end of the main character (Brandon Teena, an American trans man, raped and murdered in 1993). In one particular shot/countershot sequence, Brandon is shown looking at himself: the embodied castrated Brandon and the disembodied transgender one (figure 7). In this scene, the transgender gaze:

...is constituted as a look divided within itself, a point of view that comes from two places (at least) at the same time (...) if usually the shot/reverse shot both secures and destabilizes the spectator's sense of self, now the shot/reverse shot involving the two Brandons serves both to destabilize the spectator's sense of gender stability and confirms Brandon's manhood at the very moment that he has been exposed as female/ castrated (Halberstam 2005: 88-89).



**Figure 7.** The embodied castrated Brandon looks at the transgender one in *Boys Don't Cry*

Since the 1990s, the point of view of the camera in dominant cinema seems to be more neutral, in the sense that it is not exclusively attached to that of the male character. But there's always a point of view and, therefore, an important element of a feminist film analysis is to ask: **whose point of view** is the spectator solicited **to identify with**?



The voyeuristic and objectifying gaze has been increasingly directed to the black body, as well as to the male body.<sup>46</sup> A male “star” such as Brad Pitt is a clear example of “the contemporary hero who functions as an object of the female gaze” (Smelik 2007: 184). But this is a mere reversal of roles, which does not subvert the underlying gaze that objectifies, nor the gender binarism, nor the false illusion of the spectators as “centered and unified subjects” (Jay 1994: 474), nor the androcentric structures of dominance and submission.<sup>47</sup>

#### 2.1.4 From the Female Gaze to the Feminist Situated Gazes

Masochistic, male or marginal: for many pioneer feminist film theorists, the gaze of the female spectator doesn't have many alternatives in classical Hollywood cinema. That's why Mulvey called for the deconstruction, and indeed for the destruction, of visual and narrative pleasure. However, ten years after the publication of Mulvey's influential essay, Teresa de Lauretis states that films directed by feminist women have already proven to be able to open up cinematic spaces of vision for the female gaze, without total rejection of narrativity:

...when I look at the movies, film theorists try to tell me that the gaze is male, the camera eye is masculine, and so my look is also not a woman's. But I don't believe them anymore, because now I think I know what it is to look at a film as a woman. I do because certain films, by Yvonne Rainer, Chantal Akerman, Lizzie Borden, Sally Potter, and others, have shown it to me; they have somehow managed to inscribe in the film my woman's look –next to, side by side, together with, my other (cinematic) look. (1987b: 113-114).

Just as female spectators adopt the male gaze when they identify with the male hero in classical cinema, all spectators, regardless of their gender, might identify with the female gaze inscribed in films such as *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*

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<sup>46</sup> Contemporary fitness culture makes Smelik argue that, nowadays, “the voyeuristic gaze has been internalized in impossible norms for a thin and yet strong and well-formed body” (2007: 183) by everybody.

<sup>47</sup> As for narcissism, female spectators are nowadays presented with so-called powerful heroines, such as Lara Croft, with whom they can identify. The drawback is that these models of strong, beautiful (according with dominant canons) women don't question the patriarchal system, and in most of the cases, identification with them “leads to dissatisfaction with oneself instead of strengthening one's self-image” (Smelik 2007: 186).

(Akerman 1975). This could be described as an **appropriation of the three gazes system**, so that the points of view and identification with characters and camera are all female. Another strategy is “**the fourth look**” (de Lauretis 1984: 148), characterised by a direct camera interpellation of the spectator, who is thus looked in the act of looking (figure 8). Examples of this can be found in *Orlando* (1993), Sally Potter’s adaptation of Virginia Woolf’s novel (1928).



**Figure 8.** The fourth look in *Orlando*

Still, such strategies could be labelled as a simple reversal of roles that does not go beyond the straitjacket of sexual difference. Therefore, even if recognising a female gaze can be of strategic importance for the affirmation of female spectatorship, it could be more productive to talk about a feminist gaze, i.e. that of the feminist subject, one located in-and-out of gender.<sup>48</sup> The **point(s) of view of the eccentric other**<sup>49</sup>, (re) produced in films “which inscribe that movement in and out of ideology, that crossing back and forth of the boundaries –and of the limits- of sexual difference” (de Lauretis 1987a: 25). Moreover, these points of view also aim at **inscribing the differences among and within women**.

The narrative pleasure that Mulvey called to destroy in 1975 is linked to narrative strategies governed by an Oedipal desire: its development is a transition, a transformation that takes place in the figure of a hero. In the Oedipal story, the reader is constrained in one of the two positions of sexual difference: male-hero-human or female-obstacle-border (de Lauretis 1984: 109). The princess, Medusa and the Sphinx are mere marks of

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<sup>48</sup> De Lauretis emphasises the risk of defining a specific female gaze and a genre of women’s cinema, for this “only means complying, accepting a certain definition of art, cinema and culture, and obligingly showing how women can and do ‘contribute,’ pay their tribute, to ‘society’ (...) [it] is to remain caught in the master’s house and there (...) to legitimate the hidden agendas of a culture we badly need to change” (1987c: 131).

<sup>49</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.3 Diffraction through an Eccentric Technology of Gender

locations through which the hero passes in search of his destiny; they are difficulties or awards on his way towards the goal of achieving androcentric humanity.

In this regard, what de Lauretis proposes is a subversive cinema capable of being “**narrative and oedipal with a vengeance**, working, as it were, with and against narrative” (1987b: 108). The purpose of this change in narrative strategies is to produce “a feminist social vision” (1987c: 134), which is no longer focused on deconstructing the man-centred vision, but on constructing other ways of seeing, congruent with the points of view of the feminist eccentric subjects. The aforementioned *Born in flames* (Borden 1983), with its depiction of alliances between women who are heterogeneous in race, class and sexuality, is an example of a film that allows for the spectator to identify with one or more of the characters, but at the same time, to remain an outsider who is “able to evaluate all of the various positions presented in the film” (de Lauretis 1987c: 140).

Such an in-and-out-gaze, could be defined as **the gaze of the inappropriate/d other or same** “who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at” (Minh-ha 1997: 418). This could lead to a kind of cinema in which conflict is replaced by difference, as Trinh T. Minh-ha describes her own films.<sup>50</sup> In her movies, difference is not depicted as the cause of conflict nor segregation, but “as a tool of creativity to question multiple forms of repression and dominance” (1997: 416). These are films with points of view that de-center masculinity, whiteness, and the apparent coherence of the androcentric subject (figure 9).



**Figure 9:** Stills from Minh-ha’s *Reassamblage* and *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*

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<sup>50</sup> This shift from conflict to difference(s) as the nodal point of a film can also operate as a way out of the sadism attached to all Oedipal narratives. As explained by de Lauretis: “Story demands sadism, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in a linear time with a beginning and an end” (1984: 132-133).

Digital technology and the aesthetics of musical videos and video games have also led to a break with the classic structures of narration. So-called postmodern films such as *Kill Bill 1* and *2* (Quentin Tarantino 2003; 2004) foreground “spectacle, sensation and affect at the expense of a tight plot and round characters” (Smelik 2007: 187). Affect and the aesthetic experience become central for the analysis of relations between the spectator and the film, relations characterised by the possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema**: “That is the moment of resistance, of change, of escaping from an identity that imprisons us” (Smelik 2007: 191). Moreover, with this shift, the main question has moved from what does a film mean? To “what does a film do?” (Smelik 2007: 190).

Film theorist Laura Marks argues for a **haptic visuality** (2000) capable of displacing optic visuality.<sup>51</sup> Haptic cinema triggers physical memories of touch, smell and taste by means of strategies such as foregrounding the grain of images or physical contact:

Haptic looking tends to move over the surface of its object rather than to plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze (...) While optical perception privileges the representational power of the image, haptic perception privileges the material presence of the image. (Marks 2000: 162-163).

According to Barbara Zecchi (2014), Isabel Coixet’s *The Secret Life of Words* (2005) and *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo* (2009) are examples of haptic cinema, in which the scopophilic drive is replaced by the pleasure evoked by other senses, thus opening up a synesthetic dimension. In *The Secret Life of Words*, the female character re-discovers pleasure through taste and touch, while the male character remains blind for most of the film. In *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*, images are subordinated to sounds and, more than visual pleasure, Coixet explores cinematic sitophilia, evoking erotic pleasure in eating (figure 10).

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<sup>51</sup> For Luce Irigaray, a haptic visuality is closer to female sexuality than the phallogocentric dominion of vision: “...the predominance of the visual (...) is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking and her entry into a dominant scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity: she is to be the beautiful object of contemplation (...) her sexual organ represents *the horror of nothing to see*” (1985: 25-26).



**Figure 10.** Haptic visuality in *The Secret Life of Words* and *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*

Laura Mulvey has reflected on the consequences of the transition from cinema's mechanical technology, where the analogic image consists of the index produced by the chemical reaction of the film with light, to the electronic and the digital, in which the image is the result of a fully computational process. In *Death 24x a Second. Stillness and the Moving Image*, she proposes the concept of “**delayed cinema**” (2006: 8), which refers to the now widely available possibility of slowing down the flow of film:

...celluloid consists of a series of still frames that have been, by and large, inaccessible to the film spectator throughout its history. Digital technology enables a spectator to still a film in a way that evokes the ghostly presence of the individual celluloid frame (...) The process of delay not only brings stillness into visibility but also alters the traditionally linear structure of narrative, fragmenting its continuities. (Mulvey 2006: 26).

The experience of digital spectatorship with a DVD that separates a film into chapters and gives spectators the possibility of skipping and repeating sequences is very different from that of the traditional cinema audience, who had to watch a film in a specific order at twenty-four frames per second. From such a delayed cinema, two new kinds of spectators emerge: “The **pensive spectator** is more engaged with reflection on the visibility of time in the cinema; the **possessive spectator** is more fetishistically absorbed by the image of the human body” (Mulvey 2006: 11). The possessive spectator is able to hold on to the previously elusive image, extracting filmed images easily from their narrative surroundings. This interactive spectatorship changes the kind of fetishistic gaze that Mulvey herself had described in her 1975 essay:

The narrative drive tends to weaken if the spectator is able to control its flow, to repeat and return to certain sequences while skipping others. The smooth

linearity and forward movement of the story become jagged and uneven, undermining the male protagonist's command over the action (...). The 'fetishistic spectator' becomes more fascinated by image than plot, returning compulsively to privileged moments, investing emotion and 'visual pleasure' in any slight gesture (2006: 165).

The pensive spectator's gaze is closer to the oppositional gaze described by bell hooks, i.e. an active and resistant way of looking, "where cinematic visual delight is the pleasure of interrogation" (hooks 2000b: 519). Stopping the flow of film, delay is also the fundamental process behind textual analysis and close reading in film theory: In the process of this research itself, each sequence is broken down into sections, and frames are repeated, looking for unexpected meanings. Digital technology makes it possible for a wider audience to unlock "the pleasure of decipherment" (Mulvey 2006: 191). Once again referring to her 1975 essay, Mulvey envisions "an alternative spectator, who was driven, not by voyeurism, but by curiosity and the desire to decipher the screen, informed by feminism and responding to the new cinema of the avant-garde" (2006: 191-192).

After revising the critiques to ocularcentrism in French thought, Martin Jay concludes that the alternative to the Cartesian scopic regime shouldn't be blindness, but a **polyscopic narrative** (1994: 592). The risk then, would be that the one androcentric eye is replaced by a collage of multiple, non-locatable eyes. Haraway has written about the connection between feminist objectivity, knowledge and embodied vision: The totalising gaze from the "unmarked positions of Man and White" (1988: 581) should be replaced by a multiplicity of eyes, but remaining aware that "relativism and totalization are both 'god tricks' promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully" (1988: 584).

The gaze that Haraway advocates for is one sustained by "location, embodiment, and partial perspective" (1988: 584). A feminist understanding of objectivity as situated knowledges that "allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (1988: 583). It also echoes Vivian Sobchack's advocacy for an understanding of "the existential act of seeing the world with one's own eyes (...) a *situated* mode of being that discovers the *self* in the world and recognizes the activity of seen as *mediated*" (1992: 51).

Haraway stands for a feminist reclaiming of vision, not as the false master capacity to separate subject from object and order all differences, but as partial perspectives of multidimensional subjectivities accountable for their positionings. She emphasises: "vision is *always* a question of the power to see –and perhaps of the violence

implicit in our visualizing practices” (1988: 585). Only by recognising and accounting for this, does it become possible to elicit power-sensitive conversations that lead to contestable and contested knowledges, opposed to fixed and categorical ones (1988: 589-590). Feminist and eccentric gazes must be, therefore, what I propose to call **situated gazes**, i.e. “views from somewhere” (1988: 590).

I reckon that the metaphors and technology involved in the visual production of science analysed by Haraway, along with her definition of feminist objectivity as situated knowledges, can be applied to cinema, especially to that genre which works with the audiovisual (re)presentation of realities: documentary cinema. This is a technology of gender and a diffraction apparatus for audiovisual production in which we might find “means for understanding and intervening in the patterns of objectification in the world – that is the patterns of reality for which we must be accountable” (Haraway 1988: 589).

### **2.1.5 Feminist Cinema(s) and Women’s Cinema(s)**

The terms “feminist cinema” and “women’s cinema” have been contested since the beginnings of feminist film theory (White 2015; Pravadelli 2016). It is not my purpose in this dissertation to propose either a closed or a prescriptive definition of what they are or should be. However, I consider it useful to outline contemporary theoretical approaches to them, to make explicit the parameters with which I choose the films analysed in this thesis.

Several questions arise around the concept of “**women’s cinema**”. It seems to be connected with authorship (films directed by women), but also with content (films about women). It evokes an essentialist approach (as if all women share a specific sensibility), a label for a specific cinema niche (chick flicks), and/or a connection with activism (films directed by women for women). Johnston (1973; 2000) and de Lauretis (1987c) use the term “women’s cinema” as synonym of feminist cinema, i.e. films directed by women with the potentiality “to effect another vision: to construct other objects and subjects of vision, and to formulate the conditions of representability of another social subject” (de Lauretis 1987c: 135).

Patricia White follows Alison Butler when affirming that women’s filmmaking distinctiveness is based, not “on an essentialist understanding of gendered subjectivity, but on the position –or positions– of women in contemporary culture” (in White 2015: 13). This importance given to location and position echoes the aforementioned definition

of feminist gazes as situated gazes.<sup>52</sup> Pravadelli emphasises that women's cinema has been highly constrained by financial matters, so that female directors have been numerous in the fields of "the avant-garde and in documentary where budgets are small or nearly non-existent, and scarce in narrative and commercial cinema where budgets are big" (2016: 330). This marginal status, however, has also being "a vantage point from which they have cast a critical eye on the norm" (2016: 330).

White proposes a strategic use of the concept of women's filmmaking, not assuming any sameness criteria, but "thinking through relations of alliance and exchange among women" (2015: 17). Such an approach advocates for a feminist film scholarship that goes beyond listing exceptional women filmmakers, focusing rather on tracing coherent genealogies. As Sophie Mayer puts it:

Firsts, such as Jennifer Lee being the first female co-director of a Disney animation, often tokenize, obscuring rather than illuminating the coherent and continuous history of innovation and activism by female-identified filmmakers. We need to link all the "firsts" together into an alternate film history. Lee's current success might remind us that, in the 1920s, Lotte Reiniger pioneered silhouette animation. (Mayer 2015: 25).

Therefore, historical retrieval of women working in filmmaking has been in itself a political project for feminist scholarship, as "a practical matter of equity" (White 2015: 3). However, in this dissertation I don't consider women's cinema and feminist cinema as synonyms, for not all films directed by women and/or about women, reveal an awareness of the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities. Still, I think that the way in which White approaches the concept of women's cinema can be a good example of what María Ruido calls "temporary coalitions built on the precarious identity of 'woman', so as to continue an incomplete political agenda (but being aware of their own masquerade)" (2006: 17).<sup>53</sup> She calls for the replacement of a biologically based sorority with different critical confrontations that arise within the heterogeneous label of "women's cinema".

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<sup>52</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Section 2.1.4 From the Female Gaze to Feminist Situated Gazes

<sup>53</sup> "coaliciones coyunturales sobre la precaria identidad "mujer" para continuar una agenda política incompleta (siendo conscientes, eso sí, de su propia mascarada)". All translations of Spanish texts are mine and were revised by native speaker James Hayes.



For Ruido, **feminist cinema** is one in which the filmmakers understand “their being creators of representation as a political task” (2006: 2).<sup>54</sup> Feminist cinema has politicised women’s cinema. For Mayer, a feminist film, filmmaker, film theorist or film viewer is characterised by “a stance of ongoing public activism, rooted in but not limited to gender equity” (2015: 20). Moreover, she considers that feminist cinema “onscreen and off (...) [is] communitist, inclusive and concerned with address (who is speaking, who is listening). It’s at once chaotically futurological and passionately historical, offering utopian visions that draw its audience into action” (2015:185).

Feminist filmmakers nowadays produce mainly **independent cinema**, i.e. “an alternative practice to dominant cinema in relation to industrial, aesthetic and ideological perspectives” (Pravadelli 2016: 331). In the specific case of Europe, independent films are usually co-productions that involve diverse European countries and often receive money from the cultural support fund of the European Union, i.e. Eurimages. According to Pravadelli, “co-productions, funding policies, awards and festivals together contribute to the realization of a European identity in a major way” (2016: 331). Therefore, talking about Spanish and Italian documentary cinema is clearly a cut enacted within this research project which is, in turn, financed by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions created by the European Commission to support research in the European area.

Transnational funding models question the national identities of these films. However, there might be local specificities that cannot translate so easily to other contexts. Mayer (2015) and White (2015) emphasise that feminist film theory has to look beyond dominant cinema in terms of location, i.e. outside Hollywood and Anglophone productions. As a matter of fact, this dissertation looks at cinema being made in Spanish, Italian and French, remaining aware that, in many cases, national borders are surpassed at many levels, from the financing and the distribution, to the content and the audiences.

In *Political Animals: The New Feminist Cinema*, Mayer analyses 500 contemporary films from 60 countries, by directors who identify mostly as women but also as trans, intersex or non-binary (2015: 14). In this sense, she argues that filmmakers like Todd Haynes are examples of feminist cismale filmmakers, whose “work is often informed by marginalized identities, notably (but not only) queer, indigenous and/or post-colonial” (2015: 17). She also emphasises the importance of widespread access to affordable technologies, such as video. A pioneer example of possibilities opened up by

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<sup>54</sup> “su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político.”

digital tools for documentary feminist cinema is Agnès Varda's *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000).

What Mayer identifies as “new” in the twenty-first century feminist film productions “is its negotiation of a transgenerational feminist film history of four decades within a reflexive awareness of the interruption and re-vision of feminisms” (2015: 17). She argues that “feminist cinema cares for the past, the present and the future, and above all for their interconnection, for each time’s need for the other (...) feminist film’s work is not done, it is doing (...) always active, always activist, always open –and always inviting us to join in (2015: 186, 196).

This dissertation also adopts **an open definition of feminist cinema in its doing**, in its practices. The diffractive methodology is proposed as a coherent method with the identification of the overlaps of diverse feminisms in various documentary films. I also reckon that reflecting on these movies, which operate outside dominant cinema, has an important political dimension in as much as it contributes to building an archive of countervisuality, working towards “representational justice, so that the next generation has to hand the materials for which we have had to search” (Mayer 2015: 187).

Such an archive provides tools for a transformation of our ways of seeing. What bell hooks states when advocating for a re-cognition of the avant-garde production can be extended to so-called marginal cinema:

If we long to transform the culture so that the conventional mass media are not the only force teaching people what to like and how to see, then we have to embrace the avant-garde (...) Here is where we’ll find radical possibility. We can deconstruct the images in mainstream white supremacist capitalist patriarchal cinema for days and it will not lead to cultural revolution. For too long, black people and everyone else in this culture have been socialized to see the avant-garde solely as a marginal place where art that only a few understand resides. The time has come to rethink our assumptions (1996; 2009: 135).

María Ruido has a similar opinion concerning the difficulties that a certain kind of feminist counter-cinema (including her own films) is said to present the spectators with:

We cannot lower the level of experimentation because, in order to say new things we have to speak with different forms, not using a Hollywood narrative, or the narrative of the news. It is not only what is said that is important, but also

how it is said (...) so let's make an effort to educate others in the provision of tools to dismantle things that are not so difficult. I mean, it's not esoteric (...) You just have to get rid of a narrative that you have learned, which is just as esoteric as the other, but you have been told that it's much easier. In class, I give an example to my students, very clear examples with cinematic language: "You don't see a conversation in shot/countershot. No, you don't. However, in a movie you understand that this is the natural language of a conversation (...) What has happened for Hollywood to make you accept the ellipsis or the shot/countershot as natural? What has happened? Well, there has been a process of visual education. Or de-education, because it eliminates other narrative forms. It imposes itself, it's hegemonic. And I think that undoing that path, dismantling that path, is our work."<sup>55</sup>

Annette Kuhn brings attention to the fact that feminist films produce their meanings, "not only through the internal operations of texts, but also in their relations of production and reception" (1994: 172). In this dissertation I ask who is currently making documentary cinema with a feminist ethos in Spain and Italy: how, for whom, and who is seeing and writing about these films. I take into account four levels when talking about each documentary: content, form, production, and reception.

At each level, feminist politics are involved. The commitment with the recognition of non-dominant cinema "that will never be on Netflix and need[s] a people's platform" (Mayer 2015: 191-192), plays an important role in the work carried out by feminist curators and festival programmers. Selina Robertson and Sarah Wood, founders of "Club des Femmes", a queer feminist film curating collective active in London since 2007, explain their mission and vision as follows: "We want to promote new processes of thought, ones that come from outside a white heteronormative viewpoint. We like outsider films because we are outsider curators too. We are not interested in the

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<sup>55</sup> "No rebajemos el nivel de experimentación porque para decir cosas nuevas hay que decir las de formas diferentes; no utilizar una narrativa de Hollywood o no utilizar la narrativa del telediario si queremos. No solamente es importante lo que se dice sino cómo se dice (...) entonces hagamos un esfuerzo por educar en proporcionar herramientas para desmontar cosas que tampoco son tan difíciles. Quiero decir, no es esotérico (...) Simplemente tienes que quitarte de la cabeza una narrativa que tienes aprendida, que es igual de esotérica que la otra, lo que pasa que te han dicho que es mucho más fácil. Yo le pongo un ejemplo en clase a los estudiantes, ejemplos muy claros con lenguaje cinematográfico: 'Vosotros no veis una conversación en plano/contraplano, a que no, no hacéis así. Sin embargo, en una película entiendes que eso es el lenguaje natural de una conversación' (...) ¿Qué ha pasado para que Hollywood te haga ver que la elipsis o el plano/contraplano son cosas naturales? ¿Qué es lo que ha pasado? Pues ha habido un proceso de educación. O de des-educación visual, porque corta los caminos de otras formas narrativas. Se impone, es hegemónico. Y yo creo que deshacer ese camino, des-andar ese camino es nuestra labor." María Ruido. Personal interview. September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

mainstream. We want elsewhere. Changing. The future” (in Mayer 2015: 193).

Mainstream **festivals** play an important role as a “capitalist culture market” (White 2015: 8) that commodifies cinema, but which might also put into circulation some visions beyond dominant cinema. However, feminist cinema has found better allies in women’s, gender, LGTB and human rights festivals, which are sites with the potential to “generate counterpublics” (White 2015: 8). In the specific case of documentary cinema, the increasing number of festivals specialised in this genre opens up another possibility for circulation. White also underlines the potential in the reorganisations of media industries due to the growing shift towards transnational funding and exhibition networks (2015: 20).

### **2.1.5.1 European Contemporary Context Data**

At European level, the promotion of gender equality in the film sector has an important vehicle in the **European Women’s Audiovisual Network (EWA)**, which was founded in 2010 during an international meeting of professionals from the industry in Spain. It has members from twenty countries and is based in Strasbourg, France. Spanish director Isabel Coixet is EWA’s honorary president, while director Isabel de Ocampo was its executive director until 2018 (currently, this position is occupied by Alessia Sonaglioni). EWA is funded by the European Union and has received financial support from the Swedish and Norwegian Film Institutes, from the Dutch Film Fund, and from the Spanish Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts Institute (ICAA). EWA aims to:

- promote greater gender equality for women audiovisual professionals in terms of access to and opportunities for employment and funding throughout Europe
- create a strong community of European women audiovisual professionals who share their experience and provide mutual support
- promote the visibility of female-driven audiovisual content in general and of EWA Network members in particular<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> EWA’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://www.ewawomen.com/ewa-network-our-mission/>>.

In order to achieve these goals, EWA works with national and pan-European film institutes and funds, at three levels: devising research and data monitoring strategies, developing training courses, and organising outreach events. EWA sets out to promote policy change and to have an impact on decisions concerning public funding, so it renders visible the inequalities of the sector to national funds and organisations such as the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly. The next step is working with private funds and studios. Among the organisations with which EWA strengthens collaborations within the sector, we can find: 1. National film funds and funding bodies including those in Sweden (SFI), Italy (Ministry of Culture) and France (CNC); 2. Co-production markets such as the DOK Co-Pro Market at DOK Leipzig—the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Films, and the When East Meets West Co-production Forum in Trieste; 3. International and European organizations like the European Audiovisual Observatory; and 4. Other women’s networks.<sup>57</sup>

In 2014, the **European Audiovisual Observatory** releases the report “Female directors in European films”, stating that women directed only 16.3% of European films made between 2003 and 2012. At the Berlinale 2016, EWA presents the results of a two-year study called “Where are the women directors in European films? Gender equality report on female directors (2006-2013) with best practice and policy recommendations”. The study includes seven countries (Italy, Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK), and some of its main findings are:

- Only one in five films in the seven European countries studied is directed by a woman (21%). This means four out five films are NOT directed by a woman.
- The vast majority of the funding resources (namely 84%) go into films that are NOT directed by women.
- Low funding perpetuates the scarcity of female-directed films in circulation, in turn affecting the markets’ willingness to invest and thus creating a vicious circle.

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<sup>57</sup> Women’s networks in Finland, Romania, Croatia, France (Le deuxième regard), FC Gloria in Austria and Ireland. EWA also works with the International Women’s Film Festival Network and has given impulse to awards such as the prize for the best female-driven documentary film project at the DOK Co-Pro Market, a Best Female Director Award at the When East Meets West Co-production Forum; and an award for the best genre script with a gender perspective at the FKM-Fantastic Film Festival of A Coruña. EWA’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.ewawomen.com/our-partners/>>.

- There is a significant difference between the proportion of female directors graduating from film schools (44%) and the overall proportion of female directors working in the industry (24%). The talent exists but the potential is not exploited.<sup>58</sup>

EWA has claimed that their main aim with this report is to inform policy change at national and European level, because the structure of Europe's film industry doesn't support the commitment to gender equality that European treaties and national laws state. EWA makes recommendations to European film and audiovisual funds so as to address gender equality issues in all their policies; to the International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) to monitor statistics on gender equality regarding applicants and graduates; to National Film Institutes in order to adopt action plans, including equal share of funding for female directors; and to public service broadcasters to achieve a minimum 40% share for female directors of feature length films.<sup>59</sup>

Since 2012, Eurimages, the European Film Coproduction Fund that promotes the European audiovisual industry, has been monitoring gender balance in the projects applying for its financial support. Its approach looks at gender balance among cast and crew, revises film budgets with a gender perspective, and analyses the script using a double female and male Bechdel Test.<sup>60</sup> It found out that projects with female directors accounted for a 17% share of Eurimages-supported films in 2012, which rose up to a 21% share in 2016, still a very low percentage.<sup>61</sup>

In the period between 2014 and 2017, within a sample of 712 films co-production projects submitted to Eurimages (38% documentary projects; 31% fiction projects; 25% animations), participation of women in the main production functions was just of 31%. Women are under-represented in the main film production jobs and certain areas tend to be associated with a particular gender. For example, in fiction projects, women represent

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<sup>58</sup> EWA's report "Where are the women directors? Report on gender equality in the European film industry" retrievable online. Date of access: November 2018. <[https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2016Exec\\_summary-Berlinale.pdf](https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2016Exec_summary-Berlinale.pdf)>.

<sup>59</sup> I'll go back to EWA's report when talking about the production context in Italy: *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 5. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Italian Documentary Production. Spain was not included in the study due to lack of funding from the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

<sup>60</sup> "A project passes the Bechdel Test if all three of the following three statements are true: (a) the project contains at least two named female (or male) characters; (b) both talk to each other; and (c) they talk about something besides a man (or a woman)." Various documents and reports concerning gender equality in the film industry are retrievable at the Eurimages website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://www.coe.int/en/web/eurimages/gender-equality-documents>>.

<sup>61</sup> "Eurimage's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2020): Aiming for 50/50 by 2020" report retrievable online. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://rm.coe.int/eurimages-gender-equality-strategy-2018-2020-aiming-for-50-50-by-2020/1680760bff>>.

87% of costumes' designers, while they occupy only 4% as sound engineers. In documentary projects, their presence is stronger as researchers (59%) and editors (51%), but only 38% as directors and 12% as camera operators.<sup>62</sup>

In light of this situation, Eurimages adopted a "Strategy to promote gender equality" in October 2015, which responds to the Sarajevo Declaration of 14 August 2015, "by which Council of Europe member states affirmed the need to reduce inequalities between women and men in the European audiovisual sector."<sup>63</sup> In September 2017, Eurimages has renewed its commitment with this goal, by signing the "Aiming for 50/50 by 2020" strategy, which has three objectives:

- mainstreaming a gender equality approach in all policies and measures, taking account of the gender dimension;
- combating gender stereotypes and sexism in the way women are portrayed in films, by making film-makers aware of this issue;
- preventing and combating violence against women, by raising awareness of the fact that showing a degraded image of women in films can encourage violence, and by enhancing respect for their dignity<sup>64</sup>

In order to do so, Eurimages makes recommendations to Council of Europe member states to: "review their legislation and policies; collect, monitor and publish data; support research; encourage the ongoing development of media literacy and enhance the accountability processes."<sup>65</sup> They also adopt measures such as analysing the causes and factors leading to the marginalisation of women in the film industry; assessing the amounts granted to the projects that apply for their support; disseminating good practices; offering the "Audentia Award", a Best Female Director Prize, at different international film festival each year<sup>66</sup>; and encouraging filmmakers to be more sensitive to representation of gender identities on screen.

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<sup>62</sup> "Aiming for 50/50 by 2020. Eurimages Strategy for Gender Equality in the Film Industry" brochure retrievable online. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://rm.coe.int/strategy-for-gender-equality-in-the-film-industry/1680789386>>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>66</sup> The first one has been given at the 35<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Film Festival in 2016, to director Anca Damian for her film *The Magic Mountain* (Romania, France, Poland, 2015). In 2017, it was awarded to Valérie Massadian at the Locarno Film Festival, for her film *Milla* (France, 2017).

## 2.2 Diffracting From What a Feminist Documentary Cinema is to What it Does

We realized that the important thing was not the film itself but that which the film provoked. (Filmmaker and politician Fernando Solanas in Thomas Waugh 2011; 1984: 3).

Along with theoretical work, feminist interventions in cinema have taken place in the actual realisation of films since the seventies. As mentioned previously, feminist cinema has been developed either as realist documentary cinema, independent fiction movies or experimental avant-garde productions. The feminist character of these films does not lie in the fact of being directed by women; rather, it refers to the exploration and construction of contents, textual structures, formal strategies and/or means of production, distribution and exhibition that reveal a feminist consciousness, i.e. awareness of the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities.

As with women's cinema and feminist cinema, in this dissertation I don't intend to define what a **feminist documentary** film is, or should be. Instead, the research question focuses on the feminist practices and effects that documentary films, conceived as diffraction apparatuses, (can) have on the visualisation of in/equalities in Spain and Italy, on both sides of the camera and the screen. I follow Olivieri's proposal of "studying what makes a documentary feminist in terms of what a documentary *does*: the representations it produces, its effects, and how it engages with reality, with the filmic medium, and with the broader political milieu" (2012: 7).<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, the feminist character of a documentary, rather than by the intentions of its filmmaker, can be found in what the film actually shows or provokes from a critical perspective towards androcentric gender norms and their role in the production, legitimation and perpetuation of unbalanced "power relations between men and women, but also *within* men and women" (Olivieri 2012: 8). As stated in the first chapter, I consider feminist documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus and an eccentric technology of gender, whose effects can be identified in form, content, production and/or exhibition/reception conditions<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> Olivieri mentions some of the effects that a feminist documentary film may produce: "giving testimony to marginal voices and subjectivities; representing struggles and the material existence of Other realities; making visible the invisible yet very material dimensions of cultural, geopolitical and social power inequalities; reflecting critically on the filmic medium, the documentary genre, and the relation between strategies of representation and their socio-political implications; and finally, stimulating change and creating new imaginaries and knowledges." (2012: 181).

<sup>68</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.3 Diffraction through an Eccentric Technology of Gender



In his 2011 revision of an essay written in 1984, “Why Documentary Filmmakers Keep Trying to Change the World, or Why People Changing the World Keep Making Documentaries”, Thomas Waugh asserts that, even though “filmmakers themselves cannot make revolutions but can only provide ‘working tools’ for those who can (...) documentary continues to be a privileged medium –indeed, the privileged medium– for committed artists and their publics, and a resource of first priority for the political activist” (1984; 2011: 6, 10). In the next section I summarise the diverse positions that feminist film theory has adopted towards feminist documentary film productions.

### 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

The first independent films made by feminist women in the seventies belong to the **realist documentary film tradition**, which shows the lives of women outside the limited range of female images in classical cinema.<sup>69</sup> This is linked with the frequent use of **autobiography** as structure in many feminist documentaries of that time: women talk to the camera in first person as representatives of their own experience, as subjects of enunciation whose stories do not need to be explained by an external voice-over.

Several of these early films portray the vindication of women’s equal rights. For example, *Union Maids*, an American film of 1976, is structured around autobiographical testimonies of three women who participated in union struggles in Chicago during the thirties. Thus, the documentary directed by Jim Klein, Miles Mogulescu and Julia Reichert presents these working class women as historical subjects whose version of events is as valid and necessary as that included in official History (figure 11).



**Figure 11.** Stills from *Union Maids*

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<sup>69</sup> Realism in cinema is characterised by representations that “present an appearance of transparency by effacing the processes of meaning production in their own textual operations. Realism is a feature of dominant cinema, but non-dominant film practices like socialist realism and feminist documentary draw on this transparency both in order to appeal to as wide an audience as possible and also with the assumption that a politically oppositional message will come across the more clearly to the extent that it is not complicated by ‘noise’ from foregrounded textual operations” (Kuhn 1994: 151).

*Union Maids* engages with gender and economic inequalities in a way that avoids the violence of speaking about the subjects, by showing them speaking for themselves. Still, it leaves conventional realist strategies intact, aspect that was soon challenged by feminist theorists like Claire Johnston. She argues that realistic aesthetics, by pretending to hold an innocent look of the camera and a non-intervention of the filmmakers who are supposedly limited to show the reality as it is, maintains the characteristic delusion of classical cinema:

What the camera in fact grasps is the “natural” world of the dominant ideology. Women’s cinema cannot afford such idealism; the “truth” of our oppression cannot be “captured” on celluloid with the “innocence” of the camera: it has to be constructed/manufactured. New meanings have to be created by disrupting the fabric of the male bourgeois cinema within the text of the film. (1973; 2000: 29).

From this anti-realist perspective, it is not enough to address issues of feminist interest in the content of the films. **Feminist counter-cinema** must challenge cinematic language itself, its strategies of coherence and its plausibility codes. Johnston highlights the importance of questioning the ways in which the spectators are placed in relation to the film. She advocates for a counter-cinema that inspires analysis rather than emotional identification with the characters; a cinema that creates “an entirely new kind of spectator as part and parcel of its representational strategies” (Pollock 1988: 246). In this sense, counter-cinema echoes Bertolt Brecht’s distancing:

Against literary realism, Brecht turned to modernist defiance of the traditional forms and encouraged the use of montage, disruption of narrative, refusal of identifications with heroes and heroines, the intermingling of modes from high and popular culture, the use of different registers such as the comic, tragic as well as the confection of songs, images, sounds, film and so forth. Complex seeing and complex multi-layered texts were the project. Distancing is therefore the theoretical and practical result of this critique of realist representation and a device for achieving a different form of realist knowledge actively involving the spectator in its production and its translation into action (Pollock 1988: 226).

Feminist counter-cinema gathers the tradition marked by pioneer avant-garde filmmakers such as Germaine Dulac (*La Souriante Madame Beudet*, 1923) and Maya Deren (*Meshes of the Afternoon*, 1943), and is also influenced by Marxism and psychoanalysis. Examples include Sara Gómez's *De cierta manera* (1974) and Michelle Citron's *Daughter Rite* (1979), which mix documentary and fiction portraying, respectively, gender relations in post-revolutionary Cuba, and relationships between mothers and daughters.

Pollock outlines the dilemma faced by feminist filmmakers working with counter-cinema: “challenging dominant modes of realist representation which naturalize bourgeois hierarchies and service masculine fantasy, feminism is none the less committed, epistemologically, to realism. Political change must come through concrete social struggle in the real world” (1988: 226). What the advocates of counter-cinema emphasise in this regard, in the words of Stephen Heath, is that “reality is to be grasped not in the mirror of vision but in the distance of analysis, the displacement of the ideology that vision reflects and confirms” (in Pollock 1988: 226-227). In agential realism terms, the feminist camera should then operate, not as a reflecting mirror, but as a diffraction apparatus.<sup>70</sup>

The clash of these two positions, realist documentary vs. counter-cinema, leads to the realist debate of the late seventies. Within feminist film theory, the debate increasingly begins to be in favour of anti-realism, thus distinguishing two successive moments in feminist film production. Firstly, an effort to change the content of dominant cinema, by means of portraying women talking about their “real” experiences; secondly, a growing interest in the film form, considering that “in order to counter the aesthetic of realism, which was hopelessly compromised with bourgeois ideology, as well as Hollywood cinema, avant-garde and feminist filmmakers must take an oppositional stance against narrative ‘illusionism’ and in favour of formalism” (de Lauretis, 1987c: 128).

However, theorists such as Ann Kaplan (1983), Julia Lesage (1984) and Alexandra Juhasz (1994) refuse the sharp rejection of cinematic realism and have questioned this apparent succession. In this regard, we can notice how the narratives share similarities with the progress and loss narratives of feminist film theory identified by Hemmings (2011).<sup>71</sup> Just as the waves combine when they overlap and apparently

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<sup>70</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus

<sup>71</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

spread “when they encounter an obstruction” (Barad 2007: 28), but remain entangled moving in different directions, the production of realist feminist documentaries has actually continued side by side with more risky exercises at the formal level. This is developed in the following section.

### 2.2.2 Feminist Documentary Cinema: Possibilities of Subversive Realism

For Ann Kaplan, the debate about realism in feminist film theory is:

...in some sense a false debate, premised first on an unnecessary rigid theory about the relationship between form and content; and second on a theory of knowledge which, while it illuminates our contemporary system of relationships (...) is nevertheless inadequate when applied to practice in the sense of bringing about concrete change in the daily lives of women (1983: 140).

Although realism may tend to assume that showing oppression is sufficient in itself, feminist counter-cinema that moves away from the referent of the material world in an exercise of cinematographic language exploration, runs the risk of forgetting concrete expressions of inequality. Moreover, the mere rejection of realistic forms of representation does not guarantee that the public will reflect on how the patriarchal and bourgeois ideology builds images. In a certain way, what Kaplan is stating is similar to the return narrative of feminist theory described by Hemmings (2011), i.e. bringing together the two strands, by recognising the limits, but also the insights, of both positions.

In this sense, Alexandra Juhasz proposes the recovery of realistic feminist documentaries, recognising their political efficacy and the complexity of the multiple filmic styles that converge in realism.<sup>72</sup> She discusses the documentary *Janie's Janie* (Geri Ashur, Peter Barton, Marilyn Mulford and Stephanie Pawleski 1971), which portrays the daily life of a divorced housewife, her feminist awareness, and her move from individual to collective action. Despite employing conventional formal strategies, “the film doesn't document Janie's fixed and unproblematic identity so much as it

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<sup>72</sup> Juhasz explains: “Feminist film theory was founded upon a misreading of two integral features of feminist realist documentary; the fact that there are usually *multiple* film styles and theoretical assumptions masked by the conventions of ‘realism’, and more importantly, that realism and identification are used as viable theoretical strategies towards political ends within these films” (1994: 175).

documents Janie's identity-in-process, her coming into a politicized identity and the making of a political woman" (1994: 182).

The realism of documentaries like *Janie's Janie* is not the naïve and androcentric-complicit one, which the defenders of feminist counter-cinema denounce. It is therefore appropriate to ask along with Ann Kaplan: "how valid is it to apply the same criticism to realist practices used in the commercial, narrative cinema and in the independent documentary form?" (1983: 134). The same practices of realism can be used to confirm and perpetuate a bourgeois and patriarchal reality, or to show collective sexist oppression, to register subversive histories of marginalised subjectivities, and to introduce multiple voices into public discourse.

An example is the use of "talking heads", widely spread on television, but criticised in cinema for being monotonous and rigid. However, as Barbara Halpern argues, the effects of talking heads depend on "who is talking about what and how" (1984: 267). This is indeed a difference that matters: Whether this resource is used to represent an official and authoritarian position, or as an empowering tool for people who represent themselves and tell their own stories in front of the camera.

The visual portrait of women in this self-conscious act of narrating themselves in a politicised way is an important argument of the feminist realist documentary: "women's self-discovery as a route towards feminist *collective identity* and political action" (Juhasz 1994: 181). For Julia Lesage, this deep narrative structure is similar to that of the self-consciousness groups, in which reflecting on the meaning of being a woman leads to political collective knowledge (1984: 232). The articulation of this knowledge before the camera also reorganises the expectations of the audiences: A greater variety of female characters is shown as cinematographic subjects, performing a wide range of activities and expressing in first person their desires, critics and proposals.

Identifying with the women that appear in documentaries like *Union Maids* is empowering, rather than oppressive. According to Teresa de Lauretis, identification and self-representation are important, "theoretically and politically, for women who have never before represented ourselves as subjects, and whose images and subjectivities -until very recently, if at all- have not been ours to shape, to portray, or to create" (de Lauretis 1987c: 130). Just like feminist counter-cinema, realist feminist documentary rejects the idea that there is a fixed identity and an immovable truth: instead, both are conceived as cultural constructs to be called into question.

The type of identification raised by a realist documentary might be different from that of a fiction film. While fiction appeals “directly to the spectator’s emotional and sentimental life, their private subjectivity (...) [documentary] speaks to the viewer as citizen, as a member of the social collective, as putative participant in the public sphere” (Chanan 2007: 16). A common feature of the realist feminist documentary is that the filmed subject(s) and/or the film as a whole reflect an explicit commitment to change aspects of the public and private spaces. While classical cinema places the spectator as a subject of an exclusively private desire, documentary cinema seeks to mobilise her/him as a social subject whose desire is directed to the socio-political arena of concrete historical experiences.

In this sense, documentary cinema recognises our need to cohabitate with other humans and non-humans on which our lives depend, as explained in the first chapter.<sup>73</sup> In Judith Butler’s words: The need to struggle from and against precarity, not to overcome interdependency or even vulnerability, but “to produce the conditions under which vulnerability and interdependency become livable” (2015: 2018).

Juhász believes that the value of realist feminist documentaries lies heavily in their use as tools for political action, with “an explicit opinion or position whose articulation contributes toward some manner of change” (1994: 175). This becomes evident in the case of films made at specific junctures, when immediate information is needed to counteract invisibilisation in the mass media.<sup>74</sup> It is also manifest in the alternative system of distribution and exhibition of these materials, since people who rarely go to the cinema compose much of the intended audience. For this reason, many feminist filmmakers seek to show their work in non-governmental organisations, trade unions, community groups, schools, and diverse public spaces. Even if only on a small scale, this is an example of feminist interventions located beyond content and form: the film production/distribution/ exhibition is also conceived in its political dimension.

As stated by Julia Lesage when comparing two representative films of the two branches of feminist film practice (the realist documentary *Self Health* by Catherine Allan, Judy Erola, Allie Light and Joan Musante on the one hand; the experimental film *Rape* by Joann Elam on the other hand): “Both realist and experimental documentary forms have been politicized by feminist filmmakers” (1984: 246). Following Teresa de

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<sup>73</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>74</sup> An example analysed in this dissertation is the Spanish documentary film *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014). *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.2

Lauretis's proposal of a subversive narrative cinema (1984; 1987b), we can talk of a **subversive realist feminist documentary**, i.e. one able to use stylistic strategies of the classic documentary to unmask androcentric ideology.

The sharp rejection that much of the feminist theory of cinema expressed towards cinematic realism and narrative pleasure in documentary film rests on unnecessarily rigid and dogmatic assumptions. Instead of prescriptive and limiting positions:

We need a theory that will permit and accept different positionings towards class and economic issues in the realist mode and that, while not mitigating any of the semiological problems, especially around the overall positioning of the spectator as passive recipient of knowledge, at least grants a limited area of resistance to hegemonic codes in certain examples of the form (Kaplan 1983: 130).

Taking steps towards such a theory, my proposal in this dissertation is to create a theoretical-methodological apparatus combining Karen Barad's diffractive methodology and agential realism (2007); Donna Haraway's situated knowledges (1988); Teresa de Lauretis's eccentric technologies of gender (1987a; 1990); Bill Nichols's modes of representation (2010); materiality (Olivieri 2012), emotionality (Ahmed 2014) and performativity of documentary cinema (Bruzzi 2000). These elements, in dialogue with the feminist film theory concepts summarised in this chapter, make up the feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze that I propose as one of the main outcomes of this dissertation.

### Chapter 3. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production

Our history is neither univocal nor linear nor nominal nor summarisable. If we affirm that, at any given moment, as if it was one entity, feminism became institutionalised and decided to prioritise the interests of bourgeois, white and heterosexual women, we would be denying all the autonomous, working-class, radical, whore, gypsy and lesbian feminists who were operating at that same moment. That's why I prefer to formulate transfeminism as another update, here and now, of the radicalism of feminism. (Itziar Ziga 2013: 83).<sup>75</sup>

The aims of this chapter are to contextualise and to situate the production of Spanish documentary feminist cinema (produced either with film stock, video or digital formats), so as to trace a possible genealogy of contemporary non-fiction audiovisual productions made from a feminist perspective. As stated in the previous chapter,<sup>76</sup> I don't look for a closed definition of what a feminist documentary film is. Rather, I focus on what documentaries informed by a feminist ethos do. I pay attention to films directed by women because the presence of female professionals in creative areas where audiovisual contents are created is both cause and consequence of gender equality. But the feminist character of a film does not lie on the fact of being directed by a woman. Instead, it refers to the exploration and construction of contents, textual structures, formal strategies and/or means of production, distribution and exhibition that reveal a feminist consciousness, i.e. awareness of the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities.

This historical revision does not intend to be exhaustive, but it provides a wider cartography in which to place the case studies analysed in the next sections. It is presented in chronological order, from the pioneers and the filmmakers of the Spanish

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<sup>75</sup> “Nuestra historia no es ni unívoca ni lineal ni nominal ni resumible. Si afirmamos que en un momento dado el feminismo, así, como si fuera un ente, se institucionalizó y decidió priorizar los intereses de las mujeres burguesas, blancas y heterosexuales, estaremos negando a todas las feministas autónomas, obreras, radicales, putas, gitanas, bolleras que operaban en dicho momento. Por ello, prefiero formular el transfeminismo como una actualización más, aquí y ahora, de la radicalidad del feminismo.” All translations of quotes taken from sources in Spanish are mine and were revised by native speaker James Hayes. Original quotes are cited in the corresponding footnotes.

<sup>76</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.2 Diffracting from What a Feminist Documentary Cinema is to What it Does



Transition (1975-1985) up to the current situation. My main sources in the elaboration of this genealogy are Barbara Zecchi (2014); Virginia Villaplana (2008); Carmen Navarrete, María Ruido and Fefa Vila (2005). I also incorporate information provided by some of the interviewees (filmmakers and film festival organisers) throughout the chapter, as well as landmarks in the Spanish feminist movement.

Zecchi describes the experience of women directors in Spain as characterised by a sense of “orphanhood” (2014: 13) due to historiographical silence and lack of sorority. For instance, she mentions that the three women directors from the Transition (Cecilia Bartolomé, Josefina Molina and Pilar Miró) never established any kind of collaboration.<sup>77</sup> This has begun to change and a clear example is the creation of the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain (CIMA) in 2006.

Making visible the connections, the shared problems and the patterns of “where the effects of difference appear” (Haraway 1992; 2004: 70) when talking about documentary cinema produced by women and/or with a feminist perspective can contribute to counter this orphanhood feeling and to build stronger nets of working and support. Therefore, even though my case studies have been produced from 2013 onwards, I consider it important to look back at what has been present in the Spanish feminist audiovisual agenda(s) of the last decades.

### 3.1 Spanish Pioneers

While it is relatively easy to find documented works about pioneer female filmmakers in other European countries such as France (e.g. Alice Guy and Germaine Dulac), Sweden (e.g. Anna Hoffman-Uddgren), and Italy (e.g. Elvira Notari), not until only very recently, have names such as those of Carmen Pisano, Anaïs Napoleon, Elena Jordi and Helena Cortesina emerged as the female pioneer filmmakers in Spain. The beginnings of the film production in this country are around 1910. Cortesina is said to be the first female filmmaker in Spain, but her feature film, *Flor de España o la leyenda de un torero/The Flower of Spain or The Legend of a Bullfighter*<sup>78</sup> (1921) is lost.

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<sup>77</sup> Zecchi quotes Josefina Molina, who complains about the lack of female references: “during the first twenty years of my life I never watched a film directed by a woman, even though I started watching movies from a very young age” / “nunca en los primeros veinte años de mi vida pude ver una película dirigida por una mujer aunque desde muy pequeña estaba acostumbrada a ver cine” (2014: 14).

<sup>78</sup> In all cases, the English translation of the titles is written next to the original ones. It was not possible to find official English translations always, so I indicate my own translations with a symbol (\*).

According to Roman Gubern (1977) and Barbara Zecchi (2014), the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939) could have created favourable conditions for more women to work in the film industry. As a matter of fact, a recent historical documentary film directed by Pilar Pérez Solano, *Las maestras de la República/The Republican Female Teachers* (2013), emphasises how this period of time was characterised by an increasing awareness of gender in/equalities. The 1931 Constitution, for example, establishes equality between men and women, the female vote is recognised and, by 1932, divorce becomes legal. The investment of the period in more mixed schools is also an important measure against female illiteracy. However, with Francisco Franco's triumph, all the schools created before 18<sup>th</sup> July 1936 are closed and the Republican teachers are dismissed and repressed, to the point of killing them most times.

It is in the Republican context that Rosario Pi Brujas establishes her production company "Star Film" in Madrid. As a producer, Pi Brujas makes the first feature films with sound in Spain: *El hombre que se reía del amor/The Man Who Laughed at Love* (Benito Perojo, 1932), *Odio/Hatred* (Richard Harlan, 1933), and *Doce hombres y una mujer/Twelve Men and a Woman* (Fernando Delgado, 1934). She also directs *El gato montés/The Wildcat* (1935) and, in the middle of the Civil War (1936-1939), her second and last film, *Molinos de Viento/Windmills* (1937), which is nowadays lost. She exiles herself to Italy and never manages to direct or produce films again.

The three female directors that are active during Franco's dictatorship are Margarita Alexandre, Ana Mariscal and, in a clandestine way, Helena Lumberas. In 1953, Alexandre co-directs with Rafael Torrecilla the documentary film *Cristo/Jesus*, which revises Jesus's life story through Spanish paintings. It is considered a film of national interest by Franco, who asks for a meeting with the filmmakers: during the encounter, Alexandre recalls, Franco only speaks to Torrecilla (in Zecchi 2014: 58). The couple direct two more films, *La ciudad perdida/The Lost City* (1955), and *La gata/The Cat* (1956). Both are produced by "Nervion Films", their company production. They leave the country shortly afterwards and settle in Cuba, where Alexandre produces several films. She currently lives in Madrid.

Ana Mariscal directs ten films between 1952 and 1968, ranging from drama and comedy to thriller and musical. Hers is a controversial figure, being labelled as "the Spanish Leni Riefenstahl" (Zecchi 2014: 69) because of the role she plays in *Raza/Race* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1941), the fascist film written by Franco himself. Zecchi advocates for a re-vision of the films she directed, for it is possible to identify subtle

subversive uses of realism to question traditional female representations (2014: 65). However, her problematic collaboration with fascism cannot be ignored by any critical analysis of her work.

Helena Lumbreras (1935-1995) also directs underground documentary films during the dictatorship. Due to her focus on cinema directed by women within industrial standards, Zecchi (2014) does not register Lumbreras's work in her genealogy. In doing so, she leaves out this pioneer documentary filmmaker who made an openly militant cinema against fascism, capitalism and inequalities (including those arising from sexism). This can be read as entangled with the perspective assumed towards gender equality discussed in the first chapter: if it is considered as achieving the same as men, "where the yardstick is that already set by men" (Lazar 2007: 16), and the goal of feminism is limited to guaranteeing the presence of women in industrial film production, then the work carried out in the margins is not considered relevant. On the contrary, if we consider the idea that equality, within the feminist movement, implies questioning the androcentric structures under which cinema is produced, standing for "a radical shift in the gender order" (Lazar 2007: 16), then the cinema of Lumbreras is to be seriously taken into account.<sup>79</sup>

As María Camí-Vela (2008: 544) explains, Lumbreras's cinema stands against Franco's dictatorship, but also against capitalism and the politics of *cinema d'auteur*, because hers is a collective cinema whose objectives are conceived by and for working class women and men. Between 1968 and 1983, Lumbreras directs and co-directs eleven 16mm, black and white, non-fiction films made in secrecy and exhibited always in alternative circuits, followed by political debates.<sup>80</sup> Her figure has not only been forgotten by many film historians. Due to the male chauvinism of most left-wing activists at the time, hers is also an uncomfortable presence for political film militancy according to her partner, Mariano Lisa (in Guardia 2012: 81).

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<sup>79</sup> Vid. *Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>80</sup> Her complete filmography is conformed by the following films: *Spagna 68. El hoy es malo, pero el mañana es mio/Spain 68. Today is Bad but Tomorrow Belongs to Me\** (1968), *El cuarto poder/Fourth Estate* (1970), *El campo para el hombre/Field for Men* (1973), *O todos o ninguno/All or None* (1975-1976), *Primer aniversario de la muerte de Txiki en Cerdanyola/First Anniversary of the Death of Txiki in Cerdanyola\** (1976), *Manifestació Diada a Sant Boi de Llobregat/Demonstration Day in Sant Boi de Llobregat\** (1976), *Osuna* (1976), *¿El Prat? Un río a desviar/ The Prat? A River to Divert\** (1976-1977), *Diada, 11 de septiembre de 1977/National Day of Catalonia, September 11, 1977\** (1977), *A la vuelta del grito/Around the Scream* (1977-1978), and *Escuela de San Ildefonso/School of San Ildefonso\** (1983).

Lumbreras, who can be considered a pioneer Spanish feminist documentary filmmaker, studies at the “Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia” in Rome, where she gets involved with the Italian left movement. In 1968, “Unitelefilm”, the production and distribution company of the Italian Communist Party produces her debut film, *Spagna 68. El hoy es malo, pero el mañana es mío/Spain 68. Today is Bad but Tomorrow Belongs to Me\**. In this documentary, she portrays three collective movements against Franco’s regime: students, priests and working class people.

Her second film, co-directed with Llorenç Soler, *El cuarto poder/Fourth Estate* (1970), exposes the manipulation of the press. From 1973 up to 1977, she works with her partner, Mariano Lisa, as the “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (Class Cinema Collective). In one of their documentary films about labour struggle in a factory, *O Todos o ninguno/All or None* (1975-1976), they incorporate materials recorded by the workers themselves and involve them in the editing process.<sup>81</sup> This film also includes a sequence in which the wives of the workers gather in the house of one of them to write a letter directed to the public opinion about the unfair situation in the factory. In this way, the division between private and public spaces is evidenced and subverted. Even if Lumbreras does not label her cinema as feminist, in her work we can identify an awareness of the inequalities provoked not just by social class but by gender as well. Her gaze is not so much a female one, but a class-situated gaze, attentive to the intervention of women in historical processes (Guardia 2012: 97).

In her films, female experiences are regarded as valid information sources. Her cinema provokes and denounces. She also shows a didactic interest Camí-Vela highlights that in Lumbreras’s filmography there’s always a utopian spirit aimed at recovering the ideals of the Second Spanish Republic (2008: 545). But the Class Cinema Collective dissolves with the Transition and their work gets lost in oblivion. Not until 2005, have film festivals such as the “Mostra Internacional de Films de Dones” in Barcelona, organised retrospectives of her cinema.

A compilation documentary film directed by the film critic Diego Galán, *Con la pata quebrada/Barefoot in the Kitchen* (2013), gathers representations of women in Spanish cinema, from the thirties up to the present moment. There we can see the contrast between the female models of purity and abnegation in films produced during Franco’s

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<sup>81</sup> A recent Mexican-American documentary film that has a similar production process is *Maquilapolis [City of Factories]* (Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre 2006), where the workers keep a video-diary that is later incorporated in the film.

dictatorship, and the women-objects of desire in the cinema of the so-called “destape”. Cinema of “el destape”, which oscillates between comedy and soft pornography, represents the vastest part of the Spanish film production during the Transition and is characterised by films with titles such as *La caliente niña Julieta/Horny Julieta\** (Ignacio Iquino, 1981) and *Las calientes orgías de una virgen/The Hot Orgies of a Virgin* (Antonio Verdaguer, 1983).

### 3.1.1 Beginnings of the Spanish Feminist Movement

According to Carmen Navarrete, María Ruido and Fefa Vila (2005), the artistic manifestations of Spanish feminism have peculiarities due to the repression of a dictatorship that lasted until the mid-seventies. In Spain, the radical feminism of the sixties doesn't emerge openly:

...through sporadic, clandestine manifestations (...) the most critical and radical Spanish feminism and lesbianism are contemporary with and aware of those that emerge in other contexts. However, their space for expression and influence is doubly blocked, due to the existence of a “patriarchal system”, and the atrocious experience of forty years of dictatorship, which postpone, hide or paralyse feminist expression. (2005: 159).<sup>82</sup>

Franco dies in November 1975 and, within a few weeks, the Women's Liberation Front is created in Madrid. The feminist movement had begun to take form in the previous decade, with groups like the Democratic Movement of Women, but had had to remain clandestine. The First National Encounter for Women Liberation is celebrated in January 1976, gathering nearly four hundred people in Madrid. Their motto is: “Woman, Fight for your Liberation!” (Villaplana 2008: 50).<sup>83</sup> By May 1976, the number of participants increases at the National Encounter for Women Liberation in Barcelona. In 1979, after the Encounter in Granada, two main groups arise within the Spanish feminist movement: socialist feminism, which defends a double militancy because women's liberation is

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<sup>82</sup> “...a través de manifestaciones esporádicas, clandestinas (...) el lesbianismo y feminismo español más crítico y radical es conocedor y coetáneo del que surge en otros contextos. Sin embargo, su espacio de expresión y de influencia está doblemente colapsado, por la existencia de un ‘sistema patriarcal’ y por la experiencia atroz de cuarenta años de dictadura, que van a aplazar, ocultar o paralizar brutalmente las expresiones feministas.”

<sup>83</sup> “Mujer, lucha por tu liberación.”

conceived as inextricably linked to class struggle; and radical feminism, which advocates for one militancy only.

From 1975 to 1984, the feminist fight gathers around the recognition of equality and women civil rights in the Spanish Constitution.<sup>84</sup> According to Villaplana (2008: 50), the feminist agenda at that time concentrates on participation, family, education, rural women and work (including domestic labour). Such general axes give way in the following years to the demands concerning divorce, contraceptives and abortion.<sup>85</sup> Their motto is: “Free contraceptives not to abort, free abortion not to die.” In 1981, the Encounter for the Right to Abortion is celebrated under the motto: “We give birth, we decide.”<sup>86</sup>

The first Lesbian Encounter takes place in 1979. The first feminist editorial in Spain, LaSal, begins its work in 1978, editing Alexandra Kollontai.<sup>87</sup> Lidia Falcón had written *Los derechos civiles de la mujer/Woman's Civil Rights* (1963), *Los derechos laborales de la mujer/Woman's Labour Rights* (1964), and *Mujer y sociedad/Woman and Society* (1969). In 1977, Amparo Moreno writes *Mujeres en lucha: el movimiento feminista en España/Women Fighting: The Feminist Movement in Spain\**. Three feminist magazines are also created in this period: *Vindicación feminista/Feminist Vindication*, which was created by Falcón and Carmen Alcalde, issued from 1976 to 1979; *Poder y libertad/Power and Freedom*, which takes the place of *Vindicación feminista* and has been directed by Falcón since 1979; and *Dones en lluita/Women Fighting\**, published from 1980 until 1983.

According to oral testimonies gathered by Navarrete, Ruido and Vila (2005), the feminist movement adopts a relational model with groups of women, cooperatives, bars, clinics, libraries, i.e. a web attentive to women's needs, aiming at a radical transformation of society. The political subject “woman” created by this movement stemmed from

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<sup>84</sup> *Las constituyentes/The Constituents* (2011), a documentary film directed by Oliva Acosta, gathers the testimonies of the twenty-seven female politicians who took part in the drafting of the constitution after Franco's death.

<sup>85</sup> It's until 1978 that legal equality of the sexes gets recognised in the Spanish Constitution. That same year, contraceptives are legalised, the law of divorce is approved in 1981, and a limited legalisation of abortion is recognised in 1985. With this Organic Law, abortion was legalised only in three cases: rape, serious risk to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, and malformations in the fetus.

<sup>86</sup> “Anticonceptivos para no abortar, aborto libre y gratuito para no morir.” “Nosotras parimos, nosotras decidimos”. In my diffractive reading of the case studies, it's interesting to see how these mottos come back in the 2014 film *Yo decido, el tren de la libertad*. Indeed, the demonstration registered in this film was initiated by the group “Tertulia Feminista Les Comadres”, which is created in 1986, in Gijón, Asturias. *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.2 *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*

<sup>87</sup> Apart from the pioneer LaSal, Spanish editorials that have translated important feminist texts are: Talasa, Revolución, Eutopías and Cátedra-Feminismos. More recent ones are: Icaria, Traficantes de Sueños, El Roure, Anthropos and Paidós.

“utopian and libertarian discursive practices defined as anti-authoritarian, anti-patriarchy, anti-capitalist, interclass and internationalist” (2005: 162).<sup>88</sup> Over time, though, they notice a division between diverse feminisms:

Despite the initial unity, a unity that was passionately forged as a resistance and anti-dictatorship struggle, and under the dominating influence of socialist feminism, once the transition period was over, the feminist movement, though united on the main causes –divorce, contraception, abortion, violence– is breaking up into different positions that describe and represent the reality of sexual difference in new languages. (2005: 164).<sup>89</sup>

During the Patriarchy Encounter and the Independent Feminist Encounter in Barcelona in 1980, several debates between equality feminism and difference feminism, take place. According to Navarrete, Ruido and Vila (2005: 165), some figures associated with equality feminism in Spain are Celia Amorós, Amelia Valcárcel, Alicia Puleo, Rosa Cobo, Cristina Molina, Luisa Posada, Neus Campillo and Ana de Miguel. Among the names associated with difference feminism, they mention Victoria Sendón, Milagros Rivera, Fina Birules, Rosa Rius, Merce Otero, and Carmen Revilla.

### **3.1.2 Filmmakers of the Spanish Transition (1975-1985)**

There are only three female directors during the Transition (1975-1985): Cecilia Bartolomé, Pilar Miró and Josefina Molina. According to Zecchi (2014: 83), each one plays a specific role in an industry where the active participation of women is not welcome.<sup>90</sup> Bartolomé takes an explicit political position and is linked with the feminist movement, Miró takes on a role similar to that of a male director, and Molina adopts

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<sup>88</sup> “prácticas discursivas libertarias y utópicas definidas como antiautoritarias, antipatriarcales, interclasistas, anticapitalistas e internacionalistas.”

<sup>89</sup> “Frente a la unidad inicial, unidad que se fraguó apasionadamente como resistencia y lucha antifranquista y bajo la influencia dominante del feminismo socialista, una vez pasado el periodo de transición, el movimiento feminista, aunque unido en las principales reivindicaciones –divorcio, anticoncepción, aborto, violencia–, se va atomizando en diferentes posiciones, que describen y representan la realidad de la diferencia sexual en nuevos lenguajes.”

<sup>90</sup> At the film school, women were also discriminated against. Josefina Molina and Pilar Miró both failed in the class taught by Carlos Saura. As Miró recalls: “I would sit in the last row of a very full classroom (...) but it was pointless. He would search for me, bring me to the front, tell me that what I was doing was wrong and that he didn’t know what I was doing there, nor why I had to study that” / “Me sentaba en la última fila de una clase muy numerosa (...) pero no me servía de nada. Él me buscaba, me sacaba a la pizarra y me decía que lo que hacía estaba mal y que, en realidad, no sabía que hacía yo allí ni por qué tenía que estudiar aquello” (in Zecchi 2014: 97).

more of a so-called female gaze. In line with a diffractive methodology, which looks for patterns of differences and where the effects of such differences appear, it is interesting to see the directions that their careers have followed, bearing in mind the gazes they adopt.

After the documentary film co-directed by Alexandre in 1953 and the work of Lumbreras in the seventies, there is no other female documentary filmmaker until 1981, year in which Cecilia Bartolomé co-directs with her brother the political documentaries *Después de... No se os puede dejar solos/And After... One Cannot Leave Them Alone*, and *Después de... Atado y bien atado/And After... Tied Up and Tied Well*. In a similar vein to that of Lumbreras, she registers the opinions of peasants and working-class people, from Franco's funeral until Antonio Tejero's coup d'état in 1981. In the first part, she includes a part specifically devoted to feminist demands, including abortion rights.

Bartolomé expresses her feminist politics since her thesis at the Official Madrid Film School, a hybrid fiction and non-fiction musical called *Margarita y el lobo/Margarita and the Wolf* (1969). According to filmmaker Isabel de Ocampo, the clearest example of a feminist filmmaker in Spanish history is precisely Bartolomé: "For me, *Margarita y el lobo* is the most feminist and transgressive film recorded at that time (...) And *Vámonos, Barbara* is like *Margarita y el lobo*, very close to the nouvelle vague."<sup>91</sup> *Vámonos, Barbara/Let's Go, Barbara* (1978) is the Spanish version of Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974), and is considered Spanish cinema first feminist feature film (Zecchi 2014: 87). However, it was widely ignored at that time, with only 147,445 spectators. Among the effects that we can identify in Bartolomé's career due to her explicit feminist political position, we might mention the freedom she has in the form and content of her films, but also the marginal position she occupies within the industry. After her controversial documentary *Después de...*, she manages to direct just one more film, fourteen years later: *Lejos de África/Far from Africa* (1996).

Pilar Miró is one of the most well known female Spanish filmmakers. She criticises the feminist movement and distances herself from being called a feminist filmmaker. She even refuses to direct *Vámonos, Barbara*, which is then proposed to Bartolomé. In the opinion of Zecchi (2014), Miró's strategy for coping with a hostile

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<sup>91</sup> "Margarita y el lobo, a mí me parece la película más feminista y más transgresora que se grabó por aquella época (...) Y *Vámonos Bárbara* es como *Margarita y el lobo*, es como muy de la nouvelle vague." Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.



environment was that of imitating male directors.<sup>92</sup> She begins her career in television, but also directs nine feature films between 1976-1996,<sup>93</sup> and occupies two administrative posts: General Director of Cinematography from 1982 to 1985, and General Director of the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation from 1986 to 1989. She undergoes two judicial proceedings, but is absolved later on.

Miró is also a controversial figure due to the so-called “Ley Miró” (Miró Law), published in 1984. This law is created with the intention of protecting Spanish cinema from the increasing presence of American films in national cinemas. It also establishes a financial model that favours quality over quantity, which leads to a drastic reduction of Spanish films’ production. As a result, many distributors and film professionals criticise Miró, but there is also support from some film critics. Carlos Heredero (1999), for example, affirms that this law facilitates the production of debut films. As Zecchi points out (2014: 101), this is quite important from a gender equality perspective, if we consider that among the 62 directors who make their debut between 1984 and 1989, six are women: Isabel Mulá, Virginia Nunes, Pilar Távora, Cristina Andreu, Isabel Coixet and Ana Díez. Another interesting effect of the Miró Law is the decrease in the production of the most popular genres during the Transition: comedy and soft pornography. These films are left without public economic support and the taxes imposed on pornographic cinema, labelled with the newly created “category X”, increase.

Josefina Molina is the first woman to graduate as director from the Official Madrid Film School in 1969 (Pilar Miró graduates in 1968, but in scriptwriting). Her second feature film, *Función de noche/Evening Performance* (1981), is a mixture of fiction and documentary, based on a play (also directed by Molina in 1979), which is in turn based on a novel published in 1966: *Cinco horas con Mario/Five Hours with Mario* by Miguel Delibes. Carmen Sotillo, the character created by Delibes, sits by the coffin of her husband and expresses the frustration accumulated over decades of silence. In Molina’s theatrical adaptation, Lola Herrera plays the part of Carmen Sotillo and, in so

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<sup>92</sup> Zecchi quotes Miró: “I’ve always behaved quite like men, in the way I work or in how I face life”/ “siempre me he comportado bastante como los hombres, en la forma de trabajar o de enfrentarme a la vida” (2014: 84).

<sup>93</sup> Miró’s complete filmography is conformed by the following films: *La petición/The Request* (1976), *El crimen de Cuenca/The Cuenca Crime* (1979), *Gary Cooper, que estás en los cielos/Gary Cooper Who Art in Heaven* (1980), *Hablamos esta noche/Let Us Talk Tonight* (1982), *Werther* (1986), *Beltenebros/Prince of Shadows* (1992), *El pájaro de la felicidad/The Bird of Happiness* (1993), *El perro del hortelano/The Dog in the Manger* (1995), and *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños/Your Name Poisons my Dreams* (1996).

doing, she realises how much the women from her generation, and she herself, share with the unsatisfied Sotillo.

*Función de noche* combines fragments from the play with fragments of a real conversation between Lola Herrera (performing herself) and her ex-husband, in which they talk about their marriage, their divorce, their desires and frustrations. María Socorro Suárez Lafuente defines this film as “an intertextual documentary” (2003: 398) that deconstructs the situations in which women were trapped during Franco’s dictatorship: “Lola’s sexuality, like Carmen’s, had been defined by the most orthodox doctrines of national-Catholicism, that constrained the body, mind and language of women for 40 years. Lola’s cry is voicing many a woman’s tragedy, including her own” (2003: 402).

As aforementioned, Molina has spoken about the feeling of orphanhood felt by the female filmmakers of her time. But her trajectory itself is an important step towards the visualisation of gender equality in filmmaking: the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain (CIMA) is created in 2006 with an initial monetary donation from Molina, who had received a recognition to her trajectory in Andalusia, the region where she was born. Molina is also recognised with a Goya Honorary Award in 2012. In 2011, she is the first filmmaker awarded the “Premio Mujer de Cine” (Cinema Women Prize), created by the itinerant showcase “Mujeres de Cine” (Cinema Women). Ana Palacios, founder of “Mujeres de Cine”, emphasises the importance of recognising this female genealogy in cinema:

...in the second year of the festival, we proposed a prize called “Premio Mujer de Cine”, with the purpose of recognising those women who are role models for other generations of female filmmakers, and we gave it to Josefina Molina that first year (...). The original philosophy of the project, the tribute and the recognition, was that the participants of “Mujeres de Cine” would accompany the awarded filmmaker (...) because the recognition came not from “Mujeres de Cine”, but from them, who are indeed women of cinema.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> “...en la segunda edición propusimos un premio que se llama Premio Mujer de Cine, que era para reconocer aquéllas que son referentes de otras generaciones de mujeres cineastas y que se lo dimos a Josefina Molina el primer año (...) la filosofía como original del proyecto también, del homenaje y del reconocimiento, era que fueran las, las participantes en la itinerancia de Mujeres de Cine las que estuvieran acompañando a la premiada (...) como que el reconocimiento no era de Mujeres de Cine, era de ellas, mujeres de cine son ellas.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

After the Transition, the LGBT movement and the feminist movement keep on producing critical discourses and oppositional strategies, many of them under the form of artistic expressions. In 1983, a small group of female militants in the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) creates the Woman's Institute, but an important part of the Spanish feminist movement distance itself from what they call "institutional feminism" (Navarrete, Ruido and Vila 2005: 159).

As for queer cinema produced in this period, Ventura Pons directs *Ocaña, retrato intermitente/Ocaña, An Intermittent Portrait* (1978), about the transgender artist José Pérez Ocaña. The Spanish Movement of Homosexual Liberation gets organised in Barcelona at the beginning of the seventies, and in 1975 it becomes the "Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya" (Gay Liberation Front of Catalunya). In 1977, the Homosexual Front of Revolutionary Action is established in Madrid. The documentaries *Sentenciados sin juicio/Sentenced Without Trial\** (2002) directed by Eliseo Blay, and *Testigos de un tiempo maldito/Witnesses of a Damned Time* (2012) directed by Javi Larrauri, portray the criminalisation of homosexuals between 1970 and 1979.

Before moving forward in this historical revision, it's interesting to point out the shift in the genres of the feature films directed by women in Spain through the decades: between 1922-1974, the majority of female filmmakers direct drama (60%), followed by comedy (20%), thriller (13%) and documentary (7%). During 1975-1996, drama (63%) and comedy (28%) remain as the most popular genres; there's a very slight increase in documentary productions (8%) and the female presence as thriller directors decreases significantly (3%). What we observe in the 1997-2010 period is that drama remains as the most popular genre (41%), followed closely by a considerable increase in documentary productions (35%), while comedy (19%) and thriller (5%) belong just to a minority.<sup>95</sup>

### **3.2 The Women's Cinema "Boom" in the Nineties**

The Goya Awards, Spain's main national annual film awards, are created in 1987, one year after the founding of the Spanish Academy of Cinematic Art and Science. Over more than thirty editions, only three women have won this prize for best fiction feature film director: Pilar Miró in 1996 for *El perro del hortelano/The Dog in the Manger*; Icíar Bollaín in 2003 for *Te doy mis ojos/Take My Eyes*; and Isabel Coixet twice, in 2005 for

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<sup>95</sup> Based on the data gathered by Zecchi (2014: 246).

*The Secret Life of Words* and in 2017 for *The Bookshop*. Six women have been awarded this prize for their directorial debut: Ana Díez for *Ander eta Yul/Ander and Yul* in 1989; Rosa Vergés for *Boom, boom/Heart Beat* in 1990; Ángeles González Sinde for *La suerte dormida/Sleeping Fortune* in 2003; Mar Coll for *Tres dies amb la família/Three Days with the Family* in 2010; Carla Simón for *Estiu 1993/Summer 1993* in 2017; and Arantxa Echevarría for *Carmen y Lola/Carmen and Lola* in 2018.

In 1988, and at least partially as an effect of the so-called “Miró Law”, three women direct their debut film: Isabel Coixet (*Demasiado viejo para morir joven/Too Old to Die Young*), Cristina Andreu (*Brumal*), and Ana Díez (*Ander eta Yul*). The three of them are nominated for the Goya award and Díez gets it. Between 1988 and 1996, nearly thirty women filmmakers make their debut. This has been called a “boom” but, as writer Dolores Payas points out, it’s not really an enormous change, just the beginning of a more balanced situation (in Camí-Vela 2001: 105). Or as Chus Gutiérrez ironically expresses: “It was small, but it’s true that, from being two [female filmmakers] to being twenty, it was a boom.”<sup>96</sup> By the end of the decade, though, this tendency stops, and from 1999 to 2000, the number of women filmmakers actually decreases, from 13.4% to 8% (Zecchi 2014: 121).

In terms of documentary film production, after Bartolomé’s *Después de...* (1981), and Molina’s intertextual mixture of documentary and fiction, *Función de noche* (1981), it’s not until 1994 that two more documentary female filmmakers appear in the database of the Spanish Film Institute<sup>97</sup>: Chus Gutiérrez with *Sexo Oral/Oral-Aural Sex*, and Cristina Esteban with *Ojalá, Val del Omar/If Only, Val del Omar*. One more documentary film, *Monos como Becky/Monkeys like Becky*, directed by Nuria Villazán and Joaquim Jordà in 1999, completes the short list of non-fiction films directed by Spanish women in the nineties. This film is made in the context of the Master of Creative Documentary, created by the Barcelona-based University Pompeu Fabra in 1997.

*Monos como Becky* (1999) is the first Spanish documentary with an autobiographical perspective (Cuevas 2012: 115). It begins as a portrait of conventional psychiatry but co-director Joaquim Jordà increasingly interacts with the patients and, after surviving a stroke, ends up talking about his own experience in front of the camera. With

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<sup>96</sup> “pequeño, pero es verdad que de haber dos a haber veinte, era un boom”. Chus Gutiérrez. Personal interview. October 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid. Original interview in Spanish, all translations are mine.

<sup>97</sup> The Spanish Film Institute (ICAA) website gathers data about the films produced in Spain since 1921. Only the films that have been registered at the Spanish Ministry of Culture are kept in the records. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://infoicaa.mecd.es/CatalogoICAA/>>.

*Sexo Oral*, Gutiérrez re-signifies a title commonly associated with pornography. Hers is a participatory documentary composed mainly of interviews about people's sexual lives. The film has a reflexive aspect, since it reveals its construction process: at times, we can see the film equipment within the frame and the crew discusses their work in a meta-cinematographic way. Forms and contents explored in these early approaches to non-conventional documentary cinema re-appear in contemporary examples.<sup>98</sup>

### 3.2.1 The “Female Cinema” Controversy

In the Spanish mainstream cinema of the nineties, which is predominantly directed by men, feminist film critic Pilar Aguilar (1998) detects a continuous representation of objectified women and a banalisation of rape. In the case of fiction films directed by women during this period, Zecchi identifies an apparent contradiction: in terms of content, most of these films talk about female experiences (mainly from the point of view of a white, middle-class woman), but in their discourses beyond their films, female filmmakers reject any connection with feminism and refuse to have their cinema labelled as feminine/female. Such a discomfort is present in Iciar Bollain's provocative and ironic article “Cine con tetas” (Cinema with Breasts), originally written in 1998:

They must be worried about watching a film made by breasts, maybe they think they are losing ground, and rightly so, because one must see that there's nothing but cinema directed by women, it's high time you let the boys say something too! Maybe they think they are going to see things from a different perspective and that scares them, now that everything was so organised and well explained, each stereotype in place. Now that it was clear who the hero, the pretty girl and the bad guy were, it looks as if we were coming to complicate things. Because they may think that one must have a different attitude since it's different cinema, cinema with waist, cinema with a bigger bum and, of course, cinema with breasts. (1998; 2003: 90).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> For instance, the documentary *Yes, We Fuck!* (Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Molina, 2013) also explores sexuality but placing the focus on people who, due to their functional diversity, are labelled by society as asexual, dependent and non-desirable. *Vid. Infra.* Chapter 4. Section 4.4 *Yes, We Fuck!*

<sup>99</sup> “Debe ser que les agobia la idea de mirar una película hecha por tetas, a lo mejor piensan que van a perder terreno, y con razón, porque hay que ver, que no hay mas que cine dirigido por mujeres, ¡a ver si dejan a los chicos decir también algo! También puede que piensen que van a ver las cosas desde otra perspectiva y eso les asusta, ahora que estaba todo tan organizado y tan bien explicado, cada estereotipo en su sitio. Ahora que ya teníamos claro quien es el héroe, quien la guapa, y quien el malo, parece que

For Zecchi, this article summarises the anti-feminist position of women filmmakers in the nineties, for whom the label “women’s cinema” seemed like a ghetto in which they did not want to be trapped (2014: 134). However, if we adopt a position of dis-identification<sup>100</sup> and read Bollaín’s article diffractively with the contemporary opinions expressed by Ana Palacios (director of “Mujeres de Cine”) and Virginia Yagüe (scriptwriter and president of CIMA from 2014 to June 2018), we can identify several similarities in the tensions being expressed. It is clear that Bollaín denounces the unmarked position of the man filmmaker, for it’s only women who are being asked for the specificities of their cinema. Moreover, with awareness of diverse inequalities, she extends this unmarked position to European and Hollywood filmmakers:

...as well as having breasts, we are from around here, the Mediterranean area, which is also quite different from other cultures. But that’s not a question, that’s taken for granted (...) I suppose that, to those from other continents, you ask what it’s like not being European (...) In a similar way in which, being even more minoritarian, we are frequently asked, this time all of us, both breasts and penises of the entire world, what we think about not being American and not making cinema in Hollywood. (1998; 2003: 90-91).<sup>101</sup>

When asked about this so-called “ghetto” of women’s cinema, Ana Palacios raises a similar controversy, connecting it with the fe/male gazes’ debate mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>102</sup> She distances herself from an essentialist approach:

I think that what is being created is so broad, that there are women whose gaze is closer to what’s labelled as masculine, and that there are men with more feminine gazes. I mean, it’s not something tied to gender (...) evidently, gazes are connected to what women are interested in. And therein you could talk about a female gaze, in the sense that, well, that women (...) have a way of dealing with conflicts, desires, frustrations (...) But neither I, nor “Mujeres de

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venimos a marear. Porque es que igual piensan que hay que tener una actitud diferente porque se trata de cine diferente, cine con cintura, cine con más culo y desde luego cine con tetas.”

<sup>100</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>101</sup> “...además de tener tetas, somos de por aquí, de la zona del Mediterráneo, que también es una buena diferencia con respecto a otras culturas. Pero eso no se pregunta, se da por hecho (...) Supongo que a los de los otros continentes les preguntaran como es eso de no ser europeo (...) De la misma manera que, siendo aún más minoritario, nos preguntan también muy a menudo, esta vez a todos, tetas y colas del mundo entero, que nos parece no ser americanos y no hacer cine en Hollywood.”

<sup>102</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses

Cine”, like to state that there’s a female gaze. For me, there are cinematographic gazes of women, which have been made invisible for such a long time, and that’s what “Mujeres de Cine” wants to render visible.<sup>103</sup>

Concerning a specific feminist gaze, Palacios reckons that they can belong to both, women and men: “I think that the feminist gaze could be the self-awareness of a struggle and of the role played by the woman. And the difficulties. And it has a commitment. I mean, for me, feminist gazes have a commitment, a commitment to changing reality.”<sup>104</sup> In an interview carried out in 2016, scriptwriter Virginia Yagüe shares Palacios’ opinion. She thinks that women are capable of making films about any topic, but tend to tell stories from perspectives that they are familiar with: “what we cannot accept is our fixation on just one area.”<sup>105</sup> Yagüe expresses the same discomfort Bollaín describes in 1998. For her, the best answer to the question “is there a women’s cinema?” is another question:

Is there men’s cinema? Has mainstream cinema been labelled as men’s cinema?  
I have never heard that. I’ve never heard this categorisation. However, I hear the phrase: “There’s women’s cinema.” What does exist is a very clear discrimination in the budgets obtained by women. On average, when they make feature films, it is less than half of what men get. And this determines the content that women can create.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> “Yo creo que la creación es tan amplia que hay mujeres que tienen miradas, lo que se etiqueta más masculino, y hay hombres que tienen miradas más femeninas. O sea, no es una cosa que esté como acotado al género (...) evidentemente, las miradas van relacionadas con lo que le interesan a las mujeres. Y ahí sí se podía hablar de una mirada femenina, en el sentido de que, pues, las mujeres (...) tienen una forma de enfrentarse a los conflictos, a los deseos, a las frustraciones (...) Pero a mí no me gusta categorizar, ni a Mujeres de Cine tampoco le gusta categorizar que hay, existe una mirada femenina. Para mí existen miradas cinematográficas aportadas por mujeres y creo que han sido invisibilizadas durante muchísimo tiempo y eso es lo que quiere Mujeres de Cine visibilizar.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>104</sup> “Yo creo que la mirada feminista podría ser la que toma autoconciencia de, de una lucha y de, de, del papel de la mujer. Y de las dificultades. Y tiene un compromiso. O sea, las miradas feministas para mí, tienen un compromiso, un compromiso de cambio de la realidad.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>105</sup> “lo que no puede ser es que nos establezcamos sólo en una parcela.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>106</sup> “¿Existe un cine de hombres? ¿Se ha catalogado el cine que mayoritariamente se ve como cine de, de hombres? Yo nunca lo he oído. Esta catalogación nunca la he oído. Sin embargo escucho el término ‘existe un cine de mujeres’. Lo que existe es una discriminación muy clara en los presupuestos que obtienen las mujeres. Es decir, que de media es menos de la mitad cuando hacen largometrajes, del que tienen los hombres. Y esto determina los contenidos que pueden hacer las mujeres.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

Only Coixet and Bollaín have worked with budgets similar to those available for their male colleagues.<sup>107</sup> Director Inés París, first president of CIMA (from 2006 until 2012), also traces a connection between the low budgets that women have access to on one hand, and the so-called female aesthetics of intimate stories concentrated in few characters on the other hand (in Zecchi 2014: 124). A similar discussion takes place concerning the contemporary “boom” of female filmmakers making documentary cinema, a considerably less expensive field than fiction. Zecchi quotes Emily Dickinson’s famous denouncing line, “they shut me up in prose” (2014: 124), wondering whether women have not been trapped in documentary cinema due to lack of financial support. This issue is to be further discussed when analysing the case studies.

### 3.2.2 Emergent Feminist Film Festivals, Video Art and Queer Perspectives

The first feminist film festival in the Spanish context is the “Festival de Cine y Video realizado por Mujeres” (Festival of Film and Video Made by Women), held in Madrid from 1985 until 1996, when it was cancelled due to political conflicts with the right-wing Popular Party (PP). It is replaced by the “LesGaiCineMad”, the biggest LGBT festival in Hispanic countries, promoted by “Fundación Triángulo” (Triangle Foundation), a non-profit organisation created in 1996 with the aim of defending equal rights for the LGBT community.

“La Mostra de Films de Dones” (The Women Film Festival) begins in 1993 in Barcelona and is celebrated in parallel with diverse educational activities at the institution/ archive “Drac Màgic”. “La Mostra” follows the model of the “Festival International de Films de Femmes de Créteil” (created in 1979), and establishes networks with production and distribution centres such as “Women Make Movies” (USA, active since 1972), the “Feminale” (Germany, active since 1984), and “CineNova” (UK, active since 1991).

In terms of feminist film theory, Mulvey’s essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* is translated into Spanish in 1988 within Valencia University Eutopías collection. It is followed by the Spanish edition of Annette Kuhn’s *Women’s Pictures. Feminism and Cinema/ Cine de Mujeres. Feminismo y Cine* in 1991; de Lauretis’ *Alice doesn’t/Alicia ya*

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<sup>107</sup> *Elegy* (Isabel Coixet, 2008), the most expensive Spanish film directed by a woman, with a budget of thirteen million dollars, is quite modest respective of the fifty million dollars that *Agora* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2009) cost (Zecchi 2014: 123).



no: *Feminismo, semiótica, cine* in 1992, and her essay, “Rethinking Women’s Cinema. Aesthetics and Feminist Theory”/“Repensando el cine de mujeres. Teoría estética y feminista”, in the catalogue of the 1993 art exhibition, *100%*. A pioneer Spanish feminist film theorist is Giulia Colaizzi, who had studied at the University of Minnesota. In 1995, she edits the book *Feminismo y teoría filmica*, with texts by Teresa de Lauretis, Laura Mulvey, Yvonne Rainer, Ann Kaplan, Rey Chow and Paula Rabinowitz.

During the nineties there’s also a “boom” of feminist video artists whose approach to body and identity is informed by the idea of performativity as a political tool (Ruido 2006: 7). Among the artists who employ video as their support we find: Carmen Sigler, Pilar Albarracín, Lucía Onzain, Itziar Okariz, Eugenia Balcells, Eulalia Valldosera, Mapi Rivera, Dora García, Cecilia Barriga, Virginia Villaplana, María Ruido, Nuria Canal, Marisa Maza, Helena Cabello & Ana Carceller, Estíbaliz Sadaba, and Azucena Vieites. In 1994, Sadaba, Vieites, and Yolanda de los Bueis create the collective “Erreakzioa-Reacción”, with the objective of rendering art works produced by women visible. In 1997, they organise the seminar-workshop “Only For Your Eyes. The Feminist Factor in Relation with Visual Arts.”

Among the art exhibitions of this decade, Navarrete, Ruido and Vila (2005) point out three that are curated with a feminist approach: *100%* is considered to be the first feminist art exhibition, curated by Mar Villaespesa in 1993, with works by Andalusian artists for whom the body is a central topic (e.g. Victoria Gil, Pilar Albarracín and Carmen Sigler). Another feminist art exhibition is *Transgénic@s*, curated again by Mar Villaespesa along with Juan Vicente Aliaga. Displayed in 1998 with works of Txaro Fontalba, Eulalia Valldosera, Alex Frances, Joan Morey, LSD, Estíbaliz Sadaba, Azucena Vieites, Carmen Navarrete, and Jesús Martínez Oliva, *Transgénic@s* explores “not only transexuality and bodies’ mutability in regards to Internet and new technologies, but also conceptual contributions like performativity and queer theory” (Navarrete, Ruido and Vila 2005: 182).<sup>108</sup> The exhibition *Zona F*, curated by Helena Cabello and Ana Carceller in 2000, focuses on connections between feminism and postmodernism.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> “no solo la transexualidad y la mutabilidad de los cuerpos a partir de las nuevas tecnologías y de Internet, sino las aportaciones conceptuales con la performatividad y la teoría y prácticas *queer*.”

<sup>109</sup> A more recent feminist exhibition is the retrospective “Genealogías feministas en el arte español: 1960-2010” (Feminist Genealogies in Spanish Art: 1960-2010), curated in 2012 by Juan Vicente Aliaga and Patricia Mayayo. The exhibition was accompanied by a cycle of projections divided into six sections (woman and work, media, family, body identity and transgenderism) with works of María Ruido, María Zafra, María Cañas, Carla Subirana, Lucía Egaña, María Llopis, Virginia Villaplana, Carmen Sigler, Claudia Brenlla, Eugenia Balcells, Flor Aliberti, Eli Cortiñas, Izibene Oñederra, Raisa Maudit, and Estíbaliz Sadaba.

The restricted dissemination of Spanish feminisms' ideas and representatives meant that most of the intellectual and political discourses appropriated by the feminist artists and activists of the nineties in Spain are from the Anglo-Saxon and French contexts (Navarrete, Ruido and Vila 2005: 171). Queer activist, such as the LSD group (active from 1993 to 1998) and La Radical Gai, activate a theoretical debate by introducing Monique Wittig's thought of "women" as a political category in the framework of a heterosexist discourse.

What this generation states, from a queer perspective, is "the need to evaluate identity politics as restrictive" (Navarrete, Ruido and Vila 2005: 167).<sup>110</sup> They reject what they consider fixed sexual identities such as "heterosexual", "homosexual" or "bisexual". They argue: "identity is never the end, but the beginning of self-consciousness" (Navarrete, Ruido and Vila 2005: 166).<sup>111</sup> Their networks extend beyond the Spanish borders, developing strategies alongside groups such as Act Up, Queer Nation, Lesbian Avengers, Outrage, Guerrilla Girls and WAC-Women's Art Coalition. They also give impulse to the production of national texts on feminist and queer practices, for instance, texts written by Javier Sáez, Ricardo Llamas, Paco Vidarte, Beatriz Preciado, Beatriz Suárez Briones, Carmen Romero and Fefa Vila.

### 3.3 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the presence of women in Spanish documentary production is still scarce: out of one hundred fiction and non-fiction films made in 2000, only one documentary, *La mafia en La Habana/The Mafia in Habana*, is directed by a woman, the Goya-awarded Ana Díez. She also directs one of the three documentary films directed by women in 2002, *Galíndez*. The other two are *El Estado de Florida contra J.J Martínez/The State of Florida Versus J.J Martínez* by Mercedes Segovia, and *Machín, toda una vida/Machín, A Whole Life*, by Nuria Villazán. In 2003, women direct two documentary films: *Gala* (Silvia Munt), and *Extranjeras/Foreign Women* (Helena Taberna). The latter shows feminist awareness (i.e. attention to the role of gender in the legitimization of inequalities), which has been consistent throughout Taberna's

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<sup>110</sup> "la necesidad de evaluar la política de la identidad como restrictiva."

<sup>111</sup> "la identidad nunca será el fin, sino el principio de la autoconciencia."

filmography. In *Extranjeras* she interviews female immigrants in Spain who face specific problems due to their condition of being foreign women.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.3.1 The Ambivalence of Media Attention to Gender Violence

There's an important legal landmark in 2004: the implementation of the Organic Law for Measures on Integral Protection against Gender Violence (“Ley Orgánica de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género”). In 2000, Icíar Bollain had directed the short docu-fiction *Amores que matan/Loves That Kill*, which gives her a solid basis for one of her most celebrated feature films, *Te doy mis ojos/Take My Eyes* (2003). This film tells the story of a woman who faces increased violence from her husband and is incapable of seeing and acting upon it. In both cases Bollain co-writes the script with Alicia Luna.<sup>113</sup>

The 2004 law receives significant media attention. Gender-based violence, specifically in the context of romantic relationships, is one of the recurring themes in the current feminist agenda in Spanish documentary production. For example: *¿No queráis saber por qué las matan? Por nada/Didn't you Want to Know Why they Kill them? Well, No Reason* (Mercedes Fernández Martorell, 2009); the short film directed by Isabel Coixet for Spanish television, *La mujer, cosa de hombres/Woman, Men's Business\** (2009); two films directed by Susanna Barranco, *Heridas/Wounds* (2009) and *Vacíos/Voids* (2011); *Nagore* (Helena Taberna, 2010); and *La maleta de Marta/Marta's Suitcase* (Günter Schwaiger, 2013).

Fernández Martorell mixes documentary and fiction to translate an anthropological three-year's research, in which she attends nearly seven hundred trials against male abusers. *La mujer, cosa de hombres* is one chapter of the Spanish television series, *50 años de.../50 years of...*, which celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation RTVE. Coixet makes a reflexive-performative short

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<sup>112</sup> The experiences of women immigrants in Spain, specifically from African countries, are also visualised in Inés París's documentary produced by the Foundation “Mujeres por África” (Women for Africa): *Manzanas, pollos y quimeras/Apples, Chickens and Quimeras* (2013). On the other side, the experience of Spanish immigrants in other European countries, without an explicit feminist perspective, is tackled in the non-fiction films *El tren de la memoria/Memory Train* (2004) directed by Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez; and the most recent documentary film directed by Bollain, *En tierra extraña/In a Foreign Land* (2014). The specific experience of female refugees is the content of one of our case studies: *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.3. *No existimos*

<sup>113</sup> Luna was interviewed for this research project about her experience as part of the collective behind the 2014 documentary film for the defence of the right to abortion, *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.2

film that contrasts television advertisements shown on Spanish television since 1960, with fragments of television news reporting on women assassinated by their partners. Thus, she ingeniously raises awareness of the connection between the symbolic violence of female gender representations, and the physical direct violence against real women.<sup>114</sup>

Media coverage is also an important element of *Nagore*, the second documentary film directed by Taberna (she had directed the above mentioned *Extranjeras*, as well as a couple of fiction feature films before). In this film, Taberna follows Nagore Laffage's mother in the reconstruction of her daughter's murder by a young physician during the "Sanfermines" celebration in Pamplona in 2008.<sup>115</sup> It shows some of the limitations of the 2004 Law: Nagore's murder is not considered gender-based violence because she had just met her murderer.

The limits of the 2004 Law are also exposed by Austrian filmmaker Günter Schwaiger in *La maleta de Marta*, where he denounces the violence against women in Spain and Austria. The film reveals that, by 2013, the written law lacks enough mediums to be enforced: for instance, there's just one police guard for every one hundred and ninety victims that ask for legal protection. The poet and filmmaker Susanna Barranco explores gender-based violence from two perspectives: that of women and transsexual victims in *Heridas* (2009), and that of violent men in *Vacios* (2011). Turning the gaze towards men as perpetrators of violence is also at the core of two of my case studies: the Spanish film *Serás Hombre* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2018) and the Italian film *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (Elisabetta Lodoli, 2017).<sup>116</sup>

According to Villaplana (2008: 28-29), the visibility of gender-based violence in the mass media has a problematic aspect: women are presented as a vulnerable collective, while the State and the media present themselves as experts in the subject. Navarrete, Ruido and Vila also express their suspicion towards this approach:

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<sup>114</sup> Also in 2009, Coixet sets an installation at the Arts Santa Monica in Barcelona, called *From I to J*, as homage to John Berger (*Vid. Supra* Chapter 2. Section 2.1.1 The Gaze in Oil Painting and the Western Way of Seeing). For Coixet, "*Ways of Seeing* was a discovery and a revelation: it was as if the curtain hiding the world surrounding me had been removed" / "*Ways of Seeing* fue un descubrimiento y una revelación: era como si la cortina que ocultaba el mundo a mi alrededor se hubiera levantado" (in Zecchi 2014: 149).

<sup>115</sup> Nagore's case and Taberna's film have been recently reconsidered in the context of "La Manada" (the wolf pack) case. This refers to an episode of sexual violence that also happened during the "Sanfermines" celebration in Pamplona, on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2016. A group of five men raped an 18-year-old girl in a building hallway. In April 2018, they were found guilty only of sexual abuse, not rape. After months of feminist demonstrations and pressure from civil society, Spain's Supreme Court finally found them guilty of gang rape and sentenced them to fifteen years of prison on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2019.

<sup>116</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Chapters 4 and 6. Sections 4.5 *Serás Hombre* and 6.5 *Ma l'amore c'entra?*

...current gender policies and the widely used ‘gender perspective’ nurture empty discourses, exploited by institutions, which insist on working on the legislative aspect that, even if it could start or drive a social debate, often undermines the paths where some freedom has been achieved, turning us once again into assisted and subsidised victims (2005: 161).<sup>117</sup>

What Villaplana explains is that, instead of recognising feminist labour against gender-based violence, mass media has appropriated their discourses in a superficial way, representing women as “fragmented, incapable and fearful beings who need the help of others (family, community and the state) to ‘recover’ from the bad, ‘fortuitous’ moment they have had to live” (2008: 169).<sup>118</sup> This way, the institutions can simulate that they are taking care of the problem, while reaffirming the patriarchal hierarchy at its basis. To these mainstream portraits, Villaplana opposes visual representations created by feminist artists such as María Ruido (e.g. *La voz humana/Human Voice*, 1997) and Cecilia Barriga (e.g. *El origen de la violencia/The Origin of Violence*, 2004-2005).

### **3.3.2 The Association of Women Filmmakers and From the Audiovisual Media (CIMA)**

According to Zecchi (2014: 115), the increasing number of women filmmakers in the Spanish film industry during the nineties is taken by some institutional discourses as proof that gender inequality is no longer a problem in the sector. This is an example of the “no problem problem”, expression coined by Deborah Rhode (1999) to describe the idea that gender equality has already been achieved. The three layers of the “no problem problem” are: 1. Inequality denial. 2. Injustice denial (i.e. inequality is recognised but justified as the result of decisions taken by women themselves). And 3. Responsibility denial (i.e. inequality and injustice are recognised but people don’t consider that they are either part of the problem or the solution). However, as the number of female filmmakers stops and even decreases over the following years, and as gender-based violence gets

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<sup>117</sup> “hoy las políticas de género y la tan para-todo-usada ‘perspectiva de género’ alimentan discursos vacíos, instrumentalizados desde las instituciones, que insisten en ahondar en el carácter legislativo, que, aunque pudiese abrir o impulsar un debate social, a menudo mina caminos que ya se transitaban con cierta libertad, devolviéndonos a la arena una vez más como víctimas asistidas y subvencionadas.”

<sup>118</sup> “seres fragmentados, incapaces y temerosos que necesitan de la ayuda de los demás (familia, comunidad y estado) para “recuperarse” del mal momento “fortuito” que les ha tocado vivir.”

more exposed, feminist awareness also begins to raise among women working in the Spanish film industry.

This is materialised in 2006 with the creation of the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain (CIMA). It is led by a group of Madrid-based filmmakers: Inés París, Chus Gutiérrez, Icíar Bollain, Isabel Coixet, Josefina Molina, Helena Taberna, Ana Díez, Cristina Andreu, Mireia Ros, Manane Rodríguez, María Ripoll, Cayetana Mulero San José, Laura Mañá, Eva Lesmes, Patricia Ferreira, Daniela Fejerman, Teresa de Pelegri and Judith Colell. With this association, female filmmakers begin to share the problems they face in the industry due to their gender, so as to find collective solutions.

CIMA is created with the purpose of fostering gender equality in the audiovisual sector. It currently gathers over three hundred women (and a few men) working in different departments of the Spanish film industry. Even though it is centralised in Madrid, it also has four regional delegations in Andalusia, Valencia, Galicia and Cataluña. Virginia Yagüe, president of CIMA between 2014-2018, narrates the creation of the association as follows:

...the association was born out of a coming together of female directors (...) who realise that there's no new generation of women filmmakers to replace them and, moreover, that they themselves have many problems in reaching a third film (...) Josefina Molina, who is our honorary president, received a prize at that moment and donated it to create the association (...) Once they had established it, Patricia Ferreira, who was one of the directors, called me and told me "you have to be in this association, because it is transversal, not only for directors but also for scriptwriters, for representatives of all the specialities."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> "...el germen de la asociación nace de un encuentro de directoras (...) detectan que no se está produciendo relevo generacional dentro de las mujeres, de las directoras y sobre todo, detectan que tienen ellas mismas muchos problemas para alcanzar su tercera película (...) Josefina Molina que es nuestra presidenta de honor, en aquel momento le dan un premio y ella coloca ese premio para montar y crear la asociación. (...) una vez que se había montado, me llamó Patricia Ferreira que era una de las directoras y me explicó y me dijo, 'tienes que estar en esta asociación porque además tienen que entrar, es una asociación transversal y no sólo tenemos que estar directoras, tiene que haber guionistas, tiene que haber otras representantes de todas las especialidades.'" Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

Under the motto, “working in positive to change the negative”<sup>120</sup>, CIMA has fought for changes in the Spanish Film Law. In its 2007 version, CIMA manages to incorporate actions in favour of female filmmakers, giving points to film projects in which women occupy decisive positions.<sup>121</sup> Yagüe does not label these measures as positive discrimination, but as “positive actions and necessary corrections”<sup>122</sup> for the adjustment of an unbalanced situation. CIMA’s pressure has also led to the creation in 2011 of a distinction called “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality.”<sup>123</sup> But for Yagüe, these are only isolated measures that do not mean significant change without a goal-oriented structure. In contrast, she praises the approach taken by Anna Serner at the front of the Swedish Film Institute:

...the measures that have been taken [in Spain] have remained isolated, which is exactly what does not happen with the Swedish Institute. What the Swedish Institute is saying is: “We apply this measure but it is surrounded by a series of measures working towards one goal. It is one measure among many others with the global objective of reaching a specific percentage” (...) [in Spain] this hasn’t been part of the political will (...) equal representation of professionals in our film industry was not on the agenda. Now it’s there, but only in a residual manner, just because it has to be there (...) But you’re not doing it in an effective way because, basically, you don’t have the will to do so. Anna Serner is the director of the Swedish Institute. And she has done it, but because she has a firm conviction about it.

In her article, “Anna Serner, thou who art in Sweden”, Yagüe analyses the measures that Serner has carried out at the front of the Swedish Film Institute. By 2015, Sweden reached the 50% of female presence in the film industry. What Yagüe identifies is a pattern that proposes concrete measures to make up for sexist fallacies, namely: 1: “There are only a few competent female filmmakers.” Action: There are many but they aren’t

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<sup>120</sup> “CIMA trabaja en positivo para cambiar lo negativo.” CIMA’s website. Date of access: November 2018 <<https://cimamujerescineastas.es/que-es-cima/>>.

<sup>121</sup> Such points are crucial in the process of deciding which film should be given public funding. In April 2019, the Spanish Film Institute informed that they would give yet another point to film projects written and directed exclusively by women. Date of access: May 2019. <<https://www.europapress.es/cultura/cine-00128/noticia-cultura-dara-punto-adicional-ayudas-peliculas-dirigidas-escritas-solo-mujeres-20190412144953.html>>.

<sup>122</sup> “acciones positivas y correcciones necesarias.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>123</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Section 3.3.5 The Distinction “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality”

visible, so they create the website “Nordic Women in Film.”<sup>124</sup> 2: “Women don’t manage to make a second or third film.” Action: They do, but with greater difficulties, so they create the mentoring program “Moviement”, for experienced female filmmakers to guide new ones. 3: “Taking into account percentages won’t lead us to equality.” Action: It will, if the data leads to concrete measures such as the Swedish Institute distributing public funds equally. 4: “There aren’t as many young girls as boys who want to direct films.” Action: Even if that’s true, we need positive models, so they create educational programs at schools.<sup>125</sup>

In 2013, following the Swedish example, CIMA creates the program “CIMA Mentoring”, which connects film and television projects led by women with experienced filmmakers who offer their counselling.<sup>126</sup> They have supported a dozen projects, including two documentary films, *Boxing for freedom* (Silvia Venegas and Juan Antonio Moreno Amador, 2015), and *Tetuaneros* (Verónica Pérez Granado, 2018). Its website is also a platform for rendering visible its members’ work. CIMA has conducted a research project about the presence of women in Spanish film productions. Nevertheless, focusing just on reaching 50% of female presence in the filmmaking industry could be problematic. Yagüe admits that this is just part of their vindications, which is why they also pay attention, for instance, to fostering contents that promote more complex female characters.

CIMA’s creation in 2006 encounters a favourable junction due to the implementation of the 2007 Equality Law (“Ley Orgánica para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres”). This provides the association with a legal framework that legitimises its demands, such as the fact that public institutions have to prove parity in their juries when evaluating projects presented for public grants. In 2008, the government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, from the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE), creates the Ministry of Equality to observe the implementation of the policies stemming from the Equality Law and from the Organic Law for Measures on Integral Protection against Gender Violence of 2004. This Ministry also incorporates the programmes of the Women’s Institute and the Youth Institute. However, in October 2010, the Ministry of Equality disappears as such and becomes part of the Ministry of Health, Social Policies

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<sup>124</sup> Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.nordicwomeninfilm.com>>.

<sup>125</sup> Translated and paraphrased from Yagüe’s original article, retrievable at CIMA’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://cimamujeresescineastas.es/anna-serner-que-estas-en-suecia/>>.

<sup>126</sup> The program had its 5<sup>th</sup> edition in 2018. One of the projects that was supported was the Goya awarded feature film *Estiu 1993*, directed by Carla Simón in 2017. CIMA Mentoring website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://cimamujeresescineastas.es/v-cima-mentoring-en-marcha/>>.



and Equality.<sup>127</sup> Concerning CIMA's relation with institutions, filmmaker Inés París explains:

Our basic argumentation towards institutions has been: it's impossible to reach effective equality between men and women, while the models shown in cinema and television respond to old macho stereotypes (...) The cinema and television model that we have, has been constructed, almost entirely, by men (...) Therefore, the absence of women in management positions within the audiovisual industry is a social and political problem. The audiovisual sector should be strategic in the development of equality policies. (2010: 359-360).<sup>128</sup>

The challenge that París and Yagüe highlight is that, even if institutions accept the basic argument, this does not lead to concrete legal measures that guarantee a change beyond the will of the politicians in charge. Still, CIMA has managed to keep on working for twelve years. They have financial support from the Spanish Film Institute (ICAA) and from the General Society of Authors and Editors (SGAE), grants for specific projects, and a monthly contribution of twelve euros from the members. The association also has a Facebook account with 35.337 likes<sup>129</sup> and a Twitter account with 12.400 followers.<sup>130</sup> Since June 2018, CIMA's president is filmmaker Cristina Andreu.

On March 18<sup>th</sup> 2016, CIMA presents an annual report with these numbers: in documentary cinema, women hold the 23% of the positions of responsibility, while men represent 77% of them. In fiction film, women have a representation of 29%, while men represent 71%; and in animation, women hold just 8%, while men hold 92% of the main positions (i.e. production, directing and scriptwriting).<sup>131</sup> The report only covers data available for public access, considering the films that were registered for competition at

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<sup>127</sup> This situation remains the same after Mariano Rajoy from the Popular Party (PP) wins the elections in 2011. With the return of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party to power in 2018, its representative, Pedro Sánchez, has announced his intention of recovering the Ministry of Equality.

<sup>128</sup> "Nuestra argumentación básica ante las instituciones ha sido la siguiente: es imposible lograr una igualdad real entre hombres y mujeres mientras los modelos que se ofrezcan en el cine y la televisión respondan a estereotipos anticuados y machistas (...) El modelo de cine y televisión que tenemos ha sido construido, casi en su totalidad, por hombres (...) La ausencia de mujeres en puestos directivos del audiovisual es, por tanto, un problema de carácter social y político. El sector audiovisual debería ser estratégico en el desarrollo de las políticas de igualdad."

<sup>129</sup> CIMA's Facebook account. Date of Access: November 2018.

<<https://www.facebook.com/CIMA.Asociacion.Mujeres.Cineastas/?fref=ts>>.

<sup>130</sup> CIMA's Twitter account. Date of Access: November 2018.

<<https://twitter.com/cimacineastas?lang=es>>.

<sup>131</sup> CIMA's website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://cimamujerescineastas.es/las-mujeres-representan-solamente-el-26-en-cargos-de-responsabilidad-en-el-cine/>>.

the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the Goya Prize in 2015: this means 143 feature films, out of which 63 are documentary films, in which women are mainly represented in production (28%), followed by direction (26%), art direction (25%) and editing (24%). This is an important difference with respect to fiction, in which women's highest representation is in wardrobe (95%), makeup and hairdressing (75%), and art direction (47%). These are departments that hardly ever figure in documentary cinema. I discussed this data with Ana Palacios:

If you see the billboard of the weekly premieres (...) there is practically no participation of women in positions of responsibility. Generally speaking, in cinema they have been more associated with acting, makeup, hairdressing, etc. But everything else –cinematography, film directing, scriptwriting, production– that is more complicated, it carries more responsibility (...) the production of a documentary film is much more accessible, it's easier to put together than a fiction project, right? So, of course, many filmmakers, who want to create and direct, faced with the impossibility of getting a fiction project off the ground, opt for the documentary.<sup>132</sup>

In her interpretation of a 2015 report from CIMA, Sara Cuenca identifies both, vertical and horizontal segregation. Vertical segregation is represented by the scarcity of women in positions of responsibility, and stems from a combination of the “glass ceiling” and the “sticky floor” (2015: 16).<sup>133</sup> The first one refers to the difficulties faced by women to access top management positions in the business hierarchy, while the “sticky floor” alludes to the social attribution of caring for descendants and ascendants tasks to women. In 2018, the percentage of Spanish films directed by women was lower than in 2016: out of 173 fiction and non-fiction films, women only directed 31 (18%).<sup>134</sup>

The impossibility to combine care labour with extended working hours leads women to stay in secondary positions, in which they find more flexibility than what is

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<sup>132</sup> “Si vas a una cartelera de los estrenos semanales (...) no hay prácticamente participación de la mujer en cargos, en cargos de responsabilidad, ¿no? Generalmente en el cine ha sido más asociado al tema de actuación, maquillaje, peluquería, etc. Pero todos los demás, dirección de fotografía, dirección de película, guionista, productora, eso es más complicado, conlleva mayor responsabilidad (...) la producción de un documental es mucho más accesible, más fácil de levantar que un proyecto de ficción, ¿no? Entonces claro, muchas cineastas que, que tienen la inquietud de crear y de dirigir, ante la imposibilidad de levantar un proyecto de ficción, se decantan por el documental.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>133</sup> The complete report is retrievable online. CIMA's website. Date of access: November 2018. <[http://cimamentoring.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/INFORME\\_ANUAL\\_CIMA2015.pdf](http://cimamentoring.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/INFORME_ANUAL_CIMA2015.pdf)>

<sup>134</sup> “El cine español no es capaz de romper con la desigualdad”. *El País*. Date of access: May 2019. <[https://elpais.com/cultura/2019/04/02/actualidad/1554199455\\_354135.html](https://elpais.com/cultura/2019/04/02/actualidad/1554199455_354135.html)>.

allowed within positions of greater responsibility. Horizontal segregation is manifest in the huge number of women in wardrobe, makeup and hairdressing departments, while the majority of men are in technical areas such as sound and special effects. This can be read as the result of a gender socialisation that conducts women to so-called feminised areas and prevents them from taking part in so-called masculine activities. In an interview, director Ana Díez expresses how she has experienced segregation due to her gender, specifically concerning motherhood:

...conciliation is not considered in the world of cinema. So the producer would tell me “with that pregnancy we won’t manage to sell anything” (...) That’s when I would start to get very angry. I’ll have the children I want and I will do cinema or I will do anything, with my belly or without it, with my children (...) then I worked for Canal Plus, and since my children were in nursery school and had to go in and out, I would always say that I had “meetings.” I wouldn’t go out saying that I had to pick up my children, I would say “I have a meeting with another producer” (...) I think that the great hindrance for women in all fields of employment is motherhood. It is motherhood, and not assuming that it is a fact that we are social reproducers (...) so you see that many women filmmakers are sterile. They choose one thing or the other. Which seems to me as a problem and an injustice. I ask myself why? I mean, if you do not want children, ok, you do not have them, nothing happens. But if you want to have them, why should I be deprived? So that was a problem.<sup>135</sup>

Created in 2013, the “Asociación Andaluza de Mujeres de los Medios Audiovisuales” (Andalusian Association of Women in Media-AAMMA) is similar to CIMA. It also promotes gender equality in the audiovisual industry, but works at the regional level of Andalusia. AAMMA disseminates the work of its members on its website and its current

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<sup>135</sup> “...esas cosas de conciliación no están contempladas en el mundo del cine. Entonces me decía el productor ‘es que con ese embarazo a dónde vamos a vender nada’ (...) Ahí sí que me empiezo a enfadar. Yo tengo los hijos que quiera y haré cine o haré lo que sea, pero con mi tripa y con mi no tripa, con mis hijos (...) luego trabajé en canal plus y como los niños estaban en guarderías y salían y entraban, yo decía que tenía ‘reuniones’. Yo no me iba de los sitios diciendo tengo que recoger a mis niños, yo decía ‘tengo una reunión con otro productor’ (...) yo creo que el gran, el gran parón para la mujer en todos los campos laborales es la maternidad. Es la maternidad y el no asumir que es un hecho que somos reproductoras sociales (...) entonces tú verás que mucha gente de cine es estéril, de mujeres, es estéril directamente. Optan por una cosa o por otra. Cosa que a mí me pareció un problema y una injusticia. Yo decía, ¿pero por qué? O sea, si no quieres tener hijos vale, no los tienes, no pasa nada. Pero si los quieres tener, por qué me voy a cercenar. Entonces, eso sí fue un problema.” Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

president is filmmaker Ana Rosa Diego.<sup>136</sup> “Mujeres de Cine” has also created a visibility platform for those filmmakers whose work has been shown in its itinerancy.<sup>137</sup>

The association “Mujeres en las Artes Visuales” (Women in the Visual Arts-MAV) was created in 2009. The work of its members (among which we find Ana Solano, whose film *No existimos* is one of my case studies) is published in its website.<sup>138</sup> MAV’s current president is the cultural manager María José Magaña Clemente. The association “Clásicas y Modernas para la Igualdad de Género en la Cultura” (Classics and Moderns for Gender Equality in Culture), which was created in Madrid in 2009, also publishes the profile of its members, who are female professionals from the fields of literature, music, film, theatre, and philosophy.<sup>139</sup> Its current president is professor Anna Caballé Masforroll.

The research project ARES (Archive and Critical Study of the Audiovisual Artistic Practices and Expanded Video in Spanish Art), includes in its database the profile of video artists like María Ruido, Cecilia Barriga and Virginia Villaplana.<sup>140</sup> The Principal Investigator behind ARES is professor Ana Martínez-Collado. Another online archive of Spanish art productions is Archive T, “a transfeminist, political-artistic counter-archive of the Spanish context.”<sup>141</sup> It was created by Ana Marchante Hueso, a.k.a. Diego\_ Genderhacker. Zecchi herself, with a grant from the University of Massachusetts Digital Humanities Initiative, is building a digital archive of Spanish “gynocine”, a term she has coined to refer to films whose “scope is gynocentric and feminist”, despite the gender of their directors.<sup>142</sup>

### 3.3.3 The Agenda in Feminist Films and Video Art (2000-2010)

In her close reading of Spanish movies directed by women during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (mainly fiction feature films), Zecchi identifies a shift from stories about a

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<sup>136</sup> Leo Jiménez, one of the directors of the case study *Cuidado, resbala*, figures among AAMMA’s members. AAMMA’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://aammaudiovisual.com/socias/>>.

<sup>137</sup> “Mujeres de Cine” website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.mujeresdecine.com/index.php/directoras>>.

<sup>138</sup> Mujeres en las Artes Visuales’ website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://mav.org.es/quienes-somos/>>.

<sup>139</sup> Clásicas y Modernas’ website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.clasicasymodernas.org/cym/junta-directiva/>>.

<sup>140</sup> ARES’ website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.aresvisuals.net/archivo/>>.

<sup>141</sup> “Archivo T es un contra-archivo político-artístico transfeminista del contexto español.” Archivo T’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://archivo-t.net>>.

<sup>142</sup> Gynocine project’s website. Date of access: November 2018. <<https://www.gynocine.com>>. Up to this date, twenty-nine filmmakers appear on the list.

female character (usually young, white, middle class and heterosexual) in the nineties, to multiple simple stories that avoid universalising female experiences. It is interesting to read this diffractively with the toolbox developed in chapter two: the shift she identifies echoes that from a female gaze to a feminist gaze within a polyscopic narrative with multiple points of view.<sup>143</sup> In Zecchi's words: "with (new) gender awareness, these filmmakers manage to transcend (via CIMA) a unique monovalent gender representation. Their stories are no longer focused on a unique and defined subject, but on a multiplicity of subjects and/or on a multiple and collective subject" (2014: 146).<sup>144</sup>

In terms of documentary production, from 2004 to 2010, on average, women filmmakers (co)direct five films per year.<sup>145</sup> As mentioned before, an important topic in

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<sup>143</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses

<sup>144</sup> "desde una (nueva) conciencia de género, estas directoras llegan a trascender (vía CIMA) una representación de género unívoca y monovalente. Sus historias no se concentran ya en un sujeto único y definido, sino en una multiplicidad de sujetos y/o en un sujeto múltiple y colectivo." Zecchi provides various examples: in *The Secret Life of Words* (Coixet, 2005), the stories of the main characters, a woman and a man, are interleaved with those of the other male characters; in *El Calentito/El Calentito Club* (Chus Gutiérrez, 2005), there are heterosexuals, lesbians, gays, transsexuals and bisexuals; and in *El patio de mi cárcel/My Prison Yard* (Belén Macías, 2008), the subjectivities of heterosexual and homosexual women are explored and interleaved.

<sup>145</sup> In **2004, women direct 4 documentaries** out of 134 films (fiction and non-fiction): *El tren de la memoria/Memory Train* (Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez), *Mujeres en pie de guerra/Women Ready for War* (Susana Koska), *El cielo gira/The Sky Turns* (Mercedes Álvarez), *Santa Liberdade/Holy Liberty\** (Margarita Ledo). In **2005, 6** out of 134: *Esta no es la vida privada de Javier Krahe/This is not the Private Life of Javier Krahe* (Ana Murugarren and Joaquín Trincado), *La doble vida del faquir/The Magicians* (Elisabet Cabeza and Esteve Riambau), *Aguaviva/Aguaviva Town\** (Ariadna Pujol), *La niebla en las palmeras/The Mist in the Palm Trees* (Dolores Salvador and Carlos Molinero), *Muxía. A Ferida/The Wound* (Nely Reguera), *Cambia de vida. El viaje de Xixon Sound/Change Life. Xixon Sound's Journey* (Elena Medina and José Fernández). In **2006, 3** out of 150: *El crimen de una novia/The Crime of a Bride* (Lola Guerrero), *¿Qué tienes debajo del sombrero?/What's Under your Hat?* (Carmen Dolores Barrera and Iñaki Peñafiel), *Hécuba, un sueño de pasión/Hecuba, A Dream of Passion* (Arantxa Aguirre and José Luis López Linares). In **2007, 3** out of 172: *Próxima estación/Next Station* (Estela Ilarraz), *Reyita* (Oliva Acosta and Elena Ortega), *Voces contra la trata de mujeres/Voices Against Trafficking of Women* (Mabel Lozano). In **2008, 6** out of 175: *Tapologo* (Sally and Gabriella Gutiérrez Dewar), *Rompe el día/At Day Break* (Natalia Díaz), *El canto del loco. Personas/El canto del loco Music Band\** (María Pilar Villalain), *B-side: La cara B de la música en Barcelona/B-side: Music in Barcelona* (Eva Vila), *Nadar/To Swim* (Carla Subirana), and *Resistencia/Resistance* (Lucinda Torre). In **2009, 10** out of 186: *Cómicos/Comedy Actors* (Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez), *Señora de.../Mrs...What's His Name* (Patricia Ferreira), *Notes al peu/Footnotes* (Anna Bofarrull), *L'escaezu. Recuerdos del 37/Memories of 37* (Lucía Herrera and Juan Luis Ruiz Fernández), *Bejart. El esfuerzo y el ánimo/Bejart. Of Heart and Courage* (Arantxa Aguirre), *Gitanos de Buenos Aires/Gypsies of Buenos Aires\** (Regina Álvarez and Xavier Villaverde), *Cataluña-Espanya/Catalonia-Spain* (Isona Passola), *Máscaras/Masks* (Elisabet Cabeza and Esteve Riambau), *¿No queríais saber por qué las matan? Por nada/Didn't you Want to Know Why they Kill them? Well, No Reason* (Mercedes Fernández Martorell), and *La tierra habitada/The Land Inhabited* (Anna Sanmartí). In **2010, 13** out of 210: *Morir de día/Dying Awake* (Laila Manresa and Sergi Díez), *Barcelona, abans que el temps ho esborri/Barcelona Socialites* (Mireia Ros), *Nagore* (Helena Taberna), *Las sabias de la tribu/The Wise Women of the Tribe* (Mabel Lozano), *Horizonte/Horizon* (Merce Solé Viñas), *Hammada* (Anna Bofarull), *Globalización/Globalization* (Assumpta Rodríguez), *Memorias rotas/Broken Memories* (Manane Rodríguez), *108 Cuchillo de palo/108 Wooden Knife\** (Renate Costa), *Anclados/Anchored* (Carlota Nelson), *Mercado de futuros/Futures Market* (Mercedes Álvarez), *En la*

the feminist agenda is gender-based violence, particularly in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships. Another one is the recovery of women's memories and herstories, i.e. their telling their own versions of History. In 2004, Susana Koska directs *Mujeres en pie de guerra/Women Ready for War*, which gathers the testimonies of six women who fought against Franco's dictatorship. Koska keeps a feminist commitment with the past in her second (and most recent) film, *Vindicación/Vindication\** (2010) about the feminist movement. Also with the aim of recovering female voices from a critical perspective, in *Señora de.../Mrs...What's His Name* (2009) Patricia Ferreira interviews more than three hundred women from Galicia, aged between sixty and eighty, whose identity under Franco's dictatorship had always been that of belonging to their husbands.

In the context of the strong feminist debate about the abolition of prostitution or its legalisation as sex work, an issue that has received attention in the last few years is sex trafficking. In 2007, Mabel Lozano directs *Voces contra la trata de mujeres/Voces Against Trafficking of Women*. In 2015, she directs a longer documentary film on the same topic: *Chicas nuevas 24 horas/New Girls 24 Hours*. In 2017, Lozano publishes a book called *El proxeneta/The Pimp*, with the testimony of the repentant Spanish pimp who also appears in my case study, *Serás hombre* (2018), directed by Isabel de Ocampo. In 2008, de Ocampo had directed the short film *Miente/She Lies*, also about sex trafficking. In 2018, Lozano makes a film about the same pimp: *El proxeneta. Paso corto, mala leche/The Pimp. Slow Gait, Bad Blood*. Susanna Barranco has directed the documentary *Desnudas/Nude* (2017), with testimonies of prostitutes working in Spain and The Netherlands.<sup>146</sup>

Also within the 2000-2010 period, Jo Sol directs the documentary *Fake Orgasm* (2010). This film is a portrait of Lazlo Pearlman, a transgender artist whose work subverts traditional gender roles. A woman does not direct it, but it is a documentary with clear awareness of the role played by gender in the (re)production of inequalities.<sup>147</sup> *En la próxima estación/At the Next Station* (Beatriz Rodríguez, 2010) tackles gender-based violence, but in the Indian context.

Among the feminist video artists who begin their career in the nineties, four have kept on working in video documentary production: Cecilia Barriga, Virginia Villaplana,

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*próxima estación/At the Next Station* (Beatriz Rodríguez), and *Ellas son África/They are Africa* (Laura Mañá, Patricia Ferreira, Inés París and Chus Gutiérrez).

<sup>146</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.5 *Serás Hombre*

<sup>147</sup> In the most recent film directed by Jo Sol, *Vivir y otras ficciones/Living and Other Fictions* (2016), the main character is played by Antonio Centeno, one of the directors of my case study *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015). Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.4 *Yes, We Fuck!*

Carmen Sigler, and María Ruido. Barriga was born in Chile but has worked in Spain since her celebrated queer piece *Meeting Two Queens* (1991), in which she recycles images from Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. She has also directed documentaries such as *El camino de Moisés/Moses's Way* (2002), which portrays Ana's transformation into Moses; *Ni locas ni terroristas/They're Not Crazy, Nor are They Terrorists* (2005), which follows the struggle of a group of Galician women, mothers of young people who become involved in a drug dealing network that they try to expose; *Im Fluss/Downstream* (co-directed with Claudia Lorenz, 2008), which portrays the romantic relationship of two old women; *Granada 30 años después, 5000 feminismos más/Granada After 30 Years and 5000 Feminisms* (2010), which registers the demonstration that celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first feminist encounter in Granada in 2009; and *Tres instantes, un grito/Three Moments, A Shout* (2014), which traces connections between the 15-M movement in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in New York, and the students' movement in Chile.

Villaplana directs what can be described as creative documentaries. In *Escenario doble/Double Scenario\** (2004), she combines an interview with Marco, an Andalusian transsexual, with images of a drag king action by French performer Myriam Marzouk. In the found footage-based short film *Anonymous Film Portrait. Fuera del Paraíso/Out of Paradise* (2004), she portrays poet Lucía Sánchez Saornil and her romantic relationship with America Barroso. Carmen Sigler co-directs with Sofía Segura Herrera a documentary about menopause: *Por el hecho de vivir/Because of Living\** (2008).

Among the works directed by María Ruido we find *Tiempo real/Real Time* (2003), an exploration of the precarious conditions faced by Spanish female workers; *Plan Rosebud 1&2* (2008), two films in which she explores memory politics and counter narratives in Spain, France and Great Britain; *L'oeil imperative/The Imperative Eye* (2016), an audiovisual essay about visual sovereignty and colonialism; and *Mater amatísima* (2017), which gathers discourses and images of motherhood.

Other feminist video artists start their documentary production in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ana and Carmen Navarrete direct *De eso no se habla/You Don't Speak About That\** (2007), a collage film about gender violence. That's also the topic of Ana Solano's *In...correctas 1&2/In...Correct Women* (2004 & 2006). Her most recent documentary film, *No existimos/We Don't Exist* (2014), is one of my case studies.<sup>148</sup> Sally Gutiérrez

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<sup>148</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.3. *No existimos*

directs *Manola coge el autobús/Manola Gets the Bus* (2005), which portrays an old woman who lived the Spanish Civil War, and *Tapologo* (co-directed with Gabriela Gutiérrez, 2008), which follows a network of women who get organised to combat the AIDS epidemic in South Africa. She is also a member of the art research collective “Magnetic Declination”, which works from a de/post-colonial perspective.

The post-porn debate in Spain begins in the mid-nineties. One of its main advocates is queer theorist Beatriz Preciado. In 2003, she organises a gender-lab and a post-porn marathon, “Pornography and Post-Pornography: Aesthetics and Politics of Sexual Representation”, at the Contemporary Art Museum of Barcelona. Some of the participants are Fefa Vila, Helena Torres, Javier Sáez, Joan Pujol, Juan Antonio Suárez, Annie Sprinkle, Marie-Helene Bourcier and the collective LICIT “Línea de investigación y cooperación con inmigrantes y trabajadoras sexuales” (Research and Cooperation with Immigrants and Sexual Workers). The queer collectives O.R.G.I.A. “Organización reversible de géneros intermedios artísticos” (Reversible Organization of Intermediate and Artistic Genders) and “Corpus Deleicti” emerge in parallel with these activities. They combine audiovisual productions, performance and activism in their work.

An important movement around transsexuals’ despathologisation in Spain starts in 2006. A pioneer group is “Guerrilla Travolaka” from Barcelona. Theirs are “autonomous, non-identity based movements, with a development of what trans is explicitly framed within the fight against heteropatriarchy” (Fernández and Araneta 2013: 47).<sup>149</sup> Stemming from here, in 2008, the “Red por la Despatologización de las Identidades Trans del Estado Español” (Network for the Trans Identities’ Despathologisation in the Spanish State) gets organised. In 2009 it gives way to the campaign “Stop Trans Pathologisation STP 2012”. It has become crucial for the contemporary transfeminist movement.<sup>150</sup>

### **3.3.4 Feminist, Women and/or Queer Spanish Film Festivals**

As mentioned before, “La Mostra de Films de Dones”, which has its first edition in 1993, is the oldest feminist film festival still held in Spain. Its curating proposal is always carried out from a feminist perspective and seeks to render visible female filmmakers. It is organised in Barcelona by the cooperative “Drac Màgic”, which has a series of

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<sup>149</sup> “son movimientos autónomos, no identitarios y con una elaboración de lo trans explícitamente enmarcada en la lucha contra el heteropatriarcado.”

<sup>150</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Section 3.3.6 The Transfeminist Critique and the Precariousness of Feminist Documentary



workshops designed for various school levels called “Construir Miradas” (Building Gazes), and a distribution company of children’s cinema in Catalan called “Pack Mágic.”

Since its second edition, “La Mostra” includes documentary films, though Spanish examples are absent until the ninth edition, held in 2001.<sup>151</sup> It also features non-fiction pieces that are close to video art or experimental narratives, such as the aforementioned works by Ruido, Gutiérrez and Villaplana. It has organised homages and retrospectives showing, for example, the work of Helena Lumbreras in its 13<sup>th</sup> edition, and that of Cecilia Bartolomé in its 14<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> editions. In its 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> editions, “La Mostra” incorporates a specific section called “Feminismos”, showing three Spanish documentary films: *A la deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina/Adrift through the Circuits of Feminized Precarious Work* (“Precarias a la deriva” collective, 2003), *La quadratura del cercle. Història del Bloc Feminista de Tarragona 1977-2001/Squaring the Circle. History of the Feminist Block of Tarragona 1977-2001* (“Les filles de Lilith” collective, 2005), and the aforementioned *Vindicación* (Susana Koska, 2012).

Besides, “La Mostra” has programmed several feminist documentaries in its main section and as part of special categories, under names such as “Women Fighting” or “Feminist Film Manifests”. For example: *Reyita* (Oliva Acosta and Elena Ortega, 2006); *I moltes altres dones/And Many More Women\** (Sonia Trigo, Begoña Montalbán, María Romero, Nahxeli Beas, Andrea Corachán and Marta Muñoz, 2007); *La luna en ti/The Moon Inside You* (Diana Fabianova, 2010); *Empieza en ti/Start with You\** (Marta Vergonyós, 2010); *El gran vuelo/The Great Flight* (Carolina Astudillo, 2014), and *Arreta/Attention* (María Zafra and Raquel Marques, 2016).

*Reyita* tells the story of a poor black woman who was born in Cuba in 1902, as told by her daughter in a book. *I moltes altres dones* narrates the story of LaSal bar, a

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<sup>151</sup> Among the international documentary films that have been shown in “La Mostra”, we can find: *Dal Polo all’Equatore/From the Pole to the Equator* (Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, 1986); *Shoot for the Contents* (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1991); *D’est/From the East* (Chantal Akerman, 1993); *Les demoiselles on teu 25 ans/The Young Girls Turn 25* (Agnès Varda, 1993); *Dream Girls* (Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams, 1993); *Chantal Akerman par Chantal Akerman* (Chantal Akerman, 1996); *Sexing the Label* (Anna Broinowski, 1997); *Made in India* (Patricia Plattner, 1999); *Performing the Border* (Ursula Biemann, 1999); *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse/The Gleaners and I* (Agnès Varda, 2000); *Señorita extraviada/Missing Young Woman* (Lourdes Portillo, 2001); *Zero Degrees of Separation* (Elle Flanders, 2005); *Uno virgola due/One Point Two* (Silvia Ferreri, 2005); *We Went to Wonderland* (Guo Xiaolu, 2008); *A Horse is Not a Metaphor* (Barbara Hammer, 2008); *Women Art Revolution! A Secret History* (Lynn Hershman Leeson, 2010). The complete list of the films that have been programmed in 26 editions (up to 2018) is retrievable on the festival archive website. Date of access: May 2019.

<<http://arxiu.mostrafilmsdones.cat/edicions-de-la-mostra/>>.

place of meeting and feminist mobilisation in Barcelona during the seventies. *La luna en ti* explores the taboo of menstruation in contemporary western societies, starting with the filmmaker's personal experience. *Empieza en ti* is made over ten years with a group of women who had experienced situations of sexist violence and recover through art. *El gran vuelo* reconstructs the story of Clara Pueyo, a militant of the Communist Party during Franco's dictatorship, using only stock footage of the time.

"La Mostra" is part of TRAMA—"Coordinadora de muestras y festivales de cine, video y multimedia realizados por mujeres" (Coordinator of Cinema, Video and Multimedia Festivals and Exhibitions by Women). TRAMA is a State association created in 2002, which also incorporates the International Exhibitions of Cinema Directed by Women held in Pamplona (since 1987, coordinated by the Social Studies Promotion Institute); Bilbao (since 1995, organised by the feminist group "Simone de Beauvoir"); Zaragoza (since 1998, coordinated by the University of Zaragoza); and Huesca (since 2001, coordinated by the Feminist Women Collective of Huesca).

TRAMA is also connected with the International Exhibition of Cinema Directed by Women in Teruel, organised by the Madart Association since 2006; and the cycle "Mirando Nosotras", organised by the "Mariana Pineda" Granada Women Assembly<sup>152</sup>, since 2001. In coordination with its five members, TRAMA organises two annual contests since 2002: "Corto en Femenino" (Female Short Film) and "Video del Minuto" (One-Minute Video, which was first held by "Drac Màgic" in 1998).

The other film festival that is pioneer in terms of queer perspective is the aforementioned "LesGaiCineMad", first celebrated in 1996. It begins in Madrid, but has developed platforms in other regions of Spain as well: Canary Islands, Extremadura, Valladolid and Andalusia.<sup>153</sup> Among the Spanish documentaries programmed as part of this festival we find: *Guerriller@s/Warriors* (Montse Pujantell, 2010); *Mi sexualidad es una creación artística/My Sexuality is an Artistic Creation* (Lucía Egaña, 2011); *Vidas transexuales/Transsexual Lives* (María Popova, 2011); *Born Naked. Madrid, London, Berlin* (Andrea Esteban, 2012); *Tomaremos las calles. Mujeres en Lucha/We Will Take the Streets. Women Fighting\** (Javi Larrauri, 2014); *Tchindas* (Pablo García and Marc

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<sup>152</sup> The Granada Women Assembly has produced a film about their history: *Asamblea de Mujeres de Granada: 40 años de lucha feminista/Granada Women Assembly: 40 Years of Feminist Fight\** (Carmen Sigler, 2015).

<sup>153</sup> In its Extremadura's version, "Fancinegay", the festival programmed one of my case studies, *Yes, We Fuck!* It's also worth mentioning that a documentary film exhibited in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the "LesGaiCineMad" can be considered a precedent for YWF: *El sexo de los ángeles/Angel's Sex* (Frank Toro, 2004). *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.4 *Yes, We Fuck!*

Serena, 2015); *El viaje de Carla/Carla's Journey* (Fernando Olmeda, 2015); and *Manolita, La Chen de Arcos* (Valeria Vegas, 2016).<sup>154</sup>

In 2010, during Zapatero's administration, the abovementioned itinerant showcase "Mujeres de Cine" is created with a grant from the Women's Institute. Ana Palacios has been the director of "Mujeres de Cine" since its creation. Its origin is the project "Cine Español en Ruta" (Spanish Cinema on the Road), which Palacios and three colleagues establish with the purpose of aiding the national distribution and exhibition of Spanish cinema. It is during the first year of "Cine Español en Ruta" that Palacios realises that there's a gender problem in film production:

...there was a percentage, which didn't reach the 10% of the production, made by women, where the director was a woman. Therefore we created a specific project, "Mujeres de Cine", where we placed the focus on cinema directed by a woman (...) One of our objectives was to give visibility to the female directors, who are normally given less promotion. On the other hand, to create models of empowerment for new generations of women filmmakers, and also to show films in which the woman was the protagonist, and that were told by a woman. So we presented this project to the Women's Institute and they supported us. The first year it had a national itinerary, eight locations, and five films made by women, contemporary Spanish cinema.<sup>155</sup>

During the second year, "Mujeres de Cine" extends its itinerancy at an international level thanks to the coalition between the Women's Institute and the Cervantes Institute: "We took it to Berlin, Casablanca, Peking, Prague (...) but there was a change of government,

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<sup>154</sup> In previous editions, the Spanish documentary films screened at this festival are mainly short videos, such as *Las esquinas del arcoiris/The Different Corners of the Rainbow* (Purificación Mora, 2006); *La Moma/Moma\** (Samuel Sebastián, 2007); and *Cuarto Creciente/Waxing Moon* (Ana Cabello 2008). In 2013, the "LesGaiCineMad" receives a grant from the Economic European Area (EEA), which recognises its work. The complete list of films which have been exhibited at the "LesGaiCineMad" is retrievable on the festival's website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/p26/ediciones-antiores/>>.

<sup>155</sup> "...había un porcentaje que no llegaba al 10% de toda la producción de películas realizadas por mujeres, en donde la dirección fuera a cargo de una mujer. Entonces creamos un proyecto específico, que es Mujeres de Cine, en donde poníamos toda la atención en cine realizado por mujer (...) Uno de los objetivos eran, dar visibilidad a las directoras, que normalmente cuentan con una promoción más deficitaria. Por otra parte, crear referentes de empoderamiento a nuevas generaciones de mujeres cineastas y por otra parte también, ofrecer trabajos en donde la mujer se, fuera protagonista y que fuera contado por una mujer. Entonces, presentamos este proyecto al Instituto de la Mujer y el Instituto de la Mujer nos apoyó (...) el primer año fue una itineraria nacional, de unas ocho localidades, en donde llevábamos cinco películas realizadas por mujeres, cine español reciente." Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

the director of the Women's Institute left, and the support to the project stopped.”<sup>156</sup> “Mujeres de Cine” has kept on running thanks to a grant from the Ministry of Culture, but Palacios defines its situation as “an annual struggle. Each year, when we organise ‘Mujeres de Cine’, we don’t know if we will manage to continue the next year, because the grants and subsidies are annual.”<sup>157</sup>

During its nine editions, “Mujeres de Cine” has exhibited one hundred and twenty five films, out of which, forty-five are documentary films.<sup>158</sup> Some of them have an open feminist intention, such as the aforementioned *Nagore* (Taberna, 2010), *Señora de...* (Ferreira, 2010), *La luna en ti* (Fabianova, 2010), *Las constituyentes* (Acosta, 2011), *Las maestras de la República* (López Solano, 2013), *El gran vuelo* (Astudillo, 2014), and *Chicas nuevas 24 horas* (Lozano, 2015). Two of my case studies, the collective film *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad/My Choice. The Freedom Train* (2014) and *Serás hombre/You'll Be a Man* (2018) are also included in its catalogue.<sup>159</sup>

*Tocaoras/Female Flamenco Guitarists\** (Alicia Cifredo, 2014), *El viaje de las reinas/Journey of Queens* (Patricia Roda, 2015) and *Carmen Laforet, la chica*

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<sup>156</sup> “Lo llevamos a Berlín, a Casablanca, a Pekín, a Praga (...) pero hubo cambio de gobierno, la directora del Instituto de la Mujer se fue y entonces el proyecto se quedó sin apoyo.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>157</sup> “una lucha anual. Cada año que se hace Mujeres de Cine, no sabemos si va a continuar al año siguiente porque las subvenciones y los apoyos son anuales.” Ana Palacios. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>158</sup> The documentary films that have been exhibited at “Mujeres de Cine” are: *B-side: La cara B de la música en Barcelona* (Vila, 2008), *La tierra habitada* (Sanmartí, 2009), *Anclados* (Nelson, 2010), *La luna en ti* (Fabianova, 2010), *El esfuerzo y el ánimo* (Aguirre, 2010), *Memorias rotas* (Rodríguez, 2010), *Señora de...* (Ferreira, 2010), *Morir de día* (Manresa, 2010), *Nagore* (Taberna, 2010), *Mercado de futuros* (Álvarez, 2010), *108 Cuchillo de palo* (Costa, 2010), *Barcelona, antes de que el tiempo lo borre* (Ros, 2010), *Ellas son África* (Mañá, Ferreira, París and Gutiérrez, 2010), *Tralas luces/Behind the Lights* (Sandra Sánchez, 2011), *Las constituyentes* (Acosta, 2011), *Escuchando al juez Garzón/Listening to Judge Garzón* (Isabel Coixet, 2011), *Huellas en el cielo/Tracks in the Sky* (Sonia Tercero and Susan Youdelman, 2012), *Tan antiguo como el mundo/As Old as the World* (Nayra and Javier Sanz Fuentes, 2012), *El jurado/The Jury* (Virginia García del Pino, 2012), *Guitarra de palo/Wooden Guitar\** (Andrea Zapata Girau, 2013), *La plaga/The Plague* (Neus Ballús, 2013), *Las maestras de la República* (López Solano, 2013), *Piratas y libélulas/Pirates and Dragonflies* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2013), *Antonio Vega. Tu voz entre otras mil/Vega. A Star in La Movida* (Paloma Concejero, 2013), *Bajari/Bajari film\** (Eva Vila, 2013), *Tocaoras/Female Flamenco Guitarists\** (Alicia Cifredo, 2014), *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014), *Cartas a María/Letters to María* (Maite García Ribot, 2014), *El gran vuelo* (Astudillo, 2014), *Corredores de fondo/Runners\** (Isabel Fernández, 2014), *Basilio Martín Patino, la décima carta/Basilio Martín Patino, The Tenth Letter* (Virginia García del Pino, 2014), *La mujer y el agua/Woman and Water* (Nocem Collado, 2014), *El viaje de las reinas/The Journey of Queens* (Patricia Roda, 2015), *Chicas nuevas 24 horas* (Lozano, 2015), *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2015), *Malpartida Fluxus Village* (María Pérez, 2015), *A la puta strasse. 2º acto/Second Act Bar\** (Anna Cervera, 2015), *Carmen Laforet, la chica rara/Carmen Laforet. The Strange Girl* (Marta Arribas Veloso and Ana María Pérez, 2016), *Club de Reyes/Keeper of Swing* (Andrea Barrionuevo, 2016), *Dancing Beethoven* (Arantxa Aguirre, 2016), *The Spanish Dancer* (Mar Díaz, 2016), *María Moliner. Tendiendo palabras* (Vicky Calavia, 2017), *Ad Ventum. Hacia el viento/Toward the Wind* (Bárbara Mateos, 2017), and *Serás Hombre* (de Ocampo, 2018). And short experimental non-fiction videos by María Cañas.

<sup>159</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.2 *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* and Section 4.5 *Serás Hombre*.

rara/Carmen Laforet. *The Strange Girl* (Marta Arribas Veloso and Ana María Pérez, 2016) are portraits of women artists: flamenco guitar players, actresses, and a writer. *María Moliner. Tendiendo palabras* (Vicky Calavia, 2017) narrates the story behind Moliner's famous dictionary.

Two of the films exhibited as part of "Mujeres de Cine" with a feminist perspective are recorded outside of Spain: *Ellas son África/They Are Africa* (Laura Mañá, Patricia Ferreira, Inés París and Chus Gutiérrez, 2010) is composed of four stories of women's struggles for everyday survival in different regions of Africa, and *La mujer y el agua/Woman and Water* (Nocem Collado, 2014) narrates the stories of four Indian women and their difficult relation with water. Collado's first film, *Cartografía de la soledad/Cartography of Loneliness* (2011), was already informed by a feminist gaze: it shows the harsh situation faced by widows in India, Nepal and Afghanistan.

Another Spanish festival with a feminist perspective is the "Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres" (Political Cinema Directed by Women), organised by the General Society of Authors and Editors (SGAE) since 2009. It has programmed two of my case studies, *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* and *No existimos*. There are also several exhibitions and screenings organised independently by different feminist groups. For example, the "Muestra Marrana" (Pig/Dirty Exhibition), a feminist post-porn festival organised since 2008 by transfeminist activists such as Diana J. Torres "Pornterrorist" and Lucía Egaña. They have exhibited one of my case studies, *Yes, We Fuck!*

Other film festivals have also incorporated sections specifically devoted to cinema directed by women and/or from a feminist perspective. According to filmmaker Oliva Acosta, in Andalusia this has happened as a result of the activist work carried out since 2013 by the aforementioned Andalusian Association of Women in Media.<sup>160</sup> Thus, the Málaga Film Festival has created a section called "Afirmando los derechos de la Mujer" (Affirming Women's Rights); the Seville Film Festival has a section called "Women in Focus"; and the "Alcances" Documentary Cinema Festival in Cádiz has the section "Mujeres que Documentan el Mundo" (Women Documenting the World). Another case is that of the "Point of View" International Documentary Film Festival in Navarra, which held a cycle devoted to feminist non-fiction cinema in its 7<sup>th</sup> edition, and promoted the compilation and publication of the book *The Personal is Political: Feminism and Documentary* by Sophie Mayer and Elena Oroz in 2011.

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<sup>160</sup> Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

### 3.3.5 The “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality” Distinction

In 2011, the Spanish Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts Institute (ICAA) introduces a new category in its film ratings: the “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality” distinction. According to the official bulletin of the Ministry of Culture, the criteria that a film must fulfil to receive this distinction are:

1. Transmitting an equal image of both sexes, without discrimination against any of them.
2. Promoting the elimination of prejudices, stereotyped images and roles based on sex, and encouraging the construction and dissemination of pluralistic and real representations of both sexes, as diverse as women and men are.
3. Promoting the use of non-sexist language, which also names the female reality.
4. Incorporating an equal vision of emotional relationships and domestic cohabitation.
5. Representing the equal presence and capacity of women in those sectors and levels that are clearly masculinised, as well as those of men in feminised sectors.
6. Promoting awareness and rejection of the phenomenon of violence in all its dimensions.<sup>161</sup>

From 2011 up to 2018, the distinction has been given to fifty Spanish and six international documentary films that have been screened in Spain.<sup>162</sup> Out of the Spanish films, female filmmakers have directed twenty-two films, while male filmmakers have directed twenty-eight. These are the non-fiction audiovisual contents that are officially recognised by a governmental body as promoters of gender equality. It is important to mention that, in order to be considered for this distinction, the film has to appear in the ICAA database, which means that several independent productions that are not officially

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<sup>161</sup> “1. Que transmitan una imagen igualitaria de ambos sexos, sin situaciones vejatorias o discriminatorias para uno de los dos. 2. Que promuevan la eliminación de prejuicios, imágenes estereotipadas y roles en función del sexo e impulsen la construcción y difusión de representaciones plurales y reales de ambos sexos, como diversos son las mujeres y los hombres. 3. Que promuevan el uso de un lenguaje no sexista que nombre, también, la realidad femenina. 4. Que incorporen una visión igualitaria de las relaciones afectivas y de la convivencia doméstica. 5. Que representen de manera igualitaria la presencia y la capacidad de las mujeres en aquellos sectores y niveles claramente masculinizados y de los hombres en los feminizados. 6. Que promuevan el conocimiento y el rechazo del fenómeno de la violencia en todas sus dimensiones.” Official bulletin retrievable online. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2011/11/28/pdfs/BOE-A-2011-18717.pdf>>.

<sup>162</sup> The international documentaries are: *Everyday Rebellion* (Arash and Arman T. Riahi, 2014), *Pussy Riot. A Punk Prayer* (Mike Lerner and Maxim Pozdorovkin, 2014), *Rafea: Solar Mama* (Mona Eldaief and Jehane Noujaim, 2014), *He Named Me Malala* (David Guggenheim, 2015), *Sonita* (Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami, 2016), *Venus. Let's Talk about Sex* (Mette Carla Albrechtsen and Lea Glob, 2016).

registered are not even taken into account, for instance, my case studies *Yes, We Fuck!*, *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*, and *Cuidado, Resbala*.

In previous sections, I have mentioned thirteen of the films that have been regarded as “especially recommended for the promotion of gender equality”: *En la próxima estación* (Rodríguez, 2010), *Las constituyentes* (Acosta, 2011), *Las maestras de la República* (López Solano, 2013), *Tocaoras* (Cifredo, 2013), *Piratas y libélulas* (de Ocampo, 2013), *Con la pata quebrada* (Galán, 2013), *La maleta de Marta* (Schwaiger, 2013), *Tres instantes, un grito* (Barriga, 2014), *Chicas nuevas 24 horas* (Lozano, 2015), *El viaje de las reinas* (Roda, 2015), *Carmen Laforet, la chica rara* (Arribas Veloso and Pérez, 2016), and two of my case studies, *No existimos* (Solano, 2015) and *Serás hombre* (de Ocampo, 2018).

Among the other films which have received this distinction, we find six that are portraits of pioneer women in diverse fields: *Los recuerdos del hielo/Frozen Memories* (Albert Solé, 2013) is about Josefina Castellvi, a researcher in the Antarctica. *Joana Biarnés, una entre tots/Joana Biarnés, One Among All* (Oscar Moreno and Jordi Rovira, 2016), is about the first Spanish female photojournalist. *La niña del gancho/The Basketball Girl\** (Raquel Barrera, 2016) is the story of basketball player Encarna Hernández. *Alcaldessa/Ada for Mayor* (Pau Faus, 2016) follows politician Ada Colau for a year, since her candidacy in Barcelona up to her investment as mayor of the Catalan capital. *Carrasca* (Alejandro Cortés, 2018) is a road movie about painter Teresa Ramón, while *En la mano de king kong/In the Hand of King Kong* (José Luis Lozano, 2011) is an interview with philosopher Amelia Valcárcel.

Fourteen of the films show contents recorded entirely outside of Spain: *Donde viven las mujeres/Where Women Live\** (Manuel García Serrano, 2012) is defined on its website as a “cinematographic, educative and solidary project about women’s rights, gender equality and gender in development.”<sup>163</sup> It consists of five stories mixing fiction and reality of women from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Guatemala, Philippines, and Angola. The short film *Sheroes* (Carlos Caro Martín, 2016) condemns the acid attacks to women in India. *La guerra contra las mujeres/War Against Women* (Hernán Zin, 2013) gathers testimonies from women who have been victims of sexual violence during wars in Europe, Africa, and America.

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<sup>163</sup> “un proyecto cinematográfico, educativo y solidario sobre los derechos de las mujeres, igualdad de género y género en desarrollo.” Date of access: December 2018.  
<<http://dondevivenlasmujeres.tusojos.tv/index.php/es/donde-viven-las-mujeres/donde-viven-las-mujeres>>.

A co-production between Argentina and Spain, *La mujer del eternauta/El Eternauta's Wife* (Adán Aliaga, 2012) is a portrait of Elsa Sánchez, the widow of Héctor Oesterheld, who was killed during the Argentinian dictatorship along with their four daughters. *Boxing for Freedom* (Silvia Venegas and Juan Antonio Moreno, 2015) follows a young female boxer in Afghanistan as she struggles with the traditions of her country. *Tanger Gool* (Juan Gautier, 2014) follows Fatima, a Moroccan activist, who meets a female football team and collaborates with them to plan a football match against a European team. *Tchindas* (Pablo García and Marc Serena, 2015) is recorded in São Vicente, a Cape Verde island in which gays and transsexuals are referred to as “Tchindas”, in honour to a beloved character in the town. *I Hate New York* (Gustavo Sánchez, 2018) gathers ten years of interviews with four transgender women artists and activists.

*Free. Hadijatou contra el Estado/Free. Hadijatou Vs The State* (Eulalia Goma and Rosa Cornet, 2016) tells the story of a Nigerian female slave who won a case against the State. *Muna* (Santiago Zannou, 2017) is a portrait of women in Ethiopia. *Boliviana/Bolivian Woman\** (Mariano Agudo, 2015) tells the stories of four women struggling against inequalities in Bolivia. Also recorded in Latin America, *Primavera rosa en México/Pink Spring in Mexico* (Mario de la Torre Espinosa, 2016) is part of a series of short films about contemporary LGBT fights for human rights and sexual freedom.

*Bolingo, el bosque del amor/Bolingo. The Forest of Love* (Alejandro González Salgado, 2016) follows various African women in their journey to north Morocco looking for the so-called “European dream.” *La manzana de Eva/Eve's Apple* (José Manuel Colón Armario, 2017) denounces female genital mutilation in Gambia, Kenya, Chile and Spain. The experiences of female immigrants in Spain, specifically from African countries, is the topic of Inés París' documentary *Manzanas, pollos y quimeras* (2013), produced by the “Women for Africa” Foundation. *En tránsito/In Transit* (Oskar Tejedor, 2016) portrays the transnational relations that Latin-American mothers who migrate to Europe establish with the children they leave in their home countries.

*Born Naked. Madrid, London, Berlin* (Andrea Esteban, 2014) presents contemporary testimonies from lesbian and transgender people in three European cities. *Singled [Out]* (Ariadna Relea Ventura and Mariona Guiu, 2017) tells the story of five single women in Barcelona, Istanbul, Shanghai and Melbourne. Based in Girona, *Parts naturals. Benvungut a casa/Natural Birth. Welcome Home* (Ester Bertran and Anna



Cañigüeral, 2014) is a film about giving birth at home. A film made a year later, *Loba/Loba Film* (Catherine Bechard, 2015), tackles the same issue not only in Spain, but also in Mexico, France and Cuba; however, this documentary does not have the equality distinction.

The short film *Nobody is Perfect* (Beatriz Pérez, 2017) is the portrait of Alex, a transgender man. *Dormíamos, despertamos/We Were Sleeping, We Woke Up* (Andrea Linares, Alfonso Domingo, Daniel Quiñones and Twiggy Hirota, 2012) follows eighteen participants of the 15-M movement in Spain. By means of a series of music videos focused on a small Catalan village, *Les Borges Blanques, Not a Step Back! No Surrender!* (Héctor Suñol, 2018) portrays Catalonia during the nine months after the referendum (1-O) celebration for independence. *Hijos e hijas del alarde/Sons and Daughters of the Alarde* (Eneko Olasagasti and Jone Karres, 2013) explores the participation of women in the traditional parties and military parades called “Alarde” in Irun and Hondarribia, at the Basque Country.

*Excluidas del Paraíso/Excluded from Paradise* (Esther Pérez, 2016) is a revision of contemporary patriarchy through the voices of various Spanish feminist thinkers. *A palabra xusta/The Right Word* (Miguel Piñeiro, 2017) renders homage to the egalitarian pedagogics that a female Galician teacher carried out in Spain, challenging Franco’s dictatorship. *La primavera/Springtime* (Christophe Farnarier, 2012) is an observational documentary that shows the lives of a group of peasants in Gerona, paying particular attention to the work carried out by women.

Two of the most recent productions tackle the issue of women in sports: In *Mujeres que corren/Women Who Run* (Cristina Mitre and Juanjo López, 2018), various Spanish women from different times and backgrounds explain how running has given them a sense of freedom; while *Mujeres, mano a la arena/Women, Hand to The Sand\** (Nacho Bello, 2018) explores the presence of women in Canarian wrestling, an ancient sport that had been practised only by men for centuries.

Finally, two of these films with the gender equality distinction tell stories that happen in women’s prisons: *Yeses/Yeses Theatre\** (Miguel Ángel Forneiro, 2018) follows a theatre company formed by female inmates at Madrid women’s prison, while *Cárceles bolleras/Dyke Jails* (Cecilia Montagut, 2018) pictures the inequalities faced by female prisoners and gathers testimonies of how lesbian desire becomes a form of resistance for some of them.

### 3.3.6 The Transfeminist Critique and the Precariousness of Feminist Documentary

In 2013, Miriam Solá and Elena Urko compile the anthology *Transfeminismos: Epistemes, fricciones y flujos* (*Transfeminisms: Epistemes, Frictions and Flows*) with the purpose of gathering multiple perspectives on the contemporary feminist movement in Spain. Their precedent is the drafting of the “Manifiesto para la insurrección transfeminista” (Manifesto for Transfeminist Insurrection) after the Granada Feminist Encounter in 2009, where the category “woman” was questioned as not being the only political subject for feminism.<sup>164</sup>

With a similar discourse to that presented by Hemmings as return narrative (2011), which aim at bringing together different positions in feminism by recognising the limits, but also the achievements of each one, Spanish transfeminist activists (among which we find Beatriz Preciado, Itziar Ziga, Amaia Pérez Orozco, Raquel-Lucas Platero, Lucía Egaña, Genderhacker and Diana J. Torres “Pornterrorist”) advocate for an updating project that doesn’t erase feminist genealogies. As a matter of fact, they choose to call themselves transfeminists rather than transgender or queer, not only because it translates better into Spanish, but also in order to recognise the important role of feminism, as well as their position as trans-feminists (instead of anti- or post-feminists).<sup>165</sup> Moreover, they show awareness of the problem that Hemmings identifies with progress, loss and return narratives, i.e. the insistence on sharing a single perspective of Western feminist theory’s past.<sup>166</sup> This is summarised in the words of Itziar Ziga with which we open this chapter.

Spanish transfeminism is non-binary but acknowledges gender oppressions. It regards identities as strategic, not as essentialist. Ziga makes a crucial question: “trying to dismantle the political subject ‘women’ is nonsense, a leap into the void, political suicide (...) How are we supposed to detect and fight male chauvinist violence if we no longer talk about women?” (2013: 85).<sup>167</sup> With a diffractive reading, which looks for overlappings within diverse insights, we can identify echoes of Ruido’s aforementioned call for “temporary coalitions built on the precarious identity of ‘woman’, so as to

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<sup>164</sup> The “Manifiesto para la insurrección transfeminista” is retrievable online at the “Parole de Queer” website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://paroledequeer.blogspot.com.es/2012/03/manifiesto-para-la-insurreccion.html>>.

<sup>165</sup> The word “transfeminismo” is firstly used in Spain in a 2000 Feminist Encounter in Córdoba (Solá 2013: 19).

<sup>166</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1 Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>167</sup> “tratar de desmantelar el sujeto político «mujeres» es un despropósito, un salto al vacío, un suicidio político (...) ¿Cómo hostias detectamos y combatimos la violencia machista si no podemos hablar de mujeres?”

continue an incomplete political agenda (but being aware of its own masquerade)” (2006: 17)<sup>168</sup>, which is why she considers that it is still important to keep the category “women’s cinema” and to render visible films directed by women.<sup>169</sup> However, while keeping the political subject “women”, transfeminists recognise that gender doesn’t only oppress women. Moreover, in a way that echoes Butler’s alliances from and against precarity,<sup>170</sup> they emphasise that:

The heterosexual white female subject is not the subject of transfeminism. Its definition is not made using this, out of this subject position. Transfeminism is characterised by alliances between bodies of diverse identities that rebel against a connected and multiple oppression system (...) we understand that the white, heterosexual female subject produces exclusion and violence by defining itself out of such an identity, generating policies only for equals and those related. And excluding the rest of the bodies that experience specific forms of violence, but do not conform to the established identity of such a subject (Medeak 2013: 77-78).<sup>171</sup>

The transfeminist agenda keeps classic topics of feminism such as abortion, sexuality, the body, violence, access to the labour market and domestic labour, but connects them with emergent issues such as “the construction of subjectivity and corporeality, pornography and sex work, the pathologisation of transsexuality, the critique of State feminism and the processes of institutionalization of the LGBT movement, squatting and Occupy, the struggle against AIDS, transmigration resistance, the precariousness of life, the feminisation of poverty” (Solá 2013: 21).<sup>172</sup>

We can diffractively read the insights from Hemmings concerning Western feminist theory, the feminist film theory debates on realist documentaries vs. counter-

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<sup>168</sup> “coaliciones coyunturales sobre la precaria identidad “mujer” para continuar una agenda política incompleta (siendo conscientes, eso sí, de su propia mascarada)”.

<sup>169</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Section 2.1.5 Feminist Cinema(s), Women’s Cinema(s)

<sup>170</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>171</sup> “El sujeto mujer blanca heterosexual no es el sujeto del transfeminismo. No se define desde ahí, desde la posición de sujeto. El transfeminismo se caracteriza por tender alianzas entre cuerpos de identidad diversa que se revelan ante un sistema de opresión conectado y múltiple (...) entendemos que ese sujeto blanca-heterosexual-mujer produce exclusión y violencia, al definirse desde esa identidad, generando políticas para las iguales y las afines. Y excluyendo al resto de cuerpos que viven formas específicas de violencia pero que no se ajustan a la identidad establecida como sujeto.”

<sup>172</sup> “la cuestión de la construcción de la subjetividad y de la corporalidad, la pornografía y el trabajo sexual, la patologización de la transexualidad, la crítica al feminismo de estado y a los procesos de institucionalización del movimiento lgbt, la okupación, las luchas contra el sida, las resistencias transmigrantes, la precarización de la vida, la feminización de la pobreza.”

cinema, and the Spanish transfeminists' position.<sup>173</sup> For Hemmings (2011), the progress, loss and return narratives with which the history of Western feminist theory has been told have reproduced an oppositional way of thinking and a single vision of the feminist movement. The false debate that Kaplan (1983) identifies concerning realism and avant-garde cinema, was sustained on unnecessary rigid connections between form, content and political commitment. And in a similar way, when looking back at the division after the Granada Feminist Encounter in 2009, Solá explains:

[we wanted to] problematise certain forms of feminism that, we thought, did not want to dialogue with the queer, with the trans, with the porn, with the sex work, with the cyborg (...) Since then, we have been building a more reflexive, more responsible and more humble movement (...) when still located in the logic of confrontation, we were unable to recognise the variety of feminist postures and visions, to understand that there were not so much resistance, or to see that feminism, in various aspects, had been “trans” for quite some time. (2013: 22).<sup>174</sup>

In terms of feminist cultural productions, transfeminists advocate for horizontal structures that question the traditional notion of authorship, as well as for continuous, collaborative, experimental and autonomous work, combining face-to-face interactions (e.g. seminars, workshops, encounters) with virtual ones (e.g. blogs, audiovisual productions). They also opt for self-management as a sustainable production model (Sentamans 2013: 42). An example would be the use of crowdfunding with websites such as Verkami and PatrocinaM. That was the model used to finance two of my case studies, *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015) and *Serás hombre* (2017). The problem, as filmmaker María Zafra puts it, is that they normally enter “the dynamics of precariousness.”<sup>175</sup> The same happens when the filmmaking is conceived as non-profit activism, which was the case of my case study, *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014).

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<sup>173</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapters 1 & 2. Sections 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism & 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

<sup>174</sup> “...problematizar ciertas formas de feminismo que, pensábamos, no querían dialogar con lo queer, con lo trans, con lo porno, con lo puto, con lo cyborg (...) Desde entonces, hemos ido construyendo un movimiento más reflexivo, más responsable y más humilde (...) aún situadas en la lógica de la confrontación, éramos incapaces de reconocer la variedad de posturas y visiones feministas, de entender que no eran tantas las resistencias o que el feminismo, en diversos enclaves, era ya «trans» desde hacía mucho tiempo.”

<sup>175</sup> “ahí entramos en las dinámicas de la precariedad.” María Zafra. Personal interview. September 14<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

Other feminist collectives, such as “La Mirada Invertida” (The Inverted Gaze), creators of my case study *Cuidado, resbala/Careful, Care Slippery\** (2013), work with public funds specifically designed for the promotion of gender equality and/or audiovisual literacy. Another sustainability strategy is combining documentary video production with research projects grants, which is the case of the artistic group “Toxic Lesbian”, directors of the medium-length film *Tomboys, marimachas, trans, bedesemeras: Versiones de la masculinidad femenina/Tomboys, Butches, Trans, Women BDSMers. Versions of Female Masculinity* (2015). Created in 2005, “Toxic Lesbian” generates what they call “ephemeral” works for the web.<sup>176</sup> The few cases in which the budget for these documentary films gets higher is, for example, when they are produced for public television, which is the case of *Las Sinsombrero/The Women without a Hat\** (2015).

In the first semester of 2017, the film committee of TVE, the Spanish Public Television, announces that they support the production of twelve films, none of them directed by a woman. In 2016, out of thirty-four feature films produced by them, only seven were directed by women (Gómez 2017). Apart from *Las Sinsombrero*, TVE has co-produced with Barret Cooperativa Valenciana, the webdoc *En la brecha/In the Gap* (Claudia Reig Valera, 2017), which narrates the experiences of seven women who work in areas that have traditionally been masculinised. Since 1999, Mediaset España, the largest private television network in Spain, has produced seventy Spanish films, out of which, only two have been directed by women (Eva Lesmes’s *El palo/Hold Up* in 2001, and Chus Gutiérrez’s *El calentito/El Calentito Club* in 2005).

In an article published in May 2017, Spanish filmmakers Javier Fernández Vázquez and Luis López Carrasco problematise the fact that independent cinema has become the clearest example of labour exploitation, precariousness and marginality: “low-cost cinema and its many festivals, exhibitions, conferences and debates will be the most evident and uncritical defence of an absolute precariousness disguised as a formal revolution.”<sup>177</sup> Ruido has also raised this issue as one of the biggest problems faced by independent artists:

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<sup>176</sup> Toxic Lesbian website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://toxiclesbian.org>>.

<sup>177</sup> “el cine ‘low-cost’ y sus múltiples festivales, muestras, jornadas y debates constituirán la más evidente y acrítica defensa de una precarización absoluta disfrazada de revolución formal”. *Revista contexto* website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://ctxt.es/es/20170503/Culturas/12541/cine-precari%C3%A9dad-cultura-colectivo-los-hijos.htm>>.

...we are immersed in a job without schedules or recognition, often without contract (...) a kind of “indefinite volunteerism”, supported by a dubious and egotistical conception of talent, of which we are expected to get tired more or less quickly (...) Precariousness in its various forms (flexibility, instability, indeterminacy of functions, (self)exploitation of experiences and emotions, extreme mobility, scarcity or lack of salary), define almost every job in the field of cultural production and communication. (2004: 259, 262).<sup>178</sup>

To change this structure, Ruido argues, artists should “question in depth the very idea of what an artist is, to begin to think of creativity as a capacity and a collective instrument and, finally, to think of art as a political work with a well-defined historical framework” (2004: 265).<sup>179</sup> In a similar vein, sociologist Pascal Gielen has explained that, in order to stay autonomous, without governmental subsidies nor free market pressure, artists need to build collective organisations:

Art can be autonomous and the artist remain autonomous only if that autonomy is enforced and guaranteed collectively (...) The artist will have to find allies, in other words, form gangs, join neotribal groups to find a way out (...) artistic freedom can only survive as shared freedom. Artistic autonomy does not coincide with individual discretion and exemption from collective obligations. It is not about freedom *of* the world, but freedom *for* the world (2015: 11, 18).

He stands for a cooperative model. Ruido also emphasises the importance of changing our ways of visualising the three interrelated components of the cycle: consumption, production and distribution (2004: 266). In an article written by Sergi Escudero in March 2017, Spanish filmmaker Isaki Lacuesta denounces how, in 2002, the Spanish commercial television channel Canal+ bought his opera prima, *Cravan vs. Cravan* for 120,000 euros, while the current Movistar channel has just offered him 12,000 euros for

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<sup>178</sup> “nos encontramos inmersas en una labor sin horarios ni reconocimiento, muchas veces sin contrato (...) una especie de ‘voluntariado indefinido’ apoyado en una dudosa y ególatra concepción del talento, del que se espera que nos cansemos más o menos pronto (...) la precariedad en sus diversas formas (la flexibilidad, la inestabilidad, la indeterminación de funciones, la (auto)explotación de las experiencias y emociones, la movilidad extrema, la escasez o inexistencia de salario), definen a casi todos los trabajos en el terreno de la producción cultural y la comunicación.”

<sup>179</sup> “cuestionar en profundidad la propia idea de lo que es un/a artista, empezar a pensar la creatividad como una capacidad y un instrumento colectivo y, en fin, pensar el arte como un trabajo político con un marco histórico bien definido.”

his eight film.<sup>180</sup> According to Gregorio Belinchón, public funds available for Spanish cinema are also considerably small: 70 millions in 2017, out of which 30 millions will be used to finish off expenses from 2015, leaving an effective budget of just 40 millions.<sup>181</sup> Yagüe explains:

This is very small and differential with respect to the rest of Europe. In Italy they were talking about getting four hundred million, right? The word from the national industry has always been that, if the fund reached ninety, one hundred million, we would be talking about a healthy industry, about the possibility that the budget lines of aid would be effective to work actively with the female producers who put together and build projects.<sup>182</sup>

There's no public subventions program for exhibition outside mainstream circuits. José Luis Palacios, co-director of the independent cinema hall "Artistic Metropol", narrates that, in order to sustain this space in Madrid, everything is private contribution and self-financing with the box office, which has to cover for maintenance expenses, governmental taxes and the distributors who own the rights of the films.<sup>183</sup> The cooperative model has also been adopted for exhibition, as in the case of the Cinema Association "Zoco Majadahonda." The neighbours, who have become cooperative members, rescued this movie theatre from bankruptcy. Another similar case is that of the Barcelona-based "Zumzeig" cooperative cinema, active since November 2006:

Zumzeig Cinecooperativa defends its activist nature in support of a pedagogy of the gaze (...) That's why it offers a committed and risky programming with the door always open to different languages and artistic disciplines. Its different cultural activities and its spaces for debate and reflection break the unidirectionality of the screen: presentations of films, meetings with

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<sup>180</sup> Notodo.com website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.notodo.com/cine-after-indie>>.

<sup>181</sup> El País newspaper website. Date of access: November 2018.

<[https://elpais.com/cultura/2017/04/04/actualidad/1491295790\\_550494.html](https://elpais.com/cultura/2017/04/04/actualidad/1491295790_550494.html)>

<sup>182</sup> "...es muy poco y es diferencial respecto a todo el resto de Europa. En Italia estaban hablando de conseguir cuatrocientos millones, ¿no? Siempre la indicación desde la industria nacional fue, que si el fondo llegara a los noventa, cien millones estaríamos hablando de una industria saneada, de esa posibilidad de que las líneas presupuestarias de ayuda fueran eficaces para trabajar activamente con las productoras que montan y levantan proyectos." Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>183</sup> Notodo.com website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.notodo.com/cine-after-indie>>.

filmmakers, film-clubs, concerts, “paelladas”, performances, debates, and many other formats yet to be explored.<sup>184</sup>

Other alternatives for exhibition are exemplified by projects like “Youfeelm” and “Screenly”, which work with a TOD system, i.e. Theatrical on Demand, carried out through online collaborative communities. They receive public funds and propose a model called “cinecracia”, which can be translated as “filmcracy”: the spectators decide what they want to see, when and where.<sup>185</sup> The crisis of the film industry is also countered with the increasing number of new technologies. Barcelona-based “Cooptechiques” is an example of a cooperative created with a feminist ethos:

A feminist self-employment project (...) We are cameras, web-mistresses, publishers, streamers, filmmakers, stop-motion artists, community managers, photography directors, sound artists, colourists, vjs, teachers, researchers. We are a production company, a learning laboratory, a collective. We believe in cooperative work created from an affinity network. Each of us, with different knowledge and experience, has already seen how it's done in the audiovisual industry and we want to change the rules. We want to work at ease and rely on mutual trust. We don't believe that maximum satisfaction with our work and between each other is achieved through competition (...) we are eager to build new ways of working to leave a state of precariousness behind, with projects that we are passionate about and with people with whom we share similar points of view about the society in which we live.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> “ZUMZEIG CINECOOPERATIVA defiende su carácter activista a favor de la pedagogía de la Mirada (...) Es por eso que ofrece una programación comprometida y arriesgada, con la puerta siempre abierta a diferentes lenguajes y disciplinas artísticas. Sus diferentes actividades culturales y sus espacios de debate y reflexión suponen una ruptura de la habitual unidireccionalidad de la pantalla: presentaciones de películas, charlas con realizadores, sesiones de cineclub, encuentros entre cineastas, conciertos, paelladas, mesas redondas y debates, performances y muchos otros formatos aún por explorar.” Date of access: November 2018. <<http://zumzeigcine.coop/es/que-hacemos/>>.

<sup>185</sup> In December 2018, the Spanish platform “Youfeelm” closed after having operated during four years.

<sup>186</sup> “Somos un proyecto de autoempleo feminista (...) Somos cámaras, web-misstress, editoras, streamers, realizadoras, artistas del stop-motion, community managers, directoras de fotografía, sonidistas, coloristas, vjs, docentes, investigadoras.. Somos una productora, un laboratorio de aprendizaje, un colectivo. Creemos en el trabajo cooperativo creado a partir de una red de afinidad. Cada una, con distinto conocimiento y experiencia, ya hemos visto cómo se juega en la industria audiovisual y queremos cambiar las reglas. Queremos trabajar a gusto y basarnos en la confianza mutua. No creemos que a base de competición se llegue a la máxima satisfacción con el trabajo y entre nosotras (...) tenemos ganas de construir nuevas maneras de trabajar para salir de la precariedad con proyectos que nos apasionen y con gente con la que compartimos puntos de vistas similares sobre la sociedad en la que vivimos.” Date of access: November 2018. <<http://cooptechiques.net/es/manifest/>>.



With this manifesto, filmmaker María Zafra and the four other members of “Cooptecnicas” reject the neoliberal model of the precarious cultural producer, who is easily exploited due to a false belief in her/his own freedom and autonomy (Lorey 2006).<sup>187</sup> Among their documentary productions we find *Tamaia 25 anys de sororitat front la violència masclista/Tamaia 25 Years of Sorority Against Male Violence\** (2017) and *Las pieceras/Women Who Work by Piece\** (2018). In *The Promise of Happiness?* Sara Ahmed asks: “how better to secure consent to unpaid or poorly paid labor than to describe such consent as the origin of good feeling?” (2010: 50). What these creators propose is a kind of filmmaking that attends to care and solidarity in the first place.

### 3.3.7 Sample Rationale

In this chapter I have presented an overview of the feminist agenda in the Spanish documentary film and video production. As an annex to this dissertation, I include the reference and synopsis of 128 Spanish documentary films that deal with gender issues, produced between 1969 and 2018.<sup>188</sup> I have referred to most of them in previous sections. We can identify **seven thematic blocks**, though in many cases topics overlap. **Gender-based violence** in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships is a recurrent issue, especially during the first decade of the century.<sup>189</sup> The specific case of sex trafficking can be considered a subgenre within the category of gender violence.<sup>190</sup> Another topic of the agenda is the **recovery of women’s herstories**.<sup>191</sup> In this category we can find some films devoted specifically to the recovery of the feminist movement memory.<sup>192</sup> Also

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<sup>187</sup> European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) website. Date of access: December 2018. <<http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/lorey/es/print>>.

<sup>188</sup> *Vid. Infra.* Annex 4. List of Spanish Documentary Films that Deal with Gender Issues. Whenever possible I have included the synopsis in English, but in a few cases, it was only available in Spanish. In all cases, I provide the source.

<sup>189</sup> *Amores que matan* (2000), *In...correctas 1* and *2* (2004, 2006), *De eso no se habla* (2007), *¿No queríais saber por qué las matan? Por nada* (2009), *La mujer, cosa de hombres* (2009), *Heridas* (2009), *Nagore* (2010), *Empieza en ti* (2010), *Vacíos* (2011), and *La maleta de Marta* (2013).

<sup>190</sup> *Voces contra la trata de mujeres* (2007), *Chicas nuevas 24 horas* (2015), *El proxeneta. Paso corto, mala leche* (2017), *Desnudas* (2017) and *Serás hombre* (2018).

<sup>191</sup> *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004), *Manola coge el autobús* (2005), (2008), *Señora de...* (2009), *Las constituyentes* (2011), *Las maestras de la República* (2013), *El gran vuelo* (2014), *Carmen Laforet. La chica rara* (2016), and *A palabra xusta* (2017).

<sup>192</sup> *La quadratura del cercle. Història del Bloc Feminista de Tarragona 1977-2001* (2005), *I moltes altres dones* (2007), *Vindicación* (2010), *Granada 30 años después. 5000 feminismos* (2010), *Asamblea de Mujeres de Granada: 40 años de lucha feminista* (2015), and *Excluidas del paraíso* (2016).

linked with this issue we find films documenting the presence of women in various social movements.<sup>193</sup>

Another category refers to the **right to one's body and sexual self-awareness**.<sup>194</sup> This is in close dialogue with the issue of **transgenderism and transsexualism**.<sup>195</sup> **Labour rights/women working conditions** is also an important topic in the feminist audiovisual agenda. Two aspects within this category have been highlighted: women working in traditionally male-labelled activities and precarity.<sup>196</sup> Several Spanish productions portray the **situation of women in other countries** without establishing any direct connection with Spain.<sup>197</sup> There are also documentary films that show the **difficulties faced by women immigrants in Spain**.<sup>198</sup>

The five Spanish case studies analysed in the next chapter were produced between 2013 and 2018. The process of selecting them ran parallel to the drafting of this chapter. I have tried to cover different subjects from the feminist agenda and diverse expressions of my four levels of analysis: content, form, production and reception.

My first case study, *Cuidado, resbala/Careful-Care, Slippery\** (María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suarez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno, 2013) can be considered within the categories labour rights/women working conditions and difficulties faced by women immigrants in Spain. Within a feminist economics framework, it portrays the discrimination faced by domestic workers. It is a realist documentary film made with a predominantly observational-participatory mode of representation. It has been used as an activist tool by domestic workers in the Spanish context. A feminist collective “La Mirada Invertida” (The Inverted Gaze) produced it in a cooperative way.

My second case study is *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad/My Choice. The Freedom Train* (Women Filmmakers’ Collective, 2014). It can be placed within the

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<sup>193</sup> *Ni locas ni terroristas* (2005), *Dormíamos, despertamos* (2012), *Tres instantes, un grito* (2014), and *Tomaremos las calles. Mujeres en Lucha* (2014).

<sup>194</sup> *Por el hecho de vivir* (2008), *La luna en ti* (2010), *Mi sexualidad es una creación artística* (2011), *Parts naturals. Benvingut a casa* (2014) and *Loba* (2015).

<sup>195</sup> *El camino de Moisés* (2002), *Escenario doble* (2004), *Fake Orgasm* (2010), *Guerriller@s* (2010); *Vidas transexuales* (2011), *Born Naked* (2012), *Tchindas* (2015), *El viaje de Carla* (2015), *Manolita, La Chen de Arcos* (2016), *Tomboys, marimachas, trans, bedesemerar* (2016), and *I Hate New York* (2018).

<sup>196</sup> *A la deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina* (2003), *La primavera* (2012) *Tocaoras* (2013), *Los recuerdos del hielo* (2013), *Joana Biarnés, una entre tots* (2016), *La niña del gancho* (2016), *Las pieceras* (2018), and *Hotel Explotación: Las Kellys/Hotel Exploitation: The Kellys* (2018).

<sup>197</sup> *Reyita* (2006), *Tapólogo* (2008), *En la próxima estación* (2010), *Cartografía de la soledad* (2011), *Donde viven las mujeres* (2012), *La mujer y el agua* (2013), *La guerra contra las mujeres* (2013), *Tanger Gool* (2014), *Boxing for Freedom* (2015), *Boliviana* (2015), *Muna* (2016), and *Boconas* (2016).

<sup>198</sup> *Extranjeras* (2003), *Manzanas, pollos y quimeras* (2013) and *En tránsito* (2016).

categories right to one's body and sexual self-awareness, while also being an audiovisual register of the feminist movement process, establishing dialogues between a contemporary fight and those held by feminist activists decades ago. This film portrays the massive demonstration against a bill banning the right to abortion. In terms of form, it is a realist documentary film made with an observational-participatory mode of representation. It is a collective non-profit work, which premiered at several movie theatres simultaneously and can be seen online for free.

My third case study, *No existimos/We Don't Exist* (Ana Solano, 2014), deals in an unconventional way with two issues of the feminist agenda: gender-based violence and the difficulties faced by women immigrants in Europe, specifically in Spain and France. This reflexive-performative documentary focuses on the violence suffered by women refugees in their home countries, during the transit, and in their host countries, but at the same time, it tries to question the violence of representation in itself. It is one of the two films from the sample that has received the "Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality" distinction and it has been screened as part of the "Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres." The filmmaker, a visual artist, was also the producer.

The fourth case study, *Yes, We Fuck!* (Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena, 2015), is the only film in my sample directed by cismen. It touches the categories: right to one's body, sexual self-awareness and transgenderism. It's a feminist postporn film, located at the intersection between gender and disability/functional diversity studies, and what has been called Crip-Queer alliances (García Santesmases et al. 2017). It's a realistic documentary film that was conceived as an activist collective project. It was self-financed with crowdfunding support and has been screened in several national and international film festivals, as well as social venues. It's available online for free.

My fifth case study, *Serás Hombre/You'll Be a Man* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2018), deals with the issues of sex trafficking and gender-based violence but shifting the attention from women as victims to the role that men and the construction of masculinity within a patriarchal framework play in the perpetuation of violence. Made within industrial standards, the post-production process was financed through a crowdfunding campaign. In this particular case, I had the chance of doing fieldwork during the pre-production and shooting phases of the film. I also held several interviews with the director at different moments of the film production because she was one of the expert advisors for the GRACE project.

## Chapter 4. Spanish Case Studies.

### 4.1 *Cuidado, resbala/Careful-Care, Slippery\** (María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suárez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno, 2013)

If we talk about vulnerabilities or unequal treatment, I think that here all three things come together: being a woman, a migrant, and a domestic worker. (Carolina Suárez. One of the directors of *Cuidado, resbala*).<sup>199</sup>

The title of the documentary film *Cuidado, resbala* plays with the two meanings of the word “cuidado” in Spanish, so that it can be roughly translated as *Caution/Care Slippery*. It is directed by two psychologists, a pedagogue, a lawyer, a teacher and a filmmaker (María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suárez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno) from two different associations based in Málaga, Spain: “Circle of Women” and “The Inverted Gaze”. The subject matter of the film locates it within two categories of the Spanish agenda: labour rights/women working conditions and difficulties faced by women immigrants in Spain. Specifically, it exposes the discrimination encountered by domestic workers with the help of a feminist economics framework that places care labour at the centre.

The analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. In the case of form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close read it diffractively with the theoretical apparatus developed in previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises gender in/equalities through its practices.

As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by directors Montserrat Clos, Carolina Suárez and Leonor Jiménez during an interview held in 2017. I also incorporate the comments that director Vanessa Gómez sent to me one week later by e-mail. I compare and contrast this data with opinions expressed by people who attended two different screenings in Granada, one organised by a local feminist group in June 2016, and the other one organised at the University of Granada as part of a dissemination

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<sup>199</sup> “Si hablamos de vulnerabilidades o de desigual trato, yo creo que ahí se juntan las tres cosas. Por ser mujer, por ser migrante, por ser empleada doméstica.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

event within the GRACE project, which took place on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018. Finally, I discuss two reviews written in 2016, one published in the independent newspaper *Diagonal* and another one in a personal blog.

#### **4.1.1 Form and Content: Rendering Visible the Hidden Part of the Iceberg**

*Cuidado, resbala* is divided into twenty-nine segments, subdivided into various sections. These can be classified into six narrative waves that are entangled throughout the film: wave 1, reflexive voice-over; wave 2, voices of domestic workers; wave 3, interviews with academic experts; wave 4 animation; wave 5, organisations of/for domestic workers; and wave 6, images of demonstrations. Each segment is described below.<sup>200</sup>

1. Introduction. Title, credits and opening questions (wave 1, reflexive voice-over).

1.1 On a black screen, we read lines from the Uruguayan poet, Mario Benedetti: “Your battle without a medal / the modesty of your possible pride / and your safe hand are useful for me / yes, they are / your path serves me, my female companion” (Min. 00:08). Then we read a short dedication, “To Tati” (Min. 00:15).

1.2 Wide shots of a plane arriving at the airport of Málaga, Spain. We follow a woman from behind, never look at her face, as she walks in the airport, in the streets of Málaga, in employment offices, in the train, as she reads the newspaper, looks at the sea, and works in a house, taking care of an old man. All along these shots, we hear a female voice-over with a Latin American accent, which we assume belongs to this woman. She narrates her experience and the reasons for making this documentary film:

I arrived in Spain in 2002 (...) passports, papers, visas and borders acquired a meaning and importance they had never had before (...) the first few years I worked as a caregiver (...) at the employment office I discovered with surprise that when I had been a domestic worker with papers, despite this figuring in my employment history, it did not allow me to collect unemployment benefit. Thus I got to know that domestic work belonged to a special scheme (...) with the “Circle of Women” collective we wanted to investigate the circumstances of domestic workers, understand why their situation is so unfair and look for

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<sup>200</sup> The language spoken in the film is Spanish. There is no version with English subtitles available. All translations are mine. I decided not to include the original Spanish texts in order to avoid overburdening the dissertation. The complete documentary is available online for free: <<https://vimeo.com/67552738>>.

alternatives (...) This documentary is the result of our research, which is still ongoing. (Min. 00:34).

1.3 Logos of the film producers on a black screen: Circle of Women, Málaga City Council and The Inverted Gaze.

1.4 We listen to lively music as the camera, with a subjective gaze, travels through the various spaces of a flat which has just been cleaned: the living room, the kitchen, the bedroom. The music remains in the background as we hear domestic sounds (e.g. vacuum cleaner, running water, telephone ringing). The movement of the camera begins slowly, but gets faster as it pans across the walls, generating a sensation of entrapment. It stops suddenly at the front door, where the title of the film appears. Fade to black.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride, surprise, anger and desperation.

2. Domestic workers in a small group dynamic (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

We see location long shots of the façade and lobby of “La Casa Invisible”, a sociocultural centre managed by citizens. A caption states that this is an encounter of domestic workers in Málaga. Domestic workers from different countries are shown in close-ups as they share their experiences, how they feel, what they want and the problems they face:

Aidéé Álvarez, Bolivia: I did not think I would come to work caring for elderly people, taking care of children or cleaning (...) Any paid work, well treated and done with responsibility I think is good (...) But a job that deprives you of your dignity, that is no good for anyone. (Min. 4:25).

Marta Isabel Peluso, Argentina: I feel frustrated because I studied something else. (Min. 5:00).

Elvia Cuero, Ecuador: There is much discrimination against people of colour. (Min. 5:12).

Ana Rueda, Spain: One has to work a lot. (Min. 5:20).

Alejandrina Huaman, Peru: What I earn is partly to help my children. (Min. 5:33).

María Julia Pérez, Cuba: It is so hard to earn money (...) [I am like] a kangaroo because I spend the day jumping from house to house to manage to get a thousand euros, and out of those thousand I have to pay 500 for the monthly rent. We are not ambitious. We settle for little because in our countries we could really have a lot less but we would like to be given a little more value (...) I pay taxes. I want to pay my social security because I will not leave (...) I want my rights. (Min. 5:40).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: frustration, exhaustion and anger.

3. Block of interviews about care labour (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Economist Amaia Pérez Orozco is sitting in a city square. Her medium close-up is combined with close-ups and details of her hands, as she explains what care labour is:

Care can be defined as the set of activities that allows us to regenerate people's physical and emotional well-being day by day. In that sense, care involves what we have traditionally called domestic work (...) and then also the tasks that have to do with attending the actual bodies, washing a child, feeding him. (Min. 6:44).

The interview with Pérez Orozco is interleaved with an interview of anthropologist and ecofeminist, Yayo Herrero. She is also sitting on a city square, in medium close-up. She says: "Throughout our life cycle, we exist and lead dignified lives because there are people who dedicate a lot of time for this to be like that" (Min. 7:12). Then we go back to the close-up of Pérez Orozco as she explains: "It is a lifelong necessity for everybody. Because there is a discourse, which says that only those who are called dependent need to be taken care of" (Min. 7:25). The segment ends with a medium close-up of Herrero explaining the entanglements between care labour and sexual division of labour:

Care work covers and manages daily well being (...). In the patriarchal societies in which we live, this has been strictly confined to the domestic sphere (...) given the imbalance and the power relationship that exists, it has been placed on the shoulders of women, who have been the only ones to have attended to these types of task. (Min. 7:34).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

#### 4. Expository animated sequence about the global care chain (wave 4 animation).

The female voice-over with a Latin American accent explains the intersections of gender, class and nationality in the global care chain: women from the Global South that have migrated to the Global North are being exploited as domestic workers, so that women from the so-called first countries can conciliate their professions with household chores. The animation illustrates the explanation with drawings that are predominantly in black and white. We see a house, women with brooms and diverse representations of domestic workers:

Domestic work covers all the household tasks. Cleaning the house, preparing food, washing and care of clothing and footwear, shopping, and care and education of children. Work done by the person who owns the house, which in most cases is a woman. This woman is called a housewife (...) 90% of domestic work is done by women. If there's no time but there's money, there has always been an option B: to hire another woman to do the work. The person who replaces the housewife is called a domestic worker (...) sometimes she lives in the house of the employer and is called a live-in domestic. (Min. 8:02).

The explanation continues as a historical revision, which is illustrated with images of women carrying out cleaning activities in different historical periods. As the voice-over talks about colonialism, we see a map of Spain with images of slaves. Then there's a portrait of a heterosexual family from the Enlightenment, within a cycle of economic reproduction. The Industrial Revolution is pictured with images from people moving from the countryside to factories and houses:

Since prehistory, domestic work has been linked to colonialism, slavery and other forms of servitude. But it is with the Enlightenment that the idea of women having to carry out the feminine and simple task of caring at home, and men having the harsh responsibility of working outside in exchange for money, is strengthened. This is called the sexual division of labour, represented through the nuclear family, which was essential for the functioning of the market society. With the Industrial Revolution, whole families came from the countryside to work in the factories. Many women also served as maids in the houses of the new industrial bourgeoisie. (Min. 9:08).



As the voice-over narrates the specific case of Spain, we see a map of this country covered with distressed female domestic workers. There's a temporal division in the seventies, with a variety of non-heterosexual families and feminist demonstrations. Women are portrayed as lost in working spaces full of men. Then we see a woman inside a house, while a big man in a tuxedo smokes and looks at her with a menacing gesture:

In Spain, extreme poverty and migrations caused by the Civil War turned millions of adolescents into maidservants in exchange for room and board. But from the seventies on, the prevailing conservatism entered into crisis and one of its bastions, the nuclear family, began to be questioned. Feminist struggles on this issue had a lot to do with it. Women en masse began to enter a labour market made by men for men, designed exclusively for people who had never cared for anyone. This is what some feminist theorists call the care crisis (...) Men, the state and companies still do not share one hundred per cent in the tasks of care. (Min. 9:54).

The next temporal division is during the nineties. Globalisation is pictured with a map of the world, within which women from the south migrate to the north, and then those from the north move from the house to the factory:

Since the 1990s, globalisation, inequalities and the need for caregivers have led to large migrations from the southern countries to the northern countries to work as domestic workers. These are called global chains of care and intersect two crises. On the one hand, women who migrate leave their sons and daughters in the care of another woman in the family and, on the other hand, those same women who leave their countries and care for their own, come to care for the children of women from the northern countries, so that they can join the labour market. (Min. 10:45).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress and entrapment.

##### 5. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

The camera observes Ana Rueda, a Spanish domestic worker who appears also in segment 2, as she carries out domestic chores in the kitchen and listens to the radio news. These images are interleaved with an interview with her, in medium shot and close-ups, and some images of her reading an electronic book. She says:

There was extended poverty and a well-to-do middle class. So, for very little money (...) from Monday to Sunday, there was no rest (...) you went in and they took away your personality, they put you in a uniform and you were practically nothing (...) My poor mother, what she cared about was if I had food to eat (...) we started to wake up a little bit because we started to feel a bit more like people (...) I've never been submissive, I worked because I had to work (...) we started to gather [with other domestic workers] (...) one day I said to the madam: "I will not come on Sunday anymore" (...) You have to value your work, if you do not value it, the madam will not value it. (Min. 11:49).

The sequence closes with different extreme wide shots of buildings in Málaga; through one of the windows we see a domestic worker cleaning. As these images change, we listen to the radio news, in which they talk about the bank rescue in Spain.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: courage and anger.

6. Interview with a nun (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers).

Wide shot of the façade of the Domestic Service Centre "Religiosas de María Inmaculada". In medium shot we see María Victoria, one of the nuns, as she gives an interview. Her images are combined with long shots of domestic workers doing different group activities at the centre; most of them are immigrants. The nun describes how care labour can get very specialised:

It should be like: a cook, one salary; a nurse, another salary; a teacher, another salary. Not in all cases do they request these services, but in many they do. What has happened? This has opened the doors to a great number of immigrants because none of the Spanish women want to work like this, even less as live-in domestic workers. (Min. 16:46).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and anger.

7. Interview with a broadcaster and domestic worker (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers; wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

Wide shot in the interior of a radio station, which then moves to a close shot of the broadcaster, Natividad Daza Vides, as she says: "Here we are in Latinísima, your program with a Bolivian accent" (Min. 17:37). Then we see her in medium close-up and close-up as she tells her story and that of the Association "Friends of Bolivia". The

images of the interview are combined with full shots of her cleaning a house, and wide shots of groups of immigrants in the association:

It was necessary to have an association because the people who came from Bolivia had to be welcomed, had to be oriented to look for work (...) I found work as a live-in domestic worker (...) for me it was like being in prison, I did not have freedom (...) I would go into my room and cry (...) until one day I exploded (...) I came due to necessity but not to be humiliated by anyone (...) I got another job with an elderly couple who were very good with me (...) care for me is extremely important, not only to give love, but also to know how to do it. (Min. 17:48).

The camera goes back to the radio station. Natividad Daza reads a piece of news about domestic work in the world and the specific problems faced in Spain, where the ministry of employment doesn't have a regulation to solve the problem:

About 600,000 people are employed in domestic work (...) By the end of August 2012, only 83,511 workers had been affiliated to the recent special system for domestic workers (...) most of them work in the underground economy (...) the Ministry of Employment has no special mechanism to solve the problem of these people, many of them immigrants. (Min. 21:25).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, anger, despair and love.

8. Expository animated sequence about the legal status of care labour (wave 4 animation).

The female voice-over with a Latin American accent explains the unfair legal status of care labour, the specific context of Spain as a member of the European Union, which is in an economic crisis, and the shift of domestic work from the special to the general scheme. The animation illustrates the explanation with drawings that are predominantly in black and white. We see a demonstration of workers, a woman with a broom to whom different items are denied or given, and an immigrant who is expelled from Europe:

Domestic workers have remained far removed from the improvements in working conditions achieved by the trade union and labour movement that kept

them on the sidelines. Domestic work was not regulated in Spain until 1985, with the special scheme for domestic workers. It was a regulation that differed from the rest of jobs and very discriminatory (...). A living wage was not recognised, it was not compulsory to have a written contract of employment (...). Immigrant domestic workers, not having an employment contract, could not regularise their situation in Spain. (Min. 22:14).

The temporal division of the nineties also shows a demonstration, this time of female domestic workers. Then, we see a politician writing at his desk, and newspapers on which we see the print information:

In the nineties, the first associations of domestic workers emerged with the aim of demanding the recognition of their rights, but it was not until 2008 that the political agenda started to consider the issue of the rights of domestic workers at the same level as those for other self-employed workers. Finally, for various reasons, the possibility of a reform was removed. In 2010, the EU required all members to override special regulations on domestic service. In 2011, Zapatero's government and major unions signed a new regulation to integrate domestic work into the general scheme. Between 2008 and 2012, Spain entered into an economic and financial crisis (...) The cuts in labour rights did not stop. (Min. 23:24).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

9. Block of interviews about legal conditions (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Jurist Mercedes Cordero, in medium close-up and close-up, explains what the general scheme entails for domestic work:

It is an advance in the recognition of the rights of domestic workers such as the written contract (...) the recognition of sick leave (...) among the aspects that still need to be developed is the non-recognition of unemployment benefit (...). You leave aside the domestic workers themselves, who, from my point of view, should be the valid interlocutors in these negotiations, they should be represented at this table, they should state their claims themselves. (Min. 24:23).

Affect/emotion evoked in this segment: anger.

10. Interview with a broadcaster and domestic worker (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers; wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

Daza Vides, whom we saw in segment 7, is interviewed in medium close-up, complementing what Mercedes Cordero said:

Now we, the domestic workers, have to raise awareness with our bosses so that we can move from the special scheme to the general one. Because there will be many domestic workers who are going to lose their jobs just due to that, because many employers will say “I cannot do it because it costs me more”. (Min. 26:56).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: impotence and frustration.

11. Interview with a nun (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers).

In medium shot we see María Victoria, the nun from segment 6, as she continues explaining the problem with the general scheme:

There are many families who really cannot, with the crisis now (...) there are employers who have had to dismiss the employee (...) employers who are going to risk having employees without papers (...) they are firing them all, but more those who have papers because they cannot afford to pay them. (Min. 27:15).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: despair.

12. Block of interviews about the general scheme (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Economist Pérez Orozco, whom we saw in segment 3, is shown in full shot and in close-up, sitting in a city square. She elaborates further on the general scheme:

Obviously, it is an improvement over the previous one because the special scheme of domestic work was a clear case of indirect discrimination on the basis of sex (...) Now the issue is for it to be truly respected (...) to inform employees and employers, because sometimes there is absolute ignorance about it. (Min. 28:30).

Close-up of jurist Cordero, as she says that the legal aspects of the general scheme are not enough; rather “we should make a broader and more complex reflection of how society is organised to meet the care needs of everybody” (Min. 29:42).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: satisfaction and mistrust.

13. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

Two domestic workers from Nicaragua, Luz Marina and Auxiliadora Medina, are shown in close and medium shots as they see photos of their relatives and their country in a computer. These images are combined with medium and close shots of Luz Marina, who is pregnant: “They tell you that you’re going to work six hours but at the end you work eight, nine hours (...) the one who is pregnant is fired (...) you cannot save money” (Min. 31:00).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: impotence, distress and nostalgia.

14. Block of interviews about the global care chain (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Anthropologist and ecofeminist Herrera, whom we saw in segment 3, is shown in medium close-up. She elaborates on the unequal global care chain:

Just as in our rich societies we live on the raw materials that are being exploited from the countries of the south, in the domestic sphere something similar has been happening. Right now, many women from the same countries from which these raw materials come, are carrying out a large part of the domestic work in our cities. That is why, just as we speak of an environmental debt, the debt that we have with these southern countries, we could speak of a kind of caregiving debt, which our society has contracted with the women of these countries, for the unequal use that is made of their energies. (Min. 32:42).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: greed and anger.

15. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

In medium shot we see Medina, from Nicaragua, as she recalls her experience: “I imagined work, respect (...) but none of that has happened (...) I left the father of my daughter, my parents, my other sister. It was difficult to leave everything behind” (Min. 33:43).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: hope, nostalgia and distress.

16. Block of interviews about the global care chain (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Economist Pérez Orozco is shown in medium close-up and close-up, sitting in the same city square we have seen in previous segments. She elaborates further on the implications of the global care chain for women who leave their home countries:

When a woman migrates there are profound changes in their place of origin (...) when men migrate, to the extent that when they leave, they continue to fulfil their presupposed role of income providers, nothing changes too much (...) when women leave, the first thing to say is that there are profound changes, even if they continue to send remittances, because they cannot fulfil that role of everyday care anymore. (Min. 34:10).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress.

17. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

In medium shot and close-ups we see Medina once again, as she describes her working conditions: “They tell you that you’re going to win, as a live-in domestic worker, 900 euros (...) but in the end that’s a lie (...) I work from nine o’clock at night to one o’clock in the afternoon (...) What does care mean for me? It means a job, to survive” (Min. 34:53).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: hope, disappointment, anger, distress, exhaustion and despair.

18. Interview with a worker from a labour insertion company (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers).

In medium close-up, sitting at her desk, we see Andrea Barbotta from “Acompaña”, a labour insertion company. She explains the conditions that employers search for in a caretaker:

Here I have several budgets (...) I have explained to them that a person cannot work so many hours, because it is also without rest. When I explained to them that they have to hire two people, and obviously the budget has risen because there are now two people with many hours of work, they reject it. (Min. 36:33).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: impotence and distress.

19. Block of interviews about the global care chain (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Economist Amaia Pérez Orozco is shown in a medium close-up, sitting in the same city square we have seen in previous segments. Close shots of her hands and face are interleaved as we listen to her explanation about lack of collective responsibility for care:

Global care chains, both at origin and destination, serve as an escape valve that gives individual solutions to collective problems. The absence of educational, sanitary, social security systems (...) The gaps that arise from there, that there is no collective responsibility to guarantee life, mean that many people, and many women in particular, leave. And to the extent that it can be solved in an individualised way, this inhibits the demand for collective responses. But in the place of destination it is the same. In destination country, migrant women are being hired as domestic workers because there is no collective responsibility to guarantee the care that the population needs (...) women in particular seek out individual solutions, and the most comfortable, the easiest, the cheapest, is to hire domestic labour. And to the extent that you individually solve the problem, you do not plan to build a political conflict from there and demand changes. (Min. 37:35).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: entrapment, distress and impotence.

20. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

Close-ups and full shots of Maimuna Ndiaye from Senegal, walking in the streets of Málaga with a girl and a female friend. These images are interleaved with medium close-ups of her, as she narrates her experience as a domestic worker in an interview:

When we say “Europe”, we get very happy. So, when they told me to go to Europe, I came to Europe with them. I finished work at 11 o’clock at night. I did not have a day off. There was not an hour’s rest. All day long I was working (...) The madam and the children loved me very much, but the mister did not. He insulted you, shouted at you, frightened you (...) I earned 150 euros a month. (Min. 39:00).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: hope, joy, exhaustion, fear and love.

21. Interview with a worker from a labour insertion company (wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers).



Close-up of Barbotta, whom we have seen in fragment 18, from “Acompanya”, a labour insertion company. She gives further information about the exploitation of immigrant domestic workers:

They have been working under conditions, from my point of view, unworthy of anyone. Often people believe that being a domestic worker, especially a live-in one, is synonymous with slavery (...) they have told them “if you are an immigrant and you do not have a house, how dare you complain about what I am giving you”. (Min. 40:41).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: impotence and humiliation.

22. Testimony of a domestic worker (wave 2, voices of domestic workers).

Close-ups of Ndiaye from Senegal, whom we saw in segment 20, as she continues narrating her experience as a domestic worker. The images are again combined with full shots of her walking in the streets of Málaga. She recalls a person, who told her that the only way for her to get papers was to marry a Spanish man, but she refused because she knew that, by having worked for four years, she could also get her papers. Then she narrates how she got a mobile phone and managed to contact a cousin, Mohammed Barry. He is shown in close-up, sitting next to her. He says: “She told me that his boss took away her cell phone (...) I saw where she lived and I thought she was in a better situation because it was a luxury house (...) I told her we have to open our eyes, little by little, until the time came to sue her boss” (Min. 43:11).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and courage.

23. Block of interviews about the care crisis (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

Economist Pérez Orozco is shown in a medium close-up, sitting in the same city square we have seen in previous segments. She explains the meaning of the care crisis:

When we speak of a care crisis, what we mean is that the previous model of distribution of care labour has been destabilised. It was a model that generated some social peace even though it was deeply unjust and based on the classical sexual division of labour. It blew apart for different reasons. The insertion of women in the labour market is usually mentioned. Above all, it is a matter of changes in life expectations, that you do not want to build yourself as a woman, just taking care of everyone else, but you want to do other things in life. Then,

suddenly, it is clear that it is very difficult to do other things in life, if you alone are bearing the responsibility of caregiving (...) factors we do not usually talk about, the precariousness of the labour market (...) Making working hours more flexible, work spaces more flexible, then it becomes impossible to make any daily arrangement of care labour that is minimally stable (...) the process of the individualisation of life, the increasingly individualised management of life puts a lot of pressure on smaller units. (Min. 44:00).

Anthropologist and ecofeminist Herrera, whom we have seen in previous segments, says:

The system has been busy in saying that we are in a deep economic crisis, when what we really are at is a time of scam and brutal assault of the public. I mean, there would be no problem getting out of this crisis with social criteria and with the criteria of justice, if it were not because what basically is being intended is to revitalise, to regain capital, wherever it comes from (...) underneath this crisis there is a real structural crisis, on the one hand deeply environmental and on the other hand a social crisis (...) at this time of widespread cuts, the whole task of cushioning all these structural tensions is delegated to the domestic sphere. (Min. 45:39).

The sequence finishes with extreme wide shots of Málaga city landscapes, as we listen to the radio news, stating that the Spanish government of Mariano Rajoy is cutting down on pensions.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: confusion, instability and anger.

24. Reflections of a domestic worker (wave 1, reflexive voice-over).

Extreme wide shot of the city of Málaga getting dark until the image fades to black. The female voice-over with a Latin American accent from segment one reflects on the process experienced by the domestic workers: “How can some women live their situation in the most absolute helplessness, while others instead have become empowered to demand their rights? Inevitably, one of the answers to this question is the union with others, recognising ourselves in many others, whose experiences are united with ours” (Min. 47:36).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress and hope.

25. Domestic workers in an organisation (wave 2, voices of domestic workers; wave 5, organisations for/of domestic workers; wave 6, public demonstrations).

Establishing shot of Madrid. Wide shot of the façade of the “Eskalera Karakola Public House of Women”. We see various long shots of the house and a reunion of domestic workers having a vegetarian lunch.

25.1 Long shots of an assembly of the “Domestic Territory” collective. Around ten female domestic workers sit in a circle. One of them says: “There is a common voice, it is evident that there is a collective voice” (Min. 48:39). Another one adds: “It is a political struggle, but a festive and celebratory one” (Min. 48:54).

25.2 Medium shots and close-ups of a conversation with six members of the “Domestic Territory” collective on a terrace in Madrid.

Mariela Loaiza, from Colombia, recalls: “Several women gather around this initiative and from there arises the idea, first as Sedoa (...) then as Domestic Territory (...) Women claiming rights, would be our motto because it is more or less what we have been doing” (Min. 49:16). The images from the women in the terrace are combined with archival footage from domestic workers’ demonstrations and performances in Madrid. Loaiza continues: “a group of women demanding with eagerness and anxiety that our work gets valued” (Min. 50:08).

Close-up of Claudia Arias from Honduras, as she says: “It isn’t just the struggle for rights, but a way of sharing our experiences” (Min. 50:24). Loaiza adds: “It is quite enriching because you realise that, despite the nationality of the partner who is next to you in the meeting, she has the same problems that you have” (Min. 50:33). Rafaela Pimentel, from the Dominican Republic mentions the importance of communication as a strategy. Loaiza recalls:

Realising the importance of joining together, we cannot do it alone, but as a group, together and united with other groups, we are capable (...) what would happen if we stopped going to work one day? (...) our work within society is very important (...) that’s how we came to that motto, “Because without us, the world does not move” (Min. 51:07).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride, joy, strength and empathy.

26. Block of interviews about the neglected responsibilities of the State and companies in terms of care labour, and possible alternatives (wave 3, interviews with academic experts).

We listen to the voice-over of economist Pérez Orozco, as we see images of people from diverse nationalities, some couples, some with children, walking in the streets of Málaga. The camera is felt as it moves, from a close-up of Orozco, to a couple of girls walking together behind her. Then it moves back to a medium close-up as she explains:

The state neglects its responsibility to people's welfare. The health system could not survive without the unpaid or underpaid care labour of women (...) but not only the state, I think the key is to think that companies, the capitalist system ultimately, can survive only to the extent that it constantly delegates the responsibility of sustaining life to the invisible domains. (Min. 53:50).

Anthropologist and ecofeminist Herrera, whom we have seen in previous segments, is shown again in medium close-up. She explains:

Our system, in which the economy is absolutely hypertrophied, has become like a huge iceberg in the visible part of which we find the world of paid work, shopping, business and markets; and in the invisible part, which can be deteriorated and exploited, we find the exploitation of paid workers, the world of all the domestic work that can be exploited and all the deterioration of the natural world, goods that will not be available never again. (Min. 54:28).

We see Pérez Orozco in medium close-ups, combined with portraits of people from diverse ages and backgrounds, walking around the streets of Málaga. She says:

Domestic work should tend to disappear. Because care labour should be organised in a more collective way, I mean, it is not the same to talk about a domestic worker who is caring for children while their parents go to the labour market; then we should talk about what would happen if there were children's schools and if the labour market was organised according to the needs of the people and not of the companies (...) another situation is that of a domestic worker who cares for an elderly person who cannot take care of himself; and there we should probably talk about public care services. And another situation is a domestic worker who cleans the house and prepares food for a young executive who prefers to devote all his time to his job (...) that young executive should be in charge of cooking his own food and cleaning his own shit. Because that is the

defining element of unequal societies, societies where care is not valued and where those who can, don't do their own care but delegate it, and where there is no social responsibility to take care of life. It could be re-directed if, instead of directly hiring a person, you could buy a service; rather than an individual employer-employee relationship, the employees could organise themselves collectively (...) cooperatives of domestic workers (Min. 55:13).

Herrera is shown again in medium close-up and close-up. She continues explaining:

We live in a world in which the centre is occupied by the markets, and what we call progress, and what we call welfare, is basically economic growth, and that is why the feminist economy asks three questions (...) what are the needs we all have? Because capitalism does not speak of needs, it speaks of demands. Second, what are the productions required to meet those needs? And lastly, what are the socially necessary jobs to meet those needs? If we ask this, we realise that many of the best-paid jobs by the market are not only socially unnecessary, but also socially undesirable and should disappear. However, other jobs that are essential to sustain lives that are worth living, would have to grow a lot (...) the topic of assistance and care of people cannot be put aside. What is essential to work on is the parity of men in the private sphere (...) men and society have to take charge, whether they want to or not, of care labour. (Min. 57:15).

As we see images of people walking alone, in couples or groups around the streets of Málaga, we listen to Pérez Orozco saying: “without care labour, there is no life” (Min. 59:00).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and hope.

27. General strike (wave 6, images of demonstrations).

We see diverse wide shots of the participants at a general “Care Strike” in Málaga, on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012. A young woman with a speaker reads out a manifesto:

Is there life before death? Our strike is the strike of the people who put life at the centre. Our strike is the strike of the undocumented migrants, the unemployed, caregivers and domestic workers, sex workers, the elderly, girls and boys, sick people, those with functional diversity, trans people, the homeless, the indigents and all those who live on the margins. (Min. 59:40).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

28. Concluding reflections (wave 1, reflexive voice-over).

We see again the travelling of a subjective camera around the various spaces of a flat, which opens the film: the living room, the kitchen, the bedroom. The movement of the camera stops at the front door. All along we hear the same female voice-over with a Latin American accent. There's soft music in the background. She concludes:

The current crisis affects the organisation of care. The most dramatic aspects of these adjustments are faced in the domestic sphere. Without questioning, without aid, without co-responsibility and with the gaze placed only on the mandates of the markets, this crisis is causing care labour to be once again carried out almost exclusively at home and deposited in the hands of women. (Min. 1:01:46).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: entrapment and distress.

29. Credits in white on a black screen as the music continues: the names of the six directors and scriptwriters, followed by the four producers. The voice-over belongs to one of the directors, Carolina Suárez. The editing was done by another one of the directors, Leonor Jiménez. The animation was carried out by "How Audiovisuales". The background music is replaced by a song of the domestic workers collective, which says: "Get up domestic worker, fight for your rights and for your visibility" (Min. 1:02:58). The last image is a medium shot of the five women from "Domestic Territory" who were singing the song.

#### 4.1.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis<sup>201</sup>

Feminist economics, as explained in the film by economist Amaia Pérez Orozco and ecofeminist Yayo Herrero, proposes the metaphor of an iceberg to describe the current socio-economic system: a hierarchical organisation sustained by inequalities, in which the production and distribution processes of the markets occupy the visible part, while life development tasks, such as care labour, remain invisible. These are differences and exclusions that matter. The invisibility of care labour as an economic activity is

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<sup>201</sup> A short version of this analysis was published as an article in *Feminist Media Studies*, under the title "Feminist documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus for the visualisation of care labour: the Spanish collective film *Cuidado, resbala* (2013)" (Calderón 2017).

materialised in the conditions under which women, without social or monetary recognition, generally carry it out.

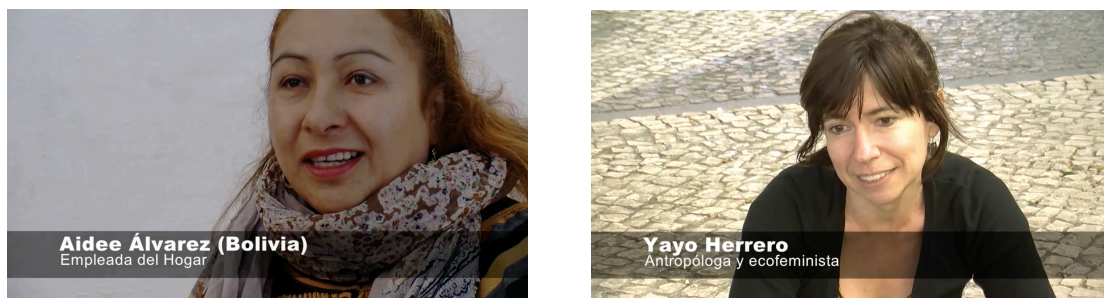
*Cuidado, resbala* can be analysed as a **diffraction apparatus** that renders visible the hidden part of the iceberg described by feminist economics. The concept of diffraction apparatus, as stated in the first chapter, has been elaborated by Karen Barad to define material-discursive practices that make boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways. These practices “enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad 2007: 148) in each intra-action with the world.

Depending on how the diffraction apparatus-film is constructed, the recorded and shown phenomena will “emerge in particular ways, and through particular cuts” (Sauzet 2015: 41). In documentary cinema, this can be translated into the framing and editing decisions: the cuts that the filmmakers enact “produce determinate boundaries and properties of ‘entities’ within phenomena” (Barad 2007: 148). In the case of *Cuidado, resbala*, the feminist ethos that informs these cuts re-enacts what matters in a socio-economic system from a feminist perspective: to begin with, care labour is placed at the centre, instead of being left at the hidden part of the iceberg.

In this way, this film also provides an example of **feminist countervisuality**, “the performative claim of a right to look where none technically exists” (Mirzoeff 2011: 478), which can manage “to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a new seeing” (Minh-ha 2005: 13). *Cuidado, resbala* aims at explaining gendered inequalities surrounding care labour in the current socio-economic system, so as to change our way of understanding how societies are organised.

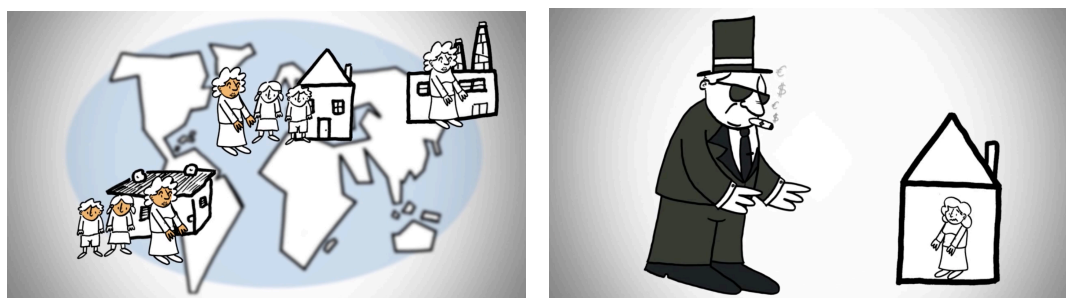
To employ diffraction as the approach to analyse a film means paying attention to the importance of the form in which it produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality**, in terms of how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). Using Bill Nichols’s typology of modes of representation in documentary cinema (2010), we can classify *Cuidado, resbala* as an observational-participatory documentary film, with a couple of expository animated sequences, and a reflexive voice-over that opens and closes the film. We can therefore talk of a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592), composed of six different **narrative waves**: wave 1, reflexive voice-over; wave 2, voices of domestic workers; wave 3, interviews with academic experts; wave 4 animation; wave 5, organisations of/for domestic workers; and wave 6, images of demonstrations.

Through a diffractive lens, we can visualise how these waves overlap within the **film editing**, hence revealing diverse and apparently spread insights on the issue of care labour as entangled. This strategy allows us to place two narrative waves at the same level: the voices of the domestic workers and the voices of the academic experts interviewed for the film (feminist economist Amaia Pérez Orozco, ecofeminist anthropologist Yayo Herrero, and jurist Mercedes Cordero). In this way, **knowledge is being produced in a horizontal way** that entangles insights from personal experience with those from academic backgrounds (figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Talking heads of domestic workers and feminist academic experts

This is further developed with wave 4, the animation in which a female voice-over explains the intersections of gender, class and nationality in the global care chain: women from the Global South that have migrated to the Global North are being exploited as domestic workers, so that women from the so-called first countries can conciliate their professions with household chores. Neither men, nor industries, nor the State assume any responsibility for care labour. Some care services are privatised, but as a whole, this only aggravates inequalities. The black and white drawings that illustrate this explanation manage to present complex issues in a fun and light, pedagogic way (figure 13).



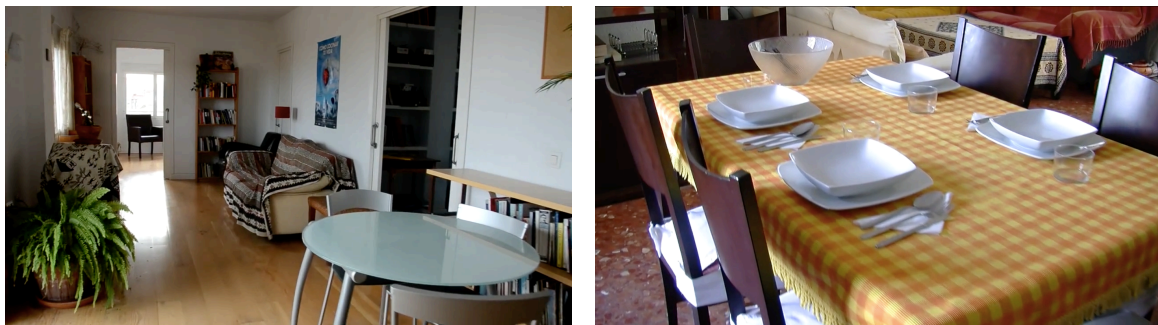
**Figure 13.** Animation: gender, class and nationality in the global care chain

The voice-over of wave 1 belongs to Carolina Suárez Rasmussen, one of the film directors, a member of the “Circle of Women” association and a migrant from Argentina



who worked as a domestic worker in Spain for three years. The film starts with her testimony about finding out that domestic labour doesn't have the same legal status as other jobs, and finishes with her account of how the **personal conflicts** she has faced are connected with that fact, and thus **have a collective political dimension**. This is key for reading *Cuidado, resbala* as a **research journey**, and what she is looking for is exactly what a diffractive reading focuses on, i.e. "how different differences get made" (Barad 2007: 30) and the effects they provoke. Throughout the film, the viewer is encouraged to recognise the way in which care labour is rendered invisible, labelled as different from other jobs within the patriarchal and neoliberal socio-economic system, placing the responsibility for life care on individuals, mainly women.

The opening and closing sequences with the reflexive voice-over also have the peculiarity of raising **awareness of the camera**, making it felt as **embodied** from a specific gaze. Such a formal strategy subverts the conventional understanding of an objective gaze in documentary cinema (figure 14). Moreover, the opening of the film with this sequence asks the spectator to identify with the **point of view of an eccentric other**: a female illegal immigrant who works as a domestic worker, and therefore a subject which decenters masculinity, whiteness, and the apparent coherence of the androcentric subject.



**Figure 14.** Awareness of the camera: embodied point of view

As stated in chapters 1 and 2, the observational and participatory modes of representation are frequently used in **realist documentary films**<sup>202</sup>, such as those made by feminist women in the seventies. A common feature in these films is the presence of women talking to the camera in first person as representatives of their own experience. In a similar vein, the filmmakers of *Cuidado, resbala* interview domestic workers that live in

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<sup>202</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Sections 1.1.4.1 Documentary Cinema Modes of Representation and 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

Spain but come, not only from this country, but also from regions as diverse as Nicaragua and Senegal. Most of these testimonies show how, once becoming aware of their unequal situations, they get organised to demand labour rights. Towards the end of the film this process is made explicit with the introduction of the “Territorio Doméstico” (Domestic Territory) collective, creators of the motto: “Because without us, the world does not move”.<sup>203</sup> These possible alternatives are also emphasised with the penultimate segment, which resorts to images usually found in militant cinema: a demonstration called “Huelga de Cuidados” (Care Strike).

The effects of using **talking heads** in these segments are twofold. Some testimonies, such as those from segments 13 and 15, by Luz Marina and Auxiliadora Medina, domestic workers from Nicaragua, are deeply distressing. Similarly, the interview with Maimuna Ndiaye, domestic worker from Senegal, evokes despair, anger and impotence (segment 20). However, when we come back to Maimuna in segment 22, after her realisation of how unfair her situation is, and also during the interviews with the women from “Territorio Doméstico” in segment 25, the talking heads become an **empowering tool** for domestic workers, who proudly affirm themselves in front of the camera.

This is linked with the **emotionality and the performativity** of the film, i.e. how it generates effects and the ways in which it names or performs different emotions. As mentioned before, some testimonies convey **affects** of anger, distress, impotence and disappointment (the latter especially concerning the image that the subjects had of “Europe”). The opening and closing sequences, with the reflexive voice-over and the embodied subjective camera, perform entrapment and despair. Nevertheless, with the testimonies of some domestic workers like those from “Territorio Doméstico”, the interviews with academic experts who envision alternatives, and the festive demonstrations, the main affects evoked in *Cuidado, resbala* have to do with empowerment, collective strength, satisfaction, hope and pride (figure 15).

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<sup>203</sup> “Porque sin nosotras, no se mueve el mundo”.



**Figure 15.** Positive affects evoked in collective struggles against social inequalities

#### 4.1.2 Production and Reception: A Collective Gaze on Care Labour

*Cuidado, resbala* is the only documentary from my sample that has been produced and directed in the south of Spain. Five of the directors (María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez and Carolina Suárez Rasmussen) belong to the “Circle of Women” association, while Leonor Jiménez Moreno is part of “The Inverted Gaze”, a network of communication professionals whose work focuses on social issues. All of them are based in Málaga.

“Circle of Women” was created in 1994 with the aim of promoting fair working conditions for women by means of **participatory action research**. This refers to “a research and intervention process that starts from the social problems, seeking to transform them and to concretise a collective process of knowledge production” (Abatedaga 2014: 20).<sup>204</sup> Vanessa Gómez describes how they realised that the audiovisual tool could become a valuable instrument for this purpose:

In the work we do at the “Circle of Women” association there are many different types of sensitivities. We start from a very heterogeneous group in terms of vital and formative experiences, but **with a clear commitment in the realm of associationism and social movements**. Due to the experiences of struggles in which some women from the group had participated, we began to talk about how interesting it would be to have **a tool for research, awareness and**

<sup>204</sup> “un proceso de investigación, producción de conocimiento e intervención que parte de problemas sociales específicos buscando concretarlos y transformar en un proceso colectivo de producción de saber.”

**denunciation**; we thought about the audiovisual, and here comes the connection with “The Inverted Gaze”, through one of its partners, our friend Leonor.<sup>205</sup>

Montserrat Clos also reckons that the alliance between “Circle of Women” and “The Inverted Gaze” was a milestone for the making of *Cuidado, resbala*. Moreover, it was something that filled them up with a feeling of **empowerment**:

We began to pay more and more attention to the whole audiovisual theme, because it transcends times and space (...) we were clear that, if we wanted to start a project like this, Leo had to participate, whatever happened. Then, the truth is that when she joined us, everything was much easier (...) It’s like: **“we’re going to move from idea to action. We will be able to tell, in a very visual way, what we are interested in transmitting.”**<sup>206</sup>

For Gómez, the interest in the audiovisual stemmed from their understanding of “feminism as an intervention tool”<sup>207</sup>. A documentary video could reach wider publics and be used as didactic material in the classroom. The other important aspect, which was raised in the interview by Clos without asking directly, was the financing of the film. What she explains is that, during those months, she was working at the Málaga Council and found out that there was an opportunity to get **public funding** from the International Cooperation area. Even though, according to Leonor, the amount of money only covered one month of their work, which took two years (2011 and 2012), it was a relevant factor for their final decision to make the film.

They chose to work on care labour because of the personal and professional experience that some of the members had in the field, and due to the feeling that “there

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<sup>205</sup> “En el trabajo que hacemos desde la asociación Circulo de Mujeres existen muy diversas sensibilidades, partimos de un grupo muy heterogéneo en experiencias vitales y formativas aunque con una clara apuesta en el ámbito del asociacionismo y los movimientos sociales. Por experiencias de luchas en las que habíamos participado algunas mujeres del grupo, comenzamos a hablar de lo interesante que sería tener una herramienta de investigación, sensibilización y denuncia, pensamos en el plano audiovisual para ello, y aquí llega la conexión con La Mirada Invertida a través de una de sus socias y amiga Leonor.” Vanessa Gómez. E-mail. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017. The emphases in all the quotes are mine.

<sup>206</sup> “Todo el tema audiovisual era un tema que cada vez nos llamaba más la atención empezar a tocar, porque trasciende más allá de los tiempos y más allá de los espacios (...) teníamos claro que si queríamos empezar un proyecto así, Leo tenía que participar sí o sí, entonces, la verdad que también cuando ella se incorporó, todo fue mucho más fácil (...) Es como que ‘vamos a pasar de la idea a la acción. Vamos a poder contar de una manera muy visual lo que nos interesa transmitir’.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>207</sup> “el feminismo como herramienta de intervención”. Vanessa Gómez. E-mail. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.

was a tremendous injustice behind this work and we reckoned that it was fair to contribute to reveal false myths”<sup>208</sup>. Carolina Suárez, originally from South America, got her Spanish residence permit as a domestic worker, while Mercedes Cordero, another of the filmmakers, was working at the “Social Rights Office” collective, which provides legal information for migrants, especially concerning labour rights. So they chose domestic work as axis and, in the process, they became more and more aware that “care has to be understood by the whole of society, also by big companies; to put life in the centre, to change the gaze”<sup>209</sup>.

*Cuidado, resbala* was conceived as **a political film** from the very beginning, not only in terms of content, but also in its **production process**. This in line with what María Ruido considers key for feminist filmmakers: to understand “their being creators of representation as a political task” (2006: 2).<sup>210</sup> The fact that five of them were not audiovisual experts was a peculiarity that aided them to “approach the process in a holistic and integral way”<sup>211</sup>. For Leonor, the only professional filmmaker out of the six directors, the assembly-like dynamics they carried out was very different from what she had been taught at film school:

I was eager to carry out **a project as a cooperative**, I mean, to work in a way, to try **to produce feminist content otherwise**. Not only an alternative theme but also to see if in some way, what I was intending to do, something incredible, that between seven people we might be able to have a single gaze. Because normally, within the world of documentary and audiovisual creation, a lot of emphasis is placed on the author’s gaze. **An individual gaze, the author’s, hierarchical**. That person has to have a gaze of their own. And we were proposing exactly the opposite. In fact, at that time I was given a scholarship to go to study documentary cinema in Colombia. We had to bring a documentary project and I took this proposal, and **they told me that this could not be done**, that how was I intending to make a documentary with six gazes, that it was very complex.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> “había una tremenda injusticia detrás del desempeño de esta labor y vimos que era de justicia contribuir a desvelar falsos mitos.” Vanessa Gómez. E-mail. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>209</sup> “los cuidados tiene que ser una cosa entendida por toda la sociedad y entre ellos también las empresas, lo de poner la vida en el centro, lo de cambiar la mirada.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>210</sup> “su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político.” *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1.5 Feminist Cinema(s) and Women’s Cinema(s)

<sup>211</sup> “encarar el proceso de una manera integral y holística.” Vanessa Gómez. E-mail. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>212</sup> “tenía muchas ganas de hacer un proyecto como cooperativo, o sea, trabajar de una manera pues, probar un poco que era eso de poder producir de otra manera un contenido feminista. No solamente una

Talking from her experience, both at film school and having worked before within industrial standards, Jiménez confronts the hierarchical Cartesian scopic regime with the **polyscopic gaze(s)**, described in chapter 2. This collective search for a different way of seeing is also in line with Haraway’s proposal of replacing the totalising gaze of the “unmarked positions of Man and White” (1988: 581) with a multiplicity of situated eyes. Suárez also identifies this process as a feminist counter-practice that subverts a patriarchal way of filmmaking:

**This hierarchical gaze that says: “documentary is to be made in this way”**  
(...) hierarchical, unidirectional, which does not understand, I mean, that does not question itself or allow itself to think in a more assembly-like way. That for me is also very patriarchal (...) not so much in terms of being masculine, but **patriarchal in terms of being hierarchical.**<sup>213</sup>

Jiménez emphasises that their being a group of feminist women was indeed **a difference that mattered and had effects** on their way of working, especially in terms of **power relations**:

Usually, collective processes are very conflictive. This process was more like a dialogue, very argumentative. We were making decisions, **thinking what one could do to contribute, not wanting to be the protagonist in the process** (...) There was no power struggle (...) I could contribute something at any given time, then others could not at some moments. Later on, that has also been recognised, paid. It has been like, who has worked the most, who has worked less and it has been very easy (...) in the process **you could see that they come from feminism and the assembly movement.**<sup>214</sup>

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temática alternativa sino también ver si de alguna manera, lo que yo me proponía, una barbaridad, que era entre seis personas, cómo podemos ser capaces de tener una mirada única. Porque normalmente desde el mundo así de la creación documental, audiovisual, hacen mucho hincapié en la mirada del autor o de la autora. Una mirada individual, el autor, jerárquica; esa persona tiene que tener una mirada propia. Y nosotras estábamos planteando todo lo contrario. De hecho en esa época me dieron una beca para irme a estudiar a Colombia, documental. Y teníamos que llevar un proyecto documental, y yo llevé esta propuesta y me decían que esto no se podía hacer, que cómo yo pretendía hacer un documental con seis miradas, que era muy complejo.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>213</sup> “esta mirada jerárquica de ‘el documental se hace así’ (...) en tanto jerárquica, unidireccional, que no entiende, o sea, que no se pregunta o ni se permite pensar en una cuestión más asamblearia, o sea, eso para mí también es muy patriarcal (...) no tanto en términos de masculino, sino patriarcal porque, en tanto jerárquico.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>214</sup> “Normalmente, los procesos colectivos son muy conflictivos. Este proceso fue muy de diálogo, muy de argumentar. Íbamos tomando decisiones, en plan de qué puedo hacer yo para aportar, no de qué

However, the decision to work in this way was very time-consuming due to long meetings and discussions. According to Clos, working with **public funds gave them more freedom than a production company** would have, in terms of content and process, but the administrative part, with very specific deadlines and lots of paperwork, was perceived as an obstacle. It became more problematic when the law for domestic work in Spain changed while they were finishing the film, forcing them to revise their material and incorporate information about domestic work moving from the special scheme to the general one. The way in which they dealt with the time limitation was by making a simpler version to meet the Málaga Council deadlines, and working on their own final version afterwards.

Jiménez considers that the production process of *Cuidado, resbala* was also different from conventional documentary films because they didn't have a clear script before shooting. Rather, they had some general guidelines and a list of the interviews they wanted to carry out, but in making and discussing these interviews, they began to **open up further and necessary lines of exploration**. The contact with domestic workers was established through the "Social Rights Office" and other migrant organisations such as "Friends of Bolivia". The creation of **an empathetic and trusting atmosphere** was a fundamental aspect during the recording of the interviews, as Jiménez describes:

The typical mechanism we have always used is that, while some of us were on the technical side of things, placing the camera, there were always other partners generating (...) a climate of confidence (...) that **climate of trust, care, good vibes**, has always been intuitive (...) I think that, **from there, the issue of the camera as an invasive power was reduced a bit**.<sup>215</sup>

To what Suárez adds: "There was a prior process, there was an explanation about why we get in touch with you, what we want to do, we tell you a bit about who we are. I think that

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protagonismo quiero tener en este proceso (...) No había lucha de poder (...) Yo puedo aportar algo en un momento dado, luego otras no podían estar. Luego eso también se ha reconocido, remunerado. Ha sido todo como muy, quién ha trabajado más, quién ha trabajado menos y ha sido muy fácil (...) en el proceso se notaba que vienen del feminismo y del movimiento asambleario." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>215</sup> "El mecanismo típico que hemos hecho siempre es que mientras unas estábamos en la parte técnica, colocando la cámara, siempre había las demás compañeras generando (...) un clima de confianza (...) como que ese clima de confianza, de cuidado, de buen rollo, ha sido siempre de manera intuitiva (...) Eso de la cámara como elemento invasivo y de poder, pues creo que se redujo un poco aunque sigue estando ahí." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

from there, we also lessen the distance between us”<sup>216</sup>. They divided the tasks of transcribing and selecting fragments from the interviews among themselves, and then gathered to discuss what to include and what to leave out. One of the most distressing interviews that they remember from the first stages of the shooting was the one with Luz Marina and Auxiliadora Medina, domestic workers from Nicaragua. Suárez considers that this was a turning point for them to **decide that they had to look for alternatives**, so as to move **from the personal to the collective** and to **avoid focusing only on the victimisation** of domestic workers:

This idea has always been there, you know, the idea of **moving from the individual to the collective**. But it became very urgent and very necessary when we began to interview the women. I think we had a lot of discomfort, a lot of “how awful”, I mean, it is like, a reality that you already presuppose, but it imposes itself so strongly, as if you did not know it. We would end up really distressed. **There were interviews after which we felt really bad** (...) Such as saying “this is too much, how are we going to work with this”. We could not stick only with that idea, we also needed to turn it around a bit and **think about alternatives or spaces of resistance** or how we could present this. Not only the harshness of domestic work, the situations that can be found, but also that there were other things happening. That’s when we went to Madrid to interview the people from “Domestic Territory”. This also responds to **our need to avoid falling into this victimisation**, this state of solitude, of understanding that this is the only possible thing. We knew that these women existed, that they had come together, that they were generating really powerful things, that **this could make a difference but from an animated approach, from the capacity for action, from creativity**. And from being the other side, you know, of this isolation, of this vulnerability that is generated.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> “Había un proceso previo, había una explicación, de por qué nos ponemos en contacto contigo, de qué queremos hacer, te contamos un poco quiénes somos. Yo pienso que desde ahí toda esa distancia se achica también.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>217</sup> “Esta idea siempre está, no, la idea de pasar de lo individual a lo colectivo. Pero se hizo como muy urgente y muy necesaria cuando nosotras empezamos a entrevistar a mujeres. Yo creo que teníamos como mucha desazón, mucha como ‘qué mal’, o sea, es como si una realidad que ya presupones, pero se impusiera con tanta fuerza como si no la conocieras, nosotras salíamos súper angustiadas. Hubo entrevistas de las que hemos salido muy mal (...) Como “esto es demasiado, cómo vamos a hacer con esto”. Que no podíamos tampoco quedarnos en esa idea nada más, necesitábamos nosotras también darle un poco la vuelta y pensar alternativas o espacios de resistencia o de que manera podemos plantear esto. No sólo la crudeza del empleo doméstico, las situaciones que se pueden encontrar, sino también, que había otras cosas que se estaban moviendo. Ahí fue cuando fuimos a Madrid a entrevistar a la gente de Territorio Doméstico. Eso también responde un poco a esta necesidad de nosotras mismas,



They are very grateful with the women from “Territorio Doméstico”, with whom they saw these other possibilities materialised:

What is done is **to collectivise a problem that is being lived, obligatorily, intentionally, in an individual way**. To say collectively: “Gentlemen, the problem is not ours, the problem is not us, the problem is the society that, just as it is set up, is not allowing us to have lives worth living. That is what “Territorio Doméstico” does (...) they have continued to advance and have representatives in a lot of spaces where **domestic workers are called upon as spokespeople. They have fought hard to be the protagonists of these negotiations** (....) Within their struggle there is also a whole network of care and advice in relation to migration issues. They have created “Senda de cuidados”, which is a domestic work cooperative. Then little by little their own conditions have improved a bit and that subjective experience of isolation can start to change. Even though their condition remains quite precarious, at least there is a feeling that, **if it has to be endured, it has to be temporary and clearly unfair. And not a feeling of such impotence**, as seen in some of the interviews, where it seems that there is no way out, there is no other possibility than to accept this that is a given.<sup>218</sup>

This **awareness of the political dimension of the inequalities surrounding care labour** is present at different narrative waves within the film, including the interviews with academic experts and the opening and closing sequences with the voice-over of Suárez. These scenes, together with the animation sequences and the demonstration shots, were added in the second version of the documentary film, after they realised that a structure

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no caer en esta victimización, en esta estado de soledad, en entender que esto es lo único posible. Sino a ver, que ya sabíamos que estas mujeres existían, que se habían juntado, que estaban generando cosas súper potentes, que podía establecer la diferencia pero desde el ánimo, desde la capacidad de acción, desde la creatividad. Y ser la otra cara, no, de este aislamiento, vulnerabilidad que se genera.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>218</sup> “Lo que se hace es colectivizar un problema que se está viviendo, obligatoriamente, intencionadamente de manera individual. Colectivizarlo para decir, “señores, el problema no es nuestro, el problema no somos nosotras, sino el problema es la sociedad que, tal y cual está montada, no nos está permitiendo tener vidas dignas de ser vividas. Entonces un poco ‘Territorio Doméstico’ lo que hace es eso (....) han seguido avanzando, ya tienen representantes en un montón de espacios en donde se convoca a las trabajadoras domésticas como interlocutoras. Han luchado mucho para ser ellas protagonistas de esas negociaciones (....) Dentro de su lucha está también toda una red de cuidado y de asesoramiento en relación con los papeles. Han creado ‘Senda de Cuidados’, que es una cooperativa de trabajo doméstico. Entonces poco a poco han ido mejorando un poco sus propias condiciones y esa vivencia subjetiva de aislamiento puede ir mutando. Aunque su condición siga siendo bastante precaria, por lo menos hay una sensación de que, si eso hay que soportarlo, pues tiene que ser temporal y claramente injusto. Y no una sensación pues tan de impotencia, como se ve en alguna de las entrevistas, en donde parece que no hay salida, no hay otra posibilidad que aceptar esto que viene dado.” Carolina Suárez. Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

based only on talking heads was not effective enough. Jiménez describes this editing process as follows:

After editing, we thought “something is missing”, we have to change the rhythms, we are putting in a lot of testimonies. And then it occurred to us that **Caro had that personal experience that was very rich** (...) she was our alter ego. So we thought it could be a good idea to record that sequence with her voice-over (...) We envision the demonstration as a really powerful way to finish the documentary. Well, we did not know; we filmed it and when we saw it, we said: “Let’s finish with this”. Totally skipping what traditional filming is, it was like doing it on the fly.<sup>219</sup>

For Suárez, the care strike is also very important as a way of emphasising that there are many people inhabiting the margins, who despite not being considered as workers, play an important role in sustaining capitalist economy:

Historically, **a strike was carried out by those who had a job**, male and female workers. But there were a number of people excluded from what was traditionally understood as employment, who made the wheels turn just like all these other people, and yet they were not recognised, not even in their right to strike, precisely because they were not within those statistics, right? **Domestic workers, sex workers, children, the elderly, the disabled, well, people with functional diversity, many immigrants.** Heaps of marginal people, of people who live on the margins, who were also on strike.<sup>220</sup>

They had to change narrative structures as a result of **their intra-actions with the filmed subjects**. For example, they had originally planned to follow the process of a small group

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<sup>219</sup> “Después de montar, vimos ‘aquí falta’, falta cambiar los ritmos, estamos metiendo mucho testimonio; y entonces se nos ocurrió que Caro tenía esa experiencia personal que era como muy rica (...) era nuestro alter ego. Entonces nos pareció bueno grabar la secuencia con su voz en off (...) Lo de la marcha lo veíamos como súper potente para terminar el documental. Bueno, no sabíamos, lo grabamos y cuando lo vimos, dijimos ‘Vamos a terminar con esto’. Saltando totalmente lo que es el rodaje tradicional, era como vamos cocinándolo sobre la marcha.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>220</sup> “Históricamente hacen huelga quienes tenían un empleo, los trabajadores y trabajadoras; pero había una cantidad de gente fuera de esta, de lo que era entendido tradicionalmente como empleo, que hacía mover la rueda igual que toda esta otra gente y sin embargo, no iban a estar reconocidos, ni en su derecho a huelga, precisamente porque no estaban dentro de esas estadísticas, no, trabajadoras domésticas, trabajadoras del sexo, los niños, las niñas, las ancianas, los discapacitados, bueno, diversos funcionales, muchos inmigrantes. Montón de, de marginales, de la gente que vive en los márgenes, que también estaban haciendo huelga.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

of domestic workers that would meet every Sunday for several weeks (the group presented in segment 2 of the film). But this was not possible due to the difficulties that the women had to meet every week for such a long period of time. The importance that the film gives to global care chains and to **the experience of women immigrants** was not something deliberately present in their agenda, but an issue that arose as **undeniable evidence**. Suárez summarises it with the quote that opens this chapter.

There were also **unexpected findings**, such as the testimony by the nun from the “Religiosas de María Inmaculada” Domestic Service Centre. Jiménez recalls that this encounter made them revise their own categories:

It comes from Franco’s regime, this really comes from the **good families who asked these congregations of nuns to bring them rural girls from a “good family”, that is, religious people**, as a way to ensure that the person who came to your house was decent (...) I was surprised by her speech because **we actually arrived with a lot of prejudices** (...) and some of the things she says are interesting.<sup>221</sup>

Still, Suárez is critical about the ways in which this place operates. She describes it as “a kind of placement agency, a bit of a strange one, because it is true that they welcome them, they understand their situation, but there is not any type of organisation or structural criticism.”<sup>222</sup> She continues: “there is really no politicisation of the employees’ situation, but acceptance and a bit of empowerment through cooking courses, issues that make them perform better at work or to offer a more complete service, in some way.”<sup>223</sup>

They position themselves as **feminist women**, and agree on the fact that *Cuidado, resbala* is **a feminist documentary** in terms of content, form, production and

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<sup>221</sup> “Viene del franquismo, esto viene realmente de las familias de bien que iban a estas congregaciones de monjas a que les trajeran niña rurales de ‘buena familia’, o sea, de gente religiosa; una manera de garantizar que la persona que entrara a tu casa fuera decente (...) A mí me sorprendió el discurso de ella porque en realidad llegamos con un montón de prejuicios (...) y algunas de las cosas que dice son interesantes.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>222</sup> “una especie de agencia de colocación, un poco extraña, porque es verdad que les acogen mucho, entienden mucho su situación, pero no hay ningún tipo de organización o de crítica estructural”. Carolina Suárez. Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>223</sup> “realmente no hay una politización de la situación de las empleadas, sino un poco la aceptación y el empoderamiento a través de cursos de cocina, cuestiones que les hagan rendir mejor en el trabajo o poder ofrecer un servicio más completo, de alguna manera.” Carolina Suárez. Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

reception. For Clos, “any feminism has to speak about care labour”<sup>224</sup>, an issue that was overlooked by the feminist movement in the seventies, but that has become extremely urgent in the current context of neoliberalism. According to Suárez, the film is feminist because it “questions, criticises and highlights all the contradictions of the patriarchal system and its economic correlate, which is capitalism”<sup>225</sup>. Gómez enumerates six reasons why it is feminist:

It is made through the feminist thought of six women.

It talks about a subject matter that renders many women invisible and exploits them, bringing it to light (domestic work).

It constitutes a tool of awareness, both at the level of projection/screening and as didactic material.

It collects the testimonies of many women to whom no one has given a voice (with the exception of those from “Domestic Territory” who act as loudspeakers of their own experiences in such a wonderful way that they made us think a lot).

It presents various topics and several proposals to think about collectively in order to solve them with the tools we have, and with all those we might invent.

The simple fact of listening to those testimonies already helps you to understand the theory behind them: “because without us the world does not move.”<sup>226</sup>

Jiménez reckons that *Cuidado, resbala* is **radically feminist**, in the sense that it goes to **the roots of placing care at the centre of the system**. And it presents such a radical thesis in a subtle and progressive manner. In the interview, Suárez connected this characteristic of the film with the process that Jiménez experienced during the production of the documentary:

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<sup>224</sup> “cualquier feminismo tiene que hablar de cuidados”. Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>225</sup> “cuestiona, critica y pone en evidencia todas las contradicciones del sistema patriarcal y su correlato económico que es el capitalismo”. Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>226</sup> “está hecho desde el pensamiento feminista de seis mujeres, habla sobre un tema que invisibiliza y explota a muchas mujeres, sacándolo a la luz (el trabajo doméstico); constituye una herramienta de concientización tanto a nivel de proyección como a nivel de material didáctico; recoge el testimonio de muchas mujeres a las que nadie les ha dado voz (quitando las de Territorio Doméstico que son altavoz de sus propias vivencias de una manera tan maravillosa que nos hicieron pensar un montón). Propone varias temáticas y varias propuestas que pensar en colectivo de cara a solucionarlas con las herramientas que tenemos, incluso con todas aquellas que inventemos; el simple hecho de escuchar esos testimonios ya te ayuda a entender la teoría de ‘porque sin nosotras no se mueve el mundo’”. Vanessa Gómez. E-mail. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.

[To Leonor Jiménez] Your gaze has been very important, don't you think? You were also asking (...) because you hadn't related so much to the idea of care. I remember Leo asking a lot, "well, then would this be so?" "Would this be so and so?" "But this has a historical context, right?" (...) I believe that there, **your own process of introduction to the issue of care also led the documentary to have this pedagogy of going from the simple to the most complex.**<sup>227</sup>

From the beginning, they envisioned the film as a militant and pedagogical tool. As the content became more complex, contextualising the inequalities faced by domestic workers within the care crisis care, the publics in mind also got wider, as Suárez explains:

While we were doing the documentary we also thought: "well, where to, what do we want" (...) to change the special scheme of domestic workers. Or to recognise the employment of domestic workers. Or to problematise care labour (...) **taking seriously the reflection on care is to turn things upside down structurally.** Hence, I think that from there, the audience is anyone, because it's interesting for domestic workers to watch, of course. But we also want it to be seen by male and female entrepreneurs, so that they also take into account that this is happening and that it is their responsibility as well. And that they show it at schools, so that we begin to understand care from a young age and that it is the responsibility of everyone. I consider it an empowering tool for them first of all, for those doing jobs related to domestic work. But in reality I think that, if we want to go to the heart and root of the problem, then it should be for everyone.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> "Tu mirada ha sido muy importante, ¿no? Tú también ibas preguntando (...) como no te relacionabas tantísimo con la idea de los cuidados. Yo me acuerdo que Leo preguntaba mucho, ¿bueno, entonces esto sería así? ¿Esto sería así? ¿Y entonces, esto, pero esto tiene un contexto histórico, no? (...) yo creo que ahí, tu propio proceso de introducción al tema de los cuidados también llevó a que, a que el documental tuviera esta pedagogía de lo simple a lo más complejo." Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>228</sup> "mientras hacíamos el documental también pensábamos, bueno, a dónde, qué queremos (...) cambiar el régimen especial de empleadas de hogar. O bueno, reconocer el empleo de las trabajadoras de hogar. O bueno, problematizar sobre los cuidados (...) como te tomes en serio la reflexión respecto de los cuidados, es poner las cosas patas arriba estructuralmente. Entonces yo pienso que desde allí, el público es cualquiera. Porque es interesante que lo vean las trabajadoras domésticas, por supuesto. Pero también queremos que lo vean, los empresarios, las empresarias para que también tengan en cuenta que eso está pasando y que les incumbe. Y que lo vean en los coles para que empecemos a entender los cuidados desde temprana edad y que eso es responsabilidad de todos y de todas. Pienso como herramienta de empoderamiento primero para ellas y los empleos relacionados con el trabajo doméstico, pero en realidad pienso que si queremos ir al fondo y a la raíz del problema, pues a todo el mundo." Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

There were **issues into which they couldn't go deeper**, such as sexual abuse and physical violence faced by domestic workers. They also recognise that in their original project they were very **ambitious in terms of the effects** that they wanted to achieve with the documentary, especially within the time limits they had. Jiménez recalls:

Our goal at first was to try **to make a network of domestic workers**. We had the idea that the documentary could be an opportunity to gather women together, to get them to know each other and to organise a “Domestic Territory” there (...). It was **a nice idea but we abandoned it on the way**.<sup>229</sup>

However, they did manage to provoke important effects in this sense after the release of the film, as Jiménez also describes: “things that we didn't expect have happened, it has had an impact as teaching material that was unthinkable for us (...) it has been downloaded many times, lots of people have seen it, and it has been shown in many places.”<sup>230</sup> According to Gómez, the animated sequences have been particularly popular among young spectators, so this narrative wave is the most used in workshops at high schools.

The premiere was at “La Casa Invisible”, a space shown in the second segment of the film. This is a sociocultural centre managed by citizens, created in 2007. The official premiere was at the 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Málaga Film Festival in 2013. Clos recalls that some of the filmed subjects attended this screening, including Natividad Daza, from the association “Friends of Bolivia”, and the nun, María Victoria:

I was very nervous. I mean, she has spoken what she speaks and knows what she says, but now to contextualise it around everything that is seen in the documentary, including the demonstration, the precarious women (...) at the end, when we went out, I remember that, well, she was ok, calm and such, but the

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<sup>229</sup> “nuestro objetivo en un primer momento era intentar hacer una red de trabajadoras. Teníamos la idea de que el documental fuese una oportunidad para juntar mujeres, que se conocieran y allí organizar un Territorio Doméstico (...) Era una bonita idea pero la dejamos por el camino.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>230</sup> “han ocurrido unas cosas que no nos esperábamos, ha tenido una repercusión como material didáctico impensable para nosotras (...) se ha descargado un montón, y se ha visto un montón, y se ha proyectado por un montón de sitios.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

testimony of Maimuna, she did not empathise with her. This African girl (...)  
Because she said this was not possible, **trying to dismiss her testimony**.<sup>231</sup>

They say that the reactions of the domestic workers who appear in the film and who have seen it have been positive. The film didn't have any commercial distribution and they stopped sending it to festivals when they realised that the material was being asked for by lots of associations, workshops and seminars, which, from their point of view, were the main exhibition spaces. That's why they decided to put it **online for free**. Apart from coverage in independent newspapers such as *Diagonal*<sup>232</sup>, it has also been spread by means of word of mouth and feminist networks. Clos describes the emotion felt with this success as "uplifting". Gómez mentions that they have accompanied the film in screenings held in Barcelona, Terrassa, Madrid, Valencia, Málaga, Granada, Sevilla, Jaén and Oviedo. While making the film care labour was even more intensive for two of the filmmakers who gave birth, and for another one, whose father got very sick. They all consider having made this film as a life questioning experience. Suárez puts it like this:

It is clear that **this type of work has to traverse you**, right? Otherwise, it is not very authentic. If we had not raised our own contradictions when it came to making the documentary, it would not have been what it is, with its good things and its bad things, but **for us it was also a personal process**.<sup>233</sup>

In a similar way to that in which second wave feminists employed documentary films as a militant tool, some of the domestic workers who appear in *Cuidado, resbala* have used it in diverse forums to raise awareness and empower people who experience similar situations. For example, "Territorio Doméstico" has organised projections and debates at the "Eskalera Karakola" feminist space in Madrid, with the explicit purpose of rendering visible their demands, such as urging the Spanish government to sign Convention 189 on

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<sup>231</sup> "Yo estaba muy nerviosa. O sea, ella ha hablado lo que habla y sabe lo que dice, pero ahora contextualízalo alrededor de todo lo que se ve en el documental, incluyendo la manifestación, lo de las precarias (...) al final, cuando ya salimos, yo recuerdo, bueno, estaba bien, tranquila y tal pero, que el testimonio de Maimuna, es que no empatizaba con él. Esta chica africana (...) Pues decía que esto no era posible, intentando un poco desmontar su testimonio." Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>232</sup> Diagonal newspaper website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/culturas/20137-cuidado-resbala-distancias-cortas-y-trabajo-invisible.html>>.

<sup>233</sup> "Está claro que este tipo de trabajo te tiene que atravesar, ¿no?, si no, no es muy auténtico. Si no nos planteamos nuestras propias contradicciones a la hora de hacer el documental, no hubiera sido el que es, con sus cosas buenas y sus cosas malas, no, pero para nosotras fue también un proceso personal." Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017 in Málaga.

Domestic Workers, which sets basic standards for care labour.<sup>234</sup> Likewise, the “Asociación Sociocultural Nosotras” (“Ourselves” Cultural Association), which gathers domestic workers living in Granada, organised a screening of the film in this city on June 16<sup>th</sup> 2018. After the debate, attended by around fifteen people, two representatives of the association presented their demands against Amendment 6777.<sup>235</sup>

Another effect of having made *Cuidado, resbala* was that Jiménez and Clos were invited by the Andalusian Association for Solidarity and Peace (ASPA) to direct the documentary film *Boconas/Big Mouth Women* (2016) about Bolivian domestic workers. This is part of a webdoc project called *Fragmentos/Fragments*, which can be seen online for free.<sup>236</sup>

I attended a screening of *Cuidado, resbala* in Granada, Spain, organised by the “Asamblea Feminista Unitaria” (“Unitary Feminist Assembly”), a self-managed feminist group created in 2013. The screening was originally programmed to take place on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 in “Entresuelo”, a pub located in the city centre, as part of the activities organised around **the International Workers’ Day**. The invitation was published on the “Unitary Feminist Assembly” Facebook page with the following description:

Through its vision we will reflect on domestic and care labour, going deeper into its importance for our social welfare, its role in the capitalist system, its configuration from patriarchy, gender and class inequalities, linked to the phenomenon of the global care chain, or the job discrimination suffered by domestic workers.<sup>237</sup>

They had to postpone the screening until 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016, at the same pub. This time they announced the event through their Facebook page and their blog. We were twenty-five

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<sup>234</sup> “Por la Ratificación Convenio 189 OIT- Organización internacional del trabajo sobre “Trabajo Decente para los y las Trabajadoras Domésticas” Facebook page. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/GrupoTurin/posts/521941261218006>>.

<sup>235</sup> The amendment 6777 in the general budgets of the Spanish State postpones until January 2024 the equalisation of domestic workers’ contributions to the general Social Security system, which was scheduled for January 2019. “Asociación Sociocultural Nosotras” Facebook page. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/157343457619216/photos/a.818607404826148/1833923936627818/?type=3&theater>>.

<sup>236</sup> *Fragmentos* film website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.aspafragmentos.org>>.

<sup>237</sup> “A través de su visionado reflexionaremos sobre el trabajo doméstico y de cuidados, profundizando en aspectos como su importancia para nuestro bienestar social, su papel dentro del sistema capitalista, su configuración desde el patriarcado, las desigualdades de género y clase ligadas al fenómeno de la cadena global de cuidados, o la discriminación laboral que sufren las empleadas de hogar.” Asamblea Feminista Unitaria Facebook page. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/asamblea.feministaunitaria/posts/590266247790498:0>>.



people, aged between 20-30 years old. A female representative of the “Unitary Feminist Assembly” led the discussion after the screening. Due to lack of immediate responses from the audience, she exposed a summary of what she considered key points of the film:

The documentary presents **how it stems from the sexual division of labour**. And the second part talks about how they get organised, especially in Madrid, well, it also happens in Andalusia, but those from “Domestic Territory” (...) their struggle, as explained by Amaia Pérez Orozco, **goes beyond achieving these labour rights, because it is something that is revealing many injustices at the basis of the organisation of the whole system**. When she talks about the global care chain, the capitalist system that has made a work environment designed for men, which women are becoming a part of, but it is a work environment made for people who do not have to care for anyone. So, of course, this system causes this crisis. That is, the capitalist system, through the sexual division of labour, makes women believe that caring for others is biological, that this is what we have to do by birth. So it is a labour struggle that is undermining the very systems, I mean, the foundations of the capitalist and patriarchal systems. What this labour struggle makes, is not only that we get their labour rights, but also this awareness means considering care labour as a job (...) **it is a labour struggle that differs from any other workers’ struggle because it attacks the foundations of the patriarchal system**. It breaks with society, it raises another type of social relationship. The documentary presents this phenomenally well.<sup>238</sup>

All the comments from the audience supported this point of view. Four women expressed in different ways that they had enjoyed the film and that they considered it **clear and well done**. In her intervention, a woman summarised what for her is the main thesis of the

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<sup>238</sup> “El documental plantea cómo es el recorrido desde la división sexual del trabajo. Y la segunda parte habla sobre cómo se organiza, sobre todo en Madrid, donde, bueno, también pasa en Andalucía, pero las de Territorio Doméstico (...) la lucha de ellas, como plantea Amaia Pérez Orozco, va más allá de conseguir esos derechos laborales, es que es una cosa que está sacando afuera toda una cantidad de injusticias, de esa base de la organización de todo el sistema. Cuando habla de la cadena global de cuidados, el sistema capitalista que ha hecho un entorno laboral hecho para hombres, donde las mujeres nos vamos incorporando, pero es que es un entorno laboral hecho para personas que no tienen que cuidar a nadie. Entonces claro, este sistema provoca esta crisis. O sea, el sistema capitalista, mediante la división sexual de trabajo, haciendo creer a las mujeres que esto del cuidado es biológico, por nacimiento, es lo que tenemos que hacer. Entonces es una lucha laboral que está socavando los mismos sistemas, o sea, los cimientos del sistema capitalista y del patriarcado. Lo que hace esta lucha laboral, no solamente es que consigamos sus derechos laborales, es que esa conciencia significa considerar el trabajo de cuidados como un trabajo (...) me parece una lucha laboral que se diferencia de todas las luchas de trabajadores porque es que va a atacar las bases del sistema patriarcal. Es que rompe con la sociedad, plantea otro tipo de relación social. Me parece que eso el documental lo plantea fenomenal.” Q&A session. 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Granada.

documentary, i.e. how **care labour** is traversed by **gender inequalities** that have **to be tackled collectively**:

I liked the documentary because **it shows that it is a collective structural problem** (...) it also analyses very well that, in the end, there is a collective need, there are people who need to be cared for. So there is a need and the problem is that it is always placed on women individually. And they need someone else to do that care labour, which is impossible to reconcile with their work activity (...). I think that **the solution proposed is very good**, I mean, it is not a problem that we women have to solve in the private and domestic spheres because it is assigned socially that this is our work and our role; rather, it poses it as a collective problem that we have to solve between all of us, right? Of course **men have to assume their share of responsibility but above all, the state has to guarantee that this care work is done**, providing the necessary services. This is extremely well explained in the documentary.<sup>239</sup>

The other aspect that was highly praised was the way in which the film portrays the organisation of domestic workers, which, as explained by Suárez, was their way of counterbalancing the distress caused by the inequalities they had found in their first interviews. A young woman from the audience emphasised that, for her, more than the State, it was this possibility of self-management, materialised for instance in the cooperative model, which had the potential to really change the current situation:

I find it really nice to see the autonomous process of their getting empowered and organised (...) I think it's extremely powerful because I don't believe in the state (...) I think this documentary shows how they come together, **how, from**

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<sup>239</sup> “A mí me ha gustado el documental y es que muestra que es un problema estructural colectivo (...) analiza también muy bien, cómo al final hay una necesidad colectiva, hay personas que necesitan ser cuidadas. Entonces hay una necesidad y el problema es que se les carga siempre a las mujeres individualmente. Y que necesiten que otra persona haga ese cuidado, que es imposible compatibilizarlo con su actividad laboral (...) Me parece muy buena la solución que plantea, es decir, no es un problema que tengamos que resolver las mujeres en el ámbito privado y doméstico porque se nos asigna socialmente que ese es nuestro trabajo y nuestro rol, sino plantear que es un problema colectivo que tenemos que solucionar entre todos y todas, no. Por supuesto que los hombres tienen que asumir su parte de responsabilidad pero sobre todo el Estado tiene que garantizar que ese cuidado se realiza y tiene que poner los servicios necesarios. Me parece que está súper bien explicado en el documental.” *Cuidado, resbala* screening and Q&A session. 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Granada.

**sharing, they empower themselves.** The issue of care seems super important to me.<sup>240</sup>

The session concluded with an invitation to a gathering in support of domestic workers in front of the Granada city hall, in order to ask for the signing of the aforementioned Convention 189 on Domestic Workers, which sets basic standards for care labour.

As part of a dissemination event of the GRACE project, I organised a screening of *Cuidado, resbala* at the University of Granada on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018. Carolina Suárez and Montserrat Clos presented the film and took part in a Q&A session with the spectators, who were approximately fifty people. Two young women who are currently enrolled in the gender studies master's programme praised how the film renders visible the structural character of the inequality faced by domestic workers on one hand, and the alternatives that the domestic workers themselves are putting into actions on the other hand:

I appreciate how **you were able to capture the systemic problem**, structural problem, because **they are discriminated against because they are women**, because they're **from the Global South**, because they are **only domestic helpers**.<sup>241</sup>

I liked it a lot especially because **you have given voice to the invisible**, to those who are rendered invisible. And **not only as victims** but you have also given us, **you have signified them from their empowerment**, you also show them as an association or as a cooperative, and as participants in their own development.<sup>242</sup>

This last reading of *Cuidado, resbala* echoes what Alexandra Juhasz argues in defence of the realist feminist documentary production of the seventies<sup>243</sup>: the visual portrait of

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<sup>240</sup> “Me parece súper bonito el proceso autónomo de que se empoderan y se organizan (..) me parece súper cañero, porque yo no creo en el Estado (...) este documental muestra cómo ellas se juntan, cómo al compartir se empoderan entre ellas. El tema de los cuidados me parece súper importante.” *Cuidado, resbala* screening and Q&A session. 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in Granada.

<sup>241</sup> Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada. English originally.

<sup>242</sup> “Me ha gustado mucho sobre todo porque habéis dado voz a las invisibles, a las invisibilizadas. Y además no sólo por la parte de que serían víctimas sino también nos habéis dado, las habéis significado desde un empoderamiento, las mostráis también participando como asociación o como cooperativa, y como partícipes de su propio desarrollo.” Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada. Translations and emphases are mine.

<sup>243</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.2.2 Feminist Documentary Cinema: Possibilities of Subversive Realism

women in the self-conscious act of narrating themselves in a politicised way is “a route towards feminist *collective identity* and political action” (1994: 181). The same young woman pointed out that the film did not develop the issue of emotional care. Another woman from the audience added that another missing issue was that of the emotional manipulation suffered by care workers. The filmmakers agreed with them: those issues had emerged in the conversations with the domestic workers and the experts, but it was impossible to cover all the aspects in the documentary film. Suárez exemplified these compulsory cuts concerning what to include and what to leave out, with the aforementioned case of sexual abuse:

Sexual abuse in the home is an issue that has remained for us a bit like a small debt (...) we could not even put it in because it required a much more respectful and much more informed, very careful work, and we did not have a lot of capacity to do it, but it did come out and it is a difficult issue that is more common issue than what is generally believed (...) and we did not seek out these cases, they were there to be seen. **Do not think that we select the worst ones.**<sup>244</sup>

Among the spectators, there was a man who trains carers of people in situations of dependency. He praised the film for its accuracy in showing the invisible part of the iceberg and the multiple tasks that domestic workers are asked to perform in exchange for very low salaries. He also talked about the precarious conditions under which most of her students work, even as employees of private companies that sell care services: “If they are privately hired with a family, they can negotiate more. But if they are contracted by home support companies, where they have to carry out six services in one shift and they have to rush from one home to another to get there...”<sup>245</sup> Suárez called this situation “a perversion of the solution”, as she explains:

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<sup>244</sup> “El abuso sexual al interior de las casas es un tema que se ha quedado para nosotras un poco como una pequeña deuda (...) no pudimos ni siquiera meterlo porque requería un trabajo mucho más respetuoso y mucho más informado, de mucho cuidado, y no teníamos nosotros la verdad mucha capacidad para hacerlo, pero sí que salió y sí que es un tema duro y más común de lo que creen (...) Y no fuimos a buscar estos casos, eran lo que había a nuestro alcance. No crean que seleccionamos los peores.” Carolina Suárez. Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>245</sup> “Si están contratadas con una familia de manera privada, pues tienen más juego, pueden negociar más. Pero si están contratadas en empresas de apoyo domiciliario, donde tienen que hacer seis servicios en un turno y tienen que volar de un domicilio a otro para llegar...” Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

...these girls are now contributing to the social security system, because they are employees of a company, they are no longer domestic employees, but employees of a company. And **being hired by a company, which should give them more strength when it comes to fighting for their rights and defending their rights, makes them yet more precarious.**<sup>246</sup>

To what Clos added that the root problem is care labour being utterly discredited. Another woman from the audience commented on the patriarchal reasons behind this lack of recognition of a feminised sector:

I think the origin of this is where domestic work comes from. Domestic work before being domestic work and care labour was **what women traditionally did** in our homes. So there is no need to classify that work because **why would they classify it if they have it for free and naturally.**<sup>247</sup>

On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the directors of *Cuidado, resbala* shared on their Facebook page a review written by Juan García, who attended a screening in Jaén, Spain. In his blog, García traces connections between the content of the film and its collective production:

*Cuidado, resbala* is **an excellent analysis of the world of work**, not just the domestic part. And **an example of other forms of organisation** that rely on the development of the social economy, because the documentary has no director but directors, thus highlighting **the possibilities of the cooperative model.**<sup>248</sup>

In the same vein, he praises the decision of the filmmakers to conclude the documentary with the images of the care strike in Málaga:

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<sup>246</sup> “una perversión de la solución. Porque estas muchachas ahora están cotizando en el régimen general, porque son empleadas de una empresa, ya no son empleadas domésticas, sino de una empresa. Y siendo contratadas por una empresa, lo que les debería dar más fuerza a la hora de pelear por sus derechos y de defender sus derechos, lo que hace es todavía precarizarlas más.” Carolina Suárez. Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>247</sup> “Yo creo que eso viene de donde procede el trabajo doméstico. El trabajo doméstico antes de ser trabajo doméstico y los cuidados era lo que hacíamos las mujeres tradicionalmente en nuestras casas. Entonces no hay necesidad de clasificar ese trabajo porque para qué lo van a clasificar si lo tienen gratis y de manera natural.” Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>248</sup> “*Cuidado, resbala* acaba por esta razón siendo un excelente análisis del mundo del trabajo, no sólo del doméstico. Y además un ejemplo de que hay otras formas de organización que pasan por el desarrollo de la economía social, puesto que el documental no tiene directora, sino directoras, enfatizando así las posibilidades del modelo cooperativo.” Asombrario–Juan García Única blog. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://asombrario.wordpress.com/2013/06/15/cuidado-resbala/>>.

The success of *Cuidado, resbala* is that **it begins by articulating its discourse from below, from the place where the exploitation is more evident and raw**, which is none other than the place of female domestic workers. From there, and picking up that thread, it ends up proving that **the push to let one's life be annihilated in exchange for sustenance is never far away for anyone**. The filmmakers explain it using an impressive image: at one point we see a group of women appear on the screen at a demonstration in Málaga. They do not carry a banner, but they make it themselves using their own bodies. There is no message or motto, but only a brief question: “Is there life before death?”<sup>249</sup>

In October 2013, the independent newspaper *Diagonal* published a short article written by Soraya González about *Cuidado, resbala*, that includes a video interview with some of the filmmakers. González quotes the reaction from a woman in the audience, who belongs to “Domestic Territory”: “While I was watching it, I was identifying with them (...) How do we reach the women in the remote towns of deepest Spain? How do we convey the message to the live-in domestic workers, make them aware of their rights?”<sup>250</sup>

#### 4.1.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Cuidado, resbala* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

*Cuidado, resbala* positions itself as a research journey that aims at rendering visible the inequalities surrounding care labour. It analyses the situation of domestic

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<sup>249</sup> “El acierto de *Cuidado, resbala* consiste en empezar a articular su discurso desde abajo, desde el lugar en el que la explotación resulta más evidente y descarnada, que no es otro que el lugar de las mujeres que se dedican al trabajo doméstico. A partir de ahí, y tirando de ese hilo, se acaba por comprobar que la pulsión de dejarse aniquilar la vida a cambio de un sustento nunca anda demasiado lejos para nadie. Sus realizadoras lo explican recurriendo a una imagen impresionante: en un momento dado vemos aparecer en la pantalla a un grupo de mujeres en una manifestación en Málaga; no portan una pancarta, sino que la conforman ellas mismas valiéndose de sus propios cuerpos. No hay mensaje ni lema, sino tan sólo una breve pregunta: ¿Hay una vida antes de la muerte?” Asombrario, Juan García Única blog. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://asombrario.wordpress.com/2013/06/15/cuidado-resbala/>>.

<sup>250</sup> Diagonal newspaper website. “Mientras lo veía me estaba identificando (...) ¿Cómo llegamos a las mujeres de pueblos de la España profunda? ¿Cómo les transmitimos a las internas que tienen derechos?” Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/culturas/20137-cuidado-resbala-distancias-cortas-y-trabajo-invisible.html>>.

workers in Spain, not as personal conflicts, but as collective problems that have a political dimension. Following feminist economics, this film puts forward the thesis that, placing life care at the centre is capable of radically changing our ways of understanding the organisation of societies: “That is the defining element of unequal societies, societies where care is not valued and where those who can, don’t do their own care but delegate it, and where there is no social responsibility to take care of life (Min. 55:13).”<sup>251</sup>

The role played by gender is stressed as a key factor in these inequalities, since care tasks have been organised along the traditional sexual division of labour. The fact that it is mostly women who have carried out these activities is rendered evident in the interviews and is constantly mentioned along the film:

Care work covers and manages daily well-being (...) given the imbalance and the power relationship that exists, it has been placed on the shoulders of women, who have been the only ones to have attended to these types of task. (Min. 7:34) / it is with the Enlightenment that **the idea of women having to carry out the feminine and simple task of caring in the home**, and men having the harsh responsibility of working outside in exchange for money, is strengthened. This is called the **sexual division of labour**, represented through the nuclear family (Min. 9:08).

Inequalities surrounding care labour get worse as they intersect with social class:

**90% of domestic work is done by women.** If there’s no time but there’s money, there has always been an option B: to hire another woman to do the work (Min. 8:02) / In Spain, extreme poverty and migrations caused by the Civil War turned millions of adolescents into maidservants in exchange for room and board. (Min. 9:54) / women seek out individual solutions, and **the most comfortable, the easiest, the cheapest, is to hire domestic labour.**(Min. 37:35).

The feminist movement of the seventies poses a crucial challenge to the traditional sexual division of labour. But due to the lack of structural changes in the labour market, this has increased the social class gap and has led to the so-called care crisis:

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<sup>251</sup> The emphases in the quotes from the film are mine.

**Feminist struggles** on this issue had a lot to do with it. **Women en masse began to enter a labour market made by men for men**, designed exclusively for people who had never cared for anyone. (Min. 9:54). / When we speak of a care crisis, what we mean is that the previous model of distribution of care labour has been destabilised. It was **a model that generated some social peace even though it was deeply unjust** and based on the classical sexual division of labour. It blew apart for different reasons. The insertion of women in the labour market is usually mentioned. Above all it is a matter of **changes in life expectations, that you do not want to build yourself as a woman, just taking care of everyone else**, but you want to do other things in life. (Min. 44:00).

In the context of globalisation, gender, social class and nationality make the unequal conditions of care labour even worse, especially when connected with precarious immigration from the Global South to the Global North. This is particularly relevant for looking at inequalities beyond the Spanish borders:

**...globalisation, inequalities and the need for caregivers have led to large migrations from the southern countries to the northern countries to work as domestic workers.** These are called global chains of care and intersect two crises. On the one hand, the women who migrate leave their sons and daughters in the care of another woman in the family and, on the other hand, those same women who leave their countries and care for their own, come to care for the children of women from the northern countries, so that they can join the labour market (Min. 10:45) / This has opened the doors to a great number of immigrants because **none of the Spanish women want to work like this**, even less as live-in domestic workers (Min. 16:46).

Yayo Herrero locates this unequal distribution of resources within a wider, colonial frame:

...many women from the same countries from which these raw materials come, are carrying out a large part of the domestic work in our cities. That is why, just as we speak of **an environmental debt**, the debt that we have with these southern countries, we could speak of **a kind of caregiving debt, which our society has contracted with the women of these countries, for the unequal use** that is made of their energies. (Min. 32:42).



The film also stresses that, in Spain, there are no adequate legal mechanisms to eradicate these inequalities. The situation gets even worse as the economical crisis has been frequently used to justify recent cuts in labour benefits:

Domestic work was **not regulated in Spain until 1985**, with the special scheme for domestic workers. It was a regulation that differed from the rest of jobs and **very discriminatory** (Min. 22:14) / In 2010, the EU required all member countries to override special regulations on domestic service. In 2011, Zapatero's government and major unions signed a new regulation to integrate domestic work into the general scheme. Between 2008 and 2012, Spain entered into an economic and financial crisis (Min. 23:24) / Without questioning, without aid, without co-responsibility and with the gaze placed only on the mandates of the markets, **this crisis is causing care labour to be once again carried out almost exclusively at home and deposited in the hands of women.** (Min. 1:01:46).

As for the **form**, an important way in which *Cuidado, resbala* visualises gender equality is by placing two narrative waves (voices of domestic workers and interviews with academic experts) at the same level. The opening and closing reflexive-performative sequences raise awareness of the camera, making it felt as embodied and with a point of view that belongs to an eccentric other, a female illegal immigrant who works as a domestic worker with whom the spectator is asked to identify with, and whose agency is stressed as she sets up the starting point for the film's research journey.

The **production** process of *Cuidado, resbala* was envisioned as political in itself. Coming from two feminist associations, "Circle of Women" and "The Inverted Gaze", the six directors already had a commitment with social movements and wanted to explore a cooperative-like organisation in filmmaking. In this way, they replace the hierarchical and unidirectional gaze of "the author" with a polyscopic gaze born out of dialogue. According to their testimonies, being feminist women from the assembly movement was a difference that mattered and helped them materialise cultures of equality in their production process.

This was also reflected in their search for horizontal and empathetic relations with their interviewees, so as to diminish the violence of the camera. Through the interviews, they render visible several inequalities connected with three factors: being a woman, a migrant, and a domestic worker. But they also wanted to visualise other possibilities for the construction of gender and social equalities. Therefore, they looked for women who

are getting organised to demand their rights, for example, with groups like “Domestic Territory”.

Even though the film had public funds, which gave the directors more freedom than a production company would have, they still had to meet strict deadlines and resort to self-exploitation, a clear evidence of the inequalities surrounding feminist documentary production. However, they also emphasised the empowerment they felt thanks to the audiovisual tool, which allowed them to express their concerns in a creative way that reaches wider audiences and serves as a didactic tool. There’s an evident commitment of the filmmakers with providing a view as comprehensive as possible about the issue, but keeping it accessible and easy to understand for wide publics.

The **distribution** has been in line with this aim. Instead of waiting for a year of festivals’ cycle, the directors decided to put *Cuidado, resbala* for free online so as to make it available for workshops and seminars designed to raise awareness about the inequalities surrounding care labour. Moreover, different groups of domestic workers have used the film in diverse forums, linking it with specific demands, such as the recognition of Convention 189 on Domestic Workers, which sets basic standards for care labour.

Concerning the **reception** of the film, the filmmakers describe the experience as uplifting and surprising, in terms of how much interest has been raised. The Granada-based “Unitary Feminist Assembly” regards *Cuidado, resbala* as a tool for reflection on care labour and its connections with the capitalist system, patriarchy, gender and class inequalities. Various spectators have praised the clarity with which the film presents complex issues. One of the aspects they like the most about the film is that it understands the inequalities faced by domestic workers as structural problems and that it proposes solutions: ways to turn visualisations of inequalities into the materialisation of a more equal condition by means of a collective responsibility that involves men, enterprises, the State and the organisation of domestic workers in models such as that of the cooperative.

#### 4.2 *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad/My Choice. The Freedom Train* (Women Filmmakers' Collective, 2014)

In the past I was in a group supporting Spanish women who came to London to abort. Back then that was illegal in Spain and three planes full of Spanish women arrived every week to go to the clinics (...) We would take them to our homes and then to the clinics. I can't believe we are doing the same thing again now. Twenty years later. It's a disaster. (One of the testimonies in *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*. Min. 8:37).

In December 2013, the Spanish minister of justice from the right-wing party, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, presented an amendment to the abortion law from 2010: once again, abortion would be considered a crime, allowed to be performed only under limited circumstances. This bill introduced more restrictions for having access to an abortion than those required in the law from 1985. By January 2014, several feminist organisations had raised their voices against this amendment. The “Tertulia Feminista Les Comadres” from Gijón and the association “Women for Equality” from Barredos called for a massive demonstration in Madrid on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2014.

Nearly eighty women from the Spanish film industry were involved in the production of *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*, a forty-two minute observational-participatory documentary film that portrays this massive protest, which was called “El tren de la libertad” (the freedom train). Thanks to an e-mail sent first by feminist film critic Pilar Aguilar and then by director Chus Gutiérrez, dozens of filmmakers, scriptwriters, editors, photographers and producers got organised so as to register the event and to turn it into a militant film, which had a simultaneous premiere in movie theatres all over Spain and is available online for free.<sup>252</sup>

Like my previous case study, the analysis that follows is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. In the case of form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film and then close read it with the theoretical apparatus developed earlier. As for production and reception, I discuss the insights raised by Ana Díez, Alicia Luna, Virginia Yagüe, Chus Gutiérrez, Oliva Acosta

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<sup>252</sup> *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* website. Date of access: January 2019.  
<<http://eltrendelalibertadfilm.blogspot.com/p/the-film-other-languages.html>>.

and Guadalupe Balaguer in a series of interviews carried out with each one of them in 2016. I also incorporate opinions expressed in a sample of online reviews.

#### **4.2.1 Form and Content: A Collective Claim for Women’s Right to Decide**

*Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* is divided into fifteen segments, some of which are subdivided into various sections. These segments can be classified into four narrative waves that focus on the present, the past and/or the future: wave 1, demonstration; wave 2, preparations; wave 3, archival footage; and wave 4, international support. Each segment is described below.<sup>253</sup>

##### 1. Introduction and title (wave 1, demonstration-present).

1.1 On a black screen, we listen to sounds made by a crowd as we read: “Madrid, February 1<sup>st</sup> 2014” (Min. 00:06). Wide top shot of hundreds of women in a square in Madrid. We listen to the speech given by Begoña Piñero, from the feminist group “Les Comadres”. She appears in medium close-up, wearing a purple apron: “We are European citizens, we are citizens of the world. We had a law that worked and worked fine. And they want to change it (...) we’re not going to allow it” (Min. 00:14). A wide shot of the crowd listening to the speech fades out. On the black screen, we read the title of the film. The phrase, “Freedom Train”, moves across the screen accompanied by the sound of a train.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and courage.

##### 2. “Les Comadres” and the origin of the “Freedom Train” demonstration (wave 2, preparations and wave 3 archival footage-present, past and future).

2.1 On a black screen, we read contextual information: In December 2014, the Popular Party “presented a draft to amend the legal abortion law, which eliminates women’s right to choose. If passed, it will place Spain amongst the most restrictive countries in Europe” (Min. 00:42).

2.2 Long shot of a coffee shop in Gijón, where feminist group “Les Comadres” gathers. A dozen women, their ages ranging between sixty and seventy years old, arrive at the gathering. Medium shots of the meeting are combined with long shots of some of these women expressing their point of view. One of them explains that they got angry when justice minister Gallardón presented this law, so that when they got together, they

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<sup>253</sup> The language spoken in the film is Spanish. It can be found online with subtitles in English and French. I have resorted to the English subtitles for the transcriptions.

knew they had to do something about it. In medium close-up, another old woman explains “Les Comadres” joined forces with “La Cuenca” women’s group to react together.

Another woman, approximately fifty years of age, is portrayed in her flower shop saying: “We are serious people and we know how to reflect. We clearly state the things that we do not like or share. And in this case we are united with a clear objective (...) This law must not see the light” (Min. 1:48). The old woman in medium close-up explains that the so-called “freedom train” to Madrid was spontaneously organised. They called it that because “it represented what we believe, women’s freedom over their bodies, women’s freedom to take decisions which affect their physical and moral integrity” (Min. 2:11).

Long shots of various women from “Les Comadres” group arriving at the flower shop that we have seen before. The owner explains that this place became their headquarters. Another woman says that “there is no external funding, except for ourselves” (Min. 2:47), and that once they filled up the 150 seats in the train, they started to organise buses. More citizen movements and associations became involved. She adds: “the generations after us have found everything done for them. They believe the world is like that, but it wasn’t. We had to fight tooth and nail for what we got” (Min. 3:03). She keeps on speaking, as we see a series of old black and white photos, most of them from newspapers, where “Les Comadres” appear in gatherings, demonstrations and actions such as accusing themselves of having had an abortion to defend this right. She says: “This country changed, and it did so for the better but not as much as we wanted it to. Now we are witnessing a brutal backlash” (Min. 3:14). The old woman in medium close shot considers that the movement spread quickly because it’s about an issue that “affects women particularly, but I think also society in general” (Min. 3:36).

Medium close-up of Begoña Piñero being interviewed on the phone. She says: “If they didn’t lie so much, they’d say abortion cases had fallen (...) If a 16-year-old girl has an abortion without her parent’s consent, something is wrong with that family. And if her telling them is a big problem, she should be allowed to do it” (Min. 3:54). The woman in the flower shop says that they also want to talk to young women: “Because our fight now, here, will be useful tomorrow. Tomorrow belongs to them” (Min. 4:21).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, distress, joy and pride.

3. The “Freedom Train” song and the trip to Madrid (wave 2, preparations-present).

3.1 Long shots of dozen of women, including those from “Les Comadres” at the train station in Gijón. Most of them wear a purple apron with a train on it and hold a banner saying: “Because I decide”. They get on the train and happily begin to sing: “The Freedom Train, bound for Madrid, gives us strength and spirit to fight and choose” (Min. 5:15).<sup>254</sup> Their voices fade out into the voices of a chorus singing the same song with a violinist who appears in medium close-up.

The chorus performance continues as we see a group of people, mostly women but also men, getting on the bus in Seville; another group at the train station in Barcelona; another group at the train station in A Coruña; another one getting on a bus in Valencia; another one on a bus in Zaragoza; another bus in Albacete; another group at the train station in Oviedo; and another one in Palencia.

The song continues: “In the conscious and feminist region of Asturias the embers were relit and they are now in the streets and squares spreading messages of rebellion against these facts” (Min. 6:02).<sup>255</sup> In medium close-up, the violinist finishes playing and we see long shots of a group of women at the train station in Valladolid.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, pride and courage.

4. International support (wave 4, international support-present and past).

4.1 In medium close-up, the woman at the flower shop says: “It’s overwhelming. Everything started in the social networks and we’ve seen there are lots of women supporting us, not only from Spain but all over the world” (Min. 7:22). Transition with newspaper headings in English and French, for example, from *Le Monde* and *The New York Times*.

4.2 A group of approximately thirty women gather in Amsterdam to protest. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, says: “Not the church, not the State, women decide their fate. In my belly, I command” (Min. 7:49). Long shots show dozens of people demonstrating in the streets as we hear a news report saying that there are demonstrations in solidarity with Spain, from cities such as London and Amsterdam. Long shots of women in front of the Spanish embassy in Edinburgh. A young Spanish woman in medium shot says that she supports the fight: “There are some women who like the law as it is now and some want to make it better but we all agree that we don’t want

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<sup>254</sup> “El tren de la libertad que corre hacia Madrid, nos da fuerza y moral para luchar y decidir”. To avoid overburdening the dissertation, I only include the original Spanish quote as a footnote in the case of the songs.

<sup>255</sup> “En la Asturias feminista y concienciada, ha prendido una brasa de carbón que recorre los caminos y las plazas propagando ante estos hechos, mensajes de rebelión”

this bill passed” (Min. 8:23). Another woman holds a clothespin with the phrase “Keep abortion legal and safe” (Min. 8:29), and an old woman in medium close-up recalls that she used to support Spanish women who had to go to London to have an abortion (this chapter opens with this quote).

In medium close shot, a woman, approximately fifty years of age, gives a speech for the crowd: “Every woman has the right to a safe and legal termination. Unfortunately, we now have to go back to the beginning and fight for those rights. No return to the past” (Min. 9:18). Long shots of dozens of people protesting outside the Spanish embassy in Buenos Aires, followed by long shots of a large group of people protesting in Rome. A woman says: “As a free human being, I refuse a forced motherhood and the patriarchal regime that condemns women to the sexual and reproductive minority of age” (Min. 9:47). A young Italian woman in medium close-up says that they want to support Spanish women and to make it clear that “if they touch the Italian law, we’ll make a big mess” (Min. 10:06).

Long shots of the demonstration in Brussels, with dozens of people as well. Medium close-up of an old woman dressed in a costume that alludes to the Pope: “They have no excuse for compromising women’s freedom. Choosing is our business. We must choose. Francis, new Pope of Rome and the Catholics: Don’t touch my uterus. General womb strike! Women in power!” (Min. 10:41). Wide shots of the big demonstration in Paris. A woman in medium close-up says that she is there to support Spanish people and that she thanks artists for their work: “we are all here supporting all these rights that have to be universal” (Min. 11:24). In medium close-up, an old woman says: “I get angry when they amend these things, and even more so when we had attained legalisation in favour of women and children” (Min. 11:34). The sequence finishes with a wide shot of the Eiffel Tower.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: surprise, anger, distress and joy.

5. Artistic actions (wave 2 preparations-present and past).

5.1 The image of the Eiffel Tower dissolves into its image in a flyer of a fake travel agency called “abortion travel”. Extracts from fake news, in which the presenters explain that this agency offers “packages that include transportation, hotel and clinic” (Min. 12:21). Diverse shots show the office of the “abortion travel”, with women asking for information. A voice-over explains: “We have opened a travel agency to offer safe abortions in countries like France, England or Germany. Countries that respect women’s right to choose” (Min. 12:35). Screenshots of the agency’s website, which is linked to a

change.org campaign to stop the amendment of the law. One of the creators of the agency, a woman, approximately fifty years of age, says:

This marks the difference between us and Europe, the European reality, and places us at the same level as Ireland, Poland and Malta. This is real, I have already lived this. I've travelled with people to London. And I've been to illegal abortions here. And I went to hospital with a friend because she was dying from an illegal abortion. You people with such young faces, don't really know what it's like. (Min. 13:01).

5.2 Performance on a train in Catalonia. A dozen young women, dressed as flight attendants, make a demonstration of travel instructions that are exposed by a female voice-over speaking in Catalan. Most of the passengers smile as they see and listen to the performance:

Captain Gallardón and the Popular Party crew welcome you on this shithole. Put on your seatbelts (...) and close your minds. We remind you that thinking, complaining or aborting is strictly forbidden (...) There are two emergency exits: illegal abortions, located between life and death; the other requires leaving Spain in order to have a safe abortion. However, this exit is reserved for first class ladies only (...) We remind you that the last thing this counter-reformation wants is to protect women's lives. Thanks for choosing Patriarchal Airlines (Min. 13:31).

5.3 Performance in which dozens of women register their bodies at the personal property registry. The long shots of the women and the confused workers are accompanied by music. Close shots show the records being stamped on and given to the women. This sequence finishes with close shots of the women looking directly into the camera, covering part of their faces with the record of registration.

5.4 A large group of men and women, with the message "I had an abortion" pasted on their chests arrive at a police station in Barcelona. In medium close-up, a man, approximately forty years of age, explains: "We are fighting against this law that the old-fashioned Popular Party is trying to pass. Today this is a protest to file a claim against ourselves (...) We are claiming we are abortionists. Abortion doesn't only affect women but society as a whole" (Min. 15:21). A man, approximately sixty years of age, is



interviewed by a woman and says: “We can be rebellious when faced with an illegal law, that takes away our rights and is against people’s equality” (Min. 15:54).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, surprise, anger and distress.

6. Arriving in Madrid (wave 2, preparations, and wave 4 international support-present and past).

6.1 Point of view shot from inside the train as we listen to a female voice-over announcing that the train is arriving at the Madrid station of Atocha. Wide shots of large groups of people waiting in Atocha. Various shots of women getting off from buses, walking in groups and hanging banners on the streets.

6.2 Various shots of the arrivals hall at Madrid airport. A small group of young women arrive from Paris. In medium close-up, one of them explains: “We have created a small feminist group and have come to Spain to participate in the demonstrations, get in contact with Spanish feminists and strengthen our ties” (Min. 16:28). Inside a car, another woman from this group says: “We did not think that one day we would have to fight to save this basic right, freedom to choose” (Min. 16:46).

6.3 Long shots outside of the Atocha station and medium shots inside the train. A woman says that she used to watch women’s demonstrations in documentaries and that she used to think they were really brave, fighting together against oppression, and that she feels happy to be part of that. Another woman travelling on the train, approximately eighty years of age, says that she is on the train because of solidarity with “Les Comadres”: “What surprised me was that it’s a group that existed in 1985, when the first abortion law finally came through. It must be very difficult for them to have to come back all these years later and fight again. But they are here” (Min. 17:10).

6.4 Once again we see the French young women in the car. One of them says: “We think if Spain says that it is possible to ban abortion, other countries may have the same idea” (Min. 17:30). The other one adds: “In France, we also have to protect this right in order to keep it” (Min. 17:42).

6.5 Long shots of groups of women starting to get organised in the streets of Madrid. Another French girl, in medium close-up at the airport, states: “We have to protect the rights at an European level and change things through the solidarity of all countries” (Min. 17:57). Another one adds: “Every single right we have is very fragile because of the governments and abortion should be a fundamental right on a European basis” (Min. 18:08). Long shots of women painting their faces with messages such as “I

decide” and “My body, my rules”. Long shots of the train with “Les Comadres” arriving at the train station, where there are crowds waiting for them, screaming: “Yes, we can”.

6.6 Long shots of the crowds walking from the train and the platform of the station towards the streets as we listen to another song by the chorus accompanied by the violin. Various medium and long shots show the women singing, among whom the scriptwriter Alicia Luna and the filmmaker Chus Gutiérrez. The song says: “It’s my body. They won’t take away the right to legal abortion (...) These ovaries are ours, don’t you dare touch them (...) ‘Silence’, they say from above. I say no with the feminists (...) Mister minister is not going to beat us” (Min. 18:52).<sup>256</sup>

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: surprise, joy, pride, fear, frustration and anger.

7. Beginning of the demonstration and reasons why people attend (wave 1, demonstration and wave 4, international support-present).

7.1 Wide shots of the people gathering at the square outside the Atocha station in Madrid to start marching behind “Les Comadres”, who hold the long banner with the phrase “Freedom Train” written on it. A drums band formed mainly by young women and a few men starts playing, as people begin to walk forward. Medium close-ups show men and women of diverse ages, saying where they come from, e.g. Salamanca, Seville, Madrid, Argentina, Paris and Bilbao. All along this sequence, the testimonies are intercut with the drums band playing and dancing.

7.2 In medium close-up, a man, approximately forty years of age, says why he is at the demonstration: “to defend the right to choose, to avoid the imposition of a moral different from our own and to show respect to women” (Min. 21:18). Medium close-up of a group of women from different Spanish universities. A French woman, approximately forty years of age, states: “Whether it is legal or not, women will still have abortions. The problem is they’ll have them in bad conditions and risk their lives” (Min. 21:40). A young American woman says that she finds the law ridiculous. A man that attends the demonstration with his wife says: “We are outraged at the backward approach to this situation. We are going to fight” (Min. 21:56).

7.3 Another woman, approximately forty years of age, says: “Women here are of all ages and from all countries, and this strength and unity are priceless. We’ll stop a law that doesn’t benefit women, treats us like minors, puts us at the bottom of Europe, we

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<sup>256</sup> “Es mi cuerpo. No van a eliminar el derecho a abortar (...) Son nuestros ovarios, no los toque usted. ‘Silencio’, nos dicen de arriba. Digo no, con las feministas (...) El señor ministro no nos va a vencer.”

don't want it!" (Min. 22:06). Various medium and long shots show women of various ages attending the demonstration, dancing and saying phrases such as "We don't want this law!" and "We give birth, we decide!" A woman, approximately fifty years of age, explains in medium close-up that abortion is "a public health issue, a State issue" (Min. 22:50).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, anger, pride and courage.

8. A struggle that goes back in time (wave 1, demonstration, and wave 3, archival footage-present and past).

8.1 A woman, approximately fifty years of age, says:

30 years ago I was here demanding exactly the same thing, the right of women to decide what to do with their body. But democracy in Spain seems to have been in vain. This transitional process has been useless because 30 years later women and men take to the streets again to demand freedom. (Min. 22:58).

Medium and long shots show different women at the demonstrations yelling and showing posters with the word "freedom" on them. A young woman in medium close-up says: "It's like returning to way before the law of 1985. It's going back to Franco's time, to a situation where our mothers and grandmothers already fought" (Min. 23:34). A sequence of archival footage with long shots of a women's demonstration in Barcelona in 1977, demanding amnesty for women who had had an abortion.

8.2 As a woman holds a poster saying "Happy 1950" (Min. 24:11), a woman, approximately sixty years of age, says it feels to her as if she was going back more than thirty years. Another woman, approximately fifty years of age, says: "A friend fought for this 30 years ago. Now she's here with her grandchild. It's shameful!" (Min. 24:18). Long shots show groups of women shouting that they had already done that in the seventies.

8.3 A woman, approximately sixty years of age, says she got pregnant when she was nineteen years old and decided to have an abortion:

London cost 50,000 pesetas. In the same clinic I found a woman with four children that didn't want to have a fifth one, a girl from Burgos that had got pregnant by her lover, who was her boss, thus she couldn't have the baby, and myself, just because I didn't want it. (Min. 24:38).

In medium close-up, another woman, approximately fifty years of age, narrates with tearful eyes that she met a 16-year-old girl who got pregnant and who died after trying to abort with a knitting needle. Various shots of people at the demonstrations, including the French young woman and a tearful man. A woman who we have seen in segment 7.4 says: “Youngsters today can’t imagine getting pregnant, meeting up in a park, hiding, with a butcher, going to a house, getting an abortion there in poor conditions, get home, start bleeding and never going to a hospital because you’d go to jail” (Min. 25:46).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, frustration, anger and shame.

9. Defending the freedom to choose (wave 1, demonstration-present).

9.1 Medium close-up of a young woman saying that she won’t allow this recoil to take place because she is free to decide what to do with her life. Another woman, attending the demonstration with her young son, says that women have to be free to decide whether to become mothers or not. Another young woman says that she considers it unthinkable to deprive women of the right to choose.

9.2 A woman, approximately forty years of age, says: “Having a baby is an important decision that must not be imposed on anybody. We don’t impose abortion, nor birth” (Min. 26:29). Long shot of a group of five women, one is pregnant, another has a stroller and another one says: “We are not stupid, we can decide. I had an abortion a year ago. I’m a working mother and decided not to have it” (Min. 26:38).

9.3 A pregnant woman, approximately forty years of age, travelling on the train, explains: “I’ve decided to have my child. But I understand, and I ask the government to stop this law. We want to be able to decide” (Min. 26:57). Long shots show diverse groups of women in the demonstration singing “women decide about maternity” (Min. 27:10). Filmmaker Oliva Acosta appears in one of these shots. Long shots of the drums band playing and dancing as the demonstration moves forward.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: courage, anger and joy.

10. Cheap workforce, sexual education, men’s support, not an easy decision, and hypocritical politicians (wave 1, demonstration-present).

10.1 A woman, approximately eighty years of age, states: “Apart from trying to control women again (...) they want cheap workforce” (Min. 27:52). As we see different posters that people hold in the demonstration about the economical context (e.g. rich women abort while poor women die when abortion is illegal), a young woman says that it is ridiculous to say that fertility will increase economic growth. In close-up, a woman,

approximately thirty years of age, says: “I’m not an uterus to produce cheap workforce” (Min. 28:19).

10.2 Long shots of people at the demonstration shouting phrases such as “Many women are fighting this battle” (Min. 28:24). The young woman that we saw in segment 8.1 explains that sexual education, “the most effective means of prevention, is being completely eradicated” (Min. 28:33) by the government. The woman from segment 10.1 says that she frequently hears women saying that their boyfriend gave them wrong information, but that they believed them because of the prejudice that “men know more about sexuality” (Min. 28:58).

10.3 A young man says that they are looking for other alternatives to being a man, rather than those being proposed to them, and that the struggle for the right to abort “asserts women’s sexual and reproductive rights. It’s legal and has the support from many people” (Min. 29:05). Another man, approximately fifty years of age, says he is committed with the cause, as “a right for women and men” (Min. 29:18).

10.4 The young woman that we have seen in segments 8.1 and 10.2 explains that women have always aborted, “the issue is in what circumstances this difficult decision is made. It’s never easy” (Min. 29:30). The old woman from segment 10.1 says she dislikes the propaganda that suggests that women get pregnant just to have an abortion: “I do not agree that it is something unforgettable. Not at all. But it is clearly not an easy decision. Not to mention having to have a disabled baby (...) I’d like to ask the minister to come and help those people” (Min. 29:49).

10.5 A woman, approximately forty years of age, says they are very hypocritical when they defend the unborn children and take every social aid away from the unnourished ones and disabled people. An old couple also considers that the politicians are hypocritical because “they do what they want but impose behaviour rules on everyone else” (Min. 30:38).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, courage and surprise.

11. Abortion is a right, not a crime (wave 1, demonstration-present and past).

11.1 Various shots of the people at the demonstration shouting: “Women united won’t ever be defeated” (Min. 30:43). The woman that we saw in segment 7.3 talking about abortion as a public health issue says: “We are being forced to hide, like years ago. Women defend abortion as a right, it is not a crime” (Min. 31:08). Long shots of women

singing the same phrase.<sup>257</sup> A woman, approximately sixty years of age, says: “If this restrictive reactionary law is approved, women will be even more vulnerable, they will have to face many risks” (Min. 31:22). A young woman in medium shot also says that it shouldn’t be forbidden for a woman to decide whether to have a child or not.

11.2 Various shots of women singing “Let them arrest us, we are abortionists, wicked feminists and they cannot control us. Let them arrest us, we are feminists, they are sexists and we are not going to stop” (Min. 31:42).<sup>258</sup> A woman, approximately sixty years of age, asserts: “We are human beings, not uteri. This right makes us human beings. This, among other things, is equality” (Min. 31:56). Another woman surrounded by young women say that neither the government, nor religion should tell women what to do.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, anger and pride.

12. Religion (wave 1, demonstration-present and past).

12.1 Long shots of a group of women singing: “Get your rosaries out of my ovaries” (Min. 32:27), and another one saying: “If the Pope got knocked up, abortion would be sanctified” (Min. 32:40). A woman, approximately fifty years of age, says: “This bill drives us away from Europe and takes us back in time (...) not even the 1985 law was this restrictive. Moreover, all citizens are against it” (Min. 32:45).

12.2 Various shots show posters pasted outside a Catholic library, and a phrase stamped on the floor saying: “Whores and saints, we abort even in Easter”. A man, approximately fifty years of age, says that women should be able to decide and he adds: “The Catholic Church could use excommunication in its range to deal with people who don’t comply with their beliefs” (Min. 33:00). Another man in the same age range says: “Nobody should legislate people’s intimacy” (Min. 33:11). Another man, approximately sixty years of age, says he supports the demonstration because of his kids and adds: “There are personal reasons, but I am more interested in the collective reasons” (Min. 33:18).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, joy and pride.

13. The demonstration success and the participants feelings (wave 1, demonstration-present, past and future).

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<sup>257</sup> “El aborto es un derecho y no puede ser delito en el código penal.”

<sup>258</sup> “Que nos detengan, que somos abortistas, malvadas feministas, y no nos pueden controlar. Que nos detengan, que somos abortistas, contra estos machistas, no vamos a parar.”

13.1 Wide shots of the streets full of people. A young man says he came from Vitoria and asserts: “They are not alone, Spain is united against this” (Min. 33:42). A woman, approximately thirty years of age, says that people will fight until they stop the law. A man, approximately sixty years of age, says: “Abortion is fine as it is. No need to change a single comma” (Min. 33:58). An old woman says that the government is laughing at everybody. A man, approximately thirty years of age, with a baby in a stroller says: “I am here for my daughter and my partner. We should have the right to decide over our lives” (Min. 34:12). Another man says they have to defend “the rights we had won before” (Min. 34:29). Another woman says that people won’t accept this law.

13.2 Medium shot of a woman handing out food to some of the participants. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, says: “I absolutely love that it’s not just women here, it’s all of us” (Min. 34:44). A woman, approximately thirty years of age, says she feels happy because of the huge amount of people attending the demonstration: “I thought it wouldn’t happen, we seemed asleep” (Min. 34:54). A young man says: “It’s a right we all must defend” (Min. 34:59).

13.3 Long shots of the choir singing in the street with the man playing the violin: “They call it democracy, but it is not” (Min. 35:10). A woman, approximately fifty years of age, says: “This proves that the abortion law won’t pass” (Min. 35:32). Long shots of the drums band playing and dancing in the street, surrounded by lots of people. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, says: “I’m sure that the good vibes today in Madrid will travel around Spain so that we can keep what we have achieved so far and advance further on, because we want more” (Min. 35:52). A young woman says: “I’m thrilled because this is history” (Min. 36:10).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, hope, pride and anger.

14. Arriving at the parliament and Begoña’s speech (wave 1, demonstration-present, past and future).

14.1 Wide shots of the crowds gathering outside the Parliament. Dozens of policemen guard the building. Various shots show “Les Comadres” arriving, entering the building, and getting out with some documents. These shots are intercut with images of the choir singing: “At the Parliament’s door, the feminists are arriving (...) Outraged women, free and empowered (...) They fight for their desires. They fight for their rights,

that the leaders now want to take away from them (...) For many years they fought” (Min. 37:10).<sup>259</sup>

14.2 Medium close-up of Begoña from “Les Comadres” giving the speech we heard in segment 1.1:

Women are first class citizens. We decide how, when and with whom we want to be mothers. We don’t need them to tell us, nor the Church or the radical right to guide us. We had a law that worked and worked fine. And they want to change it (...) we’re not going to allow it. (Min. 38:25).

Various shots show the crowd clapping. The drums band begins to play again.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, pride and outrage.

15. Epilogue and credits (wave 3, archival footage-past).

15.1 The music remains in the background, as we see a series of black and white photos of various demonstrations carried out by feminist groups in the seventies for the right to free abortion. In one of them, women holding a banner to denounce rape pass in front of a movie theatre that screens a film called “The Sins of a Hot Man” (Min. 39:08). In another photo, women stand outside the courthouse with a banner that says: “Right to abort. We give birth, we decide” (Min. 39:11). In a photo from a protest in Barcelona, the banner says: “Enough repression. Cardinal, resign” (Min. 39:16). In another photo, policemen arrest women who protest. In another photo, women hold a giant banner that says: “Woman, we love you and we fight for you” (Min. 39:28). In another photo, the protesters ask for amnesty of eleven women in Bilbao. In the last photo, two women join their hands so as to form the symbol of feminism.

15.2 On a black screen, the credits appear in white letters, accompanied by violin music. It is defined as a collective work that was possible due to the work of a list of over eighty women filmmakers whose names appear in alphabetical order, except from that of the editor, Teresa Font, whose name tops the list. The “Freedom Train” song is composed by Nina Aranda, with lyrics by Carmen Vega Porto. Among the collaborators, they mention: CIMA, Almodóvar’s production company “El Deseo”, EWA Network, AAMMA-the Andalusian Association of Women in Media, Feminists of Catalunya, the

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<sup>259</sup> “A la puerta del Congreso, ya están llegando las feministas (...) Mujeres indignadas, libres y empoderadas (...) Luchan por sus anhelos. Luchan por sus derechos, que ahora quieren quitarles los gobernantes (...) Tantos años lucharon.”



Andalusian Cinematheque, and the University of Málaga. They also enlist those people who contributed financially to the making of the film, including anonymous donations.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia, pride and joy.

#### 4.2.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

By portraying a massive demonstration against a bill banning the right to abortion in Spain, *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* touches three aspects of the **feminist audiovisual agenda**: the right to one's body, sexual self-awareness and the recovery of the feminist movement memory. With such militant ethos, the **feminist countervisuality** practices enacted by the dozens of women who were involved in the making of this film are linked with the fact that they turn their cameras to a social movement led by a feminist group. In this sense, "the performative claim of a right to look where none technically exists" (Mirzoeff 2011: 478) is exemplified by the committed decision to keep an audiovisual record of a civil society protest, co-creating a discourse in which several people, women and men of different ages, enact their right to appear and their "right to have rights" (Butler 2015: 80).

Using Bill Nichols's typology of modes of representation in documentary cinema (2010), we can classify *Yo decido* as an observational-participatory documentary film. **Observational** documentary privileges observation of the social actors without comments or interventions from the director, who simply registers the events that take place. However, the film's main mode of representation is **participatory**, because most of the film is sustained by short interviews with organisers and participants of the demonstration.

The frequent use of **talking heads as an empowering tool**, with women talking to the camera as representatives of their own experience, is a common feature of the **realist documentary films** made in the seventies.<sup>260</sup> In *Yo decido*, women proudly define themselves and stand up for their rights, as one of them puts it in segment 2.2: "We are serious people and we know how to reflect. We clearly state the things that we do not like or share. And in this case we are united with a clear objective" (Min. 1:48).

Apart from the **testimonies** of Spanish women, the film includes testimonies of foreign women, mainly French, and also of men, who appear thirteen times (figure 16).

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<sup>260</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 2. Section 2.2.2 Feminist Documentary Cinema: Possibilities of Subversive Realism

The main idea sustained by foreign women is that the right to decide has to be defended at European level, within the frame of gender equality as a European value. In the case of men, the thesis put forward is that the right to abortion is not exclusively a women’s issue, but something to be defended by the whole society. In segment 13.2, an old woman asserts: “I absolutely love that it’s not just women here, it’s all of us” (Min. 34:44).



Figure 16. Talking heads as an empowering tool

Even though the film is fundamentally the register of a one-day event that took place in 2014, the **feminist movement genealogy** and the sense of historical regression are highlighted at different moments: in the epilogue we see a series of black and white photos that show women demanding the right to abortion during the late seventies and beginning of the eighties; “Les Comadres” themselves fought for the 1985 law; and there are several testimonies of women who experienced the prohibition and had to abort abroad or to accompany other women in the process of aborting (figure 17). These women, most of them of non-reproductive age, express awareness of the importance for the new generations to know that the right to decide had to be fought for, and has to be defended. At the same time, young women express gratitude and conviction towards the future.



Figure 17. A feminist movement genealogy: protests from the seventies and eighties

If we think of the film as a diffraction apparatus, paying attention to the importance of the forms in which it produces and presents its contents, we can visualise how the

entanglements between the local and the global, the past and the future, can be visualised as different **narrative waves**. I have identified four waves that overlap within the **film editing**: wave 1, demonstration; wave 2, preparations; wave 3, archival footage; and wave 4 international support.

At different segments, a narrative wave may evoke the past or the future; for example, wave 1 gets combined with wave 3 so as to render visible that the feminist struggle for women's right to decide goes back in time (segment 8). Towards the end of the film, wave 1 places a stronger emphasis on the future with testimonies such as one from segment 13: "I'm sure that the good vibes today in Madrid will travel around Spain so that we can keep what we have achieved so far and advance further on, because we want more" (Min. 35:52). Wave 2 shows the preparations before the demonstration, including artistic and militant performances. As for the strategic use of diegetic music, songs and rhythms summarise contextual information and provide the film with dynamism.

To some extent, in its defense of women's right to decide whether to become mothers or not, the film critically engages with **gender performativity**, i.e. the ways in which gender is a kind of enactment of gender norms that "inform the lived modes of embodiment we acquire over time" (Butler 2015: 29): motherhood is a choice, not something inherent nor compulsory. In the cutting together-apart<sup>261</sup> of the testimonies of various women, *Yo decido* also renders visible **differences between women**. For instance, pregnant women state that they want to have a child but that they also want to defend the right of other women not to have one, and a young Spanish woman in Edinburgh says that, within the feminist collectives, there are women who criticise and want to improve the current law, but that they have all got together with the common goal of not letting this specific amendment pass.

The authority with which women and men from the civil society speak in the film contributes to open up the possibility of **affirmation and becoming** in and through cinema. "Les Comadres" and all the participants at the demonstration enact their **performative right to appear** in public places as **political beings**. According to Butler, a massive gathering as the one portrayed in *Yo decido* "signifies in excess of what is said, and that mode of signification is a concerted bodily enactment, a plural form of

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<sup>261</sup> Agential cuts, according to Barad, don't produce absolute separations, but an agential situated separability, "a 'holding together' of the disparate itself" (2012: 46). *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity: How Documentary Cinema Matters

performativity” (2015: 8). In their action of defending the right to abortion as a condition for gender equality, the demonstrators-filmed subjects are already setting into motion a series of effects:

...the communities that assemble on the street start to enact another idea of equality, freedom and justice than the one that they oppose. The “I” is thus at once a “we”, without being fused into an impossible unity. To be a political actor is a function, a feature of acting on terms of equality with other humans (...) Equality is a condition and character of political action itself at the same time that it is its goal. (Butler 2015: 52).

When women appear in the public space to demand their right to decide on their own bodies without the intervention of the State or the Church, they also enact a **queer performativity of gender norms** (figure 18). When women march together with men in defence of the right to abortion, their claim for equality is “not only spoken or written, but is made precisely when bodies appear together, or, rather, when, through their action, they bring the space of appearance into being. This space is a feature and effect of action” (Butler 2015: 89).



**Figure 18:** Enacting a queer performativity of gender norms in the public space

As an audiovisual register, *Yo decido* adds another layer to this political space of appearance, one that defies the censorship of mainstream media and transcends temporal and spatial barriers, while keeping at the forefront its location and historical moment. Butler has also talked about the importance of media intervention in the register of these public assemblies, for example, in the creation of solidarity networks: “something different is happening when one part of the globe rises in moral outrage against actions and events that happen in another part of the globe, a form of moral outrage that does not

depend upon a shared language or a common life grounded in physical proximity” (Butler 2015: 100). Her words echo Barad’s definition of diffraction apparatus, i.e. technologies that make boundaries and enact cuts within the world, so as to make part of it intelligible to another part of the world (2007).

*Yo decido* emphasises solidarity mainly with other European countries, such as France, The Netherlands and England, through the repetition of phrases like “abortion should be a fundamental right on a European basis” (Min. 18:08). Piñero’s speech, which opens and closes the film, starts with the phrase: “We are European citizens” (00:14), and a constant critique to the amendment of the law is that it places Spain “at the bottom of Europe” (Min. 22:06), “at the same level as Ireland, Poland and Malta” (Min. 13:01). This discursive strategy gives yet more legitimacy and strength to the demand of the right for women to decide over their own bodies. Nevertheless, it might also stress a liberal feminist approach to gender equality as a Western value.

Another strategy is sense of humour, for instance, in the performances of segment 5 (figure 19). The editing of the testimonies responds to the need to present diverse arguments in favour of the film’s claim: insights that go from the need to have better sexual education, to the classism inherent to the prohibition of abortion, all of which are read through one another. There’s also a refusal of women to be regarded as uteri for the production of cheap workforce, and of letting religion interfere beyond their sphere.



**Figure 19.** Music and sense of humour

In terms of **emotionality and performativity**, i.e. how the film generates effects and the ways in which it names or performs different emotions, the strongest element is that of the testimonies-talking heads of organisers and participants in the demonstration. Anger and distress are frequently evoked, for example, in segment 8.3, when a woman narrates the case of a 16-year-old girl who died after trying to abort with a knitting needle. There are expressions of frustration and disbelief, but the overall tone of the film is joyful, linked with empowerment, collective strength, pride and solidarity.

In the next section, I read through interviews held with directors Ana Díez, Chus Gutiérrez and Oliva Acosta, scriptwriters Alicia Luna and Virginia Yagüe, and producer Guadalupe Balaguer. I also close read a sample of online reviews. Being a collective film made by dozens of people, the different insights that these women raise help illuminate different aspects of the diffraction apparatus that *Yo decido* is: How did they intra-act with different human and non-human agencies of observation so as to render this key moment for the Spanish feminist movement legible in an audiovisual way?

#### **4.2.2 Production and Reception: The Strength of Feminist Filmmaking Activism**

Dozens of women from the Spanish film industry were involved in the production of *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*. In an interview for this research project, scriptwriter Alicia Luna summarises the origin of the **collaboration between the filmmakers and the organisers of the demonstration** that the documentary film shows:

This is because of a bill that aimed to repeal a law that was already approved and that worked well, which was the law of abortion in Spain. It had taken many years to pass this law (...) Because that was not easy in this Catholic, backward, male chauvinist and patriarchal country, it was not easy. And suddenly this minister of justice came along, saying he was going to repeal this law (...) **If in Spain it was possible to reverse history and repeal a law that worked well, it was the preamble for other countries, especially European ones, to follow suit.** So it was, this was a wake-up call, red alert (...) We then get the news that some women in Gijón who have an association, “Les Comadres”, are going to take action and they have all bought train tickets and they come to demonstrate. We could not let them do it by themselves. They are ladies of sixty, seventy and eighty years of age who took a train and came to say “this will happen only over my dead body”. **We are just as angry as them, therefore we are not going to**

**let them do it alone, we are going to use the tools that we know best how to use. What are they? Cameras.**<sup>262</sup>

In Luna's discourse, the **European context** was frequently mentioned as a way of strengthening her arguments. It was Pilar Aguilar, a feminist film critic and researcher, who first told director Chus Gutiérrez about the massive demonstration that was taking place in a couple of weeks. Gutiérrez then sent a massive e-mail to all her contacts from the film industry. In an interview for this research project, she recalls:

I told myself: **“we have to do something about such an important issue for women as the law of abortion”** (...) I must have sent eighty e-mails. And the next morning, at eight thirty-nine in the morning, I open my e-mail account, and maybe forty had already answered, saying yes. And that's when I organised the first meeting and from there everything, you know, everything began to get organised.<sup>263</sup>

Luna offered the space where dozens of women from diverse branches of film production had their first meetings. It was a place called *La Corsetería*, a scriptwriting school. The film professionals whom I interviewed agree on the fact that it was not difficult to work together, due to what Luna defines as “a very strong synergy”<sup>264</sup>. They wanted to make a **militant and collective film without individualistic protagonism**, so they called themselves “Colectivo de mujeres cineastas” (i.e. women filmmakers' collective). In Luna's words, they replaced hierarchies with “common understanding (...) common sense is ‘this must be supported’ (...) Nobody commands here, there is no need, we just

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<sup>262</sup> “Esto es a raíz de un anteproyecto de ley que quería derogar una ley ya aprobada y que funcionaba bien, que era la ley del aborto en España. Que había costado muchos años sacar adelante (...) Porque no era fácil en este país católico, retrógrado, machista y patriarcal, no era fácil. Y de repente vino este ministro de justicia, diciendo que iba a derogar esta ley (...) Si en España era posible invertir la historia y derogar una ley que funcionaba bien era el preámbulo para que en otros países, sobre todo en los europeos pudiera hacerse. Entonces era, esto era una llamada de alerta, alerta roja (...) Nos llega la noticia de que unas mujeres en Gijón que tienen una asociación, ‘Les Comadres’, van a hacer una acción y es que se han comprado todas un billete de tren y se vienen a manifestarse. Entonces no las podíamos dejar solas. Son señoras de sesenta, setenta y ochenta años que se cogían un tren y se venían a decir ‘por encima de mi cadáver esto va a pasar’. Es que nosotras estamos igual de revueltas, entonces no las vamos a dejar solas, vamos a utilizar las herramientas que mejor sabemos utilizar, ¿cuáles son? Las cámaras.” Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>263</sup> “Dije, si no hacemos algo por esto que es tan importante para las mujeres como la ley del aborto (...) Igual mandé ochenta mails. Y a la mañana siguiente, a las ocho y media, nueve de la mañana, abro el mail, igual habían contestado cuarenta diciendo que sí. Y entonces ya es cuando organicé la primera reunión y a partir de ahí ya todo, sabes, ya empezó como todo a organizarse.” Chus Gutiérrez. Personal interview. October 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>264</sup> “una sinergia muy fuerte.” Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

have to get organised.<sup>265</sup> Scriptwriter Virginia Yagüe considers that in the production of *Yo decido*:

...the women filmmakers' collective showed very remarkable efficiency when it came to getting organised (...) I firmly believe that **women work in networks** (...) they have left us no other choice (...) I think we do it intuitively because traditionally we have always done it and this debunks that absolutely perverse theory, absolutely manipulated I think, which says that women don't work, don't coordinate, that we are not supportive of each other. I think it's the opposite, from my experience, **it is precisely women's work that is eminently supportive.**<sup>266</sup>

During the first meeting, they concentrated on drafting **a story thread to follow**. Luna recalls that it was editor Teresa Font who said a phrase that became their key guideline: "De la semilla inicial, al grito global", i.e. from the initial seed to the global cry. This premise, Luna explains, made the working plan clear for them:

**What we had to do was the documentary of a march. It was not the documentary about abortion laws (...)** But it was not a news report either. We wanted it to be seen, for the people who saw it to get excited and for it to be shown around the world too, right? Then it had to be understood where this came from, it was a question of following the chronology. There are some women who suddenly say: "no, we will not allow it". What? And then, why we have come to his situation (...) We will follow the "comadres" on the train and see how people are getting onto the other trains. So we had to position filmmakers at stations in Barcelona, Bilbao, Seville (...) Next we will see the march. And we're going to record interviews: "Why are you coming? What do you want to defend?" So **this was asking both women and men. Because abortion concerns us all.**<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> "común entendimiento (...) el sentido común es 'esto hay que apoyarlo' (...) Aquí nadie manda, o sea, es que no hay necesidad, simplemente hay que organizarse." Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>266</sup> "...se mostró una eficacia muy notable de las mujeres, del colectivo de mujeres cineastas, a la hora de organizarse (...) creo firmemente que las mujeres trabajamos en red (...) no nos han dejado otro remedio (...) creo que lo hacemos intuitivamente porque lo hemos venido haciendo tradicionalmente y esto desmonta esa teoría absolutamente perversa, yo creo que manipulada absolutamente, de que las mujeres no trabajamos, no nos coordinamos, no somos solidarias entre nosotras. Yo creo que es todo lo contrario, desde mi experiencia, precisamente el trabajo con mujeres es eminentemente solidario." Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>267</sup> "Lo que teníamos que hacer era el documental de una marcha. No era el documental sobre la ley del aborto (...) Pero no era un reportaje tampoco. Queríamos que se pudiera ver, que la gente que lo viera



It then became easier to divide the group into units with specific objectives. Those in charge of production were Esther García, the production manager of Pedro Almodóvar's production company "El Deseo", and Guadalupe Balaguer, who had worked with Chus Gutiérrez. Interviewed for this research project, Balaguer explains that they had **no funding** at all, but they had "a lot of will and desire"<sup>268</sup>. Logistics were covered in a **guerrilla style**, in which people contributed with the equipment they had. The schedule was also very tight, only two weeks before the demonstration:

In a week and a half we put together a kind of procedure manual and distributed it to everybody (...) these were ground rules, more than anything to unify formats, to unify forms of filming, so that **within the chaos and diversity, we had a way that was as unified as possible** to then cope with the material that we were going to have later.<sup>269</sup>

The purpose of getting divided into nearly **thirty recording units** was to have filmmakers **at different points** of the march in Madrid, but also in the different cities from where people were coming to the demonstration. A group travelled to Gijón so as to interview Begoña Piñero and the other "comadres" before the event, and to accompany them on the train. Oliva Acosta describes how the units were conformed:

Each filming unit had to have a director, a sound person and a producer. Men were never excluded. And each filming unit was in charge of an area, in my case, for example, Andalusia (...) Then we made script commissions, assembly commissions, distribution commissions and **we edited in the production company of Almodóvar, who left it for free.**<sup>270</sup>

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se emocionara y que pudiera dar la vuelta al mundo también, ¿no? Entonces había que entender de dónde venía esto, era un poco seguir la cronología. Hay unas señoras que de repente dicen 'no, no lo vamos a permitir'. ¿El qué? Y entonces, por qué se ha llegado a esta situación. (...) Vamos a seguir a las comadres en el tren y ver cómo en los otros trenes se van subiendo. Entonces había que emplazar directoras en estaciones de Barcelona, Bilbao, Sevilla (...) Y luego vamos a ver la marcha. Y vamos a recoger las entrevistas, '¿por qué vienes? ¿qué quieres defender?' Entonces era preguntar a mujeres y hombres. Porque el aborto nos concierne a todos." Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>268</sup> "mucha voluntad y muchas ganas". Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>269</sup> "En semana y media montamos como un manual de procedimiento y lo distribuimos a la gente (...) eran bases más que nada para unificar formatos, unificar formas de rodaje, o sea, para que dentro del caos y de la diversidad, tuviéramos una manera lo más unificada posible de encargar luego el material que íbamos a tener." Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>270</sup> "Cada unidad de rodaje tenía que tener directora, sonidista y productora. O productor, los hombres no estuvieron nunca excluidos. Y cada unidad de rodaje se tenía que encargar, yo por ejemplo de Andalucía (...) Luego se hicieron comisiones de guión, comisiones de montaje, comisiones de

There were also **filmmakers working abroad**, as Luna recalls:

Those who were in Europe said: “we cannot be in the demonstration but we are going to call for a demonstration here and we will film it”. And they did. And others said: “in Paris there is also an impressive demonstration”. So, directors in Paris. It was a call that was made and that had a very big response because there was a demonstration in Paris, there was a demonstration in Buenos Aires, **there was a demonstration in almost every European capital. The response was quite beautiful.**<sup>271</sup>

Director Ana Díez admits that *Yo Decido* is **the most militant film** in which she has participated. She explains that her focus during the demonstration was on **interviewing men**:

People were on the street, civil society was on the street protesting and that was what had to be shown, that it was **not an issue exclusively for women, but included society as a whole (...)** **the new generations have to commit to gender equality**, it cannot be an exclusive but an inclusive struggle, and I think the documentary tries to reflect that. The part that I shot, I said: “well, just in case there are only women talking, I want to show men”. I want men because I didn’t see how it could work if you don’t include the others with whom we live, with whom we relate, those we love. And they are subordinates, they are bosses, they are co-workers.<sup>272</sup>

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distribución y lo montamos en la productora de montaje de Almodóvar, que nos la dejó gratis.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>271</sup> “Las que estaban por Europa decían “pues no podemos estar en la manifestación pero vamos a convocar una manifestación aquí y la grabamos”. Y la convocaron. Y otras decían: “en París hay una manifestación también impresionante”. Entonces, directoras en París. Fue un llamamiento que se hizo y que tuvo una respuesta muy grande porque en París había manifestación, en Buenos Aires había manifestación, es que había manifestación en casi todas las capitales europeas. La respuesta fue muy bonita.” Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>272</sup> “...la gente estaba en la calle, la sociedad civil estaba en la calle protestando por eso y eso es lo que había que reflejar, no era una cosa exclusiva de las mujeres, sino que incluía a toda la sociedad (...) las nuevas generaciones tienen que comprometerse con la igualdad de género, no puede ser una lucha exclusiva sino una lucha inclusiva y creo que el documental intenta reflejar eso. La parte que yo rodé, yo decía, ‘bueno, por si acaso sólo hay mujeres hablando, yo quiero hombres’. Quiero hombres porque si no se les incluye a los otros con los que convivimos, con los que nos relacionamos, con los que amamos, y que son subalternos, son jefes, son compañeros de trabajo, entonces no veía la manera.” Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

According to Díez, the register carried out by these units generated **more than twenty hours of material**. Eighty women had taken part in the filming process, which required just a couple of days, but the revision and editing of the material meant **a much longer commitment**. Díez narrates:

The first crisis meeting is when we already have the material: what to do with it. So we meet, about fifteen people, including scriptwriters, directors and editors. And Teresa Font who leads the editing process, I mean, without a doubt, **if there is someone who has participated more than anyone in this work it is Teresa**, with hours of editing, and Esther García in production (...) so, we decided: “let’s see what the material brings up, what the material says.”<sup>273</sup>

Luna and Balaguer also regard Font as a key element, which is the reason why all of them agreed on placing her at the beginning of the list of credits in *Yo decido*. Balaguer brings into consideration the **short time** they had **for editing** the film, only four months so as to have the film ready for July. Another aspect that she emphasises as having had a positive impact is the **exchange between generations** that took place:

It was great because on one side you found dinosaurs of the profession, in a good sense, a woman like Teresa. But suddenly you had that the girl who was her assistant had just left school and this was the first thing she was doing. **At the cooperation level, everything was really interesting** and I really wish that every project had that energy.<sup>274</sup>

In a similar vein, Luna recalls that she would call Font to ask her about her progress and she would tell her that the young women she was working with were amazing and “capable of everything”.

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<sup>273</sup> “La primera reunión de crisis es cuando ya tenemos el material: qué hacemos. Bueno, pues ahora nos reunimos unas quince personas, entre guionistas, directoras y montadoras. Y Teresa Font que lleva la cabeza del montaje, o sea, sin duda, si hay alguien que ha participado más que nadie en este trabajo es Teresa, con horas de edición, y Esther García en producción (...) entonces, se plantea ‘vamos a ver qué habla el material, qué dice el material.’” Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>274</sup> “Fue súper chulo porque de un lado te encontrabas con dinosaurios de la profesión, en el buen sentido, una tía como Teresa. Pero de pronto tenías, la niña que era ayudante de ella pues acababa de salir de la escuela y esto era lo primero que hacía. A nivel cooperación, todo fue súper interesante y la verdad ojalá que todos los proyectos tuvieran esa energía.” Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

They cut the twenty hours to two hours and that's when they decided that they would not record any external material, such as interviews with experts. **The film structure**, which was sustained by Font's aforementioned phrase, "from the initial seed to the global cry", asked for a chronological order, but thanks to the convergence of women from different generations in the demonstration, they could **render visible the genealogy of the movement**, as Díez summarises:

The people speak for themselves, the demonstration and the feeling of indignation speak for themselves. And what I think is interesting is that **it starts with older women such as the "comadres", not of reproductive age, with the age of grandmothers, and it ends with young people who are starting their reproductive age.** And those first women who are now grandmothers are **those who started to fight for abortion after Franco's death**, which, of course, was a very well-rounded journey in the sense that this cannot happen, this is a nightmare.<sup>275</sup>

It took various revisions until coming up with the final version of forty-two minutes in which they avoid mentioning Gallardón's name, so as **not to give him any publicity**. All through the process, they had no funding. Díez finds **similarities between this kind of collective filmmaking and the film cooperatives** common in the seventies and eighties:

Nobody got paid, but well, no problem. **This cooperative system belongs to eras when utopias were closer at hand.** Now there are no utopias of anything (...) The situation in Spain is one of crisis, everyone has to look for their own lentils, as they say here. Certainly, it is very difficult, therefore, to contribute to a cooperative, that is to say, to a project in which nobody emerges triumphant – I mean, this project doesn't belong to anyone, it belongs to a collective. That does not sell, it is not attractive.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> "Habla por sí sola la gente, habla por si sola la manifestación y la indignación. Y lo que creo que tiene interesante es que empieza por mujeres ya mayores, no en edad reproductiva, con edad de ser abuelas como son las comadres y acaba en jóvenes que empiezan con la edad reproductiva. Y esas primeras mujeres que son abuelas ahora son las que empezaron a luchar por el aborto después de la muerte de Franco, con lo cual, claro, era un recorrido que quedaba muy redondo en cuanto a que esto no puede pasar, esto es una pesadilla." Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>276</sup> "...nadie cobró pero bueno, no pasa nada. Este sistema de cooperativa suena a épocas con utopías más próximas. Ahora no hay utopías de nada (...) La situación en España de crisis, cada uno se tiene que buscar como se dice aquí, las lentejas. Está muy difícil, entonces claro, el aportar a una cooperativa, o sea a un proyecto en el que nadie sale triunfante, o sea, este proyecto no es de nadie, es de un colectivo. Eso no vende, no es atractivo." Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

They didn't organise a traditional crowdfunding but on their website they opened a section for **monetary contributions** intended to sustain postproduction materials.<sup>277</sup> Balaguer points out that they contacted directly with associations to ask for their support, and at the premieres, which were free, they delivered symbolic tickets asking for cooperation.

Since the film was made with an activist and specific aim, **distribution and exhibition were considered a fundamental part of the process**, as Acosta states: "Feminist women called a demonstration in Madrid, a massive one, and we wanted to amplify the effect of that demonstration through free dissemination, through Internet and simultaneous premieres in one hundred movie theatres throughout Spain."<sup>278</sup>

In their collective, there was also **an expert in distribution**, Nieves Maroto, who worked for many years in "Alta Films", González Macho's distribution company. Aided by journalist Begoña Piña, Maroto managed to organise simultaneous premieres in dozens of movie theatres and associations on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. They tried to be represented by at least one woman from the collective in all the screenings. For example, the General Union of Workers organised a screening in a congress of judges, where Luna was present. In Cádiz, the owner of "Multicines", a big movie theatre in the city centre, allowed for the film to be screened for free.

Yagüe, president of CIMA between 2014-2018, says that the association set into motion its network to give the film as much promotion as possible. Balaguer recalls that even **small screenings organised by neighbourhood associations** were very moving. In November 2014, **the film was invited to Brussels by the European Commission**. According to Díez, after this screening, the parliamentarians said: "it has to be translated into all the languages of the European Union."<sup>279</sup> The biggest premiere was in Madrid, where "Les Comadres" from Gijón were also present. Luna describes it as follows:

The premiere was really spectacular because the "comadres" came and a lot of people came, **men and women, especially women but also men. And then it was like an extension of the demonstration**, right? The people in the interviews

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<sup>277</sup> *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* website. Date of access: January 2019.

<<http://eltrendelalibertadfilm.blogspot.com/p/crowdfunding.html>>.

<sup>278</sup> "Las mujeres feministas convocaron una manifestación en Madrid, multitudinaria, y nosotras lo que quisimos fue amplificar el efecto de esa manifestación a través de la difusión gratuita, a través de Internet y a estreno simultáneo en cien cines de toda España de la película." Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>279</sup> "hay que traducirlo a todos los idiomas de la Unión Europea." Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

applauded or laughed or cried because the documentary was exciting at times, it is exciting. But also in the demonstration scenes, people shouted and applauded, as if it had not ended.<sup>280</sup>

During this screening, a professor at the University of Washington who is a friend of Luna told her that he would take the film there, which he did in February 2015. The physical reactions from the audience that she describes can be read as those that Jane Gaines identifies as **effects of political documentaries**: “Gaines notes that seeing a body convulsed in political action on the screen causes bodily reactions in the viewer. Documentary footage of political action can lead to a bodily swelling in a politicized spectator” (Hongisto 2015: 102). For Acosta, **affective work is the most effective way** in which a documentary film can operate as **a militant tool**:

I see it as **a tool of political activism**, of creative expression, and **creative expression for me is political**, I mean, for me there is nothing that is not political. Love is political and creation is love, that is what creating is, it is the energy of the universe and channelling that energy in order to transform the power structures, to transform the social structures and renew all of this, that is to do politics (...) To stimulate and move people. Because for me **there is no political message that is channelled better than that channelled through emotion** (...) if I want to send a transforming message to society, it will always be much more transformative if you tell it through the emotional, using emotion, than if you tell it through the intellectual. Hopefully, and much better if the two things are connected, the intellectual with the emotional. But **by moving people with your message, that message ignites and transforms**.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> “El estreno fue muy apoteósico porque vinieron las comadres y vino muchísima gente, hombres y mujeres, sobre todo mujeres pero también venían hombres. Y entonces era como una prolongación de la manifestación, ¿no? La gente en las entrevistas aplaudía o reía o lloraba porque era emocionante el documental en algunos momentos, lo es. Pero también en los tramos de manifestación la gente gritaba y aplaudía, como si no se hubiera acabado.” Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>281</sup> “Lo veo como una herramienta de activismo político, de expresión creativa y la expresión creativa para mí es política, o sea, para mí no hay nada que no sea político. El amor es político y la creación es amor, crear es eso, es la energía del universo y canalizar esa energía para transformar las estructuras de poder, para transformar las estructuras sociales y renovar un poco todo esto, eso es hacer política (...) Emocionar. Porque para mí no existe ningún mensaje político que se canalice mejor que aquel que se canaliza a través de la emoción (...) si yo quiero hacer llegar un mensaje transformador a la sociedad, siempre va a ser mucho más transformador si te lo cuentan desde lo emocional, desde la emoción, que si te lo cuentan desde lo intelectual. Ojalá y muchísimo mejor si están las dos cosas conectadas, lo intelectual con lo emocional. Pero a través de emocionar con tu mensaje, ese mensaje prende y transforma.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

*Yo decido* was selected in **eleven national and international festivals** in 2014 and 2015: San Sebastián International Film Festival, “Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres” (Political Cinema Directed by Women) in Spain and Latin America, Extremadura Documentary Film Festival, Soria Short Film Festival, Women’s Cinema Festival in Huesca, Edinburgh Spanish Film Festival, Festival of Choice in London, Women’s Cinema Festival in Rouen, Women’s Film Festival from the Mediterranean in Marseille, “Coupe Circuit” Festival in Belgium, and the International Festival of Women in Film and Television in Mexico City.

It was also recognised with various **awards**. In 2014: the “Clara Campoamor” Award from Seville, the “Pasionaria” Award, the “Collective 8<sup>th</sup> March” Award, the “Aragón Dignidad” Award, the “Mulleres en Acción” Award from the Theatre Festival of Cangas, and the “Mujeres en Unión” Award from the Union of Actors and Actresses. In 2015: the Equality Award from La Rinconada City Council, the “Alcalde José Fernandín” Award, and the Audience Award at the “Coupe Circuit” Festival in Belgium.

Díez mentions that in some screenings abroad, such as the one in Chile, those who organised the event had **legal problems** due to restrictions to abortion still in force. She was present in a screening that took place in Mexico City: “In countries where abortion legislation is very backward or where civil society wants to change it, this documentary serves as an element of debate, it provokes (...) it is what documentaries are often for, to look at ourselves in another way and to light a spark.”<sup>282</sup> We can read this diffractively with my proposal of understanding documentary film as a diffraction apparatus (Barad 2007): technologies that make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world in specific ways, by means of intra-actions that make cuts within phenomena, and which are not reflecting mirrors but registers of processes and material-discursive practices.

After the premiere in movie theatres, *Yo decido* became accessible **online for free** at the film website, with English and French subtitles. Until January 2019, the version in Spanish has been played 73900 times<sup>283</sup>, the version with English subtitles has been played 1994 times<sup>284</sup>, and the version with French subtitles has been played 1806 times.<sup>285</sup> Only eleven people have left comments on the website: they all thank the

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<sup>282</sup> “...en los países en los que la legislación del aborto es muy retardataria o se está intentando cambiar, la sociedad civil quiere cambiarla, el documental sirve para elemento de debate, provoca (...) es para lo que muchas veces sirven los documentales, para mirarnos de otra manera y para encender una chispa.” Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>283</sup> *Yo decido* online in Vimeo. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://vimeo.com/99974636>>.

<sup>284</sup> *Yo decido* online in Vimeo. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://vimeo.com/102124953>>.

<sup>285</sup> *Yo decido*. online in Vimeo. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://vimeo.com/101795328>>.

filmmakers and express their support against the amendment to the law. One comment expresses a negative reaction to what the person considers lack of quantitative data to support the arguments; nevertheless, she entirely agrees with what is being proposed in the film. *Yo decido* also has a Facebook page, with 5,101 likes in January 2019.<sup>286</sup>

Yagüe remembers that, after the premiere, there was anxiety among them, regarding **the effects that the demonstration and their film would have:**

We did not know what would happen to the reform, whether it would go ahead or not. There were many moments in which we thought, and I do admit that **there was a certain moment of pessimism**, of “everything we have done has not been of any use. We have done it and that fact itself is fine, but it will not work”. And well, we paid a lot of attention to how it was developing, of the meetings of the council of ministers every Friday to see if the reform would go ahead or not, until we received very unofficial news that the minister had called a press conference and I believe that then we knew that Gallardón was resigning and that the reform would not go ahead. And that the pressure, **the pressure that had been exerted had been effective** in that sense.<sup>287</sup>

In September 2014, a few hours after president Mariano Rajoy confirmed the withdrawal of the reform of the law of abortion, Ruiz Gallardón presented his resignation. Acosta and Díez agree with Yagüe in considering that **the film had a significant impact for this outcome**: “We are sure that it has been very relevant in Ruiz Gallardón’s withdrawal of this modification of abortion. We believe that it created tension and social pressure that was felt, and that the demonstration was vital, but our contribution was also very important.”<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* Facebook page. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/trendelalibertad/>>.

<sup>287</sup> “No sabíamos qué iba a pasar con la reforma, si iba adelante, si no. Hubo muchos momentos en los que pensamos, y ahí sí que te reconozco que hubo cierto momento de pesimismo, de ‘todo lo que hemos hecho no ha servido para nada. Lo hemos hecho y está bien el hecho mismo, pero no va a servir’. Y bueno, estuvimos muy pendientes de la evolución, de las reuniones del consejo de ministros cada viernes para ver si salía adelante la reforma o no, hasta que nos llegaron noticias muy extra oficialmente de que el ministro había convocado a rueda de prensa y yo creo que ahí ya supimos que Gallardón presentaba dimisión y que no iba a salir adelante la reforma. Y que la presión, la presión que se había ejercido había sido eficaz en ese sentido.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>288</sup> “Estamos seguras de que ha tenido una relevancia determinante a la hora de que Gallardón retirara esta modificación del aborto. Creemos que creó una tensión y una presión social que la sintieron y que la manifestación fue vital, pero nuestro granito de arena también fue muy importante.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.



The six professionals that were interviewed about their participation in this film agree on the fact that *Yo decido* is a **feminist documentary**. They understand feminism as **equality and integration**. Díez and Balaguer firstly rejected what they consider a **pejorative “label”**. Balaguer was reluctant to define it as a feminist film due to her understanding of feminism as a movement that “only works for women”, so she emphasised the fact that men were also involved in a movement that she describes as “relevant for the whole society”:

I believe that **the documentary is a defence of human rights, whether they are women or men or whoever**. I do not think it is only of interest for women. It seems to me that it was a proposal from a sector of the government of that time, completely unilateral, that had no support in the streets (...) And we just tried to show what was happening. We were not alone, some of the guys from the sound or camera crews helped us despite being men. **I don’t think it was just a women’s movement.**<sup>289</sup>

She dismisses the fact that it was a group of women only that made the film, with a couple of men “helping” them. This insistence on rendering visible the support of men towards the demonstration is also very present in Díez discourse, as mentioned before with her emphasis on interviewing men. Díez prefers to call it a **militant and political film** also due to this idea that the struggle for the right to abortion concerns everybody. **The importance of incorporating men in the feminist fight** is also a relevant issue for Acosta. In the interview, she explained that her feminist militancy is currently focused on working with the audiovisual, creating networks of support among women filmmakers and organising workshops at schools, but that she has identified **the lack of feminist awareness among men as the most urgent pending problem**:

I don’t go around demanding equality. I mean, let’s put it another way, **I’m demanding that men become feminist men** (...) I believe that right now, **the pending revolution is that of men. We have already made the revolution**. We

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<sup>289</sup> “Yo creo que el documental es una defensa de los derechos humanos, da igual que sean de mujeres o de hombres o de quien sea. No creo que sólo tenga interés para las mujeres. A mí me parece que fue una propuesta por parte de un sector del gobierno de esa época, completamente unilateral, que no tenía apoyo en las calles (...) Y nosotras lo que intentamos hacer solamente fue mostrar lo que pasaba. Nosotras no estuvimos solas, algunos de los chicos de los equipos de sonido o de cámara pues nos ayudaron siendo hombres. Yo creo que no fue sólo un movimiento de mujeres.” Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

have already made our political strategy. We have already fought, we have already achieved many things and a lot is missing. But **what is missing, I think it has much more to do with men than with us** (...) I want men to be with us in this or we will not move forward (...) I see more and more that reality is not dual (...) Because there are things of the masculine that I claim and there are things of the feminine that they must claim. And that's the way, I think that's the way to build a much more balanced, a fair society. Then **my feminism is now very much aimed at men to recharge their batteries, to wake up, to make their groups, to work, to ask what it is to be a man today, because we have already done that.**<sup>290</sup>

Yagüe and Luna define themselves as feminists and criticise the ways in which the term has been considered pejoratively. Yagüe advocates for **an understanding of feminism as the normalisation of equality**, rather than a “radical” vindication of women’s rights. Luna didn’t want to become a member of CIMA at first, because she didn’t understand its reasons to exist, but she explains that she has changed her point of view over time. She now advocates for **a proud reappropriation of the “feminist” word**:

**When CIMA was created I did not understand the need to support women** because I said “well, if one is worth it and if one is strong, then they make it”. And little by little **I’ve realised that I’m exhausted, that for having done the fight alone, I’m exhausted.** So, what’s the need for those who come after to struggle uphill when the path can be flat and straight? Like the rest of mortal male humans. And that’s when I changed my mind (...) with life I’ve been learning that my colleagues, **my true sisters, are women.** And if I do not support myself and if I do not support them I am lost (...) Why am I a feminist? Above all because of this, because it is a way to integrate everyone into society,

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<sup>290</sup> “Yo ya no voy por ahí exigiendo la igualdad. O sea, me refiero, vamos a decirlo de otra manera, yo voy exigiendo a los hombres que sean hombres feministas (...) yo creo que ahora mismo, la revolución pendiente es la de los hombres. Nosotras ya hemos hecho la revolución. Nosotras ya hemos hecho nuestra estrategia política. Ya hemos luchado, ya hemos conseguido muchas cosas y falta mucho. Pero lo que falta, creo que tiene mucho más que ver con los hombres que con nosotras (...) Yo quiero que los compañeros estén con nosotras en esto o no avanzamos. (...) cada vez veo más que la realidad no es dual (...) Porque hay cosas de lo masculino que reivindico y hay cosas de lo femenino que ellos deben reivindicar. Y esa es la forma, yo creo que esa es la forma de construir una sociedad mucho más equilibrada, más justa. Entonces mi feminismo ahora va muy dirigido a los hombres, que se pongan las pilas ya, que despierten, que hagan sus grupos, que trabajen, que se pregunten qué es ser hombre hoy en día, porque nosotras ya hemos hecho eso.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz. Her position can be diffraactively read with ideas expressed in *Serás Hombre* (de Ocampo, 2017). *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.5 *Serás Hombre*.

women and men (...) I have the feeling that there are many women who do not know it and who are ashamed to be feminists, because it is like a disused word and smothered in the muck that they have thrown to dirty it. And it is a word that should be very beautiful, it should be recovered in some way, right? **In Spain the word is really reviled. It's the same as always. In a patriarchal world, any movement or any activity of women that triumphs, you try to crush it, to tarnish it.**<sup>291</sup>

Acosta, who directed *Las Constituyentes* (2011), a documentary film about the twenty-seven female politicians who took part in the Constitutional Legislature immediately after Franco's death, describes a similar trajectory to that of Luna, **from an individual fight to a collective movement**, after getting in contact with strong and inspiring feminist women:

**I have felt in my veins that transmission of the inheritance, of the genealogy**, and that is what I teach in the workshops (...) I tell them all about the history of women and I tell them "to do your political work, your personal work, which is to dream, to dream is the most political thing you can do, you have to have the power to do it, and to have power, you have to connect with the history and with the history of women, because you already know the history of men" (...) **It has been a journey from solitude to networking and even empowerment**, I mean, my life, through my work, is a search for my own power, just as I tell them. And **that power has come to me through connecting with my female ancestors.**<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> "Cuando surge CIMA yo no entendía por qué la necesidad de apoyar a la mujer porque yo decía "bueno, pues si una vale y si una es fuerte, pues llega". Y poco a poco me he ido dado cuenta de que estoy agotada, de que por haber hecho la lucha a solas, estoy agotada. Entonces, ¿qué necesidad tienen las que vienen detrás de hacer toda esa cuesta arriba cuando puede ser línea recta? Como el resto de los humanos mortales y hombres. Y ahí es cuando mi mente dio el giro (...) con la vida he ido aprendiendo que mis colegas, mis verdaderas hermanas son las mujeres. Y si no me apoyo y si no las apoyo estoy perdida (...) ¿Por qué soy feminista? Sobre todo por esto, porque es una manera de integrar en la sociedad a todos, todos y todas (...) Tengo la sensación de que hay muchas mujeres que no lo saben y que les avergüenza ser feminista, porque es como una palabra en desuso y llena del barro que le han tirado para ensuciarla. Y es una palabra que debería ser muy bonita, habría que recuperarla de alguna manera, ¿no? En España está muy denostada la palabra. Es otra vez lo de siempre. En un mundo patriarcal, cualquier movimiento o cualquier actividad de mujeres que triunfa, lo intentas aplastar, manchar." Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>292</sup> "He sentido, en mis venas, esa transmisión de la herencia, de la genealogía, y eso es lo que enseño en los talleres (...) Les cuento todo el tema de la historia de las mujeres y les digo "para hacer vuestro trabajo político, personal, que es soñar, soñar es lo mas político que podéis hacer, tenéis que tener poder para poder hacerlo. Y para tener poder, tenéis que conectaros con la historia y con la historia de las mujeres, porque la de los hombres ya la conocéis" (...) ha sido un viaje desde la soledad hasta el trabajo en red y hasta el empoderamiento. O sea, mi vida, a través de mi trabajo, es una búsqueda de mi propio

Acosta also **claims the term “feminist”** for naming herself:

**I am a feminist. And I’m a filmmaker.** And then my cinema, I suppose that it will be coherent with those two things. I am a woman, I have my vision of the world from feminism and from my identity as a woman (...) **I can make a film in which not a single woman appears, I can do it and it will continue to be a film made by a feminist director.** I claim to be a feminist and I told that clearly to the boys and girls in the schools and in the end, when they finished the workshop, most of them said that they are also feminists.<sup>293</sup>

Most of these six women have had experiences of **gender discrimination** in the area in which they work. Producer Guadalupe Balaguer said that she hasn’t felt this directly from her colleagues, but that there are prejudices concerning her expertise:

In the industry I haven’t noticed it. It is true that now I am working on a TV series and there are more men than women, but I don’t know, it has never happened to me. Two or three days ago I spoke with a police officer because we needed the script to be read by a policeman because the film we are making is about police issues and **he asked me: “who is the production manager of this?” And I said: “I am”. And he said: “ah, a woman”.** And I started laughing. **But that’s something that happens to me with a police officer, it doesn’t happen to me with a co-worker.**<sup>294</sup>

**Production is one of the most feminised sectors of the film industry**, particularly in documentary cinema, where the departments of wardrobe, makeup, hairdressing, and art

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poder, lo mismo que le digo a los chavales y chavalas. Y ese poder a mí me ha llegado a través de conectar con mis ancestras.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>293</sup> “Yo soy feminista. Y soy cineasta. Y entonces mi cine, supongo yo que será coherente con esas dos cosas. Soy mujer, tengo mi visión del mundo desde el feminismo y desde mi identidad como mujer (...) yo puedo hacer una película en la que no salga ni una sola mujer, puedo hacerla y seguirá siendo una película que ha hecho una directora feminista. Yo me reivindico como feminista y a los chicos y chicas en los institutos se los digo claramente y al final, cuando acaban el taller, la mayoría dicen que ellos también son feministas.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>294</sup> “En la industria no lo he notado. Es cierto que ahora estoy trabajando en una serie y son más hombres que mujeres sí, pero no sé, a mí nunca me ha pasado. Hace dos o tres días hable con un jefe de policía porque necesitábamos que el guión lo mirara un policía porque la película que estamos haciendo es de asuntos policiales y me preguntó, “¿quién es el director de producción de esto?” Y le he dicho, “yo”. Y dice, “ah, una mujer”. Y me empecé a reír. Pero eso es algo que me pasa con un policía, no me pasa con un compañero de trabajo.” Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

direction are often missing.<sup>295</sup> Balaguer links this with the way in which women are socialised, but is not critical about it:

Being a production manager **has a lot of psychology, has a lot of getting organised, being a bit of a hard working ant**, controlling everything, and it has a lot of that, **empathising with the people you are working with** because it involves many hours of dialogue and many hours of understanding what the other needs and what you can contribute.<sup>296</sup>

As a scriptwriter, Luna said that she has experienced direct discrimination for being a woman:

You present a comedy screenplay, written by yourself, where the protagonist is a forty-year-old woman, and you go to see a male producer, and you say “I haven’t chosen any director”, to leave freedom to also choose the producer, “but a woman would be ok”. And they say: “no, no, because it’s going to look like a feminine film, it’s going to look like a feminist movie, a woman has written it, the protagonist is a woman, a woman directs it” (...) You stay mute and you laugh inside saying “this subject being is also an imbecile”. **How many films has he produced, written by men, directed by men, starring men, has he ever thought that they are male chauvinist movies?** (...) many times in the budgets, **if you are a female scriptwriter you are paid less because they think that fewer people will go to see the movie** (...) Because one thing is what you say it is worth and another is what they pay you.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> According to a report that CIMA presented in 2016, in documentary cinema, women are mainly represented in production (28%), followed by direction (26%), art direction (25%) and editing (24%). In fiction, however, women’s highest representation is in the fields of wardrobe (95%), makeup and hairdressing (75%), and art direction (47%). Considering the three areas with greater decision power, i.e. production, directing and photography, it is the first one, which presents a highest percentage of women. *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 3. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production.

<sup>296</sup> “Ser director de producción tiene mucho de psicología, tiene mucho de organizarse, ser un poco hormiguita e ir ahí controlándolo todo y tiene mucho eso, empatizar con las personas que estás trabajando porque son muchas horas de diálogo y muchas horas de entender lo que el otro necesita y puedes aportar tú.” Guadalupe Balaguer. Skype interview. January 20<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>297</sup> “Presentas un guión de comedia, escrito por ti, donde la protagonista es una mujer de cuarenta y vas a ver a un productor, hombre, y le dices ‘no he elegido director’, para dejar la libertad también al productor de elegir, ‘pero igual una mujer estaría bien’ y te dicen, ‘no, no, porque va a parecer una película femenina, va a parecer una película feminista, la ha escrito una mujer, la protagonista es una mujer, la dirige una mujer’ (...) Te quedas muda y te carcajeas por dentro diciendo ‘este ser abyecto, además es imbécil’. Cuántas películas ha producido él, escritas por hombres, dirigidas por hombres, protagonizadas por hombres, ¿ha pensado alguna vez que sean machistas? (...) muchas veces en los presupuestos, si eres guionista mujer te pagan menos porque entienden que también va a ir menos gente

Gutiérrez and Díez, both of them directors, mentioned that they became aware of their being gendered due to the treatment they were given by the press, where their being women is always emphasised. Gutiérrez mentioned a very similar example to what Italian filmmaker Costanza Quatriglio<sup>298</sup> describes about her own experience when her debut film was selected in the Cannes Film Festival:

Bollaín won the Critics' Prize in Cannes with *Flores de otro mundo*. Well, only a very few people heard about it, you know? And if a guy wins, I don't have to tell you, come on, he's a genius. **There are no female geniuses**, you know? All these things you begin to realise later, because before you don't, you are just not aware of it.<sup>299</sup>

For Díez, **this emphasis of the press is ambivalent**, because it gives them promotion but can also pigeonhole them in a stereotyped ghetto:

I thought I was an asexual director until I released my first film, *Ander eta Yul*. Suddenly, I got headlines such as "Woman directs, first Basque woman who directs". And that's why they called me, ok, fun stuff, because there were men who had also directed and had premiered and they did not get press headlines. There I began to be conscious of this (...) I think that **talking about women's cinema helps because it makes us visible, I mean, beware, because then we complain about it but it makes us visible**, because I say works by women are welcome because suddenly the distribution does not treat you well and no one looks at you because you have to compete with a series of elements, the distribution of cinema in Spain is very fragile (...) **That label ghettoizes us and at the same time makes us visible**, it is contradictory, like everything.<sup>300</sup>

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al cine (...) Porque una cosa es lo que tú dices que vale y otra es lo que te pagan." Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>298</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 6. Section 6.3 *Triangle*

<sup>299</sup> "Íciar Bollaín gana el premio de la crítica en Cannes con 'Flores de otro mundo'. Bueno, pues es que se enteró muy poca gente, ¿sabes? Y si lo gana un tío no te digo, vamos, es un genio. No hay ninguna genia, ¿sabes? Entre las mujeres. Todas esas cosas que te empiezas a dar cuenta porque antes no, es que no eres consciente." Chus Gutiérrez. Personal interview. October 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>300</sup> "...creo que soy una directora asexual hasta que estreno mi primera película, *Ander eta Yul*. De repente, me ponen titulares como 'Mujer dirige, primera mujer vasca que dirige'. Y por eso me llaman, anda tú, qué gracia, porque había compañeros que también habían dirigido y habían estrenado y no tenían titulares de prensa. Ahí empiezo a ser consciente (...) Yo creo que hablar de cine de mujer ayuda porque visibiliza, o sea, ojo, porque luego nos quejamos pero visibiliza, porque yo digo bienvenidos sean los títulos de mujeres porque de repente la distribución no te trata bien y no te mira nadie porque hay que competir con una serie de elementos, es muy frágil la distribución de cine en España (...) Esa

Díez, Luna, Balaguer and Gutiérrez have kept seeing each other as a small collective. They have tried to **promote other initiatives** in support of refugees and freedom of expression, but they haven't got a reaction as powerful as the one they got with *Yo decido*:

We have tried to get more things started and it has not been the same. Because this is, as I say, **it is gender equality but it includes all social classes** (...) With the Gag Rule we also tried, but it does not bring people together, they don't get involved, it's not the same because of course, "The Gag Rule may not affect me" (...) The migration issue doesn't catch on, not many people get involved, because they are the others, they are others. **The problem with the abortion law is that it was me, my daughters, my sister and everyone I know**, right? (...) **Abortion is an interclass issue, I mean, the curtailing of women's rights**. The Gag Law is not like that. Nor the immigrants issue. Despite the fact that with immigration what is being said is that women suffer the most, they are not only displaced, sometimes they lead a family, they are raped, they are mistreated, women trafficking, girls, I mean, they are doubly victimised. But it hasn't taken hold (...) **it took a cause that you could see as something that can affect you.**<sup>301</sup>

Links to reviews and press notes are shared on the film website.<sup>302</sup> I have chosen **four reviews** to discuss here. Two were published after the premiere of the film in cinemas in July 2014, and the other two were published after the screening at the 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of the San Sebastián International Film Festival. One of these is written in Italian.

Luis Martínez signs a review published in the online version of the newspaper *El Mundo* on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014, entitled "Contra la amargura gris del pasado" ("Against the

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etiqueta nos hace gueto y a la vez nos hace visibles, es contradictoria, como todo." Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>301</sup> "Hemos intentado que más cosas prendan y no ha sido lo mismo. Porque esto es, como digo yo, es igualdad de género pero es que incluye todas las clases sociales (...) Con la ley mordaza también lo intentamos, pero no aglutina, no es la gente que se vuelca, no es lo mismo porque claro, 'la ley mordaza es que igual a mí no me pasa' (...) La de migración no cuaja, no se implica tanta gente, porque son los otros, son otros. El problema de la ley del aborto es que era a mí, a mis hijas, a mí, a mi hermana y a todos los que conozco, ¿no? (...) El aborto es interclasista, o sea, esa cercenación de derechos de la mujer. En cambio, la ley mordaza no. Lo de los inmigrantes pues tampoco. Y eso que con la inmigración lo que se está diciendo también es que quien más sufre son las mujeres, que no sólo son desplazadas, a veces llevan prole, o sea llevan familia, son violadas, son maltratadas, la trata de mujeres, de niñas, de jovencitas, es decir, son doblemente victimizadas. Pero no ha cuajado (...) se necesitó una causa que tú la veas, que te puede afectar a ti." Ana Díez. Personal interview. October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>302</sup> *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* website. Date of access: January 2019.  
<[http://eltrendelalibertadfilm.blogspot.com/p/noticias\\_30.html](http://eltrendelalibertadfilm.blogspot.com/p/noticias_30.html)>.

Gray Bitterness of the Past”). He considers that **the film is haunted by a harsh past**: “Beyond the noise of the protest, the excitement of some of the declarations, the bitter sadness of others, (...) it is impressive to see in parallel the images of decades ago confronting those of yesterday. They are so similar that, in effect, it is frightening”.<sup>303</sup> He quotes an interview with director Chus Gutiérrez, who says that the film is important because it will stay as **testimony and witness of this historical moment**. For Martínez, the **emotionality** of *Yo decido* is crucial for the effects it provokes: “each second of the documentary is steeped in enthusiasm, anger, fright, the healthy and brilliant exercise of commitment. All of this together. And that, besides exciting the spirit, helps to understand.”<sup>304</sup>

Andrea Morán, a PhD researcher in the field of audiovisual communication, writes about *Yo decido* in her blog “filmin365”, created in June 2013. She brings together the publication of an audiovisual research project,<sup>305</sup> a book<sup>306</sup> and the documentary film, in an article called “Grietas violetas en la historia del cine” (Violet Cracks in the History of Cinema). She argues that the three projects are linked due to their potential “to vindicate the feminine presence -inside and outside the film industry- and, in that process, to make us think (...) about criticism and feminism.”<sup>307</sup> Morán follows Zecchi’s **genealogy of Spanish female filmmakers from a male to a female gaze and then to a feminist gaze**<sup>308</sup>, and reckons that the process of making a film like *Yo decido* “is a strong proof of the internalisation of feminist discourse and the current feeling of collaboration among filmmakers.”<sup>309</sup>

In the context of the film screening at the San Sebastián International Film Festival, Aitziber Saldias publishes a review at the film critic website “Videodromo”.

<sup>303</sup> “Más allá del ruido de la protesta, de la emoción encendida de alguna de las declaraciones, de la tristeza amarga de otras y de la lucidez de las últimas, impresiona ver en paralelo las imágenes de hace décadas enfrentadas a las de ayer mismo.” *El Mundo*. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2014/07/10/53be3d4de2704e2a5d8b456f.html>>.

<sup>304</sup> “cada segundo del documental destila entusiasmo, rabia, susto, el sano y brillante ejercicio del compromiso. Todo junto. Y eso, además de excitar el ánimo, ayuda a comprender.” *El Mundo*. Date of access: January 2019.

<<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2014/07/10/53be3d4de2704e2a5d8b456f.html>>.

<sup>305</sup> *Pioneres del cinema* (Cinema Pioneers) is the title of the project conducted by Marta Sureda and Ingrid Guardiola. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.pioneresdelcinema.cat>>.

<sup>306</sup> Zecchi’s aforementioned book, *Desenfocadas. Cineastas españolas y discursos de género* (2014).

<sup>307</sup> “para reivindicar la presencia femenina -dentro y al margen de la industria del cine- y de paso hacernos reflexionar (...) sobre crítica y feminismo.” Date of access: January 2019. <<https://filmin365.com/2014/07/23/grietas-violetas-en-la-historia-del-cine/>>.

<sup>308</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 3. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production.

<sup>309</sup> “una muestra contundente de la interiorización del discurso feminista y del sentimiento actual de colaboración entre cineastas.” Date of access: January 2019. <<https://filmin365.com/2014/07/23/grietas-violetas-en-la-historia-del-cine/>>.



Saldias praises the emphasis that the film places on **positive affects**. She underlines that it isn't only an audiovisual record of the demonstration, but also:

...a story of courage and determination, of music and songs. Because it could have been a sober documentary, but it rather shows the joy of women who see that more and more people join the same cause, of popular songs whose lyrics are modified to show the world a reality that shouldn't have taken place.<sup>310</sup>

Saldias also points out the fact that the film includes **testimonies by men**, and that it shows **women from different generations**, many of which were fighting for this decades ago.

The last review that I would like to refer to in this sample is written by Sabina Ambrogi for the online journal "Fanpage.it", with the title "Aborto, salta in Spagna la legge che l'avrebbe reso illegale" (i.e. "Abortion, the law that would have made it illegal in Spain has been stopped"). More than a film review, it's a short article about the film context, from the presentation of the amendment to the law in December 2013 up to Gallardón's resignation in September 2014. Ambrogi calls the fact that the law didn't pass "a triumph for feminists, women, and civil society."<sup>311</sup> In the last part of the article, she summarises the process behind the making of the film, which she describes as:

...a brand new model of self-representation through the audiovisual, widespread thanks to social networks, which had, in the light of what happened in the end, an overwhelming result. It is difficult to quantify the weight of this event and of the project but it undoubtedly had one.<sup>312</sup>

Ambrogi asserts that **the collective production scheme** of *Yo decido* can also be considered **a victory in itself** because "it is the best objection to the stereotype that

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<sup>310</sup> "...una historia de coraje y determinación, de música y canciones. Porque podría haber sido un documental sobrio, pero prefiere mostrar la alegría de las mujeres que ven que más y más personas se unen a la misma causa, de canciones populares cuya letra es modificada para mostrar al mundo una realidad que nunca se debería haber dado". Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.videodromo.es/critica-de-cine/yo-decido-el-tren-de-la-libertad/41871>>.

<sup>311</sup> "Un trionfo per le femministe, le donne e la società civile." Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.fanpage.it/aborto-salta-in-spagna-la-legge-che-l-avrebbe-reso-illegale/>>.

<sup>312</sup> "un modello nuovissimo di auto rappresentazione attraverso l'audiovisivo, diffuso grazie ai social network, che ha avuto, alla luce di quanto accaduto, un risultato travolgente. E' difficile quantificare il peso di questa manifestazione e del progetto ma ne ha avuto senza dubbio uno." Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.fanpage.it/aborto-salta-in-spagna-la-legge-che-l-avrebbe-reso-illegale/>>.

represents women who fight each other. ‘Catfigting’ they call it in many media, generally those who are ready to question women’s rights.”<sup>313</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Summary and Research Question

To summarise this case study, in this section I go over insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

This film was born with a militant feminist aim: almost eighty women from the Spanish film industry got together to support, “with the tools they knew best how to use”<sup>314</sup>, a massive demonstration against an amendment to the abortion law that would turn it into a crime and, in so doing, “it would have left women in a situation of inequality and vulnerability”<sup>315</sup>. Since its inception, the goal of the film was “to amplify the effect of that demonstration through free dissemination”<sup>316</sup>.

The **production** of this film was characterised by collective action at many levels. Firstly, they decided that they wouldn’t leave “Les Comadres” alone. Secondly, they all accepted to work as a cooperative so as to turn the audiovisual medium into a tool for enacting the performative right to appear in the public space as political subjects. They tried to work without hierarchies, in collaboration and cooperation. Solidarity between women across generations was not only present within the film diegesis, but also in the production practices, with young professionals working along veterans such as Teresa Font and Esther García. In the opinion of Yagüe, the “women filmmakers’ collective” proves that “working with women is eminently supportive”.<sup>317</sup> She pointed out, however, that this isn’t something naturally female, but something that women have been

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<sup>313</sup> “si tratta della migliore obiezione allo stereotipo che rappresenta le donne che si azzuffano tra loro. ‘Catfigting’ lo chiamano molti media, e sono in genere gli stessi pronti a mettere in questione i diritti delle donne.” Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.fanpage.it/aborto-salta-in-spagna-la-legge-che-l-avrebbe-reso-illegale/>>.

<sup>314</sup> “vamos a utilizar las herramientas que mejor sabemos utilizar”. Alicia Luna. Personal interview. October 21<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>315</sup> “hubiera dejado a las mujeres en una situación de desigualdad y en una situación de desprotección” Chus Gutiérrez. Personal interview. October 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>316</sup> “amplificar el efecto de esa manifestación a través de la difusión gratuita.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. September 13<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>317</sup> “el trabajo con mujeres es eminentemente solidario.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. September 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Cádiz.

traditionally forced to do. In this sense, it must be highlighted that they had no funding, so there was a certain amount of self-exploitation in the making of the documentary. There was, however, financial support from associations and film professionals.

The **content** is linked with the feminist struggle for gender equality in terms of guaranteeing women's freedom to decide over their own bodies and to have control over their sexuality. *Yo decido* is the register of the organised reaction led by a feminist group against a restrictive law, and of the solidarity that this movement got from thousands of people in Spain and beyond these borders. The title of the film is already a statement for the right to self-determination and a claim for freedom. Both ideas are repeated several times in the film:

...what we believe, **women's freedom over their bodies, women's freedom to take decisions** which affect their physical and moral integrity (Min. 2:11).

**As a free human being, I refuse** a forced motherhood and **the patriarchal regime that condemns women to the sexual and reproductive minority of age** (Min. 9:47).

They have **no excuse for compromising women's freedom**. Choosing is our business. We must choose. Francis, new Pope of Rome and the Catholics: **Don't touch my uterus** (Min. 10:41).

**It's my body. They won't take away the right to legal abortion** (...) These ovaries are ours, don't you dare touch them (...) I say no with the feminists (Min. 18:52).

Having a baby is an important decision that must not be imposed on anybody.

**We don't impose abortion, nor birth** (Min. 26:29).<sup>318</sup>

The right to abortion is directly referred to as an element that has a positive impact in terms of building gender equality, as one woman attending the demonstration explains: "We are human beings, not uteri. This right makes us human beings. This, among other things, is equality" (Min. 31:56). Moreover, the prohibition of abortion is discussed as a decision that worsens social inequalities and reveals the hypocrisy of pro-life discourses:

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<sup>318</sup> In all the quotes from the film, the emphases are mine.

There are two emergency exits: illegal abortions, located between life and death; the other requires **leaving Spain in order to have a safe abortion. However, this exit is reserved for first class ladies only** (...) We remind you that the last thing this counter-reformation wants is to protect women's lives (Min. 13:35).

Whether it is legal or not, **women will still have abortions**. The problem is **they'll have them in bad conditions and risk their lives** (Min. 21:40).

I'm not a uterus to produce cheap workforce (Min. 28:19).

The men attending the demonstration and that are interviewed in the film speak in terms of equality and respect for women's freedom:

We are claiming we are abortionists. **Abortion doesn't only affect women but society as a whole** (Min. 15:21).

We can **be rebellious when faced with an illegal law** that takes away our rights and is **against people's equality** (Min. 15:54).

I'm here **to defend the right to choose**, to avoid the imposition of a moral different from our own and **to show respect to women** (Min. 21:18).

I am here **for my daughter and my partner**. We should have the right to decide over our lives (Min. 34:12).

An important feminist practice in the film is its rendering visible that the feminist fight for women's right to self-determination has a long history behind and that it's necessary to remain aware of the fact that rights have to be defended. The film also shows solidarity between women from different generations. "Les Comadres", for instance, are women of non-reproductive age, but they want to claim the freedom to decide for other women:

...the generations after us have found everything done for them. They believe the world is like that, but it wasn't. **We had to fight tooth and nail for what we got** (Min. 3:03).

Because **our fight now, here, will be useful tomorrow**. Tomorrow belongs to them (Min. 4:21).

I have already lived this. **I've travelled with people to London. And I've been to illegal abortions here**. And I went with a friend to the hospital because she was dying from an illegal abortion. You people with such young faces, don't really know what it's like. (Min. 13:01)

What surprised me was that **it's a group that existed in 1985, when the first abortion law finally came through. It must be very difficult for them to have to come back all these years later and fight again**. But they are here and that's why I'm on the train (Min. 17:10).

It's like returning to way before the law of 1985. It's going back to Franco's time, to **a situation where our mothers and grandmothers already fought** (Min. 23:34).

A friend fought for this 30 years ago. Now she's here with her grandchild. It's shameful! (Min. 24:18).

The strategic discourse that describes freedom to decide as a European value, though reinforcing a liberal feminist idea of Western supremacy, gives strength to the claim of Spanish women and shows solidarity between women from different countries:

We think **if Spain says that it is possible to ban abortion, other countries may have the same idea** (Min. 17:30).

We have to **protect the rights at a European level** and change things through the solidarity of all countries (Min. 17:57).

Every single right we have is very fragile because of the governments and **abortion should be a fundamental right on a European basis** (Min. 18:08).

Another aspect that the film highlights is the strength and hope that women find in fighting together as political beings, making their voices heard in the public space. Several filmed subjects openly and proudly identify themselves as feminist:

Women here are of all ages and from all countries, and **this strength and unity are priceless**. We'll stop a law that doesn't benefit women, treats us like minors, puts us at the bottom of Europe, we don't want it! (Min. 22:06).

Let them arrest us, **we are abortionists, wicked feminists and they cannot control us**. Let them arrest us, we are feminists, they are sexists and we are not going to stop (Min. 31:42).

As for the **form**, the observational and participatory modes of representation are employed in order to place the cameras and the screen at the service of an event in which the filmed subjects enact their performative right to appear as political subjects with the right to demand freedom. It is clear that the film has a thesis, which is articulated with the polyscopic narrative of dozens of people expressing their opinions and arguments. The talking heads have the empowering effect defended by militant realist documentary filmmakers in the seventies. The dynamic editing of four waves makes the demonstration legible in continuity with a struggle that goes back in time and continues into the future. The strong presence of music and humour emphasises positive affects: joy and hope born out of a collective and political claim against a law that creates anger and distress at individual and personal levels.

I have also diffractively read (i.e. through one another) experiences of gender discrimination and self-positions towards feminism among the interviewed film professionals. Their discourses are materialised in their practices, which are then visualised in the film. For example, the emphasis that Díez places on the need to integrate men in feminist struggles was behind her decision to interview mostly men in the demonstration, with the result that we see an important amount of male testimonies in the film.

The on-going activism that characterised the production process continued during **the distribution and exhibition** of the film, which were, as Luna puts it, “an extension of the demonstration”. The film was recognised at national and international festivals. At the level of the European Union, it was praised for its political content. It has also been useful for activism in countries where abortion is banned. As for the **reception** of the film, the most common reactions in reviews and comments are of gratitude and solidarity with the struggle for women's rights to decide over their own bodies. Due to the moment in which

it was made, its professional quality, and the extensive exhibition it had, *Yo decido* became a very powerful instrument for social pressure against the reform of the law of abortion.

As explained in chapter 1, within a new materialist perspective, “documentaries not only operate on a plane of signification, but also partake in the material processes that co-compose the real” (Hongisto 2015: 12). The filmmakers recorded lots of testimonies from the one-day demonstration. Next, in their putting together the film, they entangled various points of view and rendered visible the continuity of the feminist struggle for women’s rights. In this way, their film became more than a record of a crucial moment: it participated in “the real as process” (Hongisto 2015: 12), co-producing effects as big as the resignation of Ruiz Gallardón. When this took place, Luna, Díez, Acosta, Yagüe, Balaguer, Gutiérrez and the rest of the women who worked on *Yo decido* knew that their effort had not been in vain.

### 4.3 *No existimos/We Don't Exist* (Ana Solano, 2014)

I like to imagine that in this century, women's bodies will cease to be an instrument of war and masculine orgy. The instruments of power and dominance exist everywhere, in the countries that expel them, in the countries of transit and in the countries of refuge. To what extent does this patriarchal tyranny, which put the lives of these women in danger in their respective countries, resonate in the European democracy? (*No existimos*. Min. 1:44).

Ana Solano's *No existimos* is a video essay that renders visible the violence faced by female refugees in their home countries, but also throughout their transit, and in their host countries. It is a critical reflection on Western feminist positions towards discourses on gender equality as "one of the European Union's fundamental values"<sup>319</sup>, as well as on the tensions of Europe's handling of its borders. It is also the enactment of a feminist countervisuality that approaches gender-based violence with responsibility towards the material implications on the bodies with which the filmmaker intra-acts.<sup>320</sup> With reflexive, performative and poetic modes of representations, Solano turns visually inexistent realities into informative and affective audiovisual narrative waves.

A video essay is defined "as a genre of film in between documentary and video art; it is an art practice that is also political intervention and ethnographic enquiry" (Olivieri 2012: 148). Solano first conducted ethnographic research, interviewing female refugees in Spain and France. She also gathered testimonies from lawyers, sociologists and journalists working on this issue. The challenge then was turning these data into a documentary film, bearing in mind that the refugees did not want to be visible. The importance that Solano gives to the violence of representation itself turns her film into an example of a responsible approach towards the visualisation of gender in/equalities, as discussed below.

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<sup>319</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

<sup>320</sup> The term intra-action signifies "the mutual constitution of objects and agencies of observation within phenomena (in contrast to 'interaction', which assumes the prior existence of distinct entities)" (Barad 2007: 197). To talk about intra-actions in documentary filmmaking means that the filmmaker and those s/he films constitute themselves as objects and/or agencies of observation in the moment itself of getting together. *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.2 From the Reflecting Mirror to the Diffraction Apparatus



As in the previous case studies, the analysis of the film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. In the case of form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close read it through the theoretical apparatus described in previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises gender in/equalities through its narrative waves, its cuts, its modes of representation, and the gazes deployed. As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by Solano in three different interviews carried out in 2016 as part of this research project. I compare and contrast what the filmmaker says with what I read in the film. I also explore production decisions and distribution strategies. Then I incorporate opinions expressed by audiences in an academic context and within a film festival frame.

#### **4.3.1 Form and Content: Poetic Visualisations of Invisible Bodies**

*No Existimos* can be divided into twelve segments: four are blocks in which two or three interviews with experts are interleaved; three are reflexive sequences in which the author expresses her position; two provide facts, figures and theoretical guidelines; one long segment consists of the refugee women testimonies; and then there's the opening-title sequence, and the closing sequence with the credits. Overall, these segments can be classified into five narrative waves: wave 1, music and fiction materials; wave 2, filmmaker's reflections/meta-text; wave 3, facts and figures; wave 4, interviews with experts; and wave 5, refugees' testimonies. Each segment is described below.<sup>321</sup>

1. Title of the film (wave 1, music and fiction materials).

The background is black. The title, NO EXISTIMOS appears on the left side of the screen, in white capital letters. The electronic music starts immediately with percussions whose rhythm is similar to a heartbeat mixed with machine-like sounds. Several red dots appear, followed by green and blue dots. They are revealed to be located within a map of Europe and part of Africa and Asia.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: restlessness.

2. Introduction. Voice-over of the narrator and "The Set of Threads' Game" (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 2, filmmaker's reflections/meta-text).

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<sup>321</sup> The languages spoken in the film are French and Spanish, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. The DVD can be ordered directly with the filmmaker, Ana Solano, at the film website: <<http://www.noexistimos.com>>.

The music stops. After a brief silence, the music continues during this introduction in interval cycles clearly marked by a strong sound, similar to a full stop. “The Set of Threads’ Game” can be divided into four parts.

First part of “The Set of Threads’ Game”. The background is black. At the centre of the frame, we see the image of a coiled rope in a shape similar to that of a heart. From the upper part of the frame, a hand takes the rope and, immediately, other five hands join the first one, each one on top of the previous one. The black background has been replaced by two superimposed photographs of semi-desert landscapes of villages, probably located in the north of Africa or a non-defined Middle East country. As soon as the last hand joins the other ones, the voice-over of the female narrator, speaking in French with an Arabic accent, establishes the main questions that sets up the research journey of the film: “I like to imagine that this century will serve to create a more feminist world. I like to believe that in this century, there will be a place that will naturally unite women” (Min. 00:54). The hands separate and surround the coiled rope. The screen fades to black.

Second part of “The Set of Threads’ Game”. On a blue textured background, the hands entangled with the ropes begin to make figures with them. We see the hands of three people making figures separately. The voice-over continues: “I like to believe that in this century the mind set of those countries that exclude women will be overcome” (Min. 1:04).

Third part of “The Set of Threads’ Game”. On the blue background, just one person manipulates the rope, while the other two remain still. One of them joins the first one in the creation of figures, and then the third one joins in. The three pairs of hands continue playing with the rope for a while. The ellipsis into the fourth part is marked with a subtle diffusion until the last frame, in which the image of the hands is partially overexposed and then dissolves into the image of a head. Meanwhile, the voice-over continues with the quote that opens this section.

Fourth part of “The Set of Threads’ Game”. The blue background remains but with a slightly different texture and with a white area downside. On this background we see the blurred image of a female head entangling herself with a rope; first very slowly, but gradually the pace is accelerated. The movement is robot-like. Meanwhile, the voice-over continues:

What is the price that women have to continue paying for the audacity of challenging the norms imposed in their countries of origin? The more I advance, entangling myself in this web of rebel emotions, of positions confronting social and governmental structures; the more I hear their testimonies, full of fear that they will be identified, that their voices will be recognised, their faces, their gazes. The more I advance, only empty spaces do I find. The more I advance, the further I am from achieving my goals because I have to fight against the powerful tools on which the system counts on for creating public beliefs. (Min. 2:45).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: rage, pain, fear, confusion, impotence and distress.

3. Introduction. The problem in France and Spain (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 3, facts and figures).

Since the last frames of the previous segment, an intense wind-like sound begins and remains all along the first frame of this section. Data about violence directed towards women and about female refugees in France and Spain appear on top of different photos and images, accompanied by music, in six slides that appear in succession.

First slide. Title TOLERANCE 0. The background is a digital image of dark dunes of a desert. Text in white begins to appear very quickly, flickering, which makes it hard to read:

80% of people who are victims of human trafficking are women and children.

Three fifths of the poorest population of our planet are women, earn the 10% of the wage bill and possess the 1% of the world's wealth.

Female genital mutilation affects more than 3 millions girls annually.

The use of the female body as an instrument of war. Sexual violence against women is one of the characteristics that define contemporary armed conflicts.

Among the most common abuses, rape, forced pregnancy and abortion, trafficking, sexual slavery and intentional contagion of sexually transmitted diseases can be found.

The western attitude that cultural differences should be respected allows 17 thousand girls to suffer female circumcision in Spain. For the same reason 500 thousand more will suffer the same thing in Europe. (Min. 3:20).

Second slide. The background is the photograph of an arid landscape, a dirt road with a tree in the foreground. The music from the previous slide continues but is mixed with a scratching/ burning-like sound, which underlines each sentence. The same text from the previous slide is repeated, again very quickly and flickering, making it hard to follow and read it.

Third slide. Title: FRANCE. On top of the previous photo, we see the photo of a highway at sunrise. The statistical facts about the number of asylum applications presented at the OFPRA (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides) from 2008 to 2012 appear very quickly and flickering. Once again it's hard to read it all. The scratching/burning sound continues. It's loud and uncanny, periodically interrupted by a machine-like sound. The rhythm of what sounds like another machine is added.

Fourth slide. On top of the previous two photos, the photo of what looks like a railway is added. The sound continues as in the previous slide but the rhythm of the machine added in the end is intensified. The text from the previous slide is repeated, again very quickly and flickering, making it hard to follow and read it all.

Fifth slide. Title: SPAIN. On top of the previous three photos, the photo of feet on tiptoe is added. The sound from the previous slide continues. The statistical facts about the number of asylum applications presented and approved in 2012 appear very quickly and flickering. It's hard to read it all.

Sixth slide. On top of the previous four photos, the photo of a grid is added. The sound from the previous slide continues, slightly intensified. The text from the previous slide is repeated, again very quickly and flickering, making it hard to follow and read it all.

Seventh slide. The grid from the previous slide appears with more intense colours. On top of it, we see the moving reflection of what looks like two burning human shadows. The scratching and machine-like sounds from the previous slide continue. The text from the first slide is repeated, again very quickly and flickering, making it hard to follow and read.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, anger and pain. The music and sounds evoke anxiety and fear.

4. First block of individual interviews with three experts to situate the problem in Europe. The transition is marked with a white screen and a percussion sound (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 4, interviews with experts).

Interview 1. William Spindler. UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) spokesperson. He speaks in Spanish and appears in medium shot.

On a black background, the blurred silhouette of a map of France appears with the image of William Spindler within it. He speaks about violence directed specifically towards women as a common strategy in war conflicts: “In many of these conflicts, women are the principal victims. Furthermore it can be said that in some cases the violence directed against women is not merely a result of these conflicts, but rather it forms part of the strategy of certain armed groups against their enemies or against civilian population” (Min. 6:24). The frame changes: the blurred map remains and inside of it we see William Spindler next to the image of a large photo with the text in French, “Le Siècle des Réfugiés” (the century of refugees). He speaks about migratory policies in Europe:

In general, migratory policy in Europe, as in most industrialised countries, and increasingly more in developing countries, is designed to stop migration. In many cases, they do not take into account that among these economic migrants there are also people arriving seeking protection, people escaping from their countries due to conflicts or persecution. In general, migratory policies are designed to repress the arrival of those who arrive in an irregular way. (Min. 7:06).

Transition. Map of Europe on a black background accompanied by a percussion sound.

Interview 2. Smaïn Laacher, sociologist and judge representing the UNHCR in the CNDA (Cour Nationale du Droit d’Asile). He speaks in French and appears in medium shot. On a black background, the blurred silhouette of a map of France appears with the image of Laacher within it. He explains the procedure for asylum applications: the asylum applicant makes the application to the OFPRA (Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides). In case of denial, the applicant has the right to present an appeal to the CNDA, composed of a president, an administrative advisor from the OFPRA and one from UNHCR. Transition. Map of Europe on a black background accompanied by a percussion sound.

Interview 3. Caddy Adzuba, journalist. She speaks in French and her face appears in a close shot. Adzuba’s profile appears on the left side of the screen. On the blue background, there’s a map of Europe. The text in Spanish of what she is saying occupies

the right side of the screen. She talks about the specific case of refugee women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo: “Host countries must bear in mind where these women come from (...) In the Congo, women are victims of sexual violence, they are threatened, thrown out onto the street” (Min. 9:41). There’s an image transition with a texturised white screen and a percussion sound. The voice of Caddy continues. She talks about the contradiction between the law and then the lack of care for these women:

When a woman comes and requests refuge, it is refused. Where is the humanity? They want them to return to their countries of origin to die. They make up laws, which they later fail to fulfil. I believe that it is high time for the world to think about human dignity and not only about money and economics (...) women are victims of conflicts and politics for which they need protection (Min. 10:36).

The text of what she is saying occupies the right side of the screen, white letters on a black background. On the left side of the screen we see diverse images. Firstly, the photo of a woman wearing a chador, holding a boy by the hand, looked at from behind; this image is then combined with the photo of a huge tree. The image is then followed by a composed image of a female silhouette on a desert landscape, on top of which a text begins to appear quickly, until it occupies the entire left side of the screen. It is very difficult to read it while also listening to what Adzuba says, which generates anxiety in the spectator, not knowing where to focus her/his attention. This text is more theoretical and adds another dimension to the opinions expressed by the interviewee:

Female migrants and minors in transit: between the externalisation of borders and traffic for exploitation. The borders of the European Union are not closed borders, neither are they lines constructed with barbed wire where, what the press call avalanches, are generated. The southern border of Europe is considered to be one of the key points in security policy for the member states of the Union. Countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya have turned into preferred allies of European states and have morphed from mere countries of origin of immigrants to being qualified as transit countries (...) this second category supposes a promotion of status and this country turns into a prioritised ally and defender of European interests. This is a phenomenon

called externalisation, in other words, “subcontracting out of migratory control to third countries” (Min. 10:36).

A black screen followed by the photo of six women wearing coloured chadors on a desert landscape, while Adzuba’s voice continues: “The question is very simple. How to establish adequate strategies so that these women can return to their countries of origin and live a normal life” (Min.10:51).

The images keep on changing: after the photo of the women with chadors, the grid that we saw in the previous segment emerges, this time with the black and white photo of a woman with dark curly hair. Then we see the photo of a blue door and a white wall as background, on top of which there’s the portrait of a dark-skinned woman and, repeated over twenty times in Spanish, French, English and Portuguese, the phrase “We don’t exist”. Meanwhile, Adzuba’s voice continues: “In regard to the refugee issue, the international community has to think about this again, because this phenomenon comes back time and time again” (Min. 11:04).

Black screen followed by a blue landscape, which also looks like a microscopic photo of human skin. It is followed by an overexposed photo of a grassy landscape. Then a white screen and slowly, a map of Europe appears as if painted, with an incomplete text in French: “Le Maroc, la Tunisie, Yemen, L’Egypt. Signe convention mais aucune respect reellement l’exile” (Sign the convention but none really respect the exile). Meanwhile, Adzuba narrates her personal experience: “When I hear other people speak about the difficult conditions in which they live, I cannot live in exile, I can’t ask for refuge because I am scared. It scares me to live in a worse situation than what I experienced in my country. I don’t feel ready to change one suffering from another (...) It is a contradiction at international level” (Min. 11:44).

On top of the map of Europe, the same text in Spanish appears many times and in different sizes: “The mechanisms of power, in the case of exiled and refugee women and girls, have a different relationship with sex and gender discrimination, which continues to be a dominant principle in their countries of origin. Even in this XXI century” (Min. 11:44).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, fear and distress.

5. The refugee women’s sample and testimonies (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 5, refugees testimonies).

The transition is marked with a black screen and the music from the beginning of the film (percussions and electronic sounds with a rhythm similar to a heartbeat mixed with machine-like sounds). On a grey screen, an explanatory text appears, while the music continues: “All of those exiled women who were interviewed in the course of making this documentary, ALL OF THEM, had work in their countries of origin. They are not immigrants, they are not asylum seekers, they are threatened by persecution and death” (Min. 11:55) On the same grey screen, another text appears: “The majority of these women run the risk of being identified (...) their testimonies were not filmed, only written down, and their voices are condemned to silence” (Min. 12:21). There’s a sudden change in music, it becomes more intense and then it gets lower, almost imperceptible.

Facts and figures of the sample. The data is presented on a digital desert landscape in horizontal motion. Countries, professions and ages (e.g. economist, journalist, Tunisia, Iran, Egypt, El Salvador, teacher, 24, 40) appear as isolated words. The music combines percussions with guttural sounds and a voice saying random phrases in Spanish (“La luz que desaparece (...) nada más”). As the horizontal movement progresses, several female voices are combined in an indistinct way. The screen goes black while the voices continue. We hear again the percussions, the voices and intense sounds.

Testimonies. They appear only in text, with white capital letters, on top of photos of walls and buildings. It is not clear whether different statements belong to the same person or to different women. Meanwhile, the disturbing music with deep human voices and guttural sounds continue. The text says:

In my country I didn't wear the veil. They demanded that I put it on at work. I said no and it was at that point that my problems started (...) I had to escape and request asylum in France. A lot of women wear the veil without any conviction (...) because it gives them a certain liberty to think or to move around without being identified by those groups that are against women's freedom. Only my family and close friends know where I am. (Min. 14:40).

The music stops. Instead, we hear a combination of multiple female voices speaking indistinctly in Spanish, English and French (“detrás del silencio, un atardecer frente al mar, shaved head, exponencial, thousand and thousands of wars”). The testimonies keep on appearing on top of the blurred photo of a wall:



I am threatened by death. Obviously, I am scared (...)

There isn't quite discrimination in these host countries. Not even direct racism. But, nevertheless, I think that racism does exist. I am not able to practice my profession because I don't have citizenship here (...)

I am waiting for an appeal that I have lodged because I consider the reasons I was given, for having been denied asylum, to be unjust. (Min. 15:48).

Transition: Black screen. In the centre, the photo of a nose and a mouth appears. Texts in different sizes, with meaningless incomplete words in Spanish: "cara, desoñarajada, escuidada". The indistinct multiple voices in Spanish, English and French continue. Then we see another photo of a wall with squared windows. On top of it, another testimony appears, accompanied by the actual voice of the refugee speaking in Spanish as the text appears: "The motive for us having requested asylum in Spain is, we might say because of social persecution in our country. I was a high school teacher and my husband is a systems engineer (...) The persecution was first directed at him" (Min. 16:36).

Transition. Again we see the black screen, with the photo of a nose and a mouth that appears in the right corner. Texts in different sizes appear all over the screen, meaningless, in Spanish: "cara, desoñarajada, escuidada". We hear a disturbing wind-like sound and then see another photo of a blurred wall. The blurred face of a woman begins to appear on the background. It gets clearer gradually until we see her face. On top of the image, another testimony appears, this time with the actual voice of the refugee speaking in Spanish, reading with a strong accent, as the text appears:

We had a big problem in our country, we were Muslims and on converting to Christianity we could not stay there. I didn't want to abandon my country but I have to (...) In my country there is neither freedom of expression nor freedom of choice. We want to live in a safe and free country. I am a member of the association for human rights in Iran. I am against the current Iranian regime because they violate the universal declaration of human rights. Death penalty is the punishment for those people who want freedom of expression. (Min. 18:18).

Transition. The music intensifies. Again we see the black screen, with the photo of the nose and the mouth appearing in the right corner. Slowly another face appears and then another one. Again the texts in different sizes, with meaningless incomplete words in

Spanish appear: “me, ajada, pre”. The music continues with a rhythmic sound, similar to the sound of a train on a railway, which propitiates a persecution feeling. The background image of a brick wall appears and on top of it we read another testimony:

I am from Iraq. In my country a woman who is a Muslim and a lesbian is condemned to death penalty. I have lodged an asylum request here in France (...) Discrimination does exist in France but not just due to the French or the westerners in general, it also exists among the Arabian-African community in France (...) To be a lesbian produces as much rejection here as in Iraq. (Min. 19:34).

Transition. The music continues, mixed with the sound similar to a train on a railway. Once more, we see the black screen, with the photo of the nose and the mouth that appears in the left corner. Texts in different sizes, with meaningless incomplete words in Spanish: “Soñar, soñar forzadas, más, mucha”. A second face appears, another one disappears. We see more meaningless words in Spanish: “mucha, lograra”. Another testimony appears on a curved brick wall as background image. The disturbing music and the railway sound continue. We hear the isolated phrase in Spanish “nosotros no podemos quedar en mi país” (we can’t stay in my country”). Next, we only see the text; we don’t listen to the voice:

I am an Egyptian Copt. My husband and I had problems with groups of Muslims because we didn’t want to convert to Islam (...) We came legally, by plane and with visas authorised by the Spanish embassy in Egypt (...) I do feel a little discrimination from the Spanish people. I get the impression through their looks that they are reminding me that this is not my country and I am a foreigner (Min. 20:38).

Transition: Again we see the black screen, with the photo of the nose and the mouth in different sizes, fourteen times and with different colours, while the disturbing music continues. The background image of a building appears; the image does not remain static, it keeps on moving in different combinations, with the screen divided into various parts. We hear another testimony in French as the text appears: “Three years ago I participated in a demonstration. Two months later I was in prison and later on I left the country. I didn’t have a choice. I had to leave my country” (Min. 21:14). The background image

moves, we get closer to the building, closer and closer, in a movement that seems to be creating cell bars, provoking a sensation of being imprisoned. However, there's also emphasis on a window partially open. Meanwhile, the testimony continues:

I have been waiting for the papers for two years. I lived in a shelter with cockroaches, bedbugs. Everyday I had to take sleeping pills. I lost twelve kilos. Now I also live in a shelter, it's the same. With or without papers, it's the same (...) I know an Iranian woman who has been raped four times. Four times. Afterwards, we spoke with the police and they said: "I don't care, you're refugees. You don't have papers, you don't have French nationality" (Min. 22:58).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, anger, love and disgust. The voices evoke confusion and the music evokes anxiety and fear.

6. Facts, figures and theoretical guidelines to understand the problem (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 3, facts and figures).

The screen is divided into nine areas. On each one of them we see several moving images, mainly of grassy landscapes and unintelligible handwriting. We hear the sound of a train advancing combined with an uncanny screeching/burning sound. The images within the rectangles freeze and then move again just one by one, right before texts appear gradually and slowly in each one. Some fragments appeared before, in the texts that were shown during the interview with Caddy Adzuba:

1. Violations of the human rights of women and girls who escape their countries of origin seeking asylum and refuge in Europe.
2. The externalisation of borders. The ironical management of the European Union borders.
3. The southern border of Europe is considered to be one of the key points in security policy of the EU member states.
4. Countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya have become preferred allies of the European states.
5. In Europe we subcontract out to peripheral states whose democracy leaves much to be desired and whose respect for human rights and international conventions are also somewhat dubious.

6. There is an important part of civil violence directed towards women from local population and male refugees.
7. France, together with Algeria, manages migratory flows; Libya does so with Italy and Spain together with Morocco.
8. All of their rights, as human beings, are violated.
9. The right to dignity. (Min. 24:20).

The screen is divided horizontally into three grassy landscapes. The middle one shows the grass with movement; on the lower one we see the mouth and nose that appears in the transitions between testimonies, three times. The wind-like music can be perceived in the background, as we hear the voice-over of the female narrator from segment two, speaking in French with an Arabic accent: “Irony is an intellectual thought. It is also a rhetorical political proposal. I would say that it is a method. Another tool, which public systems in host countries use, so that women asylum seekers remain immersed in this solitude, which makes them even more invisible” (Min. 24:45).

A list of rights begin to appear on the screen, gradually, from the lower to the upper part: the right to life, to security, to physical integrity, to reproductive health, to not be discriminated against, to education, to freedom of movement, to asylum. The voice-over continues: “It’s also sheer irony the compatibility of these discourses with the strategies of a patriarchal system in our host countries, as they continue to be places where unequal relationships are established, where cynicism overruns the possibility of unity” (Min. 25:24).

Fade to white of the whole screen while a penetrating and intense sound goes *in crescendo*. The word TRANSIT in red and a map of Europe appear, identifying strategic places for asylum seekers. It’s the same map from segment one, the beginning of the film. This time we get to know what each coloured dot means: Red-places for foreigners waiting for their admission exam; green-places for foreigners waiting for their deportation; blue-places that combine the two functions, admission and deportation; black-information points.

Transition: the digital landscape of the desert appears with an intense sensation of movement; the light of the day changes, as if the day is passing by, and the wind-like sound intensifies. A sound similar to that of a bell accompanies the fade in black. The coiled rope from the beginning reappears on one side, along with the hands that take it.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress.

7. Second block of individual interviews with experts. Two interviews are interleaved. (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 4, interviews with experts).

Interview 1. Smaïn Laacher. Focus on the legal status of women refugees during their transit.

The screen is divided into two. The talking head of Laacher appears on the right side, while we keep on seeing the image of the hands on the other side. As Laacher talks, the repeated images of “The Set of Threads’ Game” with the blue background are combined with background photos of a textured wooden table. There’s barely perceptible background music. He says:

I investigate the issue of violence against women, on their route to exile. A prohibited route because they don’t travel by plane with a legal passport. They are not refugees. They are women without any statute, without official documentation. They don’t have the right to travel. However travel they do, and they do it towards Europe. My study deals with the violence against women, above all their protection. And for this reason I have travelled to five countries: Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spain and France. (Min. 27:41).

As Laacher begins to give a brief explanation of his research findings, the image of the hands is replaced by the photo of the back of a person with a kind of black chador, floating in the air as s/he seems to move forward into the desert, giving the impression of an ink stain expanding. S/he is then faced by a kind of huge machine, which keeps on rotating. The music begins slowly and intensifies towards the end of the sequence. Meanwhile, Laacher narrates:

The female victims of violence en route to exile are not protected and, above all cannot request any type of protection from any international agency or from any state either. My question is whether this violence could come to be qualified as persecution. In the affirmative case, requisition of protection is then possible. In the opposite case, these women would not be able to request protection neither from a state, nor from an agency such as ACNUR. This then became my question: Why is it that women who are victims of violence in their own countries can request international protection? And why is it that, when they step outside of their countries, barely ten metres from the border, if they are victims of violence there isn’t any kind of international protection? (...) It is

both legitimate and authorised to protect people who have no protection. (Min. 29:46).

Transition: Black screen. The word TRANSIT appears in red as we listen to a drum/heartbeat kind of sound. Tense music continues in the background. The eye, ear and nose of a woman within an eye-shaped figure appear on the screen three times. The image is then replaced by the word TRANSIT.

Interview 2. Flor Tercero. Lawyer for the defence of refugees. She speaks in Spanish. Focus on what's specific about women asking for refuge and explanation of the xenophobic policies preventing equality discourses from actually being enforced.

The screen is divided into two. On the right side, we see the talking head of Flor Tercero in close-up. She is in a coffee shop. On the other side, we see the blurred dark background image of a forest. On the foreground, a kind of transparent sphere, all covered as within a white net, rotates slowly. The sphere begins to disintegrate. Tercero narrates:

I recently had the case of a woman who was really in a cage in her country, in the sense that since she was born she was an inferior being. For this reason, her family gave her to another family that didn't have the resources to educate her. And this other family treated her like a servant instead of as a daughter (...) Her husband was arrested and she found herself alone (...) What did her family do? They sought her out in order to forcibly marry her to another man. She escaped and made it to France (...) Due to the simple fact of being a woman she had no alternative; this wouldn't happen to any man. Yet because she was a woman she was put in a cage. (Min. 31:42).

The background image of the forest is substituted with a white background on which a naked woman with no hair is kneeling, looking at the floor. The image moves slowly, as the background blurred forest image appears again. The white sphere-net begins to get formed again in the centre of this woman, so that she gets trapped within it. The image of the woman disappears and the sphere gets dissolved again. Meanwhile, Tercero explains:

We are struggling everyday so that the situation that women face in certain countries will be recognised as completely unacceptable in our societies, and that this inequality is so extreme that they need to have safe refuge here. This

concept of freedom, of equality between men and women that should be recognised at an international level, is something of a repetitive political discourse maybe. Yet we always see a confrontation between this and the arguments surrounding immigration policies. The response to these claims is therefore that, if in France we recognise that women, due to the simple fact of being women, could receive asylum, then all the women of the world are going to want to come to France and this is not possible. Therefore we can't grant asylum to women for simply being women (Min. 33:20).

Interview 1, second excerpt. Smaïn Laacher. Focus on what women face in the transit.

The screen remains divided into two. The talking head of Laacher is on the right side of the screen. On the left side, the image of the forest remains slightly blurred as a burning/scratching sound gets louder and combined with a repetitive machine like sound. The image of the forest is combined with the video of a person, of whom we only see the feet and legs, walking forward. The video image disappears and we see a zoom out of the image of the forest. Meanwhile, Laacher narrates:

Undocumented men and women riding in a truck, crossing the Algerian desert (...) A group of nomads on this route stops their truck. The leader of this group looks at the undocumented immigrants who are in the truck. He sees a woman and asks her to go with him somewhere. She refuses to do so (...) The leader asks the driver of the truck to get out and he says to everyone: "In any case you cannot continue with your journey, even if someone else knows how to drive, because it will be very difficult to cross the desert (...) In the end the woman will come with me" (...) In the end they convince the woman to go with the leader of this group, so that the journey can continue. (Min. 35:25).

Fade to a black screen on which the image of the woman's eye, nose and ear within an eye-shaped figure appears again. The sound of drums, like heartbeats, underlines the change of frame. A text from the previous segment appears again: "The externalisation of borders. The ironical management of the European Union borders" (Min. 35:33).

The eye-shaped image gets bigger and occupies the centre of the screen. Another text from the previous segment is repeated: "In Europe we subcontract out to peripheral states whose democracy leaves much to be desired and whose respect for human rights and international conventions are also somewhat dubious" (Min. 35:34).

Black screen, as if the eye-shaped image blinked. It reappears in the centre as we read again a text from the previous segment: “Violations of the human rights of women and girls who escape their countries of origin seeking asylum and refuge in Europe” (Min. 35:42).

The eye-shaped image gets bigger on the centre of the screen and another text from block six is repeated: “There is an important part of civil violence directed towards women from local population and male refugees” (Min. 35:49). The eye-shaped image gets bigger twice and the sound keeps on emphasising each movement.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, love and distress.

8. Third block of individual interviews with experts. Three interviews are interleaved. Focus on different situations that refugee women face in their home and host countries (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 4, interviews with experts).

Interview 1. Flor Tercero. The talking head appears on one side of the screen and the translation of what she says appears on the other side. On the background, the close-up of Caddy Adzuba and Claudia García appear. Tercero explains: “We see many women who are illiterate in comparison to men (...) In general, gender discrimination reverberates more strongly among refugees. There are persecutions of a political nature which, in general for these women, manifest themselves through sexual violence” (Min. 36:38).

Interview 2. Claudia García, refugee from Colombia. The talking head of García emerges on top of that of Tercero. She says: “I continued the work that my father began as a political leader with the Union Patriótica, which is a movement that was forcefully exterminated by the Colombian government (...) My left-wing position has always caused me many troubles” (Min. 37:30).

Interview 1, second excerpt. The image of Tercero emerges on the foreground once again, while the other two talking heads remain visible and in movement, but silenced. Tercero says: “The sexual violence against women, I am thinking about the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where rape is a weapon of war (...) or women who have suffered from sexual violence in prison, because they are women” (Min. 38:20).

Interview 3. The image of Caddy Adzuba emerges on top. The change of speaker is also indicated with percussions’ sounds. She says:

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there’s violence designed to destroy the woman (...). We call this feminicide because it is a form of planned



genocide in order to destroy the woman (...) Why do we not speak of femicide, of female genocide, due to the fact of this planning to rape women? To bring down their standard of living and to depict them as inhuman? (...) How can such atrocities occur in plain view of those who proclaim so often about women's rights, and who then permit these acts to take place on such a scale and to last so long, without creating an international mobilisation? (Min. 39:48).

Interview 1, third excerpt. The image of Tercero emerges on top. She says:

In regard to lesbians, there are cases in which they have not yet been victims of violent persecution, because it is in France where they decide to come out of the closet. And it is difficult, when they haven't experienced their own sexual orientation in their country of origin, to assert this right in the country where they are seeking asylum (...) I recently had two clients who were seeking asylum due to their sexual orientation and who declared they had been victims of sexual violence when they were girls. The chairperson at the hearing told them that sexual violence had nothing to do with their respective situations, as "everybody knows that sexual violence against boys can provoke homosexuality as adults, but against girls this was not the case" (Min. 41:10).

Interview 2, second excerpt. The image of García emerges on top: "I know that patriarchal culture exists not only in Colombia but in all countries, when they see that a woman speaks out (...) this has been very hard, yet at the same time I have felt very privileged because I have had so much support from the women of my own country" (Min. 42:30).

Interview 3, second excerpt. The image of Adzuba emerges on top:

What is happening in my country is femicide (...) These women have lost everything. Their lives, their humanity, their femininity, their family... they have lost everything, they are traumatised, both physically and morally. They have no hope. For this reason it is necessary to make an effort in this area, above all on the part of NGO's, including international groups, in order to give hope and life to these women (Min. 43:15).

Interview 1, fourth excerpt. The image of Tercero emerges on top: “They ask France for asylum because it is the origin of human rights, of the declaration of human rights. And then, afterwards, they receive the greatest disappointment of their lives” (Min. 43:53). The image of García emerges on top: “What we always say, our slogan is that we women, as givers of life, are forgers of peace” (Min. 44:19).

Transition: On a white screen, we see black brush paint strokes, while the music intensifies. Several female portraits in movement appear, each one on top of the other.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, anger, fear, peace and hope.

9. Voice-over of the narrator (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 2, filmmaker’s reflections/meta-text).

The screen is divided into two: the right side is totally black, and on the left side, we see a female black shadow that travels on a kind of train or tram; the landscape changes slowly, the city remains unknown. The tense background music is combined with an acute sound. The voice-over of the female narrator, which is also present in segment two speaking in French with an Arabic accent, reflects on the content of the film itself, specifically on the dilemmas of visibility:

Like many women years ago, I began my march towards the deconstruction of the concept of gender. So that later on, I could construct a relationship between the body and language. Between the body and public-political discourse. My problem now consists in visualising this literal nature. (Min. 45:12).

On the half of the screen that is black at the beginning, we gradually see the image of the woman entangling herself with a rope from the fourth part of “The Set of Threads’ Game”. The acute sound gets stronger until reaching a peak; then it goes on less strong and gets combined with a sound similar to that of a train in movement. The narrator continues:

The invisibility of their bodies, of their faces, of their inexistent identities, of their thoughts. Where for them, only one landscape exists: To get some paperwork. And continue to be an anonymous face (...) I have to move my critical discourse once more towards the patriarchal system. Now that I am far away from demonstrating equality from the perspective of gender. (Min. 46:17).

The shadow and landscape disappear, leaving that side of the screen black. Only the image of the entangled woman remains. The tense music goes on until the next segment.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress.

10. Fourth block of individual interviews with experts. Two interviews are interleaved. Focus on what women refugees go through once they ask for asylum (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 4, interviews with experts).

Interview 1. Smaïnn Laacher. The screen is divided into two; he appears in medium shot on the right hand side, while the translation of what he says appears on the left hand side. The background music continues all through his intervention. He says:

One of the manifestations of violence is silence. One of the manifestations of violence is trauma. There's great difficulty when a woman asks for asylum (...) Any institution capable of giving protection has the right to ask this woman to tell them everything, so that they can evaluate and judge the persecution (...) But, in contrast to what one might think, telling her story is not a natural act; in fact, telling her story is not culturally given in the same way everywhere. Telling one's story, reconstructing events, is a phenomenon that people are given to in the West. (Min. 48:28).

Interview 2. Flor Tercero. The screen is divided into two. She appears on the left hand side, while the translation of what she says appears on the right hand side. At a certain moment of her intervention we only see her photo. The background music disappears, but there are still isolated sounds that highlight specific moments. She says:

An interview at the OFPRA is quite traumatic (...) They do not allow us, the lawyers, to accompany our clients during the interview (...) I have seen many women, many more women than men, completely frustrated, listless, without energy, as if they were destroyed inside (...) I am not going to personally interrogate them about the violence they have suffered because I am only a lawyer. I think it is better that they go to see a psychologist or psychiatrist and that they speak with them (...) I ask the psychologist to write a certificate explaining the traumas suffered. (Min. 50:35).

Interview 1 Second excerpt. Smaïnn Laacher. The change of speaker is underlined with an intense music strike, which is repeated at different moments of his intervention. The

screen is divided into two; he appears on the right hand side, while the translation of what he says appears on the left hand side. He explains:

The scars are on the body, but still, a legitimate institution has to acknowledge that these scars are compatible with the applicant's story (...) It's a difficult exercise, so whoever is listening to these accounts should not look for the truth because they will probably never know it. They must look for the plausible. (Min. 52:04).

Interview 2, second excerpt. Flor Tercero. The screen is divided into two; she appears on the left hand side, while the translation of what she says appears on the right hand side. She says:

In France there's a fear that, if we begin to accept that women can be recognised as refugees for the simple fact of being women, this will open the door to an incredible rise in immigration from every woman in the world, who will then request asylum in France. For this reason, the fact of being a woman is not recognised as forming part of a social group that is persecuted because of its characteristics. But certain jurisprudences, which recognise protection against forced marriage and genital mutilation as legitimate causes for asylum, have been developing. Nevertheless, I have not yet seen a decision, which recognises that, for example, a Congolese woman can become a refugee because she has been a victim of violence simply due to being a woman, since in Congo, women are indeed victims of sexual violence on a massive scale. (Min. 53:25).

Interview 1, third excerpt. Smaïn Laacher. The screen is divided into two; he appears on the right hand side, his face in close shot, while the translation of what he says appears on the left hand side. His image is put in slow motion at times. He explains:

If these countries have signed the Geneva Convention it's one thing, but that is not enough to guarantee people's protection (...) In the Arab world there are 22 countries. Only 5 of which have signed the Geneva Convention: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Yemen and Egypt. None of them, absolutely none of them provides asylum to any asylum seekers. In these countries, it is the HCR that

legitimises asylum seekers (...) but being given asylum does not mean that they become protected by the country where they reside. (Min. 54:41).

Interview 2, third excerpt. Flor Tercero. The screen is divided into two. She appears on the left, while the translation of what she says appears on the right. She narrates one case:

As a result of the repeated sexual violence that she suffered, a client of mine ended up becoming sterile. And during the interview, one of the judges started by asking her (...) “And don’t you have any children?” He hadn’t even read the file (...) This shouldn’t happen in any jurisdiction; but it does happen because the generalised prejudice of the judges towards asylum seekers is that they are all liars. On many occasions I, as a lawyer, have left the courtroom traumatised. And if the lawyer ends up traumatised, in the case of the asylum seeker it is even worse (...) That is, in itself, inhuman treatment. (Min. 56:29).

Transition: An image of two trains moving in opposite directions. The music is composed of guttural sounds mixed with screeching/burning sounds. The trains stop and on one of them we see a text from segment six: “All of their rights, as human beings, are violated” (Min. 56:48). We hear the voice in Spanish from segment five (“La luz que desaparece y se agota”), saying meaningless phrases as if isolated from a poem. This voice continues onto the next segment.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, fear, distress and shame.

11. Conclusion. Voice-over of the narrator focusing on the narrator’s positioning towards the refugees’ situation and the documentary (wave 1, music and fiction materials; and wave 2, filmmaker’s reflections/meta-text).

In the background there’s a barely perceptible photo of a window. On the foreground, we see the texts in different sizes that were displayed in segment five: meaningless and incomplete words in Spanish. The background window disappears gradually and the letters have periodical changes of colour. The multiple voices continue in the soundtrack along with a repetitive, machine-like sound. The narrator, speaking in French with an Arabic accent, expresses the concluding remarks of the meta-text:

I like to imagine that their fight for survival will not continue in their new host countries. I like to imagine that our States have the necessary mechanisms so

that they can live and not only survive. I like to imagine that in the host countries, feminist women are not divided among themselves. (Min. 57:20).

The text gets closer and bigger. The image of windows moving from inside a train appears in the background. The narrator continues: “I like to imagine that in the cities, the places, the neighbourhoods where they survive in their host countries, we will accept them. We will not create a barrier of resistance, we will live together with them” (Min. 57:36).

The text changes and the image becomes clearer. The background photo seems like the upper cables of a tram; it is constantly moving, giving the feeling of constant transit. The narrator continues: “I like to imagine that we believe their stories, in which their identities are reflected. Created from silence, from reclusion, from psychological and physical violence (...) The sentence, “these are their customs and we have to respect them”, is pure irony. It is with these so politically correct speeches, so ironically democratic, that they justify these customs” (Min. 58:09).

The scratching/burning noise gets louder, as the image becomes black. The background photo with the tram cables remains as the screen is divided into four parts, two with what looks like colourful rectangles, and two with texts in Spanish, repeating something the narrator told previously: “Me gusta creer que la lucha de ellas por la supervivencia no continúa en los países de acogida”. “Me gusta imaginar que nuestros estados tienen los mecanismos necesarios para que puedan vivir y no sobrevivir” (Min. 58:15). This image is also combined with quick glances at an image of red paint being poured onto what looks like white clothes, probably a white dress. Gradually, these glances become longer and the colourful rectangles turn to white. The tense music goes on along with the scratching, disturbing sound. The narrator continues:

I like to imagine that their customs don't turn them into objects of use and enjoyment for being women. I like to imagine that this documentary film will manage to give visibility to the reality of isolation and inequality in which these women, who request asylum and refuge in our countries, find themselves. I like to imagine that they will form part of the social reality of our countries in this XXI century. (Min. 58:46).

Transition: Background photo of train tracks. On the foreground, once again we see the texts in different sizes from segment five and from the beginning of this segment. The music is composed of strong guttural voices. The screen is then divided into two: on one side we see the train moving forward, on the other side we see photos of the neighbourhoods where probably these women live. These images move to the right.

The black screen is divided into two. On both sides we see the duplicated image of the coiled thread and the hands from “The Set of Threads’ Game” that we had previously seen on segments two and seven. They are combined with the blue background, which was also seen before. The disturbing music with the repetitive, machine-like sound continues, combined with a scratching/burning sound. The narrator continues: “I try not to lose the thread that led me to begin this documentary. I try to reach the end, or perhaps the beginning (...) This thread, which I began, has managed to entangle me” (Min. 59:41).

The screen is divided into rectangles of different sizes. It looks like a grey prison, within which the image moves in a constant horizontal way. The music and the narrator continue: “I try to render visible this place we call ‘forgotten’. That is where these women live in their host countries. I try to render visible (so that we don’t forget) that these women travel and endure, taking with them the identifying marks of their female gender” (Min. 1:00:15).

Slowly, in some of the sections in which the screen is divided, different photos of places connected with these women, like the court, airports and corridors with barriers, appear. The music and the narrator continue, with the burning/scratching sound getting louder gradually: “I try not to be hasty in judging the existing nihilism which makes us immune to the reality of these millions of women who are not treated as humans. Ariadna’s thread was my guide at the start of this small map that was drawn up to give visibility to the relationships of domination, which continue to exist in the XXI century disguised as identities and categories” (Min. 1:00:53).

The image of the corridor with the barrier takes up the whole screen, but in the background smaller images of other places remain. The narrator continues: “Ariadna’s desire to get out of Crete, (not to save Theseus) forces her to go down paths, to endure the crossing” (Min. 1:01:08).

The screen is divided into nine rectangles. In five of them, incomplete texts in Spanish (“400 años antes de... doscientos años antes de”) appear in constant diagonal

movement that slightly gets aligned. On the other four sections we see buildings and avenues, which are also in permanent movement. The music and the narrator continue:

It is for this that her, Ariadna, (the same as other women who seek refuge and asylum), comes out of the labyrinth to discover that this path does nothing more than carrying her along towards that place (nobody's place), that we call forgotten. My main difficulty has been not being able to get into the empty buildings where the identities of these women are reflected, who, with their testimonies, transform this artificial architecture of national identity. I discover how, while in transit, airports turn into organic symbols through which they transit, they get arrested, returned or deported to their countries of origin. In these architectural places, women are treated as commodities, transferred and commercialised. Although we don't want to see it (...) The traces of their transit cannot be hidden (Min. 1:02:35).

Transition: The music is replaced by a mixture of voices in Spanish and French saying isolated and meaningless phrases such as "Miradas que acechan, nadamás. Je ne peux raconter. La plancha que no calienta, nadamás. La canela, el olor" (Min.1:03:00). They are accompanied by periodical percussions, which give the feeling of a slow heartbeat. The text disappears leaving the rectangles black. The photos move and change. The images from the previous frame slowly dissolve into the image of the entangled woman on a blue background that we saw previously in segments two and nine. The music in the background is low. The voice-over continues:

Ariadna's thread is our matrixial path home, for we still cannot proclaim, in this XXI century, that equality between genders exists. Neither is it possible to transform this chauvinist and patriarchal structure, while the discriminatory structure "sex/gender" continues to prove useful to the political systems of our countries. (Min.1:03:36).

The music goes *in crescendo* until reaching a very high tone.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: impotence and confusion.

12. Closing and credits (wave 1, music and fiction materials).

The music that we heard at the beginning of the film starts immediately, with sounds and rhythm similar to a heartbeat mixed with machine-like sounds. The screen is



black and in the centre we see the image of the mouth and the nose from segments five and six. With the effect of white brush painting strokes, the title of the film appears across the screen, and is then erased. The same pattern, with the face and the brush paint, is used to present the rest of the credits: produced by Ana Solano and Belén Herrera; directed by Ana Solano; music and sound space by Iván Solano; screenplay by Ana Solano; director of photography, Belén Herrera; documentation specialists, Ana Solano, Tamara Bueno and Marta Zein; interviews: Ana Solano and Tamara Bueno; executive production: Belén Herrera; production coordinator: Tamara Bueno; voice-over: Farida Djehiche.

At the end, the centre of the screen is covered with white brush paint on which this text appears: “Special thanks to all the women we have interviewed but whose identities we can’t show” (Min. 1:05:34). They also thank the interviewees, the “Proyecto Social Real” research group from Complutense University in Madrid, and the students from Information Sciences who helped. Finally we see the website and the year of production.

#### **4.3.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis**

The ordered segmentation of such a multi-layered video essay facilitates its analysis as a diffraction apparatus, i.e. technologies through which human and non-human elements intra-act, making boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways (Barad 2007: 148). It also shows the structure of the filmic text, within which we can identify diverse modes of representation and types of gazes, as described below.

*No existimos* has an openly feminist agenda: it depicts different perspectives on the difficulties faced by women who have to escape from their countries of origin due to gender-based violence, and then, upon arrival in Europe, encounter yet more problems, challenges and discrimination not only for being women but also for being foreigners. Director Ana Solano presents testimonies by some of these women, without showing their faces or their voices, as this could put them in danger. She provides spectators with statistical data and theoretical insights into Europe’s approach to gender equality and the management of its borders. This is complemented with interviews with four experts (Smaïn Laacher, sociologist and judge of the Cour Nationale du Droit d’Asile; Flor Tercero, lawyer; Caddy Adzuba, journalist; and William Spindler, United Nations High Commission for Refugees spokesperson). Throughout the film there’s also a narrative

thread made out of the filmmaker/narrator's reflections on the issue of women refugees in Europe and on the process of visualising these realities in a documentary video essay.

Solano's work is at the crossroads of video art, experimental documentary, and ethnographic enquiry. It is organised as an essay, i.e. "a short written text, on a particular subject, always critical, often fragmentary and frequently presenting a personal view of the author, with a clear structure consisting in an introduction, body and conclusion" (Olivieri 2012: 153). In *No existimos*, introduction and conclusion are expressed with a subjective and reflexive voice-over that can be connected with the position of the author/filmmaker. And the body of the film incorporates various layers, or rather multiple narrative waves in accordance with Barad's terminology, at times combined within one single frame.

A diffractive methodology "provides a way of attending to entanglements in reading important insights and approaches through one another" (Barad 2007: 30). Diffraction, as explained in chapter 1, is a concept used in physics to describe wave behaviour, i.e. how waves combine when they overlap, and their apparent spreading "when they encounter an obstruction" (Barad 2007: 28).<sup>322</sup> What we see in *No existimos* is that five different **narrative waves** are entangled through the editing, complementing one another, and providing spectators with diverse entry points: the music and the fiction materials (wave 1), the filmmaker's reflections (wave 2), the facts and figures (wave 3), the interviews with experts (wave 4), and the refugees' testimonies (wave 5). In this way, Solano challenges the traditional ways in which gender-based violence is portrayed, i.e. exposing women as victims, giving their personal testimonies in front of the camera and without pointing at the structures that sustain such an unequal situation.<sup>323</sup>

The four segments of interviews are edited in a way that we can describe as diffractive: for example, what Tercero says about sexual violence in Congo overlaps with what Adzuba describes about the feminicides in this country (segment 8), and what Laacher explains about silence as a manifestation of trauma and of how narrating one's story is a Western imposition, is further exemplified by the criticism that Tercero makes of the violent interviews at the OFPRA. I propose to analyse this film as a diffraction apparatus that renders visible a series of circumstances that have material consequences

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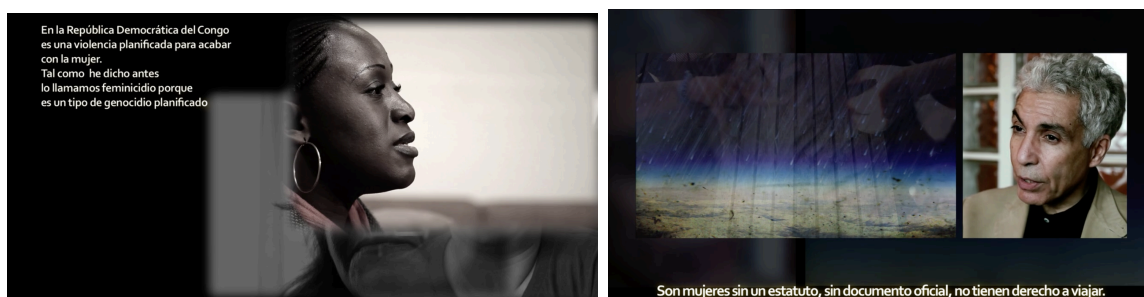
<sup>322</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1 A Diffractive Methodology for the Visualisation of Differences and their Effects

<sup>323</sup> *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Hernán Zin, 2013), for example, is made out of painful testimonies of women who have been victims of sexual violence during wars in Europe, Africa, and America.

for women, whose bodies and voices cannot be shown, as this could be translated into direct attacks on their lives.

A diffraction apparatus is a material-discursive practice that, depending on its construction, makes phenomena “emerge in particular ways, and through particular cuts” (Sauzet 2015: 41). Therefore, to employ diffraction as the approach to analyse a film, means paying attention to the importance of the form in which it produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality**, in terms of how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). Instead of approaching any documentary film as a reflecting mirror that reproduces sameness, I analyse it as a diffraction apparatus that can produce “patterns of difference” (Barad 2007: 29). In the case of *No existimos*, these differences include those between female and male refugees, as well as those between European and non-European women.

The feminist responsibility of the gaze behind the camera and behind the editing of this film is evident in the decision not to show the faces or the voices of the refugee women. Instead of a realist approach with observational and participatory **modes of representation** that are frequently materialised as talking heads, Solano resorts to poetic, reflexive and performative modes of representation to give visibility to bodies and voices that ask to remain invisible. The interviews with the experts are presented in a way that, as explained above, can be considered diffractive (figure 20). Moreover, on several occasions the interviews are accompanied by fiction materials (e.g. segment 7) or by extra information from different sources (e.g. segment 4).



**Figure 20.** Interviews can be diffractively read through the fiction materials

By fiction materials I refer to the digitally generated images (e.g. the desert landscape in segment 5), the video art pieces, the manipulated photographs and the superimposed texts that are present all along the film. These materials are widely used as transitions, but they are also employed in performative ways, i.e. to (co)produce the realities the film shows

and to emphasise the subjective, embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world. An example is the thread's piece, which is present in segment 2 (the introduction) and in segment 11 (the conclusion). Both are also reflexive segments in which the filmmaker-narrator makes her position explicit, as well as the challenges she faces in relation with constructing the film itself: "The more I advance, entangling myself in this web of rebel emotions, of positions confronting social and governmental structures; the more I hear their testimonies, full of fear that they will be identified, that their voices will be recognised, their faces, their gazes" (Min. 2:45)<sup>324</sup>.

The thread's piece renders visible the filmmaker's emotional state and her admission of not managing to find universal solutions, nor definite conclusions: "I try not to lose the thread that led me to begin this documentary. I try to reach the end (...) This thread, which I began, has managed to entangle me" (Min. 59:41). Solano disrupts the epistophilia of the expository mode in segment 3, where the facts and figures are presented very fast and flickering, making it hard to read them all. This propitiates a distanciation effect in the spectator who, challenged by the formal strategies, might pay more attention to the contents (figure 21).



**Figure 21.** The thread's game. Fiction materials that challenge epistophilia

The performative effects of the fiction materials is also evident in segment 5 when, as we listen to the desperate testimony of a refugee in France, we see the background image of a building getting closer and closer, with window frames intersecting to suggest prison bars, provoking a sensation of imprisonment and asphyxia (figure 22).

<sup>324</sup> The emphases in all the quotes from the film are mine.



**Figure 22.** Feeling of imprisonment. The performative effects of fiction materials

The work with mood and affect, characteristic of the poetic mode of representation, is an important element in the **emotionality** of *No existimos*. This mode stresses “visual and acoustic rhythms, patterns, and the overall form of the film” (Nichols 2010: 150). Solano creates rhythmic patterns all along the film with the fiction materials and with the music. One example is the transition pattern between testimonies in segment 5: on a black screen we see photos of a nose and a mouth in different sizes, which increase in amount with every new testimony (figure 23). However, throughout the film, the poetic mode is surpassed by the performative one, in as much as Solano is permanently joining “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political” (Nichols 2010: 204).



**Figure 23.** Poetic transition patterns

The music of *No existimos* is in itself a narrative wave and a performative tool that serves as a punctuation mark to emphasise certain aspects. For example, the sounds of trains moving in segment 5 propitiate a feeling of persecution. And the absence of voices from the majority of refugees is replaced by guttural sounds and isolated phrases in different languages that make up the soundtrack of various moments of the film. An important musical pattern in segments 1, 5, 7, 11 and 12, is similar to a heartbeat, a performative technique employed by the filmmaker to point at the human bodies that are not visible in

the film, but on which the effects of gender violence, borders, laws and trials are materialised beyond the screen.

In fact, to visualise non-existent subjects who do not want to be rendered visible, Solano develops strategies that “provoke (...) facilitate, and (...) solicit a new seeing” (Minh-ha 2005: 13) beyond ocularcentrism. In this sense, we can assert that the multiple narrative waves with which she performs and materialises the unequal realities of these women, produce a feminist **countervisuality**. Therefore, *No existimos* can be considered an example of feminist counter-cinema, balancing between fact, i.e. the lived reality of the here-and-now, and fiction, i.e. imagined alternatives to the gendered hegemonies (Lykke 2010: 39). This is clear in the contrast between what we hear from the refugees and the experts, and the possibilities that the filmmaker hopes for:

I like to imagine that their fight for survival will not continue in their new host countries. I like to imagine that our states have the necessary mechanisms so that they can live and not only survive. I like to imagine that in the host countries, feminist women are not divided among themselves (Min. 57:36).

Solano challenges dominant modes of realist representation, while remaining committed to realism and to the political change that “must come through concrete social struggle in the real world” (Pollock 1988: 226). In this sense, *No existimos* is an interesting manifestation of what Olivieri defines as **indexicality**, i.e. the characteristic relation that documentary cinema maintains with reality, which is “a relation of copresence if not of contact” (2012: 36). The filmmaker does not show the faces or the voices of the female refugees with whom she spoke. But the indexical signs of her film operate as deixis, directing attention towards the presence of their absence. In the musical heartbeat, in the fictional materials made out of anonymous faces, and in each of the film narrative waves, the reality of the material bodies of these women haunts the documentary.

*No existimos* can also be defined as an **eccentric technology of gender**, which makes possible the conditions of visibility for “an eccentric discursive position outside the male (hetero)sexual monopoly of power/knowledge (de Lauretis 1990: 127). In this film, the eccentric subject is the female narrator who speaks in French with an Arabic accent:

I like to imagine that our states have the necessary mechanisms so that they can live and not only survive (...) I like to imagine that in the cities, the places, the neighbourhoods where they survive in their host countries, we will accept them. We will not create a barrier of resistance; we will live together with them (...) I like to imagine that they will form part of the social reality of our countries in this XXI century (Min. 57:20, 58:46).

With its multiple layers, at times combined within one single frame, *No existimos* has a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592). However, if there's one point of view with which the spectator is solicited to identify with, that's the narrator's, a feminist subject that aims at de-centering masculinity. It is, nevertheless, problematic in the sense that it tacitly supports the representation of "the subject of gender equality as Western, capitalist, and democratic, and the West, capitalism, and democracy themselves as sites that create the possibility of, and reproduce, rather than hinder, gender equality" (Hemmings 2011: 9).

The narrator locates herself within a "we" in a Western-European reality, part of a progressive narrative according to which, gender equality has not been entirely achieved in Europe, but if we manage to transform the patriarchal structure, we might reach it: "we cannot proclaim, in this XXI century, that equality between genders exists. Neither is it possible to transform this chauvinist and patriarchal structure, while the discriminatory structure 'sex/gender' continues to prove useful to the political systems of our countries" (Min. 1:03:36). Then she looks at "them", located in so-called third world countries where the conditions for women are portrayed as much worse (e.g. the feminicides in the Congo), so that their only possibility to improve their situation is to move to the Western world. Polemic issues such as the use of the veil<sup>325</sup> and female genital mutilation<sup>326</sup> are cited (as part of a testimony and under the title "Tolerance 0"). They are not discussed in depth, just mentioned to describe "those countries that exclude women" (Min. 1:04).

Throughout the film, so-called third world women are referred to as victims eleven times and the affects mobilised around them are predominantly negative: pain, fear and distress. Regarding these women, the narrator positions herself in an "othering"

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<sup>325</sup> Joan Scott (2007) has analysed the connection between the veil and reducing gender equality to the freedom to exercise heterosexual independency. "Muslim 'veiled women' can thus be positioned as self-evidently unequal on the basis that they do not make themselves available to an outside (implicitly male) gaze" (Hemmings 2011: 142).

<sup>326</sup> In 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) published a report on "Female Genital Mutilation in the European Union and Croatia", in which it is stated that such a practice is considered a criminal act across the European Union Member States. The complete report can be downloaded from EIGE's website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/eige-report-fgm-in-the-eu-and-croatia.pdf>>.

process (Hemmings 2011: 126). In this sense, *No existimos* could reproduce a colonial Western gaze. But in many ways, Solano challenges the violence of representation of non-Western women as passive victims, whose only chance for living is to be saved by Western interventions. Firstly, even though the refugees remain faceless and even voiceless in most of the cases, their experiences are visualised in the film. Moreover, not exposing them to the spectators' gazes is actually a responsible decision so as not to endanger women who are already in a highly vulnerable situation.

Secondly, despite being portrayed as victims of sexist and racist violence, the refugees are also referred to as women with agency: they are "Ariadnas" whose "desire to get out of Crete, (not to save Theseus) forces (...) [them] to go down paths, to endure the crossing" (Min. 1:01:08). Women who "don't have the right to travel. However travel they do, and they do it towards Europe" (Min. 27:41). Thirdly, the narrator insists on the fact that gender inequalities are as present in non-European countries as in European ones, though the Eurocentric bias that locates European States as offering better circumstances for women remains. Tercero's intervention illustrates the contradictions within this European gender equality discourse:

We are struggling everyday so that the situation that women face in certain countries will be recognised as completely unacceptable in our societies, and that this inequality is so extreme that they need to have safe refuge here (...) They ask France for asylum because it is the origin of human rights, of the declaration of human rights. And then, afterwards, they receive the greatest disappointment of their lives (Min. 33:20/ 43:53).

The other problematic aspect concerning the narrator's position is her reference to a **biologically based sorority** among women at the beginning of the film: "I like to imagine that this century will serve to create a more feminist world. I like to believe that in this century, there will be a place that will naturally unite women" (Min. 00:54). This can lead to a "Western feminist gaze that seeks only to recognize its mirror image" (Hemmings 2011: 208), rather than to "a more critical and difference-attentive mode of consciousness and thought" (Geerts and Van Der Tuin 2016)<sup>327</sup> that would see

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<sup>327</sup> COST Action IS1307 New Materialism. Networking European Scholarship on "How Matter Comes to Matter" website. Date of access: November 2018. <<http://www.newmaterialism.eu>>.



differences “as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (Lorde 1984; 2007: 111).

Nevertheless, in its constant questioning of the situations faced by women both, within and outside the European borders, Solano maintains what we defined in chapter 2 as **the gaze of the inappropriate/d other or same** “who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at” (Minh-ha 1997: 418). This is visualised in the intersectional patterns of differences within the experiences of women, which the film as diffraction apparatus attends to. One of the refugees’ testimonies exemplifies this:

In my country a woman who is a Muslim and a lesbian is condemned to death penalty. I have lodged an asylum request here in France (...) Discrimination does exist in France but not just due to the French or the westerners in general, it also exists among the Arabian-African community in France (...) To be a lesbian produces as much rejection here as in Iraq (Min. 19:34).

In her brief intervention, this woman identifies herself as an Iraqi, Muslim lesbian who experiences discrimination in her country of origin, but also in her host country. She states that she had to seek refuge in France due to the fact that in her home country, a law that condemns her to death enforces such discrimination. Solano also **problematizes the straightforward mirroring approach** towards refugees, with the fragment from the interview with Laacher about **the Western imposition of narrating one’s story**: “in contrast to what one might think, telling her story is not a natural act; in fact, telling her story is not culturally given in the same way everywhere. Telling one’s story, reconstructing events, is a phenomenon that people are given to in the West” (Min. 48:28). This is further developed in the next section.

#### **4.3.2 Production and Reception: An Artistic Translation of Tragic Realities**

*No existimos* has been awarded the “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality”<sup>328</sup> distinction, created in 2011 by the Spanish Cinematography and

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<sup>328</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 3. Section 3.3.5 The “Especially Recommended for the Promotion of Gender Equality” Distinction.

Audiovisual Arts Institute (ICAA). However, in one of the interviews carried out for this research project<sup>329</sup>, Solano made it clear that she had nothing to do with this distinction, as it was given by the ICAA as part of the normal procedure of registering the film in order to be able to send it to international festivals.

As a matter of fact, Solano did not receive any public funds for financing her film. She is the sole producer of *No existimos*, which she defines as experimental and eclectic. She admits that she has a privileged economic position that allows her to ask for a bank loan and thus, to avoid “a paternalism of the system that restricts you.”<sup>330</sup> Moreover, she emphasises that her use of **new technologies** and **basic equipment** responds to her positioning as a filmmaker who stands against the industrial model where, “in order to make a documentary and four interviews I need two thousand cameras.”<sup>331</sup> In this sense, her documentary film is located within **independent cinema**, i.e. “an alternative practice to dominant cinema in relation to industrial, aesthetic and ideological perspectives” (Pravadelli 2016: 331).

The production of *No existimos* took four years, two of which were devoted solely to research in Spain and France. Initially, it was part of a project conducted by the Complutense University in Madrid. Later on, Solano decided to make an independent documentary film with a very reduced team: Tamara Bueno (research), Belén Herrera (production, editing and photography), and Iván Solano (music). Solano sees her decision of employing alternative and cheaper modes of production as a feminist strategy to become **self-sufficient**. She argues that, to a great extent, this becomes easier with new technologies, especially **digital** ones. The latter is connected with the social importance of **media literacy** so as to avoid depending on the mainstream model.<sup>332</sup>

Her film deals with two issues in the **Spanish feminist documentary agenda**: gender-based violence and the difficulties faced by women immigrants in Europe. As discussed previously, one of the main differences in Solano’s approach is the avoidance of showing women’s faces or voices, while managing to acknowledge their testimonies and their presence. Even though they are constantly referred to as victims who need protection from the European laws, they are also portrayed as subjects with diverse

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<sup>329</sup> I carried out three interviews with Ana Solano: on June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 18<sup>th</sup>, and August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016. They were in Spanish, all translations and emphases are mine.

<sup>330</sup> “un paternalismo del sistema que te coarte”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>331</sup> “necesito para hacer un documental y cuatro entrevistas doscientas mil cámaras”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>332</sup> Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

backgrounds and desires. All of these decisions were produced during the filmmaking process, as she narrated in the interviews conducted as part of this research project.

Solano's first production step was reaching William Spindler, of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in France. Through him, she got in touch with **female refugees** and asked for interviews with them, since she had the principle of **beginning from what they wanted to say**. Her interview guideline consisted of three questions:

I asked them about the relation that they establish with their host countries and if their human rights were still under threat (...) the other question was about how they handle their female identity in relation with the physical and psychological pain that they suffered and that they continue to suffer (...) and the other was concerning the relation that existed between the flight from their countries of origin to Europe due to gender persecution.<sup>333</sup>

In asking these three questions to refugees in Spain and France, she identified a pattern: “they express their pain and fear through silence, in their countries of origin and in those where they ask for refuge and asylum.”<sup>334</sup> They accepted to give an interview as long as Solano wouldn't record them and would keep them in anonymity. She was then faced with an ethical dilemma on whether and **how to represent silence and invisibility**. Moreover, she realised that her initial categories, such as “female identity”, did not work in this context: “Because they tell me ‘what's that?’ If they don't have an identity, what do I want to say, what do I want them to tell me. I mean they have nothing.”<sup>335</sup>

This was also a key moment in which she developed what became one of the main theses of the film: they “ask for refuge due to a gender problem (...) the feminicide that is taking place in their countries is what led them to ask for refuge in this old Europe.”<sup>336</sup> With the exception of García, the Colombian militant and the only refugee who asked to

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<sup>333</sup> “Les preguntaba la relación que establecen con ellas los países de acogida y si continúan peligrando sus derechos como seres humanos (...) la otra cuestión es cómo encaran ellas su identidad femenina en relación al dolor físico y psíquico que sufrieron y que siguen sufriendo (...) la otra, la relación que tenía la huida de sus países de origen a Europa por la causa de persecución sobre género”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>334</sup> “el dolor y el miedo lo manifiestan a través del silencio en sus países de origen y en los que piden refugio y asilo”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>335</sup> “Porque ellas me dicen que, ¿qué es eso? Si ellas no tienen identidad, de qué quiero hablarle, qué quiero que me digan; o sea, ellas no tienen nada.” Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>336</sup> “Piden refugio por un problema de género (...) el feminicidio que se está produciendo en sus países era lo que las llevaba realmente a buscar refugio en esta vieja Europa”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

appear onscreen, the women that Solano interviewed didn't have an elaborated political discourse:

...they are only escaping. They have lost any capacity of abstraction, any capacity to conceptualise, and the only thing that they want is to get something and not be visible. I mean, **what they want is not to be afraid and terrified**, and maybe to be able to, I don't know, sit down and rest or think (...) **They don't want to be visible**, they only want to stay there, not to be murdered (...) **to be able to work and become just like anyone else in the society**, right? In this case, in Europe.<sup>337</sup>

Solano then left aside the idea of exposing the painful testimonies of these women and focused on what became the main subject of the film, which is how the human rights of female refugees remain under threat in European territory: "I pose the problem that we have in Europe, how we are actually dealing with, how we are treating them in Europe."<sup>338</sup> In terms of form, she decides "to break with the Aristotelian mimesis (...) to create precisely what I call the meta-text, right? And to create a narrative that does not follow the traditional documentary model."<sup>339</sup> She locates her work process at the tense crossroads of a tragic reality and its artistic translation. Within the diffractive reading, we can define her strategy as one of moving **from the reflecting mirror to the diffraction apparatus** that makes reality intelligible in specific ways by means of intra-actions between human and non-human objects and agencies of observation.

By meta-text Solano refers to her "poetic treatment of the text."<sup>340</sup> For her, the materials generated in the fifty hours of interviews are the "masa textual" (textual mass), from which she develops the rest of the layers, i.e. the **diverse narrative waves** that make up the video essay *No existimos*. She resorts to a **compilation technique** to combine video art pieces she had done before (e.g. the female portraits in movement of segment 8), with new pieces generated specifically for this film (e.g. "The Set of

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<sup>337</sup> "...ellas lo único que están es, es huyendo; han perdido toda capacidad de abstracción, toda capacidad de conceptualización y lo único que quieren es eso, tener algo y no ser visibles. O sea, no sentir pavor y terror y poder a lo mayor... yo qué sé, sentarse y descansar o pensar (...) Ellas no quieren ser visibles, ellas quieren seguir ahí, sólo estando y no siendo asesinadas (...) poder trabajar y ser uno más dentro de una sociedad, ¿no? En este caso Europa". Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>338</sup> "Planteo el problema que tenemos en Europa, cómo estamos tratando en realidad... cómo las estamos tratando en Europa". Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>339</sup> "la ruptura con la mimesis aristotélica (...) crear precisamente lo que yo llamo el metatexto, ¿no? Y a crear una narrativa que no está sujeta al modelo documental tradicional." Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>340</sup> "un tratamiento poético del texto." Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Threads' Game"). Solano is the one who calls these "fiction materials", with which she metaphorically represents different ideas: for example, the images of buildings in segment 5 "are as meaningful as they are the prisons or the spaces where we keep them. Where you can't have access to them and they can't have access to you, because I can't show them."<sup>341</sup> "The Set of Threads' Game" is her way to represent the diaspora. Nevertheless, she insists on the fact that this is just her interpretation and that she doesn't want to impose a unique reading for the spectators. Rather, she looks for **open representations**: "you can think of a thousand things that I might be suggesting when I present the game with the hands."<sup>342</sup>

Once again, she emphasises the value of digital technologies as "the tools that work well for me to create this aesthetic and open process."<sup>343</sup> Another strategy for opening up interpretations is **providing the spectator with a lot of information** in one single frame. For example, during the interviews with the experts, we see the talking heads on one side of the screen, but she tells another story with digital images on the other side. Another instance is when she presents facts and figures in such a fast way that one cannot read them all, thus catching the attention of the audience and creating "lots of anxiety in a certain way. You don't manage to read it all. It's actually very subtle because it is an emotional game, and it works because later on I'll give you all that information, but you don't know it and you leave the cinema without understanding what I did."<sup>344</sup>

Solano defines her film as an **intervallic** and **fragmentary** piece, in the sense that she breaks with conventional temporality and approaches "the text as a musical score"<sup>345</sup> in which there are no dialogues, but fragments that you can separate. A layer that plays a key role in this intervallic construction is **the music**, which she defines as "an invisible heartbeat that underlies the documentary."<sup>346</sup> It is composed by her son, Iván Solano, who also works with layers and textures. The purpose of the music in *No existimos* is not to

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<sup>341</sup> "son tan significativos como que son las cárceles o son los espacios donde las tenemos metidas. Donde tú no puedes acceder a ellas y ellas no pueden acceder a ti, puesto que no puedo mostrarlas." Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>342</sup> "se te pueden ocurrir miles de cosas, que estoy planteando cuando estoy haciendo el juego de las manos." Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>343</sup> "las herramientas que me vienen bien para trabajar ese proceso estético y abierto". Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>344</sup> "bastante ansiedad, de alguna manera. Tú no llegas a leerlo. De hecho, es muy sutil porque es un juego emocional y funciona, porque luego yo te voy a dar toda esa información pero eso tú no lo sabes y te vas del cine sin saber qué he hecho". Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>345</sup> "yo trabajo el texto como una partitura musical". Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>346</sup> "un latido invisible que existe en el documental". Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

accompany the image, but to work as “a great narrative gesture”<sup>347</sup>, **eliciting empathetic emotions** from the spectators. She illustrates this with the construction of segment 5, in which she presents the refugee’s testimonies. The first layer, the “textual mass”, is provided by the interviews. Then she creates a second layer of “fiction materials” with the buildings and the mouths transitions. But the emotional response, the feeling of persecution and terror, is achieved mainly through the music, because she acknowledges that most of the spectators have become indifferent towards oral testimonies of suffering and abuse:

**I wanted to achieve terror because they live, they are terrified.** But I don’t have to do it like a horror movie because that’s absurd. And **the confessional part is useless because it does not terrify anyone.** I mean, if every day you see a woman burned with gasoline, destroyed, and we see that while we are eating (...) **I have to work with horror from another perspective, right?**<sup>348</sup>

She also looks for a **rhythmic editing**, that we can describe as diffractive (i.e. reading insights through one another), in the way that she establishes dialogues between interviewees. In segment 7, for example, she interleaves the interviews of Tercero and Laacher: Tercero insists on the fact that women are being killed for being women. On the contrary, Laacher told Solano that the refugees’ problem is not a gender issue, but in the editing she opted for leaving out this part. Throughout her discourse, Solano states that there’s something essentially different between women and men. She does not advocate for difference feminism, but she argues in favour of remaining aware of the weight that gender has: “The conceptualisation of gender as such has ceased to exist, or should cease to exist, but then we have the contradiction with reality, where we have millions and millions of women who are murdered, raped, where they leave their countries (...) due to their gender.”<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> “un gran gesto narrativo”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>348</sup> “quería conseguir terror porque ellas viven, están aterrorizadas. Pero no lo tengo que hacer como un cine de terror porque me parece absurdo. Y tampoco, y la parte confesional no sirve para nada porque no aterroriza a nadie. O sea, si cada día te sale una mujer quemada de gasolina, hecha polvo, y lo vemos comiendo (...) es trabajar el terror desde otra perspectiva, ¿no?” Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>349</sup> “la conceptualización del género tal cual, parece que ha dejado de existir o debería dejar de existir, pero luego tenemos esa otra contradicción con la realidad, ¿no? Donde tenemos millones y millones de mujeres a las que asesinan, las violan; donde realmente salen de sus países (...) por una posición de género”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The **reflexive voice-over**, a meta-text in first person, is read by Farida Djehiche in French, with a strong Arabic accent. Solano describes Djehiche as an intimate friend of hers, “a woman who comes from the Arab world, (...) who breaks relations with her family and all her story because she doesn’t want to get married (...) without knowing it, she is a different woman, a real feminist.”<sup>350</sup> Throughout her discourse, in the interviews and within *No existimos*, Solano expresses rejection of the Arab and Muslim culture, which she pictures as absolutely patriarchal, while conceiving Europe “and the West, capitalism, and democracy themselves as sites that create the possibility of, and reproduce, rather than hinder, gender equality” (Hemmings 2011: 9). This is problematic, as discussed in the previous section, since it can exploit and distort feminist arguments in a xenophobic sense.

However, the filmmaker remains accountable and, in line with a situated knowledge’s perspective, in the meta-text written in first person, she explains from where she stands, i.e. she speaks as a European resident who wants to establish sorority bonds with women who ask for refuge in Europe. This standpoint is one of the main reasons why Solano defines *No existimos* as a video essay. Also because she conceives filmmaking as an **open research process**, through which it might be possible to elicit different ways of thinking and seeing from the audiences. For her, the purpose of **experimental cinema** is “to search, to investigate”<sup>351</sup>, to create boundary-less narratives and to mix diverse languages. As a matter of fact, she didn’t study filmmaking, but philosophy, and the bulk of her work has been developed in the fields of performance and visual arts.

She is interested in **expanded cinema**, a model that combines film, video, photography, text and installation: “it does not refer exclusively to the fact that a projection screen can be circular or multiple (...) rather, the ‘expansion’ refers to the new perceptive and expressive modes that generate new modes of understanding” (Sucari 2009: 9).<sup>352</sup> In the case of *No existimos*, she wants to trigger mutations from the film’s fragmentary quality. She envisions a **performative expression**, consisting of a **video-installation** inspired by the story that Laacher narrates in segment 7, where a woman is

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<sup>350</sup> “Ella es una mujer que viene pues del mundo árabe (...) que rompe con toda su familia y con toda su historia porque ni se quiere casar (...) sin saberlo es una mujer diferente, es una feminista de verdad”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>351</sup> “es ir buscando, es investigar”. Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>352</sup> “no hace referencia exclusivamente al hecho de que una pantalla de proyección pueda ser circular o múltiple (...) sino que la “expansión” hace referencia más bien a los nuevos modos perceptivos y expresivos que generan nuevos modos de comprensión.”

given to a group of nomads to negotiate the permission to cross the desert. The project has the support of a producer-curator, but they are still looking for financing and for the museum that wants to exhibit it. She wants to install steam gates with the stories of female refugees that the visitors have to cross and in so doing they will perform these women's transit:

...an **expanded cinema environment** where the audiovisual really has the power (...) to generate that dialogue with the public, which is nothing more than a **performative dialogue** (...) The public has to go through the journey, okay? And they will find what they find, right? I mean, there is no narrative to show how the women really are through this journey. It is for each person who goes through that journey, who undergoes the journey of the installation, to feel different things.<sup>353</sup>

There are various tensions in the relation that Solano wants to establish with **the public**. Her aim is to make people think, to make them feel **uncomfortable**, and to explore new possibilities for documentary cinema. But at the same time, she is worried by the difficulty of her language and the **endogamy** of most feminist productions. The work with layers is a strategy to reach wider publics, as she believes that, while some people may be interested in concrete data, others will be more **touched at an affective level**.<sup>354</sup>

From her point of view, it is more effective to transform harsh realities into textual masses through video art and cinema. This locates her film in a grey zone: it seems to be too realist and social-focused for video art, but too abstract and artistic for a human rights documentary. Such an **inappropriate/d location**, however, has also favoured a flexible distribution of the film. This has been carried out by a Catalan distribution company called "Movies for Festivals", which Solano contacted at the industry market of the San Sebastián Film Festival. *No existimos* has been part of the programme of five film festivals in 2015 and 2016: "Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres" (Political Cinema Directed by Women) in Spain and Latin America; Erie International Film Festival (USA); Human

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<sup>353</sup> "...un entorno de cine expandido donde realmente el audiovisual tenga el poder (...) de generar ese diálogo con el público, que no es mas que un diálogo performático (...) El público tiene que hacer el tránsito, ¿vale? Y se encontrará con lo que se encontrará, ¿vale? O sea, no, no hay una narrativa para, para mostrar cómo están ellas por el tránsito, sino que cada persona que cruce ese tránsito, que haga el tránsito de la instalación, sienta cosas diferentes." Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>354</sup> "they enter into an emotional process, and there is identification in that emotional process. / [la gente] entra en un proceso emocional y es en ese proceso emocional, donde hay identificación." Ana Solano. Phone interview. August 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.



District-International Film Festival of Human Rights (Serbia); FIDOCS-International Documentary Film of Santiago de Chile; and the New Filmmakers Platform Madrid Film Festival. In 2017 it was selected at the Women Media Arts and Film Festival (Australia).

The other exhibition window has consisted of **specific screenings at events** organised around the issue of female refugees and human rights. The premiere of the film was organised by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in France on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. It took place at the SCAM-Société Civile des Auteurs Multimedia in Paris and the audience was composed mainly of French judges who disliked the fact that the film exposed the awful conditions faced by female refugees in Europe. Solano recalls that it was a difficult and controversial situation, but that this is what she wanted to provoke: “I want that the public, the European public sees what is happening. And what we are not capable of doing.”<sup>355</sup>

In one of our interviews, she admitted that she didn't think of the female refugees as part of the audience, which can be problematic in the sense that they become **objects to be spoken about, rather than subjects to speak with**. This is one of the problems that Hemmings identifies in feminist theory return narratives, where “postcolonial subjects (of critique) are transformed into postcolonial objects (of importance), with direct implications for who is able to occupy the subject position of Western feminist” (2011: 127). In *No existimos*, it is clear that the Spanish filmmaker who makes the situation of the refugees intelligible for European audiences occupies this position, which speaks of tensions regarding who can speak up about in/equalities. Still, we have to take into consideration the fact that Solano started her project by listening to these women, who then made explicit their desire to remain invisible due to their vulnerable situation.

The topic of the film, along with its experimental form, has made it **hard to find distribution in television or paid online platforms**. According to Solano, ARTE, the European Culture Channel co-financed by the European Union and based in France and Germany, dismissed the film due to both, its content and form: a tension provoked by a reflexive-performative counter-documentary that cannot be easily labelled, and therefore, not easily placed for exhibition. *No existimos* is also an example of an **eccentric**

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<sup>355</sup> “Yo quiero que el público, que el público europeo vea lo que está pasando. Y de lo que no somos capaces”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

**technology of gender** produced by “a strange, non conventional feminist (...) they don’t know how to frame you and that worries them.”<sup>356</sup>

*No existimos* has a website, where some of the video art pieces are available, as well as a short text about the origin of the film.<sup>357</sup> It also has a Facebook page in Spanish, with 378 likes, quite a small amount considering that other films from the sample, such as *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* and *Yes, We Fuck!* have 5,101 and 14,678 likes respectively.<sup>358</sup> The page was created in September 2014 and has been used to spread information about special screenings, a crowdfunding campaign that was not successful, and related news (e.g. the 2014 Prince of Asturias Award for Concord given to Caddy Adzuba). As a matter of fact, this medium has not reached many people, as there are no comments apart from a couple of congratulation messages, and one post by a refugee woman who participated in the film and would like to see the final result. Solano also mentions that there were notable transformations among the communication students that worked with her in the production of the film.

I had the opportunity to attend two screenings held within the framework of the New Filmmakers Platform Madrid Film Festival in October 2016. Both took place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October: the first screening was for communication students at the University Rey Juan Carlos, and the second one was open to the public at “Sala Berlanga”, a cinema hall under the administration of the General Society of Authors and Editors (SGAE). Both were free and were followed by a Question&Answer encounter with Ana Solano and Belén Herrera. In the second screening, researcher Tamara Bueno was also present. This was an opportunity to compare and contrast what effects the film did cause in the audiences.

In the first screening there were approximately forty undergraduate students. Seven of them, five men and two women, asked questions. The moderator also asked a couple of questions. The reactions were positive. **Formal decisions** were the main focus of the first three questions, which supports Solano’s idea of engaging publics, not just with the content, but also with a different film language. This is important, considering that this audience is conformed by people who want to work in the field of audiovisual production:

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<sup>356</sup> “una feminista extraña, no convencional (...) no te saben encuadrar y eso les preocupa” Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>357</sup> Gender is presented as “the real reason for this discrimination”. *No existimos* website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.noexistimos.com>>.

<sup>358</sup> *No existimos* Facebook page. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/noexistimos.documental/>>.

Student 1, male: It seems to me **a very necessary subject** and I'm glad that there is this type of production, independently of the fact that, because I imagine that you had problems getting funding (...) But I wanted to ask why you decided on this form, why this way of doing this documentary? I mean, **it is not a conventional documentary**. You use many images, why?<sup>359</sup>

Student 2, male: To what extent do you consider that language, the word, which is so important at times in the documentary, reinforces or helps to convey the message better? Because it seems that you give it a lot of importance.<sup>360</sup>

Student 3, female: I wanted to **ask you about the sound**, which you said is like the heartbeat of the documentary, but I do not know if really one hears different sounds and, throughout the documentary, and I do not know if, some of them seem like voices. I do not know if they have any meaning apart from being the heartbeat?<sup>361</sup>

Other students asked about the process of gathering the testimonies, the reactions from the public and distribution strategies, which also responds to the fact that they are **knowledgeable about the production process and the media industry**. One of them, male, said that the film "is going to remove something within both, the ignorant viewer and the one who knows more about the subject matter. I think it expresses a lot of sincerity, I liked it."<sup>362</sup> This is in accordance with the aforementioned effects that the filmmaker wants to achieve with her multi-layered approach: while some viewers might be touched at an emotional level, others will be more interested in the actual facts. The

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<sup>359</sup> "Me parece un tema muy necesario y me parece muy bien que haya este tipo de producción, independientemente de que, porque me imagino que para subvención habéis tenido problemas (...) Pero sí quería preguntaros por qué decidís esta forma, por qué esta manera de hacer este documental. Quiero decir, no un documental al uso sino que tiene muchas imágenes, ¿por qué motivo?" Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid. All translations and emphases are mine.

<sup>360</sup> "¿En qué medida ve usted el lenguaje, la palabra, que tiene tanta importancia por momentos en el documental, refuerza o ayuda a que se transmita de mejor manera el mensaje? Porque parece que sí que le da mucha importancia." Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

<sup>361</sup> "Yo te quería preguntar por el sonido, que has dicho que es como el pulso del documental, pero no sé si realmente, se oyen distintos sonidos y, a lo largo del documental y no sé si, algunos parecen como voces. No sé si tiene algún sentido más aparte del pulso." Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

<sup>362</sup> "tanto al espectador ignorante como al que está puesto en el tema le va a remover algo. Y creo que expresa mucha sinceridad, me ha gustado." Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

other male student praised her decision not to show women as victims: “the impression that it has given me is that it is not so sensationalist, it develops a lot of information, it is not so much about how a woman is crying, but about presenting real facts.”<sup>363</sup>

For the moderator, a Spanish white woman, approximately fifty years of age, the most important aspect of the film was its **reflexive gaze towards gender inequality in Europe**, which Solano has as one of her **main theses**:

[*No existimos*] goes beyond the simple issue of women, of refugee women who have to go into exile, because what it really raises is that such a situation occurs because of their being women. And these women you have spoken with are not in their countries; they are in Europe, and **it is in Europe where they have that problem too**. They had it in their country but **they also have this problem in Spain, they also have it in France, which we assume to be developed countries working for women’s equality**, equal conditions, and so on. But they are aware that, perhaps precisely because they come from outside, we live with our level, eh, on a daily basis, but **they come looking precisely for that difference in Europe and they do not find it there either**.<sup>364</sup>

When a female student asked about the **emotions** they felt regarding the film, Herrera, who has credits as producer and photographer of the film, answered that her main feeling was **impotence** “because it’s a very difficult problem to solve. To consider that they can’t ask for refuge due to the fact of being women, despite knowing that they leave their countries because of their gender.”<sup>365</sup> During one of our interviews, Solano expressed a similar feeling of despair: “After finishing this project, I ended up almost in a depression. Because you come from working very hard with these women and you know that you

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<sup>363</sup> “la impresión que me ha dado es que no es tan sensacionalista, desarrolla mucho la información, no es tanto cómo una señora, una mujer está llorando, sino que presenta hechos reales.” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

<sup>364</sup> “va más allá, yo creo del simple tema de la mujer, de las mujeres refugiadas, que se tienen que exiliar, porque realmente lo que se plantea es que la situación es por ser mujer. Y que estas mujeres con las que has hablado no están en sus países, están en Europa, y que es en Europa donde tienen ese problema también. Lo tenían en su país pero es que ese problema lo tienen también en España, lo tienen también en Francia, que nos suponemos países desarrollados en donde se trabaja por la igualdad de la mujer, igualdad de condiciones, etcétera, etcétera. Pero ellas son conscientes de que, quizás precisamente porque vienen de afuera, nosotras convivimos con nuestro nivel, eh, diariamente, pero ellas vienen buscando precisamente esa diferencia en Europa y tampoco la encuentran.” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

<sup>365</sup> “porque es un problema que es muy difícil resolver. Considerar que no pueden pedir refugio por el hecho de ser mujeres, a pesar de que se sabe que la salida de sus países es por género.” Belén Herrera. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

cannot do anything, that all you do is this.”<sup>366</sup> As Waugh says about political documentary cinema: “filmmakers themselves cannot make revolutions but can only provide ‘working tools’ for those who can” (1988: 6). In this case, for instance, lawyer Flor Tercero has proposed to use the film as an educational tool among lawyers and judges working with refugees.

The screening at “Sala Berlanga” in Madrid took place at nine o’clock. There were approximately 50 people, whose ages ranged between 25 and 50, and out of which less than half stayed for the Question&Answer encounter with Solano and Tamara Bueno. Nearly eight people left ten minutes after the screening had begun. Apart from the moderator, six people from the audience asked questions, two men and four women. Two of these people were from Latin America and acknowledged the **suitability of the film** in connection with contemporary national and international events concerning migration and gender-based violence, within and beyond European borders:

Young Latin American man: The documentary as such is presented in a super interesting moment, twenty-four hours ago there was a riot in the prison of Aluche, immigrants protested about their conditions, testimonies said that **many people prefer to be in prison rather than in a detention centre**. In Latin America, the number of **women murdered and raped increases daily** due to male chauvinism (...) **it’s important that all these kinds of things are shown** (...) What was the strongest experience you had in the making of this documentary?<sup>367</sup>

Solano and Bueno agreed that, for them, the strongest experience was the generosity with which the refugee women treated them. Bueno emphasised the **hope and strength** shown by these women despite the violence they had suffered. While presenting the film, she mentioned that their goal was not to show these women as victims, rather to “question our consciences. We call on all those who should protect the rights of these women but don’t.

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<sup>366</sup> “Después de terminar este proyecto, acabé casi en una depre. Porque vienes de un trabajo muy duro con las mujeres y sabes que no puedes hacer nada, que lo único que haces es esto”. Ana Solano. Phone interview. July 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>367</sup> “el documental como tal se presenta en un momento super, super interesante la coyuntura, hace 24 horas empezó un motín en la cárcel de Aluche, inmigrantes protestaban por las condiciones, los testimonios hablaban de que mucha gente prefiere estar en prisión antes que en un centro de detención. En América Latina el número de mujeres asesinadas, violadas se incrementa todos los días por causa del machismo (...) es importante de que se evidencie todo este tipo de cosas (...) ¿cuál fue la experiencia más fuerte que viviste en la elaboración de este documental?” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

Therefore it is not a comforting documentary that doesn't question things; on the contrary, it questions the entire system on which the right of asylum is based."<sup>368</sup> The other Latin American person in the audience asked something in the same direction:

Young Latin American woman: I think this documentary is very suitable for today, because in Latin America there's complete media coverage of this October 19<sup>th</sup> [2016] event, called "Ni una menos" [Not one woman less], where we are talking about processes in which we are being killed all the time, we the women (...) it is a global fight, this happens in Argentina, where this march has started, this worldwide demonstration of us as women. This happens in Mexico, this happens in Spain, here too there are many cases of femicide that are hardly shown (...) **this is not happening only in Iraq, Israel, Afghanistan, Latin America, no, it happens constantly and we are totally exposed as a gender** (...) You mentioned that the documentary was screened before the judges, and it is obviously mentioned that the judges are also a little deaf to it all. What happened, what was their reaction?<sup>369</sup>

She refers to the premiere of the film at the SCAM in France. What Bueno added was: "they called us feminists as an insult, told us that we should do these documentaries in Spain, asked us if we didn't have problems over here."<sup>370</sup> Solano explained that, even though they interviewed judges in both countries, they decided to focus mainly on the case of France because the system is different there: In Spain, ordinary courts defend the cases of asylum; in France there are specific courts with judges working only on this issue. Solano's husband, who was among the audience, commented on this and the three

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<sup>368</sup> "interpelamos a nuestras conciencias. Interpelamos a todas esas personas que deberían encargarse de proteger los derechos de estas mujeres y que no lo hacen. Por lo tanto no es un documental cómodo y que no cuestione cosas; al contrario, cuestiona todo el sistema sobre el que está asentado el derecho de asilo." Tamara Bueno. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>369</sup> "Creo que este documental cala muy bien precisamente el día de hoy, que a nivel de Latinoamérica se está llevando un proceso totalmente mediático este 19 de octubre, "Ni una menos", donde estamos hablando de procesos en los cuales nos están matando todo el tiempo, mujeres (...) es una lucha mundial, esto pasa en Argentina, de donde ha salido esta marcha, este paro a nivel mundial de nosotras como mujeres. Esto pasa en México, pasa en España, aquí también hay muchísimos casos de femicidio que igualmente se evidencian (...) esto no está pasando solamente en Irak, Israel Afganistán, Latinoamérica, no, nos pasa constantemente y estamos totalmente expuestas como género (...) Mencionaste sobre que fue expuesto el documental ante los jueces y pues evidentemente se menciona que los jueces también son un poco de oídos sordos. ¿Y qué pasó, cuál fue su reacción?" Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>370</sup> "Nos llamaron feministas como insulto, que fuéramos a España a hacer estos documentales, que si aquí no teníamos problemas." Tamara Bueno. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

of them agreed that the judges are “part of the system”: “to see their reflection, to see what they do every day, caused them serious restlessness and a terrible annoyance.”<sup>371</sup>

Another woman asked whether the refugees had seen the film. Solano and Bueno admitted that, apart from those who are activists, they had not been able to keep in touch with them, which echoes the tension discussed above, concerning the objectification of these **women who are talked about, but who do not speak back**. Solano answered: “the only thing they want is to be left in peace, they want to live a life that they don’t have. They are threatened with death. And we have to understand that.”<sup>372</sup> The moderator questions were more general: he asked about the process of getting the testimonies, the editing, the concept of expanded cinema and the future of the project. Visual artist Marta Zein, a friend of Solano who was among the public, praised the inherent merit of “a documentary about women who do not exist and who are invisible. And to represent that in an audiovisual language that does precisely the opposite has an aesthetic and philosophical work behind.”<sup>373</sup>

Great part of the conversation focused on formal aspects of the film. In this sense, a comment by another woman from the audience, once again proved what Solano called the **emotional effects that can be caused by a multiple-layered piece**: “Thank you for this wonderful documentary that has moved me. I don’t understand so much about experimental cinema but I think the information that you transmit has been concise and it touches very deep inside. My question is whether you are going to continue presenting this documentary or how we can collaborate to spread it.”<sup>374</sup> Their answer was that they had managed to reach some audiences due to their selection in festivals and because of their work within the academia, but that they didn’t get an actual distribution circuit.

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<sup>371</sup> “lo que realmente les causó una grave inquietud y una molestia terrible fue ver su reflejo, ver lo que hacen cada día”. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>372</sup> “lo único que quieren es que les dejen en paz, quieren vivir una vida que no tienen. O sea, están amenazadas de muerte. Y eso lo tenemos que entender”. Ana Solano. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>373</sup> “un documental sobre mujeres que no existen y que son invisibles. Y representarlo en un lenguaje audiovisual que precisamente hace todo lo contrario, tiene un trabajo detrás estético y filosófico”. Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>374</sup> “En primer lugar agradeceremos este maravilloso documental que a mí me ha emocionado. Igual no entiendo tanto de cine experimental pero creo que la información que transmitáis ha sido concisa y que llega, llega muy dentro. Mi pregunta es, ahora, si vais a seguir pues presentando este documental o de qué forma podemos colaborar para difundirlo.” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

### 4.3.3 Summary and Research Question

To summarise this case study, I'll now read insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *No existimos* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

The **content** visualises the role played by gender in the decision of non-European women to ask for refuge in European countries, specifically in Spain and France. Moreover, gender-based violence and discrimination are analysed as persistent problems faced by female refugees during their transit and in their host Western countries. What interviewed experts Azduba, Spindler, Laacher and Tercero expose is that their gender puts women in a more vulnerable situation in the context of any conflict:

**Violence directed against women** is not merely a result of these conflicts, but rather it **forms part of the strategy** of certain armed groups (Min. 6:24). **Due to the simple fact of being a woman she had no alternative**; this wouldn't happen to any man. Yet **because she was a woman she was put in a cage** (Min. 31:42). The leader of this group looks at the undocumented immigrants who are in the truck. He sees a woman and asks her to go with him somewhere (...). In the end they convince the woman to go with the leader of this group, so that the journey can continue (Min. 35:25). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, **there's violence designed to destroy the woman (...)** **We call this feminicide because it is a form of planned genocide in order to destroy the woman** (Min. 39:48)

The narrator positions herself as a feminist woman who reflects on the refugees' situation, on the contradictions of the European laws, and on gender discrimination within European borders. The word "equality" is cited three times in the film. Once as something present in the European political discourse but not effective in the immigration laws, and the other two times as located in a progressive narrative that will not be accomplished in the Western world as long as the patriarchal sex/gender structure remains untouched:



I am far away from demonstrating equality from the perspective of gender (Min. 46:17) **we still cannot proclaim, in this XXI century, that equality between genders exists.** Neither is it possible to transform this chauvinist and patriarchal structure, while the discriminatory structure ‘sex/gender’ continues to prove useful to the political systems of our countries (Min.1:03:36).

In this sense, Solano states that gender inequality is not a problem exclusive of non-Western countries. She recognises her privileged position, for it is evident that women who have to escape from their own countries due to direct attack on their physical integrity are in an extremely vulnerable position. But she also acknowledges the agency of these refugees in search for better living conditions. In her interrogation of European migratory laws and in her criticism of violence at the trials and everyday discriminatory attitudes in the host countries, she challenges “Western feminist presumptions about who needs saving, from what, and by whom” (Hemmings 2011: 208).

In terms of **form** and ethics, I have discussed how the visualisation of the problems faced by female refugees is carried out in a way that takes into account the violence of representation. Solano does not show the faces or the voices of most of the women who shared their testimonies with her. Instead of resorting to painful testimonies in front of the camera, she elicits empathy from the viewers with performative and poetic modes of representation, e.g. the music/heartbeat and the guttural sounds/multi-lingual voices. *No existimos* maintains an objectivity close to Barad’s definition, which “instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies, and responsibility to the entanglements of which we are a part” (in Dolphijn and Van Der Tuin 2012: 52).

The independent **production** of *No existimos* is traversed by various tensions. Solano regards freedom to experiment as key for feminist filmmaking. Otherwise, one depends on the system’s paternalism and/or ends up copying the androcentric model that has been imposed within dominant cinema. She overcomes the problem of precariousness due to her privileged economic position, but also as a result of using new technologies, which are cheaper and more flexible than those used within industrial parameters. In this sense, she admits that women filmmakers face unequal conditions, but proposes media literacy as a possible strategy for advancing critique from a different perspective.

*No existimos* visualises two issues of the Spanish feminist documentary agenda (gender-based violence and difficulties faced by women immigrants in Europe) in an

unconventional way. What I have identified by diffractively reading (through one another) the interviews with the filmmaker is that each formal decision was informed by her intra-actions with the subjects that she spoke with. In the refugee women she found agency and generosity, but also fear and silence. Most of all, she realised that rendering them visible would increase their vulnerability and could have negative material effects on their lives. Differences matter and, for this group, visibility was not desirable. Thus, she decided to change the focus, from portraying them as victims, to analysing the gender dimension in the female refugees' issue and the ways in which European authorities are dealing with it.

We can say that Solano moves from the reflecting mirror to the diffraction apparatus in her translation of real circumstances into audiovisual narrative waves. She gathers testimonies, interviews, photographs and other pieces of information into a textual mass, to which she then applies a multi-layered visualisation strategy. While one layer provides spectators with factual material, there's a self-reflexive layer written in first person where she talks from where she stands, i.e. as a European resident who wants to establish sorority bonds with women who ask for refuge in Europe. This is a situated feminist gaze located in-and-out-of-gender, in the sense that she shows awareness of gender as a social construction, but still denounces the fact that women are being killed, raped and/or discriminated against for being women. There's another visualisation layer that borrows from poetic and performative strategies to elicit emotional responses from the audiences, for example, the persecution feeling provoked by the music. In this way, Solano aims at reaching diverse audiences, since some may identify with one kind of layer, while others will be more interested in another one.

*No existimos* has had limited **distribution**. It has been screened in five festivals, out of which only one focuses on political films directed by women. It has also triggered polemic encounters, like the one with French judges. Such events are examples of moments in which these kinds of films can become working tools for those who can effect material changes. In the screenings organised within the New Filmmakers Platform Madrid Film Festival, the responses from the public show that the film manages to visualise the inequalities faced by refugee women in their home countries, but also in Europe. The interest in the materiality of the film, especially among communication students, proves that innovative formal strategies can engage publics that are not interested a priori in feminist issues. And the emotional comments of some of the spectators are evidence of the affective responses that Solano's film can trigger.

#### 4.4 *Yes, We Fuck!* (Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena, 2015)

What has subsequently been the central and powerful theme of the documentary is that the themes of gender and of functional diversity are practically the same. I mean, in the end the structure of oppression is the same, right? That attempt to justify social inequalities based on biological differences is a very old story and that is why the discourses are so parallel and so related. (Antonio Centeno, one of the directors of *Yes, We Fuck!*).<sup>375</sup>

*Yes, We Fuck!* is the only film in my sample directed by cismen<sup>376</sup>: Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena. It is a postporn<sup>377</sup> documentary film because it consists of six stories with sexually explicit images that seek to question ideals of desirability, as well as sexual practices framed by ableism and heteropatriarchy. In this sense, it has become a tool for alliances between Spanish activists groups, which have been called “Alianzas Tullido-Transfeministas”, i.e. Crip-Queer Alliances (García-Santesmases et al. 2017). Therefore, this film can be located within the transfeminist agenda discussed in chapter 3, which keeps on working with the political subject “women”, but advocates for a subject of feminism that includes other subjectivities, in as much as gender and biological differences employed in the legitimisation of social inequalities do not only oppress women, but also all those who don’t fit within the androcentric norms, such as queer individuals and people with functional diversity.

Sexuality and functional diversity are at the core of *Yes, We Fuck!* The decision of replacing the term “disability” with that of “functional diversity” has been put forward by the “Spanish Independent Life Movement” (Movimiento Vida Independiente), which is

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<sup>375</sup> “Lo que luego ha sido el eje central y potente del documental que es que, el eje de género y el eje de diversidad funcional son el mismo eje prácticamente, o sea, que al final la estructura de opresión es la misma, ¿no? Ese intento de, de intentar justificar las desigualdades sociales a partir de las diferencias biológicas es una historia muy vieja y que por eso los discursos son tan paralelos y tan afines.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>376</sup> The term cisgender, as opposed to transgender, refers to those people whose gender identity matches the sex that they were assigned at birth.

<sup>377</sup> Postporn cinema “uses sexually explicit imagery to contest and complicate dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, body type, and other identity markers. It explores concepts of desire, agency, power, beauty, and pleasure at their most confounding and difficult, including pleasure within and across inequality, in the face of injustice, and against the limits of gender hierarchy and both heteronormativity and homonormativity. It seeks to unsettle conventional definitions of sex, and expand the language of sex as an erotic activity, an expression of identity, a power exchange, a cultural commodity, and even a new politics” (Miller-Young et al. 2013: 9-10).

articulated through a virtual community called “Independent Life Forum” (Foro de Vida Independiente), founded in 2001 (García-Santesmases et al. 2017). In an interview carried out for this research project, Antonio Centeno explains that using this term is not a matter of being “politically correct in the sense that we are looking for a term that does not hurt us, that we are very sensitive people and we want to be dealt with, no! What we want is to be political.”<sup>378</sup> He elaborates on this argument:

While you remain in that **traditional view of disability**, what you affirm is a personal **tragedy linked to biology**, which has happened to someone that society helps as it can. Well, that doesn't have much of a political content. It's confined to the realm of the personal tragedy. When we talk about diversity, we stress the fact that we are all different, we all do things differently (...) if it's not a political question, what is it? It is charity, it is solidarity, I mean, it has to be political (...) What is at stake is not what we do with these strange people. **What is at stake is what we do with human fragility**, what we do with that need of others. That, if that is not political, I mean, **it is politics of the first order**, it must be.<sup>379</sup>

As with the previous case studies, the analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. As regards form and content, I first present a segmented description of the film. Then I close read it with the theoretical apparatus described in previous chapters, i.e. identifying the material-discursive practices (e.g. narrative waves, cuts, modes of representation, gazes and points of view) through which it visualises gender in/equalities. As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by Centeno in an interview carried out for this research project in 2016. Then I close read three articles written by people who participated in the film (Post-Op Collective 2013; Centeno 2014; and García-Santesmases et al. 2017). I also incorporate opinions expressed

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<sup>378</sup> “políticamente correctos en el sentido de que buscamos un término que no nos haga daño, que somos personas muy sensibles y queremos que nos traten, ¡no! Lo que queremos es ser políticos.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>379</sup> “Mientras tú te mantienes en esa mirada tradicional de la discapacidad, lo que planteas es una tragedia personal vinculada a la biología que le ha pasado a alguien, que la sociedad ayuda como puede; pues eso no tiene mucho de contenido político. Se circunscribe al ámbito de lo personal, de la tragedia. Cuando hablamos de diversidad, ponemos el acento en el hecho de que todas somos diferentes, todas hacemos las cosas de manera diferente (...) si no es una cuestión política, ¿qué es? Es caridad, es solidaridad, o sea, esto tiene que ser una cuestión política (...) lo que está en juego no es qué hacemos con la gente rara. Lo que está en juego es qué hacemos con la fragilidad humana, qué hacemos con ese necesitar de los demás. Eso, si eso no es política, o sea, es política de primer orden, debe serlo.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

by audiences in three different screenings in Granada: one was held at the Granadian Federation of People with Physical and Organic Disability (FEGRADI) in November 2016; another one took place at a transfeminist space in April 2017; and I organised the last one at the University of Granada, as part of a dissemination event within the GRACE project, on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018.

#### 4.4.1 Form and Content: Six Re-Visions of Sexuality

*Yes, We Fuck!* is divided into six short stories, plus the opening sequence with the title, and the one with credits, giving a total of eight segments. Each segment can be regarded as one narrative wave. Each one is described below.<sup>380</sup>

##### 1. Opening sequence and title (wave 7, opinion poll).

The film opens with a street opinion poll, in which nine people (five women, four men) of various ages appear in medium shots. They answer the question “what is sex for you?” with responses such as: “For me, sex is love, it’s personal, it’s duality and victory” (Min. 00:15); “an aspect of life that is also necessary for one’s health, for the integral health of the human being” (Min. 00:27); “with age, sexual life has become more important, more pleasant and more instructive” (Min. 00:50). The screen becomes dark blue as we listen to electronic music and see the title of the film, YES, WE FUCK!, in blue capital letters (Min. 1:10). The letters appear below the blue icon of a person on a wheelchair with another person, in red, sitting on top of him/her. The title flashes in red as the icon moves up and down.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love and joy.

##### 2. Story 1. The Post-Op crip-queer workshop (wave 1, story 1; and wave 7, opinion poll)

2.1 Presentation of Majo and Urko from the Post-Op Collective. A hand-held camera follows Urko as s/he walks in the dark streets of Barcelona, starting from medium shots up to close-ups of her face. We listen to her voice-over:

My name is Urko, my name is Ilenia, my name is Eleno, Eloy, Urka (...) I do not have only one name because that’s my position regarding my gender. I do not feel comfortable in the man or woman category. It seems to me that I do not

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<sup>380</sup> The language spoken in the film is Spanish. It can be found online for free with subtitles in English, French, Italian and German. I have resorted to the English subtitles for the transcriptions. *Yes, We Fuck!* on Vimeo. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://vimeo.com/123177395>>.

fit into any of the two categories, and my names also speak a little about all this (Min. 1:40).

The hand-held camera now follows Majo from behind, in a medium shot that moves to an extreme close-up of her face. We also hear her voice-over: “when you talk about someone called Majo, you don’t know if you talk about a man or a woman, and I like that” (Min. 2:01). Then we see them both in full shot, walking together towards the camera as electronic music begins to play. They are in their thirties, have dark short hair, and wear short male pants.

2.2 Interview with Majo and Urko about their work with postporn. They are sitting in medium shot. In the background we see an inflatable doll and colourful objects. Urko is in front, and Majo is in the background, out of focus. Urko narrates:

The insult that marked my childhood was that of a tomboy. I realised that suddenly I had to behave in a way in which I didn’t feel comfortable. In the family, with friends, at school, everywhere, they are telling you how you are supposed to behave. (Min. 2:37).

Transition with a photo of Urko as a young child with long hair and white clothes, looking at some yellow flowers; it is followed by a photo of her, adolescent, dressed as a man. There’s a slight emphasis with music. Then we see them again in medium shot, as Urko keeps on narrating her experience:

It was a trauma for a while, it was hard because you don’t understand very well why you can’t behave like your brother (...) and the worst is that you reach a moment in which you absorb this oppressive discipline so much that I remember that at certain point I said, I’ll try to be more feminine. (Min. 3:16).

Transition with a photo of Majo as a baby, there’s a slight emphasis with music. We come back to them in medium shot, now Majo appears in focus as she says: “I have felt male chauvinist oppression for being a sexual person, a society that has always called me a whore” (Min. 3:29). Transition with archive footage, a fragment from a postporn video produced by them (*Introacto*, 2006), in which they both appear half-naked in an empty room with white walls, masturbating, touching and kissing each other, as we listen to electronic music. Then we go back to the interview with them and Urko explains: “In

postpornography or the type of workshops that we do, we give great importance to sexualising the entire body, beyond the genital areas as reproductive zones” (Min. 3:53).

Transition with archival footage from diverse videos of porno terrorist performances in which they appear with Quimera Rosa and Mistress Liar (*Pelea de perras*, 2010; *Fantasia postnuclear*, 2006; *Ramblas*, 2004; *Oh kaña!*, 2010): one of them leads the other one as a dog; in another sequence they interact with an inflatable doll. We go back to the interview in medium shot and Urko explains:

I can get very excited with mainstream porn, the point is to become aware of what that kind of pornography is telling us, and that there’s not only that (....) Desire is also something constructed. If you have always been told that what is desirable is that, and all the while the bodies that you are seeing in pornography are very concrete bodies, in the end, as long as desire is constructed, you end up wanting that, because you think that such thing is the only desirable one (Min. 4:37).

Transition with archival footage from a Post-Op video: an extreme close-up of a mouth putting on lipstick, intensified with electronic music. We go back to the interview, where Majo says: “You must have imagination to fuck and most of the people have been told that fucking is this, and maybe sometimes they don’t feel much pleasure but they don’t think that there might be other ways to do it” (Min. 5:03).

In medium shot, Majo and Urko pick up toys and different objects for the workshop. This is followed by medium and long shots in which they prepare the room, while we listen to Urko’s voice-over: “We are in a society that considers some bodies more valuable than others, based on capacities considered more valuable than others; and those capacities are simply productive ones. If you are a productive body you are a valuable body and if not, then you aren’t” (Min. 5:50). We go back to the medium shot of the interview, where Urko continues: “Socially, they are not interested in the reproduction of us, the monsters, the people who do not fit” (Min. 6:00).

2.3 The postporn workshop. The sequence opens with various shots of the workshop participants as they arrive and are welcomed by Urko. They are twenty women and men, ten queer activists and ten people with functional diversity, among which we find Antonio Centeno, one of the directors of the film. Some participants are on wheelchairs, blind (Mertxe, who reappears in story 4), without limbs, paraplegic or

quadriplegic. Urko asks who prefers to remain on the wheelchair and who prefers to lie on the mattresses. The colours are warm, yellow and orange. Some shots are slightly out of focus, especially as the camera moves from very close shots to wider ones.

The workshop begins with a wide shot of the room, in which the participants are lying or sitting with their eyes closed; then the camera gets closer to the faces of some of them. Throughout the sequence, we listen to soft music and a female voice-over (Helen Torres) reading a postporn tale, which describes the images in a poetic way:

Eyes closed, we were a little afraid; in sex there's always something scary, but not now. We breathe, I touch my belly, it's not mine, it's not my body; all the hands, all the bodies, caresses, touches, whispers, laughter, hollows through which we slip, there's no hurry, we let our clothes being taken off softly, we recognise ourselves, we lose ourselves in our hands, we let ourselves be loved, we let ourselves be pampered, I feel, you feel, the miracle of attunement, being available, being me and you at the same time, stop being me and becoming a little more you, stop being you and becoming part of me. (Min. 7:55).

Close shots of faces, hands and mouths are interleaved with medium, full and wide shots of the various participants who lie, sit, kneel and stand all over the room, touching, kissing and caressing each other. We see the movements of the hands, the faces smiling and hands caressing the body of a young paraplegic woman. Some of the close shots of the mouths and the hands go in and out of focus; in the medium shots, the focus frequently changes from one participant to the other. Some play with the objects that Urko and Majo showed in previous sequences, such as feathers, clothes pegs and vibrators; both of them are also among the participants. Some wear wigs and hats. We see a top shot of the entire naked body of a paraplegic woman lying on the mattress, caressing herself. The voice-over continues:

We try other prosthetics, leather, feathers, whips, fingers where I don't arrive, pleasures that I can't have on my own. We are more than one body, breathing, vibrating, more than one body united in pleasure. We let desire burst, I desire the freedom to be sexual, to be something more at the same time, an assembly that is not a whole, breaks, joints, deviations, extensions, articulations, organs and mystery that encounter each other in that deviation of the everyday that we call desire. The surprised pores claim and drink. I try this and that, I enjoy, I



dare. I'm not afraid, we talk, we laugh, we keep quiet, we moan. Sex is a serious affair, sex is laughing, floating, dissolving (Min. 9:14).

Antonio eats a strawberry and kisses a hand. Urko inserts a needle under the skin of another woman. The sequence finishes with a close shot of the smiling face of Urko as she caresses the body of an old man on a wheelchair; the voice-over narration finishes as well: "...hold me, suck me, play, let's play. Let's dance this choreography of flesh, material, meaning and signs. This choreography that is not a jumble of fragments, this choreography that is a coupling that dances, a mass of bodies united in pleasure" (Min. 9:42).

2.4 Closure. We go back to the full shot from segment 2.1, with Urko and Majo standing up in a dark street; they look at each other, smiling. Then we go back to the medium shot of their talking heads. They answer the question that opened the film, "what is sex for you?" Urko says: "For me, sex is play, fun, experimentation, politics" (Min. 9:57). Majo's face was out of focus; as we see her in focus, she says: "For me it is diversity, imagination, pleasure knowledge" (Min. 10:03). Both faces get out of focus as the inflatable doll in the background gets in focus.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort, shame, surprise, anger, distress, joy and fear.

3. Story 2. A heterosexual, interracial couple in which she is paraplegic (wave 2, story 2; and wave 7, opinion poll).

3.1. Presentation of the characters, Miriam and Pama. The story opens with the wide shot of an art workshop room with wooden tables, as well as paintings and small sculptures scattered around. A white woman with dark hair, approximately fifty years of age, enters the frame: she is Miriam and is on a wheelchair. We listen to her voice-over, answering the question that closed the previous story, i.e. "what is sex for you?": "Sex is something natural, something that shapes us, that conforms us and covers all aspects of our life; sex in general, we are sexual creatures" (Min. 10:19). Close shot of her hands and her face as she holds paintbrushes and paints a sculpture. Her voice-over goes on: "It's difficult, if you have a connection with sexuality, to conciliate, to integrate that part, because the answers from outside, the looks and the response of the people is like an interrogation of what it is that you are doing in this field" (Min. 10:38).

Now we see close shots of Pama, approximately forty years of age, he speaks in a mixture of Spanish and French. His skin is darker than that of hers, he is from India. Full

shot of him in front of a stall in which he sells the sculptures painted by Miriam; we listen to his voice-over: “Sex is like meditation, pleasure for me, pleasure for my partner” (Min. 10:52). Miriam and Pama are sitting in their living room, both appear in medium shot. Pama continues: “Sex is that, pleasure” (Min. 10:56).

3.2 The role of a personal assistant. We see a wide shot of the kitchen with Miriam, Pama and Ana. The camera, held by Raúl de la Morena on a steadicam, follows both women into the bedroom. Ana, Miriam’s personal assistant, helps her to move from the wheelchair to the bed, aided by a special apparatus. Meanwhile, Miriam explains:

She is the person who helps me get up in the morning, take a shower, get dressed, and all those intimate things (...) The difference with Pama or another relative is that Ana has a commercial relationship with me, in the sense that she works doing this, and the other people are part of my family, or my partner, it’s a different role. Because that’s not their role, this is something that I have to take care of myself, I dress myself, I take a shower myself and I have to solve how I do it (Min. 12:33).

Ana helps Miriam get dressed. We see a medium shot of Miriam as she brushes her hair in front of the mirror. She explains that, even though she can’t reach her head with her hands, she uses a long wooden hand to comb her hair the way she likes it.

3.3 Interview with them about their vision of sexuality and their relationship. We go back to the medium shot of Miriam and Pama. She says:

What makes something sexy? The form of the breasts, the ass, the face, the body? (...) We are eroticised by things that maybe we can’t define exactly and that shouldn’t be pigeonholed in these images that are bombarding us all the time. I think that reality isn’t like that. What happens is that publicity tries to sell us a model that doesn’t correspond with the reality of nobody, not only of people with functional diversity (Min. 14:28).

In medium shot, they have dinner together, as we hear him speak with voice-over: “sex is normal with her” (Min. 14:45). We then go back to the medium shot of the interview. Miriam narrates:

...when you are a teenager, either on a wheelchair or not, there are always complications (...) the idea that I had of sex when I was 13, 14, 15, the age when you begin to want to have boyfriends (...) is that to have a sexual relationship you have to be more or less an acrobat, to have a body that would allow it. It took me a while to understand that sexuality is a much more complex thing (Min. 15:30).

Pama says: “Before, with other women, things were complicated. Now with Miriam this body, because she does not touch me, I touch her; things are the way I want, the position. I like this body” (Min. 16:05). The interview is interleaved with images of the dinner they share, close shots of their faces as they kiss and smile at each other, and circular movements with the camera that surrounds them. Then we go back to the medium shot of the interview and Miriam says: “He gives me freshness, also a way of looking, he comes from a different culture (...) the way in which he looks at me is something new to me” (Min. 16:40). He adds: “Kama sutra helps a lot. What she can’t do sexually, I can do and we can do everything” (Min. 17:00).

3.4 Miriam and Pama’s intercourse. The camera is on a steadicam that follows them, as Pama takes Miriam to bed. We see various shots of both naked in bed, they kiss, he caresses her; they hug, smile and laugh at each other. In a wide shot, they have sexual intercourse. The sequence is accompanied by calm electronic music and the colours are warm, mainly red and orange.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: shame, discomfort, love and joy.

4. Story 3. A paid service of BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Sadomasochism, Dominance and Submission) for a man with cerebral palsy (wave 3, story 3; and wave 7, opinion poll).

4.1 Presentation of the characters, Oriol and Linda Porn. Oriol, a white man, approximately thirty years of age, is lying in bed. He has cerebral palsy and is aided by another man to get on his wheelchair. Then we see his face in a close shot, talking to the camera: “Having functional diversity makes it difficult to flirt, because people don’t know what we have” (Min. 18:56). Oriol is assisted by the man to take a shower, we listen to his voice-over: “I discovered sexuality through girlfriends and lovers, because I couldn’t masturbate” (Min. 20:00).

We see Linda Porn naked, standing up against the window of an apartment. She is a woman, approximately forty years of age, with dark skin and a Latin American accent.

As she puts on her underwear, we listen to her voice-over: “I am Linda Porn, I am a sex worker, I work in the production of porn cinema (...) Why do I do this job? Well the first reason is for money, for economic reasons, and the second reason is a more personal matter” (Min. 20:22). Now we see her in medium shot, talking directly to the camera with a white background behind: “For me it is also a political positioning from feminism, from my position as a person who has moved to other places” (Min. 20:35). As she puts on her tights, the camera follows the movement closely. Close shots of her black leather bodice and her face, as we hear her voice-over: “I believe that sex is a great weapon of freedom, when a person is sexually free and does with his/her sexuality as s/he pleases, s/he is a person who is hardly attached to conventional conceptions and stuff” (Min. 20:53). We see her talking head, as she says:

It’s a job that empowers me, gives me money and makes me feel good. Besides, I believe that I am contributing something politically: advocating for freedom of the bodies, freedom of pleasure and freedom in doing what we want with our bodies, without any moral or political mandate that tells us how we have to act in privacy. Politics, the State, have gotten into our room; they have gotten up to our genitals to tell us how we have to behave. It’s a brutal control. (Min. 21:26).

We see different medium and long shots of Oriol in his living room, as he searches for sexual workers online. He finds Linda’s website, we see her photos as dominatrix from his point of view. He then speaks in close-up: “I have had paid and not paid sex, but now I was interested in various ways of experiencing sex” (Min. 22:40).

We go back to Linda. The camera follows closely her leather bodice up to her face. Then we see her talking head as she explains: “Sadomasochism is a practice that is marginalised precisely because it doesn’t comply with conventional sex” (Min. 23:15). Electronic music plays as we see her in full shot, with lots of light in the background, looking directly into the camera and moving some leather strips as if she was hitting someone. The music stops as we see various shots of Oriol on his wheelchair around the streets of Barcelona; we listen to his voice-over: “Society looks differently at people who have functional diversity. Not like a man” (Min. 23:55).

4.2 Oriol and Linda BDSM session. Music begins as the sequence changes. Now we see a wide shot of a big room with black walls and purple lights. Linda is sitting on a

bed with red curtains; she smiles at Oriol as he enters the room. He says: “This is my first time, so I ask you to be careful” (Min. 24:10). The camera moves in close shot from Oriol to Linda, as she replies: “For me this is also the first time with a person with functional diversity, so I’m nervous too” (Min. 24:28).

The music gets louder as we see diverse long shots, combined with a few close shots of Oriol’s face during their BDSM session. Linda kisses Oriol, puts a necklace around his neck and hits him on the butt. There’s a close shot of her breasts as he says “wow, those tits” (Min. 25:29). He is inside a cage and she enters the cage. She masturbates him and blindfolds him. They have sexual intercourse.

4.3 Closure. Close-up of Oriol as he answers the questions repeated in the first sequence and the two previous stories: “For me, sex is pleasure with another person, in this case, a girl” (Min. 27:25). Then there’s a close-up of Linda saying: “it’s culture and spirituality” (Min. 27:50).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: surprise, joy and shame.

5. Story 4. Mertxe and the female ejaculation/squirting workshop (wave 4, story 4; and wave 7, opinion poll).

5.1 Presentation of the main character. The sequence opens with a very wide shot of apartment buildings in Madrid. We hear the ring bell, and the voice of Mertxe, who arrives at one of the flats. The screen gets totally black as we listen to the conversation between Mertxe and another woman about a workshop called “The Pussy Ejaculation”. Mertxe says: “I thought it was a scam (...) since the man is the model and you have to do the same as the model” (Min. 28:50).

The screen remains totally black as they discuss how some women think their ejaculation is urine, how everything about women is considered dirty, while men don’t experience it as such. Then they talk about what they find attractive in another person and Mertxe says that the smell. The screen is suddenly occupied by a close-up of Mertxe, a blind white woman, approximately fifty years of age. She answers the question that closed the previous segment: “For me, sex is one of the most important bases or one of the foundations of any person (...) it’s a source of joy, of interaction with others, of personal growth” (Min. 31:11).

Transition with soft music as we see the lights from inside the subway. Full shot of Mertxe getting out of the subway station in Lavapiés and close shots of her face as she walks in the streets of Madrid.

5.2 The workshop and its organiser. Close shot of Kani's boots. Then we see him in medium shot smoking, as we listen to his voice-over talking about the neighbourhood of Lavapiés, which is iconic for its social movements. Kani is a white transgender man, approximately thirty years of age. Medium shots of Kani's talking head are interleaved with diverse shots of the workshop participants arriving at the building where it is held. Among them we see Mertxe and a young woman in a wheelchair. Kani narrates:

We received various e-mails from people with specific needs, with functional diversity (...) these are bodies that don't fall within the norm, bodies that, in the society in which we live, that is heterosexist, patriarchal and ableist, don't fall within the norm of an acceptable social body. And from here, I think there is a lot of potential when it comes to working together (Min. 32:44).

Long shots of the workshop: we see Kani sitting on a table surrounded by other women; Mertxe puts her hand inside Kani's vagina. We go back to a full shot of him, as he says:

Why has squirting been invisible and stigmatised until very recently? (...) It is quite surprising to see the extent to which the body, the genitality and the pleasure of women are invisibilised (...) from the medical-clinical point of view, all the organs which are not intended for reproduction are considered as secondary (Min. 34:22).

The sequence continues with the combination of shots from the workshop and medium shots of Kani's interview. Most of the shots of the workshop are long ones, but there's also a close shot of Kani's vagina with a speculum in it. In the interview he says: "At the time of my birth I was diagnosed as a woman and currently I am in a process of transition, and I identify with the male gender" (Min. 34:53).

5.3 Closure. We go back to the workshop. A hand-held camera on a steadicam shows various close shots of Kani masturbating Mertxe, as we hear his voice-over: "For me, sex is a space of creation, a space where I feel free to experiment, where I can develop my creativity, subvert a series of codes, roles, which I don't feel as comfortable doing outside of the sexual context, but also I couldn't define where sex begins and ends" (Min. 35:25). The screen gets black as we listen to female moans and orgasms.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: shame, fear, surprise and disgust.

6. Story 5. Discussion group of people with intellectual diversity (wave 5, story 5; and wave 7, opinion poll).

6.1 On a white background, we see a series of talking heads of people with intellectual diversity (Down syndrome), five women and four men, whose age range between twenty and forty. They answer what sex is for them: “sex is very good” (Min. 36:14), “without taboos, nor restrictions, only sincerity” (Min. 36:22), “a pretty thing” (Min. 36:25), “it’s natural and I’d like to do it but I don’t have a place” (Min. 36:55). Transition with a medium close-up of a heterosexual couple with Down syndrome kissing each other. The shot is intensified with music.

6.2 Discussion group. The people from the previous sequence and five more sit together in a circle and share their views on sex related issues. The camera shows the speakers in medium shots. The first topic is masturbation. A young girl says she masturbates and enjoys it. Another woman says she does the same: “not simply to relax but to have my own pleasure, I touch myself and reach my orgasm on my own” (Min. 37:51). A man says he masturbates and feels pleasure. Another young man says: “The pleasure is incredible, until you reach orgasm (...) in life you have to know how to have sex on your own” (Min. 39:18).

They talk about porn films. A man says: “when I have watched it, I have practised it and it felt really good” (Min. 40:17). A woman says she doesn’t like porn films. The couples talk about sex positions and the places where they have sex. They say they enjoy games. One young man says: “I still have not dared to do it because I have to talk with my parents before” (Min. 42:02). A transition with a wide shot of the whole group is accompanied with music.

6.3 Talking heads of the parents of the people who participate in the discussion from the previous segment. One father says: “The truth is that from the first moment I felt uneasy about my son’s sexuality” (Min. 42:14). Another father says: “With our son, the main problem was masturbation. And we had to correct it with school professionals, and the truth is that it was relatively easy. We managed to prevent him from touching himself, and, if he does so, he knows where to do it” (Min. 43:14). One of the mothers says about her daughter: “The psychologists advised us that a good way could be to sterilise her. Then after two years of legal permits she had a tubal ligation” (Min. 43:46). In this regard, another mother says:

...they have the right to reproductive rights but they must have all the information, to know that it requires responsibility and a series of prerequisites before having the great responsibility of bringing a child to the world. Then, we have to separate sexuality from reproduction (Min. 44:07).

Another father adds: “society normally accepts that any of our children may form a couple, even if s/he is not prepared (...) and we always hold people with disabilities in question, anything they do (...) we always blame it on their having a disability” (Min. 44:45).

6.4 Closure. One of the couples that we have seen in segment 6.2 kisses each other in medium shot, against a white background, as soft music plays. The man answers the question that traverses the film, about what sex is for him: “for me, sex is pleasure to enjoy your partner and yourself” (Min. 45:00). His talking head is followed by those of more participants in the discussion. A young woman says: “to make love, to be more united to your partner, to be loved and a bit respected” (Min. 45:21). One man says: “I can’t have sex” (Min. 45:25). A young man with a worried expression closes the sequence saying: “It’s the first time that I talk about this subject but it’s a lot weirder because at school I was taught a little, but now that I’ve heard this, it makes it a little weirder, a little more confusing to me” (Min. 46:04).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, confusion, joy, anxiety and fear.

7. Story 6. Sexual assistance (wave 6, story 6; and wave 7, opinion poll).

7.1 Presentation of the characters, Sole and Teo. The screen is black as we hear the voices of Sole and Teo, saying that they are going to start. Teo removes the lens cap of the camera and we see they are recording themselves in Sole’s bedroom. Sole is a quadriplegic woman, approximately fifty years of age, sitting on her wheelchair; Teo is a transgender man approximately twenty-five years of age. They appear in medium shot. Sole tells Teo: “I don’t know how far I want to go with a sexual assistant (...) I find it interesting, that you can put me to bed, that you can hold my hand and help me touch myself (...) and obviously feel you because there are parts that, if you don’t help me directly, I will not be able to reach” (Min. 47:13).

7.2 Session with the sexual assistant. The camera is located on Teo’s head, so that we see Sole’s body lying on the bed from his point of view, in top shot. We see Teo’s hands caressing Sole’s legs. He holds Sole’s hand to try to reach her neck, but she only reaches her stomach. Sole expresses in awe: “What a soft hand I have! (...) Not being able



to touch myself, I didn't know what my hands were like. What a feeling!" (Min. 49:23). Teo keeps on caressing Sole's body with her own hand. Sole smiles peacefully and says: "I had never touched my nipple" (Min. 50:36) and "hey, how nice it is to touch oneself" (Min. 51:57). She asks Teo to touch her face, neck and hair, and to introduce her own hand inside her underpants. The sequence ends with Teo masturbating Sole.

7.3 Closure. Once again, we see Sole and Teo in medium shot, as Teo says: "Why does a person who needs support have to be limited on a sexual level? (...) That's why we're doing this video" (Min. 55:24). Sole adds: "to give visibility to all of this is important, also that people with functional diversity discover it as well, because neither do we know that we can ask for it and that it is also our right" (Min. 55:49). Teo smiles and puts the cap to the lens of the camera back on.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and surprise.

8. Credits. Music plays as we see the credits. Directors: Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena. The main characters are enlisted in their order of appearance: Post Op-Majo and Urko, Miriam Ballesi and Pama, Linda Pornsánchez and Oriol Roqueta, Kani and Mertxe, Soledad Arnau and Teo Valls, and the first names of the discussion participants. Camera and editing: de la Morena. Research: Andrea García-Santesmases. Postporn story: Helen Torres. Music: Sonia Basco and Raúl Morales. Logo: de la Morena. The list of archive footage from the first story and the names of the people and organisations that donated to the project via the Verkami platform. Among them we find: precarias.org, pac LGTBP+Valladolid, en torno a la silla, aberturavaginal, Raquel (Lucas) Platero, Liz Misterio, Helen Torres, ensentidocontrario.com and quimera rosa. In the thanks list, we find Teresa del Valle, Dolores Juliano, parole de queer, l'alternativa, colectivo vortices transfeministas, la escalera karakola, sex asistent catalunya, and Museo Reina Sofía.

#### 4.4.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

*Yes, We Fuck!* touches key aspects in the Spanish feminist audiovisual agenda: the right to one's body and sexual self-awareness. It is also in line with a **transfeminist agenda**,<sup>381</sup> which keeps classic topics of feminism like sexuality, body and violence, but connects them with emergent issues such as "the construction of subjectivity and corporeality,

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<sup>381</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 3. Section 3.3.6 The Transfeminist Critique and the Precariousness of Feminist Documentary

pornography and sex work, the pathologisation of transsexuality” (Solá 2013: 21).<sup>382</sup> Moreover, it’s an example of a **feminist postporn film**. As defined at the beginning of this chapter, this genre “uses sexually explicit imagery to contest and complicate dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, body type, and other identity markers” (Miller-Young et al. 2013: 9). For postporn filmmakers, sexual representation is “a site for resistance, intervention, and change” (Miller-Young et al. 2013: 10).

What I argue is that feminist postporn searches for a **feminist countervisuality** in the field of sexually explicit representations. While the desirable bodies that come to matter in mainstream porn have very specific, heteronormative characteristics, the subjects filmed by Centeno and de la Morena have bodies that subvert the androcentric norm, either due to functional diversity and/or gender transgressions. In this sense, *Yes, We Fuck!* can be regarded as an **eccentric technology of gender and sexual pleasure**, which makes possible the conditions of visibility for “an eccentric discursive position outside the male (hetero)sexual monopoly of power/knowledge” and desire (de Lauretis 1990: 127).

As mentioned before, a **diffraction apparatus** is a technology through which human and non-human elements intra-act, making boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways. In *Yes, We Fuck!*, the rebellious and diverse bodies of the filmed subjects are represented in such a way that questions their intelligibility from the perspectives of pathology, monstrosity, voyeuristic curiosity and/or pitiful solidarity. Rather, the intra-actions which take place both sides of the camera, present the filmed subjects as both, desiring and desirable.

The film consists of six ten-minute stories joined by a common thread: the question that opens the film, “what is sex for you?” The repetition of this question in each of the stories (less explicitly in the last one) can be read as a **diffractive strategy** in the presentation of the topic, which provides spectators with a way of “reading important insights and approaches through one another” (Barad 2007: 30). In this case, the audience gathers ideas expressed by people as diverse as a sex worker, a transgender man, and youngsters with intellectual diversity. In terms of **emotionality**, the film performs mainly positive emotions such as pleasure, love and freedom. However, in most of the stories there are also negative emotions involved, for example, shame, anger and discomfort.

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<sup>382</sup> “la cuestión de la construcción de la subjetividad y de la corporalidad, la pornografía y el trabajo sexual, la patologización de la transexualidad”.

The division into six short stories can be analysed as six different **narrative waves** entangled into one film, complementing one another, and providing the spectators with diverse entry points. With its depiction of various stories of people with different kinds of functional diversity, *Yes, We Fuck!* makes it possible for the spectator to identify with one or more of the characters, while remaining an outsider “able to evaluate all of the various positions presented in the film” (de Lauretis 1987c: 140). It is also an example of a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592). However, it is only in the last story that we see a different **point of view** than that from co-director and cinematographer Raúl de la Morena.

We listen to the filmed subjects’ discourses but we also observe their practices, engaging in diverse sexual activities that fall out of what Gayle Rubin calls the “charmed circle of sex” (1984; 2006: 153).<sup>383</sup> Not only do their bodies deviate from ableist, racist and heterosexist norms but their sexualities also question androcentric, heteronormative and patriarchal conventions. It is in this sense that we can identify the potential of the film as a **feminist countervisuality device** that can manage “to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a new seeing” (Minh-ha 2005: 13). As explained in chapter 2, vision and knowledge are linked: we only see what is made “seeable” (Rajchman 1988: 91) within the constraints of thought in a specific period. In its portrait of functional diverse subjects as desiring and desirable subjects, *Yes, We Fuck!* opens up a kind of visuality that questions the dominant one, which operates by naming, categorising and defining/aestheticising (Mirzoeff 2011: 476).<sup>384</sup> Bodies are classified in a certain way and such an order is presented as “right and hence aesthetic” (2011: 476). What a postporn film like this one does, is presenting images that **subvert such dominant aesthetics of desirability**.

To employ diffraction as the approach to analyse a film, means paying attention to the importance of the form in which it produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality** in terms of how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). *Yes, We Fuck!* is a realist film whose main **modes of representation**

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<sup>383</sup> Rubin explains that, in western heteronormative societies, sex is regulated by a sexual value system. Within the charmed circle of so-called good and natural sexuality, we find that which is “heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, and non-commercial.” We must remember that: “It should be coupled, relational, within the same generation, and occur at home. It should not involve pornography, fetish objects, sex toys of any sort, or roles other than male and female. Any sex that violates these rules is ‘bad’, ‘abnormal’, or ‘unnatural’. Bad sex may be homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, or commercial. It may be masturbatory or take place at orgies, may be casual, may cross generational lines” (1984; 2006: 152).

<sup>384</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses

are **observational and participatory**, though it also incorporates a **performative** mode in two stories. In all of them, the relation that the film maintains with reality is “a relation of copresence if not of contact” (2012: 36), what Olivieri defines as **indexicality**.

The first story sets the potential alliance between functional diversity and queer activists, stemming from the fact that their bodies do not fit within the productive norm. During the postporn workshop sequence, the observational-participatory mode of representation is combined with a poetic voice-over that accompanies the images of group sex, in which sexualisation goes beyond the genitals and incorporates intra-actions between **human and non-human artifacts**. Centeno, co-director of the film, participates in the workshop. De la Morena and his camera intra-act with the rest of the bodies, capturing very close shots of some faces and getting out of focus several times (figure 24).



**Figure 24.** Postporn workshop

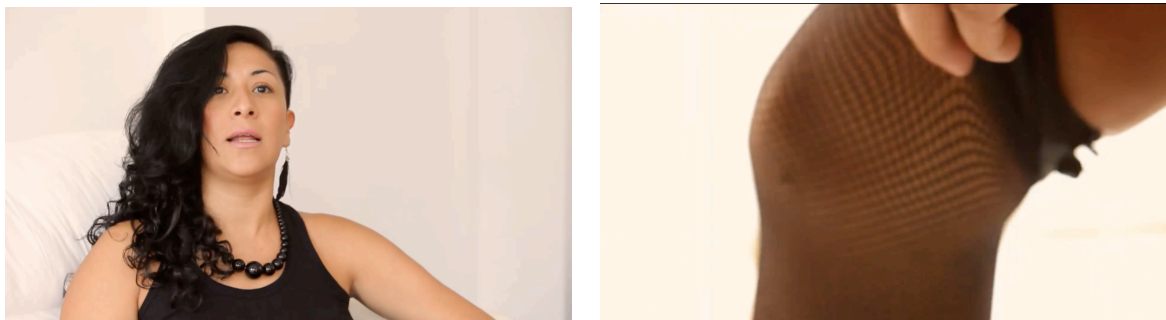
The second story presents a heterosexual couple traversed by two highly visible differences: the functional diversity of Miriam, paraplegic, and the nationality of Pama, a migrant from India. The main mode of representation in this story is the observational-participatory one. In the interview with the couple, Pama hardly speaks and shows difficulty in communicating in Spanish. While she has an elaborated political discourse on sexuality and diversity, he uses very short phrases e.g. “she does not touch me, I touch her. Things are the way I want, the position. I like this body” (Min. 16:05). What she emphasises is that due to his different cultural background, his gaze towards her is different, which she finds surprising.

The last scene, in which they have sexual intercourse, can be problematic in terms of a **voyeuristic gaze** from the camera and the spectators. Nevertheless, within this story and in the film as a whole, the camera’s voyeuristic gaze is questioned several times (this is clear, for instance, in narrative waves four and six). Since this story only lasts ten

minutes, the characters' profiles and their relationship dynamics remain on a superficial level. Similarly, the role of Miriam's personal assistant, the person who helps her with everyday activities in exchange for a salary, is only quickly referred to.

The third story also has an observational-participatory mode of representation. In the sequences with Linda Porn, we can detect a **fetishistic gaze**. As explained in chapter 2, according to Mulvey (1975; 1988: 58), fetishism fragments the female character into fetish images, such as her legs or her high-heel shoes. In the case of *Yes, We Fuck!*, Linda's body is followed closely by the camera as she puts on her underwear and her leather bodice. During the BDSM session with Oriol, there's a close-up of her breasts as he says "wow, those tits" (Min. 25:29). The fact that Linda is a sex worker filmed by a man, wearing clothes associated with the figure of the dominatrix in mainstream porn, renders these sequences problematic from the point of view of a feminist countervisuality, as they reproduce an objectifying gaze.

There's, however, a counterbalance in the story that has to be taken into consideration. As a talking head, Linda also expresses her reasons for being a sex worker. It's important to note that, as Pama from the second story, Linda is a migrant from the Global South, a Latin American country. She clearly states that the first reason why she is a sex worker is because of the money, and only later does she elaborate on her political position "advocating for the freedom of bodies, the freedom of pleasure and the freedom in doing as we please with our own bodies, without any moral or political mandate" (Min. 21:26). Thus, the film does not hide the fact that precarity is an important factor behind the exercise of sex work, but by rendering visible Linda's confident testimony, it also argues against the stigmatisation and victimisation of sex workers. Another aspect worth mentioning is the fact that before the BDSM session, the dialogue between the characters emphasises **consent, vulnerability and respect** (figure 25).

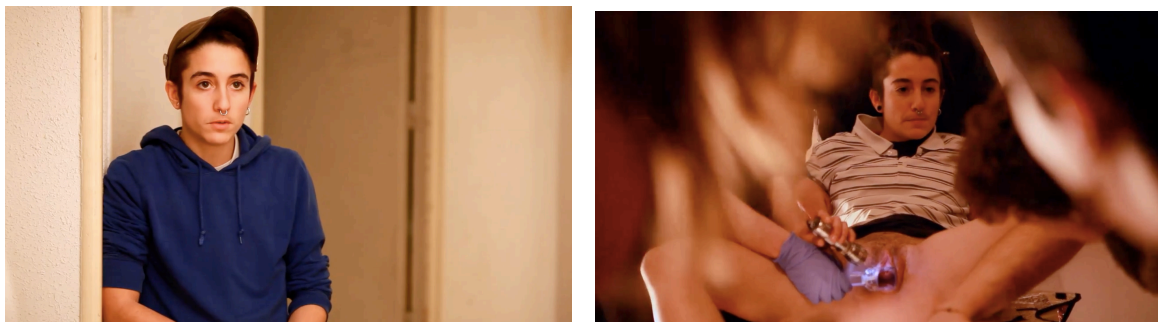


**Figure 25.** Linda's talking head as counterbalance of the fetishistic gaze

The fourth story starts with a sequence in which the performative mode of representation propitiates identification with Mertxe, a blind woman who also appears in the first story. During the first three minutes, the screen is totally black as we listen to her talking to a friend about a squirting workshop. The screen goes black again at the end of the story, as we listen to female moans of pleasure. Thus, the formal strategies employed in this story question the **ocularcentrism** of dominant cinema, giving an example of **haptic visibility** (Marks 2000) that triggers physical memories of touch, smell and taste.

The black screen as we listen to female expressions of pleasure is closer to female sexuality than the phallogentric dominion of vision as explained by Luce Irigaray: “Woman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking and her entry into a dominant scopic economy signifies, again, her consignment to passivity: she is to be the beautiful object of contemplation (...) her sexual organ represents the horror of nothing to see” (1985: 25-26).

The rest of the story resorts to an observational-participatory mode of representation. The film as diffraction apparatus and eccentric technology of gender has an eloquent example in the contrast between Kani’s images of his vagina with a speculum and his assertion in the interview, identifying “with the male gender” (Min. 34:53). In reading one sequence through the other, this cutting-together-apart<sup>385</sup> strategy renders visible **gender performativity**, as we see the disconnection between the body and the gender enacted by the same person (figure 26).



**Figure 26.** Disconnection between body and gender enacted by the same person

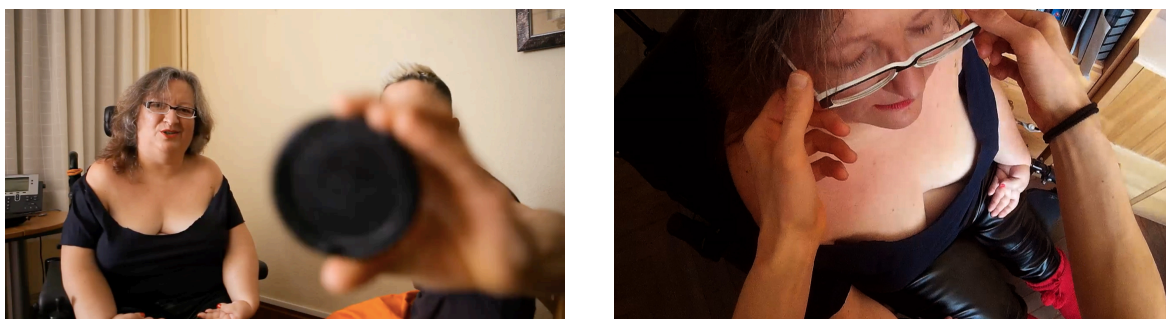
The fifth story consists mainly of talking heads. Therefore, its mode of representation is observational-participatory (the filmed subjects are interviewed by the filmmakers or are shown taking part in a group discussion). The organisation of the sequence, which

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<sup>385</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity: How Documentary Cinema Matters

presents first the opinions of people with intellectual diversity and then the opinions of their parents, establishes a clear contrast between sexuality as pleasure, on the one hand, and reproduction as responsibility, on the other. The story does not take sides, nor does it go deeper into problematic issues such as sterilisation, which is only superficially raised. What it emphasises is the sexual desires of people with intellectual diversity together with the freedom and openness with which they talk about their own sexuality. In this sense, the effect of the use of **talking heads** is that of an empowering tool for people who express and affirm themselves in front of the camera as desiring and desirable subjects.

The sixth and last story introduces the figure of the sexual assistant, which is different from the personal assistant of the second story, but also from the sex worker of the third story. The sexual assistant helps a person with functional diversity have access to her/his own body, without becoming herself/himself engaged in sexual intercourse. This story resorts to a performative mode in which the characters record themselves. Most of the sequence is shot from Teo's point of view as he caresses Sole. The beginning and the end of the sequence, where Teo removes and puts back on the lens cap, raises **awareness of the camera**, directly interpellating the audience before the credits start (figure 19).



**Figure 27.** Awareness of the camera and embodied point of view: the characters record themselves

This sequence is also reflexive, because the two characters look directly into the camera as they say why they are recording the video: “visualising all of this is important. It is also important to help people with functional diversity discover it” (Min. 55:49). In each story, the characters make explicit their position as politically informed. In this case, the filmed subjects assert that making the film is their political/activist intervention. This declaration of intentions echoes the possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema** that Smelik identifies in the affective relations that can take place between the spectator and the film: “the moment of resistance, of change” (2007: 191).

In the next section, I read through an interview with Antonio Centeno held for this research project in 2016; a presentation he gave at a screening in Granada; the interventions at the Q&A sessions at two other screenings in the same city; and three articles written by Centeno himself (2014), the Post-Op Collective (2013), and researcher Andrea García-Santesmases (2017).

#### 4.4.2 Production and Reception: Changing Ways of Seeing Functional Diversity

Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena, the two directors of *Yes, We Fuck!*, met in 2005, when de la Morena was shooting his documentary film *Editar una vida/Editing a Life*. Centeno, who is quadriplegic since he was thirteen years old, was interviewed by de la Morena, who wanted to contrast life for people with functional diversity within an institution, with that of those who, aided by a personal assistant, pursue an independent life. *Editar una vida*, as Centeno expressed in the interview carried out for this research project, is a good film, but “did not have any impact, nor distribution. Practically nobody heard that such a documentary existed.”<sup>386</sup>

During a conversation in 2012, Centeno and de la Morena realised that the situation for people with functional diversity had remained exactly the same as in 2005, despite the 2006 Law of Personal Autonomy and Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. They understood that **the problem was that the ways of seeing functional diversity** had remained the same:

This made us think that a good part of the suppression is in the unwritten, in a collective imaginary that remains anchored in the past, which still values institutionalisation as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem, which still **infantilises people with functional diversity from the idea that biology makes them “naturally dependent”** (....) It seems clear that there’s a need to break the binomial dependency-infantilisation, terms that feed into each other generating a vicious circle that has hitherto been resistant to any ideological and legislative progress. **It was from this point that the idea of making a documentary about sexuality and functional diversity was born** (Centeno 2014: 107).<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> “no tuvo ningún tipo de repercusión, no tuvo difusión, nadie se enteró de que ese documental existía, prácticamente.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>387</sup> “Eso nos hizo pensar que buena parte del bloqueo está en lo no escrito, en un imaginario colectivo



Therefore, with this film, what they wanted to have an impact on, were precisely the cultures of in/equalities (i.e. processes, practices, meanings and/or performances in which part of the world becomes legible to another part of the world) surrounding functional diversity. Centeno explains that a rich experience of one's own **sexuality is incompatible with life within an institution:**

It is one of the potentialities of including sexuality when thinking about functional diversity, because in the end **sexuality is a very powerful expression of what it is to live with freedom and self-determination.** And when you try to fit that new piece of sexuality into the systems we have, it becomes evident that those systems collapse, they are unable to support and include that dimension of life, because **what kind of sexuality can you expect to live in a place where your body is not yours, where there is no space of privacy,** where you have to ask permission to enter and leave, where you do not relate to anyone other than the people who are there who have not even been chosen by you. So in that residential environment or locked in the family without support, in any of those areas that are the most common responses we have to functional diversity, it does not make any sense to consider a sexuality for yourself of any kind. And so you can only do two things, either renounce sexuality or transform those responses into others, find other ways, other types of support from the public authorities **to live in another way, one in which the experience of sexuality does become possible and does make sense.**<sup>388</sup>

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que sigue anclado en el pasado, que aún valora la re-clusión en instituciones como parte de la solución en lugar de como parte del problema, que aún infantiliza a las personas con diversidad funcional desde la idea de que la biología les hace 'naturalmente dependientes' (...) Parece clara la necesidad de romper el binomio dependencia- infantilización, términos que se retroalimentan generando un círculo vicioso que hasta ahora se ha mostrado resistente a cualquier avance ideológico y legislativo. De aquí nació la idea de hacer un documental sobre sexualidad y diversidad funcional."

<sup>388</sup> "Es una de las potencialidades que tiene también el hecho de incluir la sexualidad a la hora de pensar la diversidad funcional, porque al final la sexualidad no deja de ser una expresión muy potente de lo que es vivir y de la libertad y de la autodeterminación. Y cuando tú intentas encajar esa nueva pieza de la sexualidad en los sistemas que tenemos, se pone de relieve que esos sistemas petan, son incapaces de soportar e incluir esa dimensión de la vida, porque qué tipo de sexualidad puedes esperar vivir en un sitio donde tu cuerpo no es tuyo, donde no hay ningún espacio de intimidad, donde tienes que pedir permiso para entrar y salir, donde no te relacionas con nadie más que las propias personas que están allí que ni siquiera han sido elegidas por ti. Entonces en ese ámbito residencial o encerrado en el ámbito familiar sin apoyos, en cualquiera de esos ámbitos que son las respuestas mayoritarias que tenemos ante la diversidad funcional, no tiene ningún tipo de sentido plantearte una sexualidad de ningún tipo. Y entonces solo puedes hacer dos cosas, o renunciar a la sexualidad o transformar esas respuestas en otras, buscar otros caminos, otro tipo de apoyos desde los poderes públicos a la diversidad funcional para vivir de otra manera donde esa experiencia de la sexualidad sí sea posible y sí tenga sentido." Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

There was no production company interested in the issue, but de la Morena had basic recording equipment at home and was receiving unemployment benefits, while Centeno, a retired mathematics professor, had his pension, so they were able to sustain themselves during the four years of production of *Yes, We Fuck!* The film is therefore located within **independent cinema**, i.e. “an alternative practice to dominant cinema in relation to industrial, aesthetic and ideological perspectives” (Pravadelli 2016: 331).

In order to pay for post-production, they resorted to **crowdfunding** through the Barcelona-based Verkami platform.<sup>389</sup> With this campaign, which finished in January 2015, they gathered 12.950 euros, thanks to 563 supporters. They also ask for a monetary contribution when an entity that wants to screen the film has the resources. In this way, they have managed to recover part of the expenses.

The title of the film is a parody of Barack Obama’s presidential campaign motto, “Yes, we can”. From the beginning, Centeno and de la Morena knew that they wanted to make **a political film**, since their aim was to change the dominant vision about sexuality and functional diversity. In this sense, they are consistent with what Ruido deems key for feminist filmmakers: to understand “their being creators of representation as a political task” (2006: 2).<sup>390</sup> With this goal in mind, they decided to have **a polyscopic and anti-pedagogical approach** with various stories, a good example of what I propose to call **a diffraction apparatus rather than a reflecting mirror**:

We never intended for the documentary to describe a certain reality in the sense “look, this is the reality, I filmed it and I put it here in front of you so that you know it too”. That’s impossible, there are as many realities as people. So we thought that the stories that we would include had to contain something, either in the idea or in the development of the story, or in the image, or in both if possible, of course; they had to contain some element that could get embedded in the people’s minds like **a splinter that was incompatible with the previous vision that one had about functional diversity and sexuality (...)** So that, after seeing the documentary, **the effect was not so much that of knowing what the sexuality of people with functional diversity is, but to have the feeling that one has no idea and that one has to rethink things.**<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Verkami website. Date of access: January 2019.<<https://www.verkami.com/projects/10562-yes-we-fuck>>.

<sup>390</sup> “su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político.”

<sup>391</sup> “Nunca hemos intentado que el documental describiese una cierta realidad, así ‘mira, ésta es la realidad, la he filmado y te la pongo aquí delante para que tu también la conozcas’. Eso es imposible,

Centeno describes this as a complete change of our ways of seeing bodies with functional diversity. What they want to **subvert** is **the gaze** that conceive them as broken bodies:

**That gaze which turns difference into something pathological (...) a gaze that tries to make questions that are unnatural natural, though they are not natural but political and social.** It wants to make it seem that by nature there is only one way to be in the world, only one way to work, only one way to be. And that is not real, that does not exist (...) You knock at the door of normality and there is no one there to open. The only thing that is real is diversity, being different (...) From that kind of gaze such a broken body is not acceptable for desire, for pleasure.<sup>392</sup>

De la Morena, who had professional experience as a cinematographer and had directed four documentary films before,<sup>393</sup> asked Centeno to co-direct the film with him, due to his active role at the Spanish Independent Life Movement<sup>394</sup> in Barcelona since 2004:

Otherwise it would have been impossible to get people to put their bodies in front of the camera. It was there, **from the complicity of sharing activism, of understanding that it was a political project.** That it was not an entertainment product but something that had to do with creating a political tool. And **that personal trust and that political commitment made it possible;** not without difficulties, of course, it was still very complicated. And

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hay tantas realidades como personas. Entonces sí pensamos que las historias que pusiésemos contuviesen algo, bien en la idea o en el desarrollo de la historia, o bien en la imagen o bien en ambas de ser posible, claro, contuviese algún elemento que se incrustase en la cabeza de la gente como una esquirra que resultase incompatible con la visión previa que uno se hace acerca de la diversidad funcional y de la sexualidad (...) De manera que, que después de ver el documental, el efecto fuese, no tanto de tener la sensación de saber cómo es la sexualidad de las personas con diversidad funcional, sino tener la sensación de que uno no tiene ni idea y que tiene que replantearse las cosas". Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>392</sup> "Esa mirada que convierte la diferencia en patológico (...) una mirada que intenta hacer natural cuestiones que no son naturales, que son políticas, que son sociales. Parece, se quiere hacer natural que sólo hay una manera de estar en el mundo, sólo hay una manera de funcionar, sólo hay una manera de ser. Y eso no es real, eso no existe (...) Tú vas a la puerta de la normalidad y no hay quién te abra. Lo único que es real es la diversidad, es ser diferentes (...) Desde esa mirada no es aceptable ese cuerpo roto como un cuerpo para el deseo, para el placer." Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>393</sup> Apart from *Editar una vida* (2005), de la Morena has directed *Dones contra el franquisme* (2006), *Feldpost 23558* (2007), and *Tsitsanu, camina!* (2009).

<sup>394</sup> The Spanish Independent Life Movement is a social movement impelled by a group of people with functional diversity who demand personal assistance to carry out their everyday activities and be able to get out of hospitals, institutions and even their houses, so that they could participate in the community. "Movimiento Vida Independiente" website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://ovibcn.org/movimiento-de-vida-independiente/>>.

that's also why we took so long to make the documentary, because many times, months and months passed in which we did not get anyone who was willing - right?- to show themselves in front of the camera.<sup>395</sup>

This was much more difficult because of the decision **to show sexually explicit images rather than talking heads** only. Centeno asserts this was fundamental “due to the need to create that different collective imaginary (...) we wanted to put those images that have not been there, for we had no reference, no example of diverse bodies in sexual or pleasurable attitudes.”<sup>396</sup> They also wanted to cover different areas, such as intellectual diversity (story 5), paid sex (story 2), sexual assistance (story 6), and more conventional “romantic love” in the portrait of a heterosexual couple (story 2).

The filmmaker and activist admits that it was thanks to the contribution of researcher and anthropologist Andrea García-Santesmases, that he and de la Morena found out that there were people already working with diverse sexual representations in feminist postporn cinema. Centeno points out that it's not uncommon to find people with functional diversity in **mainstream pornography**. The problem is that “most of the time, functional diversity is there as an object at the service of other gazes, other desires, other pleasures that are not ours.”<sup>397</sup> In opposition, “what postporn tries to do is to take the visual language of the ordinary porn, which greatly shapes our idea of what sexuality is, and turn it around, politicise it and turn those who were objects into subjects who can express their own pleasure, their own desire.”<sup>398</sup>

García-Santesmases put them in touch with Diana “Pornoterrorista” and with the Post-Op Collective. She was also behind the two stories based on workshops (stories 1 and 4) and was in charge of the *Yes, We Fuck!* Facebook page. Centeno admits that her

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<sup>395</sup> “Sino era imposible conseguir que las personas pusiesen el cuerpo delante. Fue ahí, a partir de la complicidad, pues, de compartir activismo, de que se entendiese que era un proyecto político. Que no era hacer un producto de entretenimiento sino que, tenía que ver con crear una herramienta política. Y esa confianza personal y ese compromiso político lo hizo posible, no sin dificultades, desde luego, fue muy complicado también. Y por eso tardamos tanto también, en hacer el documental, porque muchas veces pasaban meses y meses en los que no conseguíamos que nadie se ofreciese ¿no?, a mostrarse delante de cámara.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>396</sup> “por la necesidad de crear ese imaginario colectivo diferente (...) queríamos poner esas imágenes que no estaban, que no teníamos ninguna referencia de cuerpos diversos en actitud sexual o de placer.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>397</sup> “casi siempre que eso ocurre, la diversidad funcional está allí como un objeto al servicio de otras miradas, de otros deseos, de otros placeres que no son los nuestros”. Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>398</sup> “El postporno lo que intenta hacer es coger el lenguaje visual del porno corriente que tanto configura nuestra idea de lo que es la sexualidad, y darle la vuelta, politizarlo y aquéllos que eran objetos, convertirlos en sujetos que enuncian su propio placer, su propio deseo.” Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

counselling was a landmark for the development of the film, because **they hadn't thought about the gender axis** when they started working on the project, but it became one of their main insights:

That **control over bodies is something that people with functional diversity and women suffer and have suffered**, right? Being told what to do and what not to do, that **denial of one's own pleasure and body** (...) These are not different struggles, in the end **the system is based on sexism because that ensures reproduction and on ableism because that ensures production**. Then it is inseparable, if we want to change the social system we have into another where we stop being units of reproduction and production, we must work on the two central issues because everything we advance in the fight against sexism will make it easier to fight against ableism, and reciprocally, everything that we manage to advance in breaking the idea that work dignifies, will also help in the fight against sexism.<sup>399</sup>

The production process of the film has been **a space for the encounter** of “these activisms that had been disconnected until then. There we found the opportunity to share, to see the political power of that meeting.”<sup>400</sup> However, it is important to point out that such a disconnection has never been absolute, as Lucas Platero points out: “there have always been people who inhabited the intersection of those oppressions and were aware of it” (in García-Santesmases et al. 2017: 279). Centeno describes the exchange between queer and crip activisms as **a gradual increase of both, the subjectivities included in the “we” and what was understood by the “fuck”** in the film's title:

In the “we” of the title, **different groups that share our political work on and from the body** (feminisms, transfeminisms, queer, functional diversity, fat

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<sup>399</sup> “Ese control sobre los cuerpos es algo que hemos sufrido y que sufrimos las personas con diversidad funcional, y que también sufren y habéis sufrido siempre las mujeres, ¿no? El deciros que sí, que no, esa negación del propio placer y del cuerpo (...) No son luchas distintas, al final el sistema se sostiene sobre la base del sexismo porque eso asegura la reproducción y sobre la base del capacitismo porque eso asegura la producción. Entonces es inseparable, si queremos cambiar el sistema social que tenemos, hacia otro donde dejemos de ser unidades de reproducción y de producción, pues hay que trabajar los dos ejes porque todo lo que avancemos en la lucha contra el sexismo hará más fácil la lucha contra el capacitismo y reciprocamente, todo lo que consigamos avanzar y romper esa idea de que el trabajo dignifica, pues también ayudará en la lucha contra el sexismo”. Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>400</sup> “estos activismos que habíamos estado desconectados hasta entonces. Y que ahí encontramos la oportunidad, pues de compartir, de ver la potencia política que había en ese encuentro.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

activism...) have come together. And the “fuck” has become more complex due to **our will, not to fit into the norm but to demolish it**, and make a valuable contribution to the necessary **transformation of the conceptualisation and experience of human sexuality** in general (Centeno 2014: 110).<sup>401</sup>

This is a very different approach from the one presented in the documentary produced by the Catalan Television, *Jo també vull sexe!/I also want sex!* (Armengou and Belis, 2016), in which they only raise the issue of sexual assistance so that the “charmed circle” (Rubin 1984; 2006: 152) of heteronormative sexuality remains unquestioned. This is also the case of the “White Hands” Japanese association, in which there are only women offering services as sexual assistants for men. In opinion of Centeno, the latter “is not a project that questions anything or that transforms anything, but rather reinforces and underpins what already exists.”<sup>402</sup>

They didn’t want to make a film that supported the idea “we can do it too, let us participate in this wonderful thing you have.”<sup>403</sup> What they discovered **in alliance with the queer and transfeminists subjects** is that “a sexuality that includes all these realities about functional diversity is surely a sexuality that will offer more possibilities, a rich and interesting experience for the population as a whole.”<sup>404</sup>

In this sense, Centeno thinks that it was a good decision to have a woman as the main character in the story about **sexual assistance** (story 6). He remarks the difference between prostitution and sexual assistance: while in the first case one has access to another body, in the second case, one only has access to her/his own body. As part of his experience in an organisation for sexual assistance self-management in Barcelona, he has noticed that there are **very few women with functional diversity who request this service**: “It is not easy because men do feel, well, or we feel more legitimised to have

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<sup>401</sup> “En el ‘we’ del título nos hemos ido identificando y encontrando diferentes grupos que compartimos el hacer trabajo político sobre y desde el cuerpo (feminismos, transfeminismos, queer, diversidad funcional, activismo gordx...). Y el ‘fuck’ se ha ido complejizando desde la voluntad no de encajar en la norma sino de demolerla y hacer una aportación valiosa a la necesaria transformación de la conceptualización y vivencia de la sexualidad humana en general.”

<sup>402</sup> “No es un proyecto que cuestione nada o que transforme nada, sino que refuerza y apuntala lo que ya hay.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>403</sup> “nosotros también podemos, dejadnos participar en esto tan maravilloso que tenéis.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>404</sup> “una sexualidad que incluye a todas estas realidades sobre diversidad funcional, seguramente es una sexualidad que va a ofrecer más posibilidades, una vivencia rica e interesante al conjunto de la población.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

desire (...) On the other hand, women, well, they have learned, they have been taught that no, that desire was not theirs to claim.”<sup>405</sup>

Soledad Arnau, the woman with functional diversity who appears in this story, a philosopher and feminist activist, regarded her participation in the film as political: “We frequently commit ourselves to making speeches and, sometimes, they do not have as strong an impact as images (...) it is good that the body can also demand other ways of feeling, other ways of perceiving reality.”<sup>406</sup> She shares Centeno’s idea about the parallelism between the **fight against sexism and ableism**:

The fact that we have positioned ourselves in terms of genders, in plural, **genders beyond the binary system**, I think is also enormously enriching (...) **Everybody is educated in male chauvinism and ableism**. Therefore, those two pillars are established in the minds of all people. Having the ability to deconstruct that, and that is a real ability, is one of the contributions that “Yes, We Fuck!” makes. To see how these different human realities are intertwined and that we are all really claiming the same thing, which is **being able to be and exist through our differences, through our singularities** and why not, through our pleasures.<sup>407</sup>

Centeno admits that he became a feminist while making this film. For him, it is more politically effective to talk about **diversity and differences than to talk about equality**, even if at the end of the day, the goal is the same: “It is precisely because we are different that you have to treat us differently so that we are equal in rights.”<sup>408</sup> In his opinion, *Yes*,

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<sup>405</sup> “no es nada fácil porque los varones sí se sienten, a ver, o nos sentimos más legitimados para tener deseo (...) En cambio las mujeres, bueno, han aprendido, se les ha enseñado a que no, no les correspondía eso del deseo”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>406</sup> “Muchas veces nos dedicamos a hacer discursos y pues, algunas veces no llegan tanto como las imágenes (...) está bien que también el cuerpo pueda reclamar otras maneras de sentir, otras maneras de percibir la realidad.” Soledad Arnau. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>407</sup> “El que nos hayamos posicionado en temas de géneros, en plural, géneros más allá del sistema binario también, creo que es enormemente enriquecedor (...) todas las personas estamos educadas desde el machismo y desde el capacitismo, por tanto, esos dos pilares los llevamos en la mente todas las personas. Tener la capacidad para deconstruirlo, esa sí que es una capacidad, es uno de los aportes que quizá hace el documental de *Yes, We Fuck!* El ver cómo esas distintas realidades humanas se van entrecruzando y realmente todas estamos reclamando lo mismo, y es el poder ser y estar, desde nuestras diferencias, desde nuestras singularidades y por qué no, desde nuestros placeres.” Soledad Arnau. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>408</sup> “Justamente porque somos diferentes nos tienes que tratar diferente para que seamos iguales en derechos.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

*We Fuck!* is a **feminist documentary** because it “raises the conflict of oppression by gender and shows ways to fight against this oppression.”<sup>409</sup> He elaborates on this:

I understand it as a deeply feminist documentary, even if we didn't have that in mind at the beginning, but in the process of doing it, finding the people, the stories, it ended up like this. I mean, our experience is that **it is impossible to make an anti-ableism documentary**, to make a documentary that fights against the oppression of ableism, **without it being feminist**.<sup>410</sup>

Even though he doesn't connect it directly with feminist filmmaking, he insists on the importance of **situating his gaze** and of getting involved with the reality he films. His vision of objectivity echoes Barad's aforementioned definition: “Objectivity, instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies, and responsibility to the entanglements of which we are a part” (in Dolphjin and Van Der Tuin 2012: 52). He describes **the filmmaking process as a series of intra-actions**, which is in line with my understanding of documentary as a diffraction apparatus:

When you make a documentary there is no objective position, what exists is your position and what you have to do is to explain it as best as possible (...) part of the work is that, in the process of making the documentary, there is a reflection on what has been your interaction with that reality that you intend to reflect, right? **How that reality has transformed you, how you have also transformed that reality** (...) to say “my position is this and I am looking from here, I come from here, my background is this, my ghosts are these, I am obsessed with these things and well, my process has been this”. To situate, **to situate what your gaze is**.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>409</sup>“plantea el conflicto de la opresión por género y que muestra vías de lucha contra esa opresión.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>410</sup>“Lo entiendo como un documental profundamente feminista, te digo, sin que en el planteamiento inicial estuviese en nuestra cabeza, sino que en el proceso de hacerlo, encontrando las personas, las historias, fue así. Es decir, nuestra experiencia es que es imposible hacer un documental anticapacitista, hacer un documental que luche contra la opresión del capacitismo, sin que sea feminista.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>411</sup> “cuando haces un documental no existe una posición objetiva, lo que existe es tu posición y lo que tienes que hacer es explicarla lo mejor posible (...) parte del trabajo es que en ese proceso de hacer el documental, haya una reflexión sobre cuál ha sido tu interacción con esa realidad que pretendes reflejar, ¿no? Cómo eso te ha transformado a ti, cómo tu has transformado también a esa realidad (...) decir ‘mi posición es ésta y yo estoy mirando desde aquí, vengo de aquí, mi background es éste, mis fantasmas



Talking about the first story, the Post-Op Collective workshop, Centeno admits that he had planned to stay behind the camera. However, Urko and Majo made him aware of the importance of taking part in the activity like the rest of the filmed subjects:

So I participated in the workshop, not because of conviction, because I did not see clearly how it would be or if I was going to be comfortable. And it was an experience, I don't know how to say it, but **a very powerful one, very liberating and very different from what I could have imagined.**<sup>412</sup>

De la Morena established from the beginning that he wouldn't show the recorded material to the filmed subjects before the final cut. According to Centeno, everybody has been satisfied with the result, with two exceptions: a female participant in the workshop from story 1, who asked not to be shown because she felt that the project was **not feminist**, and the main character of a story about paid sex that they had recorded before working with Linda and Oriol, who decided that she didn't want her story to be included in the film. Both women felt uncomfortable with the ways in which the two male directors were making boundaries and cuts within the recorded phenomena. The first one called the film "machirulo" (a Spanish pejorative term meaning male chauvinist), while the second one felt vulnerable in the way she was exposed. For Centeno, this is symptomatic of "how bad our relationship with our body is, right? It seems to us that this is what puts our identity, our social position, at stake the most. We know that the body continues to be that which can receive further social punishment."<sup>413</sup>

Among the filmed subjects who have openly expressed their **satisfaction with the final result**, we find Urko and Majo, the main characters of the first story. They created the Post-Op Collective in Barcelona with a transfeminist perspective: "we start from a pro-sex feminism and a political subject that goes beyond the category woman" (Post-Op Collective 2013: 197).<sup>414</sup> Since 2003, they have produced postporn films, participated in

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son éstos, estoy obsesionado con estas cosas y bueno, mi proceso ha sido este'. Situar, situar cuál es tu mirada". Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>412</sup> "Entonces participé en el taller, no por convicción, porque no veía claro cómo iba a ser eso ni si iba a estar cómodo. Y fue una experiencia, no sé cómo decirlo, pero muy potente, muy liberadora y muy diferente a lo que yo podía proyectar." Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>413</sup> "cómo de mal tenemos la relación con el cuerpo, ¿no? Nos parece que es lo más, lo que pone más en juego nuestra, nuestra identidad, nuestra posición social. Lo que sabemos que puede recibir más castigo social sigue siendo el cuerpo". Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>414</sup> "nosotrxs partimos de un feminismo prosexo y de un sujeto político que va mas allá de la categoría mujer."

postporn performances and organised postporn workshops. By postporn they understand “a movement that seeks to promote self-representations of dissenting practices and corporealities” (in García-Santesmases et al. 2017: 272).

The open call for the Post-Op workshop that appears in *Yes, We Fuck!* was made online, and it was the first one that Majo and Urko organised for people with functional diversity. As such, it provided them with various lessons, including the need to strengthen the queer-crip alliance. As an effect of their involvement in this film, they have developed the project “Pornortopedia”, focused on creating prosthesis and sex toys that include “bodies with unusual mobilities and sensitivities” (Post-Op Collective 2013: 201).<sup>415</sup>

Soledad Arnau, the main character of the story that raises the issue of sexual assistance, has also publicly expressed her positive feelings towards having participated in the film. She wrote a short piece based on her experience, which is published on the *Yes, We Fuck!* Tumblr page: “You come willing to look at me, to observe me with your camera (...) My nipples, my pussy, my belly. My hair. These words had never been part of my geopolitics, I did not know they existed. I have just discovered them. Those hands, which are being filmed, have supported me to find them.”<sup>416</sup> In a Q&A session after a screening that I organised at the University of Granada, Arnau thanked the filmmakers for having given her the chance to take part in this documentary:

For me it has been very positive. All the stories have enriched me a great deal, and of course mine, well, I would not change the experience I had for anything, what I felt in that screening. Because for me it was like a before and after. I think it’s a beautiful way to learn to love oneself, to love oneself even more, if I already loved myself then even more, and also to love the body because in the end, I think **it’s impossible to love yourself if you do not love your body** (...) To have a body is not something problematic, I believe it is the most beautiful thing in the world to have a body and to be able to enjoy it. And fortunately **the documentary is an example, it shows that bodies are enjoyable.**<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> “cuerpos con movilidades y sensibilidades poco usuales.”

<sup>416</sup> “Vienes dispuesto a mirarme, a observarme con tu cámara (...) Mis pezones, mi coño, mi vientre. Mi cabello. Estos vocablos nunca habían formado parte de mi geopolítica, no sabía que existían. Acabo de descubrirlos. Esas manos, que están siendo grabadas, me han apoyado para encontrarlos.” *Yes, We Fuck!* Tumblr page. Date of access: January 2019.

<<http://yeswefuckblog.tumblr.com/post/117440234759/desde-mi-coño-desde-mi-desnudez>>.

<sup>417</sup> “Para mí ha sido algo muy positivo. Todas las historias me enriquecen muchísimo y desde luego la mía, bueno, no cambiaría por nada del mundo la vivencia que viví, que sentí en esa proyección. Porque

Centeno and de la Morena knew that by showing sexually explicit images with functional diversity bodies and by questioning gender binaries, they were making a film that could be **disturbing for mainstream audiences**. They found themselves in the tension between wanting to reach a wide public and being aware that “if you eliminate any roughness so that it ends up being what is the simplest, the most acceptable, the most digestible, then in the end you have something that has no power to transform anything. You end up offering what people already have in their heads.”<sup>418</sup>

They have been **censored** on Youtube, Vimeo, Dailymotion, Gmail, Flickr and Facebook, but have managed to find ways back, e.g. in their mail address they had to leave out the letter “u” of the word “fuck”. As for January 2019, their Facebook page has 14,678 likes. In this space they share crip-queer activities, as well as information from various international sources that contextualise local encounters within a wider dynamic (García-Santesmases et al. 2017). As a matter of fact, the way in which I found out about two screenings that I attended as part of this research project was through the Facebook page. Another virtual platform that they have used is Tumblr, which has helped to address the issue of disseminating personal testimonies, anonymously in most of the cases (García-Santesmases et al. 2017).

The Portuguese television bought *Yes, We Fuck!* before the Catalan **public television**, which didn’t accept to screen the film until 2018. Interestingly, the film was the most seen program in Barcelona the day it was aired. Bearing this in mind, Centeno asserts: “public television should take note that *this paternalistic idea that society is not prepared* for these things, *is perhaps a prejudice* of people who make decisions about how culture is distributed.”<sup>419</sup> TV3, the main television channel of Catalan public broadcaster Televisió de Catalunya, produced its own film, the aforementioned *Jo també vull sexe!* The main character of this film attends a screening of *Yes, We Fuck!* and

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para mí fue como un antes y un después. Yo creo que es una forma preciosa de aprender a quererse a una misma, a quererse más todavía, si ya me quería pues ahora más todavía, y bueno también a querer al cuerpo porque al final, creo que es imposible quererte si no te quieres el cuerpo (...) realmente no es nada problemático, es lo más hermoso del mundo tener un cuerpo, creo yo y poder disfrutar de este cuerpo. Y afortunadamente el documental es un ejemplo de que los cuerpos son disfrutables.” Soledad Arnau. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>418</sup> “Si vas eliminando asperezas para que quede lo más simple, lo más aceptable, lo más digerible, entonces al final te queda algo que no tiene ningún poder de transformar nada. Acabas ofreciendo lo que la gente ya tiene en la cabeza.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>419</sup> “las televisiones públicas deberían tomar nota de que esa idea paternalista de que la sociedad no está preparada para estas cosas, a lo mejor es un prejuicio de la gente que toma decisiones sobre cómo se distribuye la cultura.” Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

Centeno is one of the interviewees. In the Tumblr page, Centeno condemned the decision of showing a documentary about American men looking for wives in Ukraine (*Estima'm*) after *Jo també vull sexe!*, instead of screening *Yes, We Fuck!* De la Morena harshly criticised the TV3 film, which aired in 2017:

What is unacceptable is the gaze, the gaze of a documentary that made me cry with rage, the gaze of a documentary that cornered the figure of male and female whores, where they show the tits of female assistants (...) where there is no other possibility than the man-woman binomial, where sex is shoved into a corner by the bourgeois-Catholic air typical of some sectors of power within Catalan society, which in this documentary seeps through all its pores. **To lend images of YWF in this documentary was to get the only fee that TV3 has given us**, a channel that has never accepted to screen YWF, a channel that never wanted to touch nor open the door to what we said, nor to what we were doing.<sup>420</sup>

As aforementioned, in the end, TV3 accepted to screen *Yes, We Fuck!* three years after it was made. Despite limitations and difficulties, Centeno reckons that they have managed to reach more people than they had originally imagined. Before uploading it for free on the Internet,<sup>421</sup> they tried to show it in as many festivals and platforms as possible, so as to **reach people who would not have had interest in the film** in the first place:

We have reached all the people we wanted to reach, right? **At the political level, at the level of activism, at the social level, at the level of functional diversity, at the level of sexology, at the cultural level.** In all those areas we have impacted in a powerful way, and it's a known project and it had the effect we wanted, right? **But at the level of the general public we haven't got it**, we haven't got this to be seen in cinemas (...) We must try to put the documentary

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<sup>420</sup> “Lo que es inaceptable es la mirada, la mirada de un documental que me hizo llorar de rabia, la mirada de un documental que arrincona la figura de las putas y putos, donde me enseña las tetas de las asistentes mujeres (...) donde no cabe otra posibilidad que el binomio hombre-mujer, donde el sexo es arrinconado por el aire burgués-católico típico de algunos sectores de poder de la sociedad catalana, que en este documental supura por todos sus poros. Salir y prestar imágenes de YWF en este documental era tener la única cuota que nos ha prestado TV3, canal que nunca ha aceptado emitir YWF, canal que nunca ha querido tocar ni abrir la puerta a lo que decíamos y estábamos haciendo.” *Yes, We Fuck!* Tumblr page. Date of access: January 2019.

<<http://yeswefuck-blog.tumblr.com/post/153855924839/cartas-a-tv3-de-los-directores-de-ywf>>.

<sup>421</sup> Vimeo website. As for January 2019, *Yes, We Fuck!* has been played 55,400 times. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://vimeo.com/123177395>>.

in front of people who do not care (...) many people have seen us, right? But only people who already had an interest.<sup>422</sup>

Their **distribution company** is 3BoxMedia, which specialises in television and online platforms. In 2015, they presented the film at the Centre for Contemporary Art and Culture in Barcelona and at the “Reina Sofia” Art Museum in Madrid. In both venues they had an audience of more than 400 people (García-Santesmases et al. 2017). *Yes, We Fuck!* is available on Filmin, a video-on-demand platform that operates in Spain, Portugal and Mexico. By January 2019, it has received thirty positive comments and a general evaluation of 8,4. The most common adjectives used to describe it are: indispensable/necessary (13), brave (6) and a breakthrough film (5). Three comments underline the fact that everybody should watch it:

It teaches many things for people who do not have functional diversity, since all people are diverse. / It is necessary in today’s society to understand that one of the parts of people’s quality of life is their sexuality and we cannot remove this very personal dimension from anyone. It is impressive on many occasions and breaks with the preconceived models of sexuality: coitocentric, heteronormative. / A very necessary documentary for empathising, growing and expanding our vision of sexuality. Thank you.<sup>423</sup>

General film festivals have rejected it, but it has been screened in sixteen **independent, LGBT, erotic and functional diversity festivals**, receiving awards in three of them. In 2015: Berlin Porn Film Festival (Best Documentary), “Fish and Chips” Turin Film Festival (Best Documentary), FlixxFest International Film Festival (Best Documentary LGBT), “L’Alternativa” Barcelona Independent Film Festival, Creative Commons

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<sup>422</sup> “hemos llegado a toda la gente que quisiéramos llegar, ¿no?, es decir, a nivel político, a nivel activista, a nivel social, a nivel de la diversidad funcional, a nivel de la sexología, a nivel de la cultura. En todos esos ámbitos hemos impactado de manera potente y es un proyecto conocido y ha tenido el efecto que queríamos ¿no? Pero a nivel de público general no hemos conseguido, no, no hemos conseguido, no hemos conseguido que esto se vea en los cines (...) hay que intentar colocar el documental delante de la gente que no nos pela (...) nos ha visto mucha gente ¿no?, pero solamente nos ha visto la gente que ya tiene un interés.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>423</sup> “Enseña muchas cosas para las personas que no tienen diversidad funcional, ya que todas las personas somos diversas. / Necesario en la sociedad de hoy en día. Entender que una de las partes de la calidad de vida de las personas es su sexualidad y no podemos quitar esta dimensión tan personal a nadie. Es impresionante impactante en muchas ocasiones y rompe con los modelos preconcebidos de la sexualidad: coitocéntricos, heteronormativos / Documental muy necesario para empatizar, para crecer y ampliar nuestra visión de la sexualidad. Gracias.” Filmin website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.filmin.es/pelicula/yes-we-fuck?origin=searcher&origin-type=primary>>.

Barcelona Film Festival, “Inclús” Barcelona International Film and Disability Festival, Holy Fuck Amsterdam Pornographic Film Festival, “This Human World” Vienna International Human Rights Film Festival, Cine//B Santiago de Chile Festival, Lesbisch Schwule Filmtage Hamburg/ International Queer Film Festival, Cineeuropa Festival, “Imperfectu” Festival in Mexico, Capacities Festival in Tenerife, and the postporn festival “Muestra Marrana” in Spain, Mexico City and Quito. In 2016: the BFI Flare London LGBT Film Festival, “La Fete du Spip” Lussane Festival, and the PopPorn Sao Paolo Film Festival.

Centeno describes the **reactions from the public as very enthusiastic**, but emphasises that there’s **a strong bias** in the sense that most of these people are already interested in the issue and have actively looked for the film:

Many expressions of gratitude in the sense of feeling that these stories are needed so that people can deal with their own things (...) People crying, but not the usual crying associated with functional diversity of “look, what a pity, look at that, thank goodness I’m fine.” But **crying with the thrill of encountering unresolved things related to their bodies, their sexuality** (...) We have garnered lots of enthusiasm from **many people who have identified with this kind of war cry** of *Yes, We Fuck!* Right? Of saying “yes, at last, let’s say it, let’s do it together” (...) there was that need, right? Of this positioning and creating this almost initiatory moment of speaking about sexual rights.<sup>424</sup>

He describes the reactions from the audiences as positive. What he deems negative is the fact that they “haven’t caused much of a stir, I mean, I expected, I expected sessions of people insulting us, complaining, throwing tomatoes at us. This has not happened, has it? I mean, people who did not like it did not dare to express themselves.”<sup>425</sup> **Censorship and rejection** have taken place a priori, in the sense of not wanting to see the film or to hear anything about it. Regarding the possibility of being accused of making an

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<sup>424</sup> “Muchas muestras de agradecimiento en el sentido de, de sentir que ese tipo de historias hacen falta para que la gente pueda trabajar sus propias cosas (...) Gente llorando, pero no el llanto habitual asociado a la diversidad funcional de “mira, que pena, mira que tal, menos mal que yo estoy bien”. Sino llanto con la emoción de encontrarse con cosas no resueltas vinculadas a su cuerpo, a su sexualidad (...) Hemos conseguido un entusiasmo en mucha gente que se ha identificado con esta especie de grito de guerra de *Yes, We Fuck!* ¿no?, de sí hostia, por fin, vamos a decir, vamos a hacerlo juntos (...) había mucho esa necesidad, ¿no? De este posicionamiento y como de crear este momento casi como iniciático de, de hablar de los derechos sexuales”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>425</sup> “hemos molestado poco, es decir, yo esperaba, esperaba sesiones de gente insultándonos, quejándose, tirándonos tomates. Esto no ha ocurrido, ¿no? O sea, realmente la gente que no le ha gustado no se ha atrevido a expresarse”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

exploitation film, i.e. a film that attempts to attract attention by exploiting lurid content, Centeno opposes the empowered discourses of the filmed subjects, for example “when Linda speaks with that strength, when Oriol speaks with that clarity.”<sup>426</sup>

The most **controversial issue** raised by the film has been that of stories three and six: sex work and sexual assistance. Such controversy echoes the strong feminist debate about the abolition of prostitution or its legalisation as sex work, expressed in the steps towards the abolition of prostitution taken recently by the Spanish socialist government and their contestation from sex workers associations, attempting to create a sex workers trade union. A male reader of the article “*Yes, We Fuck! Pleasure and Sex for People with Functional Diversity*”, published on the Spanish digital newspaper *Cuartopoder*, expresses his rejection in these terms: “That film is a patriarchal political statement disguised as misunderstood empathy. Prostitution is renamed feminism or ‘assistance’. The social and sexual power of the actors is underestimated. What a way to treat such an important topic! A misfortune of neoliberalism.”<sup>427</sup>

In the “Tribuna Feminista” (Feminist Tribune) website, three articles against sexual assistance have been published, but the film is not mentioned: “Sexual Services for People with Disabilities? The Dangerous Compassion” (January 2017), originally written in French by Catherine Albertini, translated by Traductoras para la abolición de la prostitución (Translators for the abolition of prostitution); “Five Myths about Sexual Assistance” (April 2017) by Ana Pollán; and “Who Listens to Women with Disabilities about ‘Sexual Assistance’?” (January 2018) by Tasia Aránguez Sánchez.<sup>428</sup>

The first article asserts that the claim for sexual assistance is a way of granting male “‘natural’ right over the body of women.”<sup>429</sup> The second article also argues against sexual assistance in the same terms as if it was prostitution or even sex trafficking. The

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<sup>426</sup> “cuando Linda habla con esa contundencia, cuando Oriol habla con esa claridad”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>427</sup> “Esa película es una declaración política patriarcal disfrazado de una empatía malentendida. La prostitución se renombra feminismo o ‘asistencia’. Se subestima el poder social y sexual de los actores. Cual manera de tratar un tema tan importante! Una desgracia del neoliberalismo.” *Cuartopoder* newspaper website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.cuartopoder.es/sociedad/2015/04/11/yes-we-fuck-placer-y-sexo-en-personas-con-diversidad-funcional/5253/>>.

<sup>428</sup> “¿Servicios sexuales para personas con discapacidad? La compasión peligrosa”, “Cinco mitos sobre la asistencia sexual” y “¿Quién escucha a las mujeres con discapacidad sobre la ‘asistencia sexual’?” “Tribuna Feminista” website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.tribunafeminista.org/2017/01/servicios-sexuales-para-personas-con-discapacidad-la-compasion-peligrosa/>>, <<http://www.tribunafeminista.org/2017/04/cinco-mitos-sobre-la-asistencia-sexual/>> and <<https://tribunafeminista.elplural.com/2018/01/quien-escucha-a-las-mujeres-con-discapacidad-sobre-la-asistencia-sexual/>>.

<sup>429</sup> “el derecho ‘natural’ sobre el cuerpo de las mujeres.” “Tribuna Feminista” website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.tribunafeminista.org/2017/01/servicios-sexuales-para-personas-con-discapacidad-la-compasion-peligrosa/>>.

author insists on the fact that sex and desire are not rights nor needs, and that disability is being used as an excuse for men “to have free access to women’s bodies.”<sup>430</sup> The third article defends the thesis that “sexual neoliberalism uses people with disabilities as an argument in favour of the prostitution business”<sup>431</sup>. The author argues that the fight for sexual assistance totally ignores women and that the most important battle should be against sexual violence. She wonders why nobody listens to disabled women. Paradoxically, Soledad Arnau, the quadriplegic woman who appears in the story about sexual assistance, totally supports its legalisation and highlights the need “to demand that everybody’s human rights and sexual rights are respected.”<sup>432</sup>

Centeno is in favour of the legalisation of prostitution and, within the Spanish Independent Life Movement, has defended **sexual assistance as a right** for people with functional diversity. As aforementioned, both are types of sex work, but with important differences:

The sexual assistant doesn’t engage in sexual practices with the person with functional diversity, except from masturbating. Why just that? Because that’s the limit of the right to access to one’s own body (....) Neither people with functional diversity nor anyone has the right to access other bodies (....) **Other bodies are accessed through agreement, not by right.** (Centeno 2014: 111).<sup>433</sup>

He also argues: “Those in favour of the abolition of prostitution can incorporate the reality of functional diversity into the process of constructing a general human sexuality that is rich and appreciative of difference, so as to eliminate the demand for sexual

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<sup>430</sup> “para tener libre acceso al cuerpo de las mujeres.” “Tribuna Feminista” website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.tribunafeminista.org/2017/04/cinco-mitos-sobre-la-asistencia-sexual/>>. A feminist blogger from Valencia called “4Estriada Estelada”, wrote a response against Pollán’s article in her blog “Sister Blister”. She basically argues in favour of sexual rights, autonomy and freedom. “Respuesta a cinco mitos sobre la asistencia sexual.” Blogger website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://companyasororitat.blogspot.com/2017/08/respuesta-cinco-mitos-sobre-la.html>>.

<sup>431</sup> “El neoliberalismo sexual utiliza a las personas con discapacidad como argumento a favor del negocio de la prostitución.” “Tribuna Feminista” website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://tribunafeminista.elplural.com/2018/01/quien-escucha-a-las-mujeres-con-discapacidad-sobre-la-asistencia-sexual/>>.

<sup>432</sup> “exigir que los derechos humanos y los derechos sexuales se respeten”. Soledad Arnau. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>433</sup> “El asistente sexual no realiza prácticas sexuales con la persona con diversidad funcional, excepto masturbarle. ¿Por qué hasta aquí? Porque hasta aquí llega la materialización del derecho al acceso al propio cuerpo (....) Ni las personas con diversidad funcional ni nadie tiene derecho al acceso a otros cuerpos (....) A los otros cuerpos se accede por acuerdo, no por derecho.”



services beyond police repression” (Centeno 2014: 109).<sup>434</sup> Both, Centeno and Arnau, reject paternalistic, victimising and criminalising approaches.

Sexual assistance is also the main topic of the fiction film *Vivir y otras ficciones/Living and Other Fictions* (2016), directed by Jo Sol. In 2010, Sol had directed the documentary film *Fake Orgasm*, about the transgender artist and activist Lazlo Pearlman. Centeno plays the main role in *Vivir y otras ficciones*, a man who sets up a service for sexual assistance in his house. As part of their crowdfunding and marketing campaign, Sol and Centeno created a fake piece of news about the legalisation of sexual assistance in Barcelona, and many people thought it was real. They consider this a big achievement in as much as they succeeded “in making believe possible a claim that until then didn’t even exist on the political agenda.”<sup>435</sup> They also made a series of short videos called “I masturbate” and fake magazine covers with the concept “Crip Pride”.

As part of this research project, I attended two **screenings** of *Yes, We Fuck!* and organised a third one in Granada. The first one took place on November the 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the framework of an encounter of sexology and functional diversity held at the Granadian Federation of People with Physical and Organic Disability (FEGRADI). The open call for the event was published on Facebook by sexologist and functional diversity specialist, Eduardo Perujo. There was a fee of five euros in order to pay for Centeno’s travel and accommodation and, after the event, Perujo published the list with the names of the fifty-seven people who contributed. He also shared the comments that he got from six people who attended. All of them thanked him for the event, **expressed how the film affected them and highlighted the importance of rendering visible these issues:**

Woman: The event doesn’t leave you indifferent; refreshing of conscience, sweet, it presents reality without sermonizing; direct, kind and exciting. **It changes outdated roles, opens minds** and gives the space needed so that we can all love each other more and better (...). **A necessary multidisciplinary gaze** that provides the opportunity to enjoy life a little more.

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<sup>434</sup> “Quien esté por la abolición de la prostitución, puede incorporar la realidad de la diversidad funcional al proceso de construir una sexualidad humana general suficientemente rica y positivamente apreciadora de la diferencia como para eliminar la demanda de servicios sexuales más allá de la represión policial.”

<sup>435</sup> “logramos hacer creer como posible una reivindicación que hasta entonces ni tan solo existía en la agenda política.” Crowdfunding campaign for *Vivir y otras ficciones*. Verkami website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://www.verkami.com/projects/13425-vivir-y-otras-ficciones>>.

Woman: Beyond taboos, prejudices and wherever one decides to stand on this subject, there's the becoming aware and **opening one's eyes to a reality that exists and needs to find answers** (...) it has left me thinking.

Man: For me, it was one of those days that won't be forgotten in a lifetime, due to all of **the emotions the interventions, the documentary, aroused within me** (...) everything was amazing!

Man: Many opinions can be expressed about the documentary *Yes, We Fuck!*, but for me the most important thing is that **it is a way to "upset the applecart", "to show up and be heard"** (...) I would like some authority (political-judicial-ecclesiastical) to take up the challenge that this documentary has just set them.<sup>436</sup>

The encounter at Fegradi began with an introduction about sexology and functional diversity, given by Perujo. This was followed by the presentation of Aierotic Seville, an organisation that facilitates sexual assistance, and the screening of the short film *Estela* produced by ASPACE, a non-profit entity that works with cerebral palsy. Throughout the session there was a sign language interpreter for deaf people, and Centeno apologised to the people with visual impairment (two women) for the lack of an accessible technology to the film's audio guide.

There were seven women and one man with functional diversity. Most of the spectators were social workers and/or sexologists. Centeno presented *Yes, We Fuck!*, narrating how it took him thirty years to get over "that gaze which turns difference into something pathological."<sup>437</sup> In this sense, with making this film, his intention is that such

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<sup>436</sup> "La jornada no te deja indiferente, renovadora de conciencias, dulce, presenta la realidad sin dar lecciones, directa, amable y emocionante. Cambia los roles anticuados, abre mentes y da un espacio necesario para que todos nos podamos querer más y mejor (...) Una mirada multidisciplinar necesaria que brinda la oportunidad de disfrutar un poquitín más de la vida / Más allá de los tabúes, prejuicios y el lugar donde uno decida pararse frente a este tema, esta sensibilizarse y abrir los ojos a una realidad que existe y necesita encontrar respuestas (...) Al menos en mí, me ha dejado pensando / Para mí fue uno de estos días que no se olvidan en la vida por todas las emociones que me despertaron las intervenciones, el documental (...) fue todo brutal!/ Sobre el documental *Yes, We Fuck!* se pueden decir o dar muchas opiniones, pero para mí lo más importante es que es una forma de "patear el tablero", "mostrarse y ser oídos" (...) Me gustaría que alguna autoridad (política-judicial-eclésiástica) recogiera el guante que le acaban de echar a la cara con este documental". Testimonies publicly shared by Eduardo Perujo (Dubi Perujo) on his Facebook profile. Date of access: January 2019.

<sup>437</sup> "Esa mirada que convierte la diferencia en patológico". Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

a process “does not take people thirty years, and that they have tools, possibilities, to find a break point with that speech of a unique reality.”<sup>438</sup>

The second screening was also in Granada, in a bar called “La Qarmita”, where various transfeminist activities are organised on a regular basis. It took place on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017, it was free and approximately forty people, whose ages ranged between 20 and 35, attended. Centeno couldn’t travel from Barcelona but he briefly introduced the film via Skype, emphasising that it was made as “a political commitment that would give us a tool to move things; which is what makes those who appear in the film participate in the most difficult way, that is, with their bodies.”<sup>439</sup> After the screening, two young women from “La Qarmita” facilitated a discussion.

The third screening took place within the framework of a dissemination event of the GRACE project, which I organised at the University of Granada on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018. Antonio Centeno presented the film and took part in a Q&A session with the spectators, who were approximately sixty people. Ten people had functional diversity, and the rest were mostly social work or gender students. Soledad Arnau, the main character of the sixth story (the one about sexual assistance), also took part in the Q&A via Skype. I have quoted some of their interventions all along this section.

The **reactions in the three screenings were mostly positive and enthusiastic**. However, it is important to point out, as Centeno explains, that the people who attended were already interested in the film, either due to their work within the field of sexology and functional diversity, or because of their activism as (trans)feminists. At Fegradi, nine people asked questions or made comments, two men and seven women, among which two with functional diversity. The recurring theme was **the importance of education** about these issues and a wide dissemination of the film:

Man: It should be **screened everywhere, in educational centres too**. I also work in the field of disability. Have you thought of a sexual assistant who has functional diversity and could be incorporated in that way workwise?

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<sup>438</sup> “esto no le lleve a la gente treinta años y que haya herramientas, posibilidades para que la gente encuentre punto de ruptura con ese discurso de la realidad única”. Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>439</sup> “un compromiso político que nos diese una herramienta para mover cosas, que es lo que hace que la gente que aparece en el filme participe de la manera más difícil que es poniendo el cuerpo.” Antonio Centeno. Skype presentation. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

Woman with visual impairment: I think that these types of documentaries should be shown **in schools, especially in high school**, because adolescence is when you start to see, let's say, people with disabilities, in a different way (...) yes, it is true that they give talks about sex, and also talks about disability, but they never unite them.

Young man: It's mostly educational. **You have to teach this; because people with disabilities or without disabilities, the first step to sex is through the porn that you see for free** on your computer or on your mobile. Which is mainstream porn, exclusive and sexist porn. Hence this education at school-level, at college-level. Even for parents.<sup>440</sup>

Centeno joked about the fact that there's no high school that would allow the showing of the film. He agreed on the importance of institutional education with materials that take into account human diversity, but emphasised that **the main work has to be carried out in the informal everyday spaces** and in the construction of situations that allow for people with functional diversity to **learn through direct experience**. From his perspective, it is there where *Yes, We Fuck!* can have an impact:

**If tools such as the documentary manage to have that effect, of making us consider people with functional diversity as sexual beings, as sexed beings, as bodies that desire, as bodies that are desirable, then the main learning should take place in those spaces of everyday coexistence (...)** it's okay to talk about it, it's an important part of that change, but what is fundamental is for us to create spaces, experiences, situations, where we can have that coexistence and that experience of sharing sexuality, either with functional diversity, or without it, all together.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> “Debería verse en todos los sitios, además en centros educativos también. Yo también trabajo en el ámbito de la discapacidad. ¿Habéis pensado en algún asistente que tenga diversidad funcional e incorporarle de esa forma laboralmente? / Yo creo que estos tipos de documentales se deberían de poner en las escuelas, sobre todo en los institutos porque la adolescencia es cuando se empieza a ver digamos, a la gente con discapacidad, de una forma diferente (...) sí que es verdad que dan charlas de sexo y también charlas de discapacidad pero nunca lo unen / Principalmente es educativo. Esto, hay que educar, porque personas con discapacidad o sin discapacidad, la forma de conocer el sexo es mediante el porno que tú ves gratuito en tu ordenador o en tu móvil. Que es el porno mainstream, un porno muy excluyente, machista. Entonces, esta educación a nivel de escuelas, colegios, institutos. Incluso para padres.” Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>441</sup> “Si herramientas como el documental consiguen hacer ese efecto, de que pensemos a las personas con diversidad funcional como seres sexuales, como seres sexuados, como cuerpos que desean, como cuerpos que son deseables, en esos espacios de convivencia debería de hacerse el principal aprendizaje

He concluded something similar at the end of the screening at the University of Granada. The documentary, from this point of view, is a tool among many others through which actual **material changes have to take place in everybody's experiences**. What we can call a diffraction apparatus that must engage in the co-creation of the worlds we inhabit:

In the end, **the only way to change this situation is not a speech, nor is it a documentary. It is experience**. Getting to coexist on a daily basis with these realities too, I mean, so that these people who think differently and see the world differently are not segregated in special schools, special homes, but are present in general schools with the support they need, that their housing in the community has the support they need and that they become part of the community and that we interact with them on a daily basis. I think that is the only thing that has the power to truly change our perception of this experience. Everything else can help, **having brilliant speeches helps, making nice documentaries helps, but the only thing that really has a transforming power is everyday experience**, I think. The problem with that is that if it works, it works slowly.<sup>442</sup>

A woman with functional diversity raised the issue of the role played by relatives, who many times “do not give you information because they want to protect you.”<sup>443</sup> Two young men at the University of Granada also asked about the relation with the parents in the case of people with **intellectual diversity**. Centeno responded that this story was one of the hardest to film and that it became virtually impossible to get sexually explicit images, which is why they ended up showing only talking heads. The parents who appear in that story are a good example of how difficult it is for families to talk about these issues:

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de todos (...) está bien que hablemos, es una parte importante de ese cambio pero lo fundamental es que generemos espacios, experiencias, situaciones, en las que se pueda dar esa convivencia y esa experiencia de compartir la sexualidad tengamos diversidad funcional, no tengamos, todas juntas.” Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>442</sup> “Al final la única manera de cambiar esta situación no es un discurso, ni es un documental. Es la experiencia. Conseguir convivir de manera cotidiana con estas realidades también, o sea que estas personas que piensan de manera diferente y ven el mundo de manera diferente no estén segregadas en escuelas especiales, en viviendas especiales, sino que estén en la escuela con los apoyos que necesitan, que estén en viviendas en la comunidad con los apoyos que necesitan y que se conviertan en una parte más de la comunidad y tengamos interacción con ellas de una manera cotidiana, creo que eso es lo único que tiene el poder de cambiar de verdad nuestra percepción de esa vivencia. Todo lo demás puede ayudar, tener discursos brillantes ayuda, hacer documentales bonitos ayuda, pero lo único que realmente tiene un poder transformador es la experiencia cotidiana, creo. El problema de eso es que si va, va lento.” Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>443</sup> “no te dan información por quererte proteger.” Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

These parents are the cool ones, **parents who are open to talking about the subject in front of the camera, who have allowed their sons and daughters to stand in front of the camera.** These are the families who want to address the issue and even then, you see **the contrast between the speech of the people with intellectual diversity and the parents;** they talk about pleasure, playfulness and the parents about the problem, sterilisation (...). **Why do we never think about sexuality as part of the solution?** Why do we never think of it as something that can fix things, which can become a drive, which can change people's lives for the good? Why do we always think of it via the risk, the problem, in terms of prevention, of abuse?<sup>444</sup>

Arnau highlighted the need to **stop seeing sexuality and functional diversity as problems, rather than as potentialities.** The role of parents was also discussed at “La Qarmita”, after a young woman said that she didn't agree with their testimonies in the film and hadn't understood why they were included, since she considered them pessimistic and negative. Other people from the audience responded that they found it appropriate to have these voices within the film:

It is like bringing you back into reality (...) Just like so many parents who are told that their daughter is a lesbian and it seems like the trauma of their lives, they cannot talk about it. For those families, it is not easy to accept this situation or accept that their son who has x needs, wants to talk about sex (...). They don't know, I mean, we don't know, society doesn't know (...) how to react.<sup>445</sup>

A young woman who attended the screening at the University of Granada asked about the need to separate reproductive and sexual rights. Another woman asked about the way in

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<sup>444</sup> “Estos padres son los padres guay, los padres que están abiertos a hablar del tema, que se han puesto delante de la cámara, que han permitido que sus hijos se pongan delante de la cámara. Estas son las familias que quieren abordar el tema y aún así, ya veis el contraste entre el discurso de las propias personas con diversidad intelectual y los padres, ellos el placer, el juego y los padres el problema, la esterilización (...) ¿Por qué nunca pensamos la sexualidad como parte de la solución? ¿Por qué nunca la pensamos como algo que puede arreglar cosas, que puede impulsar, que puede cambiar la vida a bien de las personas? ¿Por qué siempre la pensamos desde el riesgo, desde el problema, desde la prevención, desde el abuso?” Antonio Centeno. Q&A session. November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Granada.

<sup>445</sup> “Es muy ponerle en la realidad (...) Al igual que tantos padres que les dicen que su hija es lesbiana y parece el trauma de su vida, no lo pueden contar. Para esas familias no es fácil aceptar esa situación o aceptar que su hijo que tiene x necesidades quiere hablar de sexo (...) No saben, o sea, no sabemos, la sociedad no sabe (...) cómo reaccionar.” . Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

which they arrived at the point of **including an issue such as squirting** in a documentary that, a priori, had nothing to do with that. Centeno explained the connections between the gender axis and the functional diversity axis in similar terms to the ones already expressed above and added: “it seemed to us that this story highlighted the point of contact of that alienation of one’s own body that has to do with that domination of the norm, of who has the power to deciding what is at stake, what exists and what does not exist.”<sup>446</sup>

In the three screenings, there were many expressions of **praise**, such as a young man at the University of Granada calling himself “a fan of Antonio and Soledad”.<sup>447</sup> There were **expressions of surprise, of not knowing what to say**, and admitting that there were many aspects raised by the film that they hadn’t considered before. In this sense, **the effect that the filmmakers wanted to have with the film was achieved**, i.e. “not so much that of knowing how the sexuality of people with functional diversity is, but to have the feeling that one has no idea and that one has to rethink things.”<sup>448</sup> Many people at “La Qarmita” said that **the film moved them**, particularly the last story about sexual assistance:

Woman: I don’t know what to say, it’s a lot of information, **it’s like each one of us is dealing with ourselves and I find that very interesting about the documentary**. The fact that we do not know how... Because if it were perhaps about feminism, which we already have a discourse about, we are quick and we answer and we have an opinion. But not about this.

Woman: The only thing I know is that I went in being one person and I’m going to leave being another (...) **that they gave me their first experience through a video; that was a gift for me**. I cannot question absolutely anything now (...) The last thing that Sole does, the person who touches herself at the end, with her own hand, that is fabulous, it is beautiful what she does. I mean, what she gives me is wonderful, with her own hand, with her own skin, because

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<sup>446</sup> “nos parecía una historia que ponía muy de relieve ese punto de contacto de esa alienación del propio cuerpo que tiene que ver con esa dominación de quien tiene el poder, de la norma, de decidir qué es lo que está en juego, qué es lo que existe y qué es lo que no existe”. Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>447</sup> “me declaro fan de Antonio y Soledad”. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>448</sup> “no tanto de tener la sensación de saber cómo es la sexualidad de las personas con diversidad funcional, sino tener la sensación de que uno no tiene ni idea y que tiene que replantearse las cosas”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

I thought the other person was going to do it (...) but no, she gives it to herself, with her own skin. **That's a gift, that's power, that's freedom, that's feminism,** that's me.

Man: I was very **moved by seeing the first time a person touches herself** through a video and how she does it with the help of another person. I am **deeply thankful for the generosity of this person.**<sup>449</sup>

The opinions expressed in this transfeminist space were **in favour of sexual assistance and the legalisation of sex work.** There was no debate on this topic. A young man pointed out that the film showed an aspect that is “totally ignored by the abolitionist discourse”<sup>450</sup>, which, he argued, should be taken into account. The questions prepared by the two women from “La Qarmita” focused on **tools and ruptures concerning everybody's sexuality.** The general reaction was in line with the potential that Centeno discovered in alliance with queer and transfeminist subjects, i.e. “a sexuality which includes all these realities about functional diversity surely is a sexuality that will offer more possibilities, a rich and interesting experience to the population as a whole.”<sup>451</sup> In the words of the audience:

Woman: **How different but also how similar** (...) I've noticed that what is claimed, in a way I feel it too, that's why I was also very moved, to say “how cool” because it is not only that collective's struggle, it is ours as well.

Woman: I watched it and I learned a lot from the experience of this type of people (...) what it reflects is that we have a super rigid sexuality and that we

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<sup>449</sup> “No sé qué decir, es mucha información, como que cada uno con nosotros mismos estamos y eso me parece muy interesante del documental. El hecho de que no sepamos cómo... porque si fuera quizá de feminismo, que todos ya tenemos un discurso creado, somos rápidos y contestamos y opinamos. Y de esto no. / Lo único que sé es que entré una y voy a salir otra de este sitio (...) que su primera experiencia me la regalaran a mí a través de un video; eso fue un regalo para mí. No puedo cuestionar absolutamente nada ahora (...) Lo último que hace Sole, la persona que se toca al final, por ella misma, con su propia mano, es fabuloso, es bellissimo lo que ella hace. O sea, eso que ella me regala es maravilloso, con su propia mano, con su propia piel, porque yo pensé que la otra persona le iba a hacer (...) pero no, se lo regala con ella misma, con su propia piel. Eso es un regalo, eso es potencia, eso es libertad, eso es feminismo, eso soy yo / A mi me ha emocionado un montón ver la primera vez que una persona se toca a sí misma a través de un video y cómo se toca con la ayuda de otra persona. Agradezco mucho la generosidad de esta persona.” Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

<sup>450</sup> “totalmente invisibilizado en el discurso abolicionista”. Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

<sup>451</sup> “una sexualidad que incluye a todas estas realidades sobre diversidad funcional, seguramente es una sexualidad que va a ofrecer más posibilidades, una vivencia rica e interesante al conjunto de la población.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.



do not venture out of our own frameworks (...) and that we could also learn from that, to have a sexuality that is more, I do not know, complex, shared.

Woman: Those people turned the finger on me and told me, “you, with the heteronormative body, maybe it turns out that you haven’t had one pleasant experience”, as they did in some of those experiences that they showed us (...) They gave me a slap in the face and told me “that’s not true, **you haven’t questioned your heteronormativity enough**”.

Woman: I was very shocked when the blind woman said that what attracts her most to a person is the smell. And I felt very identified with that (...) Smell is a part of us, of sexuality, that is completely forgotten.

Woman: When she said that sex is something spiritual, that stuck with me, wow, I loved it. So for me it sums up everything, it is something that transcends the body, **it is more than the body and it is also the body**.<sup>452</sup>

However, at the screening held at the University of Granada, a woman from the audience said she had enjoyed the film **except for the story about sex work and BDSM**:

I was shocked by the part in which you included the sex worker with the theme of masochism, even when she commented on culture and spirituality, because in general I found everything that you have done very horizontal, I found it very interesting, but **the case of the sex worker, who calls herself such, seemed to me a vertical thing, a reproduction of power from top to bottom**, I want to ask you why you included it (...) When you make a documentary, you decide what to include and what to leave out (...) There is a moment when she says that

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<sup>452</sup> “Qué diferente pero también qué parecido (...) he visto que lo que se reivindica, en cierta manera también lo siento yo así, por eso también me ha emocionado mucho, de decir qué guay porque en realidad la lucha no es solo de ese colectivo, es de todas, de tod@s, de todes. / Lo veo y aprendo un montón de la experiencia de ese tipo de personas (...) lo que refleja es que tenemos una sexualidad súper rígida y que no salimos de nuestros propios esquemas (...) y que nosotros también podríamos aprender de eso para una sexualidad mucho más, no sé, compleja, compartida. / Esas personas me voltearon el dedo a mí y me dijeron “tú, la que tienes el cuerpo heteronormativo, pues resulta que a lo mejor no has tenido ni siquiera una práctica placentera”, como lo lograron ellos en alguna de esas prácticas que nos presentaron (...) me voltearon una cachetada y me dijeron “no es cierto, tu heteronormatividad le falta cuestionarse” / Sexualizar otras partes del cuerpo, que no sean sólo genitales. / A mí me chocó mucho cuando está la mujer que era ciega y dijo que lo que más le atrae de una persona era el olor. Y yo me sentí muy identificada con eso (...) El olor es una parte de uno, de la sexualidad, que se olvida completamente. / Cuando ha dicho lo de el sexo algo espiritual, ahí yo me he quedado, vaya, me ha encantado. Entonces para mí lo resume mucho todo, es algo que trasciende al cuerpo, es más que cuerpo y es también el cuerpo.” Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

sadomasochism is rejected by society, but now we have *Fifty Shades of Grey*, ultimately **sadomasochism is one of the most mainstream things, and it is about power and domination**, while it seemed to me that **the other stories were about a horizontality of sharing.**<sup>453</sup>

Centeno replied that they decided to **include this story in their polyscopic narrative in order to render visible a playful approach to sexuality**, “especially because what commonly happens is that we are allowed some sexuality if it has a therapeutic effect, if it is related to love, the couple, Disney, nothing more.”<sup>454</sup> He also pointed out that explicit and detailed consent is at the basis of BDSM practices “carried out in true freedom”<sup>455</sup>, and that Linda simply expressed what her experience as a sex worker is, without any pressure from him or de la Morena.

In the same vein, people at “La Qarmita” agreed that the main merit of *Yes, We Fuck!* is the **rendering visible of these issues in a positive way, in line with the sex-positive stance of transfeminism and in spite of dominant conservative discourses:**

When I have heard talk about sexuality and functional diversity, it has been from a very **pessimistic perspective and very much pretending to infantilise people and saying “poor people, they need this too”**. And the documentary turns that on its head.

The great thing about this is to visualise it, as the whole sexual part that leaves the norm is so hidden (...) There are a lot of things to learn there, right? To remove our own taboos because it is beautiful that **in Spain, a country that is**

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<sup>453</sup> “Me ha chocado la parte en la que incluiste a la trabajadora sexual con el tema del masoquismo, incluso cuando ella ha comentado lo de cultura y espiritualidad, porque en general me ha parecido muy horizontal todo lo que habéis hecho, me ha parecido súper interesante, pero el caso de la trabajadora sexual, que ella misma se llama así, me ha parecido una cosa vertical, reproducción de poder de arriba a abajo, quiero preguntar por qué lo habéis incluido (...) Cuando tú haces el documental, tú decides lo que incluyes y lo que no (...) Hay un momento en que ella dice que el sadomasoquismo está rechazado por la sociedad, pero tenemos ahora “Cincuenta sombras de Grey”, en el fondo el sadomasoquismo es una de las cosas más mainstream, y es una cosa de poder y de dominación, cuando a mí me ha parecido que en las otras historias era una horizontalidad de compartir.” Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>454</sup> “Sobre todo porque venimos mucho de que se nos permite algo de sexualidad si es que tiene un efecto terapéutico, si es que está relacionado con el amor, la pareja, Disney, nada más.” Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>455</sup> “desde la verdadera libertad”. Antonio Centeno. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

**so ultraconservative and sexually repressed; that is the stereotype, right?**  
**We imagine that, but these things are taking place, they are also there.**<sup>456</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Summary and Research Question

To summarise this case study, in this section I go over insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Yes, We Fuck!* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

The subject matter of the film, sexuality and functional diversity, raises several issues relevant for the visualisation of gender in/equalities. None of the main characters fit within the androcentric norm, let alone within mainstream pornography standards of bodies that are regarded as desiring and desirable. The intra-actions that these filmed subjects establish with the camera and with the filmmakers visualise processes of empowerment in deciding how they want to be portrayed. As Arnau says at the end of the last story, their sexually explicit visualisation aims at providing people with functional diversity with tools “to know that we can ask for it and that it is also our right” (Min. 55:49).

Female pleasure and gender performativity are key issues in the film. There are transgender characters in three out of the six stories, and female characters embrace and openly discuss their sexual pleasure. Importantly, all of the people involved in care tasks, including those with sexual connotations, are women or transgender/gender non-conforming people: the personal assistant, the sex worker, the sexual assistant, the Post-Op Collective, and Kani from the squirting workshop. In general, gender is considered as oppressive, but also as something that can be questioned and subverted:

I do not have only one name because **that’s my position regarding my gender. I do not feel comfortable in the man or woman category.** It seems to me that I do not fit into any of the two categories (Min. 1:40) The insult that

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<sup>456</sup> “Cuando yo he escuchado hablar de sexualidad y diversidad funcional, lo he escuchado como desde una perspectiva muy pesimista y muy de pretender infantilizar a las personas y decir “pobrecitos, necesitan esto también ellos”. Y el documental como que le da la vuelta a eso. / Lo genial de esto es visibilizarlo, como toda la parte sexual que se salga de la norma está súper oculta (...) Hay un montón de cosas que aprender allí, ¿no? Quitarnos tabús nosotros mismos porque es precioso que en España, un país tan ultraconservador y sexualmente reprimido, ¿es el estereotipo, no? Imaginamos eso, pero se están dando estas cosas, igualmente están ahí.” Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

marked my childhood was that of *tomboy*. I realised that suddenly I had to behave in a way in which I didn't feel comfortable. In the family, with the friends, at school, everywhere, they are telling you how you are supposed to behave (Min. 2:37) the worst is that you reach a moment in which, you absorb this oppressive discipline so much, that I remember that at certain point I said, "I'll try to be more feminine" (Min. 3:16). At the time of my birth I was diagnosed as a woman and currently I am in a process of transition and **I identify with the male gender** (Min. 34:53).<sup>457</sup>

In terms of female pleasure, the film shows images and sounds of women's sexual pleasure, and exposes discourses surrounding the tensions around this issue:

**I have felt male chauvinist oppression** for being a sexual person, a society that has always called me a whore (Min. 3:29) [sex work] is **a job that empowers me**, gives me money and makes me feel good. Besides, I believe that I am contributing something politically: **advocating for freedom of bodies, freedom of pleasure** and freedom in doing what we want with our bodies, without any moral or political mandate that tells us how we have to act in privacy. Politics, the State, have gotten into our room (Min. 21:26). **Why has squirting been invisible and stigmatised until very recently?** (...) It is quite surprising to see the extent to which the body, **the genitality and the pleasure of women are invisibilised** (Min. 34:22) to have my own pleasure, **I touch myself and reach my orgasm on my own** (Min. 37:51).

By presenting sexually explicit images of empowered women, men and transgender people, many of them with different kinds of functional diversity, *Yes We Fuck!* offers a visualisation of desiring and desirable subjects beyond the androcentric model. In this way, it makes sexual pleasure and desire intelligible beyond normalised inequalities.

As for the **form**, the decision to approach sexuality and functional diversity with six different stories (diverse narrative waves) offers a polyscopic portrait of sexual expressions that go beyond Rubin's charmed circle. Stories four and six, with a blind subject and a quadriplegic subject as main characters, resort to performative modes of representation to visualise female pleasure.

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<sup>457</sup> The emphases in the quotes from the film are mine.

There's a voyeuristic and fetishistic gaze that renders problematic the depiction of the female body of a sex worker and the sexual intercourse of an interracial couple. However, looking at the overall strategies employed in the film, we can paraphrase de Lauretis' proposal of a cinema "with a vengeance, working, as it were, with and against narrative" (1987b: 108): the voyeuristic gaze (i.e. being able to look into a private world, objectifying what is seen without the risk of being looked at) is subverted at the end, when one of the filmed subjects removes and puts back on the lens cap, thus raising awareness of the camera. And the fetishistic gaze directed towards Linda is counterbalanced as she is also presented in an interview where she claims her political position as a sex worker.

*Yes, We Fuck!* resorts to an independent **production** scheme based on self-exploitation, activist alliances and crowdfunding. Centeno and de la Morena began the project with the intention of using the film as a tool for political action, with "an explicit opinion or position whose articulation contributes toward some manner of change" (Juhasz 1994: 175). Such a position was already present in de la Morena's previous film, *Editar una vida*, i.e. to change the gaze that pathologises and infantilises functional diversity pretending that social and political issues have natural causes. But they realised that a documentary based on talking heads and without dissemination strategy had had no impact. Therefore, with *Yes, We Fuck!* they decided to make a postporn film, visualising bodies with functional diversity in a sexually explicit way.

Aware of the impossibility of fully presenting any so-called "reality", the film proposes a polyscopic approach with six stories that present different elements, all of which visualise sexuality and functional diversity as something positive, empowering and desirable. The effect that they want to provoke in the viewers, and which took place indeed at the three screenings that I attended, is to make them rethink sexuality and visualise subjects with functional diversity as sexual beings that desire. The ultimate goal is to materialise the conditions for an everyday coexistence where differences don't become inequalities.

In postporn films, the respectful and horizontal relationship that filmmakers establish with the filmed subjects is fundamental. In *Yes, We Fuck!*, those who participated did so from the complicity of sharing activism and understanding that it was a political project. They are not objects to be spoken about, but subjects to speak with. In the process of making the film, the advice of anthropologist Andrea García-Santasmases led Centeno and de la Morena to transfeminist activism. The Post-Op workshop was the

turning point in the making of the film, one through which they realised that the gender axis and the axis of functional diversity share a common fight, from their political work with the body to the critical dismantling of the attempt to justify social inequalities based on biological differences.

Such an alliance is most clearly visualised in three stories: the postporn workshop, the squirting workshop, and the sexual assistance session. The emotions generated within the film have had material effects beyond the screen, for example: the Post-Op Collective have started the project “Pornortopedia”, in which they create prosthesis and sex toys that include bodies with functional diversity; Centeno, within the Spanish Independent Life Movement, has kept on advocating for the recognition of sexual assistance as a right in Catalonia; and a fiction film, *Vivir y otras ficciones* (2016), keeps on visualising this topic in the Spanish context. For Arnau, the main character of the story about sexual assistance and a feminist functional diversity activist, having appeared in the film has been a positive experience. She regards it as a tool for showing “that bodies are enjoyable.”<sup>458</sup>

In the field of **distribution**, the main problem identified by Centeno is that most of the people who have seen *Yes, We Fuck!* were already interested in the topic. However, even these audiences admit to get a strong impression after watching the film, having encountered images that break with what they had seen or heard before about sexuality and functional diversity. Mainstream cinemas wouldn’t show it. However, the Catalan public television acquired it in 2018 and it has been available on the online platform Filmin. In 2018 it was released for free on the Vimeo platform.

**As for reception**, most reactions in the screenings I attended were positive and enthusiastic, with many expressions of surprise, gratitude and lack of words. People agreed on the fact that the main merit of *Yes, We Fuck!* is visualising functional diversity and sexuality in a positive way, particularly in the Spanish context, “a country that is so ultraconservative and sexually repressed”<sup>459</sup> as described by a young female viewer. There were only two negative reactions: one against the role played by parents in the story about intellectual diversity, and another one against the portrait of sex service and BDSM.

The overall tone of the film is in line with a sex-positive perspective. The one discordant voice within the diegesis is indeed that of those parents. Nevertheless, as one

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<sup>458</sup> “el documental es un ejemplo de que los cuerpos son disfrutables.” Soledad Arnau. Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>459</sup> “un país tan ultraconservador y sexualmente reprimido.” Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

of the viewers replied to the person who expressed disagreement with this story, hearing their stories is realising that it is not just them, but society as a whole, which does not know how to react when confronted with diverse bodies claiming their own sexual pleasure. The woman who questioned Centeno about the decision to include a story about a BDSM session between a female sex worker and a man with cerebral palsy echoes the general suspicion, in many cases open rejection, that many feminist women express towards prostitution and sexual assistance (as evidenced in the aforementioned articles published on “Tribuna Feminista”). They look at sex work as an expression of patriarchal and neoliberal control of men over women’s bodies. What Centeno replied was that, among the stories they presented, they also wanted one in which sex was conceived out of the romantic sphere. He highlighted that freedom and consent were central to this story.

All in all, looking at *Yes, We Fuck!* as a diffraction apparatus that records processes and focuses on patterns of differences that have effects, I argue that the various narrative waves through which the axes of gender, sexuality and functional diversity are co-constructed by Centeno and de la Morena really produce, facilitate and solicit new ways of seeing the intersections and alliances between the three axes, paraphrasing Trinh T. Minh-ha (2005: 13). To conservative, paternalistic, heteronormative and ableist material-discursive practices, they respond with their performative right to appear as desiring and desirable subjects. Their joy, pride and pleasure are the main affects gathered by audiences that confess to be deeply moved by the film.

#### 4.5 *Serás Hombre/You'll Be a Man* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2018)

Concerning the fight against gender violence in Spain, right now, we are in that preschool stage, which is “it’s your fault” [women’s]. The responsibility of leaving gender violence behind is yours, because you have to be the one who reports it to the police. But the true discourse should be: “Men, you are mistreating women, you are raping women, you are using prostitution, what’s wrong with you guys?” But of course, that means putting your finger in a wound, in a dark area of the subconscious in which men don’t want to face their own education. (Isabel de Ocampo, director of *Serás Hombre*).<sup>460</sup>

Isabel de Ocampo has tackled the issue of gender violence and sex trafficking since her 2008 short film *Miente*, which was awarded with the Goya prize. She kept on exploring this topic in her first feature film, *Evelyn* (2012). In both cases, the main character of the fictional plot is a woman victim of sexual exploitation. In contrast, in her most recent work, the documentary film *Serás Hombre* (2018), de Ocampo approaches gender-based violence from the point of view of men. She entangles various academic debates on the construction of masculinity with the experiences and discussions of an ex-pimp, a performance artist, a teacher and a group of publicists.

As with the rest of the case studies, the analysis of the film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. As regards form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film, identifying the six narrative waves into which it is divided. Then I close read it with the theoretical apparatus developed in the previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises gender in/equalities in what it shows, and in how it shows it. As for production and reception, I discuss the insights raised by Isabel de Ocampo in a series of interviews carried out at four different moments in 2016 and 2017. Due to the fact that she has been an expert advisor of the

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<sup>460</sup> “En la lucha contra la violencia de género en España ahora mismo, estamos en ese paso de parvulario, que es ‘la culpa es tuya mujer’, la responsabilidad de salir de la violencia de género es tuya en tanto que tienes que ser tú la que vaya a denunciar a la comisaría. Cuando el discurso verdadero sería: ‘hombres estáis maltratando mujeres, estáis violando mujeres, estáis utilizando la prostitución, ¿chicos qué os pasa?’ Pero claro, eso es meter el dedo en una herida, meter el dedo en una zona oscura del subconsciente en el cual los hombres, pues no quieren enfrentarse a su propia educación.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 in Madrid. Original interview in Spanish, all translations are mine.



Marie Curie project (GRACE- Gender and Cultures of Equality in Europe) of which this dissertation is part, it was also possible to carry out participant observation during the shooting in June 2016, and at a focus group screening in June 2018. I incorporate fieldwork notes from both situations.

I also gather opinions expressed by people who attended two informal screenings prior to the film's premiere, and a screening organised at the University of Granada as part of a dissemination event within the GRACE project, which took place on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018. Finally, I discuss two reviews written in 2018, the first one by gender violence expert Miguel Lorente (also a participant in the film), and the second one by a Spanish gender studies professor, Victoria Robles.

#### **4.5.1 Form and Content: Trying to Use the Master's Tools to Dismantle Masculinity**

*Serás hombre* is divided into thirty-two segments, some of which are subdivided into various sections. The segments can be classified into six narrative waves that are entangled throughout the film: wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 3, Abel's arc; wave 4, high school class; wave 5, advertising agency; and wave 6, poetic transition. In each segment and with different waves, diverse issues are tackled. For instance, interviews from wave 2 are divided into various parts along the film, covering aspects such as: patriarchy and gender stereotypes, the model of masculinity, patriarchy in religion, transsexuality and the gender binary, male chauvinism, gender violence, feminism and fatherhood. Each segment is described below.<sup>461</sup>

##### 1. Introduction and title. Women as money (wave 1, Rafa's arc).

1.1 On a black screen, we see the awards that have been given to the film: The first prize for project development at the "MiradasDoc" Festival 2017, and the selection at the "SEMINCI"- Valladolid International Film Festival 2018. Next, we see the list of producers: Isabel de Ocampo, Grismedio and Orreaga Filmak through a public Spanish subsidy, the support of the ECAM-Madrid Film School and the Complutense University of Madrid, and regional funds from Gipuzkoa, Salamanca and Sabadell.

1.2 The brothel. Two wide shots of a Spanish highway at dawn. A few cars and trucks pass by, as we see the names of the associate producers. The next wide shot of the

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<sup>461</sup> The language spoken in the film is Spanish, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. The DVD can be ordered directly with the filmmaker, Isabel de Ocampo, at the film website: <<http://youwillbeaman.com>>.

highway is recorded from the balcony of a building, decorated with lights. Tilt down of a glass door that is partially broken possibly due to a bullet. High angle shot of the floor. Long shot of the stools on the bar table and a red curtain covering the window. Long shot of a red desk and a chair, in a room with wine-coloured walls and paintings of naked women. Detail shot of an “easy change” machine. High angle shot of white towels and sheets in a bin.

1.3 Training a pimp. In medium shot, Rafa, approximately sixty years of age, with sunglasses and a black sweater, enters into an office with a coffee, saying happily that “a pretty girl” (Min. 01:41) gave it to him. Another man, approximately thirty-five years of age, stands up from his desk and warmly receives him. In the office there are five more chairs, one of which has a hair washbasin. The light of day enters through the curtains. They kiss on both cheeks and sit at the desk. The young man tells Rafa that they have a mess with “accounts and bookkeeping” (Min. 02:00). Rafa smokes a cigarette and looks at the files. He advises to “write the phone numbers of the women at the back. So, if they leave the house you can always locate them” (Min. 2:10). The young man agrees, smiling with docility.

In medium close-up, he tells Rafa that there are eleven women: “they’re good, but sometimes, you know, as in all jobs” (Min. 2:28). In medium close-up, we see Rafa speaking in an aggressive tone “when a woman doesn’t pay you for two or three days, do you still feed her?” (Min. 2:40). When the young man answers affirmatively, Rafa says: “If a woman doesn’t work for three days, she pays or she’s out on the fucking street. How do you manipulate a woman?” (Min. 2:50). The young man doubts and says that it’s not manipulation but trying to make her feel ok. Rafa aggressively says that he isn’t an NGO and asks him if he has the guts to prostitute a woman. In medium close-up, Rafa says that he can teach him how to do the job, which he describes as business work at a club where lots of money can be earned. He then defines the women as “wads of money. If you see them as people, you won’t make any money” (Min. 3:35).

1.4 Title. Wide shot of the entrance to the brothel and part of the façade with red and green lights. The sounds of the cars on the highway gets combined with tense music as we see a long shot of Rafa in front of the door, writing a message with his mobile phone, a wide shot of a bigger part of the façade with a big canvas announcing a VIP room ad images of women, and a wide shot of the brothel and Rafa walking away from it. Medium shot of Rafa smoking next to the highway. The title of the film, *Serás Hombre*, appears next to him.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride, anger and joy.

2. What is a man? (wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 6, poetic transition).

2.1 Godino's performance. First part. We still see the long shot of Rafa, as we start to listen to the voice-over of Javier Godino, a Spanish actor, reciting Rudyard Kipling's poem, *If*: "Yours is the Earth and everything that is in it" (Min. 4:11). Then we see Godino and Eduardo Vallejo on a stage. Godino is still reciting and Vallejo moves around him. The former is in his thirties, the latter in his twenties.

2.1 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. First part. Soft music is played in the background. We see various shots of Vallejo dancing as we listen to the voice-over of Melich, approximately fifty years of age, who says: "man and woman are not biological categories, but political, ethical, religious categories" (Min. 4:35). He then appears in medium close-ups and close-ups, sitting on a black chair, in a luminous room with plants behind him.

2.2 Interview with anthropologist Manuel Delgado. First part. As we see Vallejo dancing, we listen to Delgado's voice-over: "There is not a natural definition of a man. 'Man' is basically a label assigned to certain people according to the genitals they have" (Min. 4:53). Delgado, approximately fifty years of age, is sitting on a brown couch.

2.3 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. First part. Lorente, approximately fifty years of age, is standing up in front of a long window from which we can see a busy street. He proposes, "to analyse a man as a result of what culture dictates a man should be (...) culture establishes that being a man is not being a woman" (Min. 5:05).

2.4 Transition-leitmotif sequence. The soft music that has been played in the background since segment 2.1 gets louder as we see long shots of men of various ages walking in different streets of Spanish cities. Two of them look into the camera with a questioning look. Another one, wearing a suit, smokes a cigarette. Medium close-up of a man with a suit, seen from behind and in slow motion, as he walks in a narrow street.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride and joy.

3. Presentation of Abel Azcona and Godino's performance (wave 3, Abel's arc; wave 6, poetic transition).

3.1 Godino reads about Azcona and contacts him. Wide shot of the façade of a building, in which just one flat has the lights on. Camera over-the-shoulder of Godino, as he looks for information on the Internet about contemporary artist Abel Azcona. He finds various photos and information about his artworks: when he took hormones and

prostituted himself in Colombia, when he ate the Koran, when he formed the word pederasty with consecrated hosts, and when he got his anus tattooed as a message to Donald Trump. Godino expresses surprise while reading. In close-up, he calls on the phone. As we listen to his voice-over, we see Azcona arriving in Madrid and taking the subway. He is thirty years old, wears sunglasses and a black hat. Godino invites Azcona to his performance with Vallejo. He says that it's about Franz Kafka's *Letter to the Father*. The soft music in the background continues during the whole sequence and the next one.

3.2 Godino's performance. Second part. Long shot of Godino and Vallejo onstage as he talks about Kipling's aforementioned poem, which gives instructions from a father to his son, so as to become a man. "How do we learn to be a man if it isn't through a father?" (Min. 6:55), Godino asks. Azcona is sitting in the second row and looks away. Godino continues with his speech: "You women have the burden of patriarchy. But men also bear the burden of patriarchy" (Min. 7:23). He criticises the lack of communication men have with their fathers and asserts that Kafka didn't have the courage to talk directly with his father.

3.3. Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a leather jacket, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a narrow street. The scene is accompanied by tense music that fades out at the beginning of the next segment.

3.4 Dialogue between Godino and Azcona. First part. In a backstage room, Godino lies on his back. Azcona arrives holding two cups of wine. They talk about Kafka's work and what they call "normative" families (Min. 7:58), which, in opinion of Azcona, don't really exist. In close-up Godino tells Azcona that he comes from a non-normative family. They agree that Godino has to talk about the relationship he has with his own father in his performance.

3.5 Godino's performance. Third part. In long shot, Vallejo makes a gun with his hands as Godino asks him if he wants to kill his father, but Vallejo puts the gun inside his mouth. Godino orders him not to hurt himself because of his father and to love himself. In a high angle shot, we see Abel among the audience. Godino asks the audience, with tears in his eyes, to let him kill all the fathers and make a world of sons that only want to love. Vallejo puts a shirt around Godino's neck, puts him on his knees and pretends to strangle him. The performance finishes and the camera shows Abel applauding. The whole sequence is accompanied by music.

3.6 Transition. Long shot of two toddlers playing with soap bubbles. The music is combined with the sound of children's laughter.

3.7 Dialogue between Godino and Azcona. Second part. In close-up, Azcona tells Godino about his mother, who was a heroin-addicted prostitute. He expresses the anger he feels against his father:

...a whoremonger. Someone who uses a prostitute (...) I always talk about my father as semen (...) if this semen got inside my mother through force, I'd just prefer it to go into the toilet. Better that it's disposed of than used to abuse. I think my mother and I are both victims. I would never hold anything against her. Against my father, yes! (Min. 9:56).

Godino asks him if he would like to tell this to his father, but Azcona replies that it's impossible to find him.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, surprise, distress, pain and joy.

4. Presentation of Rafa. First part (wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 6, poetic transition).

4.1 Long shot of the empty brothel during the day. There's a stage with a tube and red curtains. Rafa walks next to the stage, smoking and with sunglasses. The greenish disco lights are on. He asks de Ocampo if she's recording, to what she answers affirmatively. In medium shot, with the stage and the curtains in the background, Rafa looks at the camera and speaks with de Ocampo. He jokes about the making of the film, particularly about her cutting afterwards part of what she shoots. In medium close-up he also jokes with her about his profession: after teasing her, he describes himself as "a trafficker, a women's trafficker, a man of the night, a layabout (...) a night businessman" (Min. 11:10).

4.2 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a jacket and a beanie, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a narrow street. The scene is accompanied by tense music.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride and joy.

5. High school class. First part. Prehistory (wave 4, high school class; wave 6, poetic transition).

5.1 Transition. Long shot of a group of young men hanging around in a football field. Long shot of a football match. Tight shot of young men writing messages on their mobile phones. Wide shot of a high school in Madrid. The tense music continues in this sequence.

5.2 Prehistory class. A male teacher, approximately thirty years old, introduces the topic of prehistory to a group of seven adolescents, men and women. They sit in a circle. Close-ups of the students as he describes prehistory as the “most extensive period of humanity” (Min. 12:08). He traces a parallelism with human experience, stating that everything happens to each person for the first time, so that we discover the world as we discover each one of us.

5.3 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a jacket, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: kindness and surprise.

6. Presentation of Rafa. Second part (wave 1, Rafa’s arc).

6.1 Transition. Wide shot of a street in a red light district.

6.2 We see Rafa in the same setting as in segment 4.1. In medium shot and medium close-ups, he narrates with pride that he started in 1982: “There were 70-80 women behind the bar. All of them in leotards. I was 17 years old and was fascinated. I was captivated by the atmosphere. I was dazzled by the elegance” (Min. 13:00). He admits that he liked it and that he has stayed in “the night business for 35 years” (Min. 13:20).

6.3 Transition. Wide shot of a street in a red light district.

6.4 In medium close-up, Rafa says that he has been in prison for sex trafficking: “I brought here 1,117 Colombians with debt bondage, 311 Brazilians and 19 Venezuelans” (Min. 13:45).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: awe, pride and joy.

7. Azcona looks for his father (wave 3, Abel’s arc).

7.1 Long shots of Azcona, all dressed in black, arriving at a law firm. Medium shots of Azcona welcomed by the lawyer Duran. In medium close-up, Azcona explains that he wants to look for his father but that he has no data, apart from the fact that he was a client of his mother. He adds that he looked for his biological mother, from whom he had name and date of birth, so he could find her in the poverty and destitution records of Madrid. The lawyer, also in medium close-up, explains that, in order to have access to DNA records, he needs to have a paternity demand against someone and that the law doesn’t protect him.

Moreover, he explains that not everybody has his or her DNA registered, only big criminals. He says: “you wouldn’t like your father to be a sexual offender” (Min. 16:15). Azcona smiles and says that he considers him as such. The lawyer explains that it was “a

consensual relation. I'm a lawyer and I can't ignore that (...) I'm not talking about morality" (Min. 16:22). Azcona reacts angrily: "The data protection laws protect the abuser, the whoremonger, and criminalises the prostitute. And the son of a whore ends up unprotected" (Min. 17:04).

7.2 Transition. We listen to soft music as we see an out-of-focus shot that follows Azcona as he walks next to a fence, followed by a long shot of him standing in front of a children playground and looking directly into the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, distress and discomfort.

8. Compassion or cruelty (wave 2, interviews with experts).

8.1 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. Second part. We still see Azcona's image, as we hear Melich's voice-over explaining that human beings are ambiguous, that they can act with compassion or with cruelty.

8.2 Melich appears in the same setting from segment 2.1, in medium close-ups and close-ups, and explains that compassion means: "that your pain matters to me" (Min. 17:49).

8.3 Rafa's turning point. In medium close-up, without sunglasses, sitting in a dining room and holding a cigarette, Rafa admits that he is not a businessman, but an ex-pimp, an ex-dealer and a mobster. He directly interpellates de Ocampo, telling her that it's up to her what she wants him to say. She says she wants to show his process of remorse. Jump cut to Rafa, now with eyeglasses, stating his position:

But I'm not sorry. I am not repentant. I regret the harm I caused women. But not the life I've lived (...) I want to explain how I manipulate the victim, and society allows me to do it. And the justice system allows it. And the law allows me to do it. And politicians allow me to do it. And the newspapers allow me to do it. That's what I want to talk about. This is my remorse (Min. 18:32).

8.4 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. Third part. Melich appears in the same setting from segments 2.1 and 8.2. He continues with the discourse from segment 8.2: "Cruelty happens as a result of indifference to the body of the other, to the pain of the other" (Min. 19:02).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, discomfort, distress and cruelty.

9. Dialogue between Godino and Azcona. Third part (wave 3, Abel's arc).

9.1 Transition. We listen to soft music in the background as we see a medium shot of Azcona standing in front of the same children playground from segment 7.2, looking directly into the camera.

9.2 Long shot of Azcona and Godino talking in the same setting from segments 3.4 and 3.7. Godino asks Azcona if he has ever role-played with anyone pretending to be his father. Azcona doesn't show interest, but Godino convinces him to do it and asks him for forgiveness in medium close-up: "I apologise to your mother for abusing her and for not using a condom. And I'm sorry for not taking care of you" (Min. 19:38). In medium close-up, Azcona looks at him with an impassive expression and asks him to stop crying.

After a short pause, Godino tells him that, despite having a father and a mother who loved him, he still felt the lack of his father's hug. Azcona looks at him with crying eyes. Godino tells him: "I can't even imagine the void you must feel" (Min. 20:11). Azcona tells him that he is afraid of hugging, that he rejects hugs unconsciously. Godino laughs and asks him if he would give him a hug in front of the camera. Azcona tries to avoid it, Godino tells him that he is the one who will embrace him and finally, Azcona lies down, putting his head in Godino's lap. Godino kisses him in the forehead and says: "I'm sorry, man" (Min. 21:00).

9.3 Close-up of Azcona's face with a sad look. Close-up of both of them sitting with their backs to each other. They are shown in medium close-up, sitting with their eyes closed. Soft music is played in the background.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, love, distress and discomfort.

10. High school class. Second part. Gender stereotypes (wave 4, high school class).

10.1 Same setting and characters from segment 5. The teacher asks students to close their eyes and imagine a prehistoric scene. When he asks them what they imagined, girls and boys respond with gender stereotypes: "a man hunting with a spear; a family in a cave, the father painting on the wall and the mother with two children beside the fire" (Min. 21:54). In close-up, a girl says that she doesn't think women would hunt: "supposedly men are destined to hunt because they are stronger and women take care of the children and the cave" (Min. 22:17). They laugh when the teacher points out the similarities between gender roles then and nowadays. He tells them that maybe their vision of prehistory is too stereotypical.

10.2 Transition. Tight shots of the hands of construction workers. Soft music is played in the background.



Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: surprise.

11. Patriarchy and gender stereotypes (wave 2, interviews with experts).

11.1 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Second part. Lorente appears in the same setting as in segment 2.3. He explains: “Patriarchy is the mould and instruction manual for creating men” (Min. 23:08). As he continues talking, we see close shots of the hands of a tailor, and a porcelain figure of a nurse with a baby. He says that men have their identities constructed on the basis of protection and maintenance of the structure, while “ a woman’s role is based mostly on subjugation, dependence on her husband, looking after the children and the men, and so on” (Min. 23:30). Long shot of a woman pushing an old woman on a wheelchair and young men standing next to a playground.

11.2 Interview with sexologist Cristian Gallego. First part. Gallego, approximately thirty-five years of age, sits on a chair in what looks like a coffee shop. Behind him, we can see the street through the glass walls. He explains: “Traditional masculinity draws from that figure of man as a hunter and therefore we had to be violent” (Min. 23:40).

Tight shots and long shots in slow motion of two young men practising bullfighting moves accompanied by soft music. Gallego’s voice-over continues: “We have all been socialised in a sexist culture” (Min. 23:58).

We see Gallego again in the same setting. He talks about the concept of sexist micro aggressions: “I’m a cool guy, I’m a modern guy, I help you at home with your domestic tasks. I cooperate. When in fact, these are shared responsibilities” (Min. 24:08). Long shots of clothing lines outside buildings as he explains that, as women become part of the professional market, domestic tasks overburden them. Soft music is played in the background and continues during the whole segment.

11.3 Transition. Medium close-ups of two women working at a fish market.

11.4 Interview with economist Alain Cuenca. First part. We continue seeing the images of the fish market, as we listen to the voice-over of economist Alain Cuenca saying that economy is a male chauvinist area. He appears in medium close-up, wearing a suit and a tie, approximately fifty-five years of age. We see images of the fish being bought and cooked, as he explains that processes without a price aren’t given any value: “Women have been completely invisible. Their work was domestic and whatever happened indoors didn’t belong to the economy given that it has no price” (Min. 25:38).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: aggression and discomfort.

12. Being a man is not being a woman (wave 2, interviews with experts).

12.1 Transition. The soft music gets louder as we see wide shots from the exterior of various buildings at night. We see the interior of some of the flats from the window. We see a woman hanging clothes, another one in the kitchen and a man looking through the window.

12.2 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Third part. Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous sequences. He explains: “If we assume being a man is not being a woman and women have stopped being what they used to be, men are lost” (Min. 25:54). He adds that such confusion is provoking yet more violence. The music, which has been played in the background, gets louder as we see two more wide shots of the flats from the window: a man in the bathroom and another one sitting at a table.

12.3 Interview with sexologist Cristian Gallego. Second part. Gallego appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous sequences. He says: “A basic principle of masculinity is to refuse, directly, the feminine” (Min. 26:28).

12.4 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. Fourth part. Melich appears in the same setting from previous segments. He says that men are not allowed to be extremely sensitive: “A man that cries a lot is socially frowned upon” (Min. 26:49).

12.5 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Still, third part. Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous sequences. He explains that crying is considered a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

12.6 Transition. The music gets louder as we see long shots of men in the streets, having conversations and on the phone.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: confusion, distress and anger.

13. Transsexuality and the gender binary (wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 6, poetic transition).

13.1 Transition. The music continues as we see a long shot of people at a square. A couple is kissing and a girl walks by, wearing a dress of the film “Frozen”.

13.2 Interview with trans activist Pol Galofre. First part. Medium close-up of Pol Galofre, a trans activist, approximately thirty years of age. He wears casual clothes and sits on a red chair, in front of a window. He says that, if a boy dresses up as a princess, likes pink or is queer, “that doesn’t make you less of a man” (Min. 27:12).

13.3 Interview with sexologist Cristian Gallego. Third part. As we see a long shot of men and women of different ages walking in the street, we listen to the voice-over of Gallego, who appears in the same setting that we have seen previously: “Our society

doesn't accept that there are different sexes. Not just male and female. There's and interference when our girl has a penis, because gender identity is not located in our genitals, it is located in the head" (Min. 27:25).

13.4 Transition. The soft music gets louder as we see a couple going up electrical stairs and men in suits.

13.5 Interview with trans activist Pol Galofre. Still, first part. Galofre appears in the same setting that we saw previously. He defines himself as a trans man and explains that for him it's important to name this transition so as to make explicit the ways in which he has constructed himself.

13.6 Transition. The music gets louder as we see long shots of young men skateboarding and breakdancing.

13.7 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. Fifth part. Melich appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous segments and wonders why transsexuals are so worried about the changes in their bodies.

13.8 Interview with trans activist Pol Galofre. Still, first part. Galofre appears in the same setting that we saw previously. He says that he doesn't want to undergo surgery and that he has taken testosterone, so his body has more muscles and hair.

13.9 As we see more long shots of young men breakdancing, Melich wonders why transsexuals don't feel comfortable in their own bodies and explains: "Because implicitly, they are accepting an extremely brutal social logic that tells them they can't act nor think that way" (Min. 28:52).

13.10 Galofre appears in the same setting that we saw in previous segments saying that he is working on loving his own body.

13.11 Long shot of two young men walking, as we listen to the voice-over of Melich explaining that organs force people to act in specific ways, "to be in a certain way, even if you don't want to" (Min. 29:08).

13.12 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a sweatshirt, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street. The scene is accompanied by tense music.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: confusion and anger.

14. Male chauvinism and Rafa's story (wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 2, interviews with experts).

14.1 In medium close-up, sitting at the table of a dining room, Rafa asks his mobile phone the meaning of the word "machismo" (male chauvinism). The recorded

voice of the phone responds: “Attitude or way of thinking that defines a man as superior by nature to a woman” (Min. 29:32). We see a long shot of a transsexual talking by phone in the street and a heterosexual couple in a car; she is the one driving.

14.2 Interview with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Spanish Prime Minister 2004-2011. First part. Zapatero appears in medium close-up, wearing a suit, sitting on a red couch. He says that male chauvinism is “one of the most persistent viruses, the most difficult to eradicate. Today it is fought against, contained, controlled, but we still have a long way to go” (Min. 29:46).

14.3 Conversation between Rafa, his friend Manolo and de Ocampo in a coffee shop.

Medium close-up of Rafa greeting a friend in the street. The man, approximately sixty years of age, says he is very discreet. They sit in a coffee shop. Isabel asks him what male chauvinism is. The man replies: “male chauvinism is dominating a woman just like you dominate a horse (...) Treating a woman as an inferior being” (Min. 30:14). Rafa asks him if he considers that Spanish society is sexist. He replies it is: “Spain and worldwide. Those are laws we have inherited from prehistory. I agree to change them, all right” (Min. 30:35). He also says that there’s less sexism: “Nowadays few women get beaten. Before, it was almost all of them. But back then, TV still didn’t exist, so it wasn’t on the news” (Min. 30:56).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride.

15. Advertising agency. First part (wave 5, advertising agency).

15.1 Low angle shot of a tall office building and long shot of a man walking into the same building. Long shot of a group of eight publicists, four women and four men. Ages range from thirty to fifty years old. The boss, sitting in the main position of the table, announces that they have to work on a new campaign. He jokes about it not being about sanitary pads, but for an anti-wrinkle cream for men. He says that their target is the alpha male and points at one of them, Alfons: “a guy who doesn’t think he needs it because he’s already handsome. He likes himself and doesn’t need the cream” (Min. 31:28).

A woman says that she is against following a pattern of another brand, in which they portray the man as seductive of all women, because she finds it “sexist and humiliating” (Min. 32:33). One man asks about the ethics that they want to preserve in their campaign. The boss says that he doesn’t want to judge or raise awareness. He says that he wants to sell the cream.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride, anger and discomfort.

16. The model of masculinity (wave 2, interviews with experts).

16.1 Interview with anthropologist Manuel Delgado. Second part. Long shots of clothes stores with suits and ties. We listen to Delgado's voice-over: "Masculinity is a fashion" (Min. 33:15). He appears in the same setting that we have seen before and explains that Rodolfo Valentino, a feminised model, has little to do with the models represented by Clark Gable or Marlon Brando. Long shots of men and women at the gym. He keeps on explaining: "The market gets fed by that image of what a man and a woman should be. And any man or any woman who wants to be competitive, to speak in such terms, has to resemble the model" (Min. 33:43).

16.2 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Fourth part. Long shots of men from different ages, walking in the streets, followed by a male manikin with a bow tie. In voice-over, Lorente says: "one of the principal errors, one of the biggest traps our current sexist culture has devised is to hold up the model of masculinity as the model of success. A woman is successful when she does what men do" (Min. 34:01). Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous sequences. Wide shots of people walking in the streets at night.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort and frustration.

17. High school class. Third part. The invention of fatherhood (wave 4, high school class).

17.1 Same setting and characters from segments 5 and 12. The teacher explains that almost 90% of the sculptures that have been found from prehistoric times represent women. He shows a clay female figure with big breasts and many circles instead of a face. The students laugh. One girl describes it and says that it represents fertility. The teacher explains that these societies would give lots of authority to women and that for many years it's possible that men were not conscious of their role in biological reproduction: "Women had an essential significance: the perpetuation and sustenance of life. Furthermore, women provided social relationships (...) The father was an invention" (Min. 36:18).

The teacher asks the boys what they have nipples for. They laugh. The teacher speculates about what would happen if men breasts lactated. One of the boys says that he can also do other things to take care of the children, "but the traditional way of thinking is that a mother should stay at home. Though it's not correct or egalitarian for both sexes, it's what gets inside our heads" (Min. 37:39). The teacher concludes: "I don't need

lactating breasts to be a father. The invention of paternity happened in prehistory, but it's being reinvented over time. Fathers of today may not be the fathers of the future (...) Fatherhood gives an opportunity of being men in a different way" (Min. 37:51).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: kindness.

18. Patriarchy in religion (wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 3, Abel's arc; wave 6, poetic transition).

18.1 Interview with philosopher Joan Carles Melich. Sixth part.

Tilt up of male religious figures inside a Catholic church. We listen to the voice-over of Melich: "God is a male figure, a father figure, a figure that represents the law" (Min. 38:22). He appears in the same setting that we have seen previously and says that the fact that God is a male figure is not something that happened by chance. Different shots of people at a Catholic church.

18.2 Interview with Azcona about his performances. Long shot of Azcona entering a coffee shop. Miriam, approximately twenty-five years of age, greets him and thanks him for the interview. They sit at a table. He explains that he makes his performance with a political goal and exemplifies this with the occasion in which he formed the word pederasty with consecrated hosts. He also says that having been brought to trial for this performance was not a witch-hunt, but an achievement: "Art has to provoke a reaction. Art has to be critical, social and political. If you criticise a society that you disagree with and this society gets up, condemns you and takes you to court then you have done a very good job" (Min. 40:14).

Miriam asks him about the double moral with which the Catholic Church judges sins. Azcona replies that, what the Church wants is for people to be on their knees: "It's when we get up that it starts being a problem. A sinner is someone who stands up. If you're on your knees, you're subjugated, you're good. Religion is a kingdom made by men and for men" (Min. 40:53).

18.3 Low angle shot of a Church. Soft music is being played in the background as we see a wide shot of Rafa going inside the church. Then we see him in medium close-up, in the same setting from segments 4.1 and 6.2. He kisses a rosary that hangs from his neck. De Ocampo asks him if he is a religious man and he answers that he has always believed in God. Long shots of him praying in the Church. In close-up, again inside the brothel, he tells de Ocampo: "In a selfish kind of way, I believe in something (...) As most of us pray, so something we're doing wrong finally comes out right" (Min. 42:17).

18.4 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Fifth part. Long shots of religious images inside a Catholic Church. We hear the voice-over of Lorente explaining: “Religions contain the myth of the depraved woman” (Min. 42:50). His close-up is interweaved with close shots of different monstrous female figures and virgins. In close-up, he says: “no one has remarked on the fact that male chauvinism causes more death than Jihadism” (Min. 43:32).

18.5 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a hood, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street. The scene is accompanied by tense music.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and fear.

19. Gender-based violence. First part (wave 2, interviews with experts).

19.1 Interview with anthropologist Manuel Delgado. Third part. Various shots show heterosexual couples dancing tango. These are interweaved with long shots of Delgado in the same setting that we have seen previously. The music remains in the background and gets louder towards the end of the sequence. He explains that in everyday life there are several examples “of how far males go in exercising their right to dominate women” (Min. 43:52), such as cat-calling. He says that, sometimes “men are ‘obliged’ to establish a particular kind of bond. The courting process itself, deep down, basically implies domination. Because it’s expected that women just like cities or countries, must be conquered” (Min. 44:07). At the basis, he adds, the vision is that of woman as a prey, so that, if flirting fails, the next step is violence.

19.2 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Sixth part. Wide shot of the façade of a building. A woman hangs clothes in the balcony. Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen previously, saying that several women have told him that their husbands beat them “the normal amount” (Min. 44:52). His images are interweaved with shots of closed windows and of heterosexual couples of various ages in the streets:

Why is a woman ashamed to report her husband who beats her? And is not ashamed if the neighbour is the one who beats her up? Because if I report my husband in a culture that says only bad women are beaten, I’m announcing publicly that I’m a bad woman. Because your husband has beaten you. Society doesn’t question him, it only questions her. Because good women don’t get beaten. It’s like “good girls don’t get raped”. Whatever happens to a woman, she provoked it, with her deviation, her malice, her depravity. This is the basis

of the construction of patriarchy, that then translates into the sexism of everyday life (Min. 45:10).

19.3 Interview with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Second part. We see the shadows of two people talking, reflected on the wall, as Zapatero, with voice-over, starts talking about the gender violence case of Ana Orantes. He then appears in close-up, in the same setting that we have seen in a previous sequence, narrating that he visited her at the hospital and that this made him decide “on the big priority of my government: to fight against gender-based violence” (Min. 46:18).

19.4 Transition. As music of violins is played, we see a low angle shot of a clothesline with dark clothes.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, fear, pain and shame.

20. Advertising agency. Second part (wave 5, advertising agency).

20.1 We see the same group of publicists from segment 17.1. The boss tells them that they have to work on a campaign about gender violence, issue that he finds “Interesting but controversial” (Min. 46:36). In medium close-up, a woman, approximately thirty-five years of age, says that the first step is defining what is understood by gender violence, at a personal level and as a publicity agency. In medium close-up, a man, approximately forty years of age, says that, for him, gender violence is the one that takes place within the family. Another man, with glasses, replies that he considers catcalling gender violence as well.

This comment sparks a debate on the limits of freedom and respect. In close-up, the boss admits that he doesn’t understand why it’s called gender violence, to what the man with glasses replies that it’s the one perpetrated by men against women. A woman, approximately forty-five years of age, says that society is sexist and that sexism can be found also in newspaper headings such as “A woman dies at the hands of her alleged attacker” (Min. 47:38). The man with glasses says that this kind of headings “perpetuates roles and attitudes that lead to the murder of women every day” (Min. 47:55).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: confusion, discomfort and distress.

21. Gender-based violence. Second part (wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 6, poetic transition).

21.1 Interview with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Third part. Close-ups of Zapatero are interweaved with wide shots of an ambulance seen from behind, as it moves forward on the highway and in the streets, at sunset and at night. He defines gender



violence: “Gender violence is the violence men exercise over women through various different means. As a result of a sexist conception of hierarchy, of domination, of superiority, which has historically shaped our societies” (Min. 48:08).

21.2 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Seventh part. We see the long shot of a man walking and the windscreen of a car reflecting the lights of a police patrol, as we listen to the voice-over of Lorente asking what kind of society this is, in which each year sixty men kill their female partners. The medium close-ups of Lorente are interweaved with various shots of the police patrol, as he explains that these kinds of crimes are not instrumental, but moral: “They surrender voluntarily after committing the homicide, in 75% of the cases. And about 20% commit suicide. They commit the homicide to assert themselves as men” (Min. 49:03).

21.3 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a jacket and a sweatshirt, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street under the rain.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, distress and anger.

22. Advertising agency. Third part (wave 5, advertising agency).

22.1 We see the same group of publicists from segments 17.1 and 22.1. In medium close-up, the man with glasses asks if they are going to place the focus on the victim or the perpetrator. A woman replies that she would focus on the perpetrator. This sparks a debate on how to approach men, because they don't picture themselves as perpetrators. The boss asks the youngest woman in the team (approximately twenty-five years of age) for her opinion, to what she replies: “A perpetrator isn't born, but made. When we're young we learn from attitudes we see. Not necessarily at home but mostly at school, media, films we watch. Music” (Min. 50:05).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: confusion and discomfort.

23. Gender-based violence. Third part (wave 2, interviews with experts).

23.1 Transition. Medium shot of the reflection of a man in the window of a train at night. Long shots of young men walking in the streets at night.

23.2 Interview with Pol Galofre. Second part. Galofre appears in the same setting that we have seen previously and says: “When the world recognises you as a man you find yourself in a position of privilege (...) perceived as a man, I'm also seen as a potential aggressor” (Min. 50:56). Various long and medium shots show women and men in the streets at night, as Galofre explains that, for women, being harassed in the public space becomes part of everyday life. But he adds: “When I began transition and to be recognised as a man, I wasn't aware of the fear I had felt on the street when I was

perceived as a woman. When I stopped being afraid, it was liberating. People stopped seeing me as a sexual object. I wasn't something to conquer" (Min. 51:40).

23.3 Transition. Tense music is being played as we see long shots of young men in a park, practising different physical activities.

23.4 Transition. The music continues as we see a medium close-up of Rafa standing in the street, wearing sunglasses. He looks directly into the camera and then walks away.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear and discomfort.

24. Dialogue between Godino and Azcona. The Fathers' Performance (wave 3, Abel's arc).

24.1 Long shot of Godino and Azcona walking in the streets of Madrid. Medium shot of both sitting at a coffee shop. Azcona tells Godino that he is not looking for his father due to empathy, "but as a process of denunciation" (Min. 52:53) and, since he couldn't find him for the reasons explained by the lawyer, he decided to make a performance about it. Azcona then explains his performance as we see various long and medium shots of the people who took part in it. All of them are dressed in black and sit in wooden chairs in a big room with white walls; seven are ex-prostitutes and the other seven are cartoonists. They sit front to front, and the ex-prostitutes describe the faces of their last clients to the cartoonists, so that the portraits are those of the men he is looking for. He will then place the portraits in a gallery, as possible images of his father.

The camera moves along the table at which the fourteen people are sitting. We hear the voice-over of various women describing features of their clients. Long shot of Azcona standing next to them. We see him and Godino again at the coffee shop. Azcona says that, socially, he is called son of a whore, rather than "son of a whoremonger" (Min. 54:41). Medium shots of Azcona gathering the portraits and then hanging them on the wall, as we listen to his voice-over explaining that a prostitute is an abused woman, while the client is the one who does wrong. The last shot of the segment is accompanied by tense music and shows Azcona sitting at the table, with the portraits hanging on the wall next to the title of the performance, "The Fathers", and a quote from Guglielmo Ferrero: "War leaves an arduous legacy of wars" (Min. 55:04).

24.2 Transition. Long shots of the streets in a red lights district.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, pain and distress.

25. Rafa's perspective on prostitution (wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 6, poetic transition).

25.1 Rafa appears in the same setting from segment 4.1 and says that he doesn't see the point in legalising prostitution:

We and the government already earn enough money. If it were legalised, it's the women who would lose out (...) The government is my partner. It takes 33% of the business (...) If it was legal, I would still pay the same because I would earn the same. The women would pay the State themselves for their medical care and stuff. Sure! They'd have it. But I'd have to make sure they pay for it (Min. 55:24).

25.2 Transition. High angle shot of the publicity outside a brothel.

25.3 Conversation between Rafa, his friend Manolo, and de Ocampo in a coffee shop. Rafa and Manolo appear in medium close-up, in the same setting that we have seen in segment 14.3. Rafa says that, if a group of men decide to go with prostitutes, they are celebrated, while women would be negatively judged. Manolo says that there's a contradiction when prostitution is said to be illegal, but then it's announced with neon lights. Rafa replies that prostitution is not illegal, what is illegal is exploitation. Manolo expresses his position in favour of the legalisation of prostitution and compares working as a whore with being a bricklayer: "You can have the same rights as a bricklayer. End of the mafia. Who'd buy from the mafia when he can get it legally? (...) It's a job. Like any other. And if she doesn't like it, well, someone who works on a building site at five in the morning doesn't like it either" (Min. 57:09).

Manolo interpellates de Ocampo directly, asking her if she agrees with him. She and Rafa tell him that they disagree. She admits that she can't offer any solution and says that there are lots of lies around prostitution. She also tells Manolo that he doesn't want to see what Rafa is confessing about the ways in which he deceives women. Manolo replies that nobody is being deceived.

25.4 Close-up of Rafa driving his car. He gets a phone call from Lorena, a prostitute from Colombia who used to work with him. She tells him that she has to prostitute herself again, to what he replies that he is no longer a pimp but that he can call people he knows. He asks her if she is in good physical condition because she has to compete, to what she replies: "I'm really fine. I can still do it. I still turn men on" (Min. 59:35). He laughs. She asks him how much the women charge, to what he replies fifty euros. He stops the car and asks her why she doesn't try to stop working as a prostitute, to

what she replies: “I can’t find anything better. I’m not exactly keen on doing blowjobs. It’s not like I enjoy it” (Min. 1:00:05). She tells him she has two daughters, but now she is also in charge of two granddaughters.

When the phone conversation finishes, Rafa, in close-up, tells de Ocampo that he receives lots of calls like that one, which makes him feel bad: “Once you’re in, it’s very difficult to get out” (Min. 1:01:05). In medium close-up, Rafa stands next to his car, smoking. We see him in wide shot and then in medium close-up, the car parked on the highway, as he smokes looking at a rainbow in the sky.

25.5 Transition. Two high angle shots of puddles on which red lights are reflected at night.

25.6 Rafa appears in close-up in the same setting that we have seen in segments 4.1 and 27.1. He walks towards an exit door in the brothel as he says: “What changed my life really were the women. When I started to really see them. They stopped being objects. Or bottles as I used to say. I realised they were people like me. And I had used them” (Min. 1:01:49).

25.7 Transition. Two shots from inside a car that moves forward on the highway under the rain.

25.8 Rafa talks with two men that want to become pimps. Long shot of two men, approximately twenty-five years of age, arriving at Rafa’s club. In medium shot, they enter Rafa’s office and he warmly greets them. In medium close-up, one of them says that a friend of his wants to work in the club because there’s no other solution for her: “she lives alone, doesn’t get enough money, has a four-year-old daughter” (Min.1:03:03). He told her that it’s like working in a disco. Rafa tells him: “With the difference that it’s not her who makes a choice. It’s the client who chooses her” (Min. 1:03:21). The young man replies: “Either that or removing old people’s shit for 800 euros” (Min. 1:03:28). He adds that she earns a thousand euros working in the countryside and that he told her, as a lure, that she would make a thousand euros per week in the club. He says:

It’s my job (...) I don’t want to be a sheep in a company either, as I was, for one thousand euros. Treated like shit, while they get rid of you whenever they like. That’s also being a sheep. Not as bad a reputation as prostitution, but it’s being a sheep. You work hard, with a degree and everything. And when Ford decides, you get thrown out after six months (...) those wolves are well considered because they drive BMWs and Mercedes and work during the day.

I'm going to be a wolf. I won't mistreat any woman. But I will have guts and rise in my business (Min. 1:03:58).

In medium close-up, Rafa tells him not to make the same mistakes he made. He also tells him not to compare women with cigarettes, because women are people, not things. He finally asks him if he would advise his sister to enter into prostitution. The young man laughs uncomfortably and says that he would tell her to look for something else.

25.9 Transition. Shot from inside a car at night as it passes next to the brothel.

25.10 Rafa appears in medium close-up in the same setting that we have seen in segments 4.1 and 25.1. He reminds Isabel of the occasion in which he called her to ask: "Are we such bastards? Well yes, we are. Real bastards" (1:06:26). His close-ups are interweaved with shots from inside the car at night as it passes next to various hotels and brothels. Rafa continues: "I just wasn't aware. I saw it as natural. I've been in this since I was 16" (Min. 1:06:42).

25.11 Transition-leitmotif sequence: Medium close-up of a young man with a sweatshirt, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort, distress, anger and impotence.

26. Feminism (wave 2, interviews with experts).

26.1 Interview with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. Fourth part. Zapatero appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous segments. In close-up, he asserts that the best societies he knows are those in which "women are equal to men" (Min. 1:07:08).

A long shot shows a man and a woman riding a bicycle, and another one shows three women and two men skating together.

In close-up, Zapatero says he called himself a feminist man: "I am proud of having done it and I did it due to the strength that such an act from a Prime Minister could have to remove consciences" (Min. 1:07:19).

Five different long shots show men playing with their children in public spaces.

Zapatero, still in close-up, says that feminist values are very good for any society and any man: "values of sensitivity, cooperation, respect, equality" (Min. 1:07:40). A long shot shows a man carrying a child on his shoulders, an elderly couple and a family of black people, in which he pushes the stroller.

26.2 Interview with gender violence expert Miguel Lorente. Eight part. Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen in previous sequences and says: “If there’s something that really believes in men, it’s feminism. Because its objectives, its approach and solution depend upon men changing” (Min. 1:07:50).

26.3 Transition. Birds flying in the sky.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride and sensitivity.

27. Advertising agency. Fourth part (wave 5, advertising agency; wave 6, poetic transition).

27.1 We see the same group of publicists from segments 15.1, 20.1 and 22.1.

In medium close-up, one of the men, approximately forty-five years of age, says that there have been changes in sexist attitudes over the years: “You re-educate yourself” (Min. 1:08:18).

27.2 Transition-leitmotif sequence: Medium close-up of a man with a beanie and a bicycle, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street. The scene is accompanied by tense music.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: sensitivity.

28. High school class. Fourth part (wave 4, high school class).

28.1 Same setting and characters from segments 5, 10 and 17. In medium close-up, the teacher tells the students that he prepared a surprise and leaves the classroom. The students joke around until the teacher comes back with Carlos, approximately forty years of age, and his daughter Gala, a two-year-old girl. The teacher introduces Carlos as his friend, who is father for the first time and will share his experience with them. Carlos sits on a chair, holding the girl in his arms. He says: “If a woman had come with her child, it would be something completely different. It would be seen as the most normal thing in the world. It wouldn’t be strange or surprising” (Min. 1:09:42).

One of the students asks him if having the girl hasn’t meant that he had to stop doing things he enjoyed. He replies that he has fallen in love so deeply with his daughter that being with her all the time is a choice, not a sacrifice. He also makes it clear that his wife doesn’t ask him to stay; rather, he is the one who has decided to do so. The teacher asks him if having asked himself what kind of man he wants to be has influenced the kind of father he has become. Carlos agrees. The class finishes and everybody applauds. Carlos stands up in medium close-up, holding the girl in his arms. They both thank the class.

28.2 Transition. We listen to birds singing as we see an extreme close-up of a boy smiling and holding a flower.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, joy and surprise.

29. Fatherhood (wave 2, interviews with experts).

29.1 Interview with gender expert Miguel Lorente. Lorente appears in the same setting that we have seen previously and explains that there's no fixed identity for paternity.

29.2 Transition. Soft music is being played as we see a long shot of a man riding a bicycle and holding another bike with him, followed by a long shot of a man holding a baby.

29.3 Interview with economist Alain Cuenca. Second part. He appears in the same setting that we have seen previously and says that inequality becomes worse when children are born:

Society tells the mother: you have four months to take care of your baby. And to the father: you have a month, but if you don't take it, no problem. If maternity and paternity leave were equal and obligatory, business bosses would never ask "do you or will you have children?" Because it would make no difference. (Min. 1:12:32).

Close-up of the man playing with the baby, the baby looks directly into the camera with a smile. These images are interweaved with close-ups of Cuenca as he keeps on saying that current Spanish laws favour inequality: "income tax law provides relief for the family unit. If a family member doesn't work, usually the wife, she has the right to pay less taxes. And this means that, if that woman decides to go back to work one day she loses this tax deduction. Therefore she will pay tax on what she earns plus the tax relief she loses" (Min. 1:13:03). He concludes that economy by itself cannot change the situation, because it's a cultural construct that requires public policies to correct privilege.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love and distress.

30. Abel's performance (wave 3, Abel's arc).

30.1 Soft violin music is played as we see various long shots of people arriving at a gallery where Azcona presents his performance, "The Fathers". Different people who appear in the documentary, such as Godino and Gallego, are among the public. A table and eight chairs occupy the centre of the room, the recording of the performance is

projected on a screen and the portraits hang on a wall. Azcona thanks everybody and says that he would like to make the same performance with clients of prostitution, but that he doubts they would participate. He complains about the fact that Rafa, who had promised to attend, didn't show up. A woman asks him what he would ask his father if he found him. Abel replies that, as with the pimp who didn't arrive, he would listen to him, give him his opinion and that's it, because he doesn't believe he would apologise to his mother. Wide shot of the people applauding and medium close-up of Azcona with a sad face. Once the gallery is empty, the camera pans across the portraits lying on the table.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress and frustration

31. Abel meets Rafa (wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 3, Abel's arc; wave 6, poetic transition).

31.1 The hand-held camera follows Azcona in a party. The whole sequence is accompanied by a dramatic piece of music. He is visibly drunk, spits to the camera, takes off his clothes and crawls on the floor until security guards throw him out. As we see these images, we listen to de Ocampo's voice-over, telling Rafa about Azcona being an artist and the son of a prostitute. He appears in the same setting that we have seen before, his brothel, smoking and with sunglasses. When de Ocampo asks him if he has seen similar cases, he replies: "I have seen women giving birth to babies here in the club. I have seen pregnant women working. One day working in the strip club and the next, having the baby. And I've seen them fight to keep the baby. But later on, giving it up to social services for adoption" (Min. 1:16:28).

De Ocampo asks him what he would tell Azcona and Rafa remains silent with evident discomfort. He finally answers: "He must have suffered a lot. Sure. Has he become a man? Yes. She didn't drop him into a waste bin. She handed him over" (Min. 1:17:21).

31.2 Transition-leitmotif sequence. The music gets even louder as we see a medium close-up of a man with a black coat from behind and in slow motion, as he walks in a narrow street.

31.3 Shot from inside a car as it moves forward on the highway in the morning. De Ocampo drives and Azcona sits in the back seat with his eyes closed. They are going to Rafa's brothel. She tells him that she thinks it's important for them to meet each other and asks him about how he thinks his childhood was. Azcona replies: "Whoever does harm, did not have an easy childhood. But this doesn't do for me. Precisely, what counts,



after having a difficult childhood, is to become resilient as an adult and be capable of not hurting anyone” (Min. 1:18:40).

31.4 Wide shot of the brothel as Azcona arrives. Medium shot of him knocking the door with an angry face. Several minutes pass by, before a young man called Cristian opens the door. The camera follows Azcona as he enters Rafa’s office, which is the same that we have seen in segment 1. Rafa is sitting at the desk and Azcona sits in front of him. Azcona complains about the fact that he didn’t show up at the performance. Rafa tells him that he doesn’t know how to say no, to what Azcona replies: “How can you be a pimp without saying no? That seems impossible to me” (Min. 1:20:50). Rafa avoids the question and says that he became a pimp due to the circumstances, not because he was born one. Rafa tells him that he likes how he used the expression “son of a whoremonger” (Min. 1:21:15) because he finds it more elegant. Azcona says it’s more realistic and asks him if he’s tense. Rafa admits being tense and stands up to show Azcona around the club.

31.5 The camera follows Azcona as he enters the area of the brothel with the bar counter. They stand up next to it in medium close-up, drinking. Rafa tells Azcona that he began as a bouncer, then waiter, barman, manager and owner: “We have guidelines, we have our rules, and one of those rules is, a woman is this. She is a bottle. This gives me money. A woman produces money” (Min. 1:22:15). Azcona grabs the bottle and asks him what happens if that woman is his mother. Rafa grabs two shot glasses and says those are the sons of a whoremonger, one called Abel and one called Rafael. Azcona asks for another bottle and places it in front of Rafa, asking who he is. At the other side of the bar counter, we see the man from segment 1, who is looking at the conversation between Rafa and Abel. Rafa asks his employee for more bottles and orders them in a rating scale: “We have the woman. We have the clients. This is the waiter. I am this one. And above me, the government’s social policies. Which is the most expensive. This is the paraphernalia of the system of prostitution” (Min. 1:23:45).

Azcona asks him how and why he moved from being the small one to the big one of the scale. He also starts throwing bottles with the shot glass in an aggressive way and Rafa tells him not to do it because soon they will start to work. In medium close-up, Azcona holds the bottle that represents the whoremonger and tells Rafa: “He is a biological father. But the father of the system, the father of this evolution is you. So you are my father” (Min. 1:24:30). Close-up of Rafa with a puzzled look in his face. Azcona

continues: “I was here and the moment I asked if I could go further, I said: I’d prefer to commit suicide and die than to abuse” (Min. 1:24:47).

Rafa asks him if he has ever tried to commit suicide, to what he replies that a thousand times. Rafa tells him that he has shot himself twice. Azcona replies he wishes it would have worked before he became who he is. Rafa says that it’s not his fault, Azcona tells him that he is totally to blame for what he has done: “You manipulate the puppet” (Min. 1:25:24). Rafa tries to defend himself saying that he was also manipulated, to what Azcona replies: “I have suffered abuse, bad treatment, I’ve been down there. But I swear I’d never, for my mother, and everything I love, I would never be up there” (Min. 1:25:30).

Rafa asks for a baseball bat. In medium close-up, Azcona reacts with fear and says that’s not a good idea with so many crystals. Rafa asks for a cue stick, adding “it’s an order” (Min.1:25:48). Azcona looks at the camera with evident discomfort. Rafa asks everybody to move away and breaks all the bottles with the cue stick. He then asks for Azcona, who has hidden between two cash machines. Rafa says: “Now it’s me who wants to destroy all of this” (Min. 1:26:19). Azcona approaches the bar counter and points out to Rafa that the only ones that didn’t break were the two shot glasses, the sons. Azcona asks him why, Rafa smiles and says: “because we are sons of whoremongers” (Min. 1:26:36). Azcona walks away and says that it’s all the same shit. Then he hugs Rafa and tells him that, even though he reproaches him lots of things, he respects what he had just done. We hear soft music as the camera shows details of the broken bottles and stops at the two intact shot glasses.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, discomfort and anger.

32. Closing (wave 6, poetic transition).

32.1 Transition-leitmotif sequence. Medium close-up of a man with a grey coat, seen from behind and in slow motion as he walks in a street. Other people are coming towards the camera but we can’t see their faces. We listen to Lorente’s voice-over: “That’s the question that men ask themselves, why am I going to give up all of this if it’s convenient for me?” (Min. 1:27:15). Music continues being played as we see the same man with a beanie and a bicycle from segment 27.2, walking in slow motion, and other three men that we have seen along the film, walking from behind. With the camera out-of-focus, these men and others that have appeared in the film turn towards the camera, still with their faces out-of-focus.

32.2 Wide shot of kids of all ages playing in the fountains. Four of the adolescents from the high school sequences, two girls and two boys, play in the fountains. At one point, the girls jump on the back of the boys, who laugh as they carry them and get out of the frame. On top of the images, we read the credits: directing and script by Isabel de Ocampo; production by de Ocampo, Efthymia Zymvragaki, Angelo Orlando and Joseba Garmendia; photography by Carles Muñoz and Zymvragaki; editing by Eloi Tomàs; original music by Antonio Escobar–Antipop. On the black screen, we read that the film is dedicated to Nathalie Seseña, followed by the rest of the credits, such as technical staff and crowdfunding supporters. It is stated that the film was shot in Salamanca, San Sebastián, Barcelona, Valdepeñas, Almansa and Amsterdam.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and hope.

#### 4.5.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

*Serás Hombre* deals with a crucial topic in the **feminist audiovisual agenda**: gender-based violence and, specifically, how it is expressed in sex trafficking and prostitution. As in one of my Italian case studies, *Ma l'amore c'entra?*<sup>462</sup>, the director shifts the attention from women to men, so that the focus is placed on the role that the construction of masculinity plays in the perpetuation of gender-based violence. In this sense, the main **feminist countervisuality** practice enacted by Isabel de Ocampo is precisely this change of gaze that places responsibility and accountability on men. She portrays male characters, which embody hyper-violent hegemonic violence, making sense of their perverse logic while, at the same time, presenting other possibilities of becoming men.

There are, however, controversial issues in the ways in which this is visualised in the film. Men are the main characters, but many times they don't talk about themselves: they talk about women in victimising and/or paternalistic tones. For instance, Rafa refers to women as money, bottles and cigarettes at different moments; even when he claims that he has changed, he talks about women as vulnerable victims and reinforces the idea that men should respect women only because they can be “your sisters or mothers”, as when he asks the young pimp if he would advise his sister to enter prostitution (segment 25.9). Nevertheless, such a way of speaking is consistent with the kind of masculinity he embodies. The decision of interviewing only male experts is a tricky aspect, because

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<sup>462</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Chapter 6.5 *Ma l'amore c'entra?/Is It About Love?* (Elisabetta Lodoli, 2017).

many times they don't give credit to feminist knowledges, with the exception of segment 26, in which Zapatero and Lorente recognise that feminism is positive for everybody.

*Serás Hombre* can be analysed as a **diffraction apparatus** that renders visible the perpetrators' responsibility, instead of placing it on the (female) victims. The concept of diffraction apparatus, as stated in the first chapter, has been elaborated by Karen Barad to define material-discursive practices that make boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways. De Ocampo tries to make "visible the invisible" (Kuhn 1994: 67) in various senses: at the core of the film, she explores masculinity as a socio-cultural construct, not as a biological set of characteristics. One of the main characters, Rafa, renders visible part of the structure behind the sex trafficking industry in Spain, while the other protagonist, Abel, takes us through the processes behind his performative art. Similarly, the high school class and the meeting of the advertising agency team are microcosms that visualise some of the arguments that nurture gender stereotypes and current debates on gender violence. As aforementioned, the film is constructed with a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592) that entangles six different **narrative waves** through the film editing: wave 1, Rafa's arc; wave 2, interviews with experts; wave 3, Abel's arc; wave 4, high school class; wave 5, advertising agency; and wave 6, poetic transition.

To employ diffraction as the approach to analyse a documentary film involves paying attention to the importance of the form in which it produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality**, in terms of how it "engages with bodies and with the matter of the world" (Olivieri 2012: 10). Using Bill Nichols's typology of modes of representation in documentary cinema (2010), *Serás hombre* can be classified as an observational-participatory documentary film. **Observational** documentary privileges observation of the social actors without comments or interventions from the director, who simply registers the events that take place. However, various sequences in this film, such as the conversation between Rafa and a newbie ex-pimp that opens the film, don't have the fly-on-the-wall feeling of more conventional observational documentary films. Rather, these sequences seem to be re-enactments: performances for the camera that remind of the performative potential of documentary cinema, as described by Stella Bruzzi (2000).<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> According to Bruzzi, what we see in a documentary film is always a product of the intrusion of the filmmaker and the camera in the situation being filmed. *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1, section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity

In this sense, the film's main mode of representation is actually the **participatory** one, because most of the film is sustained by interviews. There are, however, a few problematic aspects concerning the way in which these **interviews** are set in the film. These issues are connected with the filmmaker's decision of presenting only male voices as valid voices, i.e. using the master's tools to dismantle the master's house, paraphrasing Audre Lorde's phrase.<sup>464</sup> In defence of the feminist realist documentary films of the seventies, most of which resorted to observational and participatory modes of representation, theorists such as Alexandra Juhasz (1994) argue that **talking heads** can be an empowering tool for people who finally have the space to represent themselves and tell their own stories in front of the camera.<sup>465</sup> In *Serás Hombre*, the men that appear onscreen are already authority figures, not only due to the fact that they are white European middle-class men, but also because they are placed in a framed setting that underlines their epistemological superiority, being a politician, an anthropologist, an economist, a philosopher, a gender violence expert and a sexologist (figure 28).



**Figure 28.** Male experts and epistemological superiority

The only interviewee who speaks from his embodied experience is Pol Galofre, the trans activist. The editing interweaves his testimony with the reading that philosopher Joan Melich makes of transsexuality: “Why do transsexuals feel uncomfortable in their own bodies? Because implicitly, they are accepting an extremely brutal social logic that tells them they can’t act nor think that way” (Min. 28:52). Instead of complementing each other, the two testimonies are presented in a way that tends to reproduce a hierarchy in which the academic expert seems to understand the trans experience better than the trans

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<sup>464</sup> “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde 1984; 2007).

<sup>465</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 2, section 2.2.2 Feminist Documentary Cinema: Possibilities of Subversive Realism

person. Anyway, Galofre's testimony in *Serás Hombre* stands for a different approach to masculinity, one that challenges biological essentialism.

As mentioned in chapter 1, with the participatory mode of representation, “the viewer senses that **the image is** not just an indexical representation of some part of the historical world but also **an indexical record of the actual encounter between filmmaker and subject**” (Nichols 2010: 157). The character to whom de Ocampo directly speaks in various scenes is Rafa, the ex-pimp. She doesn't appear onscreen but we hear her voice-over. The risk of this closeness with such a charismatic and manipulative character is that he elicits complicity from the spectator<sup>466</sup> (figure 29). The only scene in which the filmmaker talks directly to the other main character, Abel Azcona, is when they are on their way to meet Rafa. In this conversation, Azcona rejects any empathetic feeling towards the ex-pimp: “Whoever does harm, didn't have an easy childhood. But this doesn't do for me. Precisely, what counts, after having a difficult childhood, is to become resilient as an adult and be capable of not hurting anyone” (Min. 1:18:40).



**Figure 29.** Conversations with Rafa, the ex-pimp

The encounter between Rafa and Azcona is a clear example of **performativity** as defined in the first chapter: a way of naming the power documentary cinema has “to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects” (2015: 28). It is the result of the filmmaker's decision to make the two main narrative waves of her film overlap. Still, as the encounter moves forward, the tension between them becomes a kind of male egos contest, including challenging each other as for who had tried to commit suicide in a more aggressive way (segment 31.5). At the end, Azcona hugs Rafa and admits a sense of respect towards him, once the ex-pimp makes it clear that he is the boss of the brothel,

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<sup>466</sup> This was indicated by spectators in the preview screenings, to which I will refer to in the next section. *Vid. Infra*. Section 4.5.2 Production and Reception: Constructing an Affective Message for Men

that he can break the most expensive bottles around, and that he is the one “who wants to destroy all of this [the sex trafficking industry]” (Min. 1:26:19).<sup>467</sup>

Rafa has two encounters with young men who admire him and who want to become “businessmen of the night” like him. The conversation in segment 25.8 is eloquent. When asked for the reasons why he wants to get into sex trafficking, the young man replies:

**I don’t want to be a sheep in a company** either, as I was, for one thousand euros. Treated like shit, while they get rid of you whenever they like. That’s also being a sheep. Not as bad a reputation as prostitution, but it’s being a sheep. You work hard, with a degree and everything. And when Ford decides, you get thrown out after six months (...) **those wolves are well considered because they drive BMWs and Mercedes and work during the day. I’m going to be a wolf.** I won’t mistreat any woman. But I will have guts and rise in my business (Min. 1:03:58. My emphasis).

We can read this testimony diffractively with Sayak Valencia’s “endriago subjects”<sup>468</sup>, that is, the dystopian version of **marginalised masculinities**: men who “decide to make use of violence as a tool of empowerment and acquisition of capital (...) a response to the fear of emasculation that hangs over many men, given the increasing job insecurity and its consequent inability to stand, legitimately, in their role as male providers” (2010: 90-91).<sup>469</sup> In a context of structural violence, where the desirable conditions of life become the prerogative of a few and frustration is emphasised by a hyper-consumer society, “endriago subjects” embody subordinate masculinities that, in a perverse reinterpretation of entrepreneurial freedom, resort to violent mechanisms in order to move from victims to victimisers. These self-called “businessmen of the night” (segment 4.1) violate laws but maintain absolute obedience to market demands, to capital, to hyper-consumption, to their (male) bosses and to the dictates of **hegemonic masculinity**.

This dystopian masculinity is also nurtured by the hate towards the feminine that lies at the heart of patriarchy. As gender violence expert Miguel Lorente and sexologist

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<sup>467</sup> Reactions to this ending at the preview screenings will be further discussed. *Vid. Infra*. Section 4.5.2

<sup>468</sup> The endriago monster is a literary character that combines a man with a hydra and a dragon.

<sup>469</sup> “los sujetos endriagos deciden hacer uso de la violencia como herramienta de empoderamiento y de adquisición de capital (...) una respuesta al miedo a la desvirilización que pende sobre muchos varones dada la creciente precarización laboral y su consiguiente incapacidad para erigirse, de modo legítimo, en su papel de macho proveedor.”

Cristian Gallego say in the film: “culture establishes that being a man is not being a woman” (Min. 5:05), and “a basic principle of masculinity is to refuse, directly, the feminine” (Min. 26:28). At the beginning of the film, Rafa tells the newbie pimp that he has to see women as money if he wants to become prosperous. In this argument, we can identify what Valencia has called “gore capitalism”: a theoretical tool to reinterpret the economics of globalisation in areas where predatory exploitation is erected as part of the logic of the market (2010: 15). Gore capitalism is sustained by a rigid construction of gender and, especially, by the association of masculinity with violence. Therefore, in order to dismantle it, it is necessary to subvert hegemonic and complicit masculinities, to draw up alliances, i.e. becoming a woman, becoming a migrant, becoming precarious (Valencia 2010: 175, 180), and to look for other forms of subjectivities that do not legitimise themselves by means of violence and hyper-consumption.

Azcona embodies a kind of subjectivity that tries to construct itself by channelling his rage and pain through art, though also through self-destructive attitudes. In the film, he describes the process of looking for his father as “a process of denunciation” (Min. 52:53), not as an act of reunion, completion, nor empathy. His arc/narrative wave concludes with him calling Rafa his father (segment 31.5). This destabilisation of the traditional hero’s journey can be diffractively read as an example of subversive cinema capable of being “**narrative and oedipal with a vengeance**”, as described by Teresa de Lauretis in chapter 2 (1987b: 108).<sup>470</sup>

Certain **emotions** predominate in the portrait of each character. With Rafa there’s a strong sense of pride and anger/aggressivity linked with his self-representation as a powerful “businessman of the night”. This gradually turns into remorse, discomfort and distress but his selfishness and violent ego re-emerge and remain intact in the last sequence. In the case of Azcona, the main affects that are evoked are pain, distress and anger. Only in the sequence with Godino (segment 9) there’s care and tenderness. In the sequences of the advertising agency, the principal affects are confusion and discomfort.

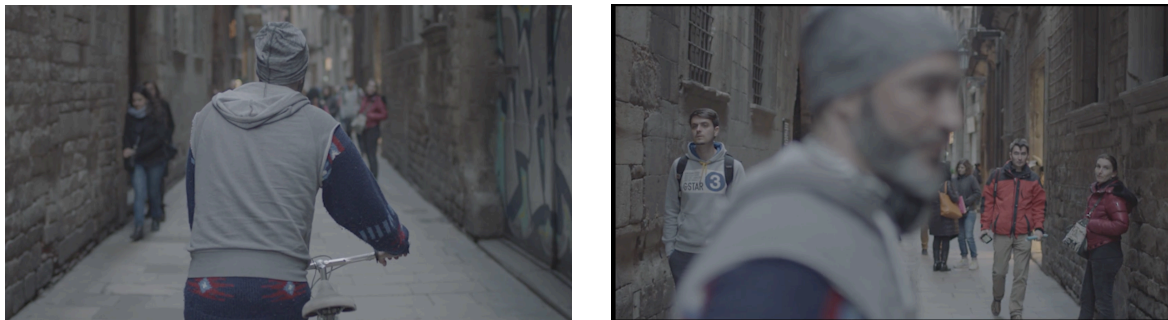
The **positive affects** of the film are elicited mainly in the high school sequences (wave 4): surprise, kindness and joy. Apart from the trans masculinity embodied by Galofre, the models of masculinity that the film offers as alternatives to hegemonic ones are those of the teacher and the father he invites to his class. The adolescents are also present in the last shot of the film, evoking a message of hope as they play together, boys

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<sup>470</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Section 2.1.4 From the Female Gaze to the Feminist Situated Gazes



and girls, in the fountains. The transition-leitmotif sequences of men walking the streets seen from behind, which closes with the images of these men stopping and turning their out-of-focus faces towards the camera is a strategy that elicits accountability from the spectators, who might identify with those anonymous men who have been educated by a patriarchal society but who have the possibility to question it (figure 30).



**Figure 30.** Transition sequences: eliciting accountability from the spectators

In the next section, I diffractively read four interviews with Isabel de Ocampo held for this research project. I also close read the transcriptions of reactions at four screenings of the film and a couple of online reviews. All of these insights illuminate different aspects of *Serás hombre* that emerge at specific encounters from various situated gazes.

#### **4.5.2 Production and Reception: Constructing an Affective Message for Men**

When Isabel de Ocampo started developing *Serás Hombre* in 2013, she had **one clear premise**: it was necessary to **change the gaze, from women as victims** of gender-based violence, **towards men as perpetrators, and to the construction of the hegemonic masculinity sustained in the exercise of such violence**. I had the opportunity to interview de Ocampo at different stages of the production of this film: in June, October and December 2016, and in August 2017. During our third conversation she explained that, after having portrayed women as victims of sex trafficking in *Miente* (2008) and *Evelyn* (2012), she thought that a change of strategy was required **in order to connect with a male audience** that hardly ever showed up in her presentations:

I told myself: **If only male voices have authority for you, then so be it, male voices you will have** (...) the objective of my documentary is not to make a documentary for feminists, nor for women. It is to make a documentary, I insist,

for men, because since I've been participating in talks on gender violence, since I made *Miente* in 2008, I speak to audiences full of women, so I say, okay, this is fine, but what is the point of preaching to converts, right? We have to preach to the atheists, that is, **this message has to connect with men, we must end the complicit silence (...) And that's why in my documentary there are only men**, I want them to be the ones who speak, **I want them to be models and examples for other men**, so that they are not afraid to speak out and condemn gender violence.<sup>471</sup>

De Ocampo, therefore, carried out the production of *Serás Hombre* with **the objective of eliciting empathy from men** and of making them reflect about their own masculinity. The message that she wants to get across is that **gender-based violence is not a women's problem, but a problem that concerns everybody**, especially men as perpetrators:

**I am making this documentary about masculinity but, as a matter of fact, it isn't about masculinity, the actual question is: why are you killing us and why are you raping us in this way?** What have you got in your heads? Let's sit quietly, without accusing anyone, without insulting anyone, but please, we must look at this as a society. And those who have responsibilities, well, **I'll put a mirror in front of them (...)** you have to force these men to sit down and reflect on the truths that come out of their mouths and the barbarities that emerge in their WhatsApp conversations.<sup>472</sup>

Her approach is similar to what Elisabetta Lodoli does in one of my Italian case studies,

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<sup>471</sup> “Yo he dicho: Si sólo las voces masculinas para vosotros suponen autoridad, pues hala, voces masculinas váis a tener (...) el objetivo de mi documental no es hacer un documental para las feministas, ni para las mujeres, es hacer un documental, insisto, para los hombres porque yo desde que llevo participando en charlas sobre violencia de género, desde que hice “Miente” en el 2008, asisto a auditorios llenos de mujeres, entonces yo digo, vale, esto está muy bien, pero qué sentido tiene predicar a los conversos, ¿no? Es que hay que predicar ante los ateos, o sea, este mensaje tiene que conectar con los hombres, o sea, tenemos que acabar con el silencio cómplice (...) Y es por eso que en mi documental sólo salen hombres, quiero que sean ellos los que hablen, quiero que sean referentes y modelos para otros hombres, para que no tengan miedo de hablar y condenar la violencia de género.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016. All translations and emphases are mine.

<sup>472</sup> “Yo estoy haciendo este documental de la masculinidad pero en realidad no es de la masculinidad, en realidad la pregunta es ¿por qué nos estáis matando y por qué nos estáis violando de esta manera? ¿Qué os han metido en a cabeza? Vamos a sentarnos tranquilamente sin acusar a nadie, sin insultar a nadie, pero por favor, esto hay que mirárnoslo como sociedad. Y quien tenga responsabilidades, pues le voy a poner el espejo adelante (...) hay que obligar a estos hombres a sentarse y a reflexionar sobre las verdades que salen por sus bocas y las barbaridades que salen en sus conversaciones de WhatsApp.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

*Ma l'amore c'entra?*<sup>473</sup>, in which she interviews men who have physically attacked their female partners. Both want to distance themselves from the official discourse described by Virginia Villaplana<sup>474</sup>, who explains that, instead of recognising the feminist work against gender-based violence, mass media and governmental representations tend to portray women as “fragile, incapable and fearful beings who need the help of others (family, community and the State) to ‘recover’ from the bad ‘fortuitous moment they have had to live’” (2008: 169). De Ocampo identifies this tendency, for example, in the discourses of Mariano Rajoy, Spanish Prime Minister from the right-wing Popular Party between 2011-2018. In one of our interviews, she quotes a speech he gave in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

Here is the key to the failure of all the policies that try to fight against gender violence. Mariano Rajoy said “there is a way out”, addressing the victims of gender violence, he told them **“there is an exit for your problem”** (...) Excuse me, Mariano Rajoy, it is not “your problem”, **it’s our problem as a society**, we have it at home, it is our problem, **of women and men who are educated in patriarchy** (...) I want to make a documentary that goes to the root of the problem and for me, the root, the first thing to do is admitting that it is a problem of each and everyone of us.<sup>475</sup>

De Ocampo decided to **talk only with male experts and to have men as her main film subjects** because she considers that her film can be more convincing for a male audience in this way. She has a background in publicity, so she wanted to employ **persuasion tools** in her film: “the failure we are having is precisely one of communication with men (...) I come from putting together a message in a persuasive way, well, let me use those tools that I know how to use, to put together this message that is going to be so fundamentally transgressive for them.”<sup>476</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, I summarise this

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<sup>473</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 6.5 *Ma l'amore c'entra?/Is It About Love?* (Elisabetta Lodoli, 2017).

<sup>474</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 3, section 3.3.1 The Ambivalence of Media Attention to Gender Violence

<sup>475</sup> “Aquí está la clave de cuál es el fallo de todas las políticas que tratan de combatir la violencia de género. Mariano Rajoy dijo ‘hay salida’, dirigiéndose a las víctimas de violencia de género, les dijo ‘hay salida para vuestro problema’ (...) Perdona Mariano Rajoy, no es ‘vuestro problema’, es nuestro problema como sociedad, lo tenemos en casa, es nuestro problema, el de las mujeres y los hombres que están educados en el patriarcado (...) quiero hacer un documental que vaya a la raíz del problema y para mí, la raíz, lo primero que hay que hacer es admitir que es un problema de todos y de todas nosotras.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>476</sup> “el fallo que estamos teniendo es precisamente de comunicación con ellos (...) Yo vengo de cómo armar un mensaje de forma persuasiva, bueno, déjame que utilice yo esas herramientas que sé también utilizar para armar este mensaje que va a ser en el fondo tan transgresor para ellos.” Isabel de Ocampo.

approach as trying to use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house (Lorde 1984: 2007). For example, despite acknowledging that there's no such thing as objectivity in documentary cinema, she wants to present her audience with what she calls "standard" framings of characters that might not be initially read as feminist activists:

I find that the men I interview haven't reflected that much on these ideas (...) it's a handicap that I have because **I couldn't find many men who have very clear ideas on the subject.** But I prefer that, I prefer to take that risk, rather than showing a female feminist against whom the man who sees it says "ah, well, this feminist, going on again about the same old thing" (...) Because **my goal is to connect, to communicate, you know, to be as objective as possible** (...) to have a standard message that no man can shield himself from; to prevent him from making excuses to not listen to the message.<sup>477</sup>

The urge to elicit empathy from the spectators was also behind her decision to structure her film, not only with interviews recorded in a talking head's format, but also incorporating attractive **narrative plots embodied by more developed characters.** She wants to **affect spectators,** to move them at an emotional level:

From the point of view of seduction or persuasion, **I know that a guy with a tie will be much more effective than a radical feminist telling you that the IRPF [personal income tax] is a sexist tax.** Because other feminists will listen to that radical feminist, but not men, they stop listening (...) Moreover, part of the persuasion with which you have to imbue the audiovisual language, another element for a message to reach its target, is for you **to catch the audience through emotions. You have to make them empathise with you somehow.** That's why many documentaries don't manage to transmit the ideas they intend to transmit, because the talking heads don't, I mean, the message doesn't reach you (...) But in a dark theatre, when you go to see a film, you already know that you are going to disconnect from your world, your emotions, and you will

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Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>477</sup> "Me encuentro con que los hombres que entrevisto no tienen estas ideas tan tan tan reflexionadas (...) es un hándicap que tengo porque no encontré tantos hombres que tengan las ideas tan claras pero es que prefiero eso, prefiero correr ese riesgo, a poner a una feminista contra la que el hombre que lo vea diga "ah, bueno, esta feminista, ya está otra vez con eso" (...) Porque mi objetivo es conectar, comunicar, o sea, sabes, que sea lo más objetivo posible todo (...) que sea un mensaje estándar, que ningún hombre pueda escudarse, ni pueda poner excusas para no escuchar el mensaje." Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

get into the emotions of the other. And you relax and lower your barriers and defences (...) The audiovisual language first has to grab you in the guts, unprepared, it has to make you feel whatever it is that you are feeling and then, after the movie is over, the idea reaches your head.<sup>478</sup>

Originally, de Ocampo had thought about interviewing clients of prostitution as the film's main axis. But she noticed that this would entail two problems: finding funding for the film would have become impossible, and she would run the risk of eliciting empathy with such characters. In other words, she became aware of **the responsibility involved in choosing what kind of character you decide to place in front of the camera**: “I realised that our approach was mistaken, that if I interviewed prostitution clients, deep down, I would give them power, I would give them a voice (...) we can't give voice to prostitution clients, we have to give voice to feminist men.”<sup>479</sup> This issue, however, remained problematic with the portrait of Rafa, the ex-pimp. Concerning the **controversy over men being feminist**, she reckons that, even if “a man can never come to perceive the oppression that a woman has suffered”<sup>480</sup>, they can empathise with feminism:

What I think is that you have to open the door and reach out. **We can't say “no, you can't, since you are a man, you can't be feminist”** (...) in Spain there are two very powerful associations of feminist men, who don't call themselves feminists, precisely, I think, to avoid conflict because, of course, there will be a radical sector of feminism that says, “you can't call yourselves feminists.” “No, calm down, we'll call it something else, because after all

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<sup>478</sup> “Desde el punto de vista de la seducción o de la persuasión, yo sé que va a ser muchísimo más eficaz un tío con corbata diciéndote que el IRPF es un impuesto machista, que no una feminista radical. Porque esa feminista radical será escuchada por otras feministas menos radicales, no por los hombres, que se cierran (...) Otra de las cosas, parte de la persuasión con la que tú tienes que envolver el lenguaje audiovisual, otro de los elementos para que un mensaje llegue, es que le tienes que pillar a través de las emociones. Tienes que conseguir que empatice de alguna manera. Por eso muchos documentales no llegan a transmitir las ideas que pretenden transmitir, porque los bustos parlantes no, o sea, el mensaje no te llega (...) Pero en una sala oscura, cuando te pones a ver una película, tú ya sabes que vas a desconectar de tu mundo, de tus emociones, y te vas a meter en las emociones del otro. Y tú te relajas y bajas las barreras y bajas las defensas (...) El lenguaje audiovisual primero te tiene que coger de las vísceras, desprevenido, te tiene que hacer sentir lo que quiera que sea que estás sintiendo y luego ya, después que ya se acaba la película, la idea llega a la cabeza.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>479</sup> “Yo me di cuenta de que nos estábamos equivocando en el enfoque, que si yo me dedicaba a entrevistar a clientes de prostitución, en el fondo, les iba a dar poder, les iba a dar voz (...) no podemos darle voz a los clientes de prostitución, tenemos que darle voz a los hombres feministas.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>480</sup> “un hombre nunca puede llegar a percibir la opresión que ha sufrido una mujer.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

we're fighting for the same thing.” I am quite conciliatory. I share Ana de Miguel’s idea that we have to look for common areas, because differences will always be there. The interesting thing is to be able to transcend that idea and empathise with the other.<sup>481</sup>

She was aware of the fact that the wide male audience that she wants to reach might not have even heard the word “masculinity” before. Therefore, she wanted to present various perspectives in a clear way, so that **men could find reference models and arguments in support of a non-violent masculinity:**

They don't even know what masculinity is. In other words, **they have never considered that they have received an education in which they are infused with a social role they have to play** (...) Then we have to start with the vowels, unfortunately. And the vowels, in this case, are these: to tell them through the documentary “Hey, look, you too are victims of a social and cultural construction in which, if you deviate, they're going to attack you. If you dress in pink, they will punish you. If you dare to say ‘I am sad’ they will call you a girl, and beware, that is very dangerous for you and you have to be the one to stop those messages and confront them with tools, with references, with models, with everything you need to argue against them properly.”<sup>482</sup>

In the first presentation dossier of the documentary film, which de Ocampo designed in 2015, she had planned to interview nineteen male professionals, including politicians, anthropologists, philosophers, economists, football players, porn actors and physicians. Out of this list, she ended up including interviews just with a politician (José Luis

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<sup>481</sup> “Yo lo que creo es que hay que abrir la puerta y tender la mano. No podemos decir no, tú no, por ser hombre no puedes ser feminista (...) en España hay dos asociaciones muy potentes de hombres feministas, que a sí mismos no se llaman feministas, precisamente yo creo como para desvincularse porque claro, habrá un sector radical del feminismo que les diga, “no podéis llamaros feministas”. “No, tranquilidad, lo llamamos de otra manera, pues al fin y al cabo estamos luchando por lo mismo”. Yo soy bastante conciliadora, yo soy muy de la idea de Ana de Miguel de que hay que buscar las zonas en común, porque es que diferencias va a haber siempre. Lo interesante es que tú seas capaz de trascender esa idea y de empatizar con el otro.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>482</sup> “Es que no saben ni siquiera qué es la masculinidad. O sea, nunca jamás se han planteado que ellos han recibido una educación en la que va inoculado un rol social que tienen que desempeñar (...) Entonces hay que empezar con las vocales, lamentablemente. Y las vocales, en este caso, son éstas: es contarles a través del documental ‘oye, mira, es que tú también eres víctima de una construcción social y cultural en la que, si sacas la patita, te la van a pegar, sabes. Si te vistes de rosa, te van a sancionar. Si te atreves a decir ‘estoy triste’ te van a llamar nenaza. Y ojo, que eso es muy peligroso para ti y tienes que ser tú el que frene esos mensajes y se enfrente a ellos con herramientas, con referentes, con modelos, con todo lo que necesitas para argumentar adecuadamente un discurso’.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Rodríguez Zapatero), a physician and gender violence expert (Miguel Lorente), an anthropologist (Manuel Delgado), an economist (Alain Cuenca) and a philosopher (Joan Carles Melich). She added an interview with a sexologist (Cristian Gallego) and one with a trans activist (Pol Galofre). As for the characters with more developed narrative plots, de Ocampo enlisted six men in her original dossier, out of which she kept two main characters, Abel Azcona and Rafa, and two groups, one of publicists and another one of adolescents who attend lessons with a gender-aware teacher.

De Ocampo’s first interest in Abel Azcona as a character was motivated by the political statement in his performative artwork, linked with his attempt to empathise with his mother, a drug-addicted prostitute who abandoned him as a baby. On the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2016, in Madrid, I had the opportunity to carry out **participant observation** during the shooting of two sequences: Javier Godino’s theatre piece (segments 2 and 3) and Azcona’s performance entitled “Los Padres” (segment 24). In the play, Godino was supposed to react to Franz Kafka’s *Letter to His Father* but, instead, he recited Rudyard Kipling’s 1895 poem, *If*. De Ocampo acknowledges that the inspiration for the title that the documentary ended with came from this poem’s last line.<sup>483</sup> Regarding **Azcona’s performance**, she thinks that it **accurately translated the goal she had in mind** with *Serás Hombre*:

With an infinite beauty and with a delicacy and a respect for woman, what he is saying, **what he is doing, is what I want to achieve with this documentary, and that is, to draw the attention, to transfer it, from the woman to the man who consumes prostitution, to the client.** Let’s leave women in peace now, once and for all, let’s stop showing women crying, telling the horrors they have suffered. Let’s consider that these gentlemen are potential criminals. Well, I say potential criminals; if you ask Abel, straight up he calls them abusers.<sup>484</sup>

De Ocampo envisioned a specific arc for Azcona, which echoes one of the most common

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<sup>483</sup> “And—which is more—you’ll be a Man, my son!”

<sup>484</sup> “Con una belleza infinita y con una delicadeza y un respeto hacia la mujer, lo que está diciendo, lo que está haciendo es lo que yo quiero conseguir con este documental, y es localizar la atención, trasladarla, de la mujer al hombre prostituidor, al cliente. Vamos a dejar en paz ya, de una vez a las mujeres, vamos a dejar en paz ya, de mujeres llorando, contando los horrores que les han hecho. Vamos a cuestionarnos que estos señores son unos potenciales delincuentes. Bueno, yo digo potenciales delincuentes, si le preguntas a Abel, directamente te dice abusadores.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

arcs in mainstream cinema. She considers this useful from the perspective of empathy from the audiences. For her, these **narrative conventions aren't problematic.**<sup>485</sup> Moreover, they are consistent with her approach to documentary cinema, which she considers to be as narrative as fiction:

The arc we have created for Abel is: someone who is looking for his father, encounters an obstacle, there is a twist, and there is an unexpected ending. Well, this is the arc of all the films you see at the cinema. **It's the journey of the hero.** Luke Skywalker starts a journey, there are many obstacles, in the end there is a twist, which is normally a climax in the second part, and an ending. In a documentary, the structure should be the same. That's why **documentaries are fictionalised**, they have the same structure as a fiction film.<sup>486</sup>

At different moments in our interviews, de Ocampo showed a **performative understanding of documentary cinema**: as Stella Bruzzi puts it, the idea of unmediated transparency is replaced "with a performative exchange between subjects, filmmakers/apparatus and spectators" (2000: 6). The filmmaker intra-acts with the realities she frames and puts together. When talking about documentary filmmaking, she is aware of the lack of pure objectivity, but also of the **directors' lack of control over the human and non-human agencies that appear in front of the camera**:

**A documentary is a misnamed reality** (...) a script is a story that you have closed, that you have completely planned, without any overlooked detail. The documentary is: you spark something off, an idea, in a human group in which you see some characteristics, and what you have to achieve is the same as in fiction, but based on a story with real characters. So, **you have to kind of improvise fiction, and if, at any given moment, what you want to tell deviates, you have to be open to let yourself go** where it wants to go.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> In opposition, for example, with what Claire Johnston (1973; 2000), Laura Mulvey (1975; 1988), and Teresa de Lauretis (1984) argue. *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2

<sup>486</sup> "El arco que hemos creado para Abel es: Alguien que está buscando a su padre, se encuentra un obstáculo, hay un giro y hay un final inesperado. Vale, este es el arco de todas las películas que vayamos a ver al cine. Es el viaje del héroe. Luke Skywalker inicia un viaje, hay muchos obstáculos, al final hay un giro, que es normalmente un clímax en la segunda parte y un final. Pues en un documental, la estructura quiere ser la misma. Por eso los documentales están ficcionados, tienen la misma estructura de una ficción." Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>487</sup> "Un documental es una mal llamada realidad (...) un guión es una historia que tú has cerrado, que



**A documentary is also fiction, I mean, there's also a staging in which I, the director, have intervened.** I admit that, **at any given moment, such staging gets out of my hands and that's where the magic of documentary takes place.** When I lose control of the steering wheel, when I lose the reins: that is the real magic. But there is a steering wheel that I have tried to direct, that is clear, you have to accept it.<sup>488</sup>

This lack of control over the filmed reality became evident, for example, in the shooting of the sequence with the professor and the adolescents, in which I also had the opportunity to carry out participant observation on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2016. In the dossier, de Ocampo had envisioned this sequence as the “Save the cat” moment of the film. Screenwriter Blake Snyder coined this concept in 2005 to describe the need to introduce the main character in a decisive moment where s/he does something nice and kind (such as saving a cat). The goal is to gain audience support for this character from the beginning of the film.

With this in mind, de Ocampo had planned to start her film with a sequence in which a group of fathers would come to the classroom with their babies, and the male students would have to learn how to change their diapers. More than sympathy with the characters, she says she wanted to establish a positive, not-menacing tone with this opening sequence. This would be consistent with the message she wanted to convey concerning **the potential of parenthood for envisioning a different kind of masculinity:**

**What I want to tell you, man, is that you can gain what is commonly called the female side, wrongly called so, right? It is your emotional side.** Society wants to call it female but it is not female at all, it is part of you, your emotional dimension, your feelings, your affections are part of you. Female is

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has completamente planificado, que no se escapa ningún detalle. El documental es: tú detonas algo, una idea, en un grupo humano al que tú le ves unas características x y lo que tienes que conseguir es lo mismo que en la ficción, sólo que basándote en una historia que en realidad son personajes reales. Entonces como que tienes que improvisar la ficción y si en un momento dado, lo que tú quieras contar se desvía, tienes que estar abierto a dejarte llevar donde te quiera llevar.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>488</sup> “Un documental también es ficción, o sea, también hay una puesta en escena en la que yo directora he intervenido. Que a mí, en un momento dado, esa puesta en escena se me va de las manos y ahí es donde surge la magia del documental, lo reconozco. Cuando yo pierdo el volante, cuando yo pierdo las riendas, esa es la verdadera magia. Pero que hay un volante que yo he intentado dirigir, eso está claro, tienes que aceptarlo.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

a badly used adjective. What happens is that women are allowed to express these emotions and that's why we call it the female side, but it's yours, accept it and enjoy it, enjoy the possibility of saying "I need help, for God's sake, someone help me I'm suffering, I feel like crying this afternoon."<sup>489</sup>

The night before the shooting, however, the teacher called her saying that he had a different idea and that he would invite a different guest. Therefore, she had to change the scheme of things as she had planned it:

I found these students of this history teacher, who has educated them in equality in their Vallecas High School, so that now they find it completely natural to have equal relationships with their female partners (...) well, the teacher changed the sequence completely. So I say, well, he has changed it, what can I do? This is documentary cinema. **Documentary means that you approach reality and you say, "I would like this to happen", and reality tells you: "no, something else is going to happen."**<sup>490</sup>

And what happened was that **he gave us a beautiful history lesson, in which you realise how the kids are inheriting prejudices**, the way they are inheriting preconceived ideas and, of course, there are a couple of moments of humour, very tender as well. That is, **what I wanted was to achieve tenderness and it is achieved, I believe that it is achieved, but in a different way from what I had expected.**<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> "Yo lo que quiero es contarte, hombre, que puedes ganar lo que comúnmente se llama el lado femenino, mal llamado lado femenino ¿no? Es tu lado emocional. La sociedad quiere llamarlo femenino pero no tiene nada de femenino, forma parte de ti, tu dimensión emocional, tus sentimientos, tus afecciones forman parte de ti. Femenino es un adjetivo mal utilizado. Lo que pasa es que a las mujeres sí se les permite expresar estas emociones y por eso lo llamamos lado femenino, pero es tuyo, asúmelo y disfruta de eso, disfruta de la posibilidad de decir 'necesito ayuda, por dios, que alguien me ayude que estoy sufriendo, tengo ganas de llorar esta tarde'." Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>490</sup> "He encontrado a estos alumnos de este profesor, que como les ha educado en igualdad desde la historia en su Instituto de Vallecas, es que encuentran completamente natural las relaciones igualitarias con sus compañeras (...) bueno, el profe me cambió la secuencia por completo. Entonces yo digo, pues me la ha cambiado, pues qué le voy a hacer. Esto es el documental. El documental es que tú te acercas y dices 'a mí me gustaría que pase esto' y la realidad te dice, 'pues no, va a pasar otra cosa'." Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>491</sup> "Y lo que pasó fue que nos dio una lección de historia preciosa y además te das cuenta cómo los chavales van heredando los prejuicios, cómo van heredando las ideas que tenemos preconcebidas y claro, hay un par de momentos de humor, pues muy tiernos también. O sea, yo lo que quería era lograr ternura y se logra, yo creo que sí se logra, pero de otra manera diferente a como yo había esperado." Isabel de Ocampo. Q&A session. October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

Before shooting this sequence, de Ocampo met with the students to explain what the topic was. After this introductory speech, one girl decided not to appear because, she said, her parents would disapprove. The crew, especially the gaffer, a man in his thirties, showed interest in the lecture and, once the shooting was over, he approached the teacher with questions. The students were also talking with curiosity about the contents of the “fake” class during a shooting break. In this sense, it was evident that **the action itself of making the film was co-creating a space for discussion and reflection on those involved on both sides of the camera**. It’s important to mention that, due to the small funding of the film, apart from the director of photography, the rest of the crew was formed by students from the Film School of Madrid, where de Ocampo studied. Their work in this shooting was considered an internship and, as such, they were not paid.

The other main character, Rafa the ex-pimp, also presented de Ocampo with a radical change from what she had written in the dossier. She wanted to shoot a scene in which he would discuss new marketing strategies to attract new clients for his brothel. She had met Rafa in 2010, during the pre-production of *Evelyn*. As a matter of fact, the character of the pimp from this fiction film is based on Rafa. The surprise for her was that, when she contacted him again in 2016, he told her that he was no longer working in prostitution and that he regretted having exploited women. Moreover, he told her that **a decisive factor in his repentance had been looking at a reflection of himself** in *Evelyn*:

For me, **the surprise was that Rafa admits that his change of mentality occurs when a double process takes place**: On the one hand, **he empathises with women and he stops seeing them as objects that give him money**, like a cash register. That is when, instead of asking her how much money she’s made tonight, he asks her how she is doing. Secondly, **when he looks at himself reflected in my film, as in a mirror** (...) Then you say of course, that empathy is the key.<sup>492</sup>

In the effect that *Evelyn* had in Rafa’s self-image, de Ocampo saw **the potential of the effects that her documentary film could have on spectators**:

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<sup>492</sup> “Para mí la sorpresa fue que Rafa admite que su cambio de mentalidad ocurre cuando se produce un doble proceso: Por un lado, empatiza con las mujeres y las deja de ver como objetos que le dan dinero, como una caja registradora. O sea, cuando en lugar de preguntarle ‘cuánto dinero has hecho esta noche’ le pregunta ‘cómo estás’. Y segundo, cuando se ve reflejado en mi película, como espejo (...) dices claro, la clave es la empatía.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

**What I want is to achieve a change of consciousness and I have achieved it once**, with my film, which was one of the least seen films of its year in Spain. I managed to achieve that it was seen by one person and it has changed his life, that of this man. **If the same thing happens with my documentary, that just one person who has the power to change things sees it, we exponentially multiply this change of consciousness** that we want.<sup>493</sup>

She decided to structure Rafa's arc as one of transformation, so she asked him to re-enact "scenes" such as those in which he trains young pimps (segments 1.3 and 25.8). For de Ocampo, telling this story would provide the film with what she considers fundamental keys against gender violence and sex trafficking, namely empathy and the recognition of women as equal human beings:

**Prostitution has nothing to do with women's freedom. It has to do with an economic situation that is incompatible with life and with dignity** (...) And he wants to unmask that social hypocrisy that exists. I try to do it but it seems that our voices do not have all the force that a man like him can have, right?<sup>494</sup>

He has one of the keys to the possible solutions that we could have for men to overcome male chauvinism or that vision of patriarchy, which is that he began to put himself in their place [prostitutes], he began to understand their problems, he began to see the world through their eyes (...) you humanise these people and stop contemplating them as merchandise to sell and buy. For me, the key to all this is the humanisation of women, and there is a lot of interest in the fact that people who bother others in the world in which we live, not only women but immigrants, are not seen as humans, but as something else.<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> "Lo que quiero es lograr un cambio de conciencia y lo he conseguido una vez. He conseguido una vez que con mi película, que fue una de las menos vistas de su año en España, la vio una sola persona y le ha cambiado la vida, que es este hombre. Si con el documental que yo haga pasa lo mismo, que lo vea una sola persona que tiene el poder de cambiar las cosas, vamos multiplicando exponencialmente este cambio de conciencia que queremos." Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>494</sup> "La prostitución no tiene nada que ver con la libertad de las mujeres. Tiene que ver con una situación económica que es incompatible con la vida y con la dignidad (...) Y él pues quiere desenmascarar esa hipocresía social que hay. Yo trato de hacerlo pero parece que nuestras voces no tienen toda la fuerza que pueda tener la de un hombre como él, ¿no?" Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>495</sup> "Él tiene una de las claves de las posibles soluciones que podríamos contar para que los hombres superen ese machismo o esa visión del patriarcado, que consiste en que él empezó a ponerse en el lugar de ellas, empezó a comprender sus problemas, empezó a ver el mundo a través de sus ojos (...)

But working with an ex-pimp, “a professional manipulator” as she describes him, proved to be an emotionally challenging task at various levels. Not only because of the sordid context in which Rafa dwells, but also because many times he wouldn’t show up at the shootings. For example, they had originally planned to close his narrative line with an event against sex trafficking at the University of Comillas, in which Rafa would be one of the speakers, but he cancelled at the last minute. Many of the sequences in which he appears were shot with a smaller camera and a reduced crew, formed only by the director and two young female students. De Ocampo explains that this was a planned strategy:

They perceive us as completely harmless (...) And this is something that this woman who carried out research about the prostitution client told me [Dr. Carmen Meneses]. Because at the beginning I was looking for a team of guys, so that they would open up. And she told me: “No, you’re wrong, **if you go with women they’ll speak more because they’re going to feel empowered**”. And it is becoming clear to me that, indeed, **the younger and more inexperienced my collaborators are, the more they talk.**<sup>496</sup>

Rafa would even blackmail de Ocampo because he wanted to be the main character of the film, but was also worried about his image. She remembered that he was very anxious when she published a video called “Cómo ser un buen proxeneta” (How to be a good pimp) in her Youtube account on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2016.<sup>497</sup> In the end, he also worked with filmmaker Mabel Lozano, who published a book about his life in November 2017 and directed a documentary film in 2018, both under the name *El proxeneta (The Pimp)*. Lozano’s film had its premiere at the “SEMINCI” Valladolid International Film Festival 2018, a couple of days before *Serás Hombre* had its own.

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humanizas a esas personas y dejas de contemplarla como mercancía para vender y comprar. La clave para mí de todo esto es la humanización de las mujeres y hay como mucho interés en que las personas, ya no solo las mujeres en el mundo en el que vivimos sino los inmigrantes, los que molestan, no sean vistos como personas humanas, sino que sean vistos como otra cosa.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>496</sup> “Ellos nos perciben completamente inofensivas (...) Y esto es algo que me dijo esta mujer que hizo un estudio del cliente de prostitución. Porque yo al principio buscaba un equipo todo de tíos para que ellos se soltaran. Y ella me dijo: ‘no, te equivocas, si vas con mujeres se van a soltar más porque se van a crecer’. Y me estoy dando cuenta de que efectivamente, de que cuanto más jóvenes y más inexpertas, ellos más hablan.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>497</sup> By January 2019, the 11-minutes video had 6,689 visualisations. It is the register of the interview that de Ocampo and actor Adolfo Fernández had with Rafa in 2010, during the reproduction of *Evelyn*. Date of Access: January 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l7WDtNaLQQ>>. Rafa also has a Twitter account of restricted access: <<https://twitter.com/osnimode>>.

When Rafa didn't show up at Abel's performance, it was the film's editor, Eloi Tomàs, who suggested taking Abel to Rafa's brothel:

What took place was the encounter between a man who had helped to create sex trafficking in Spain –however regretful he is, he is a key figure of prostitution in Spain- and a child of the consequences of that, or of the secondary effects or of the collateral effects. And it was absolutely brutal (...)  
**Rafa, who until then considered that he had hurt women only, ended up realising that when you hurt a woman you hurt the whole family. And it was incredible because he came to the conclusion that, of all the women that he had damaged, in the end he had also damaged their children.** Abel wanted him to apologise, but **he asked for forgiveness only after the camera was off.** Because there is an axiom that says: “What is cinema? What happens when the camera is off”.<sup>498</sup>

De Ocampo has an abolitionist discourse, utterly **against the legalisation of prostitution**. She considers it to be “the most destructive **privilege of toxic masculinity**”, and an example of the double standard of sexual morality, which is incompatible with gender equality:

There is no possibility of an equal relationship of companionship where everything has become contaminated (...) I mean, where everything has become a relationship in which the man has the power and the woman has the obligation to obey, submission (...) this is what we are bound to have if we allow them to continue using us as merchandise. If we let them have, in a little corner in their brain, the idea that, “well, yes, yes, **all the equality you want, but for 50 euros any day, if I'm in a bind, I can do with a woman whatever I want**”. **That is incompatible with equality**, it's obvious.<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> “Lo que se produjo fue un encuentro entre un hombre que había contribuido a crear la trata en España, por muy arrepentido que esté, es una figura clave de la prostitución en España. Y por otro lado, el encuentro de un hijo de las consecuencias de eso, o de los efectos secundarios o de los efectos colaterales. Y fue absolutamente brutal (...) Rafa, que hasta ese momento sólo consideraba que había hecho daño a las mujeres, se terminó dando cuenta de que cuando haces daño a una mujer haces daño a la familia entera. Y fue increíble porque él llegó a la conclusión de que todas las mujeres que él había dañado, en el fondo también había dañado a sus hijos. Abel quería que le pidiera perdón y él le pidió perdón ya cuando la cámara estaba apagada. Porque hay un axioma que dice, ‘¿qué es el cine? lo que ocurre cuando tienes la cámara apagada.’” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>499</sup> “No hay posibilidad de que exista una relación igualitaria de compañerismo donde ya todo se ha contaminado (...) o sea, todo se ha transformado en una relación en la que el hombre tiene el poder y la

She positions herself as a **feminist filmmaker due to her embodied experience**. She realised that she had been prejudiced against feminism only after experiencing sexism “in her own flesh”. These insights took place at the beginning of her professional trajectory, when she was seventeen years old and worked at a radio station:

**I thought what everyone else said, that feminists were fat and ugly ladies, who had problems with men**, right? General image. I was blonde with blue eyes, skinny, cute, **I have no problem with men, I don't need to be a feminist** (...) What happens? The best radio host on the radio at that time was sacked as soon as they found out she was pregnant. It was the year 2000. I went to talk to the boss and I asked him: “Why do you fire her now, when she most needs the money?” His answer: “yes, but her husband provides for her”. And I said: “this shouldn't be like that”. The second thing that had a big impact on me: one night, all the women went out to say goodbye to this woman who had been fired, and I remember that **the secretary, who was totally drunk, ended up confessing that we earned much less than men and that she, who saw how we worked every day, was aware that we worked much harder**. For me that was a second shock. Because I said: “There you have it, **I'm a victim of the wage gap**. I thought I was so cute, so blonde, with my blue eyes, well, it turns out that I'm earning less than the asshole who sits next to me, when I have more experience than him”. Third fact: work-related paternalism. Because I realised that **we tend to think of male chauvinism as a monster with a very unpleasant face**. But no, male chauvinism is very kind, so kind, that it is not even aware of being male chauvinism (...) Then I discovered that there was no bad faith on the part of men who said to me: “No, calm down, I'll do this” (...) but of course, that freedom from responsibility is also freedom from the pleasure of a well-done job (...) What I would have wanted was to have done that task just like my male partner, so that if an emergency came, I would have had hours of real experience to perform that task correctly.<sup>500</sup>

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mujer tiene la obligación de obedecer, la sumisión (...) esto es a lo que vamos abocados si permitimos que nos sigan utilizando como mercancía. Que se permitan el tener en un rinconcito en su cerebro la idea de que, ‘bueno, sí, sí, igualdad toda la que quieras pero yo por 50 euros cualquier día, si estoy en un aprieto, puedo hacer con una mujer lo que yo quiera’. O sea, eso es incompatible con la igualdad, está claro.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>500</sup> “Para mí en ese momento las feministas, obviamente yo pensaba lo que todo el mundo, que eran unas señoras gordas y feas, que tenían problemas con los hombres, ¿vale? Imagen general. Yo era rubia,

That was the moment in which she started to look more carefully at what feminism entails. She explains that her own process has got more complex over the years, moving from individual interest to an understanding of the movement's collective dimension: "I believe that the feminist awakening proceeds in layers of onion, you go from within, you know your situation, you know your world, you react and then, of course, you expand."<sup>501</sup> Over the years, she has become **aware of her privilege for being a white European woman**, and establishes links between **the invisible privilege of colonialism** that she had experienced **and the privilege of sexism** that men don't see:

**As a European, the word colonialism sounds to me very far away. And of course, I think, it's my privilege, a privilege is actually invisible, right? (...)**

I live it as: "what are they talking about, if colonialism is forgotten?" And I realised that it was the same argument that many friends of mine had told me about male chauvinism: "But is it my fault? No, if it isn't my fault, it's not my problem", and I would say: "No, you have a privilege and you don't see it".

Well, the same thing happened to me with colonialism, I have a privilege and I don't see it.<sup>502</sup>

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ojos azules, delgadita, monísima y tal, no tengo ningún problema con los hombres, no necesito ser feminista (...) ¿Qué ocurre? A la locutora más buena de la radio en ese momento, la despiden en cuanto se enteran que está embarazada. Y esto era el año 2000. Entonces yo, fui allí a hablar con el jefe y le digo, pero por qué la despedís precisamente ahora, es cuando más necesita el dinero. Contestación: 'Ya, pero está su marido que la mantiene'. Y yo dije 'no, esto no es así'. Segunda cosa que mí me impactó muchísimo: Una noche nos vamos de pedo, todas las mujeres, para despedir a esta pobre que la habían despedido, creo recordar y entonces, la secretaria, que estaba pedo total, nos termina confesando que nosotras ganamos mucho menos que los hombres y que ella que está viendo todos los días lo que trabajamos, ve que sacamos nosotras el trabajo muchísimo más. Para mí eso fue un segundo shock. Porque dije 'ahí va, soy víctima de la brecha salarial. Yo que me creía tan mona, tan rubia, tan ojos azules, resulta que estoy ganando menos que el gilipollas que tengo al lado, cuando yo tengo más experiencia que él'. Tercer hecho: el paternalismo laboral. Porque claro, me dí cuenta que el machismo, tendemos a pensar que es un monstruo con la cara muy desagradable. No, el machismo es muy amable y además el machismo es tan amable, que ni siquiera es consciente de ser machismo (...). Entonces yo descubrí en este trabajo que no había mala fe por parte de los hombres que me decían, 'no, no tranquila, ya esto ya lo hago yo' (...) pero claro, ese liberarte de la responsabilidad es también liberarte del placer que da el trabajo bien hecho. (...) Yo lo que hubiera querido es haber hecho ese trabajo igual que mi compañero, de manera que si llegaba una emergencia, yo hubiera tenido ya horas de experiencia real para hacer ese trabajo bien hecho." Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>501</sup> "Yo creo que el despertar feminista tú lo vas haciendo como en capas de cebolla, vas desde dentro, conoces tu situación, conoces tu mundo, reaccionas y luego claro, vas expandiendo." Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>502</sup> "Como europea, la palabra colonialismo me suena como a muy lejano. Y claro pienso, es mi privilegio, un privilegio en realidad es invisible, ¿no? (...) lo vivo como de qué me están hablando, o sea, si el colonialismo está olvidado ya. Y me di cuenta de que era el mismo argumento que muchos amigos míos me decían, sobre el machismo: '¿pero tengo yo la culpa? No, si yo no tengo la culpa no es problema mío', y yo decía: 'no, tú lo que tienes es un privilegio y no lo ves'. Bueno, pues lo mismo me pasó con el



She also joked about coining a new concept, “eolofeminismo” (roughly translated as aeolian-feminism), which would refer to the current omnipresence of feminism, at times devoid of meaning. For her, this kind of **feminist mainstreaming** has positive, but also negative consequences:

What we are witnessing is aeolian-feminism. That is: it is everywhere, it is in the air, everyone breathes it because they have to breathe it, because it is politically necessary to breathe it, but at times there are many people how breathe it out converted into carbon dioxide, pure poison. This is done by people who say “yes, yes, yes, I agree with all this but...” (...) However, **we have to be happy because feminism is everywhere already, I mean, no one can deny that it is on the public agenda** (...) The reason and common sense of all feminist struggles are so overwhelming that there are no longer reasons to be angry. We just have to keep going and be happy.<sup>503</sup>

De Ocampo admits that making *Serás Hombre* has been a difficult process, in which she has made mistakes but through which she has also learnt a lot. She reflects, for example, on how her vision concerning the **strong resistance against feminism** has got more complex:

I was watching one of Rita Segato’s videos, the pedagogy of cruelties, which ends up raising a very interesting question. And it is that, of course, I thought: “the main resistance to feminism by men is because of losing their privileges.” But no, it is something else. It is that, **if you remove women from the place of oppression and inequality, women who are the basis of the system, the basis of this pyramid of inequality, then all the hierarchical and patriarchal systems collapse.** The economy collapses, the state collapses, politics collapses, religion collapses, everything collapses. And so of course

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colonialismo, yo tengo un privilegio y no lo veo.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>503</sup> “A lo que estamos asistiendo es al eolofeminismo. Que es: está en todas partes, está en el aire, todo el mundo lo respira porque tienen que respirarlo, porque es políticamente necesario respirarlo, pero hay veces que hay muchas personas que lo expiran convertido en anhídrido carbónico, en veneno puro. Lo que hace la gente que dice ‘sí, sí, sí, estoy de acuerdo con todo esto pero...’ (...) Pero hay que estar contentas porque el feminismo está en todas partes ya, o sea, ya nadie puede negar que está en la agenda pública (...) es que es tan apabullante la razón y el sentido común de todas las luchas feministas que no hay ya que enfadarse. Solamente hay que seguir, seguir, seguir y ser felices.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

that's where the resistance comes from. I thought it was simply about losing a series of privileges but no, it is something much bigger, it is that the system is set up like this.<sup>504</sup>

Following Ana de Miguel, she has learnt to live with what she calls “the contradictions of a feminist”, that is “you have to live with your contradictions because otherwise you won't survive in a world where the system hasn't been created by you (...) But accepting the system cannot prevent us from thinking that this system is badly made.”<sup>505</sup> She says she has decided to face male chauvinist attacks without getting angry and taking care of herself, in a tone that can be considered a celebration of the “happy and successful” model of **liberal feminism** on one hand, but also a strategic **reaction to prejudices against feminist women** on the other hand:

The other day I had an epiphany, I said: “No, I'm not going to enter this game of gladiators.” **No sexist man will take away my good mood and my state of positivity from me.** I won't get angry with any of the bullshit that any of these imbeciles say (...) **I will not react like a frustrated, bitter, angry and unsuccessful woman, I will respond with humour,** and I will not get angry (...) If I get angry I get sick, I don't like it because it makes me negative, so **I have to find my own way to be an optimistic and successful feminist,** you know, so that nobody can say “they are frustrated women.” No, no, not at all.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> “Estaba viendo uno de los vídeos de Rita Segato, el de pedagogía de las crueldades, que acaba planteando una cuestión muy interesante. Y es que claro, yo pensaba: “la resistencia al feminismo por parte de los hombres es a perder sus privilegios”. Pero no, es que es algo más, es que si tú quitas del lugar de opresión y desigualdad a las mujeres, que son la base del sistema, la base de esta pirámide de desigualdad, se derrumban todos los sistemas jerárquicos y patriarcales. Es que se derrumba la economía, se derrumba el Estado, las políticas, se derrumba la religión, es que se derrumba todo. Y entonces claro, de allí la resistencia, yo pensaba que era simplemente perder una serie de privilegios pero no, es que es algo muchísimo más, es que el sistema está planteado así.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>505</sup> “tienes que convivir con tus contradicciones porque sino, no sobrevives en un mundo donde el sistema no lo has creado tú (...) Pero el aceptar el sistema no puede impedir que pensemos que ese sistema está mal hecho.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>506</sup> “El otro día tuve una epifanía, dije: ‘no, yo no voy a entrar en este juego de gladiadores’. Paso de que ningún machista me arrebate a mí el buen humor y el estado de ánimo positivo que yo pueda tener. No volveré a enfadarme con ninguna gilipollez que diga cualquiera de estos imbéciles (...) no voy a reaccionar como una frustrada, amargada, rabiosa y fracasada, sino que voy a responder con humor. Y no me voy a enfadar (...) Enfadarme se me da mal, no me gusta porque me pone negativa. Entonces yo tengo que encontrar mi propio camino de ser feminista optimista y exitosa, ¿sabes? Para que nadie pueda decir ‘son frustradas’. No, no, para nada.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The importance of **self-care** was a crucial issue for the filmmaker while working on this film, especially due to severe health and financial problems. De Ocampo encountered several obstacles during the production process. Originally, she was going to make the film with the support of the NGO, “Femicidio.net”. Due to financing issues and different perspectives, they stopped the collaboration. She then found the two production companies she ended up working with: the Barcelona-based “Gris Medio” and the San Sebastián-based “Orreaga Filmak”. She had already got financial support from the Spanish Film Institute but it only covered for 50% of the expenses. She had planned to get the other 50% from sales to the Catalan and Basque public television companies. Unfortunately, both rejected the project: one due to the fact that she is not from Catalonia, the other one because there were not enough women in the documentary film.

Concerning this argument, de Ocampo knew from the beginning that hers was a risky approach: “It’s another way that will have its effect. Feminism has been trying new ways throughout history, hasn’t it? And each one has made their bit of contribution. When you have taken a path that is wrong, obviously it eventually turns off. And I say, well, let’s try this too.”<sup>507</sup> She also faced denial of financial support from the region of Castilla y León, the area where she is from. At this point, she began suspecting that **the funding problems** could be connected with some kind of censorship, especially due to her abolitionist position:

My documentary tackles a very painful topic. Often, creators, artists, we put a mirror up against society and sometimes you don’t like what you see. And if you look at this issue of the fight against gender violence and against prostitution and trafficking, in reality, society has made a clear distinction between prostitution and trafficking, so that, what all states clearly fight against is trafficking, because to include prostitution is to recognise that all men bear a part of the responsibility, that they participate in that complicity with other men (...) they realise that my documentary may be something that gets out of hand in the sense that they may be supporting something that will eventually go against their privileges (...) And so, yes, they find it very interesting, they realise that there are figures of violence against women that are not normal, that the problem has to be tackled, but in reality they don’t

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<sup>507</sup> “Es otra forma que tendrá su efecto. Y el feminismo a lo largo de la historia ha ido probando nuevas vías ¿no? Y cada una ha conseguido su pequeño trocico de aportación. Cuando ya has tomado un camino que es equivocado, pues obviamente se auto-apaga. Y yo digo, bueno, pues hay que probar esto también.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

want to abandon the official discourse. And **the official discourse in Spain is: “woman, if you are mistreated, denounce,** because there is a way out”.<sup>508</sup>

She didn't consider asking for **European funds** because she wanted to concentrate on the Spanish situation. She thinks that the ideas of her film are very basic for the realities lived, for instance, in Nordic countries where “masculinity is a well-trodden theme (...) I mean, they don't need these messages because they have already overcome them. It's in the Spanish language that this has to be said.”<sup>509</sup> In this sense, she holds the idea that certain societies are “more evolved” in terms of gender equality, a problematic position that renders invisible inequalities in so-called spaces of “achieved equalities” and feminist achievements/struggles in so-called “backward-not there yet” spaces.

At different moments of the four interviews I had with her, de Ocampo complained about the **precarious conditions of the film industry in Spain**: “I did the calculation one day and domestic workers earn twice as much as I did while making *Evelyn*.”<sup>510</sup> Coming from a middle class family without any connections with the film industry, a family in which she is the first person to go to university and the first woman to open a bank account, she acknowledges that her lack of financial backup has been a problem in her career. It was also one of the main reasons why she had to leave the two associations from which she was part, the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain (CIMA), and the European Women's Association Network (EWA). This renders visible **economic inequalities** in the access to producing audiovisual contents and in the amount of time available for being an activist:

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<sup>508</sup> “Mi documental está abordando un tema que es muy, muy doloroso. Muchas veces los creadores, los artistas, nos dedicamos a poner el espejo contra la sociedad y a veces lo que ves no te gusta. Y en todo este tema de la lucha contra la violencia de género y de la lucha contra la prostitución y la trata, en realidad, si te fijas, la sociedad se ha encargado de hacer una gran distinción entre la prostitución y la trata, y contra lo que sí que luchan todos los Estados clarísimamente es contra la trata, porque incluir la prostitución es incluir que todos los hombres tienen parte de responsabilidad, participan en esa complicidad con los otros hombres (...) se dan cuenta que mi documental puede ser algo que se les va de las manos en el sentido de que pueden estar apoyando algo que en realidad a la larga va a ir contra sus privilegios (...) Y por eso, sí, les parece interesantísimo, sí se dan cuenta que hay unas cifras de violencia contra las mujeres que no son normales, que hay que atajar el problema, pero en realidad no quieren salirse del discurso oficial. Y el discurso oficial en España es: ‘mujer, si te maltratan denuncia porque hay salida’.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>509</sup> “El tema de la masculinidad lo tienen más que trillado (...) O sea, no necesitan estos mensajes porque ya los tienen superados. Es en el idioma español donde esto tiene que ser dicho.” Isabel de Ocampo. Telephone (WhatsApp) interview. December 11<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>510</sup> “Yo un día hice el cálculo y las señoras de la limpieza ganan el doble que yo gané haciendo *Evelyn*.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

I saw myself without money, I had no time to look for work, dedicated 24 hours a day to women's associations and I had a breakdown (...) I realised that in the world of activism, you can dedicate yourself to it, as long as you are **very careful to have your financial support covered** because otherwise, it can end up destroying you.<sup>511</sup>

In the end, she managed to finish *Serás Hombre* with a prize from the “MiradasDoc” Festival 2017, regional funds (from Guipuzcoa, Manresa and Salamanca), and a crowdfunding campaign at the Spanish platform “Patrocinam.com”. The campaign started in June and finished in August 2018. It got 3.263 euros, thanks to the contribution of 113 sponsors. All of them are individuals, since no brand wanted to have their logos associated with this content. One woman left a message of encouragement: “Go ahead, Isabel. This message is super necessary! We can't stop and it's very important to include men and women in our research and struggle”. On this website, the film is described as “a sensory journey through reflections on our gender identity” and as “a collage on the notion of masculinity”.<sup>512</sup>

It is stated that the funds are to be used for post-production and promotion expenses. Knowing that the film is almost completed serves a guarantee for the sponsors. The rest of the arguments in favour of supporting the film stress the large amounts of crimes related with gender violence and suggests that the film can work as “a mirror in which men can look at themselves and decide whether to distance themselves from that patriarchal, asymmetrical, unsustainable and male chauvinist order (...) Or keep quiet and look away”. When the minimum goal of 1.800 euros was reached, de Ocampo uploaded a short video in which she thanks the sponsors and narrates a short anecdote: she showed the film to an 88 year-old man who described the documentary as one that makes you go to “the thinking corner”.

Before the official premiere, de Ocampo organised several **focus groups** so as to get **feedback** about the rough cut of her film. She held meetings with feminist activists, people from the film industry and friends. I had the opportunity to attend one of these meetings, which took place in Madrid, on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018, together with Professor Adelina

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<sup>511</sup> “Me veía sin dinero, me veía sin tiempo para buscar trabajo, dedicada 24 horas al día a las asociaciones de mujeres y entré en corto circuito (...) me di cuenta de que en el mundo del activismo, hay que dedicarse a ello pero con mucho cuidado de tener las espaldas económicas cubiertas porque si no, puede ser muy destructivo para ti.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>512</sup> Patrocinam.com website. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://patrocinam.com/proyecto/seras-hombre191/>>.

Sánchez Espinosa, my supervisor, who also recorded another session held in Almuñecar in August 2018. De Ocampo sent me the audio recording of another focus group from Salamanca. In the next paragraphs I will summarise the areas in which the three groups coincide, and then I'll look at how different viewers engage with the materiality and emotionality of the film, so as to identify the **effects and affects that they emphasise**.

Rafa, **the ex-pimp, provoked the first strong reactions**. Most viewers found it interesting to listen to his testimony and wanted to know more about him. Others were against the weight he has in the film, especially because of his manipulative charisma. The affects that he evoked in the focus groups go **from tenderness, pity and empathy to hatred and distrust**:

Woman1: The pimp has **an impressive force**, from the first word he utters.

W2: What happens to me with that character is that in many moments **I feel tenderness towards him**.

W3: But the thing is that the pimp is **such an egocentric!**

W4: I don't feel any tenderness towards him. He makes me want to shoot him.

W5: **I feel sorry for him**, because he regrets what he did but then he cannot change because he has a way of being.<sup>513</sup>

Woman1: The risk is that a truck driver who watches the documentary would identify more with a character like Rafa, **he would idolise him**.

W2: Rafa is **such a charismatic character**

W3: In the end you feel sorry for Rafa, you say, he is a victim

W4: **I don't feel any pity**

W3: He is talking about masculinity; masculinity is everyone's problem. We are all victims of a concept, a culture, something that we have been taught, men too. He is put there at the age of seventeen and follows a path. He follows the same path that women follow as women: they place you on a path and you do what they tell you to do, what you have seen that must be done. If you are a guy and you have to be a mobster, then you make your

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<sup>513</sup> "Mujer1: El proxeneta tiene una fuerza impresionante, es que desde la primera palabra que dice. M2: A mí lo que me pasa con ese personaje es que en muchos momentos me da ternura. M3: Pero lo que pasa es que el proxeneta es un chulazo también. Es un egocéntrico que te cagas. M4: A mí no me da ternura, a mí me dan ganas de darle un tiro. M5: A mí me da pena, porque él se arrepiente pero luego no puede porque tiene una forma de ser." Focus group. June 2018 in Salamanca. All translations and emphases are mine.

own way within your situation. As he describes and narrates himself, I say, “this is a victim” obviously, a victim who inflicts a lot of harm. Abel chooses to hurt himself, in his body, in his life, he tries to kill himself, while the other guy attacks others. Both are damaged people, victims.

W4: **He is a victim, yes, but that doesn’t generate any empathy or pity in me.** But that part is true.

M1: **I find him fascinating.** Of course, I would never go and have a beer with him.

M2: He is a very **dark character**; he is more of a protagonist than Abel.

W5: This man Rafa, of course, what he recounts, **he is a great liar.** He tells you what he wants you to hear. He is a **manipulator**, but I do not believe he only works on seduction. I think that, at that moment when he takes out the baseball bat and breaks all the bottles (...) I believe that man has used the bat more than once. With the women too (...)

W2: What stands out is the grotesque nature of both characters. It’s the strangeness, precisely what is different from those of us here. The exotic really calls to us, that world we haven’t got into, in that brothel where a character like Rafa exists, and what catches my attention and at the same time seems a bit dangerous to me is that, he has **such charisma that you almost end up liking him.**<sup>514</sup>

The woman who considered Rafa a liar and manipulator, also argued that **paying so much attention to the violent masculinity embodied by such a character**, prevented

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<sup>514</sup> “Mujer1: El peligro es que un camionero que vea el documental se identifique más con un personaje como Rafa, lo idolatre. M2: Rafa es un personaje tan carismático. M3: Al final te da pena Rafa, dices, es una victim. M4: A mí no me da ninguna pena. M3: Está hablando de la masculinidad, la masculinidad es un problema de todos, es decir somos víctimas todos de un concepto, de una cultura, de algo que se nos ha enseñado, los hombres también. A él lo plantan ahí con 17 años y va siguiendo un camino. Él sigue el mismo camino que seguimos las mujeres siendo mujeres, es decir, que te colocan en un camino y tú vas haciendo lo que te dicen, lo que has visto que hay que hacer. Si eres un tío y tienes que ser un mafioso, pues tú vas haciendo tu camino, dentro de su situación. Yo, tal y como se describe y se relata a sí mismo, digo este es una víctima obviamente, una víctima que hace mucho daño. Abel elige hacerse daño a sí mismo, en su cuerpo, en su vida, se intenta suicidar y el otro agrade a otros. Los dos son personas dañadas, son víctimas ambos. M4: Es víctima sí, pero a mí no me genera empatía ni pena, pero es verdad esa parte. Hombre1: A mí me parece fascinante. Claro, nunca me tomaría una caña con él. H2: Es un personaje muy oscuro, lo veo mas protagonista que Abel. M5: Este hombre Rafa, claro, él lo que cuenta, es un gran mentiroso. Él cuenta ahí lo que él quiere que tú oigas. Es un manipulador terrible, pero yo no me creo que él solamente trabajara a base de seducción, creo que ese momento cuando saca el bate de beisbol y arrea todas las botellas (...) Una catarsis pero yo creo que ese hombre el bate lo ha usado más de una vez. Con las chicas también (...) M2: Lo que llama la atención es lo esperpentico de ambos personajes. Es lo extraño, precisamente lo que es diferente de quienes estamos aquí. Nos llama en realidad lo exótico, ese mundo en el que no nos hemos metido, en ese prostíbulo donde está un personaje como Rafa y lo que llama la atención y al mismo tiempo me parece un poco peligroso también es que como él tiene tal carisma, al final casi como que le tomas un poco de cariño.” Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

the filmmaker from showing other kinds of masculinities:

Woman5: What it is to be a man seems to me a fascinating question, and it seems to me that you have let that question get monopolised by this dark and negative character, that somehow for me shuts off and narrows the approach. He is fascinating and I think you have been fascinated with him and that is another film. But what it is to be a man, I do not think there is an answer, but I think that it could have been explored more with other men, with another type of men.<sup>515</sup>

A woman from another focus group found confusing **the selection of men** in the film, partly due to unclear sample criteria, partly due to the film's structure:

Woman1: It seems to me a good idea **to expand the typology of men** involved in the documentary, which seems necessary to me. You could expand much more, but well, you go from the trans to the alpha male, the pimp. That seems necessary to me because if, following the title of the documentary, how to become a man, then what is reflected is that there is no one way to do so. It is not clear to me how you have selected them, that is not clear to me. That is, **why have you chosen the men you have chosen?** Because the range is so wide that I get lost, I lose the idea that each one wants to transmit (...) They talk and talk, they have ideas, they talk about male chauvinism in general but **I don't know exactly how they are built, how they politicise their masculinities.**<sup>516</sup>

Other viewers also expressed confusion regarding the title and the structure. For example,

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<sup>515</sup> "Mujer5: Me parece una pregunta fascinante qué es ser hombre, y me parece que has dejado que esa pregunta la secuestre este personaje tan oscuro y tan negativo, que de alguna manera para mí cierra y estrecha el planteamiento. Él es fascinante y creo que te has fascinado con él y esa es otra película. Pero qué es ser hombre, eso para mí, no creo que haya una respuesta, pero creo que se podría haber explorado más con otros hombres, con otra variedad de hombres." Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

<sup>516</sup> "Mujer1: Me parece una buena idea ampliar la tipología de varones que intervienen en el documental, eso me parece necesario. Se podría ampliar mucho más, pero bueno, vas desde lo trans hasta el macho alfa, el proxeneta. Eso me parece necesario porque si, siguiendo el título del documental, cómo llegar a ser hombre, pues lo que se refleja es que no hay una única forma. No me queda claro cómo lo has seleccionado, eso no me queda claro. Es decir, por qué has elegido los varones que has elegido. Porque la gama es tan amplia que, a mí se me pierden, se me pierde la idea que cada uno quiere transmitir (...) Hablan y hablan, tienen ideas, hablan del machismo en general pero yo no sé exactamente cómo se construyen, cómo politizan sus masculinidades." Focus group. August 2018 in Almuñécar.



a young woman considered that the construction of masculinity remained underdeveloped due to the emphasis placed on gender violence. In two screenings, there was a general sensation that the film hadn't been put together well, which provoked **frustration**, particularly **in those viewers who had expected to learn** something with the film:

Woman1: I find it difficult to establish, **when you have several stories you need something that joins them together, I need it to be a little more didactic** in the sense that, I would not mind if you had a story on one side and a story on the other, and put together those you want, but make it clear where each one of the speeches or the testimonies goes (...)

W2: At the end you see the conclusion of those two characters, but the rest of the stories are reflections but you don't see the connection they have. They do not have to have it, but they could so as to make the film well presented. **I like to leave the cinema feeling that I have learned something.**<sup>517</sup>

Woman2: It seems to me that the whole documentary is **a kaleidoscope where its different faces and facets are not well woven**, in general (...) So, the attention of us, the viewers, is dispersed and there is no way that we can gather together that beauty that you have shown in some fragments, in order to say, let's see, in short, which are the stories that appear and which characters are the most important.<sup>518</sup>

In general, viewers considered it appropriate to interview only male experts. They also understood that de Ocampo didn't want to make a film for feminist audiences, but that hers is an attempt to speak to men who wouldn't watch a feminist film a priori. Nevertheless, there was scepticism about a male "truck driver" (expression frequently used by the filmmaker to refer to her ideal spectator) actually watching *Serás Hombre*.

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<sup>517</sup> "Mujer1: A mí me cuesta establecer, cuando tienes varias historias necesitas algo que una, necesito que sea un poco más didáctico en el sentido que, no me importaría si tienes una historia por un lado y una historia por el otro, y juntas las que quieras, pero que cada uno de los discursos sea, de los planteamientos, sea más claro hacia dónde va (...) Mujer2: Al final ves la conclusión de esos dos, pero en el resto de historias son reflexiones pero no acabas de ver la conexión que tienen, que no tienen porque tenerlo pero para hacerlo bien presentado. A mí me gusta salir del cine teniendo la sensación de que he aprendido algo." Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

<sup>518</sup> "Mujer2: A mí me ha parecido todo el documental un caleidoscopio en donde sus diversas caras y facetas no están bien hilvanadas, en general (...) Entonces, la atención de quienes estamos viendo, es como si se dispersara y no hay manera de que esa belleza que has dejado en alguno fragmentos podamos reunirla como para decir, a ver, en definitiva, qué historias son las que aparecen y qué personajes son los más importantes." Focus group. August 2018 in Almuñécar.

One of the male assistants proposed erasing any allusion to feminism and masculinity from the synopsis, so as to eliminate any suspicion from the potential male viewer. In their arguments, there are **tensions between feminism rejection and strategies for normalising/mainstreaming it**:

Man1: With these kinds of works you have **to put them in the mainstream however you can, you have to disguise them**. Me, as a straight guy, as a mainstream user, if suddenly I see in Netflix that the film tells me about the story of a pimp, **you have to seduce me to see it**. And it's my father you have to convince. Then it has to be an absolutely **normal thing that doesn't smell like feminism**. It will be real feminism when I say, "Damn, I just saw a feminist movie." But if it looks like feminism, we the heterosexuals say, "I'd rather watch a football match". Because we are already winning in this war, so we are not interested (...)

M2: That interests me, it's commercial: an artist's search for a father figure leads us to get to know the figure of a repentant pimp.

M1: **Feminism has triumphed when it is not talked about**. Right now there are two gay ministers; that is a sign that it has been normalised. **That's when equality has triumphed, not when we have wars between us**. I see this film on Netflix and I say "damn, how cool, I think about things without having to soak up the theory of feminism."

M2: **If you put the feminist colour purple, no guy is going to watch it.**<sup>519</sup>

Two feminist women in one of the focus groups pointed out the lack of recognition from male experts towards feminist knowledges. Former Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, was criticised by viewers from the three focus groups, either due to his clear political affiliation or due to what was considered an opportunistic attitude:

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<sup>519</sup> "Hombre1: Con este tipo de trabajos es meterlos en el mainstream como se pueda, hay que meterlos de tapadillo. Yo como hombre hetero, como usuario mainstream, si de repente veo en el Netflix que me habla de la historia de un proxeneta, me tienes que seducir para verlo. Y es a mi padre al que tienes que convencer. Entonces tiene que ser una cosa absolutamente normal, que no huela a feminismo. Será feminismo de verdad cuando diga, "hostia, me acabo de ver una película feminista". Pero si tiene todo pinta de feminismo, los heteros decimos mejor veo el futbol. Porque nosotros ya estamos ganando en esta guerra, entonces no nos interesa (...). H2: A mí eso me interesa, es comercial: La búsqueda de un artista de una figura paterna nos lleva a conocer la figura de un proxeneta arrepentido. H1: El feminismo ha triunfado cuando no se hable de ello, ahora mismo hay dos ministros gays, eso es señal de que ya se ha normalizado. Eso es cuando ha triunfado la igualdad, no cuando tenemos guerras entre nosotros. Yo esta película la veo en Netflix y digo hostia, qué guay, hago unas reflexiones sin tener que empaparme de la teoría del feminismo. H2: Si le pones el color morado feminista, ningún tío la va a ver." Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

Woman2: It's a product aimed at a group, it wants to provoke. **I don't think it's a bad thing as a strategy** (...) all of us who have fought for a comprehensive law against gender violence, with that specific name, we see that it has been a battle of the feminist movement, of the women of this country. It has been an absolute battle, where Zapatero, like most of the gestures he made, the comprehensive law against gender violence had no budget, did not have an allocated budget, and then **it's just a showcase, which is also marketing, pure marketing**. Obviously, how do we receive it, those of us who are feminists and that have been in the street fighting that law? We say: "here he comes, **the one who wants to pin a medal on himself**". But, if you have made your documentary taking into account what kind of product it is and for whom, it is interesting that it exists. **This is not a documentary for feminists**, that is the truth, because we would contest it right away, it does not make sense.<sup>520</sup>

**The end also raised questions and uncertainties** among the three groups. Some male viewers considered it a powerful sequence that works well as a circular narrative, bringing together the two protagonists. But the main concern that various female viewers shared was that it simply confronted Rafa and Abel in **a male ego battle that leaves hegemonic masculinity intact**. One woman considered that a previous scene, in which they talk for the first time in Rafa's office, was more interesting because it revealed them as vulnerable (scene 31.4):

Woman2: That final scene where they are sitting face to face seems to me a super powerful scene, before the bottles, **the bottles are effective and gimmicky** (...)

Man2: Abel has pushed the limit and the other, **as an alpha male**...

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<sup>520</sup> "Mujer2: Es un producto que va a un grupo, que quiere provocar. A mí no me parece nada mal como estrategia (...) todas las que hemos peleado porque hubiera una ley integral contra la violencia de género, con ese nombre específico, vemos que ha sido una batalla del movimiento feminista, de las mujeres de este país. Ha sido una batalla absoluta, en donde Zapatero, como la mayoría de los gestos que hizo, la ley integral contra la violencia de género no tenía presupuesto, no tuvo presupuesto asignado, y entonces es ese escaparate, que también es marketing, puro marketing también. Evidentemente, ¿cómo lo recibimos nosotras, que somos feministas y que hemos estado en la calle peleando esa ley? Pues decimos ya está ahí el que quiere colocarse la medallita. Pero, si tú has construido tu documental teniendo en cuenta qué producto y para quién, es interesante que esté. Este no es un documental para feministas ni muchísimo menos, esa es la verdad, porque nos lo cargaríamos enseguida, no tiene sentido." Focus group. August 2018 in Almuñécar.

W2: Exactly

M2: **Like primates**, that's it.

W2: But it is this exercise of authority that breaks it. Until then, they have their vulnerabilities, and there you see them when they come together in the brothel for the first time, when they see themselves and they are recognising, they want to avoid those vulnerabilities but you still see them. And suddenly they move from there to the exercise of **how men avoid, that kind of alpha male man, how they continue to avoid talking about, not recognising their vulnerabilities**. And it's by breaking the bottles and by doing that escalation of the bottles of who has more power.<sup>521</sup>

The interpretation that one young woman proposed was that such an end was the only possible for such characters: a grotesque end “from which they couldn't escape, because it was one competing against the other, a struggle of hegemonies symbolised by those phallic symbols that are those bottles. And they can't get out of there, they are stuck there.”<sup>522</sup> Another woman considered that a possibility for getting out of the vicious circle of hegemonic masculinity could be symbolised by the two intact shot glasses. Some viewers expressed **frustration for what they felt as a lack of solutions and alternatives**:

Man3: **The teacher is the only one who gives me a solution**, who says to me as a man: “okay, we can do this”. Because another thing that happens is that everything highlights problems, it looks like an attack, more than anything because then you can't see a solution. People who want to solve the problem, who have good will, don't know what to do. And that's the issue: we don't know what to do.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>521</sup> “Mujer2: Esa escena final donde están sentados frente a frente me parece una escena súper potente, antes de los de las botellas, lo de las botellas es efectivo y efectista (...) Hombre2: Abel ha forzado el límite y el otro, como macho alfa... M2: Exactamente. H2: De primates, se acabó. M2: Pero es que ese ejercicio de la autoridad es lo que rompe. Hasta entonces tienen sus vulnerabilidades, y ahí tú los ves en un momento en el que se juntan en el prostíbulo por primera vez, cuando se ven y están como reconociendo, quieren evitar esas vulnerabilidades pero tú las estás viendo todavía. Y de pronto ya pasan de ahí al ejercicio de cómo evitan los hombres y siguen evitando, ese tipo de hombre macho alfa, hablar de sus, no reconocer sus vulnerabilidades. Y es rompiendo las botellas y haciendo esa escalada de botellas de quién tiene más poder.” Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

<sup>522</sup> “del que no podían salir porque era uno compitiendo con el otro, una lucha de hegemonías simbolizada con esos símbolos fálicos que son esas botellas. Y de ahí no salen, se quedan estancados ahí.” Focus group. August 2018 in Almuñécar.

<sup>523</sup> “Hombre3: El profesor es el único de todo el conflicto que me aporta una solución, que me dice a mí como tío, vale, podemos hacer esto. Porque otra cosa que ocurre es que todo llama atención sobre problemas, se ve como un ataque, más que nada porque luego no ves una solución. La gente que quiere

In general, **viewers enjoyed the high school sequence** and appreciated the teacher's pedagogical work. For example, one woman said: "I think that the teacher is a great figure. Because moreover he is didactic with young men and women, and he comes to the conclusion that you can be a caregiver without having breasts in a very simple way."<sup>524</sup> In one of the focus groups, however, there was **suspicion towards the father** who comes as guest to the class because they considered him "too effeminate":

Woman3: When I was watching the school sequences, when they brought the father's role model, **I would have liked to see a man who was not effeminate.**

W5: He is heterosexual.

W2: Those are the prejudices that we have when we are watching it. Immediately I also thought "**what an obvious homosexual**".

M2: The thing is that you can read that like "of course, **he takes care of his daughter because he is gay**, but a man like me..."

W4: If you want male truck drivers to watch it...

W2: Sure. We may find it interesting because of gender fluidity, but a truck driver does not understand that.

W4: **The effeminate man has made me confront myself directly with the concept of masculinity I have**, and that is where women have the concept fully incorporated. And I realised that I thought: "this guy is a faggot, a surrogate, how strange that this character was chosen". And then, when he says "my wife", I say, "**look at the concept of masculinity that I have in my brain**", I mean, **I think that such an effeminate guy is not a man.**<sup>525</sup>

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solucionar, la que tiene buena voluntad, no sabe qué hacer. Y ahí está el tema, es que nosotros no sabemos qué hacer." Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

<sup>524</sup> "El maestro me parece una figura genial. Porque además es didáctico, lo hace con chavales y con chavalas, y además llega de una manera muy sencilla a la conclusión de que se puede ser cuidador sin tener mamas." Focus group. August 2018 in Almuñécar.

<sup>525</sup> "Mujer3: Cuando yo estaba viendo las secuencias del colegio, cuando han traído al modelo de hombre del padre, a mí me hubiera gustado ver un tío que no fuera afeminado. M5: Es hetero. M2: Ahí están los prejuicios que nosotros tenemos cuando estamos viendo eso. Inmediatamente yo también he pensado "qué pluma, homosexual". H2: Es que ahí puedes hacer la lectura de "claro, éste cuida a su hija porque es gay, pero un tío como yo..." M4: Si quieres que lo vean camioneros... M2: Claro. A nosotros nos puede parecer interesantísimo porque está la fluidez del género, pero un camionero no capta eso. M4: A mí el afeminado me ha hecho enfrentarme conmigo misma, con el concepto de masculinidad en vivo y en directo, o sea, ahí es donde las mujeres tenemos el concepto totalmente incorporado. Y me he dado cuenta, yo he pensado "este tío es maricón, es un vientre de alquiler, qué raro que haya elegido este personaje". Y luego, cuando él dice "mi mujer", digo "fíjate el concepto de masculinidad que tengo

Other viewers criticised this character for what they considered to be a “hippie” look with which they didn’t identify. Furthermore, **some spectators felt that the issue of fatherhood was very superficial in the film.** Two women from different focus groups asserted that it was a mistake to talk about paternity with the story of Abel Azcona:

Woman1: **Paternity in this documentary is too superficial for me.** With all respect, the super hippie guy that appears...

Man1: That’s not society.

W1: I think Abel Azcona is a bit of a burden sometimes. **He talks about a fatherhood that is not real, because fatherhood is not that you screw a woman and she gets pregnant,** that’s not fatherhood.

W2: Speaking in the documentary of something as important as paternity, as someone who makes a girl pregnant, seems to me super simple, I mean, that is not paternity, that is a trauma.

W3: The issue of fatherhood in the documentary is very important and it’s not only played from the point of view of Abel. There is a very important part, which is **the way in which the care system is distributed,** and I think that is key.

Isabel de Ocampo: That’s very well explained, that’s what the economist says, if everybody here got the same paternity leave, nobody would ask you when you are planning to get pregnant.

W3: In countries of the north it is being enabled, but in spite of having the same rights, women opt for them more than men, **it is not only about legislation.**

W2: I have a Swedish friend and she experiences another kind of **male chauvinism, which is not political, but it is inside, in the home.**

W3: It’s good to legislate and regulate, but law and regulation don’t do it alone.

Man1: **That’s why we need documentaries like this.**

W1: What I don’t like about the class is that the youngsters are being directed to think in a specific way. I would have liked this teacher **to bring that model of hippie man, but also the banker who picks up his son** in the afternoon.<sup>526</sup>

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yo en el cerebro”, o sea, yo entiendo que un tío así de afeminado no es un hombre.” Focus group. June 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Madrid.

<sup>526</sup> “Mujer1: La paternidad en este documental a mí se me queda floja. Sale el chico súper hippie con todo respeto. Hombre1: Esa no es la sociedad. M1: Yo creo que Abel Azcona es un pelín cargante a

As part of a dissemination event of the GRACE project, I organised a screening of *Serás Hombre* at the University of Granada on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018. Isabel de Ocampo presented the film and took part in a Q&A session with the spectators, who were approximately forty people. At first, nobody wanted to speak and de Ocampo commented that the same happened at the premiere at the “SEMINCI” Valladolid Film Festival. After a while, a man said that it was hard to speak because it was a “very deep” film:

It goes deep inside, it speaks from a very deep point of view, I mean, when you see the son of a whoremonger, he speaks from deep within himself. So, **how can you talk about it if you don't delve within yourself**, of course, how can we reach within ourselves to talk about that. That pimp is, the poor guy, he is also searching, he is trying to get within.<sup>527</sup>

Like some people from the focus groups, this man felt pity for the pimp. A young woman said that she couldn't speak because she felt “very angry and very sensitive” at that moment and she added that the documentary provokes “very different emotions”. A young man agreed with her, adding that the difficult thing about the film is that it talks about many different things “in very different ways”, but that the idea that stayed with him was that of the father. He asked de Ocampo about her position towards the legalisation of prostitution and, when she explained she is abolitionist, he expressed his disagreement:

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veces. Habla de una paternidad que no es real, porque la paternidad no es que folles con una tía y quede embarazada, eso no es la paternidad. M2: Hablar en un docu de algo tan importante como la paternidad, como que alguien deje embarazada a una chica, me parece súper simple, o sea, eso no es la paternidad, eso es un trauma. M3: Es importantísimo el tema de la paternidad en el documental y no sólo se toca desde el punto de vista de Abel. Hay una parte muy importante que es cómo está distribuido el sistema de cuidados y yo creo que eso es clave. Isabel de Ocampo: Eso está muy bien explicado, es lo que dice el economista, si aquí todo el mundo se cogiera los mismos permisos, nadie te preguntaría cuando piensas quedarte embarazada. M3: En países del norte se está habilitando, pero pese a tener los mismos derechos, las mujeres optan más que los hombres, no es sólo legislación. M2: Tengo una amiga sueca y me dice que vive allí otro machismo, que no es político, sino que está por dentro, en las casas. M3: Está muy bien legislar y regular, pero la ley y la regulación no lo hacen solo. Hombre1: Por eso documentales como éste. M1: A mí lo de la clase lo que me despierta es un disgusto hacia la dirección de los chavales en un pensamiento. Me hubiera gustado que este profesor lleve a ese icono de hombre hippie, pero también al banquero que va a recoger a su hijo en la tarde.” Focus group. June 2018 in Salamanca.

<sup>527</sup> “Va muy dentro, es que habla desde un punto de vista muy profundo, es que cuando ves al hijo de putero, habla desde muy dentro, entonces, cómo hablar de eso si no hurgas desde tu adentro, claro, cómo llegamos adentro para hablar de eso. El putero ese está, el pobre, también está buscando, está intentando llegarse dentro.” Q&A session. October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada. All translations and emphases are mine.

I have friends who are feminist sex workers and they are aware of what they are doing precisely to end that (...) you are talking about something very fixed and precisely those sex workers that I know, try to dismantle that (...) **I believe in feminist sexual work** and we are always talking about women but there is also male sex work, that women and men pay for.<sup>528</sup>

After de Ocampo expressed some of her arguments, already mentioned before, the young man still disagreed with her, but his female companion said: “Of course, everyone should do what he or she wants, but still, the fact that there are men who pay women to sleep with them generates shitty feelings inside me (...) It would be better to build love between us.”<sup>529</sup> A woman mentioned the ways in which men are constructing their masculinities in groups. And a man asked the filmmaker how she thought that a film on masculinities directed by a woman was going to be received by men, to what she answered that she had also had the gaze of her male editor and that men had spoken for decades about women without any complaint.

A female professor of gender studies, Victoria Robles, wrote a public Facebook post after attending this screening at the University of Granada. She decided to **focus her gaze in the “alternative, non hegemonic masculinities” also present in the film.** Particularly, those of the trans activist Pol Galofre and the high school teacher:

In him, it took a metamorphosis to find a masculinity “in accordance” with his body, except that his masculinity is not a common masculinity. It is not the physical body or the category of “man” that has determined his masculinity, but **a strong will to build himself in a culture where there is room for the consciousness of being privileged and not wanting to be so, and to love, feel and respect as a man.**

The teacher who appears in *You Will Be a Man* is another hymn to hope. If men are made over time, they can also be remade (...) To see them in the

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<sup>528</sup> “Yo tengo amigas trabajadoras sexuales feministas y conscientes de lo que están haciendo precisamente para acabar con eso (...) estás hablando de una cosa como muy fija y precisamente esas trabajadoras sexuales que yo conozco, intentan desmontar eso (...) Creo en el trabajo sexual feminista y siempre estamos hablando de la mujer pero también hay trabajo sexual masculino, que las mujeres y los hombres pagan.” Q&A session. October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>529</sup> “Claro, que cada quien haga lo que le dé la gana, pero a mí me sigue generando una mierda por dentro muy gorda que haya hombres que paguen a mujeres por acostarse con ellos (...) Mejor construir amor entre nosotros.” Q&A session. October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.



classroom is to imagine them in a chain of values: **pupils and students break out of their stereotyped boxes and learn from the teacher as coeducator and a committed and sensible man.**<sup>530</sup>

Robles concludes her post saying that the harsh reality of “indecent” masculinities that the film shows is **real and needs to be exposed**, but that **next to it, there’s hope** for other possible ways of being men.

Miguel Lorente, the gender violence expert who appears in the film, wrote a review in the Huffington Post on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018, under the title “Serás Hombre... o no serás” (You’ll Be a Man... or You Won’t Be At All). In opposition to the previous example, he placed the **focus on the character of the ex-pimp and the kind of masculinity he embodies**. Lorente considers that the film shows the skeleton that sustains the construction of male identity by analysing three axes: male identity connected with the consumption of prostitution; the culture and society that gives sense to such masculinity; and the representation of women provided by prostitution within a male chauvinist culture:

The documentary takes us through those neon nights that illuminate the mornings of each day, and in which men dress as businessmen, friends, sons or parents, in search of women that they can subdue at a low price, so that other men see how manly they are when doing it, so that **all of them together preserve the model that gives them identity and power.**<sup>531</sup>

Lorente points out some aspects that the documentary reveals. For instance, complicities and hierarchies in conversations between men, the role of euphemisms such as “night

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<sup>530</sup> “En él ha bastado una metamorfosis para dar con una masculinidad 'acorde' con su cuerpo, sólo que su masculinidad no es una masculinidad al uso, la habitual. No es el cuerpo físico ni la categoría "hombre" lo que ha determinado su masculinidad, sino una fuerte voluntad de construirse en una cultura donde hay espacio para la conciencia de ser privilegiado y para no querer serlo, y para amar, sentir y respetar siendo hombre. / El maestro que aparece en *Serás hombre* es otro canto a la esperanza. Si los hombres se hacen con el tiempo, también pueden rehacerse (...) Verles en el aula es imaginarlos en una cadena de valores: alumnas y alumnos rompen sus encasillamientos estereotipados y aprenden del maestro por maestro coeducador y por hombre implicado y sensato.” Facebook post. Date of access: January 2019. All translations and emphases are mine. <<https://www.facebook.com/clara.arrollo.98/posts/2190655224525839>>.

<sup>531</sup> “El documental nos lleva por esas noches de neón que iluminan las mañanas de cada día, y en las que los hombres se visten de empresarios, de amigos, de hijos o de padres, en busca de mujeres a las que poder someter bajo precio para que otros hombres vean lo hombres que son al hacerlo, y así todos juntos sostener el modelo que les da la identidad y el poder.” Huffington Post newspaper website. Date of access: January 2019. <[https://www.huffingtonpost.es/miguel-lorente/seras-hombre-o-noseras\\_a\\_23568500/](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/miguel-lorente/seras-hombre-o-noseras_a_23568500/)>.

businessman” in the normalisation of prostitution, and the fact that Azcona ends up telling Rafa that he “respects him” for proving that he is a man.

#### 4.5.3 Summary and Research Question

To summarise this case study, in this section I go over insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Serás hombre* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

The **production** of *Serás Hombre* was born with a militant feminist aim nurtured by the necessity to deal with gender violence from a different perspective: rather than focusing on women as victims, focusing on the reasons why men commit violent acts against women. With this in mind, the director envisioned the production of the film under the guiding axis of eliciting empathy from men and making them reflect about their own masculinity. Many of her decisions were motivated by this need to connect with a male audience that might haven’t even heard the word “masculinity” before. Therefore, she interviewed only male experts, so as to show models and references with which male audiences could identify more easily.

Her relationship with the main characters was difficult and unpredictable until the end, but she reckons that both help her convey her message: the process behind Azcona’s performance reflects the shift in demanding accountability from men, and the change of consciousness that Rafa claims to have after humanising and empathising with women mirrors the effect that de Ocampo wants to have with her film. She faced financial censorship and precarious conditions while making the film, which speak of economic inequalities in the access to producing audiovisual contents and in the amount of time available activism.

In terms of **content**, the film explores the construction of masculinity within a patriarchal framework, focusing on the role it plays in the perpetuation of gender inequalities and gender-based violence. De Ocampo decides to question men, demanding responsibility and accountability from them. Male experts provide different tools for understanding how, as Lorente puts it, “patriarchy is the mould and instruction manual for creating men” (Min. 23:08). Gender inequalities are discussed, though not in depth, from the perspective of economics (e.g. domestic work, tax laws), violence (e.g. cat-

calling, the idea that only “bad” women are beaten), religion (e.g. the myth of the female sinner) and sexuality (e.g. women as victims of sex trafficking).

The high school sequence exemplifies education from a gender equality perspective: the teacher tries to dismantle gender stereotypes and to open up other possibilities for being a man and for experiencing fatherhood. As for the main characters, they are both trapped by a patriarchal construction of masculinity, as it becomes evident in the last sequence of their encounter, when they compete to see who the most powerful is. In diffractively reading Rafa’s narrative with Valencia’s concepts, we can see the logics of gore capitalism in action: marginalised masculinities that resort to violence and exploitation of minorised others as a perverse way of reinforcing their male identities according to hegemonic patterns of masculinity.

As for the **form**, I have defined the strategies used in *Serás Hombre* as an attempt to use the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house, paraphrasing Audre Lorde (1984; 2007). For example, the talking heads in the film give yet more authority to white men with epistemological superiority. However, in many cases, they use that position of power to dismantle masculinity as a social construct that provides men with privileges at the expense of women. In the case of Azcona, his search for the father as a process of denunciation can be read as a narrative and Oedipal arc but “with a vengeance” (de Lauretis 1987b: 108). Rafa claims to have undergone a transformation, so that he now regrets having done so much harm to the women with whom he trafficked. But his paternalistic and victimising tone when talking about women with other newbie pimps, along with his attitude in the last sequence, cast doubts on his repentance.

As for the **reception** of the film, many reactions concentrated on the character of the ex-pimp and the kind of masculinity he embodies. The affects that he evokes go from tenderness, pity and empathy to hatred, disdain and distrust. This speaks of the open character of the film, which allows for diverse interpretations in each encounter between the film and the spectators: as a viewer, one can also decide “what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad 2007: 148) in each intra-action with the world. In the case of the reactions that I discussed, for instance, a couple of female spectators recognised the importance of exposing hegemonic masculinities but decided to pay more attention to the other masculinities that the film shows: men who construct themselves with awareness of gender politics and against the inequalities that sustain male privileges.

## **Chapter 5. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Italian Documentary Production**

We will continue to strike from productive and reproductive work to reject the neoliberal violence of exploitation and precariousness. We will continue to strike against gender to subvert the sexual hierarchies, gender norms and imposed social roles. We will continue to build solidarity and transfeminist networks to increase the global tide of women, to overcome the material and symbolic boundaries with which they would like to divide us. If our lives have no value, then we do not re-produce this sexist society. (“Non Una di Meno” Plan, 2017).<sup>532</sup>

The aims of this chapter are to contextualise and situate the production of Italian documentary feminist cinema (produced either with film stock, video or digital formats), so as to trace a possible genealogy of contemporary productions. As stated in chapter two<sup>533</sup>, I am not looking for a closed definition of what a feminist documentary film is; rather, I focus on what practices enacted from a feminist perspective (either by the filmmaker, the filmed subjects or the film spectators) do. As in chapter three<sup>534</sup>, I pay attention to films directed by women, since the presence of female professionals in creative areas where audiovisual contents are created is both a cause and a consequence of the visualisation of gender inequalities. But the feminist character of a film does not lie in the fact of being directed by women; instead, it refers to the exploration and construction of contents, textual structures, formal strategies and/or means of production, distribution, exhibition and reception that reveal a feminist consciousness, i.e. awareness of the role that gender has (had) in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities.

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<sup>532</sup> “Continueremo a scioperare dal lavoro produttivo e riproduttivo per rifiutare la violenza neoliberale dello sfruttamento e della precarietà. Continueremo a praticare lo sciopero dei e dai generi per sovvertire le gerarchie sessuali, le norme di genere e i ruoli sociali imposti. Continueremo a costruire reti solidali e transfemministe per far crescere la marea globale delle donne, per travolgere i confini materiali e simbolici con cui vorrebbero dividerci. Se le nostre vite non valgono, allora noi non riproduciamo questa società sessista.” All translations of quotes taken from sources in Italian are mine. Original quotes are cited in the corresponding footnotes.

<sup>533</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.2 Diffracting from What a Feminist Documentary Cinema is to What it Does

<sup>534</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 3. An Overview of the Feminist Agenda(s) in Spanish Documentary Production

This historical revision does not pretend to be exhaustive, but allows having a wider cartography in which to place the case studies analysed in the next chapters. It is presented in chronological order, from pioneers such as Cecilia Mangini and the feminist collectives of the seventies to filmmakers who explore diverse formal strategies and new distribution platforms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My main sources in the elaboration of this genealogy are Giuliana Bruno and Maria Nadotti (1988), Marco Bertozzi (2012; 2014), Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo (2013; 2015).

I incorporate information provided by some of the interviewees (filmmakers and distributors) throughout the chapter, as well as landmarks in the Italian feminist movement. I also briefly refer to the data presented by the European Women's Audiovisual Network (EWA) in 2016, which has been discussed in chapter two.<sup>535</sup> What I emphasise in this chapter is the specific EWA national report carried out in Italy, which is complemented with data presented in 2016 at the Torino Film Festival by DEA-Donne e Audiovisivo (Women and the Audiovisual), a project sustained by SIAE-the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers.

## 5.1 Italian Pioneers

Italian cinematography was born at the end of 1896 following the French model of recording everyday “views”. Much of the documentary production of the early twentieth century was anonymous. An exception is Luca Comerio, founder of the first film production company in Milan in 1907, “Comerio Films”, whose records of war conflicts such as the Libyan War (1911) and World War I (1914-1918) were reused by Cecilia Mangini, Lino del Fra and Lino Micciché in *All'armi siamo fascisti!/To Arms We Are Fascists*<sup>536</sup> (1961), and by Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian in *Dal Polo all'Equatore/From the Pole to the Equator* (1986).

Elvira Notari (1875-1946) is considered the first female director in Italy, with about sixty feature films and numerous short films in her filmography, ranging from 1906 to 1930. Her figure has been rescued from oblivion thanks to the work of feminist researchers (Miscuglio 1988: 154). An online database coordinated by Columbia University since 2013, “The Women Film Pioneers Project”, provides information about

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<sup>535</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1.5.1 European Contemporary Context Data

<sup>536</sup> In all cases, the English translation of the titles is written next to the original ones. It was not possible to find official English translations in all cases, so I indicate my translations with a symbol (\*).

other six female directors during the silent era of Italian cinema: Bianca Virginia Camagni, Fabienne Fabrèges, Elvira Giallanella, Diana Karenne, Lotte Reiniger and Daysi Sylvan.<sup>537</sup> They all made fiction cinema and, apart from Notari, Camagni and Sylvan also established their own production houses: in 1910, Notari and her husband Nicola founded “Dora Films” in Naples; Sylvan created “Daysi Film” in Florence around 1919; and Camagni established “Camagni Films” in Milan in 1920.

“Camagni Films” was destroyed within a few years after a devastating fire; “Daysi Film” disappeared after the production of two motion pictures; and “Dora Films” was forced to close down in 1930 due to fascist censorship. Even though Notari’s cinema was not politically subversive, the regime was bothered by the excessive realism in her portrayal of poverty, a portrait that contradicted the image of idealised stability it sought to spread.

Fascism also aimed to concentrate the film industry in Rome, a project that began in 1924 with the founding of the LUCE Institute. According to Marco Bertozzi (2014: 61), Benito Mussolini was convinced of the importance of the cinematographic medium for his regime’s propaganda and he himself invented the name LUCE, acronym for “L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa” (The Educational Film Union). In 1926, he enacted a law that made compulsory to show at least one documentary produced by LUCE in every Italian cinema. Together with the *Giornale Luce/The Luce Journal*\*, the Institute recorded events such as the conciliation of the fascist government with the Vatican in 1929, and the wedding of Mussolini’s daughter. In 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia and LUCE supported the invasion with the propagandistic documentary *Il cammino degli eroi/The Path of The Heroes* (Corrado D’Errico, 1936). Cinecittà<sup>538</sup> was inaugurated in 1937 with the shooting of *Scipione l’Africano/Scipio Africanus: The Defeat of Hannibal* (Carmine Gallone).

The most important school of cinema in Italy, the Experimental Centre of Cinematography, was inaugurated in Rome in 1935. Among the filmmakers who have graduated there, we find Liliana Cavani (1961), Rosalia Polizzi (1963), Susanna Tamaro (1978), Francesca Archibugi (1982) and Isabela Sandri (1983). On the fringes of the fascist regime, some spaces of partial and monitored freedom were created, such as the “Cineguf”: cinematographic sessions organised by the Fascist University Groups.

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<sup>537</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<https://wfpp.cdrrs.columbia.edu/pioneers/?sort=nationality>>.

<sup>538</sup> Closed during World War II (1939-1945), Cinecittà reopened in 1947. Since May 2009, Cinecittà and the LUCE Institute have merged, giving rise to Cinecittà Luce.

Launched in 1935 by Luigi Freddi, “Cineguf” contributed to the interest in experimental cinema of young film lovers, including Pier Paolo Pasolini and Cecilia Mangini.

In the post-war years, neorealism was developed under the influence of documentary film: shooting *in situ* with non-professional actors and with an emphasis on denouncing the country’s socioeconomic situation were some of the elements of neorealist fiction films such as *Roma, città aperta/Rome, Open City* (Roberto Rossellini, 1945) and *Bicycle Thieves/Ladri di biciclette* (Vittorio de Sica, 1948). But documentary cinema was relegated and legislative obstacles like the “Formula 10”, whose name is due to the rigid duration of ten minutes equivalent to a single roll of film, limited this genre to the short film. In 1950 a group of filmmakers and critics created the National Association of Cinematographic Authors (ANAC) with the aim of demanding the freedom of expression that the fascist regime had denied them. Among them, Ansano Giannarelli and Cecilia Mangini denounced the pressure to become fiction directors due to the lack of recognition of documentary filmmaking as a feasible lifelong career (Bertozzi 2014: 186).

### 5.1.1 Cecilia Mangini’s Documentary Cinema

The first Italian woman to develop a professional career as a documentary filmmaker was indeed Cecilia Mangini (1927, Puglia):

Always obstinately free, she has lived her work as a constant challenge not only to society and to conformism, but also to that idea, still so strong in Italy, that cinema is a territory, especially when it comes to directing, almost exclusively male (Sciannameo 2010: 12).<sup>539</sup>

Her first film (*Ignoti alla città/Unknown to the City*, 1958), in which the voice-over narration is taken from a text written by Pier Paolo Pasolini, was censored. In an interview that I conducted in March 2013, Mangini narrated that the idea behind the film was to talk about the rebellious young boys from the *borgate*, the name given to the urban settlements of popular housing made between 1924 and 1937 in the area of the Agro Romano, i.e. the rural area that surrounds the city of Rome. The fascist government built twelve *borgate* to transfer the people who lived in the houses of the historic centre, which

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<sup>539</sup> “Sempre ostinatamente libera, la regista pugliese ha vissuto il suo lavoro come una sfida costante non solo alla società, al conformismo, ma anche a quell’idea, ancora così forte in Italia, che il cinema fosse un territorio, soprattutto nella sua parte realizzativa, quasi esclusivamente ‘maschile’.”

were demolished in order to create avenues like Via della Conciliazione and Via dei Fori Imperiali. She also filmed the youngsters of the *borgate* in *La canta delle marane/The Song of the Marane* (1962), once again with a text of Pasolini read in voice-over:

They bathed in the *marane*. *Marane* is a Roman term to refer to the ponds (...) These *marane* are their space of freedom and play (...) There they express their rebellious creativity (...) Pasolini wrote a beautiful text, which in my opinion is an anti-comment because he becomes one of them, he speaks in the first person, he identifies as one of these boys.<sup>540</sup>

This “anti-comment” is a formal strategy that subverts the authoritative “divine voice-over” (Nichols 2010: 105) of a narrator who is heard but never seen. In many of her documentaries, such as *Divino amore/Divine Love\** (1960) or *Felice natale/Merry Christmas* (1965), Mangini doesn’t include any voice-over at all. To a great extent, she advocates for an understanding of objectivity as situated knowledges<sup>541</sup>, that is, as an understanding of one’s own vision as something partial, embodied and subjective. She describes her position like this:

I’ve always had a kind of struggle against the text. And when I used it, it was a text openly declared as mine, my point of view (...) At the moment when a clearly subjective approach is given, the spectator is free to think whatever he wants: to agree, to disagree, to be in controversy, enthusiastic, to deny it. The viewer is given a freedom, which the authoritative text does not give.<sup>542</sup>

As part of the group of the “Demartiniani” documentary filmmakers (so-called due to the influence of anthropologist Ernesto de Martino in their work), Mangini directed *Stendali* (1959), a record of the funeral songs of the women from Salento, in south eastern Italy. The film, which includes a text written by Pasolini in the voice-over, was well received

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<sup>540</sup> “Loro facevano il bagno nelle marane. Marane è un modo romanesco di chiamare gli stagni (...) Queste marane erano diventate il luogo della sua libertà, di quello che è il gioco (...) E loro li esprimevano la loro creatività di ribelli (...) Pasolini ha scritto questo testo bellissimo, che secondo me è un anti-commento perché lui diventa uno di loro, lui li dà da la prima persona, lui si riconosce come uno dei ragazzi.” Cecilia Mangini. Personal interview. March 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 in Rome.

<sup>541</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1.4 From the Female Gaze to the Feminist Situated Gazes

<sup>542</sup> “Io ho sempre avuto una specie di lotta contro il testo. Oppure quando l’ho fatto, era un testo che dichiaratamente diceva che era mio, che era il mio punto de vista (...) Nel momento in cui si dà un’impostazione chiaramente soggettiva, lo spettatore è libero di pensare quello che vuole, essere d’accordo, in disaccordo, in polemica, entusiasta, in negazione. Si dà allo spettatore una libertà che invece, il testo autoritario non li dà per niente.” Cecilia Mangini. Personal interview. March 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 in Rome.



by de Martino, but not by the ethnologists of the Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions of Rome, who argued that an ethnographic document should have been recorded with a single shot in order to maintain scientific objectivity. Mangini objected that the mere framing choice already implied the denial of the so-called scientific objectivity but they did not accept her argument (Bertozzi 2014: 149).

In 1961, Mangini co-directed with her husband, Lino del Fra, and with historian Lino Micciché, the documentary *All'armi, siam fascisti!*, made with found footage. LUCE denied them access to its archives but they found enough material in Yugoslavia, France and Germany. Regarding the formal resources of this film, she remarks:

The material we used against fascism and against Nazism had been recorded by fascists and Nazis (...) The fact that the fascists recorded it does not mean that it becomes something at their absolute disposal forever (...) In the film, Mussolini is a clown, he is not a credible person. And that was recorded by the fascists.<sup>543</sup>

The act of revision and reinterpretation that Mangini, del Fra and Micciché carry out in *All'armi, siam fascisti!* is an example of a reflexive mode of representation that invites the public to think about the mechanisms of meaning-making in the celluloid. Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian employ a similar mechanism in their last film, which is also one of my case studies, *Pays Barbare/Barbaric Land* (2013).

In 1965, the Italian Communist Party, of which Mangini was a member, commissioned her to work on the female condition in Italy. She got access to the factories, and interviewed women in the assembly lines: the result, *Essere donne/Being Women* (1965), is a documentary that denounces the double and even triple workload per day of Italian women. It was awarded a prize at the Leipzig Festival by a jury consisting of Joris Ivens, Paul Rotha and John Grierson. However, it was ignored in Italy, so as to avoid its distribution in national cinemas. This was the first documentary in which Mangini directly addressed the oppression of women.

In my 2013 interview with her, she admitted that, from her point of view, social class has a stronger impact than gender, and consequently, feminist struggles must be

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<sup>543</sup> “Il materiale di repertorio che noi abbiamo utilizzato contro il fascismo e contro il nazismo è quello girato dai fascisti e dai nazisti (...) Non è che perché l’hanno girato i fascisti diventa una cosa assolutamente a loro disposizione per sempre (...) Nel film, Mussolini è un pagliaccio, non una persona credibile; è quello l’hanno girato i fascisti.” Cecilia Mangini. Personal interview. March 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 in Rome.

inserted “in a broader picture of the liberation of humanity”<sup>544</sup>. After telling her that an intersectional feminist perspective analyses how chains of oppression are shaped through the simultaneous operation of categories such as gender, social class and race, she replied: “I discover myself to be intersectional!” Since the first email we exchanged in February 2013, Mangini made it clear that she did not identify herself as a feminist filmmaker, even though she recognised gender inequality:

Cinema is just cinema, it is neither male nor female. Certainly, as in almost all well-recognised human activities, women have encountered strong difficulties in the cinema, and their commitment to the defence of a gender identity has frequently been a limitation.<sup>545</sup>

In relation with this assertion, a documentary-homage on her trajectory called *Non c'era nessuna signora a quel tavolo. Il cinema di Cecilia Mangini/There Was No Woman at that Table. The Cinema of Cecilia Mangini* (Davide Barletti and Lorenzo Conte, 2010), owes its title to an anecdote narrated in the film by Mangini herself, about an occasion in which she passed for a male, because at the table where she was sitting, her colleagues stated that there were no ladies. This rejection of a female (and feminist) gender identity is also present in the discourses of several Italian women filmmakers nowadays<sup>546</sup> and reflects the conflict in-and-out of gender that is experienced by those who question the patriarchal imposition of the role of “Woman”, and then have to assume traits of the androcentric subject as one’s own so as to have access to male-dominated areas.

In 1974, Mangini directed *La Briglia sul collo/The Bridle on the Neck\**, about a rebellious child expelled from school. She then left cinema for over forty years, due to the difficult conditions imposed on documentary filmmakers: the genre was declared “a register lacking of creativity, punished by the Veltroni law with 25 million liras per copy, compared to the 100 million liras allocated to fiction short films (...) even with a length

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<sup>544</sup> “in un quadro più ampio di liberazione dell’umanità.” Cecilia Mangini. Personal interview. March 24<sup>th</sup> 2013 in Rome.

<sup>545</sup> “Il cinema è solo cinema, non è né maschile né femminile. Certamente, come in quasi tutte le altre attività umane di rilievo, nel cinema le donne hanno incontrato fortissime difficoltà ad affermarsi, e l’arroccarsi nella difensiva di un’identità di genere molto spesso ha costituito una limitazione.” Cecilia Mangini. Personal e-mail. February 2013.

<sup>546</sup> Filmmakers interviewed for this research project such as Elisabetta Lodoli and Simone Cangelosi also expressed this resistance. *Vid. Infra*. Chapters 6.2 *Una nobile rivoluzione* and 6.5 *Lunàdigas*.

of three minutes” (Mangini 2012: 134)<sup>547</sup>. Without economic support, the documentary in Italy was reduced to the television format and RAI, the Italian radio and television public company founded in 1954, was inclined to certain type of documentary: that which explains images with an authoritative voice-over (Bertozzi 2014: 223).

According to Ivelise Perniola (2004), the possibility of an Italian documentary school in the fifties was dissolved due to all of the obstacles with which documentary filmmakers were presented, such as reduced budgets, pressure from the film critics to direct fiction cinema, and lack of interest from the public television to screen their films. A few alternative production spaces were created, for example the REIAC (Independent Filmmaking Authors), established in 1962 with the union of Ansano Giannarelli, Piero Nelli and Marina Piperno. The availability in Italy, since 1965, of the more accessible Super 8 format, made it easier for independent and experimental cinema to gain strength during the second half of the sixties and the seventies, as explained in the following section.

### **5.1.2 The Independent Italian Cinema of the Seventies**

Following the 1968 student movement and the 1969’s “autunno caldo”<sup>548</sup>, the early seventies in Italy was a period of political and social transformation, “a period of hard-fought struggle by workers for specific political objectives: they struggled not only for wage increases, but also, and above all, to change their working conditions” (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 97). In this context, there was an explosive growth of collective practice and experimentation within the audiovisual field.

In 1967, groups of filmmakers from Rome, Turin and Naples converged in the “Independent Film Cooperative” (Cooperativa Cinema Indipendente-Cci), whose members include Alberto Grifi, Mario Masini, Anna Lajolo, Guido Lombardi, Alfredo Leonardi, Giorgio Turi, Pietro Bargellini, Massimo Bacigalupo, Gianfranco Baruchello, Roberto Capanna, Tonino de Bernardi, Mario Schifano, Silvio Loffredo, and Ugo Nespolo. In the same year, Annabella Miscuglio and Americo Sbardella create the independent cinema hall “Filmstudio ‘70”, which played an important role in the

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<sup>547</sup> “dichiarato ‘registrazione priva di creatività’, punito dalla legge Veltroni con 20 risicatissimi premi di qualità di 25 milioni di lire erogati a copia campione, contro i 100 milioni assegnati ai corti di fiction (...) anche per una lunghezza di tre minuti”.

<sup>548</sup> The “Hot Autumn” of 1969 is a term used to refer to a series of strikes in factories and industrial centres of northern Italy, in which workers demanded better pay and better conditions in general.

distribution and exhibition of independent cinema in Rome. The first review of experimental cinema organised at “Filmstudio ‘70” in 1968 opened with *Proussade (J’ai noyé les mots dans mon ventre)/Proussade (I Drowned the Words in My Belly)\** (1967), a Super 8 film directed by Pia Epremian.

Alberto Grifi, the “spiritual father” (Zonta 2008: 87)<sup>549</sup> of Italian experimental cinema, directed thousands of open films in the sixties and seventies. Among the best known we find *La Verifica incerta/Disperse Exclamatory Phase* (co-directed with Gianfranco Baruchello, 1965), *Anna* (1972-73) and *Parco Lambro/Lambro Park\** (1976). The latter is a record of the Festival of the Proletarian Youth in Lambro Park, which gives some insights into the contradictions of the Italian left youth (Bertozzi 2014: 218). The widely known version lasts one hour. The long version (lasting thirty hours) includes a feminist gathering in which the appropriation of the discourse of sexual liberation by leftist men to (re)convert women into sexual objects is the issue under discussion. *Anna* is a documentary about a young woman from the street, which includes images of the police beating feminist protesters in Rome.

The work of Anna Lajolo and Guido Lombardi can be divided into two moments: an experimental approach as part of the Cci (1968-1972), and a more militant one with “Videobase”, a Rome-based collective that they created with Alfredo Leonardi in 1970. They are among the first filmmakers who emphasised the political potential of the small video camera, as a light instrument for public interventions at events such as riots and manifestations, and as an opening device for new experimental ways. They produced films such as *La casa è un diritto, non un privilegio/A Home is a Right, Not a Privilege* (1970), *Lotta di classe alla Fiat/Class Struggle at Fiat* (1973), *Omsa Sud. Dopo un Anno di Lotta/Omsa Sud. After One Year of Fight\** (1974), *Lottando la vita, Emigrati italiani a Berlino/Fighting for Life. Italian Migrants in Berlin\** (1975), and *Il lavoro contro la vita/Work Against Life* (1979). When describing the “Videobase” collective production, Bertozzi explains that they employed cinema as a revolutionary tool due to their revisions of material with the filmed subjects at assemblies that led to further reflections, and because they did not conceal the procedures behind their films (2014: 220).

The price of this creative freedom and political engagement lies in the low visibility guaranteed to these independent productions with the exception of some specific spaces, such as the previously mentioned “Filmstudio ‘70”. At the end of the

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<sup>549</sup> “il suo padre spirituale”

seventies, the “Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico-AAMOD” (Audiovisual Archive of the Workers and Democratic Movement) was created to “foster the building of a collective memory of social movements and their protagonists”<sup>550</sup>. Its first president was screenwriter and film theorist Cesare Zavattini. It’s still operating in Rome, with an archive of 10.000 films, some of them available online. AAMOD also produces films, among which we find Sabrina Varani’s *Pagine Nascoste/Hidden Pages* (2017) and Adele Tulli’s *Normal* (2019).

### 5.1.3 Feminist Cinema: The Feminist Film Collective and The Nemesiache

Feminism in Italy grew in the context of the political and social transformations of the early seventies. For many women, their first step to “emancipation” was “militancy in a political party of the traditional Left” (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 10), and therefore, their involvement with the feminist movement started as a kind of dual militancy. Feminism played an important role in the questioning of traditional political structures, particularly by means of the small group dynamics:

Italian feminism was experimenting with a political practice closely linked to a female experience of knowledge, both individual and collective. It grew within a logic, the centre of which was the small group (...) The small group is a “centrifugal centre” of dissemination of discourse, where knowledge and self-knowledge are articulated and realised in the form of political commitment and experience (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 7-8).

Within their small, uncentralised, consciousness-raising groups:

Women became involved in examining the type of relations which are formed within social and political organisations as they relate to the question of power. The first theoretical break brought about by Italian feminism was, therefore, the analysis of relations of power and domination in social and political structures, starting from the family and going all the way to the leftist groups, in order to reach definitions of female identity, subjectivity, and pleasure. This process of research followed a path, which began with, and traversed, Marxism, and

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<sup>550</sup> “per favorire la costruzione di una memoria collettiva dei movimenti sociali e dei loro protagonisti” AAMOD’s website. Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.aamod.it/#aboutus>>.

naturally led to reaching and traversing psychoanalysis (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 10).

In 1974, a collective called “Alcune femministe milanesi” (Some Milanese Feminists) wrote the article “Pratica dell’inconscio e movimento delle donne” (Practice of the Unconscious and Women’s Movement), in which they discuss:

The need to devise a group practice to confront a “specific discourse of the unconscious”, that which is revealed in the stories women tell about themselves and, particularly, in the complex and unexplored relationships with each other. The mother-daughter relationship, as located in the experience of the groups and relived through the increasingly intense emotional, sexual, and intellectual relation in them. (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 22).

A feminist practice developed at that time is that of “partire da sé”, i.e. starting from oneself: “This practice involves taking oneself as a starting point so that the free knowledge of oneself and the world around must necessarily be reconfigured and rethought from one’s own gender experience” (Luciano and Scarparo 2015: 125).<sup>551</sup> The Milan-based group “Anabasi” identified a series of elements in the practice of the unconscious: “the small group, the assumption of the authenticity of one’s personal story, mutual identification and the liberating efficacy of exchanging thoughts” (Giardini 2011: 75).<sup>552</sup> For the “Rivolta Femminile” group, created in 1970 by Carla Lonzi, Carla Accardi and Elvira Banotti, the practice of the unconscious was such an adventure and a discovery of “an ego that confronts the world from an embodied, practiced, critical position (...) self-consciousness as a tabula rasa of myths (...) Figure of this autonomy is ‘the clitoral woman’, in resonance with the paths of female sexuality in that period” (Giardini 2011: 79-80).<sup>553</sup>

After the encounter with the French group “Psychanalyse e Politique”, created by Antoinette Fouque, the Milan-based groups reinterpreted the practice of the unconscious

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<sup>551</sup> “Questa pratica implica il prendere se stessa come punto di partenza in modo che la libera conoscenza di se se stessi e il mondo intorno a sé debbano necessariamente essere riconfigurati e ripensati a partire dalla propria esperienza di genere”.

<sup>552</sup> “il piccolo gruppo, l’assunzione dell’autenticità del racconto personale, l’identificazione reciproca e l’efficacia liberatrice della parola scambiata.”

<sup>553</sup> “un io che si confronta con il mondo da una posizione critica incarnata, praticata (...) Autocoscienza dunque come tabula rasa dei miti (...) Figura di questa autonomia è, in risonanza con i percorsi sulla sessualità femminile del periodo, ‘la donna clitoridea’”

so as to tackle the contradiction implied by the practice of the small group, which seemed to isolate feminism from political issues that involved a larger number of women (Giardini 2011: 75). Within the “Libreria delle Donne di Milano” (Milan Women’s Library), created in 1975, Lia Cigarini and Lea Melandri argued that the practice of the unconscious inaugurated “an idea of politics that we can define today as a politics of the singularity and the experience, distinct from a collective politics on large external issues” (Giardini 2011: 78).<sup>554</sup> The encounter between feminist politics and psychoanalysis in Italy gave place to certain cues for action:

It is possible to work politically using yourself as raw material -it is the well-known practice of “the personal is political”. It is not an individual enterprise, but rather it necessarily happens in a relation. Speaking in relation is a practice par excellence, which takes into account the conflictive link between body and speech, and therefore calls attention not only to what’s said explicitly, but also on what is shown without passing through the verbal expression. In rejecting the assumption of already built political instances, women start from their singular experiences, with the idea that this experience is the instrument to intervene, not only on their condition, but also on the very structures of an order that produces female subordination. (Giardini 2011: 81).<sup>555</sup>

According to Giuliana Bruno and Maria Nadotti, Italian feminism has oscillated between “separatist opposition to dominant culture, and attempts at insertion, maybe for the sake of survival” (1988: 10). Annabella Miscuglio argues that the lack of centralisation and permanent deconstructive practices of Italian feminism makes it hard to fit it “into any system or systematization, and its end products are therefore hard to categorise” (1988: 152).

In the field of film studies, priority was given to “the question of fascination and female desire” (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 13). Italian feminists focused on female

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<sup>554</sup> “si inaugura un’idea di politica che potremmo definire oggi una politica della singolarità e dell’esperienza, distinta da una politica collettiva su grandi temi esteriorizzati.”

<sup>555</sup> “Si può lavorare politicamente utilizzando se stesse come materia prima -è il notissimo ‘il personale è politico’. Non si tratta però di un’impresa individuale, che avviene piuttosto e necessariamente in relazione. La presa di parola in relazione è pratica per eccellenza, che tiene conto del legame, non pacificato, tra corpo e parola, e dunque esercita l’attenzione non solo sul detto, sull’esplicito, ma anche su quel che si mostra pur non passando attraverso l’espressione verbale. Nel rifiutare l’assunzione di istanze politiche già costruite, le donne partono dall’esperienza singolare di ciascuna, con la pretesa però che questa esperienza sia lo strumento per intervenire, non sulle condizioni, bensì sulle strutture stesse di un ordine che produce la subalternità femminile.”

spectatorship rather than textual representation. One of the contributions of Italian feminism, according to Bruno and Nadotti, is its recognition of the figure of the mother and of female pleasure: “It acknowledges its problematic nature, rather than denying it as simply imposed upon women by male-dominated discourse” (1988: 13).

In the early 1970s, Annabella Miscuglio, Rony Daopoulo, Loredana Rotondo, Grazia Belmonti, Ana Carini and Paola de Martiis created the “Collettivo di Cinema Femminista” (“Feminist Film Collective”) in Rome. Their first documentary, directed by Daopoulo and Miscuglio, was *Aggettivo donna/The Adjective Woman\** (1971), an inquiry about the so-called female condition, widely perceived as one of oppression and exploitation. They covered areas such as work, education, sexuality, and the representation of the female body in art and media. In 1973, they accompanied the film with a manifest called “Per un cinema clitorideo vaginale” (For a Vaginal Clitoral Cinema), a reference to Carla Lonzi’s book *Sputiamo su Hegel. La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti/Let’s Spit on Hegel. The Clitoral and the Vaginal Woman* (1970). In this manifest, the “Feminist Film Collective” made its position explicit:

We use cinema to live our creativity, our fantasy, our imagination. Because this delights us. We want to explain ourselves, not to justify ourselves. Explaining ourselves, we investigate ourselves and in doing so, we understand ourselves and we find the way to free ourselves (...) Screenings of feminist films at schools, factories, neighbourhoods, film clubs to get in contact with other women; making fiction films, documentaries and research about women and children to discover their ignored and distorted reality, so as to bring it to the collective consciousness (in Filippelli 2015a: 70).<sup>556</sup>

The Collective directed *La lotta non è finita/The Struggle is Not Over* (1973), which included images of demonstrations on March the 8<sup>th</sup> 1972 and 1973 in Rome, as well as a self-ironic segment “where the feminist movement is advertised in the style of a television sketch” (Zonta 2008: 95).<sup>557</sup> According to Rony Daopoulo, they had many difficulties trying to reconcile the feminist practice of self-consciousness and horizontal

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<sup>556</sup> “Usiamo il cinema per vivere la nostra creatività. La nostra fantasia, la nostra immaginazione. Perché questo ci diverte. Vogliamo spiegarci, non giustificarci. Spiegandoci, ci ricerchiamo e ricercandoci ci capiamo e troviamo la strada per liberarci (...) Presentazione di film femministi in scuole, fabbriche, quartieri, cineclub per prendere contatti con altre donne; realizzazione di film a soggetto, documentari, inchieste sulle donne e i bambini per riscoprire la loro realtà ignorata e distorta e portarla alla coscienza della collettività.”

<sup>557</sup> “un divertissement autoironico in cui si fa la pubblicità del Movimento femminista nello stile dei caroselli televisivi.”



ways of working with the rhythms and pressures of filmmaking. In an exercise of self-criticism, Annabella Miscuglio has admitted that the cinema of the women's movement in the Italy of the seventies "tended to fall into a kind of 'feminist realism' due to a rather over-schematic and insufficiently dialectical representation of reality" (1988: 156). She explains:

...in these films ideological discourse overshadows the texts instead of being implied in the structure, the new contents fail to find a corresponding mode of expression, the poetry of the images is often blunted by a voice-over commentary which does too much explaining. This problem was the legacy of two tendencies in contemporary Italian production: the Militant Cinema that grew out of the 1968 movement and, to some extent, State cinema. And television documentary (1988: 156).

I perceive a parallelism between the flaws of this feminist production, whose mode of representation is mainly expositive (the voice-over which explains in a simplified way how to interpret the images) and the growing search in the seventies for a feminist counter-cinema capable of subverting form and content of classical cinema. Miscuglio finds similar reasons behind the failed project of the first feminist incursion into Italian commercial cinema filmed in 35mm: an adaptation of Dacia Maraini's 1975 novel *Donne in Guerra/Women at War*, called *Io sono mia/I am Mine* (1977), which Miscuglio describes as "stiff and schematic" (1988: 160). Directed by Sofia Scandurra and made with an all female crew, this film "made for women, by women" (Cavallaro 2015: 133)<sup>558</sup> traces the process through which Vannina, a twenty-five-year-old teacher, becomes aware of her own condition of subordination and dissatisfaction, mainly due to a pregnancy imposed by her husband. In 1976, Dacia Maraini had directed the documentary film *Aborto: parlano le donne/Abortion: Women Speak Out*.

Following an International Convention on Violence against Women organised by the feminist movement in 1978, the "Feminist Film Collective" decided to film a rape trial in order to denounce the injustice to which the victims were subjected at a time in which sexual violence was considered a crime against morality, not against the person. With the help of lawyer Tina Lagostena Bassi, the filmmakers introduced their cameras inside a courtroom, in which four men were on trial, accused of rape by an eighteen-year-

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<sup>558</sup> "Un film per le donne, fatto da donne"

old woman. The documentary *Processo per stupro/A Trial for Rape* (1979), directed by Loredana Rotondo, was broadcast by RAI thanks to the fact that she worked there as a programmer. It was screened in April and October 1979, reaching 4,8 millions of spectators the first time, and 9,5 millions the second time. It was awarded with the Prix Italia, exhibited in numerous international festivals, and sold to various European countries, as well as to Japan, India and Australia: “Rarely has a feminist film achieved so much public success, not to mention the fundamental role it played in the Italian debate on the reform of laws on sexual violence” (Luciano and Scarparo 2015: 118).<sup>559</sup>

The pressure of the feminist movement forced RAI to transmit, between 1977 and 1981, the weekly news programme, *Si dice donna. Fatti, ricerche, domande sul ruolo femminile/ Called Woman. Facts, Research, Questions About the Female Role\**, produced by Loredana Dordi, Marina Tartara and Tilde Capomazza. Diverse guests, always women, would discuss issues such as sexuality, prostitution, motherhood, domestic labour, education, labour rights, and politics in Italy, but also at an international level. The editors who conducted the debates in the studio participated in the feminist movement of those years. Some of them belonged to the association Unione Donne Italiane-UDI (Italian Women Union), and some were journalists of the magazine *Noi Donne/We Women*, both created in 1944 and still active.

The first episode of *Si dice donna* reached six million spectators and maintained this popularity for years. With this programme, the feminist agenda entered the public television service, an institutional place that, according to Loredana Cornero (2015:129), had always been controlled by the Christian Democratic party and only began to open to different points of view after 1975. However, *Si dice donna* was suppressed in 1981, after broadcasting an episode about abortion. Cornero narrates that this episode was attacked from the right and from the left, including the network direction, the Church, political parties and newspapers (2015: 132). Miscuglio and Daopoulo argue that the suppression of the programme was part of a reaction from the public television to regain power over its contents:

After becoming interested in feminist issues with considerable delay compared to the real Movement, mother-RAI resumes its control: the demographic decline and the heavy catholic intervention make it cautious on the abortion campaign, at the

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<sup>559</sup> “Raramente un film femminista ha raggiunto un così vasto successo di pubblico, per non parlare del ruolo fondamentale che ha avuto nel dibattito italiano sulla riforma delle leggi sulla violenza sessuale.”

moment in which the limitative law is submitted to a popular referendum; programmes such as *Si dice donna* are suppressed; the information that the reform want to become pluralist returns under central control (in Filippelli 2015a: 69).<sup>560</sup>

Other documentary films produced by RAI during the brief period in which it opened up to feminist productions were *Il femminismo/Feminism\** (1976) by Anna Baldazzi and *Marisa della Magliana/Marisa from Magliana\** (1976) by Maricla Boggio. Defined as the “first feminist telefilm” (Perrotta 2015: 123), *Marisa della Magliana* portrayed the struggles of a young proletarian mother from Rome. Boggio also directed the documentary film *Sono arrivati quattro fratelli/Four Brothers Have Arrived\** (1979), which narrated the story of a single woman who adopted four kids at the same time. Other documentary films dealing with motherhood made at that time were *Il rischio di vivere/The Risk of Living* (1976) by Ana Carini and Anabella Miscuglio, and *Madre, ma come?/Mother, But How?* (1977) by Rosalia Polizzi, as well as the fiction film *Maternale/Maternal\** (1977) by Giovanna Gagliardo.

In 1980, the “Feminist Film Collective” directed its last two documentary films, *I fantasmi del fallo/The Phantasms of the Phallus* and *AAA Offresi/AAA Offer\**. The first one is an experimental meta-film that shows the making of a pornographic film. The second one consists of images of a prostitute with her clients and has not had any distribution. In fact, it is impossible to access the negative preserved in the RAI archive due to censorship that prohibits its projection with the argument of “safeguarding morality on television” (Miscuglio 1988: 163). The filmmakers were brought to trial charged with interference with privacy and promotion of prostitution. In the end the charges were dropped but the negative was confiscated. After that, Miscuglio directed two documentaries: *L’altro Sguardo–Cinema Donne/The Other Gaze–Cinema Woman\** (1980) and *Percorsi Metropolitani/Metropolitan Itineraries\** (1983).

In 1978, Daopoulo and Miscuglio organised a women’s film festival in Rome, called “Kinomata. La donna con la macchina da presa”. They presented documentary, fiction and experimental films by Italian directors such as Alessandra Mann, Paola Faloja, Elda Tattoli, Lù Leone, Anna Baldazzi, Isabella Bruno, and Dacia Maraini. In Florence,

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<sup>560</sup> “Dopo esserci interessata alle problematiche femministe con notevole ritardo rispetto al Movimento reale mamma-RAI riprende il suo controllo: il calo demografico e il pesante intervento cattolico la rendono prudente sulla campagna abortista, nel momento in cui la legge limitativa viene sottoposta a referendum popolare; programmi come *Si dice donna* vengono soppressi; l’informazione che la riforma voleva pluralista ritorna sotto il controllo centrale.”

the festival “Cinema delle Donne” had its first edition in 1976. It’s still active, coordinated by the group “Laboratorio Immagine Donne”.

Other feminist collectives were formed during the seventies in Rome, such as the “Cooperativa Arcobaleno”, which directed *8 di marzo, giornata di festa et di lotta/8<sup>th</sup> of March, A Day of Celebration and Struggle\** in 1975, and the “Collettivo Alice Guy”. The latter worked with Super 8 and defined itself as a group of cinematographic self-consciousness. Its members were Isabella Bruno, Liliana Ginanneschi, Alida Giardina, Federica Giuletti, Manuela and Susanna Garroni, Loredana Fanigliulo and Enza Tolla. In 1975, Bruno had directed *Donne emergete!/Women, Rise up!\**, a short film about the origins of the feminist movement in Rome, and *È solo a noi che resta la decisione/We are the Only Ones Who Must Decide\**, a research film about abortion.

For their first film, the “Collettivo Alice Guy” decided to adapt the political practice known as “partire da sè” (i.e. starting from oneself) to filmmaking. Firstly, each one recorded herself, and then they discussed the footage. In the end, they decided to resort to irony as their way to express themselves. Their film, *Affettuosamente Ciak/Affectionately Ciak\** (1977), is considered to be the first feminist comedy film (Filippelli 2015a: 75). It was screened mainly in feminist circles. The group was dissolved soon afterwards.

Another key figure in the Italian feminist documentary production of the seventies was Adriana Monti, director of *Scuola senza fine/School Without End* (1983), a 16mm film that portrayed a group of housewives who had completed the 150-hour<sup>561</sup> course in Milan, with Lea Melandri, Giulia Alberti and Monti as teachers. The film project started as a collective process in 1979, but Monti finished it by herself four years later. According to Bruno and Nadotti:

The feminist practice of consciousness raising, self-help, and gruppi dell’inconscio spilt over naturally and spontaneously into the 150 Hours Courses,

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<sup>561</sup> The 150-hour courses were an achievement of the Italian workers in 1974. Since 1976 they were extended to housewives and retired workers. They were named like that because the workers were given 150 hours of paid leave to attend courses that amounted to 350 hours and culminated in obtaining the diploma of the primary or secondary school. According to Bruno and Nadotti, “the impact of the ‘150 Hours courses’ was not only felt in the factory and trade-union political structure and society. It sent shock waves through the educational system itself and its languages, methodologies and myths. It forced an in-depth enquiry into the nature of the pedagogic relationship and into the adequacy of cognitive theories to deal with a didactic experience in which the role of the teacher was questioned. Ultimately this entailed reversing the roles of student and teacher and creating a new work structure which was simultaneously practical and intellectual” (1988: 99-100).

whenever women teachers and groups of women met. Important experiences of collective discussion grew out of these gatherings, on themes such as health, the family, motherhood and sexuality (1988: 100).

Monti also directed experimental films in Super 8, some of which are re-used by Alina Marazzi in her documentary *Vogliamo anche le rose/We Want Roses Too* (2007). Examples of this are *Bagagli/Luggage\** (1976), *Il Filo del Desiderio/The Thread of Desire\** (1977), and *Ciclo continuo/Continuous Cycle\** (1978). The Super 8 format was popular among independent filmmakers of this period due to its affordability and because it “proved to be a way of avoiding the cinema and television production machines which, besides imposing certain production rhythms and modes, blocks the expressive potential of cinema and favours standard products” (Miscuglio 1988: 157-158). Miscuglio also states that several of these experimental films directed by women, were characterised by a strong narcissism, intimacy and voyeuristic pleasure dwelling on the female body (1988: 159).

This was also the period in which painter, filmmaker, writer and philosopher Lina Mangiacapre created “The Nemesiache” group, and the “The Three Guineas” circle in Naples. In 1971, “The Nemesiache” staged the first feminist theatrical show, called *Cenerella psicofavola femminista/Cenerella Feminist Psychofable\**, a psychodrama designed just for women, in which they employed what they called “psychofavola”, a method that combined the self-consciousness process of talking about one’s experiences, with gestures and a creative relationship with the body (Filippelli 2015b: 115). It became a Super 8 film in 1974.

They made experimental films in 16mm and Super 8, such as *Autocoscienza/Self-Awareness\** (1976), a non-edited film in which the camera becomes a tool for self-consciousness (Filippelli 2015b: 115); *Antistrip/Contrast\** (1976); *Le Sibille/The Sibyls\** (1977); *Il mare ci ha chiamate/The Sea has Called Us\** (1978), *Follia come poesia/Madness as Poetry* (1979); and *Ricciocapriccio/Curly-Whim\** (1981). They also made films in 35mm: *Didone non è morta/Dido is Not Dead\** (1987) and *Faust Fausta* (1991). The latter is a revision of the myth of Faust in an androgynous key. It translates Mangiacapre’s idea of transfeminism into images, that is, overcoming a sexuality imprisoned within the gender binary by means of an androgynous way of thinking (Arillotta 2015: 299). “The Nemesiache” defined feminist cinema as follows:

For us, feminist cinema means a cinema made by women for other women. A cinema in which they affirm themselves, their own reality, their own history. A cinema that must always fight against exploitation, use, deformation, commercialisation, reduction of the image of women. (Mangiacapre 1980: 52)<sup>562</sup>

Since 1976, “The Nemesiache” promoted a section called “L’altro Sguardo” (The Other Gaze) as part of the Sorrento International Film Encounters. At the first edition, they discussed the difficulties faced by women who wanted to make films, “not only due to the high costs of film and professionals, but above all to the lack of initiatives and structures that help women to emerge in the sector. Hence the proposal to create film cultural centres run by women, and the inclusion of paid apprentices on Italian sets” (Filippelli 2015b: 115).<sup>563</sup>

In her artistic work, Mangiacapre tried to rediscover “the oral tradition and the lost imagery of the history of women, starting from the instinct, from the unspoiled fantastic territory of childhood and mythology” (Filippelli 2015b: 115).<sup>564</sup> For Miscuglio, however, “The Nemesiache’s” films “are the products of a naïve attempt to find the vanished traces of feminine body history through the Greek myths which have survived in Neapolitan oral culture” (1988: 157). Mangiacapre was regarded as a problematic figure within Italian feminism because she positioned herself as an androgyne with a gender fluid identity rather than as a woman. However, her political fight was always centred in women’s freedom and in the restitution of what she conceived as a kind of cosmic harmony where what had been labelled as female/feminine, and therefore as inferior, would be vindicated and restored.

In 2015, Nadia Pizzuti directed *Lina Mangiacapre. Artista del femminismo/Lina Mangiacapre. Artist of Feminism* (2015), a compilation documentary that brings together films, videos, photographs and paintings made by Lina Mangiacapre and The Nemesiache. In an interview held for this research project Pizzuti explained that,

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<sup>562</sup> “Per noi cinema femminista significa un cinema fatto da donne per le altre donne. Un cinema in cui si afferma se stesse, la propria realtà, la propria storia. Un cinema che deve lottare sempre contro lo sfruttamento, l’uso, la deformazione, la commercializzazione, la riduzione dell’immagine della donna.”

<sup>563</sup> “Non solo imputabile ai costi alti della pellicola e delle professionalità, ma soprattutto alla mancanza di iniziative e strutture che aiutino le donne a emergere nel settore. Da qui la proposta di creare centri culturali cinematografici gestiti dalle donne, e l’inserimento di una quota di apprendiste retribuite sui set italiani.”

<sup>564</sup> “la tradizione orale e l’immaginario perduto della storia delle donne, a partire proprio dall’istintività, dal territorio fantastico incontaminato dell’infanzia e della mitologia.”

while making this film, she realised how precocious Mangiacapre had been in her understanding of transfeminism:

She was perhaps the first to bring out transfeminism as a concept in Italy (...) she used it already in the sense of transcending gender, right? As fluid identity (...) Therefore, she wasn't appreciated. Because in Italy, the dominant feminist thought was the thought of the difference and so they were, surely they did not understand each other, they did not want each other, they did not accept each other. She was also very aggressive and she called herself androgynous. The feminist movement has an androgynous soul because it deconstructs sexed, codified roles, and she said that this was androgyny. So, for her it did not mean being two genders, one and one; for her it was metamorphosis.<sup>565</sup>

Mangiacapre and “The Nemesiache” approached art as politics and the body as the main tool to work with. This relevance of the body for the feminist struggle was entangled with her identification as an androgyne, with her rejection of so-called “natural” roles, as well as with her interest in myths, cinema and the psycho-fable. She aimed at constant mutation and resisted to be imprisoned within any category, particularly gender, which she understood as a social construct used to legitimise injustices and, therefore, as a boundary that ought to be trespassed. Moreover, her situated work was always in dialogue with the historical and physical context of Naples in the seventies.

## 5.2 The Eighties and the Nineties

During the eighties, “the long grey decade” of Italian cinema according to film historian Lino Micciché (in Aronica 2005: 257)<sup>566</sup>, Silvio Berlusconi's television monopoly rose. The first nucleus of his media empire, Telemilano, had already begun broadcasting in 1976, but it is in 1980 that Berlusconi “took the decisive step towards monopolistic

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<sup>565</sup> “Lei è stata forse la prima in Italia a tirare fuori il transfemminismo come concetto (...) lei lo usava già nel senso di trascendere il genere, no? L'identità fluide (...) Quindi non piaceva perché in Italia, il pensiero femminista dominante è stato il pensiero della differenza e quindi loro erano proprio, sicuramente non si capiva, non si voleva, non si accettavano reciprocamente. Lei era anche molto aggressiva. E lei, perché lei diceva, lei se definiva androgina. Il movimento femminista ha un'anima androgina perché decostruisce i ruoli sessuati, composti, codificati, e lei diceva che quello è l'androgina. Quindi, per lei non voleva dire essere due generi, uno e uno; per lei era la metamorfosi.” Nadia Pizzuti. Personal interview. September 24<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>566</sup> “la larga década gris”

concentration, by merging five channels into one, Channel 5. Two years later, he also gets Italy 1, culminating his escalation with the acquisition of Rete 4 in 1984” (Aronica 2005: 259).<sup>567</sup> For Bertozzi, what happened in this period was that the national television allowed advertising to invade its programmes (2014: 251).

Nevertheless, during the eighties there was also a greater presence of women filmmakers, along with the two consolidated ones, Lina Wertmüller and Liliana Cavani. Among the women who began directing in this decade, we find Francesca and Cristina Comencini, Rosalia Polizzi, Francesca Archibugi and Wilma Labate. Many of them also made a career in television. Cavani, for example, worked for RAI, directing historical documentaries such as *Le donne nella resistenza/Women of the Resistance* (1965). Labate directed *Lavorare stanca/Work's Tiring\** (1997), employing RAI archive material to denounce the conditions at factories. It is part of the RAI Tre programme *Storie Vere/True Stories\**, curated by Anna Amendola.

Even if most of them don't identify themselves as feminist, many contemporary Italian documentary filmmakers pay attention to gender inequalities. For example, Emanuela Piovano (Turin, 1959) founded the “Camera Woman Association” in 1984, with which she has filmed *D'amore lo sguardo. Registe a Torino/The Look of Love. Female Filmmakers in Turin\** (1986); *Il Corpo, il gesto, le donne, il cinema/Body, Gesture, Women, Cinema\** (1987), and the short film *Epistolario immaginario/Imaginary Epistolary\** (1988).

In 1988, Piovano established the “Kitchenfilm” production company with the aim of promoting independent cinema, especially for women and young people. Together with filmmakers Anna Gasco and Tiziana Pellerano, and in collaboration with a group of prisoners at the Vallette prison in Turin, she directed *Le Rose blu/The Blue Rose* (1990), a creative documentary that recorded life behind bars as well as the 1989 fire, which caused the death of eleven female prisoners. Afterwards, she has directed fiction films, for example *Le complici/The Accomplices* (1998), *Le stelle inquiete/The Troubled Star* (2011), and *L'età d'oro/The Golden Age* (2016).

According to filmmaker Mariangela Barbanente, at the beginning of the nineties, the situation of Italian documentary was really bad: “the few Italian directors of documentaries who were able to succeed at international festivals were trained abroad,

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<sup>567</sup> “dio el paso decisivo hacia la concentración monopolística, al fusionar cinco cadenas en una, Canal 5. Dos años más tardaría en hacerse también con Italia 1, hasta culminar su escalada con la adquisición de Rete 4 en 1984”



and their films were also produced abroad frequently. Italian documentary was far behind in the search for a language” (2012b: 142).<sup>568</sup> Faced with such difficulties, a group of directors and producers, among which Barbanente, created “Doc/it-Associazione Documentaristi Italiani” (Association of Italian Documentary Filmmakers) in 1999.

One of the main functions of “Doc/it” has been that of acting as an interlocutor with public institutions. Due to their pressure, for example, since 2004, documentary cinema is referred to as a kind of film that can be financed by the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo-MiBACT (Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities). In order to get access to the funds, it is sufficient to present a treatment. This means more freedom for the documentary filmmaker, as Barbanente explains: “Until that moment it was obligatory to present a screenplay, which forced the few documentarians that would try, to write something fake” (2012b: 142).<sup>569</sup> They also deal with RAI television, which, according to Barbanente, often looks for ways to avoid paying copyright of the documentaries they buy to the directors.

### 5.2.1 Emergent Feminist, Women and/or Queer Italian Film Festivals

The “**Festival MIX Milano di Cinema Gay Lesbico e Cultura Queer**” (Mix Milan Festival of Gay Lesbian Cinema and Queer Culture) was created in 1986 and takes place on an annual basis. The “**Lovers Film Festival–Torino LGBTQI Visions**” was created in 1989. Since 2006, the National Museum of Cinema of Turin manages it. This festival has an interactive LGBT movie database collection<sup>570</sup>, which includes information about nearly three thousand films that have been part of its last five editions. The “**Sguardi Altrove Film Festival**” is a women’s cinema festival organised annually in Milan by the cultural association “Sguardi Altrove” (Looking Elsewhere). Gabriella Guzzi and a group of women created it in 1993, “with the aim of identifying and promoting female cinematographic and audiovisual works.”<sup>571</sup> On their website, they publish information about the films they have screened since 2009.

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<sup>568</sup> “i pochi registi italiani di documentari che riuscivano ad emergere nei festival internazionali si erano formati all’estero, e spesso erano anche prodotti all’estero. Il documentario italiano era molto indietro nella ricerca del linguaggio.”

<sup>569</sup> “Fino a quel momento era obbligatorio presentare una sceneggiatura, cosa che costringeva i pochi documentaristi che ci provano, a scriverne una finta”

<sup>570</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.glbtmoviedatabase.net>>.

<sup>571</sup> “con l’intento di individuare e promuovere opere cinematografiche e audiovisivi a regia femminile.” Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.sguardialtrovefilmfestival.it/nw/chi-siamo-2/>>.

Two medium-length documentaries from the nineties that were screened at the “Sguardi Altrove Festival” are: *Angelesse/Lady Angels* (Roberta Torre, 1994), which portrays seven women from the urban suburbs of Palermo, and *Elsa Morante* (Francesca Comencini, 1997), a film about the Roman writer. In 2015, this festival paid homage to Costanza Quatriglio. As part of the programme, my case study *Triangle* (2014) was screened.

After the various feminist festivals from the seventies, of which just the “Cinema delle Donne Festival” is still held in Florence<sup>572</sup>, it isn’t until 1993 that another explicitly feminist festival was created in Italy. The lesbian-feminist cultural association “Visibilia” created “**Immaginaria. International Festival of Women’s Cinema**” with three objectives:

To disseminate the independent lesbian and feminist cinema in Italy where important distribution channels are still missing; to overcome the prevailing prejudice and convincing the institutions of the cultural importance and the value of lesbian and feminist film productions; to propose the best works of lesbian and feminist film production to the official cinema circuit and national television stations.<sup>573</sup>

Until 2005, it took place annually in Bologna. It was interrupted due to the illness and death of one of the association key figures, Marina Genovese, but since 2015, a partnership with the “Festival Mix Milano” was established, so as to curate the lesbian feminist section. In 2018, the festival 13<sup>th</sup> edition was celebrated in Rome, under the title “Immaginaria. International Film Festival of Lesbians and Other Rebellious Women.”<sup>574</sup>

Two medium-length documentaries from the nineties that were screened at the “Immaginaria” festival were: *Quando l’eroe è un mezzo soprano/When the Hero is a Mezzo Soprano\** (Cristina Rap and Patrizia Pivetti, 1993), which explores travestism in opera, particularly when male roles are entrusted to women; and *Pazza d’azzurro/Nietta’s Diary* (Gabriella Romano, 1996), a film inspired by the diary of Antonietta (Nietta) Aprà,

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<sup>572</sup> *Triangle* (2014) has also been screened in this festival, along with most of Quatriglio’s work.

<sup>573</sup> “Diffondere il cinema indipendente lesbico e femminista in Italia dove sono ancora del tutto mancanti canali di distribuzione di rilievo; superare il pregiudizio imperante e convincere le istituzioni dell’importanza culturale ed del valore della produzione cinematografica lesbica e femminista; proporre i lavori migliori della produzione cinematografica lesbica e femminista al circuito cinematografico ufficiale ed alle televisioni nazionali.” Date of access: March 2019. An archive with information of all the films they have screened is available on their website. <<http://www.immaginaria.org>>.

<sup>574</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.immaginariaff.it>>.

an art historian who had a love story with Linda Mazzuccato from 1937 to 1974. Most of the films selected in this festival are independent productions with limited distribution.

### 5.3 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In *Reframing Italy. New Trends in Italian Women's Filmmaking* (2013), Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo argue that the new generation of women filmmakers is changing the ways in which the screen portrays Italian realities. This is so regardless of the fact that most of them reject the label of “female filmmaker”. These directors don't identify themselves as feminists, since they conceive so-called gender neutrality as the best strategy to legitimise their work. Still, what is clear in their work, Luciano and Scarparo assert, is that they do have a gendered perspective: “the oeuvre of a new generation of women filmmakers may not be overtly feminist but increasingly foregrounds a desire to engage, create, and conceive of female subjectivity on screen” (2013: 58). These researchers analyse various fiction and non-fiction films from the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which they classify under three categories:

First, how women filmmakers have reframed cinematic tradition by appropriating and rethinking ways of imagining Italy through realistic cinema and less conventional cinematic modes and by challenging traditional representations of women through female-centred narratives; second, how they have reframed women's history by rendering the history and stories of women visible in the cinematic space; and third, how these filmmakers are addressing pressing social issues through films that reframe Italy by engaging with changing national and transnational contexts from a position of gendered marginality (2013: 20).

As for the first category, Luciano and Scarparo discuss how Italian female filmmakers have positioned themselves regarding **the realist and neorealist traditions**. Specifically, they examine the appropriation and subversion of one neorealist cinema trope: “the representation of the child against the backdrop of a changing Italian landscape” (2013: 22). Wilma Labate, Costanza Quatriglio and Francesca Comencini subvert this trope by foregrounding girls as central characters. Labate in the fiction film *Domenica/Sunday* (2001) about an orphan girl; Quatriglio in the docu-fiction *L'isola/The Island* (2003), which tells the story of a girl and her older brother; and Comencini in the docu-fiction

based on real interviews with women that had faced mobbing at their workplaces, *Mi piace lavorare/Mobbing. I Like to Work*. (2004).

In the second category, i.e. how women filmmakers have **reframed history as herstory**, Luciano and Scarparo identify two levels: a private one that starts from the mother-daughter relationship, and a socio-historical one that ranges from the biopic to more experimental works representing lives of women. Among fiction films that deal with **motherhood**, they mention Anne Riitta Ciccone's *L'amore di Mårja/Mårja's Love* (2002), in which a woman faces patriarchal law when she moves from Finland to Sicily with her daughters; Cristina Comencini's *Il più bel giorno della mia vita/The Best Day of My Life* (2002), which portrays three generations of mothers and daughters, and finishes when a girl literally appropriates the video camera; and Francesca Comencini's *Lo spazio bianco/The White Space* (2009), which focuses on the experience of giving birth to a daughter.

Luciano and Scarparo also discuss three documentary films: Susanna Nicchiarelli's *Il terzo occhio/The Third Eye* (2003), Fabiana Sargentini's *Di madre in figlia/From Mother to Daughter* (2004) and Alina Marazzi's *Un'ora sola ti vorrei/For One More Hour with You* (2002). In these three films they perceive that “the new options open to daughters free the mother from her position of weakness within a patriarchal framework that devalues her authority by depriving her of institutional and social power” (2013: 58).

Nicchiarelli's experimental documentary portrays the self-conscious small group dynamic of six women in a health spa, as they reflect on their lives from a gendered perspective. The director herself, her mother and sister are part of the group. In *Di madre in figlia*, Sargentini juxtaposes interviews with mothers and daughters of varying ages, talking separately about their relationship and the so-called “female condition”. All along the film, sequences of a game are intertwined: blindfolded daughters look for their mothers as the spectators realise what the relations between the various filmed women are.

In her debut film, *Un'ora sola ti vorrei*, Marazzi recovers the memory of her mother, who committed suicide when the filmmaker was seven years old. The “Libreria delle Donne di Milano” has called this movie “the translation in images, in film, of the discourse about the mother's symbolic order” (Marazzi in Calderón 2013: 109).<sup>575</sup> Her

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<sup>575</sup> “questa è la traduzione in immagini, in film de tutto il discorso sul simbolico della madre.” According to Luisa Muraro (1991; 2006), replacing aversion with gratitude in the mother-daughter

primary visual sources are the home movies recorded between 1926 and 1972 by her grandfather Ulrico Hoepli, who shot images of idealised bourgeois happiness.

Marazzi subverts these images by means of the rebellious voice of her mother, who reveals the artifice of patriarchal harmony through the uncertainties and discomfort that she expresses in her diaries and letters: “I worked with films recorded by my grandfather with an intention. And I’ve looked again at them from my perspective and therefore this film is my version of the story. Absolutely. It was a revision process, of personal and universal restitution” (Marazzi in Calderón 2013: 110).<sup>576</sup>

According to Marco Bertozzi (2012), and as stated also by Simone Cangelosi, the director of my case study *Una nobile rivoluzione*<sup>577</sup>, the use of found footage, archival materials and home movies is an international tendency in the documentary cinema of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the case of Marazzi, this formal decision has an important feminist effect:

...the emphasis on re-construction, re-vision and re-reading as an act of memory, that is, an approach that comes from feminist thinking and from *Women’s Studies* in general, which have placed as central the goal of giving back its meaning to women’s experiences (*herstory*) often excluded or marginalised by dominant culture (Cati 2015: 159).<sup>578</sup>

Marazzi keeps on exploring motherhood in her only fiction film *Tutto parla di te/All About You* (2012). To the examples given by Luciano and Scarparo (2012), I would add the short film *J’attends une femme/Waiting for a Woman* (2010), in which Chiara Malta uses amateur films in Super 8 to reflect on the female body and her daughter to be born. It is a French-Italian co-production.

There are also various Italian documentary films in which it is the paternal figure that the female filmmakers portray, for example, Giovanna Mezzogiorno produces and gives her voice to *Negli occhi/In the Eyes* (Daniele Anzellotti and Francesco Del Grosso,

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relationship, which is cancelled by the patriarchal order, is key to opening a space where women’s experience can be represented outside the androcentric order.

<sup>576</sup> “Ho lavorato su film girati da un uomo, mio nonno, con un’intenzione ed io ho rivisto la storia dalla mia prospettiva e quindi quel film è la mia versione della storia. Assolutamente quello è stato un processo di re-visione della storia, di restituzione appunto personale della storia, ma anche di restituzione a livello più ampio, più universale.”

<sup>577</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 6.2 *Una nobile rivoluzione*

<sup>578</sup> “...l’accento posto sulla ri-costruzione, sulla re-visione e ri-lettura come atto di memoria, cioè un approccio mutuato dal pensiero femminista e dai *Women’s Studies* in generale, i quali hanno posto come centrale l’obiettivo di restituire significato all’esperienza delle donne (*herstory*), spesso escluse o marginalizzate dalla cultura dominante.”

2009) a portrait of her father, actor Vittorio Mezzogiorno; Maria Sole Tognazzi follows a similar pattern to talk about actor Ugo Tognazzi in *Ritratto di mio padre/Portrait of my Father* (2010); and Giovanna Taviani goes back to the places where her father, director Vittorio Taviani, had filmed, in *Fughe e approdi/Return to the Aeolian Islands* (2010).

As for the recovery of socio-historical “mothers”, Luciano and Scarparo mention Stefania Sandrelli’s *Christine Cristina* (2009), a biopic about Christine de Pisan; Antonietta De Lillo’s *Il resto di niente/The Remains of Nothing* (2004), a reinterpretation of the Neapolitan Revolution from the perspective of Eleonora Fonseca; Nichiarelli’s *Cosmonauta/Cosmonaut* (2009), the coming of age story of a young woman involved in Italian communism; and Marina Spada’s *Poesia che mi guardi/Poetry that I Watch* (2009), a docu-fiction that resorts to home movies and photographs in order to narrate the life and works of poet Antonia Pozzi.

Under this category of “herstory”, I would also include the considerable amount of documentary films that portray the **history of the Italian feminist movement**. Journalist Giovanna Gagliardo has directed two documentaries made with archival material: *Bellissime. Il Novecento dalla parte di Lei/Simply Beautiful. The Twentieth Century from Women’s Perspective* (2004) and *Bellissime. Dal 1960 ad oggi dalla parte di Lei/Beautiful Women. From 1960 to the Present from Women’s Perspective\** (2006). The main source of these two documentaries is the RAI archive, and the film resorts to a voice-over that explains the images. Also for RAI, Lorella Reale directs *Storia del movimento femminista in Italia/History of the Feminist Movement in Italy\** in 2006, a film divided into two parts (from the Post-war period to the sixties, and the seventies), which gathers interviews and archival material in a conventional expository-participatory mode of representation. Cristina Mazza tells the story of the Unione Donne Italiane-UDI in *Donne in viaggio/Travelling Women\** (2004), a medium-length documentary produced by the UDI branch in Ferrara.

More innovative are the ways in which Alina Marazzi portrays the feminist movement in *Vogliamo anche le rose/We Want Roses Too* (2007), and Paola Sangiovanni in *Ragazze la vita trema/Girls, Life is Trembling* (2009). Both examples are mentioned by Luciano and Scarparo (2013). For Sangiovanni, the desire to direct documentary cinema comes from the need to find “an aesthetic that nourishes an awareness of oneself as a woman in the world” (in Luciano and Scarparo 2015: 119).<sup>579</sup> Before *Ragazze la vita*

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<sup>579</sup> “un’estetica che si nutra di una consapevolezza di sé come donne nel mondo.”

*trema*, she directed *Staffette/Couriers* (2006), which presents the testimonies of four women who joined the Italian Resistance Movement in their youth.

Her approach in *Ragazze la vita trema* is quite similar, gathering the voices of four women who got involved in the feminist movement of the seventies. She explains that her goal is telling History through female subjective stories: “I tried to build an empathic relationship, which became a method, a sort of circularity of emotion that Story generally communicates. A challenging emotion that should bring those who look and listen to active participation, a living and present memory” (in Luciano and Scarparo 2015: 124).<sup>580</sup> She also denounces the violent repression against the women’s liberation movement in Italy from the end of the seventies onwards.

In *Vogliamo anche le rose* (2007) Alina Marazzi reconstructs a panoramic view of the debates and transformations that were possible thanks to second wave feminism in the Italy of the seventies, especially in terms of sexual politics. The way in which Marazzi explores this period is through the establishment of a dialogue between inner worlds of self-representations and outer worlds of media representations. On the one hand, three fictionally constructed voices that narrate fragments from three authentic diaries written during those periods (Anita, 1967; Teresa, 1975; and Valentina, 1979). On the other hand, fragments of television surveys, advertisements, animations, graphic novels, home movies and experimental cinema of that time, in which issues such as abortion, contraception, the feminist movement and romantic love are addressed.

The importance of going through the archive and recovering the audiovisual memory of gender representations can be summarised with Adrienne Rich famous statement: “Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction— is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival” (1972: 18). In an interview carried out in 2013 as part of my master thesis, Marazzi acknowledged this intention behind her work:

The film comes from a desire to recognise the ties with the past, to recognise myself today as a female subject in relation to the women of the seventies (...)  
my desire was to rediscover my roots, to reconnect with these women and,  
therefore, the work was done in that way, as a research through archives,

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<sup>580</sup> “Ho cercato di costruire con tutto questo un rapporto empatico, che è diventato metodo, una sorta di circolarità dell’emozione, ciò che la Storia generalmente stenta a comunicare. Si tratta credo di un’emozione impegnativa, che vorrebbe portare chi guarda e ascolta ad una partecipazione attiva, una memoria vivificata e presente”

documents (...) I even went to look for underground films because I knew that the same thing, at the same moment, could be represented in completely different ways (...) *Vogliamo anche le rose* was a bit like saying “that’s not the only way to show us what we had not lived” (Marazzi in Calderón 2013: 126).<sup>581</sup>

The third category identified by Luciano and Scarparo is how female filmmakers are addressing two **contemporary issues** that reframe Italian society: **immigration** and precarious work. Among those that foreground migration, they discuss three fiction films: Spada’s *Come l’ombra/As the Shadow* (2006), which portrays the friendship between a Milanese and a Ukrainian woman, and the comedies *Bianco e nero/Black and White* (Cristina Comencini, 2008), and *Billo-Il Grand Dakhaar/Billo* (Laura Muscardin, 2008), in which sexual and racial politics are exposed.

They also analyse three documentary films: Katia Bernardi’s *Sidelki.Badanti/Caregivers* (2005), which gathers interviews with women who have migrated to Italy from countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet Union and find work primarily as caregivers; Emma Rossi Landi’s *La stoffa di Veronica/Veronica’s Fabric* (2005), about an imprisoned Romanian woman who finds freedom and reaffirmation working as a seamstress for a cooperative; and Quatriglio’s *Il mondo addosso/The Weight of the World* (2006), which focuses on unaccompanied minors who arrive illegally in Italy from countries such as Romania, Moldavia and Afghanistan.

To this list, I would add the documentary films *Ritratto di famiglia con badante/Portrait of a Family with Caregiver* (2009) by Alessandra Speciale, which tells the stories of three illegal immigrants who take care of old people, and *Via Padova. Istruzioni per l’uso/Via Padova. User’s Manual* (2010), by Giulia Ciniselli and Anna Bernasconi, which portrays some women who live in this Milanese multicultural street. In this film, the filmmakers emphasise relations of friendship and solidarity:

Bernasconi and Ciniselli build a counter-discourse of hospitality in response to the panic of the media representations and explore via Padova as a privileged

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<sup>581</sup> “Il film è nato del desiderio di riconoscere dei legami con il passato. Cioè, di riconoscere me come soggetto di donna oggi in collegamento con, appunto, i soggetti delle donne degli anni settanta (...) mio desiderio era invece quello di ritrovare le mie radici, di ricollegarmi con quelle donne, e quindi il lavoro è stato fatto proprio così, come un’indagine ancora una volta; questa volta attraverso degli archivi, attraverso i documenti (...) sono andata a cercare anche, per esempio, film sperimentali o underground, perché sapevo che la stessa cosa, nello stesso momento poteva essere rappresentato in modo completamente diverso (...) *Vogliamo anche le rose* era un po’ dire ‘non c’è solo quel modo’ per riproporre a noi che non abbiamo vissuto quel passato.



territory of transcultural dialogue between different ethnic and cultural groups (...) Thus, the film itself is an act of solidarity and a meeting place for dialogue with other women on the basis of a shared female experience (...) [a solidarity that allows women] to “respond” -*talk back*- as individuals and collectives to the audience of Italian viewers, telling their stories with their own voices and the visibility of their bodies. (Faleschini Lerner 2015: 146, 148)<sup>582</sup>

Concerning the **precarious conditions** of the post-industrial economy, Luciano and Scarparo discuss three fiction films that “highlight the tensions and contradictions of women’s position in a postfeminist ‘feminized’ labor market, which claims to place a high premium on female values yet renders the workplace increasingly inaccessible and unsustainable for women” (2013: 30). The previously mentioned *Mi piace lavorare-Mobbing* (Comencini); Anna Negri’s *Riprendimi/Good Morning Heartache* (2008), which adopts a film-within-a-film structure so as to portray the unstable conditions of people working in the film industry; and Labate’s *Signorina Effe/Miss F* (2007), which looks back at a crucial moment in Italian labour history labelled as the end of the workers’ movement, i.e. when the 1980s massive strike of workers from the Lingotto FIAT factory in Turin failed and thousands were dismissed.

Francesca Comencini also narrates this episode in her documentary film *In fabbrica/In the Factory* (2008), with the nostalgia of a lost era for the working class: in contemporary factories, “workers work constantly changing shifts and go systematically about their jobs. Insecure employment contracts result not in solidarity but in unhealthy competition, and workers without job security are more reluctant to stir the waters and go on strike” (Luciano and Scarparo 2013: 163). Silvia Ferreri’s documentary *Uno virgola due/One Point Two* (2005) gathers testimonies of diverse women who have encountered several challenges in combining their jobs with their being mothers; while Tania Pedroni’s *Invisibili/Invisible* (2002) problematises the flexibility that contemporary jobs demand from female workers.

To these documentaries that pay attention to women’s working conditions I would add *Sole/Soul&Soil* (2000), in which Barbanente denounces the conditions of exploitation

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<sup>582</sup> “Bernasconi e Ciniselli costruiscono un contro-discorso di ospitalità in risposta ai toni di panico delle rappresentazioni mediatiche ed esplorano via Padova come territorio privilegiato di dialogo transculturale tra diversi gruppi etnici e culturali (...) Così, il film stesso è un atto di solidarietà e un luogo di incontro e dialogo con altre donne sulla base di un’esperienza femminile condivisa (...) di ‘rispondere’ -*talk back*- come individui e come collettività al pubblico di spettatori italiani, raccontando la propria storia con la propria voce e la visibilità dei propri corpi.”

in which female agricultural labourers work in the area between Brindisi and Taranto; *Lavori in corso/Works in Progress* (2002), in which Irene Rubini portrays Carla Corso, president of the “Comitato per i diritti civili delle prostitute” (Committee on Civil Rights of Prostitutes); *Lady Truck, una vita on the road/On the Road* (2009), in which Carolina Guidotti follows three women who work as truck drivers; and *Io giuro. Appunti di donne soldato/I Swear. Pictures of Women Soldiers* (2007), in which Maria Martinelli shows the life of women who enter the Italian army. With Simona Coccozza, Martinelli has also co-directed a documentary about a lesbian couple that resorts to artificial insemination, *Over the Rainbow* (2009).

Maria Daria Menozzi directs *Manoorè. Donne al lavoro al tempo della globalizzazione/Manoorè. The Voice of the Women* (2005), which portrays three women (from Senegal, Brazil and Mali) who participate at an International Labour Organisation meeting in Turin. Menozzi and Elisabetta Pandimiglio participate in the project *I diari della Sacher/The Sacher Diaries*, a series of short films developed thanks to the collaboration between the National Diaries Archive of Pieve and the “Sacher Film”, Nanni Moretti and Angelo Barbagallo’s production company. Pandimiglio co-directs *Zappaterra/Landtiller* (2003) with Cesar Meneghetti, a medium-length film about a half-literate orphan who re-learns to read and write so as to be able to tell her story in a diary.

As in the case of Spain, there are also various Italian productions that portray **women’s conditions in other countries**. For instance, in *Un mondo senza povertà/A World Without Poverty* (2000), Ilaria Freccia presents a microcredit system promoted by women in Bangladesh; and in *La zattera di sabbia/The Sand Raft* (2003), Isabella Sandri shows how sedentarism as a means of enacting peace is imposed by the Tuareg women in Mali. Sandri also co-directs with Giuseppe Gaudino *Màquilas/Factories* (2004), a documentary about the terrible working conditions faced by women at sweatshops in the Mexico-USA border.

In *Ad occhi aperti/Eyes Wide Open* (2004), Elisa Mereghetti tells the story of Catherine Phiri, a Malawian nurse who discovers to be HIV-positive after the death of her husband and creates the Salima HIV/AIDS Support Organization (SASO), dedicated to assisting thousands of AIDS orphans, spreading information about HIV and caring for hundreds of terminally ill patients. The medium-length film *Papayoni. Creatura immorale/Papayoni. Immoral Creature\** (Cristina Vuolo and Federica Tuzi, 2002) shows the activities of a doctor’s office set up by the Italian Association for Women and Development-AIDOS in Nepal. And the short film *Pecore nere/Black Sheep* (Elena

Sarno, 2005) tells the stories of three lesbian women from Uganda and one from South Africa.

Concerning the **representation of women in the media**, Lorella Zanardo, Cesare Cantù and Marco Malfi Chindemi direct *Il corpo delle donne/Women's Bodies* (2009). This short film, available for free online, exposes the commodification of the female body by the Italian television, where “women are meant to dance, strip, allow themselves to be treated like idiots by older male hosts, giggle and keep smiling at all costs. The classic role afforded to women on television is that of the young showgirl who has little to say and much flesh to show” (Luciano and Scarparo 2013: 187).

### 5.3.1 Feminist and/or Queer Italian Film Festivals

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, more festivals with a feminist and/or queer perspective are created in Italy. Produced by Bologna's “Cassero LGBT Center”<sup>583</sup>, the “**Gender Bender**” Festival is created in 2003, under the artistic direction of Daniele del Pozzo. It has been included among the 26 best European festivals of the EFFE (Europe for Festival, Festival for Europe), and is also part of the network “Bologna Contemporanea”. “Gender Bender” is defined as “an international festival introducing the Italian public to the new imagery related to gender identities, sexual orientations and body representations stemming from contemporary culture.”<sup>584</sup>

The festival keeps an archive of the films that have been part of their programmes, among which various documentaries that are part of the television series *Erotika Italiana*, directed by Alberto D'Onofrio<sup>585</sup>; Cangelosi's transition medium-length video-diary *Dalla testa ai piedi/From Head to Foot* (2007); the collective documentary *Sesso, amore and disabilità/Sex, Love and Disability* (Adriano Silanus et al., 2012); and the portrait of various Italian homoparental families, *Il lupo in calzoncini corti/The Wolf in Shorts* (2010), directed by Nadia Dalle Vedove and Lucia Stano. Dalle Vedove and Stano have also directed the medium-length films *Le famiglie arcobaleno/Rainbow Families* (2006) on the same topic, and *Kaiko e Venere* (2004), which portrays two female sculptors.

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<sup>583</sup> The story of Bologna's “Cassero LGBT Center” is narrated in Andrea Adriatico's documentary, *Torri, checche e tortellini/The Queens Tower* (2015).

<sup>584</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.genderbender.it/en/about/>>.

<sup>585</sup> *Erotika-Fetish Ball* (2004); *Confessioni di un gay cattolico/Confessions of a Catholic Gay* (2008); *Scene da un matrimonio/Scenes from a Marriage* (2008), and *Grassi, grossi e pelosi/Fat, Big and Hairy* (2008).

The “**Florence Queer Festival**” is also created in 2003 by IREOS, a voluntary association of and for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender and intersexuals, active since 1997. On their website, they keep an archive of the films that have been screened since 2004.<sup>586</sup> Among the Italian documentaries that they have included in their programmes we find the aforementioned *Lina Mangiacapre. Artista del femminismo* and *Il lupo in calzoncini corti*; Simone Cangelosi and Luki Massa’s *Felliniana* (2010), a short film about the work of transsexual leader Marcella di Folco in Federico Fellini’s films; *L’altra metà del cielo/The Other Half of the Sky* (2008 and 2012), in which Laura Annibali gathers the testimonies of various lesbians; and *Caccia alle Streghe/Witch Hunt\** (2008), in which Sofia Gangi narrates the story of the LGBT movement in Palermo and Sicilia.

In Bologna, the lesbian-feminist activist Luki Massa creates the “**Some Prefer Cake. Lesbian Film Festival**” in 2007. The festival was interrupted for two editions due to Massa’s death in 2016, but the festival team decided to bring it back in 2017, dedicating it to her. In the words of the festival’s artistic director that year, Marta Bencich:

Do, create what you would like to be in the world. We had fun doing the festival: for us, because we liked it, and for you, because it made sense only if we shared it with you. It was a space that we wanted and we built it and, all together, we populated it (...) we dare to do, to create, out of the box, not just from mainstream society schemes, from all schemes, big and small. We create the world we want, we create the things we want and that are not in the world.<sup>587</sup>

On their website, they only keep track of the films that have been part of the “Some Prefer Cake Festival” since 2013. Among them, there are a few Italian documentaries, such as Paola Zaccaria and Daniele Basilio’s *Altar. Cruzando Fronteras, Building Bridges* (2009) about the Chicano writer Gloria Anzaldúa, and Pizzuti’s portraits of feminist philosopher Angela Putino and of feminist artist Lina Mangiacapre, respectively, in *Amica nostra Angela/Our friend Angela\** (2012) and the aforementioned *Lina Mangiacapre. Artista del femminismo* (2015).

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<sup>586</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.florencequeerfestival.it/programmi/>>.

<sup>587</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://someprefercakefestival.com/luki/>>. The festival is currently coordinated by “Comunicattive”, a gender oriented communication company created in 2005 by Samantha Cavicchi, Elisa Coco, Stefania Guidi and Lucia Jorini.

Luki Massa also participated in creating the **International Trans Film Festival “Divergenti”** in 2009, along with sociologist and transsexual activist Porpora Marcasciano, and with the support of the Italian Transsexual Movement-MIT. This festival was interrupted in 2013, partly due to Massa’s disease and death, but the MIT has brought it back since 2017. The aforementioned *Felliniana* was the opening film of the second edition.<sup>588</sup>

In 2008, the first LGBT festival in southern Italy is created in Naples, the **International Gay, Transgender and Questioning Film Festival “Omovies”**. Organised by the LGBTQI association “i Ken ONLUS”, its goal is to reinforce, through film culture, “the fight against discrimination for sexual orientation and gender identity, contributing to the formation and spread of a culture of differences in which everyone can find his/her own expressive room.”<sup>589</sup> On their website, they keep an archive of the films that have been screened since 2012. The first LGBT festival in Sicily is created in 2011, the **“Sicilia Queer Filmfest”**. In 2012, the **“USN|expo, Sardinia Queer Short Film Festival”** has its first edition.

Also in 2012, within the Interdepartmental Centre for Studies on Gender Culture of the University of Bari “Aldo Moro”, Francesca Romana Recchia Luciani creates the **“Festival Delle Donne E Dei Saperi Di Genere”** (Festival of Women and Gender Knowledge), a feminist multidisciplinary festival that includes projections, seminars, performance and laboratories. In its 6<sup>th</sup> edition, it had a section called “Documenti del femminismo. La nascita del documentario femminista italiano e il videoattivismo delle donne” (Documents of Feminism. The Birth of Italian Feminist Documentary and Women’s Video-Activism), in which feminist films from the seventies, such as the aforementioned *Aggettivo Donna* (1971) and *Marisa della Magliana* (1976) were screened. The curators were Simone Cangelosi and Fulvia Antonelli, director and writer of my case study, *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2013). This edition also included a cycle called “Diritto alla vita” (Right to Life), in which my case study *Triangle* (2014) was shown and discussed with the director, Costanza Quatriglio.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Some Italian documentary films that have been screened at “Divergenti” are: *Nel lavoro di Sandra/At Sandra’s Work* (Giangiaco De Stefano, 2006); *E Giorgia sia/Let It Be Giorgia\** (Roberto Dassoni, 2006); *Giorgio-Giorgia. Storia di una voce/Giorgio-Giorgia. Story of a Voice* (Gianfranco Mingozzi, 2008); and *Russulella* (Margherita Pescetti, 2009).

<sup>589</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.omovies.it>>.

<sup>590</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.apuliafilmcommission.it/news/il-programma-della-vi-edizione-del-festival-delle-donne-e-dei-saperi-di-genere>>.

In 2014, the first LGBTQI film festival in the southern region of Salento is created, the “**Salento Rainbow Film Fest**” at Lecce. The organisers define their aim as that of achieving “greater inclusion of different realities and cultures, through different languages and suitable for all types of public: a space where diversity is not synonymous with danger but with reciprocal enrichment!”<sup>591</sup>. The Bergamo based “**Orlando: Identity, Relationships, Opportunities**” Interdisciplinary Queer Festival is also from 2014. It mixes film screenings, theatre and dance performances, workshops, meetings and seminars.

The “**Divine Queer Film Festival**” in Turin has its first edition in 2015. It is an independent festival, in which all the screenings are free. According to its creators, this festival “stems from the desire to break stereotypes, prejudices, taboos and fears through the language of cinema in relation to the stories of transsexual/transgender people, the disabled and migrants”<sup>592</sup>. In its 2017 edition, they screened my case study *Lunàdigas. Ovvero delle donne senza figli/Lunàdigas. Or Concerning Childfree Women* (Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga, 2016).

### **5.3.2 Non-Fiction Feminist Productions During the Second Decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can see a continuity of the categories in which Luciano and Scarparo classify films directed by women between 2001-2010: reframing cinematic tradition by subverting conventional modes of representation; reframing history as herstory starting from the mother-daughter relationship; and reframing Italy through contemporary issues, specifically immigration and precarious work “from a position of gendered marginality” (2013: 20).

After analysing the non-fiction production of this period, I propose to add three more categories, which are also present in the feminist agenda of Spanish documentaries as explained in chapter three: women’s conditions in other countries, gender-based violence, and gender binary subversions/transsexualism. Moreover, these categories are

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<sup>591</sup> “una maggiore inclusione delle diverse realtà e culture, attraverso differenti linguaggi ed adatto a tutti i tipi di pubblico: uno spazio dove la diversità non è sinonimo di pericolo bensì di arricchimento reciproco!” Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.associazionelea.org/rainbow-film-festival/>>.

<sup>592</sup> “nasce dal desiderio di infrangere, attraverso il linguaggio cinematografico, stereotipi, pregiudizi, tabù e paure relativamente alle storie di persone transessuali/transgender, disabili e migranti.” Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.divinequeer.it>>.

in line with the impact that transfeminism and the “Ni una menos” (Non una di meno/Not one [woman] less) movement have had on Italian feminism.<sup>593</sup>

Under the category of how women filmmakers have **reframed history as herstory**, Luciano and Scarparo refer to **motherhood** in biological terms, but also in the recovery of women’s lives and experiences. In *Tutte le anime del mio corpo/Every Soul of my Body* (2015), Erika Rossi portrays a psychotherapist who re-discovers her mother as a rebel partisan after her death, when she finds her diary, written during the Second World War. In *Être e durer/To Be and to Last* (2017), Serena Mignani explores relationships between mothers and adolescent sons by means of an extreme urban sport of French origin, parkour.

Following **conflicting and contradictory desires around motherhood**, two recent films, *Sbagliate/She Wrong* (Maria Daria Menozzi and Elisabetta Pandimiglio, 2014) and the aforementioned *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* (Nesler and Piga 2016), tackle instead the taboo surrounding women who decide not to have children.<sup>594</sup> In this sense, the issue in the feminist agenda that this film raises is closer to what I identified in the Spanish agenda as **the right to one’s body**.<sup>595</sup>

Also within the reframing of history from a female perspective, but moving from the memory of the mother to that of the father, we find Sabrina Varani’s *Pagine nascoste/Hidden Pages* (2017). In this re-vision of the Italian colonial project under Benito Mussolini, Varani follows the creative process through which writer Francesca Melandri confronts herself with her father, a Fascist man who wrote racist articles during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.

As for the re-writing of herstory, Paola Columba portrays **the Italian feminist movement** in *Femminismo!/Feminism!* (2016). She interviews women of diverse ages and backgrounds, from the seventies up to the YouTube generation, including public figures such as Dacia Maraini, Lorella Zanardo, Emma Bonino, Lidia Ravera, Lea Melandri, Luisa Muraro, and Piera Degli Esposti. Similarly, Teresa Rossano revisits the feminist movement during the seventies in the context of Bologna, by interviewing Lucia Alessandrini, Gabriella Dalla Ca’, Roberta Gavazzi, Manuela Ghesini, Patrizia Gubellini, Benedetta Jandolo, Antonietta Laterza, Anna Lisei, Rossella Marchesini, Anna Orsini,

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<sup>593</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Section 5.4.4 Feminist Movements, from “Se non ora quando” to “Non una di meno”

<sup>594</sup> I further explore both films, since *Lunàdigas* is one of my case studies. *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 6.4

<sup>595</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 3. Section 3.3.7 Sample Rationale

Patrizia Pulga, Sandra Schiassi, Piera Stefanini and Rita Visani in *Io sono femminista!/I am a Feminist!* (2019).

As part of a documentary series called *Genova, autobiografia del '68/Genoa, Autobiography of 1968*, Gianfranco Pangrazio directs the film *Donne in movimento. Il femminismo a Genova negli anni Settanta/Women on the Move. Feminism in Genoa in the Seventies\** (2012). In *Per tutta la vita/Forever* (2014) Susanna Nicchiarelli looks at the debates that took place in Italy in 1974, when the law that made divorce legal was introduced. In this documentary, produced by the Italian television and which was screened at the Torino Film Festival, Nicchiarelli employs home movies and audiovisual materials from that period of time. The short film *Senza rossetto/Without Lipstick\** (2016), directed by Emanuela Mazzina and Silvana Profeta, narrates the first time that women voted in an election in 1946.

*Lievito madre. Le ragazze del secolo scorso/Mother Yeast. The Women of the Last Century\** (2017), directed by Concita de Gregorio and Esmeralda Calabria, gathers various **testimonies of “historical mothers”** such as Adele Cambria, Giovanna Tedde, Lea Vergine, Emma Bonino, Cecilia Mangini, Inge Feltrinelli, Dacia Maraini, and Piera Degli Esposti. In her short film *Io, qui. Lo Sguardo delle Donne/I, Here. The Women's Gaze* (2012), Costanza Quatriglio also gathers testimonies of women.

Other films are **individual portraits of “historical mothers”**. For example, the aforementioned *Lina Mangiacapre. Artista del femminismo* (Pizzuti, 2015); *Non ci è stato regalato niente. Storia di una partigiana/We Weren't Given Anything for Free. The Story of an Italian Partisan* (2013), in which Eric Esser portrays partisan Annita Malavasi, a female commander of the Italian Resistance during the Second World War; *Essere Rossana Rossanda/Being Rossana Rossanda\** (2016), in which Maria Chiaretti tells the story of this Italian politician and journalist; and *La mia casa e i miei coinquilini. Il lungo viaggio di Joyce Lussu/My Home and My Neighbours* (2016), in which Marcella Piccinini portrays this writer, translator and partisan.

Also the medium-length films *Adele Cambria, diario di una giornalista ribelle/Adele Cambria, Journal of a Rebel Journalist\** (2012), where Francesca Formisano and Gaia Capurso interview this journalist, who participated in the feminist movement and was a close friend of Pier Paolo Pasolini; and *Re-cordis* (2011), in which Paola Antonini, Annalisa Moniga and Federica Vairani portray Felicia Impastato, mother of Peppino Impastato, a radio host killed by the mafia in 1978. It's also worth mentioning Silvia Lelli's short film *Conversazione con Sofia Scandurra: Questioni di Genere Dietro la*



*Macchina da Presa/Conversations with Sofia Scandurra: Gender Issues Beyond the Camera* (2014), the last interview with the woman who directed *Io sono mia* in 1977.

The other category identified by Luciano and Scarparo is how female filmmakers are addressing contemporary issues such as **precarious work and labour rights**. This is the subject of one of my case studies, Quatriglio's *Triangle* (2014), which traces parallels between two accidents at textile factories where several women died, one in the United States in 1911, and one in Italy in 2011. Other films that deal with women's working conditions are *Licenziata!!/Fired!\** (Lisa Tormena, 2011), which portrays the fight of the female workers who were dismissed after the closure of the Omsa factory. In *Vite al centro/Living in the Malls* (2014), Fabio Ferrero and Nicola Zambelli expose how the 24/7 economic model with its liberalisation of opening hours has impacted the lives of female employees working in malls. And Diana Dell'Erba interviews female filmmakers in *Registe/Women Directors* (2014), emphasising that women only represent 7% of the Italian directors.

Other documentary films concentrate on **one woman's professional experience**. In 2012, Lelli directs *Johanna Knauf Direttrice D'Orchestra: Music to the People!* about a female orchestra director who has founded the "Choir and Orchestra Desiderio da Settignano" in the Toscana region, involving hundreds of people from diverse backgrounds. In 2016, Marazzi makes the film *Anna Piaggi. Una visionaria della moda/A Dreamer in the Fashion World*, about the famous fashion journalist. Quatriglio tells the story of the singer Nada Malanima in *Il mio cuore umano/My Human Heart* (2009). In *Dal profondo/From the Depths* (2013), Valentina Pedicini follows a woman who works in a mine in Sardinia. The worries of a freelance female scientific journalist are presented in the short film *2033* (2012), directed by Silvia Bencivelli and Chiara Tarfano. In *Scarti/Scraps* (2015), it is the filmmaker herself, Alessandra Cataleta, who reflects about her work in Italian television.

In the medium-length film *Le stanze delle donne/Women's Rooms\** (2010), Silvia Savorelli follows four women who work from home. *A casa non si torna. Stori di donne che svolgono lavori maschili/We Won't Go Back Home. Stories of Women Doing Male Jobs\** (2012) is a documentary film produced by the digital version of the newspaper "Il Fatto Quotidiano", in which Lara Rongoni and Giangiacomo de Stefano gather the testimonies of diverse women who perform **so-called male jobs** (chief of building, electrician, archaeologist and truck driver). In 2013, the pioneer Cecilia Mangini comes back to filmmaking with the documentary film *In viaggio con Cecilia/Travelling with*

*Cecilia*, co-directed with Mariangela Barbanente. They go back to Puglia, where Mangini had shot films such as *Brindisi 66'* (1966), to **compare the working conditions** from then with the current ones.

**Gender-based violence** is the subject of my case study *Ma l'amore c'entra?/Is It About Love?* (2017) by Elisabetta Lodoli, who places the focus on the men that commit acts of domestic violence. It's also the issue that Lelli has discussed in three films: *Violenza invisibile/Invisible Violence\** (co-directed with Matilde Gagliardo, 2015), *Violenza svelata/Revealed Violence\** (2016), and *Eu gosto de ser mulher... rendere visibile la violenza domestica in Europa/I Like Being a Woman... Making Domestic Violence Visible in Europe\**, still under production and in collaboration with the Portuguese association Presença Feminina di Madeira. In *Donne dentro/Inside Women\** (2013), Marzia Pellegrino portrays three generations of women who have experienced domestic violence. Women are also the ones who speak in the medium-length film *L'amore che sbrana/Tearing Love* (Mariella Bussolati, 2014).

Unequal conditions faced by **women outside Italy** are tackled in films such as *La Forza delle Donne/Women's Strength\** (2017), in which Laura Aprati and Marco Bov follow women in areas of conflict and extended migration such as Lebanon and Iraqi Kurdistan; the short film *Hijab* (Maria Grazia Silvestri, 2012), about Olympic female athletes from Muslim countries; and *Avoir toute ma tête/With All My Mind\** (2010), in which Alessia Del Bianco and Nicola Gencarelli portray three young women from Dakar who attend a community centre for labour training. This is also the subject of the medium-length films *Eco de femmes/ Women's Echo\** (2015), in which Carlotta Piccinini tells the stories of six women from Morocco and Tunisia who want to create agricultural cooperatives, and *Creative Women of Lake Bunyonyi* (2010), in which Laura Cini shows the struggles of women for ensuring the survival of their families in Uganda.

Many recent documentary films portray **gender binary subversions and transsexualism**. For example, films about transsexual women such as: *Essere Lucy/Being Lucy* (Gabriella Romano, 2011), *Le Coccinelle Sceneggiata Transessuale/Le Coccinelle Neapolitan Transsexual Melodrama* (Emanuela Pirelli, 2011); *Fuoristrada/Off Road* (Elisa Amoruso, 2013); *Lei è mio marito/She is My Husband* (Gloria Aura Bartolini and Annamaria Gallone, 2013); *Gesù è morto per i peccati degli altri/Jesus Died for the Sins of Others* (Maria Arena, 2014); *Amara* (Claudia Mollese, 2014); and *Varichina. La Vera Storia della Finta Vita di Lorenzo De Santis* (Barbanente and Antonio Palumbo, 2015). One of my case studies, Simone Cangelosi's *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2014), also falls

within this category and, depicting a leader of the LGBTQ rights movement, it tackles the issue of the **right to one's body** as well.

In the short film *Il mio genere/My Gender* (2012), directed by Marta Cioncoloni and Cesare Bonifazi Martinozzi, it is a transsexual man who narrates his story. The subversion of gender roles by a group of Drag Kings is the subject of Cecilia Grasso's film *Al di là dello specchio/On the Other Side of the Mirror* (2015). Ilaria Luperini and Chiara Tarfano direct *Fuori!/Out!\** (2015), a documentary divided in episodes, where well known members of the LGBTQ Italian community tell their experiences regarding prejudices against homosexuality in different Italian cities. In *Diversamente etero/Otherwise Straight\** (2011), Marica Lizzadro reflects on the representation of lesbians in Italian television. Giovanna Selis and Laura Landi focus on the homophobic taboos of Italian society in *Le lesbiche non esistono/Lesbians Don't Exist* (2012). And *Normal* (Adele Tulli, 2019), intends to reflect and question gender roles and stereotypes of today's Italian society.

### 5.3.3 Inequalities Faced by Independent Documentary Filmmakers

At the opening of the 2010 Rome Film Festival, over a thousand film professionals embarked on numerous protest activities against Berlusconi's 2011 budget, which cut Italy's single arts fund, the Fondo Unico dello Spettacolo (FUS), to its lowest level in twenty years. In November 2016, a new film law promoted by Dario Franceschini, the Minister for Cultural Activities and Heritage, set the basis for the creation of the "Fondo per lo sviluppo degli investimenti nel cinema e l'audiovisivo" (Fund for the Development of Investments in Cinema and the Audiovisual Sector). It increased funding in 60% and was described as a way to stop the State's censorship, since only film producers and film distributors would be responsible for classifying the films.<sup>596</sup>

The funding available per year with this new law consists of 400 million euro. It is not very high within European standards, as film critics Alessandro Anibaldi and Raffaele Meale<sup>597</sup> have pointed out: in France, for instance, the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée (The National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image) annually

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<sup>596</sup> Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali. "Approvata la nuova legge cinema e audiovisivo Franceschini: legge attesa da decenni, darà forte contributo al settore". Date of access: March 2019. <[http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/visualizza\\_asset.html\\_485582\\_523.html](http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/visualizza_asset.html_485582_523.html)>.

<sup>597</sup> "Legge cinema" in *Quinlan. Rivista di critica cinematografica* online. Date of access: March 2019. <<https://quinlan.it/2017/06/12/legge-cinema/>>.

allocates 700 million euro for film production. Moreover, the amount considered within the Italian fund also includes commercial fiction films and TV series. As a matter of fact, only up to 18% is allocated for first and second works, young authors, small cinema halls and contributions to festivals, activities of the Venice Biennale, the Luce Cinecittà Institute and Rome's Experimental Cinematographic Centre. Only 3% is allocated for educational activities that strengthen general students' cinematographic and audiovisual skills. No measures to promote gender equality are considered; it is only taken into account in the composition of public fund selection committees.

An aspect of this recent law that can be positive for independent filmmakers is that it establishes stricter procedures for television to invest in and to distribute Italian cinema. Currently, according to filmmaker Enza Negroni, president of the Association "Documentaristi Emilia-Romagna", "with television not many documentary filmmakers, let's say 10%, have access to sell and distribution"<sup>598</sup>. But she is optimistic about the impact that the law will have on television. RAI was the first public service of its kind in Europe to launch a gender policy in 2013 regarding the prevention of violence against women, in line with the Council of Europe Recommendations to the media. To a great extent, RAI's gender policy was also a response to the movement "Appello Donne e Media" (Women and Media Appeal)<sup>599</sup> launched in November 2009 by Gabriella Cims, then Head of the Observatory on the European Directive "Audiovisual Media Services" at the Ministry of Economic Development.

According to the European Women's Audiovisual Network (EWA) report, the purpose of RAI's gender policy and code of practice is "to supervise respect for gender equality guaranteeing a proper representation of human dignity, referring in particular to women's non-stereotypical image."<sup>600</sup> RAI commissioned a content analysis to the Observatory of Pavia and a qualitative analysis to Eurisko, in which the results "show that women representation on RAI channels is respectful in 95% of cases". However, in the period that goes from 2006 to 2013, out of the films financed by RAI, women directed only 21%, while men directed 79%. What researcher Loredana Cornero asserts is that

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<sup>598</sup> "Con la televisione, non molti documentaristi hanno accesso alla vendita e alla distribuzione; diciamo una percentuale soltanto del 10%" Enza Negroni. Personal interview. October 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>599</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.appellodonnemedia.it/come-nasce/>>.

<sup>600</sup> EWA report "Where are the women directors? Report on gender equality for directors in the European film industry 2006-2013". Appendix V. Italy. Date of access: March 2019. <[https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report_compressed.pdf)>.

women don't have a key role in any programme: "what is most striking on TV is the absence; what is still missing is the female gaze" (2015: 128).<sup>601</sup>

In 2016, 223 Italian films were produced, of which 80% were fiction films and 20% were documentary films.<sup>602</sup> Out of these 223 films, men directed 86%, while women directed 14%. EWA, which included Italy in its 2016 research on gender equality, provides more data: In the period that goes from 2006 to 2013, 15,6% of first and second works support was awarded to female-directed films, while 84,4% to male directed films. And in the case of works by directors from their third feature onwards, 8,9% of the support was awarded to female-directed films, while 91,1% was given to male-directed films.<sup>603</sup>

The majority of Italian woman filmmakers find it hard to direct more than a couple of films. There are a few exceptional cases, such as the Comencini sisters and Maria Sole Tognazzi, who have managed to have continuity in their career mainly "because of their long-standing family connection to the film industry" (Luciano and Scarparo 2013: 193). But most women filmmakers have to apply strategies that reduce film production costs (e.g. so-called intimate scripts with few characters and locations, digital technology), and rely on distribution out of the traditional cinema circuit: art-house circuits, the Internet, screenings in clubs, universities, cultural institutes, or at local and international film festivals. In yet fewer cases, their films become DVDs or get bought by television companies. EWA's research detects two bottlenecks for women in their path for becoming film directors:

The first one is at the stage of education, when most female filmmakers that apply to film schools are keener to choose courses other than directing. The second bottleneck comes after training, when the already lesser share of "graduated female directors" – either from film schools or from other forms of training – have a harder time to get their films into production.<sup>604</sup>

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<sup>601</sup> "ciò che più colpisce in tv è l'assenza, ciò che ancora manca e lo sguardo delle donne."

<sup>602</sup> According to the annual report of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo (MiBACT). Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.cinema.beniculturali.it/Notizie/4483/67/tutti-i-numeri-del-cinema-italiano-2016/>>.

<sup>603</sup> EWA report "Where are the women directors? Report on gender equality for directors in the European film industry 2006-2013". Appendix V. Italy. Date of access: March 2019.

<[https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report_compressed.pdf)>.

<sup>604</sup> "In the National Film School (Scuola Nazionale di Cinema), the share of female applicants to all courses is on average 39% (...) female applicants to film directing are only 17% of all applicants". EWA report "Where are the women directors? Report on gender equality for directors in the European film industry 2006-2013". Appendix V. Italy. Date of access: March 2019.

EWA's analysis also identifies two causes behind the scarcity of women directors:

One coming from women themselves and from a distorted self-perception which discourages them to engage in highly competitive and leading careers. The other reason lies on the other side of the industry and is connected to a limited trust from investors, either public or private, to bet on a woman-led project.<sup>605</sup>

In the eight-year period covered in its report, 2006-2013, women directed only 9% of the Italian films screened in theatres. If we only look at documentary production, there's a slightly higher share, with 12% female directed films screened, still a low amount. Moreover, apart from a pair of regional funds (Piemonte and Emilia-Romagna), there are no public funds specifically devoted to documentary cinema, which makes its production conditions even more difficult. For example, in the period comprising the years 2011-2013, the average budget for fiction works ranged between 2.8 million euros and 3.1 million euros; whereas for feature documentaries, the average budget ranged between 600.000 and 900.000 euros. The number of documentary releases in movie theatres was low, with an increasing trend though: from 4 features in 2007 to 35 features in 2013.

Historian and film critic Marco Bertozzi (2014) argues that the main problem for documentary cinema is the lack of a film department that guarantees regularity, not only in terms of production, but also of distribution. Filmmaker Alina Marazzi agrees with this vision, considering that the situation of Italian documentary cinema is very bad due to the lack of a consistent production scheme:

There are now many interesting documentary filmmakers because in the last ten, fifteen years, documentary in Italy has grown a lot, but there is not a true and proper production, it is not considered important. And therefore, documentaries are always self-produced. Then, maybe some of them are beautiful, so there's the DVD, the festivals, and that's it. In a city like Bologna, there is the Cinematheque where you can see these films, but usually that does not happen. They are always isolated cases (...). There is no plan and therefore it is difficult.<sup>606</sup>

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<[https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.ewawomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Complete-report_compressed.pdf)>.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>606</sup> “Ci sono adesso tanti documentaristi interessanti perché negli ultimi dieci, quindici anni è cresciuto molto in Italia il documentario, però non c'è la produzione vera e propria, non viene reputato produttivamente come qualche cosa di importante. E quindi sono sempre documentari autoprodotti così; poi magari qualcuno è bello, quindi c'è il dvd, i festival, basta. In una città come Bologna c'è la cineteca dove si possono vedere questi film ma, normalmente questo non passa. Sono sempre dei casi isolati

Italian documentaries are never successful at the box office and many times they are not even included in the filmmakers' filmographies. In this sense, Bertozzi explains that part of the responsibility also rests on film producers and critics that insist on regarding documentary as "the aesthetically poor brother of fiction film" (2014: 298).<sup>607</sup> He asserts that such poverty is only true concerning economic resources, for Italian documentary cinema has proved to be more capable of narrating Italian reality than fiction cinema. He even defines documentary as "the aesthetic condenser and the main author of a new realism" (2012: 28).<sup>608</sup> However, in the opinion of filmmaker Leonardo di Costanzo, this critical capacity of non-fiction films is diminished by the current financing structures and demands:

Documentaries that work at the market level are those in which a non-problematic vision of reality is reproduced, somehow sweetened, consensual. That's what television does (...). To finance a film the production system asks you to read the project in its feasibility. It forces you to perform an operation of simplification. The director must start by removing any roughness. This is why the most interesting things in documentary cinema take place outside the production system (in Barbanente 2012a: 106, 108).<sup>609</sup>

Following the example of the French-German channel ARTE, di Costanzo argues for a model in which the distributor engages with the projects since their production, keeping the artistic search and style of the author as main criteria. He criticises a system, television and festivals included, that "limits itself to receiving films and saying 'I like this and I do not like this', without entering into the mechanism, without asking the question: how are they made; from what concerns, urgencies, do they arise?" (in Barbanente 2012a: 108).<sup>610</sup>

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(...) Non c'è un piano e quindi è difficile". Alina Marazzi. Personal interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013 in Bologna. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>607</sup> "il fratello esteticamente povero del fiction"

<sup>608</sup> "il condensatore estetico e il principale artefice di un nuovo realismo"

<sup>609</sup> "I documentari che funzionano a livello di mercato sono quelli in cui si riproduce una visione non problematica della realtà, in qualche modo edulcorata, consensuale. E quello che fa la televisione (...) Per finanziare un film, il sistema produttivo ti chiede di leggere il progetto nella sua fattibilità. Ti obbliga a fare un'operazione di semplificazione. Il regista deve quindi in partenza togliere tutte le asperità. È per questo che le cose più interessanti nel documentario avvengono al di fuori del sistema produttivo."

<sup>610</sup> "si limita a ricevere i film e a dire 'questo mi piace e questo non mi piace' senza entrare nel meccanismo, senza porsi la domanda: come si fanno, da quali preoccupazioni, urgenze, nascono?"

Bertozzi recognises, though in an idealised and stereotypical way, the increasing number of women filmmakers that have found a vehicle of expression in documentary cinema despite its precarious conditions of production:

While the film industry regulates relationships in economic-juridical terms, the best female documentary introduces an immeasurable gratuitous character. An ethics of gift, an exchange that involves both the individual and the collective in an emotional interchange away from the totems of commodification (...) a cinema practiced with obstinacy and with ridiculous production facilities (2014: 295-296).<sup>611</sup>

Costanza Quatriglio is not as optimistic as Bertozzi in regards with this increasing number of women documentary filmmakers:

In any group of films made or to be made in Italy, any year, you will notice that women are in a ratio of three over forty. It is different in the case of the documentary genre, because in recent years women have tried to show this country with a genre that, from the point of view of producers, costs little and places the entire burden on the one who makes it. Perfect, then, for women. In Italy, making a documentary takes so much effort (...) the more time passes by, the more I realise that my difficulties are all tied to the fact that I am a young woman. Because there is a widespread paternalism in Italy for which, if a young woman proves to have talent, it is never enough (in González de Sande 2012: 1070)<sup>612</sup>

It is therefore necessary to ask the extent to which women filmmakers opt for the documentary genre, not due to their own decisions, but forced by the lack of support to develop fiction films. According to Quatriglio, the current Italian film industry has severe

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<sup>611</sup> “mentre l’industria del cinema regola i rapporti in termini economico-giuridici, il miglior documentario al femminile introduce un’incommensurabile gratuita. Un’etica del dono, uno scambio che coinvolge sia l’individuo che la collettività in un tam-tam emotivo lontano dai totem della mercificazione (...) un cinema praticato con ostinazione e con strutture produttive ridicole”

<sup>612</sup> “En cualquier elenco de películas realizadas o por realizar en Italia, de cualquier año, notarás que las mujeres están en una proporción de tres sobre cuarenta. Es distinto en el caso del género documental, porque en los últimos años las mujeres han intentado mostrar este país con un género que, desde el punto de vista de los productores, cuesta poco y toda la carga recae en quien lo hace. Perfecto, pues, para las mujeres... En Italia para hacer un documental hace falta tanto esfuerzo (...) cuanto más pasa el tiempo, más me doy cuenta de que mis dificultades están todas ligadas al único hecho de ser mujer y joven. Porque hay en Italia un paternalismo difundido y generalizado por el que si una mujer joven demuestra tener talento, éste nunca es suficiente.”



systemic deficiencies, including distribution mechanisms:

Italy lacks an industrial policy for film and culture, although there is no mention of it. There is no market because there is no pluralism. There are two big blocks: RAI Cinema and Medusa (...) Since there are only two major distributors, they distribute almost all of the films that come out. So, if a film does not generate much profit the first weekend, what do they do? They remove it to make room for another film from their own list, thus eliminating the possibility of that film for gaining its own public (in González de Sande 2012: 1072)<sup>613</sup>

In Bologna, since 2013, an experience of independent distribution has taken place under the name of Open DDB-Distribuzioni dal basso (Distribution From the Bottom). It is a Video-On-Demand platform of independent cinema, music and books.<sup>614</sup> In October 2018, as part of this research project, I carried out an interview with one of its founders, filmmaker Andrea Paco Mariani, who explains that Open DDB has been created with a creative commons ethos:

We use creative commons as a cornerstone of distributive reasoning (...) creative commons has allowed us to avoid a fixed price on the platform. Our platform is a paid platform but the innovative, particular thing, we consider it quite revolutionary in its small way, is that there is no fixed price. It is not a free donation, nor a fixed price. It is a compulsory donation, therefore a hybrid, which allows combining the access to all with the sustainability of the authors.<sup>615</sup>

Part of the staff from Open DDB, including Mariani, met as part of an independent production company called SMK Videofactory.<sup>616</sup> The idea for an independent

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<sup>613</sup> “en Italia falta una política industrial para el cine y la cultura, aunque ni siquiera se habla de ello. No existe el mercado porque no existe el pluralismo. Hay dos grandes bloques: Rai Cinema y Medusa (...) Como solo hay dos grandes distribuidoras, distribuyen casi todas las películas que salen. Así pues, si un filme no genera mucha expectación el primer fin de semana, ¿ellos qué hacen? Lo quitan para dar espacio a otra película de su propia lista; de este modo eliminan la posibilidad de esa película de ganarse su propio público”

<sup>614</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.openddb.it>>.

<sup>615</sup> “Noi utilizziamo il creative commons come caposaldo di ragionamento distributivo (...) il creative commons ci ha permesso di sbriciolare il prezzo fisso sulla piattaforma. La piattaforma nostra è una piattaforma a pagamento ma la cosa innovativa, particolare, noi la riteniamo abbastanza rivoluzionaria nel suo piccolo, è che non c'è un prezzo fisso. Non è, ne una donazione libera, ne un prezzo fisso. E una donazione obbligatoria, quindi un ibrido, che permette da coniugare l'accesso a tutti, con la sostenibilità degli autori.” Andrea Paco Mariani. Personal interview. October 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>616</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.smkvideofactory.com>>.

distribution platform had its origins in their experience with crowdfunding. Since 2011, they have made eleven documentaries through crowdfunding, which has, in Mariani's experience, two advantages:

Crowdfunding allows two basic things: one is speed because it generates a very high cash flow. So we made *The Harvest* [SMK's latest documentary film, from 2017], the whole film, from writing to DVD, in eighteen months, and this was possible thanks to the fact that we had immediate cash due to crowdfunding. The second fundamental thing is that it makes you truly independent, because we often say the word independent willingly, but what it means is that I can produce my creative path without having to follow the film industry logic.<sup>617</sup>

Crowdfunding also allows for the creation of a community network that waits for the film and gives it publicity through physical and digital word of mouth. Mariani is optimistic about the possibilities of this way of raising funds but recognises that it has limits. Simone Cangelosi, director of one of my case studies, *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2014), organised a crowdfunding campaign to be able to finance the DVD's but it was unsuccessful. In an interview carried out for this research project, he admitted that crowdfunding is demanding and unpredictable.<sup>618</sup>

For Mariani, the amount of work that you have to devote to a crowdfunding campaign is similar to the one needed for getting funds from film commissions, which usually take years to reach a decision. Mariani also rejects the idea that precarious conditions of filmmaking may lead to self-exploitation: "I do not exploit myself. At the most I choose to spend more time of my life to reach my goals. It is true that, on average, we work twelve hours a day. Also Saturday and Sunday when needed. But it's not self-exploitation. We want to achieve our journey, our desires."<sup>619</sup>

Another way of coping with the difficult conditions faced by independent

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<sup>617</sup> "Il crowdfunding ti permette due cose fondamentali: velocità perché ti genera un cash flow altissimo, quindi, noi *The Harvest*, abbiamo fatto tutto il film, dalla scrittura al dvd, in diciotto mesi, e questo è stato possibile grazie al fatto che avevamo una liquidità immediata per il crowdfunding. La seconda cosa fondamentale è che ti rende realmente indipendente, perché la parola indipendente la mettiamo spesso volentieri, ma quello che significa e che io posso produrre il mio percorso creativo senza dover sottostare alla logica della industria cinematografica." Andrea Paco Mariani. Personal interview. October 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>618</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 6.2 *Una nobile rivoluzione*

<sup>619</sup> "Io no sfrutto me stesso, io al massimo scelgo di spendere più tempo della mia vita per raggiungere mi obiettivi. È certo che noi facciamo in media dodici ore al giorno. Anche sabato e domenica quando serve. Pero non è sfruttamento. Vogliamo realizzare il nostro percorso, i nostri desideri." Andrea Paco Mariani. Personal interview. October 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

filmmakers has been the creation of associations such as the aforementioned “Doc/it”, active since 1999. Other examples are regional networks like Documentaristi Emilia-Romagna (D.E-R), active since 2006, and Associazione Piemontese Produttori Documentari (AProDoc), active since 2010. And specific film commissions like the Apulia Film Commission, active since 2007.

Filmmaker Enza Negroni, president of Documentaristi Emilia-Romagna (D.E-R), explains that documentary directors and producers who are active in the Emilia-Romagna region created this association in 2006. They share “the same motivation, which is the distribution of our films and the films of others. It is born from a need of ours, from living in a place located far from the heart of cinema, which is in Rome.”<sup>620</sup> They are also concerned about the small budgets that they are constrained to work with: “Documentary cinema is always seen as a poor product. It is said that the idea matters more than the production, but it is not like that.”<sup>621</sup>

Negroni remarks that one of their achievements has been the creation of a regional fund in 2014, the Emilia-Romagna Audiovisual Fund. Coordinated by a staff which is 60% female, D.E.-R organises two festivals, “Doc under 30” for young filmmakers, since 2007; and “Cinevasione”, a festival that takes place inside the Dozza prison in Bologna, since 2016. They show films at schools since 2007, organise training workshops for professors since 2009, have fostered the creation of an online magazine devoted to documentary, “Emilio Doc”<sup>622</sup>, and maintain a website where local documentary filmmakers promote their work, “Documentando”. The commitment that D.E.-R has shown towards training activities at schools tackles what Bertozzi describes as a key aspect for the appreciation of documentary cinema by the publics that it is made for:

A necessary literacy: the ability to read a filmic or television text, to disassemble it and to reassemble it, to understand the change in meaning when the editing changes, should be taught from the first years of school (...) having basic tools to

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<sup>620</sup> “la stessa motivazione che è la distribuzione dei nostri film e i film degli altri. Nasce da un’esigenza nostra, da vivere in un posto lontano dal cuore cinematografico che è a Roma.” Enza Negroni. Personal interview. October 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>621</sup> “Il documentario è visto sempre come un prodotto povero. Se dice che conta più l’idea che la produzione; invece non è così.” Enza Negroni. Personal interview. October 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>622</sup> One of my case studies, *Ma l’amore c’entra?*, was produced in the Emilia-Romagna region and is reviewed in this online magazine, as discussed in Chapter 6.5.

face a world dominated by images should be a “natural” pedagogical act. (2012: 30-31)<sup>623</sup>

There is no women filmmakers’ association in Italy. However, since 2016, a project called “Donne e Audiovisivo-DEA” (Women and Audiovisual), has been promoted by the Italian Society of Authors and Publishers. At the 34<sup>th</sup> Torino Film Festival DEA presented a report called “Gap & Ciak. I divari di genere nel lavoro e nell’industria audiovisiva: Lo stato dell’arte 2016” (Gender Gaps in Work and the Audiovisual Industry: The State of the Art 2016), in which they summarise the data presented by EWA and the European Audiovisual Observatory; for example, the fact that between 2003 and 2012, only 16% of the European films with distribution were directed by a woman.<sup>624</sup>

In the same report, DEA makes a series of recommendations that I hereby paraphrase: 1. Dissemination of information on gender inequality to raise awareness 2. Increased visibility of active professionals, for example with the creation of free databases and innovative ways of distributing online movies directed, written and produced by women. 3. Creation of mentoring programmes by established professionals, aimed at talented directors at an early stage of their career. 4. Practices of positive discrimination in public funding strategies, for example through the introduction of quotas or the use of a quality labels certifying that the audiovisual content was produced in an egalitarian environment.

Precariousness and inequality faced by Italian women inside and outside of the audiovisual industry have been in the agenda of the feminist movements since the seventies, with a renewed emphasis in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as I discuss in the next section.

### **5.3.4 Feminist Movements, from “Se non ora quando” to “Non una di meno”**

In an issue of the *Feminist Review* academic journal devoted to Italian feminisms, Laura Fantone (2007) explores the potential for generational exchange from and against precariousness despite the gaps and conflicts between so-called “historical feminists” of

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<sup>623</sup> “Una alfabetizzazione necessaria: la capacità di leggere un testo filmico o televisivo, di smontarlo e di rimontarlo, di comprenderne il mutare del senso al variare del montaggio, dovrebbe essere insegnata sin dai primi anni di scuola (...) godere di strumenti di base per affrontare un mondo dominato dalle immagini dovrebbe essere un atto pedagogico ‘naturale’.”

<sup>624</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.cnr.it/en/press-note/n-7149/gap-ciak-i-divari-di-genere-nel-lavoro-e-nell-industria-audiovisiva-lo-stato-dell-arte-presentazione-del-primorapporto-dea>>.

the sixties and seventies, and young feminists who have entered the public arena from 1990 onwards (di Cori 2007).

Paola di Cori identifies two moments of division within the movement during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: a collaboration of some “historical feminists” with a controversial publication called *Italiane (Italian Women)*<sup>625</sup> that was promoted by Berlusconi’s government in 2004, and two opposing opinions regarding an encyclical issued by Cardinal Ratzinger in the summer of 2004, since Luisa Muraro from the “Libreria di Milano” approved of it, while Lea Melandri and Rossana Rossanda from the “Libera Università delle Donne” strongly criticised it. According to Fantone, older feminists have been defensive towards younger ones, but productive dialogue has also taken place on a few occasions, especially around the issue of precariousness:

...over the last decade, the needs and views expressed by young feminists were greeted defensively, if not altogether dismissed, by feminists of the 1970s. This has been most evident for instance in Rome 2005 during a feminist summer school, and during meetings arranged by the women historians’ association, since the year 2000 (...). In the best cases (in Bologna, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Feminist Research Conference, in Milan in many occasions, or in Prato, at the Fiorelle Summer School), discussions among generations of feminists revolved around life chances and responsibilities, and produced reciprocal empathy and solidarity, especially with regard to autonomy, security and education, three issues presenting unresolved contradictions in Italian women’s lives (2007: 14).

Women who got into the feminist movement in the nineties are part of a precarious generation that has faced sharp reduction in real wages, benefits and social services. In Italy, neoliberal policies have taken an even higher toll in the south:

...precarity has been a permanent and traditional feature of life in southern Italy for many generations of women, taking the form of submerged labour with no contract, black markets and illegal economies (where there is no safety or rights), family self-exploitation, characterized by no clear division between work and house chores, and informal hiring practices through familial connections that have no long-term guarantees. (Fantone 2007: 10).

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<sup>625</sup> *Italiane* includes the profiles of various well-known fascists without any critical comment, while some famous anti-fascists were ignored or portrayed in a negative way (di Cori 2007: 138).

It is within this context that networks of young feminist have started to emerge, such as Sconvegno, Prec@s, A/matrix, and Sexyshock.<sup>626</sup> They argue for a redesign of labour and welfare policies that takes into account “not just the young (male) European service worker, but also an intergenerational analysis of the family and care work increasingly outsourced to migrants and retired women” (Fantone 2007: 18). While criticising labour insecurity and exploitation, they appropriate possibilities for disrupting gender roles because they reject the “security” offered by traditional families:

Fundamentally, their demands revolve around four issues: economic independence (Sconvegno), affordable access to childcare and education, freedom from family responsibilities (Precas and A/matrix) and the related need for legal recognition of temporary living arrangements typical of precarious lives (Sexyshock). (Fantone 2007: 17).

Apart from opening up productive dialogues between different generations of feminist women, precarity has been a catalyst for different movements to converge, and thus, to strengthen alliances between feminist activism, LGBT activism and Marxist groups.

Another moment of high visibility for feminist demands took place on February 13<sup>th</sup> 2011 with simultaneous demonstrations all over Italy, in which more than a million women participates: it was called the “Se non ora quando” (If Not Now, When) movement. Women from the association “Di nuovo” (Once again), created in 2009, launched the open call for these demonstrations. Some members work in the film industry, such as directors Cristina and Francesca Comencini. The latter directed a short spot for YouTube, advocating for a female gaze and inviting women to join the demonstration.<sup>627</sup>

This movement criticises the way in which, under Berlusconi’s government, the media and entertainment industry increasingly showed “an image of the female that, sold as unprejudiced and free, offends elementary principles of respect and good taste and

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<sup>626</sup> “Sconvegno is a group of graduate students based in Milan who produce collective publications and research about intergenerational feminist issues. A/matrix is a group of post-feminists based in Rome, connected to local and nationwide activism around issues of reproductive rights, precarity and knowledge production. Sexyshock is a group of media and gender activists loosely based in Bologna, working on a wide range of local and nationwide campaigns. Prec@s is a nationwide network of researchers.” (Fantone 2007: 8).

<sup>627</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zma-HI-yF3w>>.

hides the professional, civil and cultural growth of Italian women.”<sup>628</sup> One of the main issues raised by these women has to do with the demand for compulsory maternity leave and maternity allowance, mandatory paternity leave, and regulations that preclude so-called preventive dismissal. The “Se non ora quando” movement took the streets again on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, and organised more encounters afterwards. In 2015, though, it got divided, mainly due to different positions regarding surrogate motherhood. Many women also started to reject it, considering it sexist in its moral judgements of other women.

The “Non una di meno” (Not One Woman Less) movement, originally called “Ni una menos”, has its origins in Argentina, in March 2015, when activists, artists, journalists and academics got together so as to demand a stop to feminicides and violence against women. This collective cry soon reached other countries. In Italy, after the feminicide of Sara di Pietrantonio committed by her ex-boyfriend in Rome in May 2016, a first assembly took place, bringing together historical feminist militants, the new generation of feminist collectives, the transfeminist and queer collectives, those linked to social centres and the anti-violence centres. They set as their goal the elaboration of an Anti-Violence Plan that would overcome the one designed by the government in 2015, taking into account the diverse female and feminist realities, and starting from the importance of autonomy, education for differences and freedom of choice. On March 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, the “Non una di meno” movement led the so-called “Women’s Strike” in Italy.

Three collectives that have had a key role in the “Non una di meno” movement are: “Io Decido” (I Decide), “Unione Donne Italiane” (Italian Women Union), and D.i.Re - “Donne in Rete contro la Violenza” (Women’s Network Against Violence). Since 2014, “Io Decido” has involved anti-violence centres, trade unions, women’s spaces, social centres and collectives, among which “Cagne Sciolte”, “Casa Internazionale delle Donne”, “Casa delle donne Lucha y Siesta”, “Centro Donna Dalia”, “Centro Donna Lisa”, “Chayn Italia”, “Cobas Policlinico”, “Cooperativa Sociale Be Free”, “Csa Astra”, “Degender Communia”, “Freedom For Birth”, “Infosex-Esc”, “Lab. Puzzle” and “Sportello Una stanza tutta per se”.

The UDI was created after women’s Resistance in 1944 and has played an important role in the struggles for the conquest of fundamental rights for women such as the right to vote, education, work, and social services. Since the seventies, they have supported the feminist movement political agenda concerning aspects such as abortion

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<sup>628</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://dinuovodinuovo.blogspot.it/2010/06/prova-e-riprova-con-rosa-oliva.html>>.

and sexual violence. D.i.Re is the only Italian network of non-institutional Anti-Violence Centres managed by women's associations. It gathers seventy-seven centres and women's spaces that have accompanied and supported thousands of women out of violence over more than thirty years.

On November 25<sup>th</sup> 2017, the “Non una di meno” movement organised a demonstration in Rome on occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. During this event, after five national encounters and meetings of nine thematic tables in nearly seventy cities, they launched the “Piano femminista contro la violenza maschile e di genere” (Feminist Plan Against Male and Gender Violence). Their position is that violence is systemic, i.e. it goes through all the spheres of our lives and is based on entrenched behaviours. It is implicit in the construction and social consideration of the masculine and the feminine, which is why it's necessary to speak about gender violence. Their axes of action are:

The ways out of violence; the legislative and juridical aspects; work and welfare; the right to sexual and reproductive health; education and training; feminisms and migrations; the narration of the violence that comes through the media; sexism within the movements; and issues related to the earth, bodies, territories and urban spaces (2017: 5).<sup>629</sup>

They define their plan as an instrument of struggle with proposals and actions, which appropriates feminist practices such as the aforementioned “partire da sé” (starting from oneself) and strengthening relations between women:

Our Plan is therefore based on the principles of feminism and transfeminism, therefore on the principles of autonomy, intersectionality, self-defense, prevention, multidisciplinary, solidarity and social justice (....) We want autonomy, not assistance. (2017: 10).<sup>630</sup>

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<sup>629</sup> “i percorsi di fuoriuscita dalla violenza; l’ambito legislativo e giuridico; quello del lavoro e del welfare; il diritto alla salute sessuale e riproduttiva; l’educazione e la formazione; i femminismi e le migrazioni; la narrazione della violenza che viene svolta attraverso i media; il sessismo nei movimenti; le questioni inerenti alla terra, i corpi, i territori e gli spazi urbani.” Plan retrievable at the “Non Una di Meno” website. Date of access: March 2019. <<https://nonunadimeno.wordpress.com/portfolio/materiali-scaricabili/>>.

<sup>630</sup> “Il nostro Piano si fonda pertanto sui principi del femminismo e del transfemminismo, dunque sui principi dell’autonomia, dell’intersezionalità, dell’autodifesa, della prevenzione, della multidisciplinarietà, della solidarietà e della giustizia sociale (....) Vogliamo autonomia, non



They organise their proposal for action in ten categories:

1. Feminist formation in schools and universities for preventing gender violence.
2. Construction and sharing of knowledges against gender violence, especially among the professionals directly involved in women's way out of violence (e.g. lawyers, judges and educators).
3. Health as an expression of free self-determination, considering, for example, full access to all abortive techniques.
4. Freedom from economic violence, exploitation and precarity, proposing universal welfare, a European minimum wage and an understanding of strike at the productive and reproductive levels.
5. A feminist and transfeminist media strategy for preventing violence, for example, with the development of non-sexist guidelines.
6. An intersectional and anti-racist approach to migration, rejecting the exploitation of gender violence in a racist, security and nationalist key, and claiming freedom of movement for everyone in and outside Europe.
7. Freedom from the environmental violence that takes place against bodies and ecosystems, constantly threatened by exploitation practices.
8. Construction of feminist, autonomous and free spaces, particularly supporting anti-violence centres.
9. Autonomy in the ways out of violence guaranteed by legislative and judicial instruments, including work orientation and placement.
10. Databases from all public and private bodies that guarantee the qualitative and quantitative knowledge of all forms of gender-based violence.

“Non una di meno” has organised three more women's strikes on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, 2018 and 2019, always under an intersectional, transnational and transfeminist approach. It's important to point out the continuity between the demands of the “Non una di meno” movement, and those elaborated in the feminist dialogues from and against precarity during the late nineties and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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assistenza.” Date of access: March 2019. <<https://nonunadimeno.wordpress.com/portfolio/materiali-scaricabili/>>.

### 5.3.5 Sample Rationale

In this chapter I have presented an overview of the feminist agenda in the Italian documentary film and video production. As an annex to this dissertation, I include the reference and synopsis of 127 Italian documentary films that deal with gender issues, produced between 1965 and 2019.<sup>631</sup> I have referred to most of them in previous sections.

In terms of the contents of Italian feminist documentary film and video production carried out in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we can identify **seven thematic blocks**, all of which are also present in the Spanish feminist documentary production. Following Luciano and Scarparo categories (2013), several films directed by women **reframe history as herstory**, starting from the private level of mother-daughter relationship<sup>632</sup> up to a socio-historical level that recovers testimonies of women and the feminist movement.<sup>633</sup> Women filmmakers are also reframing contemporary issues such as **migration**<sup>634</sup> and **women's labour conditions**<sup>635</sup> in the context of increasing precarity.

An issue that has been tackled more recently in documentary cinema is **gender-based violence**.<sup>636</sup> There are also several films centred on the **conditions of women outside Italy**, mainly in so-called third world countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Mali, Lebanon, Morocco, Mexico and Tunisia).<sup>637</sup> Finally, with a majority of films produced during the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several films address **gender binary subversions and/or transsexualism**.<sup>638</sup> Many of these films also foreground the issue of **right to one's body**.

The five Italian case studies analysed in this dissertation were produced between 2013 and 2017. In the process of selecting the films, I have tried to cover different subjects from the feminist agenda and diverse expressions of my four levels of analysis:

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<sup>631</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Annex 5. List of Italian Documentary Films that Deal with Gender Issues. Whenever possible I have included the synopsis in English, but in many cases, it was only available in Italian. In all cases, I provide the source.

<sup>632</sup> *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (2002), *Di madre in figlia* (2004), and *Tutte le anime del mio corpo* (2015).

<sup>633</sup> There are expository films made for television such as *Bellissime 1* and *2* (2004 and 2006) and *Storia del movimento femminista in Italia* (2006); participatory films that gather testimonies like *Femminismo!* (2016) and *Io sono femminista* (2019); and reflexive-performative films such as *Vogliamo anche le rose* (2007) and *Ragazze la vita trema* (2009).

<sup>634</sup> *Sidelki/Badanti* (2005), *La stoffa di Veronica* (2005) and *Via Padova. Istruzioni per l'uso* (2010).

<sup>635</sup> *Uno virgola due* (2005), *Licenziata!* (2011), *A casa non si torna. Stori di donne che svolgono lavori maschili* (2012) and *Registe* (2014).

<sup>636</sup> *Il corpo delle donne* (2009), *Violenza invisibile* (2015), and *Violenza svelata* (2016).

<sup>637</sup> *Avoir toute ma tête* (2010), *Creative Women of Lake Bunyonyi* (2010), *Hijab* (2012), *Eco de femmes* (2015) and *La Forza delle Donne* (2017)

<sup>638</sup> *Dalla testa ai piedi* (2007), *Essere Lucy* (2011), *Fuoristrada* (2013), *Varichina. La Vera Storia della Finta Vita di Lorenzo De Santis* (2015) and *Normal* (2019).

content, form, production and reception. The potential for comparison with the Spanish case studies was also taken into account, looking for overlaps between both countries agendas.

My first case study, *Pays Barbare/Barbaric Land* (Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2013), is not explicitly located within the Italian feminist agenda, nor does it have gender in/equality as its main subject matter. However, I consider it important to include it because the material-discursive practices employed by the directors to denounce fascism and colonialism provide an important example of a countervisuality that can be productively read from a feminist diffractive lens.

Quite well known within the experimental filmmaking landscape, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi resort to reflexive-performative modes of representation using what they call an “analytical camera” that allows them to reframe audiovisual archives. As a matter of fact, this film can be considered as one of those defined by Luciano and Scarparo as “films that reframe Italy by engaging with changing national and transnational contexts from a position of (...) marginality” (2013: 20). Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s is not an explicitly gendered marginality but they do look from and against social oppressions.

My second case study, *Una nobile rivoluzione/A Noble Revolution* (Simone Cangelosi, 2014), is the only film in my sample directed by a transgender man. It falls within the categories: right to one’s body, gender binary subversions and transsexualism. It is a compilation film that gathers footage from diverse time-spaces in an emotional reconstruction of memories: the memory surrounding a specific character’s life, but also the memory of a social movement for equal rights. Accordingly, it combines participatory modes of representation with reflexive and performative ones.

My third case study, *Triangle* (Costanza Quatriglio, 2014), can be included within the category women’s labour conditions. Establishing a parallelism between two tragedies, a fire in New York in 1911, in which 146 female textile workers died, and the collapse of a ghost textile workshop in Barletta in 2011, which caused the death of five women, Quatriglio questions to what extent labour rights have really improved. She renders visible the process behind the clothes sold at a low price with a mode of representation that goes from the observational-participatory to the poetic-performative.

My fourth case study is the film *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli/Lunàdigas. Or Concerning Childfree Women* (Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga, 2016), which can be considered within the categories: reframing history as herstory-motherhood and the right to one’s body. It gathers the testimonies of dozens of women

who reflect upon the social pressure that they have faced as a result of having decided not to have children. It combines a participatory mode of representation with a reflexive-performative one, since both directors put themselves within the frame and add their own testimonies. The documentary film *Lunàdigas* is part of a wider project: a virtual community and an ongoing archive which also includes a website, a Facebook group and a book of “impossible monologues” by famous women who decided not to have children.

My fifth case study, *Ma l'amore c'entra?/Is It About Love?* (Elisabetta Lodoli, 2017), deals with gender-based violence in an unconventional way which mirrors the one employed by Isabel de Ocampo in one of my Spanish case studies.<sup>639</sup> The filmmaker shifts the attention from women as victims to the role played by men in the perpetuation of violence. Due to the challenge of not being able to show, neither the faces nor the voices of the men she interviewed, Lodoli resorts to poetic and performative modes of representation. This film was made in association with the Bologna-based women's association “Orlando”.

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<sup>639</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 4. Section 4.5 *Serás Hombre*

## Chapter 6. Italian Case Studies.

### 6.1 *Pays Barbare/Barbaric Land* (Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, 2013)

Insolent and hideously farcical, fascism returns again. We sense a feeling of concern. We are plunged into a dark night, we don't know where we are going. And you? (*Pays Barbare*. Min. 1:01:19).

*Pays Barbare* is the last documentary directed by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi. The French company “Les Films d’Ici” produced it because, despite being worldwide famous audiovisual creators, they Lucchi didn’t manage to find a producer in Italy. This film is not explicitly located within the Italian feminist agenda, nor does it have gender in/equality as its main subject matter. However, I decided to include it as one of my case studies because the material-discursive practices employed by the filmmakers to denounce fascism and the Italian colonialist project provide an important example of countervisuality that can be understood from, and employed by, a feminist lens, as a diffraction apparatus that makes the world intelligible in ways that visualise and subvert practices that have employed gender in the organisation and legitimisation of social inequalities.

As with the Spanish case studies, the analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. Regarding form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film, identifying the narrative waves into which it is divided. Then I close-read it with the theoretical apparatus developed in the previous chapters. As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi in interviews they gave to experts such as Rinaldo Censi (2013). I diffactively read such insights through a sample of online reviews. I got in touch via e-mail with Gianikian to ask him for an interview. Unfortunately, this wasn’t possible due to health issues and the fact that Ricci Lucchi passed away in February 2018.

#### 6.1.1 Form and Content: Countervisuality against the Colonial Frame

*Pays Barbare* can be divided into thirteen segments, some of which are subdivided into specific sections. The segments can then be classified into six narrative waves that are entangled throughout the film: wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive

voice-over; wave 4, singing voice-over; wave 5, reading voice-over; and wave 6, photos. Each segment is described below.<sup>640</sup>

1. Credits and title. The names of the production companies (Les Films d'Ici, ARTE France, and La Lucarne) appear in red capital letters on a black screen, followed by the title of the film and the names of the two filmmakers and the two producers, Sylvie Brenet and Serge Lalou. There's no sound at all.

2. Introduction: The corpse of Benito Mussolini (wave 1, archive footage). The whole sequence, lasting ten minutes, is mute. The screen remains black as we see two didascalical indications in red capital letters: "April 29, 1945, Milan, Piazzale Loreto" and "The corpse of Il Duce". Next, there's a quote from Italo Calvino, also in red letters: "After initiating so many massacres without images, the final images of him are those of his massacre" (Min 00:40). The sequence then shows slow motion footage painted in dark blue, sometimes moving photogram by photogram, of long and wide shots of the corpses of Mussolini, his lover Clara Petacci and five more men, surrounded by a crowd at Piazzale Loreto.

The camera pans across dozens of men and women, who celebrate, yell and raise their arms. Some of them look directly into the camera, smiling in most of the cases. In one shot, the people are retreating. In a few shots, cars try to pass through the crowd. The corpses are encircled by a group of men, one of whom has a film camera, while many others hold rifles. In one shot we see a man walking through the corpses, as another man records with a big camera film. In another shot, one of the men with a rifle bends towards the corpses, picking up papers lying around them. The sequence finishes with a slow pan, photogram by photogram, of the crowd celebrating euphorically, gazing directly into the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: euphoria and rage.

3. The imperial dream of Benito Mussolini (wave 1, archive footage; and wave 2, music).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red capital letters: "Libya 1926. Il Duce's Napoleonic Year. From the dream of the Empire's conquest to the practical transposition of the African undertaking" (Min. 10:05). Next we see three different moments of an official ceremony and military parades presided by Mussolini in

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<sup>640</sup> The language spoken in the film is French, with English or Italian subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. Access to the film can be requested directly from the production company, "Les Films d'Ici", at its website: <<http://www.lesfilmsdici.fr/en/catalog/1213-siecle-chien-loup.html>>.

Libya. The footage is in slow motion and painted in a yellowish-reddish tone. Tense background music starts gradually and accompanies the whole sequence.

3.1 Mussolini's conquest ceremony. The opening image is a wide shot of Mussolini walking across a square, surrounded by his army and by Libyan representatives. Wide shot of Mussolini riding a horse as he gives a speech. Behind him, dozens of children with uniforms stand up. Wide shot of the children making the fascist salute. Long shot of Mussolini on his horse. Wide top shot of the square full of people. Wide shot of Libyan men riding their horses around the square, followed by a wide shot of Mussolini and his soldiers also riding their horses. Wide shot of rows of children marching in uniforms and rows of Italian soldiers. Medium close-up of Mussolini. Behind him, there's a white couple wearing elegant western clothes; the man observes him and the woman looks into the camera. Wide shot of Libyan soldiers marching followed by the medium close-up of Mussolini and the white public behind him.

3.2 Mussolini's military parade in the city. Wide shot of Mussolini in a car, waving at the crowd, flanked by soldiers on horses. On the left side of the photogram, Libyan women totally covered in clothes, make the fascist salute. Long shot of Mussolini walking with his soldiers towards the camera. Long shot of Mussolini standing in front of a group of Libyan women; the one on the extreme left angle makes the fascist salute, Mussolini sees her and holds her hand, as she bows before him. Long shot of Mussolini walking with a group of men behind him, and a long shot of him, standing in front of a Libyan woman. Long shot of a group of black musicians performing in front of Mussolini and the crowd. In a medium shot, there's a pan movement from Mussolini, his soldiers and men (some of whom look into the camera) to the three black musicians playing their drums and flutes.

Wide shot of the crowds making the fascist salute as Mussolini and his men walk out of the square, and then as they go away in their cars. Long shot of Mussolini entering a balcony, where soldiers and women in elegant western clothes receive him with the fascist salute. He kisses the hand of a woman. This is followed by a wide top shot of Libyan people standing before him; some men are dancing and a soldier gives instructions among the crowd. Wide shot of Mussolini standing at the edge of the balcony, saluting the people. Wide top shot of the crowd standing below, some of which respond with the fascist salute. The sequence finishes with a closer shot of Mussolini at the balcony, standing next to a woman and making the fascist salute. The image is very damaged, due to the old state of the photogram.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: awe and latent rage.

4. The trip to Tripoli (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3 reflexive voice-over; and wave 4, singing voice-over)

The screen remains black as we see a didascallic indication in red capital letters: “On the way to Tripoli. April 1926”. The sequence starts mute with a wide top shot of a ship traversing the sea with dozens of people onboard. The footage retains the yellowish-reddish tone from the previous sequence. Then we see a long shot of women and men on the ship, looking at another ship that passes in front of them. Soft piano music begins to play as we see a long shot of a group of five young white women with skirts, playing and dancing in a circle on the ship, surrounded by dozens of women and men who look at them.

Top shot of a group of three men and three women also playing in circles. As these images appear, a female voice-over sings: “We play and dance on the Mediterranean. On the fringes of a Europe that today rejects those who flee war and hunger. And accept the risk of drowning at sea. Bottomless grave” (Min. 16:55). The music stops and the same phrases are repeated slowly by a male voice-over (Min. 17:40). Long shot of a man standing on a box, next to the boat rudder, giving a speech in front of a group of ten women and two men.

4.1 Animated music of drums starts playing as the same male voice-over says: “African adventure for entrepreneurs, financiers, administrators, explorers, doctors, priests, nuns and missionaries, all eager to tear Africans away from superstition and slavery” (Min. 17:56). Meanwhile, in medium shot, we see white women and men who arrive in the ship, as well as the captain, all of them smiling at the camera. Then we see a long shot of women and men getting out of the ship, aided by Libyan men. Among those who arrive, there’s a smiling catholic priest.

Affects/emotions evoked in this sequence: joy and anger.

5. The occupation of Libya (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; and wave 3, reflexive voice-over)

The music changes, but it’s still animated with drums. Long shot, also in a yellowish tone, of white men and one woman riding camels, which are conducted by Libyan men; they move towards the camera, smiling and waving their hands. Wide shot of a street in Libya, where we can see eight Libyan children and an Italian soldier, all of them looking towards the camera. These photographs have a reddish tone. A male voice-over says: “1922-1932. The occupation of Libya. No mercy for the ‘rebels’ whose



property is seized, be it goods or real estate” (18:46). This scene closes with a travelling shot, in the same reddish tone, of a Libyan landscape with Italian and local people.

5.1 Killings and deportations. The music continues and the footage retains the reddish tone. Wide shot of an official ceremony, in which two Libyan children from the foreground look directly into the camera. Wide top shot of a square in which there are five cars and dozens of men. Next there’s a closer shot of one of the buildings of the square. The male voice-over says: “100,000 Libyans are deported between July and December 1930. No prisoners were taken, they shot everyone, men, women and children” (Min. 19:02). Then we see the negative photograph of the long shot of a white old man in front of dozens of soldiers; the same image is then shown in positive. He makes the fascist salute, and in the next shot we see the white men and women he is standing in front of, who also respond with the fascist salute. Extreme wide shot of a Libyan landscape. The sequence closes with a long shot of a group of white women and men who walk towards the camera smiling.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

6. Love letter and postcard from an Italian textile worker to her lover, a soldier (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over; and wave 5 reading voice-over).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red capital letters: “A holiday to celebrate the ‘new spirit’ of collaboration between industrialists and the working class. Italy 1926” (Min. 19:48). The whole sequence presents the footage in a sepia tone. It starts with a wide shot of three buses full of female workers, passing through a gate. The images are accompanied by non-diegetic guitar music. As the bus passes in front of the camera, the women smiling from its windows, a didascalical text in white appears: “A textile firm working for the Libyan war effort” (Min. 20:14). The camera gets closer to the faces of the women and pans towards the right; then it zooms into a close shot of one of the women, who smiles.

6.1 The banquet and the party. The guitar music continues. Top shot of a cat eating something from the floor, next to somebody else’s shoes. Medium shot of a smiling waitress that looks into the camera; in the background we see dozens of people sitting at long tables. Long shot of the waiters coming out with food trays. The music changes, from guitar to piano, as the image turns into a wide panning shot of the women sitting at the table, drinking, eating and laughing. A female voice-over says: “We have

found several letters from a young worker to her gunner fiancé stationed in Tobruk, during the Libyan war” (Min. 21:33).

We see different shots of the party, as the female voice-over reads one of these letters. The images include close shots of the women looking at the camera (among which, the woman who was presented in a close shot on the bus from the previous scene), long shots of the music band playing, and of the people dancing, most of them highly aware of the camera. The scene closes with a wide shot of men waving flags as they walk away. The letter from 1925, written by “Benvenuta”, says: “My dear Riccardo, where has our love gone? It isn’t a passing fancy for me. Do you find me ugly? Or have you found a woman there? Unless your parents have written to you to say they weren’t pleased with me, that they would prefer a country girl” (Min. 21:55).

6.2 Catholic women’s college. As the letter closes with a “farewell”, the scene changes to a wide panning shot of the young students of a catholic women’s school, standing in line with their uniforms. One of them is holding a flag; the camera zooms into her, first as a medium shot and then in a close shot, as she smiles and gazes directly into the camera. The female voice-over says: “Benvenuta comments on a postcard from Libya: You say you laugh when you see how these people are dressed. What look like rags to us are in fact their traditional costumes” (Min. 23:15). The sequence closes with medium shots of the young girls standing behind nuns, who wear their traditional costumes and big white cornettes. They all look directly into the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, sadness, distress, and fear.

7. Carnival (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; and wave 3, reflexive voice-over)

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red capital letters: “Carnival” (Min. 23:43). The sequence opens with the wide shot of a carnival float in the middle of the street; it shows a huge white man with a hat, and on the foreground a cameraman records it. The footage has a sepia tone and, as the camera pans across the street, we can see how deteriorated it is. The footage then changes, this time it has a darker, greyish tone. We see the medium shot of one of the big carnival figures as slow piano music starts playing and a female voice-over says:

Carnival. Carnival time-contestation was one of the tactics used by the superior “caste” to establish its power. Arabs, black Africans... A reference to those called “discoveries”, a euphemism that designated brutal conquests. Carnival is a

corrosive acid... In actual fact, those in power rule as absolute masters. Harsh. Merciless (Min. 24:07).

As we listen to the voice, we see a sequence of wide shots of the carnival; the footage shows signs of deterioration. First, a huge male figure pushing what looks like a giant flowerpot, in which several women and a child stand; then, slow motion images of a group of black people with white skirts dancing around. The next footage is even more damaged, harder to see; there's another carnival float on which people are disguised as members of the nobility, and two more people wearing masks.

As the image changes to the wide shot of a carnival float with men wearing Arab costumes, still with the greyish-sepia tone, the music changes to a more animated tone, with drums. The succession of carnival wide shots continues: a carnival float with musical instruments, another one with men disguised as soldiers and conquerors, a group of men disguised as farmers walking in front of the flowerpot carnival float from a previous shot, a carnival float with young women dressed in ancient Greek-like clothing, another one full of flowers and one with people throwing stuff to those watching. As the music gets lower, the female voice-over repeats the same fragment about the carnival up to the phrase "brutal conquests" (Min. 26:00). In the slow motion footage, we see a group of men wearing masks and suits, another carnival float with a female figure, four men dressed as clowns passing by in a car, a floating car that resembles a pirate boat, and another one with a queen on a throne.

The music of drums changes, as we see wide shots of young and old men with uniforms, marching and walking around. The female voice-over says the last three sentences, "Carnival is a corrosive acid. In actual fact, those in power rule as absolute masters. Harsh. Merciless" (Min. 27:15), accompanied by piano music, as we see the wide shot of a carnival float that resembles a farm, pulled by horses, in which smiling people stand. The Italian flag is on the foreground, attached to a tree.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, joy and distress.

8. The military and civilian parades of fascism (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; and wave 3, reflexive voice-over).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red capital letters: "The 1930s in Italy. The regime's military and civilian parades" (Min. 27:36). The sequence opens with negative footage in a blue tone, showing a wide shot of a military parade in front of a catholic altar, from which the priest, standing next to a military escort

holding the Italian flag, blesses everyone. The background music consists of a series of isolated drum sounds.

The image changes to negative footage in a sepia tone. The music still consists of the sound of drums, getting tenser. As diverse wide and long shots of military parades appear on the screen, with some of the frames delayed and others fast forwarded, a male voice-over says: “They obeyed and collaborated in a policy that pursued a bloody and cruel conquest. They need uniforms, costumes, in short, it’s all a matter of appearance” (Min. 27:58).

8.1 Civilian Parades. The image changes to positive footage in a sepia-reddish tone, with long shots of dozens of young schoolgirls wearing skirts, marching together. The music with the sound of drums continues. The footage is deteriorated and overexposed; there’s a jump cut within the footage, so that this time we see schoolboys marching along with their uniforms. There’s another long shot of the schoolgirls marching and then, after another jump cut with overexposed frames, we see young women marching in the same uniform, and young men marching while holding a flag. Long shot of civilians, women and men of different ages, marching in the street. The deteriorated footage is delayed.

A male voice-over says: “Individuals, neither perverse nor sadistic, but normal. Horrifyingly normal” (Min. 30:12). The camera pans across a group of male musicians and then more civilians marching; the male voice-over adds: “Fascism is a form of government through which a whole people can be dominated to the extent that it’s possible to abuse them in order to dominate other peoples” (Min. 30:47). The sequence closes with a wide shot of a luminous sign that states “Fondatore Duce”. The sound of the drums slowly fades away.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, distress, shame and horror.

9. Images of colonial Ethiopia (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red letters: “1935-1936: Original title-card. Ethiopia: for this primitive and barbaric land the age of civilization has now arrived.” (Min. 31:32). The sequence starts with the long shot of a man with a spear, followed by the long shot of a dozen of men with spears and knives, dancing around in a rural landscape. The footage, which is in a reddish tone, is shot against the sun, so that we only see silhouettes. Just at the end of the scene, drums’ music starts playing in the background.

9.1 Ritual dances and the search for images. The footage is now in a sepia tone. Medium shot of a young black woman wearing a necklace and a tunic on her shoulders; she doesn't look into the camera. A male voice-over says: "We recently went back to search film archives to look for photograms of Ethiopia-Abyssinia from the Italian colonial period" (Min. 32:32). The images are long and medium shots of black men and women dancing in circles. As the camera goes back to the woman from the previous shot, the male voice-over adds: "The bare bodies of the women and the 'body' of the film, this stock damaged and torn even from countless viewings" (Min. 32:54). Then we see a medium shot of another young black woman with a necklace and a tunic, dancing without looking into the camera, followed by the medium shot of two black men dancing.

9.2 Racism now and then, here and there. Long shot of a woman, a man and two children sitting outside a house; she has her breast bare and one of the kids is naked. A male voice-over says: "Certain words appear in one card after another: 'type', 'barbaric', 'marauder', 'primitive', 'devious', 'proverbial wariness', 'bigamy'. Zoological vocabulary is applied" (Min. 33:26). Long shots of black men and women, sitting inside a river. To the music, which started playing since the ritual dances images, rhythmic voices are added.

As we see two close-ups and one medium shot of a black smiling young girl, who shyly looks into the camera, the male voice-over says: "Today, in Europe, racism is spreading. People arm themselves to drive out the poor and disturbing foreigners to send them back to their original hell" (Min. 34:19). There's another close-up of a black child, followed by the medium shot of a black woman breastfeeding a baby, and then a close shot of the baby. As the image changes to close-ups of a black young woman who fixes her hair, the male voice-over says: "I remember a letter from Abyssinia by Arthur Rimbaud: 'The people of the Harar are neither more stupid, nor more dishonest than the white Negroes of so-called 'civilized' countries'" (Min. 35:04).

Long shot of a white man wearing a colonial explorer's outfit, washing the hair and neck of a young black woman who sits in the middle of the frame, looking at the ground; a young naked black boy stands next to her, with a jar of water. The white man is smiling; at some point, the young boy looks at the camera, smiling as well. Close shot of the hands of the man around the woman's neck. Medium shot of the man and the woman, as he dries her neck with a handkerchief; both smile. Close shot of the face of the woman, who looks upwards and smiles; the music stops, and the sequence finishes with a medium shot of her smiling, with her shirt open, so that her breasts are exposed.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: shame and anger.

10. The war massacres (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over; wave 4, singing voice-over; and wave 5, reading voice-over).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red letters: “Eastern Africa 1935-1937. There was no conflict, no tension, no butchery, no bloodshed... and so no consequences. The massacres went undocumented” (Min. 37:33). The sequence opens with a travelling of the camera across a semidesertic landscape with several animal corpses scattered around. The footage is sepia and the background music is tense and dramatic. A male voice-over says: “A telegram from Mussolini: ‘Approval of the use of gas for superior reasons of national defence. To finish with the rebels, use gas’” (Min. 38:10). The footage changes to a wide panning shot of a military air base, where there are nearly ten men. The male voice-over continues reading the telegram: “I authorise again a policy of terror and extermination of rebels and collusive populations” (Min. 38:35). The scene closes with a long shot of two soldiers standing by the missiles.

10.1 The Italian air attack according to the Ethiopian emperor. The music changes to soft and nostalgic piano tones. The scene opens with a wide panning shot of six Italian aircrafts getting ready to take off. A series of aerial shots of the Ethiopian landscape, taken from the aircraft are mixed with a few shots of the pilots inside of it, as a female voice-over narrates:

Emperor Haile Selassie, June 30, 1936. The country seemed to be crumbling. The silence became more oppressive by the day over the magnificent high plateaus where the horizons are so vast. And so pure. Neither men nor animals could breathe. All living beings who had been touched by the light rain that fell from the planes, who had drunk the poisoned water or eaten contaminated food, fled screaming and sought refuge in the huts or deep in the forest to die there. There were corpses everywhere, in every bush, in every tree, wherever refuge seemed possible. But there were even more spread out there, in broad daylight, in full sight, for death arrived at top speed and many did not have time to seek a refuge to die in peace. Very quickly, an unbearable stench spread over the whole region. For the Italian airmen, it was no longer a war but a game. What risk was there in shooting the dead and the dying whose eyes had been burned by the gas? (Min. 39:44).

The female voice-over repeats the last question in a singing voice with a lament-like tone, as we see a wide shot of the aircraft landing in front of two black women passing by.

10.2 The Italian occupation. The scene opens with a wide shot of a street in Ethiopia, Italian soldiers walk next to Ethiopian men and women, one of whom looks shyly into the camera. The background music is tense, as a male voice-over says: “Telegram from Il Duce: ‘No agreement. I want everything. Including the emperor’s head. No one is more in favour than I am of a harsh war. In other words, war’” (Min. 43:00).

Next we see a wide panning shot of public buildings and a railway station, where a few Italian soldiers stand. The last two sentences, “No one is more in favour than I am of a harsh war. In other words, war” (Min. 43:48), are repeated by the female voice-over, as the music changes to soft piano tones and we see a wide shot of a black woman with a baby, encountering an Italian soldier who reacts with hostility, pointing at her, as she slightly looks towards the camera and keeps on walking. The photographs of this encounter are then amplified, repeated and delayed until the moment when she looks towards the camera.

Wide shot of a low river through which a couple of cars full of soldiers pass by. The background music is tense. Long shots of two black men inside the river, followed by images of two old women with five horses. Long shot of a busy street in Ethiopia, in which soldiers and horses occupy the main area, while the local people walk on the sides. A male voice-over says: “1936. Extract from a balcony speech by Mussolini: ‘... an empire of peace, because Italy wants peace, for herself and all peoples’. But, at the time, Mussolini was already preparing the military intervention in Spain” (Min. 45:00).

Long shot of another street, in which Eritrean soldiers and local civilians walk by, with horses that carry several boxes. Long panning shot of Ethiopian men and women standing on the side of a road, waiting; one man smiles nervously as he looks into the camera. One woman sits down with a worried expression in her face; the camera zooms in up to a close-up of her face; we then see in the foreground, the arm of an Italian soldier who gives the people orders to move; the footage is delayed as we see the woman standing up and moving in a nervous way, as if being scared of them. The sequence finishes with the long shot of a white hunter with a rifle, squatting next to the corpse of a deer; he smiles as he touches it and then looks directly into the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, terror and distress.

11. War photos (wave 6, photos; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over; and wave 4, singing voice-over).

The screen remains black as we see a didascalical indication in red letters: “An Eastern African war album. 1935-1937” (Min. 47:56). The sequence is composed of a series of photos, some developed and some still within the photographic roll. In the case of the latter, they are shown by a hand that appears within the frame in a special light, as in a negative photo image. Some photos move slightly.

11.1 The dictatorship workers and their weapons. The first image is the black and white photo of a young boy dressed as a soldier who makes the fascist salute. Then, photo roll images of a soldier sitting on an aircraft; two soldiers standing next to another aircraft with a skull and the name “La Disperata” on it; a man painting something on one side of another aircraft; eight men (probably technicians, judging by their clothes) standing in front of an aircraft with the Italian flag on it; a man next to the aircraft propeller; a group of Eritrean soldiers posing with spears and rifles; a bigger group of Eritrean soldiers; a white technician standing next to the aircraft; a white man dressed as an explorer; a pilot inside the aircraft; five Italian soldiers posing for the camera; and two soldiers on top of a military tank.

As we see another photo of a group of soldiers with tanks, soft piano music begins to play and a female voice-over says: “An army of specialized workers, the dictatorship’s labourer, apply their efforts to the apparatus of destruction. Do these men care about the consequences of their work? Capable of not seeing the madness and the horrors of war” (Min. 48:50). The images from a photographic roll continue to appear as she speaks: a soldier aiming his rifle; an Italian soldier posing with two Eritrean ones; two angles of a military aircraft; and a developed photo in sepia, of six men standing next to an aircraft. As the voice says, “Do these men care about the consequences of their work?”, we see once more the image of the two men standing next to an aircraft with a skull and the name “La Disperata” on it; the camera zooms in on them.

Then we see a detail of a developed sepia photo of them, as one holds a pigeon by its wings, probably a reference to the flag of the fascist Italy army; the camera then zooms out so that we see the bigger image. A photo of a white man with a black child who makes the fascist salute, next to three Eritrean soldiers and two military aircrafts. A group of five black children, one holding a rifle, and two of them holding birds by their wings once again.



The female voice-over repeats the same phrases, but this time in a singing voice, as the images from the photographic roll continue to appear. The photo of a black woman, a group of white and black men with a camel behind, and once again the image of the two men standing next to an aircraft with a skull and the name “La Disperata” on it. Three soldiers, four technicians next to an army aircraft, three people walking next to a deserted landscape, and the two men from the image of “La Disperata” playing with the pigeon. Then, we see two white men, soldiers or technicians, sitting in a room, next to a desk; the camera zooms in the sepia photo, so that we can see that they have photos of other people, as well as cut-out images of female faces, and the drawing of a landscape with an Arab man and a camel; then we see a photo of the same moment but from a slightly different angle, and this time with another bluish tone. A photo of a woman and a man with a small child in the street, looking into the camera, other people behind them also look at it; four people by a river; the portrait of a black young woman smiling to the camera; a group of five black children in the street.

The portrait of a young black woman wearing a white dress is presented in four moments: first a close-up of her face, then a medium shot of her, a detail of her sandals and then the complete portrait; she doesn't smile. The portrait of a young child with a younger one and a baby, in front of huts. Detail of a black woman sitting next to a white man, she looks uncomfortable; the camera zooms out, so that we can see that there's another white man squatting next to them and looking into the camera.

As we see the image of a pilot next to the aircrafts, a male voice-over says: “Weapons of mass exterminations and mustard gas bombs are loaded onto planes. These weapons of extermination are still used today, even though, as in the past, those responsible deny their use” (Min. 50:47). As he speaks, we see three different images of aircrafts in the sky; a photo of two black men and a woman sitting in the street; the full shot of a white man standing up with a proud gesture; the close-up of the face of a black woman, from which the camera zooms out to a medium close-up portrait; and a white young man posing with three young black men in front of a small hut, on the right side of the photo we manage to see a soldier; and an overturned truck.

The music continues as the full shot of two white men and a black child reading, below a sign that reads “Operai Caproni” (i.e. workers for the Caproni aircraft manufacturer) is presented with the entire negative film, so that we can see the perforations on both sides of the frame. An aerial landscape; a detail of an aircraft; a half-naked man standing next to an aircraft under reparation in a negative film of which we

can see the perforations on the lower part of the frame; the medium shot of a young black woman who looks into the camera with a worried expression, whose image is also presented in the film negative with perforations on both sides; and a white man drinking water from a river, which is then presented in the negative film, next to a very similar image, so that the frame is occupied by this damaged and slightly torn negative film.

11.2 Italian families and couples during the war. As the torn image of a white man holding a bone next to his mouth appears, the male voice-over says: “Do you love me, Maria?” is written on the back of a photo. The words date from May, 1936, the month of the empire’s conquest” (Min. 51:37). As he speaks we see a black child carrying a baby, with two other children, on a negative film perforated on both sides. Next, two photos of three young white women with skirts, probably in Italy, and the photo of a white toddler.

As we see the photo of a white heterosexual couple (the woman is the one who had appeared in the previous image of a female trio) with a baby in the countryside, the male voice-over says: “The wife and mother. Photos of families in Italy during the war in Eastern Africa” (Min. 51:55). Another photo of a heterosexual Italian family in the countryside; a white young boy in the countryside; another white young boy dressed with a military uniform and making the fascist salute; a white woman with two children; and the woman that we had seen previously, first with three kids in the beach, and then in a countryside landscape, followed by a full shot of a white man with a tuxedo.

The piano music goes on, as we see a seascape with two big ships; the negative is deteriorated and it shows several fingerprints on it; the camera then zooms out so that it shows the complete finger of the hand that is holding it. Within the frame now we see a negative film, partially torn, with the images of white men and women on a ship. Then a photo of a white man with a black girl in Ethiopia, he smiles while she looks sad; dozens of Eritrean soldiers; a portrait of three of them, posing with their weapons. The foreground is now occupied by two fingers that hold a negative film, on which we can see a white woman.

A male voice-over says: “The measures taken by the Fascist government to protect the race and to avoid interbreeding that was deemed unacceptable are well known” (Min. 52:35). Meanwhile, in the frame we see two white women and two men, next to a car on whose car plate we can read “Eritrea”; another picture of the two couples; another couple looking into the camera; and two more photos of the couples posing with the car. Two wide shots of a group of men holding a person that looks like a woman,

followed by a group photo of the nine white men and a man standing next to what seems to be a grave.

The foreground of the frame is occupied by the fingers that hold the negative film of a white man standing in front of seven Eritrean soldiers and an aircraft; we see the perforations and the fingers that move slightly. Full shot of an Italian soldier; wide shot of an Ethiopian landscape; three soldiers standing on the road; a deteriorated piece of negative film of which the lower perforations are visible, showing four soldiers having lunch; then smiling at the table with four more men; a group of ten aircraft technicians; a full shot of two of them; a full shot of one of them holding a bird with the wings spread out, possibly a reference to the flag of fascist Italy army; a soldier squatting, pointing at a wall full of insects; a group of soldiers in a car, while another one walks towards the camera; an aerial view of an official ceremony; the Italian flag hanging from a column; a group of black men sitting in the desert; a medium shot of a young black woman, whose breast is partially visible; the same woman holding a white man, on a negative film of which we see the perforations; the camera then zooms into the image, so that we see both their faces; another couple of a white man and a black woman, but this time the camera zooms out, so that we see it within the negative film; finally, the same woman with another black woman and two white men.

11.3 The Italian and Eritrean soldiers' profiles. As we see a wide shot of an aircraft and an aerial landscape, a male voice-over says: "The 'Disperata' squadron, commanded by Ciano, flies Caproni planes. They descend to a low altitude and open fire on peasants with rifles and pistols" (Min. 54:06). We then see two portraits of these men, followed by a long shot of black civilians on a boat and a long shot of a man next to an aircraft under reparation; the negative film, which is slightly veiled, is moved within the frame. A portrait of a smiling white man with a group of black women and children; a full shot of two black women, one of them riding a white horse, followed by a medium shot of the same woman on the horse, whose blouse is slightly open, so that her breasts are partially visible, and yet another close-up of her, as she looks into the camera. A white man standing up next to a group of black people, most of them squatting, in a city square; a medium shot of a black woman who looks defiantly into the camera; a landscape with three camels; two white men posing with a camel and two black men; a big group of Eritrean soldiers; two black boys; a black boy saluting in a military style towards the camera; and the portrait of two black women.

As we see a white man standing in front of an aircraft, the male voice-over says: “The fascist man has been perfectly educated. He exalts drinking and eating, love, work and absence of thought” (Min. 55:12). While this is being said, we see a full shot of a white man standing next to a black man who holds a rifle; a very deteriorated full shot of another white man; the full shot of a black woman; the full shot of a white man with a cat, wearing a swimsuit; and the wide shot of a white man inside a military vehicle still under construction.

The male voice-over says: “The Ascari, the Eritrean soldiers serving in the Italian colonial army. Ethnical hatred and religion are used as mortal weapons” (Min. 55:29). As he speaks, we see a group of Eritrean men with a few white men, around a cross, probably from a grave; the image is then divided into three segments that are zoomed in, so that we see details of their clothes and faces. Full shot of two white men; wide shot of a funeral conducted by Eritrean soldiers, surrounded by a few white men; another portrait of the black woman with a white dress that we had seen previously.

Then there’s a series of isolated images in negative film; in some cases we can only see shapes. Three men standing next to a column stating “base aerea” (aerial base); an aerial view of a military basecamp; a white man with two Eritrean soldiers (he holds them by the shoulders in a patronising gesture); full shots of men and women, most of them Ethiopians, in the river, with children; white men posing next to black families; a white man on a motorcycle; a sinking ship; and different views of the military aircrafts.

As the male voice-over says, “The bullet holes are painted to highlight them. They are emblems” (Min. 56:59), we see various isolated images in negative film of cars and aircrafts with bullet marks, and then a wide shot with seven men next to such vehicles. A wide shot of a big ship in a harbour full of people; three different views of aircraft structures being built; two full shots of women; full shots of white men with children; a group of men; and some men riding camels.

A female voice-over begins to say in a singing voice: “The pleasure of war. The feeling of being sheltered from need. Physical activity. Contact with the machines of war. Colonial eroticism. Could all that explain the success of Fascism? So that’s it?” (Min. 57:52). Meanwhile, the isolated images in negative film continue with a wide shot of soldiers; a wire fence; the medium shot of a man inside a tank; and various shots of groups of soldiers. When she asks the final question, we see the positive print of five of the images previously shown, with the soldiers in different situations, with a woman dressed in white in two cases, with the aircrafts. All of the images are shown individually,

held by a hand within the frame. The male voice-over then says: “Each period has its fascism” (Min. 58:49).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, shame, love, joy and fear.

12. Epilogue (wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over)

There’s no sound, as we see the negative footage in slow motion of black women dancing with their breasts bare. They are nine, they clap and jump. The material is visibly deteriorated and has a bluish tone. In the last shot, we can only see the women’s silhouettes. The frame goes totally black, as a female voice-over says in Italian (all the previous texts are originally said in French): “Insolent and hideously farcical, Fascism returns again. We sense a feeling of concern. We are plunged into a dark night, we don’t know where we are going. And you?” (Min. 1:01:19).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress and fear.

13. Credits. In red letters on a black background we read the title of the film and the name of the filmmakers. Original music by Giovanna Marini and Keith Ullrich. Voices of Marini, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi; the last two are also credited for the editing. Apart from Les Films d’Ici, there’s a production credit of ARTE-France and a participation credit of the Centre National du Cinema et de l’Image Animée, the Centre National des Artes Plastiques, and the Procirep Angoa-Société des Producteurs. Feltrinelli is credited as the Italian distributor. The laboratories credited are based in Rome, Turin and Paris.

### 6.1.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

**Diffraction**, as explained in chapter 1, is a concept used in physics to describe wave behaviour, i.e. how waves combine when they overlap, and their apparent spreading “when they encounter an obstruction” (Barad 2007: 28).<sup>641</sup> What we see in *Pays Barbare* is that six different **narrative waves** are entangled through the editing: wave 1, archive footage; wave 2, music; wave 3, reflexive voice-over; wave 4, singing voice-over; wave 5, reading voice-over; and wave 6, photos. A diffraction apparatus is a material-discursive practice that, depending on its construction, makes phenomena “emerge in particular ways, and through particular cuts” (Sauzet 2015: 41). Therefore, to employ

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<sup>641</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 1. Section 1.1 A Diffractive Methodology for the Visualisation of Differences and their Effects

diffraction as the approach to analyse a film, means paying attention to the importance of the form in which it produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality**, in terms of how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). In *Pays Barbare*, the filmmakers work entirely with found footage and photos (waves 1 and 6) made by someone else with a certain intentionality, which they subvert and question with strategies like manipulation of the footage itself and integration of diverse types of voice-over (waves 3, 4 and 5).

By means of a revision of archive footage that goes from 1922 up to “Il Duce’s” death in 1945, *Pays Barbare* offers a critical perspective on the Italian colonialist project in Libya and Ethiopia during Mussolini’s fascist regime. The quote of Italo Calvino that opens the film, “After initiating so many massacres without images, the final images of him are those of his massacre” (Min 00:40), provides spectators with a key for understanding the filmmakers’ approach to the images available for the reconstruction of these events. Against the authoritarian way of visualising history that helped sustain a specific authority, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi claim their “right to look where none technically exists” (Mirzoeff 2011: 478), i.e. **countervisuality**.

The filmmakers’ intervention on the footage provides an ironic reflection on which images are available for public vision and which one’s aren’t: “Eastern Africa 1935-1937. There was no conflict, no tension, no butchery, no bloodshed... and so no consequences. The massacres went undocumented” (Min. 37:33). Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi claim their right to look where the power says there’s nothing to see: they look for what’s hidden in the details of the photograms and point at what lies offscreen. They also express strong counterpoints by means of their own voice-over comments (waves 3 and 4) or with texts re-enacted within the film (wave 5), such as emperor Haile Selassie’s testimony or Benvenuta’s letter.

The montage of the textile worker (segment six) is illustrative of the film’s constant questioning of the colonial gaze: as we see young white girls standing behind Catholic nuns, who wear their costumes and big white cornettes, the re-enacted voice-over of Benvenuta on a postcard from Libya says: “you laugh when you see how these people are dressed. What looks like rags to us are in fact their traditional costumes” (Min. 23:15). The joyful carnival images are also contested with ironic voice-over comments: “In actual fact, those in power rule as absolute masters. Harsh. Merciless” (Min. 24:07).

Another example of a counterpoint is segment four, “The trip to Tripoli”, in which the images of Italian bourgeoisie happily and safely crossing the Mediterranean Sea in

1926 are contrasted with a voice situated in the twenty-first century: “We play and dance on the Mediterranean. On the fringes of a Europe that today rejects those who flee war and hunger. And accept the risk of drowning at sea. Bottomless grave” (Min. 16:55).

The voice-over signals the subjective presence of the filmmakers’ gazes within the film text and puts into dialogue the past with the present. At various moments, it is an open call to reflect on Europe’s current situation: “Today, in Europe, racism is spreading. People arm themselves to drive out the poor and disturbing foreigners to send them back to their original hell” (Min. 34:19). And to denounce war crimes, unpunished both, now and then: “Weapons of mass exterminations and mustard gas bombs are loaded onto planes. These weapons of extermination are still used today, even though, as in the past, those responsible deny their use.” (Min. 50:47). This strategy can be diffractively read with Jacqui Alexander’s methodology in *Pedagogies of crossing* (2005), which opposes a scrambled and palimpsestic time to a linear evolutionary narrative:

The central idea is that of the palimpsest –a parchment that has been inscribed two or three times, the previous text having been imperfectly erased and remaining therefore still partly visible (...). The idea of the “new” structured through the “old” scrambled, palimpsestic character of time, both jettisons the truncated distance of linear time and dislodges the impulse for incommensurability, which the ideology of distance creates. It thus rescrambles the “here and now” and the “then and there” to a “here and there” and a “then and now”, and makes visible what Payal Banerjee calls the ideological traffic between and among formations that are otherwise positioned as dissimilar. (Alexander 2005: 190).

The past haunting the present is a strong element of *Pays Barbare*, as shown in its structure and main thesis. The film follows a chronological order after a flashback: the opening sequence is composed of ten minutes of mute footage recorded on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1945 in Milan, showing Benito Mussolini’s corpse surrounded by a cheerful crowd. In the next sequence, the dead become alive, as we see Mussolini surrounded by his army in Libya in 1926, “Il Duce’s Napoleonic Year” (Min. 10:05). Therefore, the spectator goes from looking at the crowd celebrating Mussolini’s death and profaning his body, to the crowd that celebrates his colonial project by claiming his imperial effigy. Through the

editing that cuts together-apart<sup>642</sup> the first and the second sequence, the ghost of fascism and colonialism is resurrected within the film.

Following Freud's 1919 essay, "The Uncanny", Laura Mulvey explains that there are two affects associated with death: the difficulty of the living ones to imagine their own deaths in the future, and the "dread that the already dead might return to haunt the present from the past" (2006: 37). The people who appear in the footage that Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi work with resemble ghosts. This is particularly strong in the epilogue (sequence twelve), where the spectator is presented with delayed and deteriorated negative footage of black women dancing with bare breasts (figure 31). In the last shot, we can only see the phantasmagorical women's silhouettes, as the voice-over states the film's thesis: "Insolent and hideously farcical, Fascism returns again" (Min. 1:01:19).



**Figure 31.** The past haunting the present. Phantasmagorical images and deteriorated footage

The countervisuality enacted in *Pays Barbare* is not an openly feminist one, in terms of emphasising the role that gender has played in fascism and colonialism. However, it does show a clear understanding from the filmmakers of "their being creators of representation as a political task" (Ruido 2006: 2)<sup>643</sup> and a commitment with critical analysis of social inequalities and oppressions. Moreover, colonialism is a central element for intersectional feminism, and the film provides the spectator with many elements for a **feminist reading**, i.e. one that pays attention to power relations as traversed by gender. For instance, we can read several sequences of the film diffractively with Anne McClintock's book, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. She asserts that:

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<sup>642</sup> Vid. *Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity: How Documentary Cinema Matters

<sup>643</sup> "su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político."



Imperialism cannot be fully understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanics of class or race. Rather, gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise (1995: 6-7).

Most of the white men who appear in the archive footage are soldiers or army technicians, “dictatorship labourers [who] apply their efforts to the apparatus of destruction” (Min. 48:50). The black Eritrean soldiers occupy an inferior position, epitomised by the photo in which a white man holds two of them by the shoulders in a patronising gesture of superiority. “The fascist man has been perfectly educated” (Min. 48:50-55:12): he smiles, poses for the camera, and gives orders.

The latent violence of these encounters is rendered evident by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s strategies of delay/slow motion and zooming in. For example, in segment ten, we see a wide shot of a black woman with a baby encountering an Italian soldier who reacts with hostility, pointing at her, as she looks towards the camera and keeps on walking. The filmmakers amplify the photograms, repeat and delay them until the moment when she looks towards the camera (figure 32). Within the same segment, there’s also a zoom in on the face of an Ethiopian woman, nervously following the instructions of a white soldier.



**Figure 32.** Delay, repetition and *zooming in* to render visible latent hostility

McClintock explains that nations are material and “historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed (...) All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender” (1995: 353). Whereas men are the nation warriors, “neither perverse nor sadistic, but normal. Horrifyingly normal” (Min. 30:12; 48:50), the roles of Italian women within the fascist regime are explicitly referred to in the film as those of: “The wife and mother” (Min. 51:55). The other role for a white woman is that of the loving girlfriend who worries about being rejected by her fiancé’s parents for being a textile worker, rather than “a country girl” (Min. 21:55). In all cases, she only exists and is defined by her relationship with a man.

The representation of black women is different. McClintock coins the concept of “porno-tropics” to define the image of Africa and the Americas in the European colonial imagination: “a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears (...) Women figured as the epitome of sexual aberration and excess” (1995: 22). Following Frantz Fanon’s article “Algeria unveiled” (1959; 1965), McClintock describes “the long western dream of colonial conquest as an erotics of ravishment” (1995: 364), in which Algerian women’s bodies are equalled to “the national body, unveiled and laid bare for the colonials’ lascivious grip” (1995: 364). Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi refer to this as “colonial eroticism” (Min. 57:52). The images of naked black women keep on reappearing in the film until the haunting final sequence.

The **voyeuristic and fetishistic** dimensions of these images are emphasised by the filmmakers in relation to the **materiality** of the film footage: “The bare bodies of the women and the ‘body’ of the film, this stock damaged and torn even from countless viewings” (Min. 32:54). The sequence with which segment nine closes is particularly disturbing. It can be defined as a palimpsest of the sexism and racism of colonial violence: a long shot of a white man washing the hair and neck of a young black woman who sits looking at the ground; after he dries her neck with a handkerchief, she looks upwards and smiles with her shirt open, so that her breasts are exposed, for the white man, the camera and the spectator’s gazes (figure 33).





**Figure 33.** A palimpsest of sexism and racism in colonial violence

Analysing different ads of the British Pears' soap company from the end of the nineteenth century, McClintock argues:

The poetics of cleanliness is a poetics of social discipline (...) the inscription of Africans as dirty and undomesticated, far from being an accurate depiction of African cultures, served to legitimize the imperialists' violent enforcement of their cultural and economic values, with the intent of purifying and thereby subjugating the unclean African body and imposing market and cultural values more useful to the mercantile and imperial economy. Domestic rituals became a technology of discipline and dispossession (1995: 226).

The footage of the people from Ethiopia, particularly in segment nine, is introduced with didascallic texts that show the racist discourses through which it was recorded and mainly seen. Using Mirzoeff's terms (2011), Ethiopians were visualised, i.e. named, categorised and defined, in a way that sustained the colonial authority: "Ethiopia: for this primitive and barbaric land the age of civilization has now arrived" (Min. 31:32); "Certain words appear in one card after another: 'type', 'barbaric', 'marauder', 'primitive', 'devious', 'proverbial wariness', 'bigamy'. Zoological vocabulary is applied" (Min. 33:26). McClintock points out that in the colonial context, the terms "domesticate", "dominate" and "civilize" carry similar connotations:

In the colonies, the mission station became a threshold institution for transforming domesticity rooted in European gender and class roles into domesticity as controlling a colonized people. Through the rituals of domesticity, increasingly global and more often than not violent animals, women, and colonized peoples were wrested from their putatively "natural" yet, ironically, "unreasonable" state of "savagery" and inducted through the domestic progress narrative into a hierarchical relation to white men (1995: 35).

The so-called menace of black women “as the epitome of sexual aberration and excess” (McClintock 1995: 22) was counteracted by “measures taken by the Fascist government to protect the race and to avoid interbreeding that was deemed unacceptable” (Min. 52:35). In the photos (wave 6), Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi show white heterosexual couples, but also several pictures of white men holding, touching and gazing upon black women, whose discomfort is quite evident. However, there are also portraits of Ethiopian women who look defiantly into the camera (figure 34).



**Figure 34.** White couples, white men gazing at black women, and resistance

In this regard, what Mirzoeff points out is that:

For most European travellers, African resistance was only encountered symbolically as resistance to photography. Their books are filled with pictures of Africans permitting themselves to be photographed, often because they had no choice, but withholding consent by refusing to strike a pose or smile. For Europeans, this lack of cooperation was explained as a superstitious fear of cameras, rather than as an acknowledgement that Western military technology was in a position to enforce consent (2009: 136).

Mirzoeff defines visualisation as “a discursive practice for rendering and regulating the real that has material effects” (Mirzoeff 2011: 476). In colonial visualisation, the camera operates as a diffraction apparatus at the service of those in power, i.e. a technology through which human and non-human elements intra-act, making boundaries within phenomena so as to make them intelligible in specific ways:

The camera embodies the panoptic power of collection, display and discipline. If the camera’s claim to truth rested on the science of optics, its effect was to reorder, at a stroke, the hierarchies of world history (....) With photography, western knowledge and western authority became synonymous with the real (McClintock 1995: 123).

Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi work with raw material from a colonial archive, in which the camera has been used as a weapon at the service of the Fascist imperialist project. But, as explained before, they rewrite the material through their **oppositional gaze**, evident in their voice-over comments, their delayed and repeated footage, as well as their detailed explorations within each frame. They also raise **awareness of the filmic material**, for example, by showing its deterioration, by going from positive to negative footage within the same sequence, and by making visible the perforations of the film within the frame. Moreover, during the photo stills segment (11), Gianikian’s own hand holding some of the photos and cinema strips appears within the frame, “offering an added notion of tactility to the images” (de Cuir and de Rosa 2016: 73). For de Cuir and de Rosa, this strategy of dealing with non-human materials responds to “an effort to make corporeal the film fragment, to suture it to the human element” (2016: 73). They call it “tangible cinephilia” (2016: 70) (figure 35).

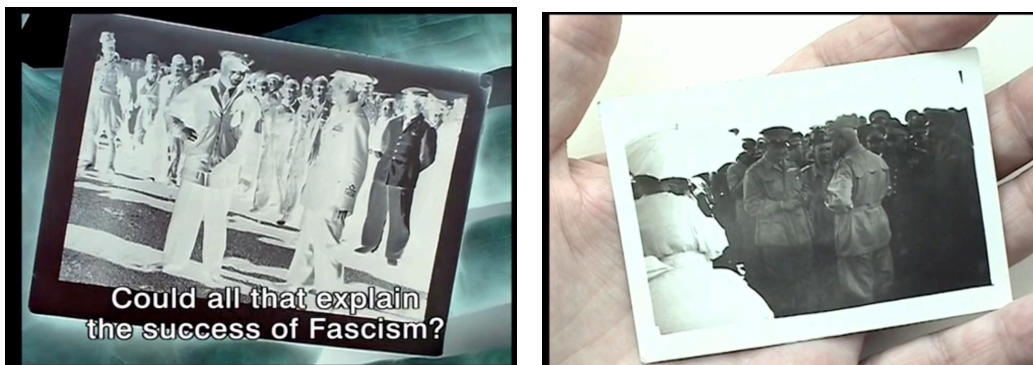


Figure 35. Raising awareness of the material through tactility

In this sense, the filmmakers challenge the **ocularcentrism** of dominant cinema, giving an example of **haptic visuality** (Marks 2000) that triggers physical memories of touch, and renders evident their attention to the concrete materiality of cinema as material and medium. This also adds a layer to the **indexicality** of *Pays Barbare*. As Robert Lumley calls it, the reality in Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's cinema is a "re-recorded reality" (2011: 72). The film strips are indexical signs in three levels: within the frame, held by the filmmaker's hand, they are material and tangible objects in "a relation of physical contact and co-presence" with the body that re-records them (Olivieri 2012: 41); they are also traces of a colonial archive, that entail "a previous temporal contact or existential connection with the object" that they show (Olivieri 2012: 41); and they are also deixis, as they point towards a presence, make present the objects they refer to, i.e. the ghosts from the past that haunt the present.

The **modes of representation** employed by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi so as to work with all these layers are the reflexive and performative ones. The **reflexive mode** calls attention to documentary cinema's constructed character. It makes spectators well aware of the fact that they are watching a film. There's emphasis on the origin of the materials, the cuts that have enacted them, and the manipulations they've gone through:

Far from ignoring certain dimensions and procedures of the image, such as the framing through which the image itself ends up manipulating reality, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's cinema turns these procedures into an object of investigation and a working method. The image no longer reflects reality, but becomes a place to reflect on reality. The film does not look, but looks at itself being looked at. (Lumley 2011: 145).<sup>644</sup>

The reflexive mode of representation is frequently employed in **compilation films**, which are "constructed around a gap or dislocation between the original archival raw material and the new reading offered by its rearrangement" (Mulvey 2011: 251). It is in this new reading that the filmmakers may offer a political commentary that subverts the colonial gaze. The colonial archive carries "the impression of empire, as it were, like a stamp" (Mulvey 2011: 254). However, as Mulvey goes on to explain:

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<sup>644</sup> "Lungi dall'ignorare certe dimensioni e procedure delle immagine, come l'inquadratura attraverso le quali l'immagine stessa finisce per manipolare la realtà, il cinema di Gianikian e Ricci Lucchi fa di quelle procedure un oggetto d'indagine e un metodo di lavoro. L'immagine non riflette più la realtà, ma diventa luogo di riflessione sulla realtà. Il film no guarda, ma si guarda guardare."

On the other hand, the camera sees and film records beyond that authorising source, leaving on the colonial film another impression, perhaps more like the more casual footprint. This impression is derived from imperialism's blind spot, and it is this material residue of a reality unseen (or overlooked) by its perpetrators that dislocates the stamp of colonial discourse (Mulvey 2011: 254).

Segment 11, the photo stills sequence, is carried out in a **performative mode**: The filmmakers produce the reality that they film by holding the photos, commenting on them, and rendering the film's materiality and their own bodies evident within the frame. This reflects Stella Bruzzi's argument that documentary cinema is always a performative act, in which the idea of unmediated transparency is to be replaced "with a performative exchange between subjects, filmmakers/apparatus and spectators" (2000: 6).

In terms of **emotionality**, the film names and performs mainly negative affects and emotions: fear/terror, distress/sadness and hatred/anger. These affects are directly named with the voice-over or can be read in the body expressions of those who appear in the frame. The repetition and the delay/slow motion strategies also elicit these affective responses. In the case of the image, the two examples from segment ten mentioned before provide an example: the black woman with a baby encountering an Italian soldier who reacts with hostility, and the face of a scared Ethiopian woman, nervously following the instructions of a white soldier.

Just as the frames are repeated, some phrases are said twice with an affective intentionality, emphasised with the singing voice-over (wave 4). For example, when Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie's words, "What risk was there in shooting the dead and the dying whose eyes had been burned by the gas?" (Min. 39:44), are repeated with a lament-like tone; or when the Mediterranean is referred to as a "bottomless grave" (Mins. 16:55; 17:40), firstly by the female voice-over and then by the male one.

The contrast between the happy images and the raw voice-over comment of the Mediterranean sea sequence is also present in segment seven, where the celebratory images of the carnival are counterpointed with a painful phrase: "Carnival is a corrosive acid... In actual fact, those in power rule as absolute masters. Harsh. Merciless" (Mins. 24:07; 27:15). A strong sense of **irony** emerges from these contrasts. The only sequence in which we see images of euphoria are those of the profanation of Mussolini's body by the crowd. This sequence is entirely mute, and the tense **music** starts slowly only at the

next sequence, in which the dead had become alive: Mussolini presiding Fascist ceremonies in Libya, almost twenty years before his death. Thus, the music underlines the feeling of estrangement that the whole film has, concluding with the ghostlike images of the final sequence. Overall, *Pays Barbare*'s music conveys a sense of sadness, pain, restlessness and lurking threat.

In the next section, I diffractively read insights raised by Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi in interviews that they have given to experts such as Rinaldo Censi. I also discuss a sample of online reviews.

### **6.1.2 Production and Reception: Entering the Archives of Fascism with an Analytical Camera**

As mentioned before, I got in touch with Yervant Gianikian via e-mail to interview them for this research project, but unfortunately, it wasn't possible to arrange any meeting. Angela Ricci Lucchi's health was very delicate for months and she passed away in February 2018 at the age of seventy-five years old. Therefore, to look at their production practices in this section, I have resorted mainly to three sources: Robert Lumley's comprehensive review of their work (2011); Andrea Lissoni's interview (2012); Rinaldo Censi's essay and interview (2013); and short interviews given by the couple specifically about *Pays Barbare*. All of these insights illuminate different aspects of the film that emerge from diverse gazes.

Of Armenian origin, born in Italy in 1942, Yervant Gianikian studied architecture in Venice and started working as a visual artist since the late sixties, building catalogues of found objects and making short films in Super 8. Angela Ricci Lucchi was also born in Italy in 1942 and studied painting, particularly watercolor in Austria. They met in 1975 and became a sentimental and professional couple ever since then.

The first part of their artistic production is characterised by a series of "scented films", i.e. nineteen performance-based films shot in 8mm or 16mm, mostly with found footage fiction materials, whose screenings were accompanied by the burning of specific essences.<sup>645</sup> Lumley underlines the potential that these films have to subvert the traditional hierarchy of the senses in cinema, by stressing the sense of smell above the

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<sup>645</sup> For example, their first film, *Erat Sora* (1975), was accompanied by rose fragrance, and *Karagoez et les brûlures d'herbes parfumés/Karagoez and the Burners of Scented Herbs* (1979) was accompanied by perfume of damask rose and bitter almonds.



sense of sight (2011: 38). Their last scented film, *Essence d'absinthe/Essence of Absinthe* (1981), made with pornographic found footage material, is the first work in which they problematise the brutalisation of the female body.<sup>646</sup> Particularly, they underline its fragmentation in isolated parts and reflect upon the parallel between the exploitation of the human body and the materiality of the film, which becomes damaged after so many projections (Lumley 2011: 59).

Almost ignored in Italy, these early works were highly valued in England and in the United States of America. An important work from this period is *Cesare Lombroso–Sull'odore del garofano/Cesare Lombroso-Scent of Carnation* (1976), which looks at the catalogue created by the Italian criminologist and physician, who argued that criminality was inherited and could be identified by physical features.<sup>647</sup> This film was key for Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's change towards a more political commitment in their cinema, working only with documentary found footage and exploring the issues that, in their words, obsessed them since then: “the material of violence, of war, of the Orientalist dream, colonialism” (in Lissoni 2012).

In their filmography, they trace a continuity from the violence of colonialism that “anticipates not only the brutality and inhumanity of the First World War, but the extreme consequences to which they will come with fascism. Which, in turn, only gave new vigor to the violence of colonialism and colonial propaganda” (Lumley 2011: 114).<sup>648</sup> Fascism as a subject appears already in their short scented film *Catalogo N. 3. Odore di tiglio intorno alla casa/Catalogue No. 3. Lime Scent around the House* (1977-79), a visual catalogue of the objects that remain in the house of a family of militant fascists, who were shot at the end of the Second World War. According to Lumley, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi regard Mussolini as the most easily recognisable face of Italian fascism, but consider that the fascist ideology:

...is not only manifested in public discourse but in everyday objects and images that penetrate Italian households (...) nor is fascism exclusively identified with a

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<sup>646</sup> Other works in which they deal with the female body and the violent male gaze are *Frammenti elettrici n.3 Corpi/Electric Fragments 3. Bodies* (2003) and the installation *Migrations-corps noir/Migrations-Bodies Black* (2006). The colonial male gaze is also an important element of *Pays Barbare*, as discussed in the previous section.

<sup>647</sup> Lombroso gave theoretical legitimacy to classifications that united the European “criminal” to the “non-European” savage, thus nurturing the ideologies of colonialism and protofascism (Lumley 2011: 43).

<sup>648</sup> “anticipa non solo la brutalità e l'umanità della prima guerra mondiale, ma le estreme conseguenze a cui esse giungeranno col fascismo. Il quale, a sua volta, non fece che dare nuovo vigore alla violenza del colonialismo e della propaganda coloniale.”

period or a particular nation. The phenomenon is found in different spaces, in private places as in public ones, and resurfaces at different times (2011: 117-118).<sup>649</sup>

The other landmark in Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's artistic trajectory was the discovery in 1982 of a collection of old documentary films that had been shot by Luca Comerio, a pioneer documentary filmmaker who had died in 1940. These films were recorded in 9.5mm, a Pathe format that required a projector, which was unavailable in Italy. It was then that they created an apparatus called "analytical camera", which they describe as follows:

It is constructed by two elements: in the first one, the 35mm scrolls vertically and can capture the Lumière perforation and the films with various grades of constriction and decay of the support. The scrolling is manual, given the precariousness of the perforations and the continual risk of combustion of flammable materials. This first part of the camera is the result of the transformation of a contact printer. The second element is an air chamber aligned with the first element from which it absorbs, by transparency, the image. It is a camera with microscopic characteristics, more photographic than cinematic. The camera is equipped with lateral, longitudinal and angular scrolling mechanisms, it can entirely respect the photogram, its original structure and the speed of apparition –in a philological sense. It can also deeply penetrate the photogram, allowing for the observation of details in the marginal areas of the image, in the uncontrolled parts of the frame. The camera respects the color of the photogram's original hand-toning, but autonomously it can also paint large areas of the film. (In Lissoni 2012).

It is this apparatus which allows them to "enter the frame", as Robert Lumley has defined their filmmaking approach (2011). The frame is their minimum unit of work and their minimum conceptual unit. With the analytical camera they explore details that go unnoticed in a conventional projection. Such a procedure has an ethical scope, for they

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<sup>649</sup> "...il fascismo non si riduce affatto alle sue espressioni pubblici e alle manifestazioni più esteriori. Il fascismo ritorna, al contrario, in tutti quegli oggetti, in tutte quelle immagini che avevano varcato la soglia delle case degli italiani per installarsi saldamente al cuore della loro esperienza più quotidiana e familiare (...) il fascismo non è riducibile a un certo periodo storico o al contesto di una singola nazione. Il fenomeno si ritrova in spazi diversi, nei luoghi privati come in quelli pubblici, e riaffiora in tempi diversi"

are interested in re-telling and re-visiting archives from the point of view of those marginal subjects who are never foregrounded, such as colonised peoples. Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi “employ a process that scrutinizes the image in its depths, to make visible faces that have vanished and to give voice to the stories lost in the folds of history” (de Cuir and de Rosa 2016: 71).

They carry out an extensive research and a multi-layered intervention work with the archives, writing down every detail from each frame and manipulating it with colour, music and techniques such as step printing<sup>650</sup> and frozen frames. Despite using found footage, they insist on the fact that, in their films, they are always talking about the present:

For us the past does not exist, nor does nostalgia, only the present does. We create a dialogue between the past and the present. We don't use the archive for itself, we use that which has already been made, with a Duchampian gesture, in order to speak of today, of the horror that surrounds us. The artist and his or her work speak of the violence with which we are involved, from East to West. Since the beginning, our work has been against violence –on the environment, animals, of man against man (...) we don't use the archive as a collection of antiquities, but as an object of the present (in Lissoni 2012).

The analytical camera is their apparatus for appropriating found footage from their own point of view, re-shooting it and then manipulating it. They work with and against the films from the archives, dissecting and rewriting them frame by frame: “The ‘analytical camera’ allows us to move closer, to descend in the depths of the photogram. To intervene on the scroll speed, on detail, on colour. To fix and reproduce archive material in uncommon forms” (in Lissoni 2012).

The film resulting from re-working Comerio's film, *Dal Polo all'Equatore/From Pole to Equator* (1986), is a critique of the original film's ideology and a reflection on violence and cruelty against animals as the basis of a way of being in the world that nurtured colonialism and fascism (Lumley 2011: 68). Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi remove the didascallic texts full of a nationalist and colonialist rethoric (Lumley 2011: 70), reframe, tint, and slow down the pace of cinematic time. In this way, Lumley explains, the couple dissects how the camera gaze is used as a weapon in the service of European

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<sup>650</sup> Step printing is a film technique that duplicates a single frame, generating a slow motion effect.

colonisers (2011: 73): the slowing down of the original film “forces the spectator to see the very act of the vision, and to see it as an integral part of the act of killing” (2011: 74). The insistence on a single frame, turning each scene twelve times longer than the original, creates discomfort for a spectator forced to see “an infinite repetition of violence, aggression, domination” (2011: 76).

*Dal Polo all'Equatore* also marks their first collaboration with musician Keith Ullrich, who composed the soundtrack.<sup>651</sup> After this film, they make *Ritorno a Khodorciur. Diario Armeno/Return to Khodorciur. Armenian Journal* (1986), a video in which Gianikian's father recounts his personal experience of the Armenian genocide. This is also the subject of *Uomini anni vita/People, Years, Life* (1990), made with images of the Armenian massacre in 1915 which had been kept in the Tsarist archives.

In 1995, they make the first film of a trilogy on the First World War, *Prigionieri della guerra/Prisoners of the War*, followed by *Su tutte le vette è pace/On the Heights All is Peace* (1998) and *Oh! Uomo/Oh, Man!* (2004). These films mark their first collaboration with singer and composer Giovanna Marini, who also works in *Pays Barbare*. Marini gives voice and music to written documents such as letters and testimonies from soldiers. They re-visit the materials with their “analytical camera”, reframing and reshooting the footage, and delaying time with step printing and freeze frames. Lumley underlines that, for Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi, the filmic material itself is a “wounded body”, in its almost completely faded frames and its traces of blood and fingerprints (2011: 96).

The wounded body of the film and war wounded bodies are the focus of the last film of the trilogy, *Oh! Uomo* (2004). Using materials from Comerio's archive and other European film archives (Moscow, Vienna, Paris, Madrid and Bologna), the filmmakers narrate the soldiers' return to their homeland, bearing the suffering of the war in their bodies. They force the spectators to look at these disfigured faces for long periods, while they seem to look back at them. While working on the war trilogy, they also make short films, among which three that deal with fascism: *Archivi italiani-Il fiore della razza/Italian Archives No. 1. The Flower of the Race* (1991), *Animali criminali/Criminal Animals* (1994), and *Lo specchio di Diana/Diana's Looking Glass* (1996).

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<sup>651</sup> Ullrich also worked with them in *Pays Barbare*, as well as in three short films about colonialism and facism: *Lo specchio di Diana* (1996), *Diario africano* (1994) and *Archivi italiani-Il fiore della razza* (1991).

*Archivi italiani*, made with footage from Comerio's archive, reflects on the presence of sport in the discourse of fascism as a celebration of racial myths. Also made with materials from Comerio's archive, *Animali criminali* has ten segments in which animals attack and kill one another. These sequences pretend to sustain a vision of the world coherent with the fascist ideology: "life as a state of permanent struggle" (Pick 2015: 96), predators against preys in a permanent fight for survival. By means of their procedures, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi reveal the construction of these combats:

*Animali Criminali* shows how, under fascism, scientific observation, the disciplinary and punitive mutually collapse: the "truth" observed through, or rather extracted from, these animal bodies is that *life itself is criminal*. Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi expose the fallacy of such "observation". What we actually see in *Animali Criminali* is not some truth about animal life but the human intervention that *produces* what is seen. The film's reworking of the archival footage reveals the "camera's collusion" in the violent action. On the screen is no longer the so-called fact of natural aggression but its active construction through film. In this moment of "man from the machine", the presence of man –and of the cameraman– reveals humans as the film's chief criminal animals. (Pick 2015: 100).

In *Lo specchio di Diana*, the filmmakers re-visit fascist mythology through a specific historical moment. In 1926, Mussolini had lake Nemi drained in order to recover two ships built by the Emperor Caligula, and ordered the construction of a museum to celebrate the imperial origins of fascism. By 1944, the museum and the ships had been destroyed by a group of fleeing Nazis.<sup>652</sup>

Colonialism and fascism are placed side by side in *Pays Barbare*. The last film directed by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi is also the first one in which they had to digitalise the footage and edit in Final Cut, because all the specialised laboratories in Milan had closed. It's also the only film in their filmography in which voice-over plays a significant role: they make their own palimpsestic comments (as explained in the previous section) or

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<sup>652</sup> Apart from films, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi have made installations. In 2001, they organised one called "La marcia dell'uomo" (The March of Men) for the Venice Biennale. Ethnographic cinema, the construction of the "racial other" and the camera as an instrument for the colonial gaze is at the centre of this work. In 2004, in Philadelphia, they made installations for the exhibition "Experiments with Truth"; and in 2005, in Switzerland, one called "Reprocessing Reality. New Perspectives on Art and Documentary". "Non, Non, Non", a major exhibition of their installation works took place in 2012, in Milan. In 2015, the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris held the exhibition "Notre Camera Analytique".

read “found texts” (e.g. letters, postcards, telegrams) that are then repeated as a song by Giovanna Marini. In an interview at the Torino Film Festival 2013, they explained that in this film they used words in order to avoid any misunderstandings: “we want the message to be clear.”<sup>653</sup>

In *Pays Barbare*, de Cuir and de Rosa identify a shift in Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s filmography, from the olfactory sphere to an openly tactile and aural one. This is due to the aforementioned voice-over, Keith Ulrich’s eerie percussion-based fragmentary music, and the presence of their fingers even within the frame (de Cuir and de Rosa 2016: 70, 72). The film is in French, despite being by Italians with Italian footage, because the production company, “Les Films d’Ici”, is French. The distribution company is indeed Italian, “Feltrinelli”. In an interview published in 2013, Rinaldo Censi suggests that this lack of national financial support operates as some kind of censorship, to which Gianikian responds:

In France, they considered it a necessary film (...) the portrait of a Europe that enters the Second World War (....) But above all, it is a film linked to today, to this state of endless wars. After all, that is the role of an artist: for us it means taking care of our time (...) We believe that a film about fascism, about “fascisms” is important, even if we don’t like the word fascism, even if we don’t want to use it anymore. When the euro crisis took place in Greece we felt that this film had to be made. It’s something we must accomplish. You can’t change things, but you have to act with the only force you have: your work. (In Censi 2013: 80-82).<sup>654</sup>

Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi insist on the fact that, as in the rest of their films, they re-appropriate old footage to speak about the present. With *Pays Barbare* they want to warn audiences about the resurgence of fascism in twenty-first century Europe. They found the 16mm footage of Mussolini’s corpse in the eighties, but it took them nearly thirty years to

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<sup>653</sup> “Usiamo la parola perché non vogliamo che ci siano fraintendimenti, vogliamo che il discorso sia chiaro”. Interview by Cristiana Paternò (2013). Cinecittà News website. Date of access: March 2019. <<http://news.cinecitta.com/IT/it-it/news/54/5599/gianikian-e-ricci-lucchi-ogni-epoca-ha-il-suo-fascismo.aspx>>.

<sup>654</sup> “In Francia, invece, l’hanno considerato un film necessario e assolutamente da fare (...) il ritratto di un’Europa che entra nella Seconda Guerra Mondiale (....) Ma è un film legato soprattutto all’oggi, a questo stato di guerre infinito. In fondo è il ruolo di un artista: per noi significa occuparsi del proprio tempo (...) Crediamo sia importante un film sul fascismo, sui ‘fascismi’, anche se la parola fascismo non ci piace, non la vogliamo più usare. Quando c’è stata la crisi dell’euro in Grecia abbiamo sentito che questo film dovevamo farlo. È qualcosa che dobbiamo portare a termine. Non puoi cambiare le cose, ma devi agire con la sola forza che hai: il tuo lavoro.”

find a way to re-visit it. They acquired most of the film's footage from a private film archive, which belonged to an Italian engineer in Ethiopia. He recorded fascist footage with the intention of depicting Ethiopia as "barbaric" so as to justify Italian colonisation. This is the dominant visuality to which Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi oppose their gazes. The work with these materials follows the same procedure developed by them over the years. In their words:

We scour those individual film frames of colonialism, studying them with a magnifying lens, and transcribe the captions. The material was intended for private home viewing, in silence. In these filmic fragments, examined by hand, without a projector, are indications of who owned the films, those sequences to which they returned over and over. Ours is a dual reading, that of the images themselves and the way in which they were consumed. An Ethiopian woman on her knees wearing a top that leaves her breasts bare, a bearded soldier who washes her head symbolically: certain words recur in the captions, such as barbaric, primitive, pillager, bigamy.<sup>655</sup>

There's also another kind of intervention in *Pays Barbare*, a sequence of photo stills which summarise the colonial narrative and "seem to demonstrate the radical importance of gesturality" (de Cuir and de Rosa 2016: 73), something that can also be read as the importance of gender performativity within the colonial imaginary. With their detailed revision of the footage frame-by-frame, within a well-documented historical context, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi enact responsible agential cuts that have important effects, as Censi explains:

It's about segmenting, cutting, isolating, through the technique, to allow you to see things differently (....) It's also about grasping and retaining what the human eye hasn't grasped in the film, what has escaped to the human eye. There are hidden details that ask to emerge from oblivion (....) [Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi] work on a second montage by breaking in, they cut, isolate, to compose frames that don't ask to be looked at, not only: rather they fix, question, in a certain sense "produce" their own viewer. (2013: 36, 41)<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi in the catalogue of the 71 Locarno Film Festival. Date of access: March 2019. <<https://www.locarnofestival.ch/pardo/program/film.html?fid=690895&eid=66>>.

<sup>656</sup> "Si tratta –attraverso la tecnica– di segmentare, de-tagliare, isolare, per permettere di vedere diversamente le cose (....) Si tratta anche di cogliere e trattenere ciò che nel film l'occhio umano non ha

The spectator of a film made by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi becomes self-conscious. The seams, holes and signs of decay in the found footage are foregrounded: their works “draw our attention to the fact that the film itself is a historical document, object of innumerable interventions, manipulations, remakes” (Lumley 2011: 158).<sup>657</sup> We can read Lumley’s description in line with the diffraction apparatus approach: they work “on the history of images and on the history of cinema, not as an instrument for reflecting the real, but as a group of active forces, able to shape a reality, to give life to new ways of seeing the world (...) Image no longer reflects reality but becomes a place for reflecting on reality” (2011: 145).<sup>658</sup>

I have selected three reviews in which the critics engage with the materiality and emotionality of *Pays Barbare*, so as to identify the effects and affects that they emphasise. The three are published in specialised websites, one in English (“La furia umana”), one in Italian (“Quinlan”, rivista di critica cinematografica), and the other one in Spanish (“Blogs&Docs”).

“Work Ethics. On Pays Barbare” is the title of the article written by Stefan Ramstedt for *La furia umana*, a quarterly created in 2009. Ramstedt defines Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s cinema as one of gestures: “In its centre are not only the gestures of the soldiers, hunters, fascists, and their victims that we often find depicted on screen, but also the gestures of the filmmakers themselves.”<sup>659</sup> He argues that their work is traversed by their ethics, specifically, what Gianikian calls an “ethical sense of vision”. For Ramstedt, this is translated in their way of re-appropriating the materials that they work with. He refers to the film’s final sequence so as to state that the filmmakers go beyond remembering and reminding of fascism:

What they do, and what they are able to do, is bringing justice to those dancing figures in the green-blue negative image, not by showing them in the context of

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colto, ciò che all’occhio umano è sfuggito. Ci sono dettagli nascosti che chiedono di emergere dall’oblio (...) lavorano ad un secondo montaggio per effrazione, tagliano, isolano, per comporre fotogrammi che non chiedono di essere guardati, non solo: piuttosto fissano, interrogano, “producono” in un certo senso il proprio spettatore.”

<sup>657</sup> “attirano la nostra attenzione sul fatto che la pellicola stessa è un documento storico, oggetto di innumerevoli interventi, manipolazioni, rifacimenti.”

<sup>658</sup> “sulla storia delle immagini e sulla storia del cinema intendendole non come uno strumento di rispecchiamento del reale, ma come un insieme di forze attive, in grado di plasmare una realtà, di dare vita a nuovi modi di vedere il mondo (...) L’immagine non riflette più la realtà, ma diventa luogo di riflessione sulla realtà.”

<sup>659</sup> Date of access: March 2019. <<http://www.lafuriaumana.it/index.php/49-archive/lfu-21/259-stefan-ramstedt-work-ethics-on-pays-barbare>>.



fascist imagery, as “barbarians” –the images are almost falling apart after having been screened in such contexts multiple times–, but by refusing to reduce them to a fascist image (used to remind), by separating them from the context of fascism, by letting them dance, by giving them a second life.<sup>660</sup>

Raffaele Meale writes “Il colonialismo dell’immagine” (“The Colonialism of the Image”), a review for the Italian online magazine *Quinlan*, in the context of the screening of *Pays Barbare* at the 2013 Torino Film Festival. He praises the filmmakers for their recovery of a brutal aspect of Italian history that has been extensively ignored: they “perform an operation that is not only obligatory from a purely historical and political point of view, but take a further step towards a cinematographic research that contains within itself the ethics that guide it.”<sup>661</sup> Meale describes Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s use of footage as alienating, painful and lacerating, while he finds their overall discourse as having an overwhelming lucidity: “The ‘barbarian country’ is also the Italy of the twenty-first century, in which fascism has not been defeated but finds glimpses of air in other forms, always monstrous.”<sup>662</sup> He also complains about the fact that the film doesn’t have a wide distribution:

...a film like *Pays barbare* (an anti-colonial act based on purely colonial images) could open the way to a real revolution of the gaze, if only the opportunity was granted to it. The risk, dramatically close to certainty, is that the masterpiece of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi -absolutely among their most complete works- remains the prerogative of festival people, ready to find its place in an archive and to be removed from memory.<sup>663</sup>

In the context of the premiere of *Pays Barbare* at the 2013 Locarno Film Festival, Aurelio Medina writes “Imágenes posibles para una masacre” (“Possible Images for a

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<sup>660</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>661</sup> “compiono un’operazione non solo doverosa da un punto di vista prettamente storico e politico, ma compiono un passo ulteriore in direzione di una ricerca cinematografica che contenga al proprio interno l’etica che la guida”. Date of access: March 2019. <<https://quinlan.it/2013/12/08/pays-barbare/>>.

<sup>662</sup> “Il ‘paese barbaro’ è anche l’Italia del Ventunesimo Secolo, in cui il fascismo non è stato debellato ma trova spiragli d’aria sotto altre forme, sempre mostruose.” Date of access: March 2019. <<https://quinlan.it/2013/12/08/pays-barbare/>>.

<sup>663</sup> “...un film come *Pays barbare* (atto anti-coloniale basato su immagini puramente coloniali) potrebbe aprire la via a una vera e propria rivoluzione dello sguardo, se solo gliene si concedesse l’opportunità. Il rischio, drammaticamente vicino alla certezza, è invece che il capolavoro di Yervant Gianikian e Angela Ricci Lucchi -tra le loro opere più compiute in assoluto- resti appannaggio del popolo dei festival, pronto a trovare la sua collocazione in un archivio e a essere a sua volta rimosso dalla memoria.” Date of access: March 2019. <<https://quinlan.it/2013/12/08/pays-barbare/>>.

Massacre”), a review published at the Spanish online journal *Blogs&Docs*, created in 2006 by Miquel Marti Freixas and Elena Oroz as a space for critique on non-fiction cinema. Medina follows Italo Calvino’s opening quote as a reading key: in the archives, the filmmakers look for non-existent images so as to reconstruct the history of the unpunished colonial exploitation during Mussolini’s regime. In his opinion, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi’s intervention techniques, which bring together present and past, manage to render visible the invisible:

Violence doesn’t appear on the screen, it was never filmed by the soldiers. Still, we find it behind sequences like the washing of an Ethiopian girl by a soldier, or that crossing in a vacant lot between a local woman and an Italian soldier. Therefore, the colonial violence not shown in the images is intuited and is sensed offscreen. That is the tone that reigns in the documentary, to look for the history of Italian colonialism in the margins, in seemingly insubstantial details of the massacre. Scenes of submission of a people, like the parades, filming of the colonised space as an exotic object, parties in the great cruises that united Italy with Africa, peripheral details of the history that bring us closer to the historical narrative.<sup>664</sup>

### 6.1.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Pays Barbare* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

*Pays Barbare* is not a feminist film in terms of the explicit intention of its directors or in dealing with gender in/equality as its main subject matter. However, I decided to include it as part of the sample to exemplify a feminist diffractive reading of a

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<sup>664</sup> “La violencia no aparece en pantalla, nunca fue filmada por los soldados; aún así, la encontramos detrás de secuencias como la del lavado de un soldado a una joven etíope, o ese cruce en un terreno baldío entre una lugareña y un soldado italiano. Por tanto, la violencia colonial no mostrada en las imágenes es intuida y se presiente en el fuera de campo. Ese es el tono que impera en el documental, buscar la historia del colonialismo italiano en los márgenes, en detalles aparentemente insustanciales de la masacre. Escenas de sumisión de un pueblo, como los desfiles, filmación del espacio colonizado como objeto exótico, fiestas en los grandes cruceros que unían Italia con África, detalles periféricos de la historia que nos acercan al relato histórico.” Date of access: March 2019.  
<<http://www.blogsandocs.com/?p=5925>>.

film that materialises a possible countervisuality practice against colonial and fascist ways of seeing. The **production** of this film is characterised by the ethics of political (re)vision that traverse Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's filmography. They employ their "analytical camera" to explore the details and margins, frame by frame, of footage that they reappropriate from what bell hooks calls an "oppositional gaze" (2000b). Their observation apparatus is indeed a diffraction apparatus that makes new boundaries and cuts within previously framed realities.

In terms of **content**, *Pays Barbare* thus opens up a critical perspective on the Italian colonialist project in Libya and Ethiopia during Mussolini's fascist regime, with a revision of archival footage that goes from 1922 up to 1945. Aware of the ideology with which these images were recorded and seen several times over the years, they dismantle this visuality within the film itself, offering what I call a palimpsestic countervisuality that reads insights from the past through the present. They openly warn audiences about the fascist past haunting the present of Europe. They also render visible the invisible, as Annette Kuhn phrases feminist cinema's goal (1994: 67): with their formal strategies, they manage to denounce undocumented massacres. They make the violence of each frame felt by the spectators and, in the still images of abusive soldiers and terrified but also defiant black women, they point at the rigid gender performativity of colonial and fascist regimes. I also diffractively read their audiovisual display of what they call "colonial eroticism" (Min. 57:52) through insights from Alexander (2005), McClintock (1995) and Mirzoeff (2009; 20011).

**As for the form**, Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi resort to different kinds of voice-over comments (waves 3, 4 and 5) in order to signal their subjective presence within the film text and to put into dialogue the past with the present. When holding the filmstrips within the frame, they give way to a haptic visuality that renders evident their attention to the concrete materiality of cinema as material and medium. The main modes of representation in *Pays Barbare* are the reflexive and performative ones. The filmmakers render visible the origin of the materials they work with and the cuts they have enacted upon them. It is in this new reading that they offer a political commentary that subverts the colonial gaze.

As denounced by one of the aforementioned reviewers, the **distribution** of *Pays Barbare* has been limited to an elite: mainly audiences that attend film festivals and contemporary art museums. The **reception** of the film in these contexts has been positive, with an emphasis on intellectual responses triggered by affective reactions of anger and

distress. It's worth mentioning that the gender politics of colonialism and fascism are not particularly emphasised, neither in the online reviews, nor in specialised essays such as those by Lumley (2011) or Censi (2013). In this regard, a feminist practice is indeed the one enacted by my own reading of the film. Such an intersectional reading is informed by a feminist film theory toolbox that makes it possible to point out the implications that the filmmaker's political stance have for dismantling gender in/equalities complicit with/cause and product of colonialism and fascism.

## 6.2 *Una nobile rivoluzione/A Noble Revolution* (Simone Cangelosi, 2014)

I am the result of the struggles of the transsexual movement, of the people who struggled and managed to obtain concrete results: laws, health protection, real possibilities of life, a dignified life. And therefore I am also the result of the revolution of feminist thought, because the questioning of gender and the revolution of man-woman relationships began with feminism (...). The LGBT movement has debts towards feminism, because it all comes from there. Without the feminist debate there wouldn't have been any other: being able to tell one's own sexual identity, self-determination to the world, a vision that goes back to the early seventies, which has its roots in feminism. (Simone Cangelosi, director of *Una nobile rivoluzione*).<sup>665</sup>

*Una nobile rivoluzione* is a film directed by the transgender filmmaker Simone Cangelosi. It is a personal-political portrait of the two lives, one as a man and one as a woman, led by Marcella Di Folco, an activist of the Italian LGBT movement. It's also a compilation film, which gathers footage from diverse time-spaces in an emotional reconstruction of memories: the memory surrounding a specific character's life, but also the memory of a social movement for equal rights. I decided to include this film as part of my sample due to the possibilities it opens up in regards with the strategic alliances of various precarious and vulnerable groups.<sup>666</sup> As Judith Butler states:

...precarity is the rubric that brings together women, queers, transgender people, the poor, the differently abled, and the stateless, but also religious and racial minorities: it is a social and economic condition, but not an identity (...). Our shared exposure to precarity is but one ground of our potential equality and our

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<sup>665</sup> “sono frutto delle lotte del movimento transessuale, delle persone che hanno fatto quelle lotte e che sono riuscite ad ottenere risultati concreti: leggi, tutela della salute, cioè possibilità reali di vita, di una vita dignitosa e quindi sono anche frutto della rivoluzione del pensiero femminista, perché la messa in discussione del genere e la rivoluzione dei rapporti uomo-donna è iniziata con il femminismo (...). Il movimento LGBT ha dei debiti verso il femminismo, perché viene da lì, se non ci fosse stata quella messa in discussione non ci sarebbe stato tutto il resto, poter dire al mondo la propria identità sessuale, l'autodeterminazione, una visione che risale ai primi anni settanta, che ha radici nel femminismo.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>666</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.1 Gender In/Equality, Precarity and Narrative Waves of Feminism

reciprocal obligations to produce together conditions of livable life. (2015: 58; 121-122).

As with the other case studies, the analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. As regards form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close-read it through the diffractive lenses and with the theoretical apparatus developed in the previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises gender in/equalities through its narrative waves, its cuts, its modes of representation, and the gazes deployed.

As for production and reception, I discuss the insights raised by Simone Cangelosi in an interview carried out as part of this research project in October 2017. I also incorporate opinions expressed by people who attended a screening organised in Bologna as part of a GRACE dissemination event called “Equality EVENTually”, which took place on February the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at “Associazione Orlando”. Finally, I integrate my discussion of two reviews from 2016: one published in a film criticism online magazine called *Pointblank*; and another one from the *Fuorivista. Media & Film Literacy* online magazine.

### **6.2.1 Form and Content: Rendering Queer Gender Performativity Visible**

*Una nobile rivoluzione* can be divided into sixteen segments, some of which are subdivided into specific sections. The segments can be classified into six narrative waves that are entangled throughout the film: wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 2, the filmmaker’s reflexive voice-over; wave 3, the filmmaker’s reconstruction road trip; wave 4, Marcella’s voice recordings; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage. Each segment is described below.<sup>667</sup>

1. Introduction: The filmmaker listens to Marcella di Folco for the first time (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; and wave 2, the filmmaker’s reflexive voice-over).

While the screen is still black, rumours of a crowd are heard for seconds, and then we see video footage of the second Italian Gay Pride Event in Bologna. The images,

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<sup>667</sup> The language spoken in the film is Italian, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. Access to the film can be requested directly from the production company, “Kiné Società Cooperativa”, at the film website: <<http://www.unanobilerivoluzione.it/contatti/>>.

from 1995, don't have very good quality. Marcella appears in the first medium shot of the film, smiling with blonde hair, wearing a pink dress and a fan. Then we see various long shots of the event, in which men and women walk together in the street, hold banners, dance and laugh. A top shot of Bologna's main square shows dozens of people attending the event, as the voice of Marcella giving a speech is heard. While she speaks, we see long shots of her on the stage combined with long shots of the crowd listening. She says:

We shouldn't have to fight for our civil rights; we're born with our rights! But society tries to deny them to us, it's society that says we're different, all of us completely different and that we shouldn't be part of this society (...). And I'd like to appeal to our clergy. The church preaches tolerance and solidarity; we ask the Cardinal for solidarity, we don't want tolerance in any way, shape or form. The true catholic spirit is the spirit of love and forgiveness, not of condemnation. We have the right to be the way we are, to live the way we need to live. (Min. 1:15).

The sounds of the crowd and of Marcella's speech get lower, as the voice-over of the filmmaker, Simone Cangelosi, situates the spectator in the time, place and event where he heard Marcella di Folco, the leader of the Italian Transsexual Movement (MIT), for the first time. As we see close-ups of diverse people in the crowd, among whom he stands, Cangelosi says: "Before long, Marcella would become part of my life, but that day I watched her with uncertainty as the crowd went crazy about her, without understanding the reason yet" (Min. 2:38). The sequence closes with a long shot of Marcella on the stage, waving goodbye and walking away.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and anger.

2. Credits and title (wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip).

Black screen for a few seconds, followed by wide shots of Italian roads and highways as the credits appear: the producers ("Kiné", "Pierrot e la Rosa", and Simone Cangelosi), with the contribution of the Emilia Romagna Film Commission, in association with the Bologna Cinematheque Foundation, Liliana di Folco, Roberto Gramaccioni, Fausto Tomei, and Murielle Moise. The shots are recorded from a vehicle, so that the camera's point of view is in movement. As we enter a tunnel and the screen goes black, we read "with Marcella di Folco, a film by Simone Cangelosi" (Min. 4:00). Getting out of the tunnel, we see the reflection of Simone's face on the window, a long shot of him standing

in the bus, and a medium shot as he gets out of the bus. On the black screen, the title of the film appears. There's no particular affect evoked in this segment.

3. On the road with Marcella, now and then (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; and wave 4, Marcella's voice recordings).

The screen remains black, as we listen to the voices of Porpora Marcasciano and Cangelosi, asking Marcella di Folco to sing "The Traviata". Then we see a medium shot of Marcella, wearing golden earrings, sunglasses and short blond hair, sitting on a bus; behind her, Porpora is also sitting, with sunglasses. The video footage doesn't have very good quality. Marcella holds the bus microphone and begins to vocalise in an exaggerated way. The camera pans to the right and shows that the bus is full with people, men and women, who clap their hands celebrating Marcella's jokes. The bus starts moving on the road, the camera is still focusing on a medium shot of Marcella, who grabs the microphone and tells a short story about a French prostitute who maintains a pimp, who then leaves her for another prostitute. There's lots of laughter off screen, as she tells the story. For a moment the camera moves to the left, so that we see Cangelosi's profile, younger than in the previous sequence.

3.1 A wide shot of a highway outside Rome, the camera is recording from a vehicle that advances. The quality of the image is better than that from the previous scene, signalling that we are looking at more recent footage. We listen to the sound of a telephone answering machine. Then we see a medium shot of Cangelosi sitting in a car driven by an old woman, Liliana di Folco, Marcella's sister. Their medium shot is combined with wide shots of the streets of Rome. Off screen we listen to the message left by Marcella in Cangelosi's telephone answering machine. She jokes about being the voice of his conscience, telling him off for not being at home.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, nostalgia and love.

4. Marcella's childhood and adolescence (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

The video footage has less quality, which indicates an earlier recording date. In a medium shot, Marcella, with short blonde hair, enters a house. Two middle-aged women (Cangelosi's sister and mother) welcome her, with hugs and kisses. Looking into the camera, Marcella makes a trumpet with her mouth and the sign of the horns with her hand. She sits at a table; the camera is placed in front of her. Cangelosi, who remains off



screen, asks her to sing “Lola”, but Marcella refuses to do so. Cangelosi explains that “Lola” is Marlene Dietrich performed by Marcella. Marcella adds that she performed in the first musical staged in the Piper Club, one of the most famous nightclubs in Rome. She then sings a brief part of “Lola” for the camera and comments that her sister, a dressmaker, makes all her clothes.

4.1 Parioli. One of the women asks Marcella where she used to live when she was in Rome, to what she replies that in Largo Preneste. Then she specifies that she was born in Parioli and that she lived there for fourteen years: “we moved to Largo Preneste because they had evicted us. But I was born Pariolina” (Min. 9:17).

Wide shots of the buildings in the Parioli neighbourhood from old television footage are combined with footage recorded nowadays. A fragment of the television footage from the fifties–sixties, in which they show the Parioli neighbourhood, is accompanied by a male voice-over: “The elegance of a residential area agglomerated to a high-density area, these are the Parioli” (Min. 9:41). The sequence is accompanied with lively music, which continues as the archival footage is combined with recent shots of Cangelosi and Liliana in her car, driving in the same area. The archive footage is shown again, with long shots of people from the Parioli, walking the dog and reading the newspaper. As full shots of middle upper class people of diverse ages are shown, the male voice-over says:

People from the Parioli district know each other since childhood. At twenty they are obliged to be flirts, then they marry always amongst themselves, members of a caste confined to a snobbish neighbourhood. Good manners and meringue with cream on Sunday morning are part of the same ritual. (Min. 10:18).

The footage shows the invitation to a party written on a wall, as the male voice-over explains that no one from outside the neighbourhood would come.

The quality of the image changes, signalling most recent footage. In a medium shot, Liliana looks at the names of the people living in the building where she used to live. She tells Cangelosi where her friends used to live. In a full shot, Liliana and Cangelosi are shown standing at the fence of the building; she talks with a man who is inside, asks him if he remembers her and admits that, after forty years, it’s difficult for him to remember. Next we see a medium shot of Cangelosi and Liliana, sitting inside the car, looking around; she says she is happy with the encounter, “because I’ve gone back in

time” (Min. 12:28). The camera closes up on her as she almost begins to cry and then tries to kill mosquitos inside the car.

4.2 Largo Prenestino. In the same medium shot from segment 4 that shows Marcella at the table, she says that many things have changed in Rome and talks about the fields with sheep in the middle of the city. She says that from her building she could see the Gordiani suburb with fields, where they would play “Cowboys and Indians”. Then we see old television footage of the Gordiani suburb, a wide panning shot, as she remembers: “I was Altamà, always. Or Calamity Jane! But never a male role, never, never, never” (Min.13:23).

Two black and white photos of Marcella as a young boy are combined with archive footage showing a group of young kids playing, as she narrates that her first feelings of love were directed towards a young girl who lived in one of the buildings. She goes on to say: “I had my first homosexual experiences when I was ten, although I just felt completely like a woman, right like a woman! I couldn’t. If they touched my penis, I would pass out from the horror, but I liked to make love with the big boys. All of my friends were my lovers” (Min. 14:06). After another photo of Marcella as a young male adolescent, we see the medium shot of her at the table again. Cangelosi’s mother puts a bottle of plastic right in front of the camera lens, hampering the vision of Marcella. Simone jokes about leaving Marcella out of the film, to what she replies: “And who cares? It’ll be the film’s loss, not mine. I won’t get anything from it” (Min. 14:58).

Wide shot of Rome streets nowadays, recorded from the car in which Simone travels with Liliana. In voice-over, he asks her about Largo Preneste. She tells him that they had to move because they couldn’t afford a house that her father had sold without telling them, but refuses to give details. Close-up of Simone looking at the buildings nowadays in Largo Preneste, followed by a medium shot of both in the car Liliana drives. She tells Cangelosi that when they were children she and Marcella had many economic privileges despite the war: “others were dying of hunger but we always had food in abundance because we had money and my father was a fascist party official” (Min. 15:51). Liliana also tells Cangelosi that her father was very strict: “He was a Jesuit (...) But he allowed himself a good time, he had his French mistress (...) When my father died, the whole castle crumbled down!” (Min. 16:26).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, nostalgia, distress and love.

5. Piper club years (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

In a full shot, Cangelosi and Marcella arrive at the Piper Club. In the same medium shot from segment 4 that shows Marcella at the table, she sings "Yeeeeeeh!" because Cangelosi asks her to do so. As she finishes, the original song by The Primitives begins to play. Then we see black and white television footage of the Piper Club in the sixties, with various shots of young people dancing as a band plays onstage. There are more shots of people dancing in the club as a band plays "The Pied Pier". Marcella is again sitting at the table, in medium shot, mentioning the celebrities that performed at the Piper Club, such as Sylvie Vartan, Caterina Caselli, Jimmy Whitherspoon and Pink Floyd.

Full shot of Cangelosi and Liliana going downstairs to enter the Piper Club nowadays; she keeps on mentioning celebrities that played there. We see Marcella again, as she keeps reciting the list: Lionel Hampton and Josephine Baker, whom he helped down the stairs.

Wide shot of the Piper Club's interior nowadays. A few men move furniture; Cangelosi sits down with Liliana, who then stands up to greet Giancarlo, an old man who used to work at the club as well. In medium shot, Giancarlo tells Liliana that his neighbour had died the night before. She asked him why he is so obsessed with death, to which he replies he doesn't really care and that his grave is ready. They go upstairs in a full shot, when two young people arrive asking for information, which Liliana provides. Then she smiles saying what an efficient secretary she is.

5.1 Black and white photo of Marcella as a man, with Sylvie Vartan in 1966 and a photo of him at the entrance of the Piper Club; in voice-over, Marcella says that she would collect the entrance tickets. In a medium shot, Liliana and Giancarlo talk to Cangelosi inside the Piper nowadays; she tells him that he used to be the boss at the door. Giancarlo jokes: "Maybe he'd leave the beautiful girls outside; and men he should have kept out, he'd let in" (Min. 22:10). Liliana emphatically says that there were occasions in which there would be two thousand or even three thousand people at the Piper.

Marcella, again in medium shot at the table, complains about group bands that played at the Piper and that she didn't like, such as Boom '67.

In medium shot, Liliana tells off Giancarlo for not remembering anything; he says that too many things happened for him to remember.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia and anger.

6. Marcella as a man (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; and wave 5, conversations about Marcella).

Cangelosi, in medium shot, stands outside an antique shop. A song by Maria Callas is playing inside. A woman enters and talks with the owner, a middle age man; she leaves. In medium shot, Cangelosi and the man talk; he is Marcella's nephew, Roberto. He looks at himself in the mirror, turns off the music, and tells Cangelosi that they all lived together in Rome, and that the strict education that Liliana and Marcella had had, showed in how they managed the household: "at the table you behaved in a certain way, you played or you studied at precise times, you didn't answer back" (Min. 25:15). We see two black and white photos of Marcello, and one in colour, at home with Roberto as a toddler. Roberto says: "As the man of the house, because my father was dead, he became the one who insisted on good manners and rules (...) she was a sort of Cerberus, you could never have imagined what came later" (Min. 25:21).

Main affect/emotion evoked in this segment: nostalgia.

7. Fellini's films (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; and wave 6, public archive footage).

Fragment from *La città delle donne/City of Women*, a film directed by Federico Fellini in 1980. Marcella, as a middle age man, plays the role of an effeminate man, who carries Marcello Mastroiani after he had passed out. The voice-over of Marcella narrates that there was a professor who came to the Piper Club and asked her to give a letter to Fellini's script supervisor. Archive footage of the shooting of Fellini's *Satyricon*, as Marcella keeps on narrating that she went to Cinecittà, and Fellini happened to see her, still as a man, and asked her to play the role of the proconsul in his film. Fragment from Fellini's *Satyricon*, in which the character played by Marcello laughs; then there's a close-up of him as the proconsul, while Marcella continues saying that, for Fellini, s/he "represented exactly the typical Latin male of the thirties (...) the aquiline nose, a bit Umbertino" (Min. 27:32). Fragment from *Amarcord*, directed by Fellini in 1973. Marcella plays the role of the prince that Gradisca loves.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia and surprise.

8. Transsexuality (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

Television footage recorded in Milano, in 1979, when a group of transsexual women from the Movimento Italiano Transessuali (MIT) protested topless at a public swimming pool, holding the banner “We are transsexuals, stop discrimination” (Min. 29:10). A male voice-over narrates what they demand:

Some of these people were actually born with some masculine characteristics but their feminine nature has dominated, sometimes even with the help of surgery (...) with the ID's that define them as males, their life is hell. With yesterday's provocation, the transsexuals ask only that the law take note of their true nature (Min. 29:11).

8.1 Marcella's surgery. Photos in colour of Marcella, when she was still Marcello. In three of them s/he appears alone and in two of them s/he stands with other men. Off screen, she explains: “As long as I was a man and was not aware of my transsexuality, I always divided sexual love from sentimental love” (Min. 30:00). While we see black and white footage of very low quality, showing people walking in the street, Marcella narrates the occasion in which she found whom she calls “the man of my life” (Min. 30:46). More old footage in black and white shows the face of a young man, a man walking around Italian streets, a man lying down, a man calling from a telephone booth, a man running, and a couple walking in the woods; meanwhile, with voice-over, Marcella narrates that it was the encounter with him that confronted her with “her masculinity” (Min. 31:20). She tried to commit suicide by taking a box of sedatives, but after surviving she quitted her job and decided to have the sex reassignment surgery.

We see a black and white photo of Marcella after her surgery, and four more photos of her in colour, wearing a wig. With voice-over, Roberto remembers: “the fact she could become a woman didn't scare me, what frightened me was the way she looked because she was completely male, she was still completely male” (Min. 32:17). Then we see four black and white photos of Marcella's face, with heavy female make up; off screen, Roberto explains that, if there had been any complication during her recovery in Italy, Marcella would have had to fly back to Casablanca, where she had had the surgery, to find a doctor that could help her. Roberto reminds this period as “very long and painful” (Min. 32:53).

Then we see three photos in colour of Marcella, again with heavy make up. Roberto says that Marcella went through surgery just because she wanted to get married

to a young man who lived in Bologna. Close-up of Roberto telling Simone that Marcella went to live in Bologna following this man, who did not marry her. But there she found the MIT, and thus, the city “allowed him to become what he was, because it was easier than Rome” (Min. 33:23). In extreme close-up, Roberto cries as he says that Marcella left her job “following a dream” (Min. 33:46); he dries his eyes saying that it’s hard for him to talk about her.

Full shot of Liliana in the cemetery, throwing away some flowers. She tells Cangelosi that the three graves are together: those of her husband, her father and her sister, i.e. Marcella. The camera follows both as they fill the vases with water and join Roberto, who arranges new flowers for the graves. In medium shot, Liliana tells Cangelosi that when she found out about Marcella’s surgery, she took her in her house to take care of her, and threw their mother out because she didn’t accept it. In a close-up, Liliana keeps on narrating that her mother came back after a couple of weeks, but that it took her one year and a half to talk to Marcella again and to get out of the house without feeling ashamed: “I’ve always been very tough (...) My sister is in need and she is coming home. My sister” (Min. 36:01).

In full shot, Liliana and Roberto count the flowers for the graves; she shows Cangelosi where Marcella’s grave is, and tells him that she is shrouded in “the flag that was on her coffin, the one with all the colours. Your flag (...) the rainbow” (Min. 36:52). She adds that inside the coffin there’s a photo of Maria Callas and a rosary. In medium shot they talk about the food that she would send Marcella from Rome to Bologna, and how much food she would cook every time.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia, sadness, pain, love, distress, shame and fear.

9. Marcella’s activism (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 4, Marcella’s voice recordings; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

Television footage of the 2000 World Gay Pride at Rome. The images, of medium quality, belong to the television channel RAI3. Several shots of crowds of people attending the event, with rainbow flags and banners. In medium shot, a journalist says that there are over two hundred thousand people, and another journalist adds in voice-over: “this day was preceded by a lot of controversy. The Church was and is contrary to the fact an event like this happens here in Rome and in the very year of the Jubilee” (Min. 39:05).

More archive footage from a different source, recorded with a hand held video camera, shows people dancing and laughing at the parade. Images of a crowd surrounding a stage, as a woman presents Marcella Di Folco, national president of MIT. Marcella, in medium shot says: “I ask all politicians that gender identity be inserted in the laws because we have the right to be like you, who are our brothers” (Min. 40:10).

9.1 Prostitution. Wide shots of Bologna’s highways at night, recorded from a vehicle in movement; we hear a radio transmission, of the programme “Night of Mysteries”, in which the topic of discussion is a possible reform to the law on prostitution. The footage now changes quality, revealing its different source and older age; it is recorded also at night, from within a car in movement. The radio announcer presents Marcella as one of the guests. She criticises the reform, arguing that “as always, the only people who will be punished and made to suffer by this law will be the people who prostitute themselves, in other words, the weakest link in the chain” (Min. 41:25).

The archive footage shows various transsexual prostitutes in the street. The camera records from inside the car, driven also by a trans woman. In the back seat there’s another trans woman who smiles and says something that remains unheard. One of the trans women is Porpora Marcasiano, dressed as a prostitute. On the radio, the announcer invites another guest, a Sicilian man, who says that the purpose of the law is “to protect our young people (...) eighty per cent have no idea about the diseases” (Min. 41:47). Marcella responds to the man:

I’d say your conception of health and prostitution is a bit out of focus. For a start, prostitutes aren’t born with diseases (...) prostitutes catch diseases because the men who go with them refuse to take any kind of precaution (...) You don’t have to explain anything to me, I was a prostitute for twenty years (...) at least try to be a little more balanced and say the fault is maybe 50/50 (Min. 42:12).

In full shot, Porpora, dressed as a prostitute, stands in the street with another two women. They sing a song about them being “bad flowers”. The camera is now inside the car, Porpora is driving, Simone is in the co-driver seat and Marcella is at the back seat. They stop in front of a hotel and call a prostitute, Marci, whom Porpora and Marcella know. Marci approaches the car, her face is blurred. Porpora happily tells her “we’re making a film” (Min. 43:27), Cangelosi asks if she wants to speak and be recorded. At that

moment, another car arrives and the man who is at the co-driver seat angrily asks them to turn off the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, shame and anger.

10. Marcella and the MIT (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

The camera is again inside the car, with Porpora driving and Cangelosi as co-driver, but the quality of the image is better, showing that this material is recorded more recently. RAI television footage of the First National MIT Congress in Milan, in 1981. Dozens of trans women attend the event. A journalist explains:

Lots of people think that transsexuals (...) are the same as transvestites. In reality they are people who have undergone or are on the waiting list to undergo a surgical operation that transforms male genitals into female genitals. Unlike most European countries, Italy denies transsexuals the right to have their new gender officially recognised (...). A right claimed adamantly by all the speakers at the congress (Min. 44:28).

Inside the car once again, Porpora drives and tells Simone that the people at MIT were really committed, but without clear objectives, "the only certainty was the need to get rid of our chains" (Min. 45:31). They stop the car. In close-up, Porpora tells Cangelosi that Marcella created the MIT Emilia Romagna in 1988, and that she became elected to the municipal council in 1994, which was the turning point for their more active and concrete collaboration.

Archive footage of the Second Gay Pride in Bologna in 1995, the event presented in the opening sequence of the film. The man who introduces Marcella at the stage emphasises that she is "the first transsexual in the world to be elected" (Min. 46:50). Simone stands among the public, still as a woman. Once again inside the car, Porpora keeps on talking with Simone about what made Marcella so important within the movement:

Her whole commitment, her quest, her battle was kind of linked with her theatricality, that made all the difference. Add to that her physical presence, that imposing physique (...) That's how the voice of transsexual people found its



voice, its presence, its physicality, its fullness, where up until then there had been emptiness (Min. 47:39).

Porpora also mentions their victories with the MIT, such as “having an advice centre, having headquarters, having refuge apartments for transsexuals with nowhere to go” (Min. 48:23). She also remembers that Marcella was very active, answering calls at four in the morning. Archive footage of Marcella in the historical centre of Bologna, gathering funds for people with AIDS. She appears sitting in medium shot, and Porpora is in full shot, giving leaflets.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and distress.

11. Marcella’s political activities (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker’s reconstruction trip; and wave 5, conversations about Marcella).

Close-up of politician Silvia Bartolini driving her car in Bologna, at night. Sitting next to her is Cangelosi. She tells him that women in the Italian Communist Party or in the Democratic Socialist Party had a good relationship with Marcella:

A strong relationship and very equal altogether. We were women who had, thanks to feminism, to the women’s movement, a willingness to confront experiences even very, not different, because really, you know, in the PCI there was everyone and everything (...) but to have the sense to deal with a series of equal rights issues as fundamental or priorities for the political-administrative agenda that was something quite different (Min. 50:00).

She goes on to say that when Marcella ran for the district, she voted for her, even though Marcella was in another party. She also voted for Marcella when she ran for the City Council: “because she was a woman who deserved to have that position (...) because she was someone who had really dedicated herself to civil rights struggles, and then because she was a friend” (Min. 51:20). At a certain moment, Bartolini and Cangelosi find themselves in the middle of a traffic collapse due to a mistake of hers. He jokes: “This woman is doing two things at once and got confused” (Min. 51:57). She also jokes about the other drivers having their hormones altered.

11.1 Archive footage of a marriage ceremony presided by Marcella. Long shot of the room, the couple is sitting in the middle of it and four musicians play the wedding march. Marcella is sitting at a desk, with the Italian flag banner attached. In medium shot,

she expresses her joy for “being able to marry two very dear friends” (Min. 52:46). She wishes them happiness and that “as always we can all together continue our battles for the civil, social and human rights we believe in” (Min. 53:18). Diverse shots of the couple going out of the building, followed by the other guests and the musicians. Top shots of the crowd walking in the streets of Bologna.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, anger and joy.

12. Marcella in Bologna (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker’s reconstruction trip; and wave 5, conversations about Marcella).

Archive footage of Marcella playing cards with another woman and two men in a bar. Medium shot of Simone in the same bar, talking with the transsexual woman Eva Robin’s; these images are recorded more recently. Archive footage of a parade in the streets of Bologna. A woman jokes with Marcella, telling her to go back to her city. Marcella also jokes about all of them being “faggots and freaks, a sickening bunch of perverts” (Min. 56:12).

12.1 Memories of Marcella at the MIT office. Various full shots and medium shots of four trans women working at the MIT office, one of them is Porpora. Cangelosi and another young man are also there. They discuss dates for the Gay Pride, have pizza for lunch and, in medium shot, Porpora recalls an occasion in which Marcella cooked ragú but threw it and began to cry, surrounded by the sauce.

Archive footage of Marcella in a restaurant, eating with Cangelosi and Porpora. Marcella teases Cangelosi for how much he eats.

In an image recorded more recently, we see the close-up of a trans woman at the MIT office and a medium shot of another trans woman sitting at the door of the office.

Archive footage of Cangelosi arriving by bicycle to the MIT office. In full shot, Cangelosi is greeted by Marcella, who is sitting on a sofa. Cangelosi asks Marcella if she could give him a kiss, which she happily does.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, joy, and nostalgia.

13. The Catholic religion and transsexuality (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker’s reconstruction trip; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage).

In a medium shot, Marcella, with short blonde hair, talks to Cangelosi about the attitude of the Catholic Church towards transsexual people. According to her, the Church has gotten more aggressive with homosexuals than in the seventies or eighties: “it’s a really ugly regression” (Min. 1:00:26)

RAI television footage of a 1980 demonstration for sexual reassignment in Rome. We see various shots of transsexual women walking down the streets with banners against discrimination and defending civil rights. Marcella keeps on talking in voice-over:

...we don't want to change law 164 on transgender rights, or open the debate about it, in case they cancel it altogether, because they don't want this type of liberty, they can't accept it as being something somehow acceptable in public, they want it kept under wraps, in private, the right-wing thinks it's something private, so pay for it yourself (Min. 1:00:42).

Marcella is again shown in medium shot. She regrets the fact that some things improve, but that "morality becomes more and more moralistic, more and more bigoted" (Min. 1:01:24).

Footage of the 2003 counter-pride demonstration in Bologna. In one shot we see Porpora recording, in another one Cangelosi is the one recording. Marcella's voice-over asserts that, despite sexual freedom, there's no real social freedom. Her face is shown in close-up, as she goes on explaining:

Before, when people talked about homosexual relationships, oh my God! It was something monstrous! Today it can be talked about, but officially the rules are as oppressive as ever, with the difference that you can do whatever you want and so the conflict is all more violent. It's much more violent because you suffer that you don't feel really accepted, everyone talks about it, puts up with you, but in the end they discriminate against you same as ever (Min. 1:02:04).

13.1 Interview with Monsignor Vecchi. Long shot of Cangelosi nowadays, standing outside a Catholic office. Full shot of him walking and waiting, sitting inside a corridor of the building; with a voice-over, Monsignor Vecchi narrates that he noticed Marcella making the sign of the cross in the processions for the Madonna of San Luca, and that, when he approached her, she said she was a believer but that she also had the need to change her body in that way.

Medium shot of Monsignor sitting down, with a big golden cross hanging from his neck. Cangelosi sits next to him. Monsignor goes on saying that he told Marcella he couldn't approve of her transformation:

...because it is not only against the laws of the church but also against the laws of nature on which all of creation is based (...) I can't approve of you but I can't judge you either. Here the nature of God comes into play that made man in his image, man and woman he created. Just like gay marriage now, the church could never say yes to a reality that goes beyond, let's say, human nature (Min. 1:04:00).

Medium shot of Monsignor remaining silent for a second, looking into the camera. Then he leaves with another man, taking an elevator.

13.2 "Secular" demonstration. Footage of a 2007 demonstration in Verona. The images are recorded with a hand-held camera. Marcella stands in the middle of the crowd, performing as "the Eminent and much revered Lady Marcella Transsexual Di Folco" (Min. 1:05:30). She goes on saying that her first deed is giving "our benediction to queers of the world" (Min. 1:06:08), and names Sappho and Oscar Wilde. The crowd responds with a loud "Amen".

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, distress and joy.

14. Memories of Marcella (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip; wave 4, Marcella's voice recordings; and wave 5, conversations about Marcella).

Full shot of Vladimir, a middle age transsexual woman in an art gallery, looking at various black and white photographs. Close-up of her face as she finds two photos of Marcella, in street demonstrations. Her face seems a bit sad.

Footage of a 1995 demonstration in Verona. Various shots of the people attending, Marcella stands among the crowd. Full shot of the speakers at the stage. A man from Taranto denounces the "fascist mayor who personally leads the vigilantes to chase immigrants and gays (...) what we're fighting is a battle for everyone's freedom" (Min. 1:07:59). Marcella speaks against Silvio Berlusconi. Another transsexual woman reacts to a statement by the Verona municipal council, which says that "homosexuals are people with animal instincts and they should live in their own habitat. Well, people, our habitat is where we are, it's the centre of every city because we will remain visible and proud" (Min. 1:09:08).

Medium shot of Vladimir, sitting in a coffee shop. Cangelosi arrives with two glasses of water and sits next to her. They talk about her experiences. She says she has never been able to pretend and, as a consequence, she was hit several times: "In the end,

these insults, these threats, these wounds, made me stronger” (Min. 1:11:05). She says that she misses Marcella, who would call her every time she appeared on television: “she followed me (...) she considered me a bit her creature in some way” (Min. 1:11:41). She describes Marcella as “blunt” (Min. 1:12:09), someone who would always tell you the truth.

Archive footage of a parade in Bologna, at Pratello Street, recorded with a hand-held camera. Marcella, wearing a red dress, teases the camera. As a band of musicians plays their trumpets, Marcella dances in the middle of the street. At a certain moment she stands in front of the camera, asking to stop because she feels tired. She is outside a coffee shop, and an old man tells her she is amazing.

Close-up of Cangelosi at the same coffee shop from the previous sequence. We listen to a voice message from a person of an automotive club, telling Cangelosi that he has to present the death certificate of Marcella, for them to be able to make the change of owner for him, of the motorcycle that belonged to her.

Another voice message from Marcella for Cangelosi is heard over, as we see subjective shots of Cangelosi going inside the building where Marcella used to live. She asks him to keep more in touch and calls herself, her “adoring granny” (Min. 1:15:10).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia, love, distress, anger and joy.

15. Marcella’s legacy (wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage).

Footage of a 2010 regional congress of the Italian Labour Confederation. Marcella, thin and visibly deteriorated, speaks on the stage of a hall full of people; in the background, we can read the sentence “a region that promotes equality” (Min. 1:15:19). In medium shot, she refers to the phrase and thanks the audience, saying she feels at home. She continues with her speech:

I’ve been a woman for thirty years. I have a voice which creates embarrassment everywhere I go. I’m tired. We are the worst nation in Europe in terms of civil rights. But why is it that our right to love can’t be recognised? (...) as we are treated badly, right from childhood, we lived through problems such as lack of communication and so on, for us love is even more important than for heterosexual people, precisely because we know this suffering (Min. 1:15:56).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, distress, joy and anger.

16. Saying goodbye to Marcella (wave 1, Marcella's private archive footage; and wave 3, the filmmaker's reconstruction trip)

Various subjective shots of Marcella's empty apartment. For a moment, we see the reflection of Cangelosi holding the camera. He goes around the corners of the rooms. At times the images get very blurry.

16.1 In medium shot, Marcella, with short blonde hair and glasses, sits on a sofa. She asks Cangelosi, who is off screen, how her expression should be. After striking a diva pose, she begins to sing "Habanera" from *Carmen*. The close-ups of her face singing are combined with the credits: written by Simone Cangelosi and Roberto Nisi; producers; photographer; editor; and sound. Marcella then says: "It's over, the novel is over" (Min. 1:20:58). The credits continue, as "Habanera" sung by Maria Callas is played. The affects evoked by this last sequence are nostalgia and joy.

### 6.2.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

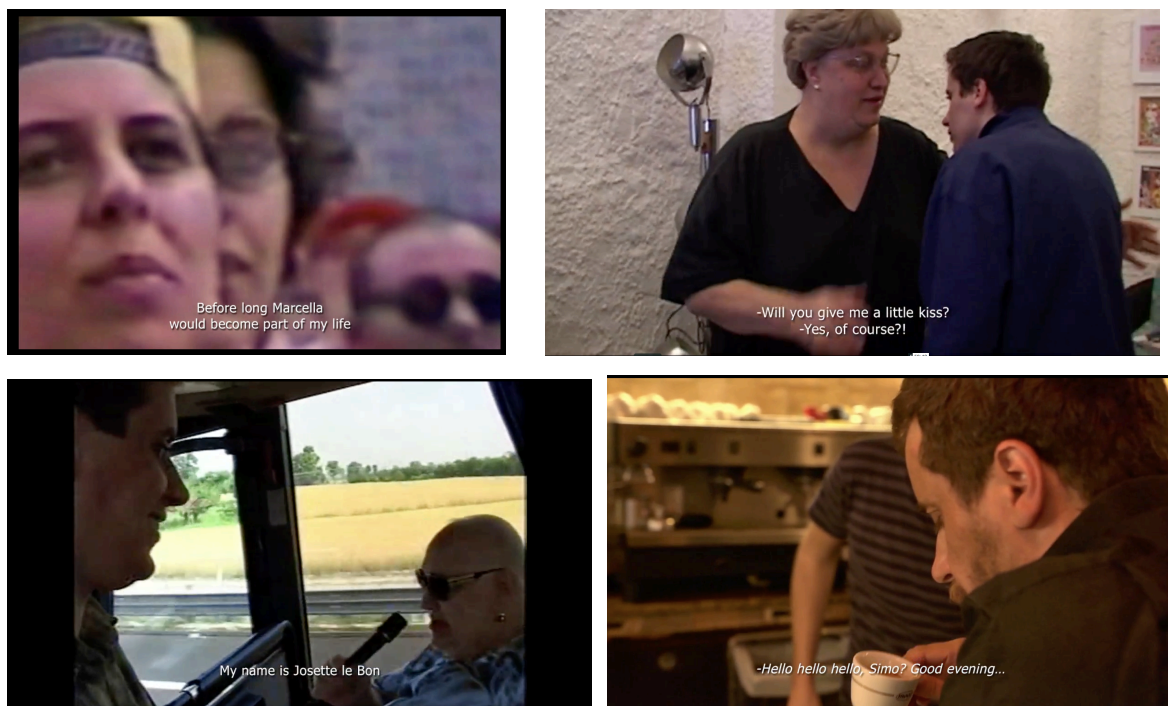
*Una nobile rivoluzione* operates at two levels: on the one hand, it is a biographical film that reconstructs the two lives led by transsexual activist Marcella Di Folco, firstly as a man in Rome, secondly as a woman in Bologna. On the other hand, it is an overview of the LGBT civil rights movement in Italy and how it intersects with the demands of other precarious groups, such as prostitutes. In this sense, it touches various aspects of the feminist audiovisual agenda: gender-based violence, the recovery of women's movements memory, the right to one's body, and transsexualism.

Both narrative strands enact **feminist countervisualities** that can manage "to provoke, to facilitate, and to solicit a new seeing" (Minh-ha 2005: 13). In the first case, Cangelosi makes two gendered lives carried out by the same person legible, setting into motion an **eccentric technology of gender** that decenters masculinity and the apparent coherence of the androcentric subject, questioning the dominant visuality which, as Mirzoeff explains, operates by naming, categorising and defining/aestheticising phenomena (2011: 476). In the second case, the film renders visible strategic **alliances from and against precarity**, already embedded in the memory of feminist and LGBT demands for equal rights, but that become clearer with the re-vision and cutting-together-apart<sup>668</sup> of archive materials within the film.

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<sup>668</sup> According to Barad, the key aspect of agential cuts is that they enact relations of responsibility among the entities that are cut together-apart. We can ask ourselves about the potential of this

The point of view from which the film is narrated is the onscreen embodied gaze of Cangelosi, himself a transgender man<sup>669</sup>, who gets to know Marcella during his transition process (figure 36). He reconstructs Marcella’s story through various other perspectives, building a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592), tied together by his own accountable and situated gaze. By acknowledging his subjective point of view, located in-and-out gender, Cangelosi manages to inscribe the film with a **transgender gaze** that looks *with* the transgender characters instead of *at* them (Halberstam 2005: 78).



**Figure 36:** The filmmaker’s onscreen gaze and Marcella’s company in his transition

The aforementioned polyscopic narrative entangles six different **narrative waves** through the film editing: wave 1, Marcella’s private archive footage; wave 2, the filmmaker’s reflexive voice-over; wave 3, the filmmaker’s reconstruction road trip; wave 4, Marcella’s voice recordings; wave 5, conversations about Marcella; and wave 6, public archive footage. Working with digital technology, Cangelosi has access to an “elastic reality” as described by Manovich (1995): he can make the film with a combination of

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framework to build feminist alliances against precarity: “What if we were to recognize that differentiating is a material act that is not about radical separation, but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments?” (2012: 47). *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity: How Documentary Cinema Matters.

<sup>669</sup> Cangelosi’s first film, *Dalla testa ai piedi* (2007) is an audiovisual diary of his transition from being a woman to becoming a man. Various materials originally recorded for this film, (re)appear in *Una nobile rivoluzione*, as explained in the next section.

photographs, recent digital video, VHS archives, film and television fragments. He articulates a movement back and forth in time and space, which is illustrative of a **diffractive and performative understanding of documentary cinema**: the filmmaker co-composes his cinematic reality through “the entanglement/superposition of different times and space”, which is indeed how Barad describes diffraction (2012: 49). The spectator and the filmed subjects move along this “spacetime mattering” (2012: 32). In segment 4.1, for example, Liliana tells Cangelosi that she is happy with their filmed encounter, “because I’ve gone back in time” (Min. 12:28).

In its entanglement of past, present and future, an affect that traverses the whole film is **critical nostalgia** (Boym 2001; Fortunati 2005; Gamberi 2013). In her analysis of Alina Marazzi’s cinema, Gamberi explains that critical nostalgia “is not sterile, but generative” (2013: 167). It doesn’t “linger in regressive stances or melancholic attitudes” (2013: 167). Rather, nostalgia as a driving force turns documentary cinema into a work of mourning that helps overcoming a loss, celebrates those who are gone, and recovers necessary genealogies.<sup>670</sup> Apart from nostalgia, the **emotionality** of the film balances between **positive affects** such as joy and love, and **negative affects** such as distress, shame and anger. There’s also a celebratory tone throughout most of the film around Marcella’s strength, which, as Porpora describes, was an embodiment of the pride and courage of the trans movement for equal rights.

The transgender gaze of *Una nobile rivoluzione* creates heterogeneous ways of seeing that exceed fixed identity categories. By making transgender bodies legible, it contributes to opening up the possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema**: “That is the moment of resistance, of change, of escaping from an identity that imprisons us” (Smelik 2007: 191). Marcella, Simone and other transgender activists, who participate in the film, enact their **performative right to appear** as political beings with “the right to have rights” (Butler 2015: 80). As a transsexual woman asserts in the film: “our habitat is where we are, it’s the centre of every city because we will remain visible and proud” (Min. 1:09:08).

The film critically engages with **gender performativity**, i.e. the ways in which gender is a kind of enactment of gender norms that “inform the lived modes of embodiment we acquire over time” (Butler 2015: 29). In the repeated reproduction of

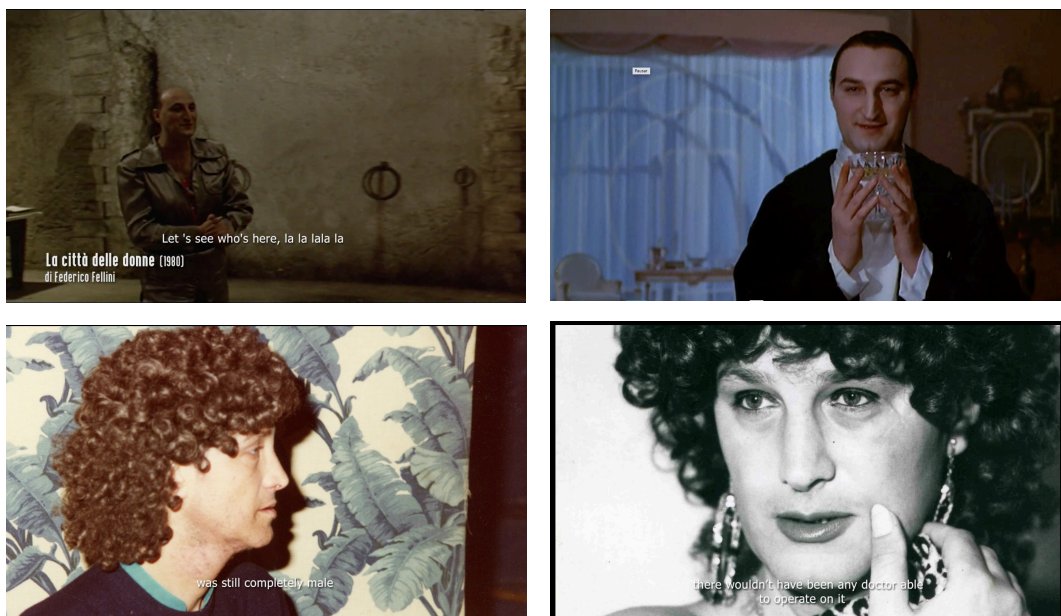
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<sup>670</sup> Nostalgia as a key affect in *Una nobile rivoluzione* is also gathered by one of the reviewers whose text in *Fuorivista. Media & Film Literacy* I discuss in the next section. *Vid. Infra.* 6.2.2 Production and Reception: The Personal-Political Portrait of an LGBT Activist



gender norms, something can go queer, “opening up the possibility of remaking gendered reality along new lines” (Butler 2015: 32). In this sense, *Una nobile rivoluzione* enacts a **queer performativity of gender norms** with the portrait of its main character, creating conditions of visibility for “an eccentric discursive position outside the male (hetero)sexual monopoly of power/knowledge (...) an eccentric subject constituted in a process of struggle and interpretation, a rewriting of self” (de Lauretis 1990: 127, 144).

To analyse **documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus** implies paying attention to how it makes boundaries within phenomena and produces diffraction patterns where the effects and affects of differences are visualised. In *Una nobile rivoluzione*, patterns of differences between men and women, differences between women, and differences within women<sup>671</sup>, can all be analysed through Marcella’s life. The confrontation with her own **identity**, which led to a suicide attempt, is an example of the differences within, and of how the rigid gender scheme in which we are set up makes life unliveable for those who don’t conform. Her identity is not shown as uniform and without contradiction (figure 37). Rather, we can diffractively read it through Barad’s terms: “*Identity is multiple within itself; or rather, identity is diffracted through itself – identity is diffraction/différance/differing/deferring/ differentiating*” (2012: 32).



**Figure 37:** Marcella as a man and as a woman

<sup>671</sup> These three levels of difference are identified and described by Rosi Braidotti in her nomadic political project (1994: 158-167).

As a man, working with Federico Fellini in films such as *Satyricon* (1969) and *Amarcord* (1973), Marcella embodied “exactly the typical Latin male of the thirties (...) the aquiline nose” (Min. 27:32). In her transition from being a man to becoming a woman, there’s a movement from a more privileged position, that of a cinema actor described by her nephew as “the man of the house (...) the one who insisted on good manners and rules (...) a sort of Cerberus” (Min. 25:21), to the precarious position of a transsexual woman. As such, Marcella worked as a prostitute for twenty years. After adopting the female gender identity and undergoing sex reassignment surgery, Marcella’s deviation from gender norms is punished with precarity and **unequal distribution of vulnerability**. As Butler asserts, “those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment, pathologization, and violence” (2015: 34).

In the discussion around prostitution that is included in the film, Marcella emphasises the unequal distribution of vulnerability that takes place when such an activity is stigmatised, and when clients’ responsibility is denied. She criticises Italian laws, arguing that “as always, the only people who will be punished and made to suffer by this law will be the people who prostitute themselves, in other words, the weakest link in the chain” (Min. 41:25). It is at this point in her life that Marcella becomes engaged with political struggles for equal rights.

In terms of differences between women, the conversation that Cangelosi has with politician Silvia Bartolini in the second half of the film touches a key aspect in terms of alliances across differences. Bartolini refers to Marcella as a woman who deserved to have an important political seat “because she was someone who had really dedicated herself to civil rights struggles” (Min. 51:20). Moreover, Bartolini emphasises that what brought them closer in their political fights was “the sense to deal with a series of equal rights issues as fundamental or priorities for the political-administrative agenda” (Min. 50:00).

Towards the end of the film, Marcella makes an open reference to the **unintelligibility of the bodies** when they depart from the gender norms that regulate the ways in which they are supposed to appear in public and private spaces: “I’ve been a woman for thirty years. I have a voice which creates embarrassment everywhere I go. I’m tired. We are the worst nation in Europe in terms of civil rights. But why is it that our right to love can’t be recognised?” (Min. 1:15:56). Butler proposes alliances of those regarded as “illegible”, so as to “open up the norms that limit not only what is thinkable, but the thinkability of gender nonconforming lives” (2015: 38). She summarises the

ultimate political aspiration of gender performativity theory as “to let the lives of gender and sexual minorities become more possible and more livable” (2015: 32). In this sense, *Una nobile rivoluzione* enacts the performative right to appear for gender non-conforming people in an audiovisual document; and within the diegesis of the film, Marcella and other activists of the MIT association, also exercise this right.

Enacting the right to appear is charged with an important political dimension: “For those effaced or demeaned through the norm they are expected to embody, the struggle becomes an embodied one for recognisability, a public insistence on existing and mattering” (Butler 2015: 37). In one scene, Porpora Marcasiano refers to the **physicality and theatricality** of Marcella as a key aspect in the victories that the MIT had under her direction:

Her whole commitment, her quest, her battle was kind of linked with her theatricality, that made all the difference. Add to that her physical presence, that imposing physique (...) That’s how the voice of transsexual people found its voice, its presence, its physicality, its fullness, where up until then there had been emptiness (Min. 47:39).

As president of the MIT, Marcella played a key role in turning affective responses into material effects that could make a change in the living conditions of transsexual people. In the film, Porpora explains that people at MIT were really committed, but without clear objectives, “the only certainty was the need to get rid of our chains” (Min. 45:31). It was through Marcella’s figure that the demands led to political conquests such as “having an advice centre, having headquarters, having shelter apartments” (Min. 48:23).

In the film, various sequences show **assemblies in public spaces**, especially of people who identify as part of the LGBT community. According to Butler, when these rebellious bodies come together, they exercise “a plural and performative right to appear, one that asserts and instates the body in the midst of the political field” (2015: 11). Their actions acquire a performative dimension, for they bring their right to appear into being and they set into motion a series of effects (figure 38). Moreover, the fact that these events are registered turns them into **an audiovisual archive and a memory tool**: to begin with, these are materials (wave 1 and wave 6) employed by Cangelosi to give form to *Una nobile rivoluzione* and, in so doing, to set into motion bonds of solidarity beyond those who actually took part in them.



**Figure 38:** Enacting the right to appear. An audiovisual archive of assemblies

The importance of a **queer gender performativity** within the diegesis of the film, along with the acknowledged transgender gaze and subjective point of view of the filmmaker, allow us to assert that the main **modes of representation** in the film are the performative and participatory modes. The opening sequence can also be defined as **expository**, since the voice-over of the filmmaker (wave 2) addresses the spectators directly, describing the images of Marcella in a demonstration. However, there's a subversion of the traditional expository mode of representation, for the voice-of-God that comes "from some place that remains unspecified but associated with objectivity or omniscience" (Nichols 2010: 168), is replaced by Cangelosi's embodied gaze.

This active presence of the filmmaker within the frame is the main reason why *Una nobile rivoluzione* can be considered within a **participatory** mode of representation. He appears in the same reality as those being filmed, rather than on the detached world of the commentator (expository mode) or witness (observational mode): "The viewer senses that **the image is** not just an indexical representation of some part of the historical world but also **an indexical record of the actual encounter between filmmaker and subject**" (Nichols 2010: 157). Moreover, Cangelosi places himself and the filmed characters in the

same reality as that of Marcella who, as we come to know by the middle of the film, died in 2010.

As a portrait of, and homage to, a recently deceased person, *Una nobile rivoluzione* raises important issues in terms of **indexicality**. Olivieri argues that documentary cinema differs from fiction cinema because of its particular relation with reality, one of “contact and continuity” (2012: 35), which she defines as “haunting” (2012: 8). Indexes are “signs founded on a ‘physical’ or ‘existential’ relation with their referent, a relation of copresence if not of contact” (2012: 36). In the case of documentaries, such referent is “an actual object that exists or existed in actuality and that has not solely been created for the camera” (2012: 37). At various moments of the film, Marcella’s presence as an indexical sign makes her present, despite her death.

The film structure, which incorporates materials from diverse sources, times and spaces, also brings it close to the **reflexive** mode of representation, because it calls attention to the film’s constructed character “around a gap or dislocation between the original archival raw material and the new reading offered by its rearrangement” (Mulvey 2011: 251). In segment 4.2, Marcella herself jokes about being filmed and not making any money out of it. These two elements, i.e. blurring the separation between the living and the dead characters, and the enactment of a suspended filmic-space-time by means of the cutting-together-apart of archival material, turn *Una nobile rivoluzione* into a documentary film, in which the performative mode of representation is central.

The **performative** documentary emphasises the embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world. Still, it always joins “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political” (Nichols 2010: 204). Instead of presenting a “reality” that exists previously and independently, performative documentary cinema shows realities resulting from the action of the camera and/or the film production: situations created from the very action of making a documentary film. Cangelosi produces the reality that he films. This film also illustrates Bruzzi’s definition of **documentary as a performative act**, in which the idea of unmediated transparency is to be replaced “with a performative exchange between subjects, filmmakers/apparatus and spectators” (2000: 6).

The modes of representation are directly linked with the ways in which the film produces and presents its contents, as well as to its **materiality** in terms of how it “engages with bodies and with the matter of the world” (Olivieri 2012: 10). The filmmaker makes it clear from the first sequence that he is telling Marcella’s story from

his point of view, and throughout the film we get to see how strong the friendship between them is. In Barad's agential realism framework, the separation between subject/observer and object/observed is replaced by an understanding that both are permanently entangled, for "we do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because 'we' are *of* the world" (Barad 2003: 829). The spectator *looks with* Cangelosi, as he re-constructs the portrait of Marcella, by means of various intra-actions with the people and places that were key in her life.

The filmmaker avoids **talking heads**, resorting instead to informal conversations (wave 5) that blur boundaries and hierarchies between filmmaker and filmed subjects (figure 39). Nevertheless, it is Cangelosi who ultimately decides how to **frame** Marcella's story. Framing, as explained in the first chapter, involves making cuts and drawing boundaries. In documentary filmmaking, "framing encloses archival documents, actual bodies, and political events within a territory in a manner that makes them expressive of qualities that are not visible as such" (Hongisto 2015: 21).



**Figure 39:** Filmed conversations: blurring boundaries between filmmaker and filmed subjects

In the next section, I read through an interview with Simone Cangelosi held for this research project, a presentation he gave at a screening in Bologna, and two reviews of the film published in 2016: one from a film criticism online magazine called *Pointblank*, and another one from the website of the *Fuorivista. Media & Film Literacy* magazine.

## **6.2.2 Production and Reception: The Personal-Political Portrait of an LGBT Activist**

Before making *Una nobile rivoluzione* in 2014, Simone Cangelosi directs two documentary films that anticipate various aspects in terms of form and content. In 2007, he makes his opera prima, the medium-length film *Dalla testa ai piedi/From Head to*

*Foot*, which is an audiovisual diary of his transition from being a woman to becoming a man. In 2010, with Luki Massa (the artistic director of the Bologna Lesbian Film Festival “Some Prefer Cake” and the Trans Film Festival “Divergenti”, who died in 2016), he co-directs *Felliniana*, a short film about Marcella’s work in Fellini’s cinema.

In an interview carried out for this research project on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017, Cangelosi explains that *Felliniana* was envisioned, carried out, and screened in the arch of seven months, which coincided with the end of Marcella’s life (they had the idea in March, presented the film in May, and she died during the first week of September 2010). Cangelosi, Massa and Porpora Marcasciano decided to make this film as homage to Marcella, within the framework of the Trans Film Festival “Divergenti” and of an international exhibition about Fellini that was taking place at that time.

*Felliniana* has a simple structure: the director of the Bologna Cinematheque, Gian Luca Farinelli, interviews Marcella about her experience working with Fellini in seven films, including *Amarcord* and *Satyricon*. Fragments from these films are interleaved with the interview. Cangelosi remembers that during the screening at the “Divergenti” Festival, Marcella, who was in a very delicate health condition, was deeply moved. The filmmaker emphasises that this film was also a restitution of a moment in Marcella’s life that was unknown for many people in Bologna, who were only aware of her life as an activist.

An element that is already present in *Felliniana*, and that is further revisited in *Una nobile rivoluzione*, is the fact that, for Fellini, Marcella was **the embodiment of masculinity**. Cangelosi reflects on how having this image of herself reflected onscreen must have been really difficult for Marcella to deal with:

**Marcella**, in *Amarcord*, but also in others, **in most of Fellini’s films, embodies masculinity**. Because she has such a strong face, the reason why Fellini chooses her for *Satyricon* is this face, both from Roman centurion and from the man of the thirties, just like the prince in *Amarcord*. A very strong, intense, marked masculine face. I have reflected deeply on this, especially during *Una nobile rivoluzione*. How hard it was for her, if you think about it, to go into cinema and embody those things, these characters, how hard it was for her as to say, the theme of identity, that is, she was an actor anyway. Since every person who undergoes a change of sex, however, engages in a fight against an external image, has a completely different internal image. And this image is not about how thin I am, or how fat I am. It is about gender. So if you think that she has gone from

embodying masculinity in cinema, in the apotheosis of cinema, because Fellini is the apotheosis of cinema, to becoming a woman, you have to think of **the huge struggle she had engaged with in terms of her identity, with that image that even the screen gave her back**, the cinema screen par excellence, if you think it was masculinity for someone like Fellini.<sup>672</sup>

In his opera prima, *Dalla testa ai piedi*, Cangelosi approached the **conflict between his inner self-image and the image of himself that the screen reflected back**. But by recording his own transition, in this film he was using the filmic medium **to put Simone into the world**: to give him a body, a voice and a history.<sup>673</sup> In our interview he explains the reasons behind his decision to start his career as a filmmaker with such a personal work:

Paradoxically, **even though starting with a documentary which followed my transition was extremely complicated, it was the easiest way to start my filmmaking career**. It was a way to start talking about me right away, without having to account for what I had done later on (...) I decided to make the film because **it was essential for me to do something in which I could see and follow the process I was going through**, a process along which you also move physically away from yourself, you abandon parts of yourself.<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> “Marcella, in *Amarcord*, ma anche in altri, in quasi tutti i film di Fellini, incarna la mascolinità. Perché ha un viso talmente forte, il motivo per cui Fellini la sceglie per *Satyricon* è questo viso così, sia da centurione romano, che da uomo dagli anni trenta, come, come appunto il principe in *Amarcord*. Una faccia maschile molto forte, molto, molto intensa, molto marcata. Su questo in realtà io ho riflettuto a fondo, soprattutto durante *Una nobile rivoluzione*. Quanto per lei sia stato forte, se ci pensi, entrare dentro il cinema ed incarnare quelle cose, questi personaggi, quanto era forte per lei come dire, il tema dell'identità, cioè, lei comunque è stata un attore. Siccome ogni persona che fa un cambiamento di sesso, comunque ingaggia una lotta contro una immagine esterna, una immagine quindi, ha una immagine interna completamente diversa. E questa immagine non riguarda che ne so quanto sono magro, o quanto sono grasso. Riguarda il genere. Quindi se si pensa che lei è passata dall'incarnare la mascolinità dentro il cinema, nell'apoteosi del cinema, perché Fellini è l'apoteosi del cinema, a diventare donna pensa all'entità della lotta che lei ha ingaggiato con la sua identità, con quell'immagine che le restituiva persino lo schermo, lo schermo del cinema per eccellenza, se pensi che era la mascolinità per uno come Fellini.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>673</sup> As part of a dissemination event within the GRACE project, I organised a screening of *Dalla testa ai piedi* followed by a Q&A session with Cangelosi at the University of Granada. This event took place on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 and we discussed many of the insights raised in this chapter.

<sup>674</sup> “Paradossalmente iniziare da un documentario che seguisse la mia transizione per quanto fosse estremamente complicato era il modo più semplice per iniziare a fare il regista. Era un modo per iniziare subito parlando di me, senza non dover rendere conto di quello che avevo fatto in un secondo momento (...) Ho deciso di fare il film perché per me era essenziale fare qualcosa che mi riprendesse, in cui io potessi vedere e seguire il processo a cui andavo incontro, un processo in cui tu anche ti allontani da te stesso, fisicamente, in cui abbandoni delle parti di te.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.



*Dalla testa ai piedi* is a **reflexive-performative documentary**, in which Cangelosi's ironic voice-over keeps together fragments of home movies, animation and self-recordings. He narrates that, since childhood, he always felt male; that he got involved in separatist lesbian feminist activism during his university years; and that the people at the MIT association, including Marcella and Porpora, accompanied him during his transition. During the interview, he acknowledges that his participation in the **feminist movement influenced his filmmaking choices** in at least two aspects, i.e. starting from oneself and making visible the invisible:

...the feminists say “a partire da sé”, that is, the concept of “starting from oneself”; **that film certainly comes from a lesson I learned, which is that of “starting from oneself”** (...) *Dalla testa ai piedi* managed to express something that I would not have been able to express in any other way than with a film because **it shows the process of my change to someone who could not follow it, it shows a process that otherwise remains invisible to others.**<sup>675</sup>

Various scenes from *Dalla testa ai piedi* reappear in *Una nobile rivoluzione*, such as the first sequence, in which Marcella gives a political speech, and segment 9.1, where Porpora drives around and greets a prostitute friend. Other sequences were originally recorded for Cangelosi's opera prima, but were discarded in the final cut of the film only to reappear later on in *Una nobile rivoluzione*; for example, the sequence of the chat with Marcella about her childhood, youth and experience at the Piper Club. Originally, the last scene, in which Marcella sings “Habanera”, was to be the end of *Dalla testa ai piedi*, but it didn't work out at the editing:

For years I asked her to shoot this scene and she did not want to. She refused because she said: “Ah, you make me look stupid in the film, I seem crazy. All the other people in the movement that you interview are shown as intellectuals, politicians, and me, the leader, you make me appear as crazy” (...) In the end I managed to convince her to shoot the scene in which she sings *Habanera* from *Carmen*, and in my heart I always had the conviction that this was the end of

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<sup>675</sup> “...le femministe dicono ‘a partire da sé’, cioè, il concetto di ‘a partire da sé’, quel film certamente nasce da una lezione che ho imparato, che è quella dell' ‘a partire da sé’ (...) *Dalla testa ai piedi* poi è riuscito a esprimere qualcosa che non sarei riuscito esprimere in nessun altro modo se non con un film poiché mostra il processo del mio cambiamento a qualcuno che non può seguirlo, agli altri, un processo che diversamente rimane invisibile.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

*Dalla testa ai piedi*. Then, when I edited the documentary and it became half an hour in its entirety, I realised that the scene had nothing to do with it (...) When I started working on *Una nobile rivoluzione*, I realised that this was its end.<sup>676</sup>

Cangelosi underlines that the drive for making both films, *Dalla testa ai piedi* and *Una nobile rivoluzione*, was in the first place an intimate need, but that they can be considered **as much personal as they are political**:

In them the personal push is very strong. Another level with which to read these films is that of my formation, academic and even political, of the study of feminist cinema, the interest in that militant cinema. And then, surely that of my desire to be a filmmaker (...) **Both films were my best way to use public space in a political mode.** The best possible way I could have because they combine creativity, personal need and a therapeutic drive, such as the elaboration of mourning in the case of the film about Marcella, *Una nobile rivoluzione*, my political stance. But it is not a political essay, it is not a political manifestation, it is the sum of all those things but through my own self-expression.<sup>677</sup>

This position is consistent with what María Ruido considers key for feminist filmmakers: to understand “their being creators of representation as a political task” (2006: 2).<sup>678</sup> Nevertheless, when directly asked about it, he **refuses to label himself and his films as feminist**. Still, he makes it clear that it’s not because of a rejection of feminism. On the contrary, he acknowledges the feminist roots of the transsexual movement and the debts that the LGBT community has with feminism:

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<sup>676</sup> “Per anni le ho chiesto di girare questa scena e lei non la voleva girare. Si rifiutava perché diceva: ‘Ah, nel film mi fai passare da scema, sembro una pazza. Tutte le altre persone del movimento che intervisti le mostri come delle intellettuali, delle politiche, e a me, che sono la leader mi fai passare per una pazza’ (...) Alla fine sono riuscito a convincerla a girare la scena in cui canta ‘l’Habanera’ della *Carmen* e in cuor mio ho sempre avuto la convinzione che quello fosse il finale di *Dalla testa ai piedi*. Poi, quando ho montato il documentario ed è diventato in tutto una mezz’ora, ho capito che quella ripresa non c’entrava per niente (...) Quando invece ho iniziato a lavorare su *Una nobile rivoluzione*, ho capito che quello era il suo finale.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>677</sup> “In essi la spinta personale è fortissima. Un altro livello con cui leggere i film è quello della formazione, accademica e anche politica, dello studio del cinema femminista, l’interesse per quel cinema militante. E poi, sicuramente quello del mio desiderio di fare regista (...) Entrambi i film sono stati il modo migliore per me di utilizzare lo spazio pubblico in maniera politica. Il modo migliore che potessi avere. Perché si uniscono insieme la creatività, il bisogno personale, la spinta terapeutica, come ad esempio l’elaborazione del lutto nel caso del film su Marcella, *Una nobile rivoluzione*, il tuo punto di vista politico. Ma non è un saggio politico, non è una manifestazione politica, è la somma di tutte quelle cose ma attraverso il tuo modo di esprimerti.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>678</sup> “su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político.”

It seems to me like forcing it, but not because I feel limited by this definition (...)  
 I do not consider myself as such. Being over and done with my female identity, I don't think in these terms any longer. Certainly I do not claim this definition but this does not mean that I would dislike people to think of me as a feminist. I believe that feminism is one of the most important and positive political movements in the Twentieth century. Certainly **I am the result of the struggles of the feminist movement, as surely I am the result of the struggles of the transsexual movement (...)** **The LGBT movement has debts towards feminism (...)** If there had not been that, a revolution of thought, there would not have been all the rest. Often those in the movement do not have these things so present (...). It is important to connect the parts, right? This is fundamental, to see which are the meeting points (...). Where does it come from? **Otherwise the struggles are emptied of roots and are a vain act.**<sup>679</sup>

In this sense, he highlights that, as leader of the MIT (Movement for Transsexual Identity), Marcella enacted various **alliances** with other precarious and vulnerable groups. For example, in the struggle for the rights of prostitutes she joined forces with Pia Covre and Carla Corso, who founded the “Comitato per i diritti civili delle prostitute” (Committee on Civil Rights of Prostitutes) in 1982:

MIT was born in 1979 (...) it arrives at a particular moment in Italian history, that of the claim of civil rights, and has **a clear debt towards the feminist movement, which is the first to put the issue of identity, of gender, since the beginning of the decade (...)** **the first alliances are, for example, on the subject of prostitution, disease prevention and health, prostitutes' rights (...)** so naturally in its path, it finds Pia Covre and Carla Corso. They are emancipated women, who set up an association with specific concrete objectives, those of defending the “fireflies”, i.e. the prostitutes. They are not separatist, they belong to a sort of new feminism, that from the eighties, which can exist thanks to the

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<sup>679</sup> “Mi sembra una forzatura ma non perché io mi senta limitato da questa definizione (...) Io non mi considero tale, avendo chiuso con l'identità femminile, non ho più pensato in questi termini. Certamente non mi approprio di questa definizione ma questo non significa che non mi faccia piacere se uno pensa che io sia femminista. Credo che il femminismo sia una dei movimenti politici dal basso più importanti o tra i più importanti e anche dei più positivi che ha avuto il Novecento. Certamente sono frutto delle lotte del movimento femminista come sicuramente sono frutto delle lotte del movimento transessuale (...) Il movimento LGBT ha dei debiti verso il femminismo (...) Se non c'era quello, una rivoluzione del pensiero, non ci sarebbe stato tutto il resto. Spesso chi è nel movimento, questa cosa non ce l'ha così presente (...) È importante collegare le parti, capito? Questo è fondamentale, vedere quali sono i punti d'incontro (...) Da dove viene che cosa, altrimenti le lotte si svuotano di radici e sono un agire vano.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

changes occurred in the consciousness of women thanks to the feminism of the seventies. The biggest difference of their position is precisely on the reading of prostitution, which until then had been seen by feminism as the greatest form of subjugation of women to patriarchy.<sup>680</sup>

As with the feminist category, Cangelosi also refuses to label his cinema as LGBT, trans or queer. Rather, he encompasses all these terms under the concept of **political cinema** and defines his work as a search for a balance between his own expressive needs and politics, so as not to make pamphlets. The ultimate goal, he asserts, is not to talk just to and between people who identify within these categories, but to reach those who normally would not listen to these narratives:

For me the most important thing is that my cinema addresses the world, raising these issues and these contents -LGBT, queer, trans and feminist, if you want- because it is the world that has to change. **It is the world that must be shaped in a new way** (...) Marcella also said that we must conduct the battles speaking first between us but then always bring out these issues, because **the message and the struggles for change are made by addressing those who are not like us**. So thinking about all these labels, if you ask me how I define it, I'll reply that I call it political cinema.<sup>681</sup>

With *Una nobile rivoluzione*, Cangelosi wanted to make **a personal-political film**, not just about, but also **with Marcella**: "I wanted it to show to what an extent the personal,

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<sup>680</sup> "Il MIT nasce nel 1979 (...) arriva in un momento particolare della storia italiana, della rivendicazione dei diritti civili ed ha un evidente debito nei confronti del movimento femminista, che è il primo a porre il tema dell'identità, del genere, proprio a partire dall'inizio del decennio (...) prima fa delle alleanze, per esempio, sul tema della prostituzione, della prevenzione delle malattie e per la salute, per i diritti delle prostitute (...) quindi in maniera naturale sul proprio cammino trova Pia Covre e Carla Corso. Sono donne emancipate, che fondano un'associazione con obiettivi concreti precisi, quelli di difendere le 'luciole', le prostitute. Non sono separatiste, appartengono ad una sorta di nuovo femminismo, quello degli anni Ottanta, che può esistere grazie ai cambiamenti avvenuti nella coscienza delle donne grazie al femminismo degli anni Settanta. La differenza più grande della loro posizione è proprio sulla lettura della prostituzione, vista sin lì dal femminismo come la più grande forma di assoggettamento della donna al patriarcato." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>681</sup> "Per me la cosa più importante è che il mio cinema si rivolga al mondo, porgendo fuori queste tematiche e questi contenuti -appunto lgbt, queer, trans e femministe se vuoi-, perché è il mondo che deve cambiare. È il mondo che deve essere plasmato in modo nuovo. (...) Anche Marcella diceva che dobbiamo condurre le battaglie parlando prima tra di noi ma poi portare sempre fuori le questioni, perché il messaggio e le lotte per il cambiamento si fanno rivolgendoci a chi non è come noi. Quindi pensando a tutte queste etichette, se tu mi chiedi come lo definisci, io ti rispondo che lo definirei un cinema politico." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

Marcella's intimacy, was connected to the political. I wanted to show her as a political figure starting from that privileged, intimate point of our relationship."<sup>682</sup> As in the case of *Dalla testa ai piedi*, the film has an important **biographical aspect**: Cangelosi's encounter with Marcella and her death. He identifies two dimensions in his drive to make this film, an intimate-therapeutic one, and a socio-political one:

*Una nobile rivoluzione* was born certainly because I needed to mourn the loss of Marcella and it was also the way in which I could make a film with her (...) Just after her death "I kept her alive". I continued to meet her by looking every day at the archives, the recordings, her jokes (...) **I also wanted to restore Marcella's stature as a person in the history of Italian politics**, with her humanity (...) I wanted to make a film which would also show her contradictions, rather than make a saint of her.<sup>683</sup>

In the same vein, he distinguishes between **two kinds of publics and the goals** that he had in mind concerning each of them. On the one hand, the LGBT community who had known her; on the other hand, the general public who had never heard of her:

Addressing the film to those who had loved her, beyond her contradictions, I thought of this work as **an exciting tribute, capable of serving as a collective ritual for overcoming mourning, a way to give her back to those who had loved her**. For a more general and broad public I thought that the film would fulfill the task of **making a historical reconstruction, that of transfiguring her from a person to a historical character**. To lay a foundation stone for historicizing the movement, because if we have to historicise its recent history, she is one of the people who are to be named.<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> "volevo che mostrasse quanto il personale, l'intimo di Marcella fosse connesso all'aspetto politico, volevo mostrarla come personaggio politico a partire da quel punto privilegiato, intimo, della nostra relazione." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>683</sup> "*Una nobile rivoluzione* è nato sicuramente perché avevo bisogno di riparare il lutto della perdita di Marcella ed è stato anche il modo in cui io ho potuto fare un film con lei (...) appena morta 'l'ho tenuta in vita', ho continuato a incontrarla guardando ogni giorno gli archivi, le registrazioni, le sue battute (...) Volevo anche restituire la levatura di Marcella come persona nella storia della politica italiana, con la sua umanità (...) Volevo fare un film che mostrasse anche le sue contraddizioni, insomma, non è che uno deve fare un santino." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>684</sup> "Rivolgendo il film a chi l'aveva molto amata, al di là delle sue contraddizioni, pensavo a questo lavoro come a un omaggio che fosse emozionante, capace di servire da rito collettivo di superamento del lutto, un modo di restituirla a chi l'aveva amata. Per un pubblico più generico e vasto pensavo che il film avrebbe il compito di fare una ricostruzione storica, quello di trasfigurarla da persona a personaggio storico. Posare una prima pietra di storicizzazione del movimento, perché se dobbiamo

After Marcella's death, Cangelosi asked her family if he could make a film about her. He left his job at the Bologna Cinematheque and, with the support of producer Claudio Giaponessi, began to prepare *Una nobile rivoluzione*. In the interview, he explains that, from the very beginning, he knew that he didn't want to make a film based on the **talking heads** of people who had known Marcella because, in his opinion, this approach gives audiences the clear feeling that the person is dead and behind the time of those appearing onscreen. Rather, he wanted Marcella to be "inside the film as if it were in the present."<sup>685</sup>

Therefore, instead of interviews, he provoked encounters with those who had surrounded Marcella, in places that had been important for her. He also envisioned a structure similar to that of a road movie filmed between Rome and Bologna, one where the only thing remaining the same would be Marcella's life time frame. However, within such biographical frame, Cangelosi moved freely between materials from various sources, thus creating what can be considered a queer time-space:

Holding the time frame steady then I would have to shuffle all the archival and recent pieces as if they had been shot at the same time (...) The goal was to be able to keep Marcella present **in this non-space, in the continuum between her time and her non-time**. This was my will from the beginning, which complicates editing a lot.<sup>686</sup>

The choice of **archival materials** was also derived from this idea of making Marcella present: "we tried to break down these temporal barriers between us and her in the narrative construction. The archives were immediately the fundamental objects, because Marcella was there."<sup>687</sup> The importance given to **Marcella's voice-over** was another strategy to create the sensation that she was present. Cangelosi acknowledges that making

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storicizzare una storia recente, ecco lei è una delle persone che vanno nominate." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>685</sup> "dentro il film così come ci eravamo noi nel presente" Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>686</sup> "Tenendo fermo l'arco temporale poi avrei dovuto mischiare tutti i pezzi d'archivio al girato di oggi come se fossero stati girati nello stesso momento (...) La volontà era quella di riuscire a tenere Marcella presente in questo non spazio, in questo non tempo, in cui c'è la contiguità tra il suo tempo e il suo non tempo, questa era la volontà sin dall'inizio, che è una chiave che complica moltissimo il lavoro al montaggio." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>687</sup> "abbiamo cercato di abbattere queste barriere temporali tra noi e lei nella costruzione narrativa. Gli archivi immediatamente sono stati gli oggetti fondamentali, perché lì c'era Marcella." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

this film was a very intuitive process, weaving “life as if it was a dream.”<sup>688</sup> In this regard, he emphasises that **documentary cinema is never objective**:

**Cinema is not objective. It is a language** (...) The great deception about cinema is that, since it is made up of moving images and therefore it is mimetic of reality, it is regarded as reality. It is a reality like any other part of reality, and it is a language that speaks of reality, discourse, representation to put it better. From this point of view I have no illusions, and so I worried about Marcella, not the film, that is, I worried about restoring Marcella, not betraying Marcella, because I know that **a film by force of things can betray**, and regardless of how much you try to stop it, it betrays reality. **It always says just a small part of reality.**<sup>689</sup>

In Cangelosi’s conception I identify a rejection of cinema as a reflecting mirror. His understanding of documentary is closer to my description of it as a **diffraction apparatus** that presents part of the world in specific ways, depending on the decisions, frames and cuts that are enacted in its making. Worrying about betraying Marcella, Cangelosi’s vision of objectivity echoes Barad’s definition: “Objectivity, instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies, and responsibility to the entanglements of which we are a part” (in Dolphijn and Van Der Tuin 2012: 52). It was in order to give a portrait as comprehensive as possible that he resorted to a **polyscopic narrative**, starting from his own embodied gaze but then gathering testimonies from various people who had met Marcella.

In *Una nobile rivoluzione* these encounters and informal conversations are framed as what can be called **dead times**: e.g. Liliana killing mosquitos or Cangelosi bringing water to Valdimir and explaining that he hates plastic bottles. When asking about it, Cangelosi asserts that leaving these **open spaces** is a strategy he employs when filming and while editing:

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<sup>688</sup> “come se la vita fosse un sogno” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>689</sup> “Il cinema non è oggettivo. E un linguaggio (...) Il grande inganno sul cinema è che, siccome è costituito di immagine in movimento e quindi è mimetico alla realtà, sia quindi la realtà. E realtà come qualsiasi altra parte di realtà, ed è linguaggio che parla della realtà, discorso, rappresentazione per dir meglio. Io da questo punto di vista non ho nessuna illusione, e quindi mi preoccupavo di Marcella, non del film, cioè, mi preoccupavo di restituire Marcella, non tradire Marcella, perché appunto so che un film per forza di cose può tradire, e per quanto ti sforzi di impedirlo tradisce la realtà. Dice sempre una piccola parte della realtà.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

In fact, I do not like it all when it “works”, on the contrary it must remain very open. If you see what I have assembled in *Una nobile rivoluzione*, many scenes are offstage, they have nothing to do with the meeting, with what the person said during the meeting and shooting. Even in some cases I talked with the operator first and I said: “you pretend you’re doing a test and record instead”. In this way I was able to use these things. Since you have to give this idea of suspension you do not have to make people “work”. **This method in my opinion is generally useful, since cinema is more like a dream**, like life, if you do not “make it work” (...) **That suspension gives the spectator a space of possibility for internal construction of meaning**, a reconstruction that the spectator makes from the text (...) **It is essential to keep a movie open because something can really happen until the end that you did not foresee**, and when it happens you have to be able to listen and grasp it. This happens both when you film and when you edit. And this is a way to gather something better from reality, something that surprises you and that says even better what you want to say compared to the form you had imagined.<sup>690</sup>

We can read this approach to filmmaking diffractively with Bruzzi’s (2000) and Hongisto’s (2015) understanding of documentary cinema as a **performative act** that composes the real and that demands **response-ability** from the ones working on it: The film arises from the intra-actions between the filmmaker, the filmed subjects and the film apparatus. He also recognises the agency of the spectators, who have space to co-create the meanings of what they see. Cangelosi’s voice-over only appears in the first sequence, avoiding the expository mode that tells viewers how to read the images. Rather, he appears within the frame at the same level as Marcella and the other filmed subjects. In this sense, he questions the **hierarchies** between who records and who is recorded, who

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<sup>690</sup> “A me infatti non piace assolutamente che ci sia una cosa che ‘funziona’, deve al contrario rimanere tutto molto aperto. Se tu vai a vedere cosa ho montato in *Una nobile rivoluzione*, tantissimi sono fuori scena, non c’entrano niente con l’incontro, con quello che diceva la persona durante l’incontro e le riprese. Addirittura in alcuni casi ci siamo messi d’accordo prima con l’operatrice e le ho detto ‘tu fai finta che stai facendo una prova e invece giri’. In questo modo poi sono riuscito a usare queste cose. Siccome tu devi dare questa idea di sospensione non devi far ‘funzionare’ le persone, questo metodo secondo me in generale è utile, poiché il cinema assomiglia di più al sogno, alla vita, se tu non li ‘fai funzionare’ (...) Quella sospensione restituisce allo spettatore uno spazio di possibilità di costruzione interna di senso, ricostruzione che fa lo spettatore rispetto al testo (...) E essenziale tenere aperto un film perché veramente può succedere qualcosa sino alla fine che non hai previsto e che quando accade devi essere in grado di ascoltare e di cogliere. Questo accade sia quando riprendi sia quando monti. E questo è un modo per raccogliere dalla realtà qualcosa di migliore, che ti sorprende e che dice ancora meglio quello che vuoi dire rispetto alla forma che ti sei immaginato.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.



speaks and who is spoken about. In Barad's terms, he blurs the boundaries between subject and object.

Cangelosi explains that an open approach at the editing phase allowed him to discover, for example, that materials recorded for *Dalla testa ai piedi* could speak to specific parts of *Una nobile rivoluzione* in ways that helped him “break down the space-time boundaries between the present and the past.”<sup>691</sup> In this sense, he highlights that the main guideline for editing *Una nobile rivoluzione* was to give “the sensation that Marcella was alive, that she was present, that she was not in the past.”<sup>692</sup>

I have mentioned that the main reason why Cangelosi resorted to archival materials, many of which he had recorded himself, was to have Marcella's voice and image onscreen. In the interview he also elaborates on how the use of archival materials, as a global tendency in filmmaking, responds to the **digital technology** available, a technology that blurs the boundaries between sources of materials and gives creators access to what Manovich calls “an elastic reality” (1995):

**Only digital technique allows you to make a film like this.** When before could you mix film and video in the same movie as I did? The archival materials I found for *Una nobile rivoluzione* are often on really bad supports, sometimes they were just DVDs, or just photographs (...) these materials of luck, have the visual quality of a stamp compared to 35mm, often the images have a horrifying quality, in the worst cases you can even see the pixels if they are digital files or they have the quality of the VHS from the eighties and nineties. In short, in the past, not only were the fragments of the great Fellini not placed next to so everyday materials, so incidental, but you could not have done it physically. Neither as an almost iconoclastic gesture towards the “father” Fellini, nor as a technical gesture. It is absolutely the digitisation that allows this type of cinema.<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> “abbattere i confini spazio-temporali tra il presente e il passato.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>692</sup> “la sensazione che Marcella fosse viva, che fosse presente, non fosse nel passato.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>693</sup> “Solo la tecnica digitale ti permette di fare un film così. Quando mai prima tu potevi mischiare pellicola, video, come ho mischiato io, dentro lo stesso film? I materiali d'archivio che ho trovato per *Una nobile rivoluzione* sono spesso su supporti veramente di fortuna, talvolta erano solo dei DVD, oppure solo fotografie. (...) questi materiali di fortuna, hanno la qualità visiva di un francobollo rispetto al 35mm, spesso le immagini hanno una qualità orripilante, nei casi peggiori ne vedi anche i pixels se sono file digitali o hanno la qualità dei VHS degli anni ottanta e novanta, insomma, in passato non solo non sono stati messi frammenti del grande Fellini accanto a materiali così quotidiani, così incidentali, ma non lo avresti proprio potuto fare fisicamente. Nè come gesto quasi iconoclasta verso il ‘padre’ Fellini, né come gesto tecnico. È assolutamente la digitalizzazione che ti permette questo tipo di cinema.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

To a great extent, the expressive freedom that Cangelosi had in making *Una nobile rivoluzione* was due to the fact that it is an **independent film**, “an alternative practice to dominant cinema in relation to industrial, aesthetic and ideological perspectives” (Pravadelli 2016: 331). The production company of the film, “Kiné”, which also distributes my case study *Lunàdigas*<sup>694</sup>, aided Cangelosi in getting public funding. However, the expenses were higher and he only managed to finish the film thanks to the donation of close friends:

The film got two funds, one from the Emilia-Romagna region, another from the Cinematheque, which was its last call before the reorganisation of the Film Commission in Emilia. Two funds, plus another small one for internationalisation, a regional fund (...) With the funds we raised forty-five thousand euro, I think, maybe something more. But the costs were higher, also due to some problems we had (...) Towards the end, to close the film, two of my dearest friends decided to co-finance the film, and so Murielle Moise and Fausto Tomei joined the film production.<sup>695</sup>

Cangelosi explains that, compared with *Dalla testa ai piedi*, the making of *Una nobile rivoluzione* was more professional in terms of having a crew, each and everyone of its members were paid for their work. However, this salary was not enough to live on and they all needed other jobs. Cangelosi acknowledges **precarity** as inherent to the freedom that he looks for and the kinds of cinema that he is interested in:

If I made commercial films, I could live on this but as you see, I have done what I wanted to do, however **I placed myself in a very marginal cinema, in the economic sense of the term**. In fact, they are also marginal themes because topics like transsexualism, if treated in this way, are not so mainstream (...) I

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<sup>694</sup> Vid. *Infra*. Section 6.4 *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli*

<sup>695</sup> “Il film ha vinto due bandi, uno della regione Emilia-Romagna, un altro della Cineteca che era l'ultimo bando che faceva la Cineteca prima della riorganizzazione delle Film Commission in Emilia. Due bandi, più un altro piccolo bando per l'internazionalizzazione, bandi di produzione regionali (...) Con i bandi abbiamo messo assieme quarantacinquemila euro mi pare, forse qualcosa di più. Però le spese sono state più alte, anche per alcune traversie (...) Verso la fine, per chiudere il film due miei carissimi amici hanno deciso di co-finanziare il film, quindi Murielle Moise e Fausto Tomei sono entrati in con-partecipazione al film.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

want to make films in freedom (...). **If to earn money, I must be in the industry, submit to ten thousand conditions, then no.** I'd rather do it myself.<sup>696</sup>

The funding allowed them to pay for distribution in festivals and cinemas, but not for DVD reproduction, since the fee for the rights to include images from the Italian **public television** (RAI) were extremely high. They tried to raise this money via **crowdfunding**, but it didn't work out. The television didn't want to acquire the film, because it didn't fit its parameters:

Being a very free film, a film that was made completely out of the strictly television canons, RAI had no interest in buying it. Usually it works the other way round: in a fairly initial phase, the contact and interest of a television is sought and if it enters the production they also determine the way you make the film. In this case it did not work out and as far as I'm concerned, I gained in terms of freedom of expression. **I would not have been able to do it differently, being a film about Marcella, because it was born of a very personal need, so I wanted to do it with a lot of freedom.** Obviously then, the TV is not coming at the end and buying the film, certainly not to an unknown person like me (...) then, in this film there are obviously themes that are weighed by a television.<sup>697</sup>

Even though he doesn't mention open  **censorship**, in practice, this lack of interest from the public television in acquiring the film or, at least, in reducing the fee for the rights to include its archival materials, operates as such. The Cinematheque of Bologna has been in charge of distributing the film: "since March 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 it began its tour in Italian cinemas, I believe at least forty movie theaters, maybe fifty. At leopard spots obviously, a

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<sup>696</sup> "Se facessi un cinema commerciale, potrei vivere di questo ma come vedi, ho fatto quello che volevo fare, comunque mi sono posizionato in un cinema estremamente marginale, nel senso economico del termine. In effetti sono anche temi marginali perché temi come il transessualismo se trattati in questo modo diciamo non sono così mainstream (...) Voglio fare dei film in libertà (...) Se per guadagnarci devo, essere nell'industria, sottostare a diecimila condizionamenti, no. Piuttosto me lo faccio da solo." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>697</sup> "La RAI, essendo che il film è stato in maniera molto libera, e il film è stato fatto completamente fuori dai dei canoni strettamente televisivi, non ha avuto interesse ad acquistare il film. Di solito funziona al contrario: in una fase abbastanza iniziale si cerca il contatto e l'interesse di una televisione e se entra nella produzione determinano molto anche del modo in cui costruisci il film. In questo caso non è andata così e per quanto mi riguarda io ci ho guadagnato in termini di libertà espressiva. Non sarei riuscito a farlo diversamente un film su Marcella perché essendo nato da un bisogno anche molto personale, lo volevo fare così, con molta libertà. Ovviamente poi le tv non è che arrivano alla fine e ti comprano un lavoro, non certo ad una persona sconosciuta come me (...) poi, in questo film ci sono ovviamente temi che vengono soppesati da una televisione." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

date here, another there.”<sup>698</sup> Concerning **festivals**, *Una nobile rivoluzione* had its premiere at the 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Torino Film Festival. In this regard, Cangelosi emphasises their interest in taking the film to festivals outside the LGBT circuit:

We knew that Marcella, being very much loved in the movement, would have had anyway interest from festivals of the sector, and therefore it was interesting to face the challenge towards a general public or not necessarily oriented to LGBT themes (...) it was more important for me to try to open Marcella’s life to the world. This was the goal for me. When you asked me before if these films are political, **this for me is to do politics, to go where they usually do not see you, where they do not listen to you.** Otherwise what sense does it make? Remembering her among us is very important because there is an element of affectivity. Through these tributes that tell personal and public events, biographical elements of those who look, of many of us, also come out, but surely Marcella is important because she speaks to the world.<sup>699</sup>

This position leads us back to what we mentioned previously about the two kinds of publics that Cangelosi had in mind when making the film: those who knew Marcella and those who discovered her through the film. Even though he resents what he considers formal limits of the film due to mistakes and lack of experience, Cangelosi thinks that *Una nobile rivoluzione* reaches its objective in relation to the public:

The film, in fact, despite its limits, manages to convey Marcella, despite some formal mistakes. So, in this sense, I know that a goal has been reached and so I know that in some way I have enriched, as you say, I took care of the spectator. I know that **at the end of the film, the spectator definitely came into contact with a character, a very significant person (...)** a very human person, very contradictory, with bitterness and sweetness at the same time (...) an important

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<sup>698</sup> “dal 7 di marzo 2015 ha iniziato a girare nelle sale italiane, credo almeno in una quarantina di sale, forse una cinquantina. A macchia di leopardo ovviamente, una data qua, una là.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>699</sup> “Sapevamo che Marcella, essendo molto amata nel movimento, avrebbe avuto comunque ascolto e interesse da parte di Festival di settore, e quindi era interessante la sfida verso un pubblico generale o non necessariamente orientato ai temi LGBT (...) per me era più importante cercare di aprire la vita di Marcella al mondo. Questo era l’obiettivo per me. Quando prima mi chiedevi se questi film sono politici, questo per me è fare politica, è andare dove di solito non ti vedono, non ti ascoltano. Altrimenti che senso ha? Ricordarla tra di noi è importantissimo perché c’è un elemento di affettività. Attraverso questi omaggi che raccontano vicende personali e pubbliche escono fuori anche elementi biografici anche di chi guarda, di tanti, ma sicuramente Marcella è importante perché parla al mondo.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

leader of the Italian LGBT movement. The film was made for this. While I was making the film, I was definitely thinking about **how to convey all this complexity**.<sup>700</sup>

Judging by the **reactions** that he has seen from the publics, Cangelosi believes that he has reached these goals:

**The film has served substantially as a collective farewell ritual**; at least I have lived it like that. For those who knew her, seeing it all together was a sort of amplification of a collective ritual, a greeting, and a farewell. For those who didn't know her, from what I was able to understand, for some the film has allowed an encounter with a very particular person, really human, too human. This was the most frequent commentary on the film. Fulvia Antonelli herself, who worked with me in the writing process at the final phase of the film, would always tell me "I would have liked to know her." **The feeling that people who enjoyed the film had was that they could get to know her by watching it**.<sup>701</sup>

At "Associazione Orlando" in Bologna I organised a screening of *Dalla testa ai piedi* and *Una nobile rivoluzione*, as part of a GRACE dissemination event called "Equality EVENTually". This event took place on February the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018. Around thirty people attended it, most of whom already knew Marcella and were interested in feminist and/or LGBT issues. The reactions were as those described by Cangelosi. Two women from the audience expressed gratitude and highlighted the memory ritual aspect:

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<sup>700</sup> "Il film infatti, nonostante i limiti, riesce a far arrivare Marcella, nonostante alcune fatiche formali. Allora, in questo, so che un obiettivo è stato raggiunto e quindi so che in qualche maniera ho arricchito, come dici tu, ho avuto cura dello spettatore. So che alla fine del film lo spettatore sicuramente è entrato in contatto con un personaggio, una persona molto significativa (...) una persona molto umana, molto contraddittoria, con asprezze e dolcezze al tempo stesso (...) una importante leader del movimento LGBT italiano. Il film è stato fatto per questo. Mentre facevo il film, sicuramente pensavo a come restituire alle persone tutta questa complessità." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>701</sup> "Il film è servito sostanzialmente, perlomeno io me lo sono vissuto così, come un rito collettivo di saluto. Per chi la conosceva, vederlo tutti assieme è stata una sorta di amplificazione di un rito collettivo, di un saluto, di un addio. Per chi invece non l'ha conosciuta, da quello che ho avuto modo di capire il film ha per alcuni permesso un incontro con una persona molto particolare, è veramente così umana, troppo umana. Questa è stato il commento al film più frequente. Fulvia Antonelli stessa, che ha lavorato alla scrittura nella fase finale del film, mi ha sempre detto 'mi sarebbe piaciuto conoscerla'. La sensazione delle persone che hanno apprezzato il film è stata quella di averla potuta conoscere guardandolo." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

Woman: **The editing of the film, the editing of the memory as well, helps to understand what you once lived and perhaps you did not understand.** And it happened to me this evening because reviewing those years, with people I knew, with whom I lived indirectly or directly, **it really helped me to understand certain meanings, difficulties, putting aside all the intellectual part and looking instead at the emotional one.** And so, I really thank you tonight because I understood things that I really needed to understand.<sup>702</sup>

Woman: This screening inserted into this project made me look at it in a different way because it made me appreciate the documentary, the film as a document also of what was that kind of culture in Italy, I mean, Simone's family, the mother who puts the bottle in front of Marcella, the pecorino and the arcacciofie they send to Bologna, that is something I've never seen before. I saw it with this look and it struck me (...). It makes you understand how these stories that apparently are stories of minorities, actually tell the culture of everyone (...). I also saw in these two works, a great generosity, Simone's and Marcella's, who wanted to tell their stories, in which we all are, right? And it is like "look at that", "how young he was". **We are all in there also in a deep sense,** which I think Simone's and Marcella's stories tell: that of becoming. Who am I? I'm a man, I'm a woman, I'm gay. **Who am I? Who do I want to become?**<sup>703</sup>

On the film website<sup>704</sup> there's a list with links to reviews published in various media, all of which are in Italian. The newspaper reviews (including *La Repubblica*, *Il Fatto Quotidiano* and *Il Manifesto*) are written within the framework of the Torino Film Festival, where *Una nobile rivoluzione* had its premiere. They basically summarise the

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<sup>702</sup> "Il montaggio del film, il montaggio della memoria anche, aiuta a capire quello che prima vivevi e forse lì non lo avevi capito o comprendevi. E a me è successo questa sera perché rivedendo quelli anni, con persone che conoscevo, con cui ho vissuto indirettamente o direttamente, mi ha aiutato veramente a capire certi significati, difficoltà, scaricando tutta la parte troppo intellettuale e guardando invece quelle emotive. E quindi, davvero io stasera ti ringrazio perché ho capito cose che avevo proprio bisogno di capire". Q&A session. February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at "Associazione Orlando" in Bologna.

<sup>703</sup> "Questa proiezione inserita all'interno di questo progetto me l'ha fatto guardare in una maniera diversa perché mi ha fatto molto apprezzare il documentario, il film come un documento anche di quello che è stato, quel tipo di cultura in Italia, cioè, la famiglia di Simone, la madre che mette la bottiglia davanti a Marcella, il pecorino e le arcacciofie che mandano a Bologna, quello non lo avevo mai visto prima. L'ho visto con questo sguardo e mi ha colpito (...) Ti fa capire come queste storie che apparentemente sono storie di minoranze, in realtà raccontano la cultura di tutte e tutti (...) ho visto in questi due lavori, anche una grande generosità, generosità tua, di Marcella, che ha voluto raccontarsi e poi, che ci siamo tutti, no, ed è come 'guarda quello', 'come era giovane'. Ci siamo tutti anche in un senso profondo che secondo me raccontano la storia di Simone e la storia di Marcella: quel diventare, chi sono? Sono uomo, sono donna, sono gay, chi sono? Chi voglio diventare?" Q&A session. February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at "Associazione Orlando" in Bologna.

<sup>704</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.unanobilerivoluzione.it/stampa/rassegna-stampa/>>.

film and quote various interviews with Cangelosi. As for April 2019, the film Facebook page has 1,411 likes. The reviews are also shared in this space.<sup>705</sup> I chose two reviews from cinema magazines, in which the critics engage with the materiality and emotionality of the film, so as to identify the effects and affects that they emphasise. The reviews are from 2016, one published on a film criticism online magazine called *Pointblank*, and the other one on the website of the *Fuorivista. Media & Film Literacy* magazine.

“Lacrime e ragù” (Tears and Meat Sauce) is the title of the review that Katia Ceccarelli publishes in *Fuorivista. Media & Film Literacy*. Ceccarelli starts with a comparison between Marcella’s life and that of Orlando, the character invented by Virginia Woolf, who lived the first half of his life as a man, and the second half as a woman. The difference, she points out, is that while Orlando’s transformation happens with no pain, almost as a magical event, the transition of Marcella and many others has meant “a fight against a judging and ghetto-bound society.”<sup>706</sup>

She identifies two affects linked with each part of the film: the first one, in Rome, is described as “amazement wrapped in nostalgia”<sup>707</sup>; while in the second part, that of Bologna, she feels the sadness and pain of Marcella’s absence. As a whole, she defines the film as “an important and useful work to make known and to recognise the value of a great and unique experience, to remember a noble figure”<sup>708</sup>, with which she echoes the goal Cangelosi had when making this film.

In a review published in *Pointblank*, Arianna Pagliara defines the “incredible story of Marcella Di Folco” as “a great example of courage, strength and tenacity.”<sup>709</sup> The way in which she describes the gaze of the filmmaker echoes some of the issues raised in the interview with Cangelosi, such as the intimate relationship he had with Marcella and his subjective approach:

The director’s gaze, full of affection and admiration, gives back to the viewer a sincere portrait full of immediacy, a description carried out in a free, elliptical, subjective way, which shuns a pretended exhaustiveness and claims, on the

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<sup>705</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <[https://www.facebook.com/unanobilerivoluzione/?ref=br\\_tf](https://www.facebook.com/unanobilerivoluzione/?ref=br_tf)>.

<sup>706</sup> “lotta contro una società ghetizzante e giudicante.” Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.fuorivista.eu/?p=584>>.

<sup>707</sup> “stupore avvolto dalla nostalgia” Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.fuorivista.eu/?p=584>>.

<sup>708</sup> “Un lavoro importante e utile per far conoscere e riconoscere il valore di un’esperienza grande e unica, per ricordare una figura nobile.” Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.fuorivista.eu/?p=584>>.

<sup>709</sup> “la storia insolita di Marcella Di Folco (...) un grande esempio di coraggio, forza e tenacia.” Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.pointblank.it/recensione/una-nobile-rivoluzione/>>.

contrary, the right to an expressive autonomy that embraces emotionality and incompleteness -understood not as limits but, on the contrary, as added values.<sup>710</sup>

Pagliara highlights the fact that Cangelosi doesn't omit, nor sensationalise, the episode in Marcella's life when she almost commits suicide and undergoes sex reassignment surgery. The reviewer reads this decision as an act of respect. She also acknowledges the appearance of Cangelosi as another character within the film as an effective way of "emphasising the overlap between filmic image and lived life, claiming an approach that moves from within, an authentic belonging to the subject matter."<sup>711</sup> All in all, she summarises *Una nobile rivoluzione* not just as an homage, but as a reminder of the struggles behind the conquest of civil rights:

Beyond being a dutiful -but sober and never redundant - tribute to an important figure in the field of activism for civil rights, *Una nobile rivoluzione* is also an opportunity, in this particular historical and social phase, to reflect on the value and sense of certain achievements. To forget the long, patient and risky work that lies behind a whole series of freedoms and guarantees too often taken for granted today, means not understanding -apart from their urgency and necessity- their fragility; ultimately it means ceasing to watch over their defense, and therefore putting them at risk. If Marcella Di Folco, with her noble revolution, has left us an inheritance, this is without a doubt that of concreteness, perseverance and courage.<sup>712</sup>

I attended a screening of *Una nobile rivoluzione* at the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of the Trieste Film Festival, within the section "Varcare la frontiera. Corpi/Bodies". The film was presented

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<sup>710</sup> "Lo sguardo del regista, pieno di affetto e ammirazione, restituisce allo spettatore un ritratto sincero e carico d'immediatezza, una descrizione portata avanti in maniera libera, ellittica, tutta soggettiva, che rifugge dalla pretesa dell'eshaustività e rivendica, al contrario, il diritto ad un'autonomia espressiva che accoglie l'emotività e l'incompiutezza – intesi non come limiti ma all'opposto come valori aggiunti." Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.pointblank.it/recensione/una-nobile-rivoluzione/>>.

<sup>711</sup> "rimarcando la sovrapposizione tra immagine filmica e vita vissuta, reclamando un approccio che muove dall'interno, un'appartenenza autentica alla materia trattata." Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.pointblank.it/recensione/una-nobile-rivoluzione/>>.

<sup>712</sup> "Oltre che un doveroso –ma sobrio e mai ridondante– omaggio a una figura importante nell'ambito dell'attivismo per i diritti civili, *Una nobile rivoluzione* è anche l'occasione, in questa determinata fase storica e sociale, per riflettere sul valore e sul senso di determinate conquiste. Dimenticare il lavoro lungo, paziente e rischioso che sta dietro tutta una serie di libertà e tutele troppo spesso oggi date per scontate, significa non comprenderne –oltre che l'urgenza e la necessità- anche la fragilità; significa, in ultimo, cessare di vigilare sulla loro difesa, e dunque metterle a rischio. Se Marcella Di Folco, con la sua rivoluzione nobile, ci ha lasciato un'eredità, questa è senza dubbio quella della concretezza, della perseveranza e del coraggio." Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.pointblank.it/recensione/una-nobile-rivoluzione/>>.



by Cangelosi and Mario Di Martino, the current artistic director of the Trans Film Festival “Divergenti”. Approximately twenty people attended the event. During his speech, Di Martino emphasised that Cangelosi’s works are “documents so as not to forget, above all, the coordinates that serve in some way to remind us who has been there, what they did, and above all what we are letting to go lost.”<sup>713</sup>

### 6.2.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Una nobile rivoluzione* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

Reading *Una nobile rivoluzione* diffractively with Simone Cangelosi’s insights allows us to see how its **production** was traversed by two aspects of the feminist movement: starting from oneself, and the personal is political. Cangelosi decides to make a film with and about Marcella di Folco, as a way to overcome the pain caused by her death, as homage to her importance within the transsexual movement, as a document for the memory of the LGBT community, and as a medium to restore her complex story and social struggles to a wider public. He refuses to call his cinema feminist, trans or queer. Rather, he defines it as political. By this, he refers mainly to his use of the cinematic medium and of public space to enact the performative right to appear of gender non-conforming people, so as to reach that part of the world that ignores and/or judges such realities. He also recognises his feeling of response-ability towards Marcella and those who knew her: they are not objects to be spoken about, but subjects to speak with.

In terms of **content**, the two narrative strands of the film (i.e. the lives of Marcella and the memory of the LGBT movement in Italy) work in a feminist direction: rendering gender performativity visible, making gender non-conforming lives legible, and highlighting concrete ways in which the struggle for equal rights is enacted from and against the precarity faced by gender-dissident groups. The film manages to find the balance mentioned by Butler, presenting the LGBT community as “at once vulnerable

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<sup>713</sup> “documenti che servono a non dimenticare, soprattutto, delle coordinate che servono in qualche maniera a ricordarci chi ci ha stato, cosa ha fatto e soprattutto che cose stiamo lasciando perdere”. Trieste Film Festival. January 26<sup>th</sup> 2018.

and capable of resistance” (2015: 141). This is done, for example, through the celebration of positive affects connected with joy and love/care, but without neglecting negative affects that emerge from deviation of gender norms, such as fear, shame and distress. Marcella first appears in the film giving a powerful speech that defies hierarchies and paternalism, demanding solidarity and alliances across differences instead.

There’s an emphasis on recognising the civil rights of the LGBT community as something public rather than private. The filmed activists argue for their existence not to be “tolerated”, but as something to be defended as part of the right of everyone to have rights, despite identity choices and sexual preferences. In this sense, reading *Una nobile rivoluzione* diffractively with some of Judith Butler’s insights (2015), we can understand how it visualises the performative right to appear at a personal and political level, as well as the potential for strategic alliances among different groups who struggle against a social and economic condition within which gender has played a key role.

As for the **form**, since the first sequence of the film the filmmaker makes his point of view explicit, so that we look *with* him as he reconstructs Marcella’s biography. This recognition of the subjective point of view of the filmmaker subverts hierarchies traditionally connected with filmmaking. This situated transgender gaze also makes it possible for *Una nobile rivoluzione* to visualise queer gender performativity as legible, political and liveable. Even though the film is told from Cangelosi’s perspective, he builds a polyscopic narrative by means of various intra-actions with the people and places that were key in Marcella’s life. The active presence of the filmmaker within the frame sets into motion a series of affective effects, as a result of the closeness of his relation with the filmed subjects: love/care, joy and nostalgia arise from the indexical records of actual encounters between Cangelosi, Marcella and the other social actors with whom they co-create(d) the filmed realities.

The various narrative waves that combine found footage from different sources, times and spaces, co-compose a cinematic spacetime matter capable of blurring boundaries between filmmaker and filmed subjects, living and dead, past and present. The film calls attention to its constructed character. In its cutting together-apart of such varied materials, it enacts relations of responsibility, connections and commitments in its portrait of the memory of the LGBT movement, which is enacted as an entanglement of people and actions whose input has to be acknowledged as a site from where to keep on building.

The expressive freedom that Cangelosi has in *Una nobile rivoluzione* is possible thanks to the independent scheme within which it is made. Nevertheless, this visualises the unequal conditions on which so-called marginal films are made: those working in them have to look for other sources of income, since independent cinema offers them just precarious jobs. Moreover, lack of interest from big **distribution** companies and from the Italian public television has been materialised as censorship, since the film cannot be distributed in DVD format due to the high fee for the rights of the television archival material.

**As for reception**, the film has been widely screened and celebrated among the Italian LGBT community, especially in the Emilia-Romagna region. It also managed to reach a wider public thanks to its exhibition at the Turin Film Festival. In the screenings that I attended in Bologna and Trieste, as well as in online reviews published, the film has got positive evaluations, as it is considered as both, the portrait of a fascinating character and a document of historical value for remembrance of civil rights movements. The affects that the film evokes go from amazement and admiration to sadness and pain. For the reviewers whose texts I discuss, the effects of the film's nostalgic drive go beyond a personal overcoming of a loss and a subjective homage: they also operate as a strong reminder of the need to defend civil rights that are frequently taken for granted. Therefore, in deciding "what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (Barad 2007: 148) in the encounter with *Una nobile rivoluzione*, spectators tend to emphasise the political value of memory for the here and now.

### 6.3 *Triangle* (Costanza Quatriglio, 2014)

I think I made a film about human beings, of which women are part. Today I have had to tell journalists many times that women are part of the human race. But, beyond the joke, it is clear that this is a film about work. (Costanza Quatriglio, director of *Triangle*).<sup>714</sup>

*Triangle*, a 62 minute film directed by Costanza Quatriglio, establishes parallelisms between two tragedies that took place in knitwear factories: the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in 1911, in New York, and the collapse of an irregular knitwear workshop in 2011, in Barletta. In both cases, the victims were women working under extremely precarious conditions. Quatriglio reconstructs the events with the voices of the survivors and archival footage. With rhythmic editing, she shows how the promises of the industrial revolution for working class people at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as the fight for labour rights during the seventies, collapse into the void, just as Barletta's illegal building.

The analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. As for form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close-read it through the diffractive lenses and with the theoretical apparatus developed in the previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises and materialises gender in/equalities through its practices. As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by Costanza Quatriglio in an interview carried out as part of this research project in March 2018. I also incorporate opinions expressed in a sample of online reviews.

#### 6.3.1 Form and Content: The Collapse of Textile Factories and Labour Rights

*Triangle* can be divided into twenty-four segments, some of which are subdivided into various sections. The segments can be classified into six narrative waves entangled throughout the film: wave 1, American archival footage; wave 2, voice recordings of

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<sup>714</sup> “penso di aver fatto un film sugli esseri umani, di cui le donne fanno parte. Oggi ho dovuto dire molte volte ai giornalisti che le donne fanno parte del genere umano. Adesso, al di là dello scherzo, è chiaro che questo è un film sul lavoro” (Min. 4:29). Costanza Quatriglio. 32<sup>nd</sup> Torino Film Festival Q&A session. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. All translations are mine. Video available online. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOuWbvcbqA>>.

survivors from New York; wave 3, images of Barletta; wave 4, testimonies of the victims' relatives from Barletta; wave 5, Mariella's interview; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling. Each segment is described below.<sup>715</sup>

1. Credits, title and introduction (wave 1, American archival footage).

1.1 Music starts playing. On a black screen, we read the names of the production companies: Doclab, Factory Film and RAI Cinema, in association with the Luce Cinecittà Institute and with the support of the Apulia Film Commission, the "Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico" (Audiovisual Archive of the Worker and Democratic Movement), the Lazio Regional Direction and the Unione Donne in Italia (Women's Union in Italy).

1.2 The music gets a faster rhythm as the screen is divided into two sections, each one with archival footage in black and white, showing images of New York City during the first half of the twentieth century. Most of the images are shot from above and mainly show skyscrapers and wide streets. The frames are presented with an anamorphic frame that emphasises the verticality of the images and multiplies the elements horizontally. The effect is that of a mirror, with each side of the frame reflecting the other, and with a rhythmic movement from the centre of the frame towards the edges of the frame. This movement seems to enlarge the images and also traces triangular forms with the streets and the buildings.

The same mirror effect remains as the archival footage changes and shows ten different shots of women working in factories. The music becomes more dramatic in this part and reaches a climax as the screen goes black and we read the title of the film at the centre of the frame.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: awe.

2. The fire at the Triangle factory (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

2.1 The music becomes slower as we see archival footage in black and white of the fire that destroyed the Triangle factory. One frame shows a woman falling from the top of the building but before we see her reaching the ground, the image becomes black. The music stops as we see photographs of burnt interiors and destroyed sewing machines. On the black screen we read "1911. New York" (Min. 3:05).

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<sup>715</sup> The language spoken in the film is Italian, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. The DVD is for sale in stores such as Mondadori, Feltrinelli and ibs. It can also be purchased online.

The camera goes through photographs of policemen looking at the burnt corpses and fire fighters putting out the fire, as we listen to the testimonies of relatives of the victims. A woman says that most of them died suffocated by the smoke and that many threw themselves from the windows. A man says that he wanted to go back to get his sister but that a fire fighter refrained him from doing so. He says that he couldn't recognise the corpse because she was all burnt.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, despair and distress.

3. The collapse of the building in Barletta (wave 3, images of Barletta).

3.1 Music signals the transition and accompanies the whole sequence. We see photographs in colour of a collapsed building. In other images, we see fire fighters, soldiers and young men removing the debris. On the black screen we read: "2011. Barletta" (Min. 4:47).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: despair, anguish and fear.

4. The fire at the Triangle factory (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

4.1 We see archival footage in black and white of women working in textile factories, during the first half of the twentieth century. We hear the voice-over of a female worker at the Triangle factory being interviewed. She says that nearly one hundred and fifty people died at the fire and that at the Triangle factory they had one thousand five hundred machines. "It was nine hundred machines on the ninth floor" (Min. 5:16). She recalls that one young girl was about to get married and went in to get her wage, but died in the fire. She also adds that her own wage ended up burnt.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress and fear.

5. The victims at Barletta (wave 3, images of Barletta).

5.1 Photographs in colour that show two men pasting posters with the names of the victims of the collapse and a white blanket on which we read their names: "Antonella, Matilde, Giovanna, Tina and Maria. Barletta cries for its five sisters" (Min. 5:58). On another poster nearby, we can read a birthday wish for Giovanna.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: sadness and distress.

6. The working conditions at Triangle (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

6.1 Archival footage in black and white of New York during the first half of the twentieth century. The images are accompanied by music and they mainly show cars and public trams that go around the streets. We hear the voice-over of the brother of one of

the victims at the Triangle factory. He says that they were immigrants from Europe. Then a girl who used to work at Triangle says that her mother didn't want her to work, but that she went because there she had fun with her friends and they would walk around the big streets. She also says that they would work eight hours a day "seven days a week, including Saturday. It was on a Saturday that the fire started (...) For twelve dollars. We thought it was wonderful, we didn't know" (Min. 7:11). Another man adds that they were never paid extra hours even if they had to work until late.

The archival footage in black and white now shows long, medium and close shots of people in the streets, mainly buying in street markets. We hear the voice-over of two women who used to work at the Triangle factory. One of them underlines that she enjoyed going to work and hanging out with the other women. She was nineteen years old. The other woman says that she was twenty-one years old, "I was considered old" (Min. 8:25). They remember other colleagues who died in the fire.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: sadness, distress, joy and nostalgia.

7. The victims at Barletta and the conditions of the building (wave 3, images of Barletta; and wave 4, testimonies of the victims' relatives from Barletta).

7.1 The music gets louder as we see long and medium shots of people buying in a street market in Barletta. As we see various wide shots from above showing the street market and the old buildings, we hear the voice-over of women and men who knew the victims. They talk about how difficult it is not to see them anymore and emphasise that they had a very good relationship of friendship between them. We also see wide shots of the cars and the public transport in the streets.

In medium shot, we see the friends and relatives of the victims sitting together in a circle. One woman says that she didn't know that women were working inside that old building, which was deteriorated and humid, but that they must have seen those conditions. A woman replies: "It was not my sister the one who had to think that the building would collapse. The employer and the owner of the building should have thought of it" (Min. 10:49).

Another woman says that she passed by, half an hour before the collapse, and that the noise made by the machines was so loud that she thinks the women could have hardly heard anything. Another woman adds that the owner's wife told the workers that were scraping next to the building that she was worried because the walls of the building were moving and that they replied: "Miss, do you make T-shirts? Go back and make T-shirts. We take care of this" (Min. 11:29).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: sadness, nostalgia, anger and joy.

8. Working conditions and causes of the tragedy in Triangle (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

8.1 Archival footage in black and white shows the wide shot of an explosion. We hear the voice-over of a man who explains that, if the doors of the ninth floor hadn't been locked, there would have been more survivors and that most, if not all of the victims, were workers from that floor. We see archival footage of female workers in a textile factory as he explains: "They had the door locked. Because every night, when we went home, each girl had to open her bag and show that they hadn't stolen any lace, yarn, or any material. If that door would have been open, there wouldn't have been any victims" (Min. 11:55).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and distress.

9. The rescue of the victims in Barletta (wave 3, images of Barletta; and wave 4, testimonies of the victims' relatives from Barletta).

9.1 Music signals the transition. We see photographs of the fire fighters and rescuers carrying one of the victims, as we hear the voice-over of a woman narrating that she asked for help for her daughter. Once again, we see the medium shot of the friends and relatives of the Barletta victims sitting in a circle. The music continues as we see more photographs of the rescue labours and then it fades out as one of the women describes how she recognised her sister among the corpses.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear and distress.

10. The corpses and the graves of Triangle (wave 1, American archival footage).

10.1 Music signals the transition. We see a series of black and white photographs of the corpses of various women, funerals, relatives of the victims crying, and graves of young women.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress.

11. Mariella's testimony as a survivor from Barletta. First part. The collapse and the rescue (wave 3, images of Barletta; and wave 5, Mariella's interview).

11.1 Wide shots of the cemetery in Barletta and of the empty space left by the collapsed building. On the grid that surrounds the area, there's a blanket with the message "You are and you will remain in our hearts" (Min. 16:05). Still looking at this image, we hear the voice-over of Mariella, the only survivor of the knitwear workshop. She describes how, after the collapse, she could hear the ambulances and the people but that, even though she was screaming at the rescuers, they couldn't hear her. Then we see a



close shot of Mariella, a woman in her forties who looks directly into the camera as she narrates those moments. She says that she felt calm when she saw that there was light, because then she thought there was oxygen. Then she focused on being found by the dog that she heard barking nearby. She asserts firmly that the light she saw saved her, since it was “the light of the Virgin of Medjugorje” (Min. 18:54).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, distress and hope.

12. Faith and despair in Barletta (wave 3, images of Barletta; and wave 4, testimonies of the victims’ relatives from Barletta).

12.1 Close-up of a young woman playing the organ in a church. Then we see medium and long shots of children in a church singing a religious song under the guidance of a few adults. In the song they talk about light and darkness, of not being afraid and of having faith in the truth and existence of the divinity. The song continues as various shots of tower cranes overlap in a rhythmic editing.

12.2. Suddenly, the film cuts to the long shot of a group of people watching a scene from the film “Le mani sulla città” by Francesco Rosi, in which a building collapses. Close-up on the screen, as it shows images of rescuers taking a boy out of the debris. The screening, also organised by the church, finishes and a young woman from the audience says that she felt impotent rage as she saw all the people running in despair. Another young woman says that it made her reflect on how she felt safe at home, while “all those women had lost everything they had, from one moment to the next” (Min. 21:53). She starts crying.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, hope, distress and anger.

13. The magnificence and the menace of the city buildings (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

13.1 Archival footage in black and white that shows long shots of the processes behind the construction of the buildings in New York City, from getting the stones to setting up the metallic structure of the skyscrapers. The screen is divided into two, and on both sides we see images of the construction workers on the scaffolds and operating the tower cranes. There’s music throughout the sequence. Then we see wide shots of the buildings, as we listen to the voice-over of a man who was at the Triangle factory and who says that, after the fire, he was afraid of working in a factory, especially “if the factory was not fire-proof” (Min. 23:32).

The archival footage now shows crowds of people in the streets of New York and coming out of the station, as well as top shots of the streets surrounded by skyscrapers

and with cars passing by. We hear the voice-over of a woman saying that the lawyer asked her how she felt when she realised there was a fire to what she responded: “How would you feel if you were trapped in a cage? The ninth floor was a cage” (Min: 24:01).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, distress and anxiety.

14. Mariella’s testimony as a survivor from Barletta. Second part. The relationship with her colleagues (wave 1, American archival footage; wave 3, images of Barletta; wave 5, Mariella’s interview; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling).

14.1 The archival footage images of the buildings of New York continue with music playing in the background as we hear the voice-over of Mariella saying that, after the collapse of the building, she couldn’t recognise the place: “It didn’t look like the place where I went to work. It was strange, different. As if my friends hadn’t died there” (Min. 24:40). She goes on saying that if the collapse had happened at the time of the lunch break, maybe none of them would have been inside the building.

14.2 The music continues as we see similar images to those from the archival footage, but this time in colour, showing various buildings of Barletta, as well as construction sites with several tower cranes. The music stops as the camera pans across a construction site and we hear the voice-over of Mariella saying that, after the accident, if she hears somebody hammering, she is afraid and has to get outside of the building. She says that she asks herself many questions, particularly why she was the only one who survived.

14.3 Close-up of Mariella saying that she has dreamt of Matilde and Maria smiling at her, at the workshop.

14.4 Medium shots of the two female relatives of the victims that we have seen in previous sequences, looking at the place where the building collapsed. We see various shots of the walls and the streets nearby as we hear tense music. As the camera tilts down various buildings in Barletta, we hear the voice-over of Mariella describing her colleagues: Matilde as shy, while Antonella and Giovanna used to joke a lot. She remembers an occasion on which they asked her what songs she liked the most, to what she replied that Neapolitan songs, because: “I understand what I listen to. For me, each Neapolitan song has its own story” (Min. 29:11).

We see archival footage of female textile workers during the first half of the twentieth century. Mariella continues: “I add my life to every song. And then you realise that the song speaks to your life (...) That’s why I love Neapolitan. Because for me, those

songs reflect my life. The past and the present. And I like the songs that have a meaning for me” (Min. 29:30). The music gets louder as we see women working in a textile factory, making thread. Images of the past are combined with images of the present in this process of making thread as the music gets louder and accompanies the rhythmical editing of the extreme close shots of the machines.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia, distress, anger, joy and fear.

15. The strike at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company (wave 1, American archival footage; wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling).

15.1 Archival footage in black and white interwoven with current footage of work at a textile factory continue, as we listen to the voice-over of a man and a woman who used to work at the Triangle Company and who were witnesses at the trial against the owners after the fire. The owners were acquitted of any responsibility. The woman recalls the strike of twenty-five weeks that the workers had sustained before the fire, in 1909: “during the strike we were not allowed to picket (...) the bosses hired gangsters against us (...) we would get arrested three times a day, every time we were picketing” (Min. 32:46). We see the black and white photograph of four women wearing a band that says “Picket. Ladies tailors. Strikers” (Min. 33:18), followed by photographs of women in demonstrations. The voice-over of the woman keeps on narrating that they were arrested so frequently, that the judges knew them by name.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and pride.

16. Mariella’s testimony as a survivor from Barletta. Third part. The worker-employer relationship and a detailed description of her job (wave 5, Mariella’s interview; wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling; and wave 1, American archival footage).

16.1 Mariella appears in close-up, talking directly into the camera. She explains that the relationship with her boss was neither hierarchical nor authoritarian: “He also worked with a machine and identified himself with us. I think he understood us. Because he would work with us as well, he wasn’t there telling each one what to do and just looking at us, as it used to be once” (Min. 33:45).

16.2 We see contemporary footage of female textile workers in a factory as we listen to the voice-over of Mariella narrating that each night they knew what was to be done the next day, and that sometimes there wasn’t enough work for all of them. She appears in close-up, as she remembers that the owner used to know the difficulties faced

by each one of them, so that “when he told us ‘girls, tomorrow there’s no work to do’, he was sorry as well” (Min. 35:08).

16.3 We keep on looking at contemporary footage of textile workers in a factory. The images are focused on the cutting of the pattern of a sweatshirt on long pieces of pink fabric. This footage showing the process behind making a sweatshirt is interwoven with the close-up image of Mariella, as she describes what her job entails in detail. She explains that, upon getting into the workshop, one has to leave aside problems and thoughts “because you have to do a job that requires concentration” (Min. 37:02). As we see a female worker quickly folding dozens of pink pieces of fabric, Mariella explains how she got paid: “If you manage to give me one hundred capes a day, you earn twenty euros a day. If you make one hundred and fifty, you earn twenty-five euros. So, the faster you are, the more you earn. But you have to be fast and precise at the same time” (Min. 37:29).

We see various women sitting at the sewing machines, working on the same pink sweatshirt, as Mariella describes the hands and the feet coordination required. She says: “A woman that works with the machine, develops techniques for becoming faster (...) A worker has so much responsibility with a machine” (Min. 38:50).

Music starts playing as we see archival footage in black and white of various workers operating different kinds of machines. The frame is divided into two and the images are shown doubly, with a mirror effect. The voice-over of Mariella keeps on explaining how focused the worker has to be while operating a machine: “Your gaze has to be fixed. Concentration is looking at what you do. Because if you get distracted, you can cut a finger (...) It’s as if I speak with the machine. The machine has to know me (...) I have a dialogue with the machine. Because I think of machines as people” (Min. 41:04).

Again we see contemporary footage of textile workers in a factory. They fold and place the pink sweatshirts in boxes. Mariella recalls that the boss would make jokes to distract them, because he knew that their job required so much concentration. Because “it is tiring for the mind to be fixed eight or nine hours with the needle or the knife” (Min. 43:51).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia and joy.

17. Changes and continuities after the fire at the Triangle factory (wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

17.1 The contemporary footage that documents the process behind the making of the pink sweatshirt continues. This part focuses on a man operating a big machine that stamps a white heart on the sweatshirts. Meanwhile, we listen to the voice-over of a man and two women who used to work at the Triangle factory. He says that, after the accident, there was a legislation that forced buildings to have an anti-fire system, emergency stairs and a no-smoking policy, so that, “even though it was a horrible thing at the time, good things came out of it in the long run” (Min. 44:40). One of the women says that, for example, the union became stronger. They remember the working conditions before the fire: “we would work by piece. We didn’t have a fixed salary, those who were fast could earn a living and the slow workers instead...” (Min. 45:01).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

18. Mariella’s testimony as a survivor from Barletta. Fourth part. Working conditions after the collapse (wave 5, Mariella’s interview; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling).

18.1 The contemporary footage that documents the process behind the making of the pink sweatshirt continues. In this part, female workers add two hearts with silver glitter on the sweatshirts; the images are interwoven with close-ups of Mariella. We hear her voice-over saying that, after the collapse, she is now working again “by piece. Not with a price set per hours (...). By piece means that, the more shirts I manage to deliver, the more I earn” (Min. 45:34). She adds that, for a period of time, she would carry out the work of three women, working simultaneously with three sewing machines.

She says that she currently earns around forty euros, working nine hours a day. The contemporary footage now shows the process of packing the sweatshirts, ready for selling. She continues: “it’s as if we were paid in liras (...) I cannot calculate in euro because one piece wouldn’t be even a penny” (Min. 47:20). She explains that the price also depends on the level of difficulty of what she has to sew: “If I make one thousand shirts, I earn forty thousand liras, which would be 20 euros” (Min. 48:31).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: frustration and anger.

19. Reflections after the fire at the Triangle factory (wave 3, images of Barletta; wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling; and wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York).

19.1 Music plays as we see wide shots of seagulls flying over the street market in Barletta. Long shots show a street vendor placing the pink sweatshirts at the market stall. They are sold for six euros. We hear the voice-over of the women who used to work at

the Triangle factory. One of them says that she didn't go back to work, because her mother wouldn't let her and she got married. The man whose sister died at the fire says: "Today, if there was a fire at the eight floor, somebody would go up to the ninth floor and set the alarm. Today people know more about these things. At that time, most of them were foreigners, they didn't know such things, they didn't know what to do in case of a fire" (Min. 50:02).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, nostalgia and distress.

20. Mariella's testimony as a survivor from Barletta. Fifth part. Starting over (wave 3, images of Barletta; wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling; and wave 5, Mariella's interview).

20.1 We keep on seeing wide shots from above showing the street market stall where the sweatshirts are being sold, as Mariella says that she had to find a way to start again. She is shown in close-up saying that it's hard for her to find a job: "There was a time in which you would emigrate, I've seen in the old films (...) to become someone (...) But I can't do that! Because today there isn't enough money. So what is the use of emigrating?" (Min. 50:53).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, nostalgia and despair.

21. The labour rights fight (wave 1, American archival footage; wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York; wave 3, images of Barletta; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling).

21.1 The wide shots of the street market stall continue as we hear the voice-over of one of the women who used to work at the Triangle Company. She says that she became a member of the union in 1974 or 1975.

21.2 Music starts playing as we see archival footage in black and white that shows workers' demonstrations, some being repressed by the police, some in which people hold posters claiming labour rights. They are from Italy as well as from the United States.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

22. Mariella's testimony as a survivor from Barletta. Sixth part. The lack of labour rights (wave 1, American archival footage; and wave 5, Mariella's interview).

22.1 We keep on seeing archival footage of the worker's demonstrations during the first half of the twentieth century, as Mariella explains that, even if she was working without any official contract and without taking any contributions, she was ok. She says that they were totally aware of the fact that they were working unofficially. Mariella is shown in close-up saying categorically: "It doesn't mean anything if the factory was in

order or not, it has nothing to do with the fact that the girls were there unofficially. The building collapsed. So what if we had been all in order? The building would have collapsed anyway” (Min. 53:31).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger.

23. Life after the collapse (wave 3, images of Barletta).

23.1 The camera pans across the posters with the names of the victims of the collapse that we saw being pasted in segment 5. They are now all torn and partially destroyed, but a few words can be read, such as “Barletta, 5 October 2011; the loving family; missing sister” (Min. 54:14).

23.2 Long shots show young people from Barletta dancing in an informal party. Medium shots show the sister of one of the victims, whom we have seen in previous segments, operating a sewing machine in a textile workshop. We see long shots of empty spaces inside buildings, wide shots of the highway outside Barletta and an extreme wide shot of the city of Barletta.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia and joy.

24. A story to fill the gap. Closing (wave 1, American archival footage; wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York; and wave 5, Mariella’s interview).

24.1 Tense music starts playing as we see archival footage in black and white of extreme wide shots of New York, as well as wide shots of the highways, the cars and the bridges. We hear the voice-over of a woman reading a letter to “her dear boys” (Min. 56:30). The archival footage shows long shots of people walking in the streets of New York. She is writing in 1951, from the Liberty ship on which she is travelling to Switzerland “to attend a meeting of the International Labour Organisation” (Min. 56:40). The archival footage shows people on board of a ship as she describes how looking at the sea is a remedy for her tired body. The archival footage shows people, mainly children, playing in parks and streets or looking from balconies. The voice-over says that the kids had asked her to tell them a story: “I’m going to try and tell you a story, after all my whole story. There’s quite a gap between your life and mine. I’d like to fill that gap if possible” (Min. 57:59).

24.2 Music keeps on playing as the archival footage images of the people and the vehicles in the streets of New York are being played backwards. The footage shows dozens of immigrants with their bags, moving back to the ship on which they arrived at New York. As the ship begins moving back, passing from the dock and the Statue of

Liberty into the sea, the Neapolitan song “Ricominciare” (i.e. starting over) by Carmelo Zappulla begins playing.

24.3 We now see the close-up of Mariella as she talks about the song, which is played in the background: “To think of starting over, as if someone was saying it angrily (...) See how beautiful it is” (Min. 59:58).

24.4 We see the credits on the black screen as the song keeps on playing. After the title of the film and the name of the director, we read Mariella Fasanella’s name. Script written by Quatriglio and Nella Condorelli, editing by Letizia Caudullo, and music by Teho Teardo. The original audios are from Cornell University. The archival footage comes from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the Critical Past Collection of the Library of Congress, and the Audiovisual Archive of the Worker and Democratic Movement (AAMOD). The names of the survivors from the Triangle fire whose voices are heard are: Max Hochfield, Dora Maisler and Pauline Pepe. At the end we also see that the film has been recognised of cultural interest by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism–General Direction for Cinema.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and nostalgia

### 6.3.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

*Triangle* touches a key aspect of the **feminist audiovisual agenda**: working conditions faced by women and increased precarity as a result of neoliberal policies. The film is constructed as a parallel narration of two tragedies that took place at knitwear factories: the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York in 1911, in which 146 female workers died, and the collapse of a ghost textile workshop in Barletta in 2011, which caused the death of five women. In the first case, Quatriglio resorts to archival footage (wave 1) and voice recordings of three survivors (wave 2), while in the second case, she presents Mariella Fasanella, the only survivor from the collapse, as the main character (wave 5). Both cities contextualise the working conditions at the factories and the effects that the tragedies provoked (waves 1 and 3). Another element interwoven in the second half of the film is the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling (wave 6).

Quatriglio works with an “elastic reality” as described by Manovich (1995): she combines photographs, recent digital video, and materials from the first half of the twentieth century multiplied in an anamorphic format. The movement back and forth in time and space that she enacts can be analysed as the different **narrative waves** described



previously: wave 1, American archival footage; wave 2, voice recordings of survivors from New York; wave 3, images of Barletta; wave 4, testimonies of the victims' relatives from Barletta; wave 5, Mariella's interview; and wave 6, the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling. This practice is illustrative of documentary cinema as a **performative act and a diffraction apparatus**: the filmmaker co-composes the cinematic reality through "the entanglement/superposition of different times and space" (Barad 2012: 49).

In the last segment of the film, we listen to the voice-over of a woman who survived the 1911 fire, saying that she wants to tell her story because "(t)here's quite a gap between your life and mine. I'd like to fill that gap if possible" (Min. 57:59). By bringing these two stories together, Quatriglio also fills a gap, rendering visible to what extent, labour rights haven't improved at all. She enacts "the performative claim of a right to look where none technically exists (Mirzoeff 2011: 478), when she cuts together apart<sup>716</sup> the testimonies of the survivors from 1911 and 2011, making connections between these two events. As in the case of *Pays Barbare*<sup>717</sup>, this strategy can be diffractively read with Jacqui Alexander's palimpsestic methodology:

The idea of the "new" structured through the "old" scrambled, palimpsestic character of time, both jettisons the truncated distance of linear time and dislodges the impulse for incommensurability, which the ideology of distance creates. It thus rescrambles the "here and now" and the "then and there" to a "here and there" and a "then and now" (Alexander 2005: 190).

This **feminist and palimpsestic countervisuality** enacted in *Triangle* renders "visible the invisible" (Kuhn 1994: 67) in at least two senses: on the one hand, Quatriglio shows the collapse of the promises made by the industrial revolution to working class people; on the other hand, she exposes the process behind the production of cheap clothes, showing the huge amount of badly paid work behind it. Even after tragedies such as that of Triangle, which fostered legislation in terms of security, and despite the fight for labour rights during the seventies, in Barletta we witness working conditions that neglect minimum security for workers, all female, who are paid "by piece" as Mariella explains: "If I make one thousand shirts, I earn forty thousand liras, which would be 20 euros"

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<sup>716</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity

<sup>717</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 6. Section 6.1 *Pays Barbare*

(Min. 48:31). She says this in 2011, in a shot cut together apart just after we have heard the survivors from the fire in Triangle criticising that same system of payment. With such editing, Quatriglio points at a loss of continuity in the fights for labour rights that were much stronger in the twentieth century. So, in 1911 three survivors of the fire say:

[we would work] **seven days a week**, also on Saturday. It was a Saturday when the fire started (...) **For twelve dollars**. We thought it was wonderful, **we didn't know** (Min. 7:11).

...we would work by piece. We didn't have a fixed salary, **those who were fast could earn a living and the slow workers instead...** (Min. 45:01).

...during the strike **we were not allowed to picket** (...) the bosses hired gangsters against us (...) we would get arrested three times a day, every time we were picketing (Min. 32:46).

Today, if there was a fire at the eight floor, somebody would go up to the ninth floor and set the alarm. Today people know more about these things. At that time, most of them were foreigners, they didn't know such things, **they didn't know what to do in case of a fire** (Min. 50:02).<sup>718</sup>

While in 2011:

it's as if we were paid in liras (...) I cannot calculate in euro because one piece would be not even a penny (...) **If I make one thousand shirts**, I earn forty thousand liras, which **would be 20 euros** (Min. 47:20).

**the faster you are, the more you earn**. But you have to be fast and precise at the same time (Min. 37:29).

It doesn't mean anything if the factory was in order or not, it has nothing to do with the fact that the girls were there unofficially. The building collapsed. So what if we had been all in order? **The building would have collapsed anyway** (Min. 53:31).

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<sup>718</sup> The emphases in all the quotes from the film are mine.

It was not my sister the one who had to think that the building would collapse. **The employer and the owner of the building should have thought of it** (...) They told her: “Miss, do you make T-shirts? Go back and make T-shirts. We take care of this” (Min. 10:49).

The effects of both tragedies are strikingly different: while the fire in the New York of 1911 ignited a change in legislation to protect workers and the strengthening of the union movement, the collapse of the building in Barletta one century later, seemed to have provoked only mourning, void, paralysis and loneliness.

In terms of **emotionality**, the emotions that traverse *Triangle* are nostalgia and despair. Since the subject matter encompasses two tragedies that led to the death of many people working in precarious conditions, **negative affects** such as distress, fear and anger are strong in the film. There are, however, also **positive affects**, like joy connected with friendship and solidarity. The clear evidence that labour rights have not improved at all over a century leads to a strong sense of hopelessness. Religious faith seems to thrive amid the void of social rights, but it is in Mariella’s pride about her own work and in her love for small things, that we may find the only possible counterbalance within the film.

To analyse **documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus** implies paying attention to how it makes boundaries within phenomena and produces, not reflections of the real as sameness, but diffraction patterns where the effects and affects of differences can be visualised. In *Triangle*, the parallel narrative that reads the working conditions in New York in 1911 through those in Barletta in 2011 renders evident how precarity for working class women persists (figure 40).



**Figure 40:** Women working at textile factories in 1911 and in 2011

The present is portrayed as darker than the beginning of the twentieth century, since the promises of the American dream are no longer an option, as Mariella says with resignation (segment 20). Lack of security conditions in the working place and the

aforementioned payment per piece continue, while the class consciousness so evident at the unions and strikes of the twentieth century fades away, leaving workers isolated, without awareness of their rights and without possibilities of changing their situations.

The main mode of representation in *Triangle* is performative because Quatrighio shows realities created from the action itself of making her documentary film: she makes connections that fill a gap of a century. She also resorts to other modes: to reconstruct the fire of 1911 and the context of New York City at the beginning of the twentieth century, she employs reflexive and poetic modes of representation. And to portray the collapse of the building in 2011 and the process behind clothing manufacturing, she uses a participatory mode of representation (interviews and group discussions), combined with observational modes that convey a sense of being a fly-on-the-wall.

**Performative** documentary emphasises the embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world. Still, it always joins “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political” (Nichols 2010: 204). Mariella’s testimony is personal, but at the same time, within the film, she speaks for the female working class condition over a century, even joining two continents. The film celebrates the pride with which she describes her work and unjudgementally presents the simplicity with which she states the unfair conditions that she has had to accept. In this sense, the film also enacts the right to appear with dignity, her testimony regarded as valid and important in the reconstruction of history (figure 41).



**Figure 41:** Mariella’s testimony

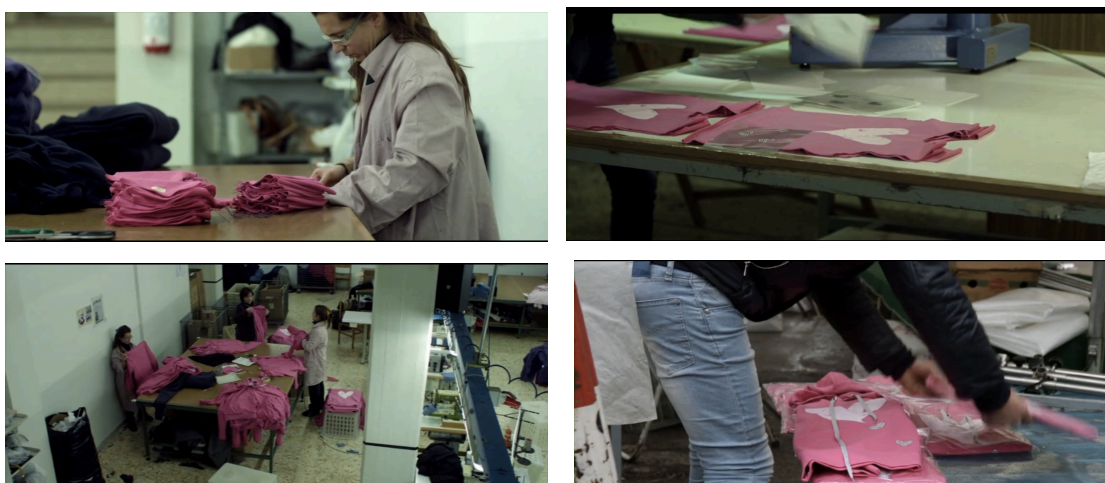
The treatment that Quatrighio gives to the archival footage with the anamorphic format, the mirror effect and the rhythmic editing is closer to a **poetic mode of representation**, which emphasises mood, tone, affect, form and the expressive quality of the images (figure 42). The effect of this is directly connected with an affective reaction of awe while watching these images, which echo cities symphonies such as *Berlin: Die Sinfonie Der Großstadt/Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (Walter Ruttmann, 1927) and *À propos*

*de Nice/Concerning Nice* (Jean Vigo, 1930). The manipulation of this archival material and its superposition with voice recordings of three survivors reveal the film's constructed character, which is characteristic of a **reflexive mode of representation**.



**Figure 42:** Archival footage of New York and the anamorphic format

An **observational mode of representation** is used to show the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling (figure 43). These sequences render visible the invisible intractions that produce, not only clothes, but also a series of human and non-human elements involved in the process, such as the workers, the sewing machines and specific buildings. Following Leela Fernandes' (1997) study of gendered and class relations on a shop floor of a Calcutta jute mill, Barad argues for an understanding of the shop floor as “a material-discursive apparatus of bodily production” (2007: 226), one of many “technologies through which the working class is produced” (2007: 227).



**Figure 43:** Rendering visible the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling

*Triangle* renders visible the alienating and badly paid work behind the production of cheap clothes: “it is tiring for the mind to be fixed eight or nine hours with the needle or the knife” (Min. 43:51), as Mariella states. But with her testimony, the film opens up a different possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema** as a worker proud of her well-done job. The way in which Mariella dialogues with her machine, also echoes the idea of a cyborg identity, in which the machine becomes part of the person: “It’s as if *I speak with the machine*. The machine has to know me (...) In my mind, I have a dialogue with the machine. Because *I think of machines as people*” (Min. 41:04). We can diffractively read Mariella’s words with Barad’s approach of the shop floor as an apparatus of bodily production:

...production is a process not merely of making commodities but also of making subjects, and remaking structures. Production should not be thought of as the repetition of some fixed set of processes (despite the pervasiveness of the Fordist assembly-line image it often connotes). Rather, the nature of production processes is continually reworked as a result of human, nonhuman, and cyborgian forms of agency. (2007: 238)

Barad also points out that the “worker” position in itself “is not a fixed and unitary property of individual human beings, but an actively contested and disunified -but nonetheless objective-category that refers to particular material-discursive phenomena (not individuals)” (2007: 243). Mariella considered her boss as another colleague, despite the fact that he distributed the tasks and owned the building. As a result of this misidentification, she doesn’t even think about suing him for not having complied with basic security regulations:

He [the owner] also worked with a machine and identified himself with us. I think he understood us. Because **he would work with us as well**, he wasn’t there telling each one what to do and just looking at us, as it used to be once (Min. 33:45).

Referring again to Fernandes’ 1997 work, Barad explains:

...the spatiality of capitalism is produced not merely through actions of managers who carve up the production process but through the workers’ own

exclusionary practices as well. That is, while the mill is perhaps most obviously an ongoing process of the materialization of capital, the iterative materialization of the mill is also the outcome of the exclusionary practices of the workers themselves, but not via some linear additive dynamics. Rather, the exclusionary practices of the workers need to be understood to be part of the technologies of capitalism. (2007: 237).

When Mariella says that the building would have collapsed anyway, even if they had had their papers in order, she expresses a total loss of belief in institutional protection, welfare state or even minimum appropriate working conditions. The building that collapsed seemed to be the only agent that produced the tragedy, while in the Triangle fire, the emphasis was placed on the fact that the employers locked the door. What was clear in 1911, but blurred in 2011 due to neoliberal policies that normalise violent and precarious structures, is that inequality operated along patterns of differences (of gender, class, location) with the effects of exposing certain people to extreme vulnerability, ending up in tragedies that could have been prevented.

In the next section, I read through an interview with Costanza Quatriglio held in 2018 for this research project and a sample of online reviews.

### **6.3.2 Production and Reception: A Diffractive Reading for Rendering Visible the Effects of Two Tragedies**

Costanza Quatriglio (Palermo, 1973) is a Sicilian filmmaker who has managed to build a career as a filmmaker in Italy, though “based on self-exploitation”, as she expresses in an interview that I carried out as part of this research project.<sup>719</sup> She has directed fourteen documentaries and three fiction films.<sup>720</sup> Her opera prima, the feature film *L'isola/The Island* was selected for the “Quinzaine des Réalisateurs” at the Cannes film Festival in 2003, and she has been awarded with the “Nastro D’Argento”, a prize given since 1946

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<sup>719</sup> “sulla base dell’autosfruttamento”. Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>720</sup> Her complete filmography is composed by: *Sembra mio figlio/Just Like my Son* (2018); *87 ore/87 Hours* (2015); *Triangle* (2014); *9x10= Novanta/9x10= Ninety* (2014); *Lampedusa/People of the Island of Lampedusa\** (2014); *Con il fiato sospeso/Without Breath\** (2013); *Terramatta* (2012); *Io, qui. Lo sguardo delle donne/I, Here. The Women’s Gaze* (2012); *Il mio cuore umano/My Human Heart* (2009); *Migranti in cammino/Migrants on the Road\** (2008); *Il mondo addosso/The Weight of the World* (2006); *Comandare. Una storia Zen/Commanding. A Zen Story\** (2005); *L’isola/The Island* (2003); *La borsa di Helene/Helen’s Handbag* (2002); *L’insonnia di Devi/Devi’s Insomnia* (2001); *Il bambino Gioacchino/Young Gioacchino* (2000); and *Ècosaimale?/What’s wrong?\** (2000).

by the Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists, for her documentary films *Terramatta* (2012) and *Triangle* (2014).

When asked to identify milestones in her career, Quatriglio mentioned four films in this order: François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups/The 400 Blows* (1959), Ingmar Bergman's *Det sjunde inseglet/The Seventh Seal* (1957), Agnès Varda's *Sans toit ni loi/Vagabond* (1985), and Orson Welles' *Othello* (1951). She was particularly fascinated after reading how the difficulties faced during Welles' shooting were overcome:

I was enchanted by reading how *Othello* had been shot during a long period of years, with so many production difficulties. There was not a scene that had been shot in the same place and at the same time. The idea that Orson Welles had recorded a shot in one place and its reverse shot in another place, even after many years, made me feel a huge excitement. **It made me think that cinema could do anything, could invent spaces, rebuild worlds, overcome every difficulty.** Today I call it love because I feel a great love for cinema.<sup>721</sup>

We can read this fascination with cinema diffractively with what Hongisto says about documentary cinema's potential "to partake in the material processes that co-compose the real" (2015: 12), and with how Barad describes diffraction: "the entanglement/superposition of different times and space" (2012: 49). Paraphrasing Barad, we can say that Quatriglio was seduced by cinema as a diffraction apparatus capable of making boundaries and cuts in order to make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world in specific ways.

Quatriglio has always been a passionate photographer, especially of children. Thus, her first documentary film, *Ècosaimale?/What's Wrong?\** (2000), portrays a group of children in a poor neighbourhood of Palermo, in which she used to work as a volunteer when she was young. The other figure that she considers a milestone in her career is Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, with whom she attended a workshop at the beginning of her career. Guided by him, she met filmmakers Amir Naderi and Mohsen

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<sup>721</sup> "rimasi incantata dall'apprendere come *Otello* fosse stato girato durante un arco lunghissimo di anni, con tante difficoltà produttive; che non c'era una scena che fosse stata girata nello stesso luogo e nello stesso tempo. L'idea che Orson Welles avesse ripreso un campo da una parte e il controcampo da un'altra anche dopo molti anni, mi fece sentire un'eccitazione enorme, mi diede l'idea che il cinema può tutto, può inventare gli spazi, ricostruire mondi, superare ogni difficoltà. Oggi lo chiamo amore perché io provo un grandissimo amore per il cinema." Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.



Makhmalbaf, also from Iran, and from the three of them she received “courage and respect”. With Kiarostami she developed a strong friendship:

When *L'isola* was invited to the “Quinzaine des Réalisateurs” at the Cannes Film Festival, he offered to draw the poster for my film and I was so stupid, and also badly advised, that I said no, **as if that wonderful gift was a paternalistic act and not a gesture of extreme generosity and friendship.** You can't imagine how much I regret it.<sup>722</sup>

Reflecting back on the reactions caused by the fact that her debut film was invited to Cannes, Quatriglio identifies what she regards as gender-based discrimination:

I was very young. The producers, obviously male, told me: “don't let this go to your head”. **Phrases to minimise what was supposed to be a party, a stepping stone**, especially since the film was a great success. And maybe my male newcomer colleague only received encouragement.<sup>723</sup>

Quatriglio is well aware of the inequalities faced by women in the film industry. However, her first reaction when asked whether her cinema is feminist, was to say no: “I've never wanted to be caged in a word (...) I find it limiting (...) I've never loved the screening of films related to a so-called “female cinema”, although I have often received invitations in beautiful settings from beautiful people that I have gladly accepted.”<sup>724</sup> She added that, even if years ago she would have said that gender has no influence in the filmmakers' gaze, over time she has changed her opinion:

Today, **with the experience I have, I can tell you that there is certainly a different gaze. But the difference is also one of economic possibilities.** Let

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<sup>722</sup> “Quando *L'isola* è stato invitato alla Quinzaine des Réalisateurs al Festival di Cannes, lui si è offerto di disegnare la locandina del mio film e io sono stata così stupida (e anche mal consigliata) che gli ho detto di no, come se quel dono meraviglioso fosse un atto paternalistico e non un gesto di estrema generosità e amicizia. Non sai quanto lo rimpiango.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>723</sup> “Ero giovanissima. Mi sono sentita dire dai produttori, ovviamente maschi, «non ti montare la testa», frasi dette per minimizzare ciò che invece doveva essere una festa, un trampolino di lancio, tanto più che il film ha avuto un grande successo. E magari il mio collega esordiente maschio riceveva solo incoraggiamenti.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>724</sup> “non ho mai avuto il desiderio di essere ingabbiata in una parola (...) La trovo limitante (...) Non ho mai amato le proiezioni dei film legate al ‘cinema al femminile’, anche se ho spesso ricevuto inviti in contesti bellissimi da persone bellissime che ho accettato volentieri.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

me explain: when women have less money to make films, they have a smaller budget, **it is natural that they take refuge in smaller, more intimate or more personal stories.** If I had so much money, if I could have big budgets, I would make historical films with great masses.<sup>725</sup>

Quatriglio asserts that she has always been a feminist implicitly, for which her mother played a crucial role:

**I have always struggled to define myself as a feminist** because I grew up with a mother to whom I owe everything, because she always placed the person at the centre of everything. I'm talking about a woman who became one of the first female lawyers, a woman who became an orphan of an antifascist father at the age of fourteen and immediately started helping her family; a woman who has always played a fundamental role inside and outside the family. **I've never loved definitions. Of course I'm happy to see that in these days we are talking about feminism again.**<sup>726</sup>

Quatriglio also refuses to define *Triangle* as a feminist film. According to her, it's not even a film about female labour, but about human labour in general. In this regard, similarly to director Simone Cangelosi<sup>727</sup>, she prefers to define her films as political:

Because **by politics I mean adherence to a sense of citizenship that is necessary to be a person.** So the person Mariella, even if she does not want to, when she says "I am not angry with my employer because he is a victim too", she is expressing a political position, as well as an existential condition.<sup>728</sup>

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<sup>725</sup> "Oggi, con l'esperienza che ho, ti dico che certamente c'è una differenza di sguardo. Ma la differenza è anche di possibilità economiche. Mi spiego: nel momento in cui le donne hanno meno soldi per fare i film, hanno meno budget, è naturale che possono raccontare storie più piccole, più intime o più personali. Se io avessi tanti soldi, se io potessi disporre di grandi budget, farei film storici con grandi masse." Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>726</sup> "ho sempre fatto molta fatica a definirmi femminista perché sono cresciuta con una madre, a cui devo tutto, che ha sempre considerato la persona al centro di tutto. Sto parlando di una donna che è diventata una delle prime donne avvocato, una donna che è diventata orfana di padre antifascista a quattordici anni e si è messa subito ad aiutare la famiglia; una donna cioè che ha sempre avuto un ruolo fondamentale dentro e fuori la famiglia. Le definizioni non le ho mai amate. Di certo c'è che in questi giorni che si parla nuovamente di femminismo, io sono contenta." Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>727</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 6. Section 6.2 *Una nobile rivoluzione*

<sup>728</sup> "Perché per politica io intendo l'aderenza a un senso di cittadinanza che, per me, è necessaria per essere persone. Quindi Mariella, anche se non vuole, nel momento in cui dice «Io non ce l'ho con il mio

*Triangle* was first conceived as a small project made with the archival footage of the 1911 fire. A production company called “Factory Film” invited Quatriglio to look at these materials and to think of a possible film. She had just finished another film made with found footage, *Terramatta*, so she wasn’t sure about accepting this new project. She wanted to find a way to read this event in relation with the present. A few months before the project proposal, the ghost textile workshop had collapsed in Barletta, so she had the intuition that it could be productive to bring both events together. As a matter of fact, what Quatriglio did was a diffractive reading of the two tragedies, following patterns of differences and their effects. She describes this process in an interview carried out in 2015 by film critic Pietro Montani:

**I asked the two stories to start together from the beginning and to proceed in a linear way** to understand where these lines touched each other and where they were separated. And what happened can only be given by the becoming and the flow of events: the feeling of prostration due to existential and material slavery is the point of contact between these two stories which then distance themselves in their two different developments. On the one hand the social conflict and the conquests of the workers, on the other hand the lack of conflict and the total absence of the concept of law itself, which is not removal but absence and void, as if nothing had happened before that collapse in Barletta. **The space in between must be filled by the spectator who is interpellated by the interrogations posed in the film.**<sup>729</sup>

At a Q&A session at the 32 Torino Film Festival, where *Triangle* had its premiere in 2014, Quatriglio also reflected on the similarities and differences between the two events that her film portrays:

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datore di lavoro perché anche lui è vittima», in quel momento lei sta esprimendo una posizione politica, oltre che una condizione esistenziale.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>729</sup> “ho chiesto alle due storie di partire insieme allo *start* e di procedere in modo lineare per capire dove queste linee si toccassero e dove si disgiungessero. Ed è accaduto ciò che può essere dato solo dal divenire e dallo scorrere degli eventi: il sentimento di prostrazione per la schiavitù esistenziale e materiale è il punto di contatto tra queste due storie che poi si distanziano per i due diversi sviluppi: da un lato il conflitto sociale e le conquiste dei lavoratori, dall’altro la mancanza di conflitto e la totale assenza del concetto stesso di diritto, che non è rimozione perché è assenza e basta, come se nulla ci fosse stato prima di quel crollo a Barletta. Lo spazio in mezzo deve essere riempito dallo spettatore, chiamato in causa dalle domande poste nel film”. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.lavoroculturale.org/intervista-a-costanza-quatriglio/>>.

What does not change is the condition of those who work, the relationship with the machine, and also the joy of living (...). What has changed is the conflict. **Whereas in 1911, the conflict set into motion the foundations to get out of a condition of slavery, today the lack of conflict actually roots slavery.** And there is also devotion towards the employer because he is your brother: “I am your brother, you will never be able to get angry with me because I am in your same condition”.<sup>730</sup>

In the process of making *Triangle*, Quatriglio identifies three milestones that arrived at her as intuitions. The first one was the decision of reading the two events together. Another one took place when she went to Barletta for the first part of her research process. There she felt what she describes as “a great emptiness in every sense: a social void, a political vacuum, but also a real desert of the soul that hurt me because people were very lonely.”<sup>731</sup> The third milestone was putting together the city and the factory: “to give the film the breath of the city. Narrating work through the city, modernisation through the city. Also because the images of New York correspond to an imaginary of modernity.”<sup>732</sup>

It was this intuition that made her look for more archival footage of New York cities during the first decades of the twentieth century. She manipulated these materials so as to stress the sense of verticality and amazement with which the big modern cities were built and then filmed by pioneer filmmakers. She then contrasted these promising images of modernity with the emptiness and decadence of Barletta at the first decade of the twenty-first century. For the rhythmic editing, she invited avant-garde musician Teho Tardo at a very early stage of the project: “I showed him part of the archival footage that

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<sup>730</sup> “Quello che non cambia è la condizione di chi lavora, il rapporto con la macchina, e anche la gioia di vivere (...) Quello che è cambiato è il conflitto. Mentre prima, nel 1911, attraverso il conflitto si costituivano le basi per uscire fuori da una condizione di schiavitù, oggi la mancanza di conflitto, di fatto radica la schiavitù. E c’è anche la devozione nel confronto del datore di lavoro perché è il tuo fratello: ‘con me che sono il tuo fratello non potrai mai prendertela perché io sono nella tua stessa condizione’” (Min. 21:02). Costanza Quatriglio. 32<sup>nd</sup> Torino Film Festival Q&A session. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOuWbvcbqA>>.

<sup>731</sup> “un grande vuoto in tutti i sensi: un vuoto sociale, un vuoto politico, ma anche un vero e proprio deserto dell’anima che mi ha fatto male perché le persone erano molto sole.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>732</sup> “dare al film il respiro della città. Significava raccontare il lavoro attraverso la città, la modernizzazione attraverso la città. Anche perché l’immagine di New York corrisponde a un immaginario proprio della modernità.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

I had already edited, so I asked him to work on a composition inspired by the alternation of fullness and void.”<sup>733</sup>

The final milestone was the encounter with Mariella Fasanella in an interview that lasted from nine in the morning to six in the evening, and that made Quatriglio rethink the categories with which she had been explaining her film before. She described this turning point at the previously mentioned Q&A session:

The real question is what Mariella says in the end: “if we were legal or we were not legal it was the same, that is, the building would have collapsed anyway”. So, what she says is that it’s the system that has collapsed, the civilisation of the twentieth century work, that kind of work civilisation. For a moment **I had to renounce to all my certainties and listen to a community** (...) They don’t know their needs because, being used to working in such an internalised condition of slavery, without ever having any kind of protection, **they are not used to thinking in terms of their rights or their needs.**<sup>734</sup>

*Triangle* was made trying to put together all those intuitions. The director envisioned it as a classic tragedy in which Mariella is the heroine and the other voices represent the chorus. To her, Mariella “is not just the working woman. She is like a divinity that speaks for all human beings, which represents labour. Everyone’s labour, that work whose dignity has now been lost.”<sup>735</sup> Her voice summarises the working class condition. As for the decision to close with Mariella singing a Neapolitan song, Quatriglio reckons that,

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<sup>733</sup> “gli ho fatto vedere un po’ di materiale d’archivio che avevo già montato, quindi gli ho chiesto di lavorare a una composizione che s’ispirasse all’alternanza dei pieni e dei vuoti.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>734</sup> “La vera questione è quello che dice Mariella alla fine quando dice ‘se eravamo in regola o non eravamo in regola era uguale, cioè, il palazzo sarebbe crollato lo stesso’. Quindi, quello che lei dice è che è un sistema che è crollato, la civiltà del lavoro novecentesca, quel tipo di civiltà del lavoro. Ho dovuto un attimo rinunciare a tutte le mie certezze e mettermi in ascolto di una comunità (...) loro i propri bisogni non li conoscono perché abituati a lavorare in condizione di schiavitù talmente interiorizzata, senza nessun tipo di tutela, mai nessuna tutela, non sono abituate a pensare nei termini, ne dei diritti, ne dei bisogni” (Min. 7:01). Costanza Quatriglio. 32<sup>nd</sup> Torino Film Festival Q&A session. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOuWbvcbqA>>.

<sup>735</sup> “non è solo la donna operaia. È come una divinità che parla per tutti gli esseri umani, che rappresenta il lavoro. Il lavoro di tutti, quel lavoro la cui dignità si è ormai perduta.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

with the local songs, she “has built an antidote against the global, existential eradication which she experiences.”<sup>736</sup>

Quatriglio doesn't believe in objectivity. In line with my agential realism framework, she doesn't think that there's a fixed reality out there to be captured with the camera. She refers to the conversation with Mariella to explain her approach to documentary filmmaking:

I believe that there is a point of view, which allows what exists to exist in another form, and therefore to become, in some way, a representation of something that is not simply reality, but a relationship that exists between the one who looks and what is filmed. It is in that space in between, in that relationship, that reality is fulfilled, that reality exists (...) for example, that interview with Mariella is not just a conversation with Mariella, it is Mariella who is at the centre of the frame, framed in a certain way, with a certain light, who speaks in a certain way, who relates to me in a certain way. All these elements make you understand that such a conversation is the result of lots of work. We shot from morning to night (...) **in the space between what I film and myself, reality is accomplished.** In time, I mean, in the passage of time, reality becomes full. So the time factor is always fundamental. That's why I think **documentary cinema is the highest expression of being in the world.**<sup>737</sup>

When the project became bigger, Quatriglio had to look for a co-producer, so *Triangle* is produced by “Factory Film” and “Doclab”, with support from RAI Cinema, the Luce Cinecittà Institute and the Apulia Film Commission. It is recognised as a film of cultural interest by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism–General

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<sup>736</sup> “si è costruito un antidoto allo sradicamento, inteso come sradicamento globale, esistenziale, che lei subisce” (Min. 17:52). Costanza Quatriglio. 32<sup>nd</sup> Torino Film Festival Q&A session. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOuWbvcbqA>>.

<sup>737</sup> “Io credo che esista il punto di vista, che permette a ciò che esiste di esistere in un'altra forma e quindi di diventare, in qualche modo, rappresentazione di qualcosa che non è semplicemente la realtà, ma il prodotto della relazione che c'è tra chi filma e ciò che viene filmato. In quello spazio in mezzo, nella relazione, esiste la realtà (...) per esempio, quella intervista a Mariella non è solo una conversazione con Mariella; lì Mariella sta al centro del fotogramma, viene inquadrata in un certo modo, con una certa luce, parla in un certo modo, si relaziona con me in un certo modo. Tutti questi elementi ti fanno capire che quella conversazione è frutto di un lavoro enorme. Noi siamo state a filmare dalla mattina alla sera (...) nello spazio tra me e ciò che filmo si compie la realtà. Nella durata, cioè nello scorrere del tempo, la realtà diventa piena. Quindi il fattore tempo è sempre fondamentale. Ecco perché io penso che il cinema documentario sia la espressione più alta dello stare al mondo.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

Direction for Cinema. At the Torino Film Festival, it won the Cipputi Prize. It was also recognised with the “Nastro D’Argento” in 2015. Distribution in movie theatres was scarce, but it has been screened on television at a national level. Quatriglio considers that the attitude towards documentary cinema is changing:

In recent years, **documentary in Italy has finally been recognised as a cinematographic genre by industry professionals and the general public.** Who started, like me, to make documentary films in the early 2000s, did it generally without any kind of support. I would say neither a productive nor a distributive contribution. Today things are changing even if, in my opinion, we are risking a misunderstanding, in the sense that I have the feeling that documentary is only recognised in the primary sense of observation of reality, I mean, the basic degree of documentary, and especially when it is aesthetically beautiful, like a glamorous aspect of reality that makes the genre acceptable.<sup>738</sup>

For Quatriglio, making documentaries has been a territory of freedom, but also of precarity. She uses it a tool for asking questions to reality so as to fill voids and render visible what otherwise remains invisible. In the case of *Triangle*, she summarises this approach as follows:

**The power of cinema is to show us what we do not see, and what we do not see is what happened in between.** We witness two tragic events experienced by those who suffered them. The event of 1911 and that of 2011. In the middle there is an empty space to be filled substantially. We must fill it all together. I do not have a recipe (...) there is, perhaps an intuition, a light, a small light somewhere. Mariella, in my opinion, is that light there, her dignity, her love for what she does, her knowing how to do it

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<sup>738</sup> “Negli ultimi anni il documentario in Italia è stato finalmente riconosciuto come genere cinematografico nella coscienza sia dei professionisti dell’industria che nel pubblico in generale. Chi ha cominciato, come me, a realizzare film documentari nei primi anni duemila, lo ha fatto generalmente senza nessun tipo di appoggio, direi né un apporto produttivo né tanto meno distributivo. Oggi le cose stanno cambiando anche se, secondo me, si sta rischiando un equivoco, nel senso che ho come la sensazione che viene riconosciuto solo il documentario nell’accezione primaria di osservazione della realtà, cioè il grado base del documentario, e soprattutto solo quando è esteticamente bello, come un aspetto glamour del reale che rende accettabile il genere.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. March 11<sup>th</sup> 2018.

well, her pride, the possibility that she has to think about her work and about doing it well, that's the light.<sup>739</sup>

*Triangle* has been well received by film critics. Scholar Dario Cecchi dedicates one chapter of his book *Immagini Mancanti. L'estetica del documentario nell'epoca dell'intermedialità* (2016) to discuss this film. He points out the different reactions generated by both tragedies: while the fire in New York had a positive effect in terms of union fights and labour rights, the collapse in Barletta didn't lead to any change and the lack of a socio-political response left the victims' relatives only with a religious escape. He considers that the film's language is very creative in the ways in which the director engages with what he terms the "ripped" character of the film, for example, when she duplicates specular images of factories and streets. He also praises the film for the reflection on labour that it propitiates.

Various reviews were written in 2015, in the context of the film premiere at the 32 Torino Film Festival, especially after winning the Ciputti prize. According to the judges, the latter was given to *Triangle*:

For its ability to weave, in a non-ritual way, stories that are linked in a thread which gives continuity to the memory of time. All of this with a strong idea of filmmaking through the story of a "unique" character. A documentary that shows how much we need images that make viewers reflect.<sup>740</sup>

Paola Casella writes about the film at the Mymovies.it online platform, active since 2000. Casella rates the film with 3.5 points out of 5. She praises Quatriglio's "deeply evocative

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<sup>739</sup> "Il potere del cinema è quello di mostrarci quello che non vediamo, e quello che non vediamo è quello che è successo in mezzo. Noi assistiamo alla esperienza di due eventi tragici vissuti da chi li ha subiti. Il evento del 1911 e quello del 2011. In mezzo c'è uno spazio vuoto da riempire sostanzialmente. Lo dobbiamo riempire tutti insieme. Io non ho una ricetta (...) c'è, forse l'intuizione, la luce, una lucina piccola da qualche parte. Mariella secondo me è quella luce lì, la sua dignità, le sue amare ciò che fa, il suo saperlo fare bene, il suo orgoglio, la possibilità che lei ha di ragionare sul proprio lavoro e sul far bene il proprio lavoro, quella è la luce" (Min. 18:06/ 24:01). Costanza Quatriglio. 32<sup>nd</sup> Torino Film Festival Q&A session. November 26<sup>th</sup> 2014. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOuWbvcbqA>>.

<sup>740</sup> "per la sua capacità di intrecciare in maniera non rituale, storie che si legano in un filo che danno continuità alla memoria del tempo. Il tutto con un'idea forte di regia, attraverso la storia di un personaggio 'unico'. Un documentario che dimostra quanto ci sia bisogno di immagini che facciano riflettere lo spettatore". Date of access: April 2019. <<https://27esimaora.corriere.it/articolo/costanza-quatriglio-racconta-il-lavoro-tra-pochi-diritti-e-troppi-rovesci/>>.



narration”<sup>741</sup> and argues that, in its portrait of Barletta’s harsh reality, the film manages to render visible “the progressive lowering of the level of what is considered lawful, or even humanly acceptable”<sup>742</sup> in Italy. She coincides with the filmmaker’s feeling that Mariella’s pride and dignity are the only possible hope among the tragedies shown in the film.

In the *Sentieri Selvaggi* film magazine, online since 1998, Silvia Pellegrino traces similarities between *Triangle* and Cecilia Mangini’s pioneer work, *Essere Donne* (1965), because both films denounce the conditions of exploitation that working class women face in Italian factories. In her 2015 article, Pellegrino praises Quattriglio for her decision to “document the unsustainable and debilitated disregard of inalienable rights treated as merchandise of exchange between life and death.”<sup>743</sup>

Another review from February 2015 is published in the independent online film magazine *taxidrivers.it*, written by Alessandra Balla. She praises Quattriglio’s ability to listen to people’s stories and to re-tell them without artifices: “The narration passes from individual to collective and this is the strength of *Triangle*, Mariella herself seems to have the weight of the world on her.”<sup>744</sup> Balla highlights, just as the filmmaker does, that the protagonist of the film is labour in general, not women’s labour.

### 6.3.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Triangle* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

Even though she is well aware of gender inequalities, for example, in the reactions that she got when her debut film was selected in Cannes and in her limited access to big

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<sup>741</sup> “Un racconto profondamente evocativo”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.mymovies.it/film/2014/triangle/>>.

<sup>742</sup> “dall’altrettanto progressivo abbassamento del livello di ciò che è considerato lecito, o anche solo umanamente accettabile” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.mymovies.it/film/2014/triangle/>>.

<sup>743</sup> “documentare l’insostenibile e debosciata noncuranza dei diritti inalienabili trattati come merce di scambio tra la vita e la morte”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.sentieriselvaggi.it/triangle-dicostanza-quattriglio/>>.

<sup>744</sup> “La narrazione passa dall’individuale al collettivo e questa è la forza di *Triangle*, la stessa Mariella sembra avere su di sé il peso del mondo.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.taxidrivers.it/58201/in-sala/triangle.html>>.

budgets, Costanza Quatriglio doesn't define herself or her films as feminist. Rather, she calls them political works. In *Triangle*, her intention was to make a film about human labour, not specifically about women. Nevertheless, the **contents** speak otherwise, because in the two tragedies that she describes, the victims were mostly women. In 1911 New York and in 2011 Barletta, working with the sewing machine appears as a gendered activity carried out by women.

Quatriglio's approach to reality and to documentary cinema is totally in line with the agential realism framework and with the understanding of documentary cinema as a performative act that co-creates what it films. At an early stage of the **production** process of *Triangle*, she decided to read the Triangle fire through the building collapse in Barletta. This strategy can be described indeed as a diffractive way capable of visualising patterns of differences and where the effects of those differences appear. It can also be understood as a feminist and palimpsestic countervisuality strategy that renders visible the continuities of social inequalities faced by the working class and, particularly by the women in this sector.

But the filmmaker's gaze is never victimising. She places herself and the viewers in a position in which to listen respectfully to Mariella, the survivor. She also subverts hierarchies and questions preconceived ideas of valuable knowledge, when she shows the pride with which Mariella describes her work and the ways in which she has managed to continue despite the lack of institutional or governmental support. In this sense, *Triangle* doesn't give any answers, but renders visible the conflict. The **distribution** of the film in movie theatres was limited but it reached wider audiences on television, thanks to the fact that RAI Cinema is one of the producers. As for **reception**, film critics have praised Quatriglio's critical portrait of what Paola Casella describes as "the progressive lowering of the level of what is considered lawful, or even humanly acceptable."<sup>745</sup>

Quatriglio has said that a turning point in the making of *Triangle* was the moment when Mariella told her: "It doesn't mean anything if the factory was in order or not, it has nothing to do with the fact that the girls were there unofficially. The building collapsed. So what if we had been all in order? The building would have collapsed anyway" (Min. 53:31). The technologies of neoliberalism (paraphrasing Barad's aforementioned expression, "technologies of capitalism") had normalised precarious working conditions to such an extent that the cause of the tragedy was placed only on the building's collapse.

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<sup>745</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.mymovies.it/film/2014/triangle/>>.

And as a result, the effects were paralysis and despair, while the Triangle fire in 1911, led to strikes, unions and fights for better working conditions. In this case, the main cause of so many deaths was considered to be the practice of locking the doors.

The **form** of *Triangle* responds to the need to fill the void between these two tragedies. The performative mode of representation entangles different times and spaces and, with the testimony of Mariella, requests spectators “to experience what it feels like to occupy the subjective, social position” (Nichols 2010: 204) of a seamstress in the south of Italy. Quatriglio combines six narrative waves so as to render visible the working class condition over a century, and the processes behind the production of clothes, but also of workers, machines and “the differential distribution of precariousness” (Butler 2015: 33). By the latter I mean that, while a fire and a building collapse can be regarded as accidents, the fact that mostly poor women, many of them immigrants in the case of Triangle, were working inside those places is an effects of patterns of differences being employed by structures of inequality.

## **6.4 *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli/Lunàdigas. Or Women Without Children* (Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga, 2016)**

To have a name means to exist.

(*Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli*. Min. 15:15).

*Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* is a film directed by two self-named “lunàdigas”, i.e. women without children: Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga. They describe their documentary film as part of a wider project: a community and an ongoing archive which includes a website, a Facebook group and a book of “impossible monologues” by famous women who decided not to have children.

The analysis of this film is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. In the case of form and content, I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close read it through the diffractive lenses and with the theoretical apparatus developed in the previous chapters, i.e. identifying how it visualises and materialises cultures of gender in/equalities through its narrative waves, its cuts and modes of representation.

As for production and reception, I discuss the insights raised by Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga in interviews carried out as part of this research project in November 2017. I also incorporate opinions expressed by people who attended a screening of the film at the “Divine” Queer Film Festival of Turin, also in November 2017. Finally, I read this analysis through a sample of testimonies and reviews from the *Lunàdigas*’ website and Facebook page.

### **6.4.1 Form and Content: A Collective Claim for a Name of Their Own**

*Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* can be divided into twenty-two segments, some of which are subdivided into specific sections. The segments can be classified into five narrative waves entangled throughout the film: wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; wave 2, testimonies; wave 3, avatars; wave 4, impossible monologues; and wave 5, small groups. Each one is described below.<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> The language spoken in the film is Italian, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. Access to the film can be requested directly from the filmmakers at the film website: < <https://www.lunadigas.com/contatti/>>.

1. Introduction to the film and to the filmmakers (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences).

On a pale blue screen, a quote from the film *Freaks* (Tod Browning, 1932) appears: “Gooble, gobble, we accept her, one of us, one of us” (Min. 00:15). As soon as the letters disappear, the sound of a projector is heard and we see fragments of home movies from the filmmakers:

1.1 Marilisa’s childhood. The sound of the projector gets combined with music as we see old footage in black and white of Marilisa Piga as a child. She appears in various places playing with her younger sister, who has an intellectual diversity issue. In some frames, both girls appear, either with their father or with their mother. Marilisa narrates:

Until I was 14, I wanted to be a boy. I felt limited just because I was female. “If you were male, you would be free”, my mother used to say. I was furious because it was so unfair (...) Growing up, I accepted the idea of being a girl. I sensed it was even better than being a boy. Yet I still can’t find a good reason to have children. (Min. 00:33)

1.2 Nicoletta’s mother. The old footage in black and white shows Nicoletta as a baby with her mother, as a toddler with her brothers, and as a young girl with her father. In the last frame, she happily walks with her mother. She recalls:

When my mother was younger, everybody called her “nur gehen”. “Just go” in German. She got that nickname because she just wanted to escape (...) She had a very independent nature. Anyhow she got married, had three children. And took care of us and our home (...) Unlike my father, my mother never asked us to make her a grandmother. She always encouraged us to be free. Maybe in that way, I made her happy. (Min. 01:40).

The screen shows the end of the film roll as the sound of the projector increases and comes to a stop.

1.3 How to approach the film’s subject matter. The image changes to high definition video in colour, which signals contemporary footage. We see a wide shot of a train going forward in the Italian countryside, accompanied by lively music of the fifties. The camera goes inside the train and follows Nicoletta (60 years old) as she sits in front of Marilisa (68 years old). The camera makes a shot-counter shot sequence of both in

medium close-up, as we listen to their voice-over wondering whether it would be better to ask direct questions or to propose the general topic to their filmed subjects. The train enters a tunnel, as they explain that they want to propose a word to define women without children, and in chorus they name it: “lunàdigas”.

1.4 Title of the film. On a pale blue screen, the title of the film appears in grey, followed by a phrase inspired by the film *Helzapoppin* (H.C. Potter, 1941): “Any resemblance of Lunàdigas to a movie is purely coincidental” (Min. 4:15). The lively music continues.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, nostalgia, love, distress and joy.

2. First block (wave 2, testimonies). Feelings of inadequacy. Along the film, the name of each interviewee appears onscreen in white print as she speaks.

2.1 Letizia Renzini. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, is shown in medium close-up as she expresses that she feels that being a lunàdiga is very similar to being a freak. She is shown in a long shot, walking alone in the countryside, as she says: “Today, being a childless woman is an issue, even if it shouldn’t be, but you do actually feel like a freak (...) it’s an ongoing, constant battle. Every day you have to sort of, not fight, we are quite a few, but you have to redefine yourself somehow” (Min. 4:22).

2.2 Veronica Pivetti. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, is shown in full shot, sitting on a bench as she happily introduces herself as a woman without children. She is shown in close-up as she explains how different she feels being filmed in this documentary, compared to her experience in mainstream media, where:

... it is difficult that they give space to talk about this topic with this freedom (...) it’s easier that the token childless woman is invited to a TV programme to say why she is so. And she is turned into a specimen that everyone examines microscopically. But here I feel really strong, as I understand that there are many of us (Min. 5:25).

2.3 Lidia Menapace. A woman, approximately seventy-five years of age, is shown in medium close-up walking into a library. She is then presented in medium close-up, as she narrates how she resented the social pressure to become a mother, which she never did.

2.4 Luisa Morgantini. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is shown in medium close-up in a garden, narrating that she always felt that she wanted to go beyond the predetermined future of getting married and having children.

2.5 Margherita Hack. Inside a library, in medium close-up, a woman, approximately eighty years of age, narrates that neither she, nor her husband ever wanted to have children. She also remembers that her mother was kind to her, but that she was never “very enthusiastic about children in general” (Min. 8:12).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort, distress and joy.

3. The filmmakers’ avatars (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; and wave 3, avatars).

The music of the fifties starts in the background, as we see medium close-ups of Nicoletta and Marilisa, cutting up paper dolls with fancy clothes. Behind them, there are two human-size images of both of them, wearing a fancy paper suit. In an ironic tone, Marilisa tells Nicoletta that what they are doing is “a real girlie thing” (Min. 8:32), “no man will ever be able to comprehend what we’re doing” (Min. 8:35). As we see close shots of their hands cutting up and pasting the dresses, the music gets louder. With voice-over, Marilisa explains that paper dolls were the game for girls in the fifties and that it brings back only memories of illnesses. When asked by Nicoletta if she has no positive memories connected with her body as a little girl, she replies that only “a body that felt finally complete in rhythmic gymnastics” (Min. 9:14).

On one of the cardboards that Nicoletta is cutting, full of images of fancy clothes and jewellery, we see a question in English written in blue ink: “Where’s poverty?” (Min. 9:37). Nicoletta tells Marilisa that when she was a child her mother made an agreement with an employee of the zoo, “to temporarily look after young animals abandoned by their mothers. We had a tiger cub, a baby kangaroo, a bear cub. We had to take care of them and learn to part from them in due time” (Min. 9:41).

Each one attaches the paper clothes on a paper doll with their print face pasted on. They ironically describe their avatars as “elegant, skinny, sophisticated, ineffable” (Min. 10:10). The screen is then occupied by an animation of the paper clothes and, in the middle of the screen, Marilisa and Nicoletta with a paper doll body, but with their real moving faces. They take turns to recite a list of antonyms: “I am real. Imaginary. Master. Copy. Identical. Different. Beloved. Lover. Maternal? Paternal? Or none of them” (Min. 10:44).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: nostalgia and joy.

4. Second block (wave 2, testimonies). Influence of the family on the decision of not having children.

4.1 Susi Bellucci. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, sits inside a car in movement. She says that her father was a man with “very definite views on what a woman should be, and indeed he once told me that a childless woman had no reason to live” (Min. 11:10).

4.2 Marina Piperno. A woman, approximately seventy years of age, is portrayed in medium close-up in a garden. She says that, over time, she has realised that she had a sexophobic feeling: “having a mother who dismissed such things and never spoke of them at all, I felt guilty” (Min. 11:46).

4.3 Lea Melandri. In full shot, Nicoletta and Marilisa arrive at a country house with Lea Melandri, whose voice-over starts then and continues as she appears in medium close-up. She says that her parents never imposed on her “the female destiny” (Min. 12:28) of becoming a wife and mother, and that when she first fell in love, her father warned her: “Either you study or you make love. I said, I will study, of course” (Min. 12:40).

4.4 Nives Simonetti. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is shown in medium close-up, sewing in a living room. She says that she decided not to have children “because children symbolise family, lack of freedom, they are a symbol of women’s slavery” (Min. 12:52).

4.5 Maria Lai. A woman, approximately seventy years of age, is shown, first in full shot and then in close-up, sitting in a park. She explains that she made a deal with her sister, so that if she had had children, she would have brought them to her, because “unlike me, she was born a mother” (Min. 13:29).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear.

5. In search of a name of their own (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; and wave 3, avatars).

Close shot of the sculpture of a white breast inside a metal cage. In medium close-up, artist Monica Lugas explains that her sculpture represents women without children. The camera opens up to a medium shot, so that we can see that Lugas is talking with Nicoletta and Marilisa. She goes on saying that she asked a friend of hers, a shepherd, how they called sheep that wouldn’t give birth to lambs, to which he replied *lunàdigas*: “*Lunàdigas? Lunàdigas is a wonderful word! So this became the title for my sculpture*” (Min. 14:04).

5.1 The paper doll avatars of Marilisa and Nicoletta appear against a pencil-drawn background showing the New York Guggenheim Museum. They take turns to say



derogatory phrases about childless women, e.g. “They just care about cats and dogs (...) Childless women only have time for themselves. Rather than being mothers, they prefer to renovate their houses” (Min. 14:23).

5.2 Marilisa and Nicoletta are shown in medium close-up from outside a window; the clouds are reflected on the glass. Background piano music starts to play as we hear their voice-over talking about the lack of an Italian word to name childless women. They look at each other and smile as they say that they want to claim the aforementioned word from the Sardinian language used to describe sheep, i.e. *lunàdigas*: “We’d like women who make that choice to have a name of their own. To have a name means to exist” (Min. 15:15). The piano music adopts a more dramatic tone towards the end of the sequence and continues into the next one.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort and joy.

6. Lilith (wave 4, impossible monologues).

Full shot of a woman, approximately fifty years of age, standing in a park with a book. She looks into the camera and says that she is reading an extract from the “*Lunàdigas’ Impossible Monologues*” (Min. 15:45). The piano music stops as she closes the book and starts talking as if she was Lilith:

They say I make men who sleep alone ejaculate and from that seed evil demons are born. According to primeval legends, that is my way to give birth (...) I am a woman outside the rules. I don’t care about a fixed abode. I was born from a sigh of the Earth when it had just formed. When Adam saw me he was dismayed. I left him immediately to his destiny as a progenitor. Because this is my dark nature, I’m not coy! To me, the Tree of Knowledge is the body in all its parts, especially the most intimate ones. There we find the source of passion, which makes the blood run through one’s veins and smells like ambrosia. Metamorphosis is the real knowledge. (Min. 16:00).

The piano music starts again at the end of the sequence and continues onto the next sequence.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, pride and fear.

7. Small discussion groups (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; and wave 5, small groups). Influence of the family and the context on their decisions.

7.1 House of Women in Florence. The sequence opens with a wide shot of a group of nearly twenty women of various ages, sitting in a circle. They are in a patio in the evening. In white letters we read that they are at the “Casa delle Donne. Associazione Il Melograno” in Florence. As each woman speaks, she is shown in medium close-up.

Ginetta Fusi, a woman, approximately forty years of age, says that in the small town where she comes from, “it was taken for granted that you had to marry and have children; not just one child, one was not acceptable” (Min. 18:50).

Claudia Chiquet, a Swiss woman, approximately fifty years of age, sitting next to a young girl who holds her arm, says that in her country, “the definition of a woman through maternity is a bit less harsh” (Min. 19:34). She adds that many women in her family didn’t have any children.

Letizia Russo, approximately forty years of age, says that she feels happy and vital without being a mother and, therefore, she feels no embarrassment when people talk about their children.

Emma Ontanetti, approximately sixty years of age, explains that she never got married and never got pregnant, but decided to adopt. She reveals her own prejudices:

I always looked at childless women with suspicion, especially in feminist times, trying to find something wrong with them. I wanted to find faults because I considered myself a woman with children. And I felt that they were crazy about nephews and nieces, or they had cats and dogs, or they would travel endlessly to India and would do all these guru things, then they would fall in love with their psychoanalyst, then with their guru and would come back with those shapeless dresses. I didn’t like these childless women. Luckily now in this circle I’ve come to realise they’re not like that. (Min. 20:41).

Laura Berni, approximately forty years of age, says that she had never talked about this issue in front of a group, only with her psychologist. She says that she used to see it as a tragedy, but that over time and with the help of her female friends, she has understood “that you can really enjoy a loving relationship and cultivate your things at the same time, even with a cat, why not? I mean, I love them so much” (Min. 22:01).

The sequence closes with various long shots of the women preparing food and having dinner together around a wooden table. The images are accompanied by the lively fifties music, which continues until the next sequence.

7.2 Transition. Close shots of Marilisa and Nicoletta drawing red and blue dress patterns on a big white sheet. The lively music continues in the background during all the sequence.

7.3 “Siblings” Group. Full shot of four women sitting in a circle; one of them is Marilisa. In medium shot, Simona Cardente, approximately fifty years of age, says that she takes care of her brother with Down’s syndrome and that she hasn’t had any children because she thinks she has done her share. Lucia Sinus, approximately sixty years of age, says that she still lives at her parent’s house, taking care of her brother. Alessandra Quattrocchi, approximately fifty years of age, explains that they are:

Not only “lunàdigas”, childless women, but also “siblings”, with a brother or sister with disabilities. The idea was to ask ourselves how much this disability affected our decision. In my case, it did. There was also a genetic risk. My brother suffered from muscular dystrophy. So I feared I might pass it on to my child, in turn, which would have been complicated. This certainly influenced me. (Min. 23:58).

Marilisa says that she was never jealous of her sister; rather, she always felt that she had to protect her.

Affects evoked in this segment: joy, love, distress and fear.

8. Rosa Luxemburg (wave 4, impossible monologues).

The sequence opens with a full shot of the woman from segment six, standing inside a greenhouse, with the book of impossible monologues. There’s piano music in the background. In medium close-up, she looks directly into the camera and starts talking as if she was Rosa: “My battle name in the ‘Spartacus League’ was Junius. A male name (...) No comrade has ever given me a child. I never took my breast out of my corset to give it to the new born. A missed act. I fought continuously in the fifty years I lived” (Min. 25:40). The piano music gets louder at the end of the monologue and then slowly fades out.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pride and nostalgia.

9. Small discussion groups (wave 3, avatars; and wave 5, small groups). Being a lesbian lunàdiga.

9.1 Transition. The paper doll avatars of Marilisa and Nicoletta appear against a pencil-drawn background showing an Italian restaurant. They take turns to recite a list of

antonyms (e.g. simple, complex, shadow, light). They look at each other as Nicoletta says “alone” and Marilisa responds “in a group” (Min. 27:10).

9.2 Informal reunion focused on childless lesbians at Susi Monzali’s home in Turin. A long shot shows five women sitting in a living room. They appear in medium close-ups as they speak.

Rosanna Rabezzana, approximately fifty years of age, says that she decided she didn’t want to be a mother nor a wife, when she was eleven years old. Marisa Porello, a woman in her sixties says that for her, “having children means to have no freedom” (Min. 27:41). Liliana Ellena, a woman in her forties, says that she sees potential in the relationship between generations that motherhood allows, to what Sonia Rosatto, approximately fifty years of age, adds: “Nobody here is saying anything against motherhood in our lives” (Min. 28:05).

They debate about the justifications that society asks childless women to give. Liliana explains: “part of the LGBT community is trying to legitimise their human existence by having children and becoming parents” (Min. 28:55). Susi points out that such legitimation “gives right of citizenship. An enormous contradiction” (Min. 29:14). To what Liliana adds: “What I can perceive very clearly is that contemporary lesbians, the visible and accepted lesbians are those who are mothers” (Min. 29:50). Marisa jokes that, when her oldest cat dies, she will devote herself to stuffed animals.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and anger.

10. The filmmakers’ relationship with their bodies as young women (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences).

Wide shots show Marilisa and Nicoletta walking through a big park. Their conversation is heard off-screen, accompanied with the playful fifties music in the background. Marilisa remembers that when she was sixteen years old, she received a postcard from a friend talking about the great bodies of African boys: “I had a very strong reaction, both amazement and embarrassment to that unexpectedly frank remark. I couldn’t even pronounce the word ‘body’. Luckily, the ‘68 was coming” (Min. 30:54).

Nicoletta remembers her first years of independence, in 1977, when she went to university: “encountering the protest movements of the time. I can’t forget their slogan, ‘Everything is inside us, let’s play and find it’. My body was revealing and defining itself along with that of the other women” (Min. 31:32). Marilisa narrates that she also went to live on her own when she was 21 years old: “It wasn’t so common at that time. At last, I

could experiment new freedom (...). In those years, I learned to listen to my body, but I still feel some embarrassment saying ‘body’” (Min. 31:57).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: shame, shock and joy.

11. Third block (wave 2, testimonies). Decisions and doubts concerning motherhood.

11.1 Alessandra Bonacci. A woman, approximately forty years of age, is portrayed in full shot as she prepares a cup of tea and remembers an occasion in which a former boyfriend asked her about marriage and children, which she didn’t want. She is shown in close-up, saying that she admires women who manage to be good mothers, but that she doesn’t feel like becoming one: “I won’t experience that, you cannot experience everything. One has to choose, one has to find directions. That’s not for me. It’s beautiful, I might even envy it. But I can still have other relationships, other emotions, other passions” (Min. 33:36).

11.2 Marinela Perroni. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is portrayed in medium close-up at the patio of an old building. She remembers that her family made it possible for her to consider the possibility of not becoming a mother. She is shown in close-up as she explains that in Catholic religion nuns renounce to motherhood, “which is theologically, biblically, the only possible destiny for women, only because God asks you to do so in the name of something higher, which is spiritual motherhood” (Min. 34:34). She also says that there are several female characters in the Bible that are not mothers and have strong stories, but that this usually remains hidden.

11.3 Francesca Nesler. A woman, approximately forty years of age, is shown in medium close-up, caressing her dog. She narrates that, over different periods in her life, she has had different approaches towards motherhood, but in the end she is happy with her dog, “who is around me and who looks like me” (Min. 36:10).

11.4 Melissa Panarello. A woman, approximately twenty-five years of age, appears, first in full shot and then in close-up, caressing two cats. She talks about her negative experience as an unwanted child: “My mother, sometimes, in her way, tried to love me, to love us; yet she remained a woman who didn’t want children, so she couldn’t see us as innocent, she couldn’t help but consider us a mistake in her life” (Min. 37:07).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, distress, joy, nostalgia and anger.

12. Coco Chanel (wave 4, impossible monologues).

Full shot of the same woman from segments six and eight, sitting on a fountain, with the book of impossible monologues. There’s piano music in the background. In

medium close-up, she looks directly into the camera and starts talking as if she was Coco: “I met Picasso and Cocteau but they didn’t make an impression on me or, even less, make me pregnant. With Igor Stravinsky I had quite a relationship, but that was all, in spite of his Firebird. Children didn’t interest me, I never had a maternal instinct” (Min. 38:15). The lively fifties music starts in the background and continues until the next sequence.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and pride.

13. Small discussion groups (wave 3, avatars; and wave 5, small groups). Problematic relations with motherhood.

13.1 Transition. Top shot of Marilisa and Nicoletta sitting on the big white sheet on which they draw red and blue dressing’s patterns. The camera travels around, showing details of their bodies and their drawings. Their voices take turns in reciting antonyms, such as line and point.

13.2 The paper doll avatars of Marilisa and Nicoletta appear against a pencil-drawn background showing a big building. They keep on taking turns to recite various actions connected with making clothes.

13.3 Informal reunion focused on how determinant motherhood is considered. It takes place in the house of Monica, in Bolzano, with five women sitting in the living room. They are shown in medium close-ups as they speak.

Kira Cacco, approximately thirty years of age, remembers that when she got pregnant at nineteen years old, she had the feeling that “all the questions disappeared, like, ‘What will I do in life?’ Because after school, you wonder what to do. When the doctor told me I was going to be a mother, I thought, ‘Good, I have nothing else to decide’” (Min. 40:10). Emilia Pometti, a forty year-old woman from Sicily, says that the two questions that everybody asks her parents in Sicily, are whether she is married and whether she has children.

13.4 Informal reunion at “Laboratorio Lunarti” in Roma, focused on women who have children but have a problematic relation with motherhood. A long shot shows five women sitting together in a studio. They are shown in medium close-ups as they speak.

Silvia Giacomini, approximately twenty years of age, narrates that she had always pictured herself without children, but that when the moment came, she decided to have the baby, “maybe because all of my friends are childless and I got a bit tired of all those who chose not to have any. I tried to find its natural aspect, in a biological sense, reproduction and all that” (Min. 41:05).

Maria Rossi, approximately thirty years of age, confesses that, after giving birth, she doesn't feel fulfilled, but lonely, because the extended family doesn't exist anymore: "If I joke about it, I can get a bit cynical, like when I said that I wanted to kill him; the atmosphere around me got chilly, everyone looking at me puzzled. In fact, I activated a mutual help group" (Min. 41:52).

13.5 Informal discussion of obstetrics students. Three young women, ages around sixteen and eighteen years old, stand up in a park, in medium shot. Eleonora Rossi says that, for her, "not to become a mother is to be incomplete" (Min. 42:23).

In close-up, Valentina Prisco agrees with her, adding: "it's like renouncing a part of oneself. We women are mothers by nature and we've been created to generate children" (Min. 42:29). Ilaria Bernabè, in close-up, agrees because she considers that having a child is "the completion of the love between a man and a woman" (Min. 42:53). She also points out that, as obstetricians, their job involves accompanying women before, during and after the pregnancy, but that the decision not to have children must be respected as well.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, distress and love.

14. Fourth block (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; and wave 2, testimonies).  
Motherhood and priorities.

14.1 Laura Como Grasso. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, is shown in full shot as she goes inside the sea, wearing a complete swimsuit. She is then shown in medium close-up, explaining that, as a lesbian, she didn't want to have children "as you go buying a house" (Min. 43:40). In full shot, sitting on the beach, she says that she has never felt childless, but "the great mother of the Sardinian homosexual movement. I feel like the one who brought about a greater degree of acceptance of different ways of approaching concepts of male and female, both personally and collectively" (Min. 43:51). In full shot, she gets out of the sea, saying that the water is too cold.

14.2 Transition. Top shot of Marilisa and Nicoletta sitting on the big white sheet on which they draw red and blue dressing's patterns. The camera travels around, showing details of their bodies and their drawings, with the playful fifties music in the background.

14.3 Geraldina Colotti. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, is shown in full shot, sitting on the grass. She explains that her decision not to have children was linked to her participation in the left wing organisation "Brigatte Rose" ("Red Brigades"), which led her to spend several years in jail. She adds that, even though some of her

comrades became mothers and her husband wanted a child, for her this would have meant “a continuing obligation that would deprive me of my freedom, because there would be another human being who would depend on me” (Min. 46:05).

14.4 Thirsà Tirapelle. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is shown in close-up, looking at the city. She says that it was a shock for her to realise that in Italy, the idea that “a woman has to have a child to be complete” (Min. 46:22) is still very strong, in comparison with Brazil, where she spent much of her life.

14.5 Valeria Viganò. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, in close-up, says that Italian society is “still tied to certain patterns of behaviour, certain requirements for women. If one does not adhere to them, it seems strange” (Min. 46:41).

14.6 Annarita Oppo and Nora Racugno. Two women, approximately sixty years of age, in full shot, are sitting on beach chairs by the seaside. Annarita states that both made a free choice, one to have a child and the other one to remain childless. Nora says that such a difference is something to celebrate, as it would mean that they are free women, but points it out that it’s a difference that has an impact on their freedom. Annarita accepts that “having a child curtails your freedom in some sense” (Min. 47:46). Nora says that it has a big impact on relationships, because “a child always takes priority, over everything else, even those things which are essential for one’s existence” (Min. 48:04). Annarita disagrees, explaining that, for her, “having a child was a challenge, an adventure. I took this opportunity that every woman has, which to me is beautiful, actually. But trying not to be completely absorbed by it” (Min. 48:40). They walk away as playful music starts and continues until the next sequence.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, fear, nostalgia, anger and love.

15. Jeanne d’Arc (wave 4, impossible monologues).

The same woman from segments six, eight and twelve is walking in a park, holding the book of impossible monologues. There’s piano music in the background. The music stops as she stops, looks into the camera, and starts talking as if she was Jeanne:

I was burned at the stake at the age of 19. I was accused of being a heretic, a blasphemer, a witch (...) I didn’t have any children, I was just neither willing nor able to have any. I fought for so long and then I spent a lot of time in prison, on trial (...) Prelates were afraid of me because I used to dress as a man. They sent lesbians to the stake, as if they were witches (Min. 49:35).



Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and distress.

15. Fifth block. (wave 2, testimonies). Relation with their mothers and external conditions preventing pregnancy.

15.1 Giovanna Morena. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, in close-up, with the mountains and the countryside as background, narrates that her mother used to suffer from depression. She remembers that, on an occasion in which her mother had a strong crisis, she decided she would never have any children, “because I didn’t want to risk making a child suffer the way I was suffering then” (Min. 51:01). But she also admits that, when she reached an age in which she knew she wouldn’t be able to change her mind, she felt the emptiness of her womb, “a real physical feeling” (Min. 51:31).

15.2 Liviana Greoli. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is shown in medium close-up, sitting in her living room. She says: “I have never been a daughter, I have always been a mother, particularly to my mother, but also to my father” (Min. 51:38). She also recalls that her mother suffered a lot.

15.3 Cinzia Mocchi. A woman, approximately forty years of age, in wide shot, is shown arriving in a wheelchair. She then appears in medium close-up, saying that she believes in maternal instinct: “I believe in nature, in the gift that nature made to women, the gift of procreation, so the fact I couldn’t experience this natural opportunity was a failure for me. I always wanted to have children, one at least, but let’s say that nature has decided on my behalf” (Min. 52:36). She is shown going away accompanied by another woman.

15.4 Afra Carubelli. A woman, approximately sixty years of age, is shown in close-up. She remembers that, as an adolescent she was diagnosed with a hormonal problem but that she decided not to take the treatment: “I considered it good news that I couldn’t have children. As if, in some way, nature had given me a gift” (Min. 54:15).

15.5 Rossella Faa. A woman, approximately fifty years of age, sings and plays the guitar in medium close-up. She is then shown sitting at a table, as she explains that she didn’t have any children, not because of her own decision, but due to health problems:

Before surgery I really wanted to have children, at least one; then, when they told me I would not be able to have any, everything vanished into thin air. I always considered it a miracle, a great gift. Because I saw many women not being able to have children, going out of their minds because of it. I wouldn’t have been able to

do my job if I had had children. And this is already enough for me, my job rewards me. And after all, children are a nuisance, let's face it. (Min. 55:15)

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: pain, distress, nostalgia and joy.

16. Bags (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; wave 2, testimonies; and wave 3, avatars).

The paper doll avatars of Marilisa and Nicoletta appear against a pencil-drawn background showing a city street. They take turns to recite actions and adjectives connected with bags.

16.1 Montage of emptied bags. A fast-cut sequence of top shots showing the bags of the interviewees being emptied, revealing what they carry in them. The lively music from the fifties plays in the background. One of them, Jodi Harris, a woman in her forties, jokes about having to open her bag in front of the camera. The filmmakers also empty their bag, full of sheep key chains, merchandising of the film. One of the interviewees laughs as she tells them that she refuses to let them see certain things.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy and shame.

17. Sixth block (wave 2, testimonies). Other preferences over motherhood.

17.1 Vittoria Vardanega and Vittoria Cabras. Two women, approximately twenty years of age, are shown inside a radio cabin. They present their program, in which they will talk about "Lunàdigas". Next we see Vardanega in close-up, sitting in a park, saying that maternal instinct is not something biological but "a social construction" (Min. 57:33). Cabras agrees on the existence of this social pressure, adding that with many ill-behaved children, you can notice that their mothers "were not so convinced of their choice" (Min. 58:10).

17.2 Francesca Carta. A woman, approximately thirty years of age, is shown in wide shot, skating on a dock. She is then shown in medium close-up, caressing a cat. She narrates: "When I was a child I thought it was compulsory to have children. My mother told me that it was a choice. I was very relieved and I have never changed my mind" (Min. 58:27). She laughs and states that she prefers cats to children.

17.3 Verona's rugby female team. Wide shots of a rugby match with all-female players. Then we see medium close-ups of some of them inside the dressing room. They are all in their late twenties.

Giorgia Ferrari says that she wanted to have children, but that she can't. She adds: "I am a primary school teacher, I can give my love to my hundred children, but a child of

your own is different” (Min. 1:00:01). Chiara Marra asserts that, if she got pregnant in this moment of her life, she would “have an abortion” (Min. 1:00:19).

Elena Prato says that she has contradictory feelings because she has always wanted to have children, but she doesn’t think she has enough energy for taking care of them, “you are completely at other people’s disposal” (Min. 1:01:09).

17.4 Nela Matas Llorente. A Skype interview with a woman, approximately forty years of age. She says that after reflecting on the subject, she reached a conclusion: “I don’t like children and children don’t like me” (Min. 1:01:52).

17.5 Rosanna Caminati. A woman in her fifties, shown in full shot, follows up what Matas Llorente said, admitting that she likes children “but only until they’re three years old, then it is enough” (Min.1:02).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, discomfort, fear and love.

18. Barbie (wave 4, impossible monologues).

The same woman from segments six, eight, twelve and fifteen is walking in a park, holding the book of impossible monologues. The lively music from the fifties plays in the background. She stops and looks into the camera in medium close-up. The music stops and she starts talking as if she was Barbie:

I was born in 1959. In all this time I’ve never had any children. Actually, I haven’t even tried to. I came to the world with all the right things to be successful. My breasts, my hips and, above all, my legs. No one has ever had such long beautiful legs. The idea of having a child never crossed my mind (...) They say I’m not a good model for little girls. What a lack of imagination! (Min.1:02:27).

Music plays at the end of the sequence.

Affects evoked in this segment: joy and discomfort.

19. Small discussion groups (wave 5, small groups; and wave 3, avatars). The importance of having a name to call oneself.

19.1 Women’s Library. “Associazione Orlando” in Bologna. A group of nearly ten women sit in a circle.

Emilia Marra, approximately thirty years of age, considers that having a name to call themselves is a conquest of the film project: “This name has got a resonance. It is a real name, which can be felt, which speaks to us immediately, a name of which we felt

the need, of which I felt the need” (Min. 1:03:51). Angela Balzano, also in her thirties, agrees on the fact that “succeed in naming oneself is fantastic” (Min.1:04:01).

Ishakti Capitanelli, approximately thirty years of age, adds the point of view of her German mother: “she told me how in Italy they saw maternity as a good thing. It was good to be a mother, it was your *raison d’être*, while, growing up in Germany, she had felt that a woman was fulfilled through her career, rather than through her family” (Min.1:04:23). Gioia Virgilio, approximately sixty years of age, describes the so-called “Cinderella syndrome” that she experienced: “I work in public service. When we had meetings, all the women fled at 4.30 pm. Having no children, I invented a sick mother because I wanted to leave too” (Min. 1:05:13). Marra says that she hasn’t made up her mind yet, and that she has a mother who gives her all her support despite what she chooses to do. She also states the political potential she sees in what the *lunadigas*’ project proposes:

I see the possibility of facing the issue by removing this sense of loneliness and fatigue and sadness and impossibility of being adequate regardless of the choice you make, in speaking about it, in having different points of view and experiences, so as to turn something intimate, private, into something collectively shared. (Min.1: 06:08).

Franca Carzedda, approximately fifty years of age, says that whenever she asks her friends why they have decided to become mothers, she never gets an answer. Valentina Ferritti, approximately twenty-five years of age, states that “being a mother or not should really be a personal choice. It has nothing to do with maternal instinct. What is maternal instinct? In my humble opinion, it is simply something we are taught” (Min. 1:06:46).

Balzano underlines that, in Italy, abortion is surrounded by “rhetoric of pain, sacrifice, incomplete womanhood” (Min. 1:07:19). Mariarosa Ferriani, approximately eighty years of age, adds that an abortion is a traumatic experience, to what Carzedda responds that this wasn’t the case for her: “it wasn’t a traumatic experience, indeed it was a liberating one, not traumatic at all, I did it twice” (Min. 1:07:35). Balzano adds: “there’s still something in our cultural, legal, economic system, which discredits non-motherhood” (Min. 1:07:48). Federica D’Andrea, approximately thirty years of age, adds that it has to be an autonomous decision. Balzano concludes that this issue shouldn’t be

kept as something private: “we should let it all out, *Lunàdigas* is an excellent catalyst” (Min. 1:08:29).

19.2 Transition. The paper avatars of Marilisa and Nicoletta appear against a pencil-drawn background showing a train station. They list the reasons why they call themselves “*lunàdigas*” as well as a series of prejudices: “Childless women throw their money around, leaving no inheritance to anyone. Childless women are so selfish. I am *Lunàdiga* because I want to be free to die any time” (Min. 1:08:45).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, pride, distress and anger.

20. Seventh block (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences; and wave 2, testimonies). Who will receive a *lunàdiga*’s inheritance after her death.

20.1 Eleonora Gelmo, approximately fifty years of age, who also attends the reunion from segment 13.3, says that she has asked herself to whom she’ll leave her diaries, her letters and her camera.

20.2 Eleonora Costa, approximately forty years of age, says that her nephew and niece are her descendants.

20.3 Fedora Sasso, approximately forty years of age, says that for her it is not important to think about who will inherit her house.

20.4 Loredana Reppucci, approximately sixty years of age, says that she finds it more important to pass on values and principles than material things.

20.5 Paola Sacchi, approximately forty years of age, says that she is not obsessed with saving her stuff for the future.

20.6 Elettra Lorini, approximately fifty years of age, says that she finds it sad that no one will carry her genes, but that it is also beautiful “to be on people’s side, to accompany” (Min. 1:10:42).

20.7 Marisa Volpi, approximately seventy years of age, says that it is hard for her to decide “whether dying is an absolute or a small thing” (Min. 1:10:51).

20.8 Transition: Marilisa and Nicoletta riding bikes in the port of Sardinia. The lively music from the fifties is played in the background and continues until next sequence.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, distress, love and nostalgia.

21. Small discussion groups (wave 5, small groups). Teenagers’ conceptions about having children.

21.1 The camera pans across a group of six teenagers in a living room. Their ages range between thirteen and fifteen.

Pietro Nissardi considers that, since having a child is something that takes up so much of your time, he first wants to live his own life and then “start a new one with a child” (Min. 1:11:58). Maria Palomba says that having children is a beautiful thing, and so she wants to do it. Marco Maxia asserts that it has to be your own decision whether to have a child or not, “because if you don’t do the things you want, it isn’t your life anymore” (Min. 1:12:29). Martino Jervis thinks that having a child is a big weight that makes you feel older. Lucia Pala says that her biggest worry is not finding her soul mate. Adele Cornaglia agrees and adds that you might think that you have found the right person but you could be wrong.

The teenagers say goodbye and run away into the street, while we listen to the lively music from the fifties in the background.

Affects evoked in this segment: joy, discomfort, fear and love.

22. Closing of the film (wave 1, self-reflexive sequences).

Top shot of Marilisa and Nicoletta sitting on the big white sheet on which they draw red and blue dressing’s patterns. Their voices over talk about menopause: “what an unsympathetic word, can’t we find another? We’ve looked for one, but it sounds bad in any language. So we’re going to invent another, like we did with lunàdiga” (Min. 1:13:37). They also assert that the “Lunàdigas” project is not over. The fifties music continues playing as white pieces of paper, similar to the ones they are drawing, begin to fall on them.

22.1 Marilisa and Nicoletta are shown in the same medium close-up recorded from outside a window from segment 5.2. Nicoletta writes the letters “F” and “I” in red, and Marilisa follows with the letters “N” and “E”, which reads “FINE”, i.e. the end. The music keeps on playing in the background.

22.2 The drawn portraits of Mari and Willy, Marilisa and Nicoletta’s mothers, appear on a blue background accompanied by the phrase “To Mari and Willy, who chose to have us” (Min. 1:15:03). The music changes to a softer tone, but keeps on playing until the end of the next sequence.

22.3 Credits. Real-life size paper dolls of Marilisa and Nicoletta are inside an industrial lift, which goes up as we see the credits on the right side of the screen.

Affects evoked in this segment: joy, distress, pride and love.

#### 6.4.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

By tackling the taboo surrounding women who decide not to have children in Italy, *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* touches a key aspect of the **feminist audiovisual agenda**: the right to one's own body and different ways of experiencing motherhood. Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga start from their own experience as women without children, and then gather the testimonies of over sixty women who have made the same choice, and about a dozen who still have doubts or who want to share their experiences as mothers.

The title of the film and its first sequence establish the **film's political aim**, its **point of view** and its main mode of representation. The filmmakers make the origin of their gazes explicit by presenting themselves as women who decided not to become mothers and who have experienced discomfort connected with their gender. They start doing so by reflecting on their home movies. They think about the best way to approach the subject matter and state that their aim is to propose a new word to define women without children, which doesn't have a negative connotation (since the Italian language doesn't have a word like "childfree"). They want to start a sorority network of queer "freaks" whose identity could be summarised in a term that comes from the Sardinian language, a word used to describe sheep that don't give birth to any lambs: "lunàdigas".

In this sense, the **feminist countervisuality** that Nesler and Piga enact aims at questioning the dominant visuality, starting from what Mirzoeff identifies as its first operation: **naming**.<sup>747</sup> The filmmakers are aware of the importance of claiming a name of their own, since having a name "means to exist" (Min. 15:15). This is also acknowledged by the women at the "Associazione Orlando" in Bologna: "It is a real name, that can be felt, which speaks to us immediately, a name of which we felt the need" (Min. 1:03:51).

By naming women without children without constantly referring to their "lack" (i.e. childless), *Lunàdigas* contributes to opening up their possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema**: "That is the moment of resistance, of change, of escaping from an identity that imprisons us" (Smelik 2007: 191). Nesler, Piga and all the women who speak in the film, enact their **performative right to appear**, which has an important political dimension, "a public insistence on existing and mattering" (Butler 2015: 37).

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<sup>747</sup> According to Mirzoeff, visualisation operates at three levels: naming, categorising and defining/aestheticising. *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2. Section 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses.

A lunàdiga’s denial of maternal instinct is considered a violation of what women “should be” within a patriarchal visibility. Several interviewees express a feeling of discomfort, as if something was wrong with them: “you do actually feel like a freak (...) Every day you have to sort of, not quite fight because we are quite a few, but you have to redefine yourself somehow” (Min. 4:22). The film’s **queer performativity of gender norms** opens up conditions of visibility for “an eccentric subject constituted in a process of struggle and interpretation” (de Lauretis 1990: 144).

The “lunàdigas” that appear in the film recognise the queerness in them, due to their breach of the motherhood mandate. In this sense, by showing their testimonies, making them legible without judgements, the film operates as an **eccentric technology of gender**. Moreover, being part of a chorus of voices, the women feel reassured: “here I feel really strong, as I understand that there are many of us” (Min. 5:25). By creating a space for various lunàdigas to come together, the film sets up alliances of those regarded as “illegible”. Alliances that might “open up the norms that limit not only what is thinkable, but the thinkability of gender nonconforming lives” (Butler 2015: 38). Childless women hereby find the words to overcome their feelings of inadequacy.

The filmmakers put into practice the feminist principle of “partire da sé”, i.e. **starting from oneself**, incorporating sequences in which they remember their childhood and adolescence, the relationship with their mothers, and the reasons why they became “lunàdigas”. Nesler and Piga reflect on the making of the film within the diegesis of the film itself, thus enacting **a reflexive mode of representation**. They take this approach a step further when they create their avatars with paper clothes (figure 44). With this **performative strategy**, they adopt an ironical tone with which they put in evidence the prejudices surrounding childless women. Their playfulness echoes what the “Collettivo Alice Guy” did in its pioneer feminist comedy film *Affettuosamente Ciak* (1977), in which they recorded themselves and presented their self-reflections with irony.<sup>748</sup>



**Figure 44:** The filmmakers’ avatars

<sup>748</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Section 5.2.1 Feminist Cinema: The Feminist Film Collective and The Nemesiache



Piga and Nesler start by making their subjective point of view explicit and by giving their personal-political testimonies, but then look for more voices, gathering over sixty interviews with women who have decided not to have children. In this way, they approach the subject matter through various other perspectives, thus building a **polyscopic narrative** (Jay 1994: 592). Within the film, they build seven blocks of testimonies, put together according to similitudes of the issues under discussion: feelings of inadequacy towards motherhood, influence of the family on the decision of not having children, decisions and doubts, priorities, other preferences, inheritance, relation with their mothers and external conditions preventing pregnancy (figure 45).



**Figure 45:** A polyscopic narrative of personal-political testimonies

In the cutting together-apart<sup>749</sup> of the testimonies of women who have a totally different approach to similar issues, *Lunàdigas* renders visible **differences between women**. For example, while one woman experiences health issues preventing pregnancy as “a failure” (Min. 52:36), another one says that when she was diagnosed with a hormonal problem, she decided not to take the treatment: “I considered it good news that I couldn’t have children. As if, in some way, nature had given me a gift” (Min. 54:15). In some testimonies **differences within women** are also discussed, since several interviewees

<sup>749</sup> Vid. *Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity

recognise having contradictory feelings towards motherhood, as well as opinions that have changed over time.

Apart from individual testimonies, Piga and Nesler organise and shoot discussions held in **small groups**. In this way, they perform one of the traditional feminist practices in Italy during the seventies.<sup>750</sup> There are nine conversations held in small groups within the film: two at feminist associations (“Associazione Orlando” in Bologna and the Women’s House in Florence), two at mutual support groups (“Siblings” and “Laboratorio Lunarti”), a group of female rugby players, a group of teenagers (the only group in which there are male participants), a group of obstetrics’ students and two informal meetings in houses, one of which focuses on the experiences of lesbians. The potential of getting together is expressed by one of the members of the Bologna’s group:

I see the possibility of facing the issue by removing this sense of loneliness and fatigue and sadness and impossibility of being adequate regardless of the choice you make, in speaking about it, in having different points of view and experiences, so as to turn something intimate, private, into something collectively shared.  
(Min.1: 06:08).

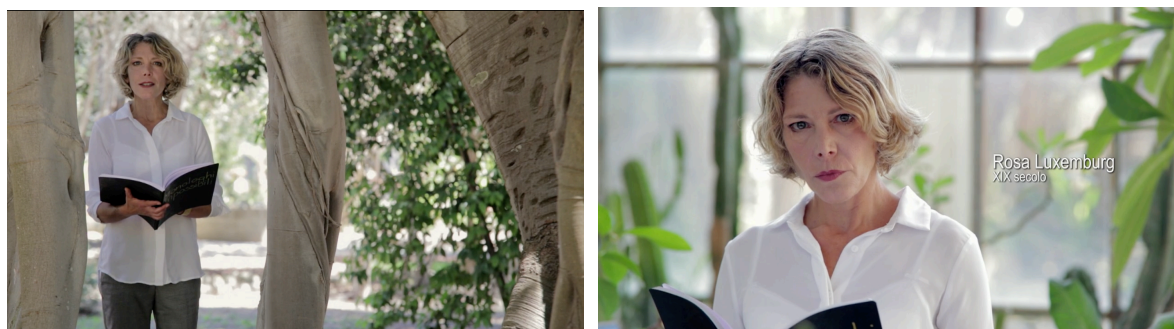
Moreover, the fact that these events are registered turns them into an audiovisual tool, which sets into motion bonds beyond those who actually took part in the gatherings. Once they share their feelings of inadequacy, the “lunàdigas” feel reassured in the fact that there’s nothing wrong with them. In so doing, the film works towards achieving the ultimate political aspiration of gender performativity theory, summarised by Butler as “to let the lives of gender and sexual minorities become more possible and more livable” (2015: 32).

The five **narrative waves** that are entangled in *Lunàdigas* work in a feminist direction: the self-reflexive sequences in which the filmmakers make explicit their point of view and political goal; the digitally manipulated avatar sequences in which they list prejudices against childless women; the testimonies of women who reflect on their decisions concerning motherhood; the discussions held in small groups; and the five impossible monologues of rebellious women from history and fantasy. The **monologues**, written by Carlo A. Borghi and distributed throughout the film, show an actress

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<sup>750</sup> *Vid Supra*. Section 5.2.1 Feminist Cinema: The Feminist Film Collective and The Nemesiache

performing short monologues by Lilith, Rosa Luxemburg, Coco Chanel, Jeanne d’Arc and Barbie (figure 46).



**Figure 46:** The “impossible” monologues

As with the avatar’s sequences (wave 3), there’s a certain degree of irony and humour in some of these interventions, such as Barbie’s monologue: she presents herself as a doll, born with the body needed for success (one which doesn’t get sick, doesn’t get old, doesn’t die and with long beautiful legs). Indeed a non-human body, incapable of giving birth but that offers a diffractive image of the absurd pressure that patriarchy and capitalism pose on women regarded as ever-productive sexualised objects of desire. Still, the same monologue concludes with Barbie saying, that reducing her to being a bad model for little girls, evidences lack of imagination (Min. 1:03:20), a nod to the possibilities of opening up subversive readings. A similar case is that of Lilith who, within the film, is allowed to give her version of herself as a sexual and passionate being, not maternal, but neither harmful to no one.

Indeed, the impossible monologues trace possible routes for diffractive readings in their encounter with the testimonies (wave 2), the small groups (wave 5), and the self-reflexive sequences (wave 1). For example, Lilith’s and Jeanne d’Arc’s interventions stand against the religious power that demonises them and that sent Jeanne to the stake as a witch. Jeanne adds that prelates were afraid of her because she would dress as a man and that they would send lesbians to the stake, also labelling them as witches. This echoes Marinela Perroni’s explanation (segment 11.2) that, in Catholic religion, the only possible destiny for women according to the Bible is motherhood. Nuns are allowed to depart from it, only because God asks them “to do so in the name of something higher, which is spiritual motherhood” (Min. 34:43). And in the small conversation held at Susi Monzali’s house (segment 9.2), Liliana Ellena brings an important insight into the conversation, the fact that “part of the LGBT community is

trying to legitimise their human existence by having children and becoming parents (...) contemporary lesbians, the visible and accepted lesbians are those who are mothers” (Min. 28:55/ 29:15).

Coco Chanel’s monologue claims pleasure, creativity and freedom of the body, as expressed in the clothes she designed and the many lovers she had. The problematic but also pleasurable relation with the body is something highlighted by the filmmakers in their self-reflections, for instance, when Marilisa recalls memories of illnesses and embarrassment but also of feelings of completeness through rhythmic gymnastics (segment 3), and when both acknowledge the positive impact that the feminist movement in the seventies had in their self-perception (segment 10). Rosa Luxemburg’s monologue and an almost imperceptible text in segment 3, “where’s poverty?” (Min. 9:37), are the only references to social class in the film. Lack of resources for bringing up a child is never mentioned as a cause for not having kids. What is pointed out is the pressure of being successful in their careers as a legitimate way of justifying their existence (segment 19.1), or embracing a social movement as a different kind of motherhood, like Laura Como Grasso (segment 14.1), who sees herself as “the great mother of the Sardinian homosexual movement (Min. 43:51).

The **modes of representation** of the film are the participatory, performative and reflexive modes. The active presence of the filmmakers within the frames and the abundance of interviews is the main reason why *Lunàdigas* is made with a **participatory** mode of representation. Its structure, which incorporates materials from diverse sources, as well as self-questioning sequences, brings it close to the **reflexive** mode of representation, because it calls attention to the film’s constructed character. As mentioned in other chapters, the **performative** documentary emphasises the embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world; still, it always joins “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political” (Nichols 2010: 204). That’s exactly what the filmed subjects do when talking about their decisions concerning motherhood and the social pressure that they have faced as a result.

Performativity is also evident in the impossible monologues and in the avatars’ sequences. Working with digital technology, Piga and Nesler have access to an “elastic reality” as described by Manovich (1995), so that they can combine their faces with paper doll clothes and drawn backgrounds, thus producing the realities they film. The ludic and performative character of *Lunàdigas* is also evident in the reference it makes to a film

that subverts spectators' assumptions and plays with various layers of reality, *Helzapoppin* (H.C. Potter, 1941): “Any resemblance of Lunàdigas to a movie is purely coincidental” (Min. 4:15).

The fact that Nesler and Piga put themselves within the frame, at times accompanying the woman they interview (segments 4.3 and 5), blurs the separation between subject/observer and object/observed (figure 47). In the first sequence, they wonder about the best way to approach the subject, either with direct questions or just with general cues, since it is a delicate, taboo issue. Indeed, the women they film find the courage to speak in front of the camera only as a result of the sorority network that the filmmakers enact with their project. In this sense, the very action of making this documentary film produces the situation that is then presented onscreen.



**Figure 47:** The filmmakers within the frame

In terms of **emotionality**, *Lunàdigas* places a heavy emphasis on **positive affects** such as joy, love/care and freedom. However, in many testimonies, **negative affects** such as distress, anger and discomfort arise. What many women express, especially within the small groups, is that being able to talk about these problematic feelings is a relief, which in turn may lead to possible collective solutions. One of the women even jokes about an occasion in which she said she wanted to kill her baby: “the atmosphere around me got chilly, everyone looking at me puzzled. In fact, I activated a mutual help group” (Min. 41:52).

In the next section, I read through interviews with Marilisa Piga and Nicoletta Nesler held for this research project; a presentation that Nesler gave at a screening in the 2017 “Divine” Queer Film Festival in Turin; and a sample of testimonies that diverse women have shared on the *Lunàdigas*' website.

## 6.4.2 Production and Reception: Breaking the Taboo of Childfree Women

The origin of *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* was a **personal situation** experienced by its two directors. As Nicoletta Nesler asserted in an interview carried out for this research project: “This film would not exist, this project would not have happened if Marilisa and I had had children (...) *Lunàdigas* is made with that theory that we have learned from feminism, which is that of starting from ourselves.”<sup>751</sup> Both took part in the Italian feminist movement of the seventies and worked for the Italian radio and television public company RAI. Their first collaboration in 1991 was a radio program for people with functional diversity, through which they found a common goal:

The attempt to find a special language to speak the right words, a **non-pietistic language**. There was nothing to cry about, there was only a lot to find out, right? And so, this criterion is a bit the criterion of all our work, from the first projects, which are related to disabled people, up to the current one, which is *Lunàdigas*.<sup>752</sup>

Marilisa Piga, also interviewed for this research project, says that she shares with Nesler “the interest in this kind of topics that are a bit intimate, a bit personal, uncommon (...) I like to ask questions and to really listen to the answers, at least trying to understand what people really think.”<sup>753</sup> She prefers to call *Lunàdigas* a **political and female**, rather than feminist film. Nesler, on the contrary, argues that their film is political for the same reasons **it is feminist**:

Because **the positions that are expressed are positions of autonomy with respect to this natural diktat**. She is a woman who chooses, she is a woman who asks herself intimate questions, a woman who tries to make her reasons visible. I

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<sup>751</sup> “Questo film non ci sarebbe, questo progetto non ci sarebbe stato se Marilisa ed io avessimo avuto dei figli (...) *Lunàdigas*, diciamo che è fatto con quella teoria che noi abbiamo imparato nel femminismo che è quello del partire da noi stesse.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

<sup>752</sup> “Il tentativo di trovare un linguaggio speciale per parlare giusto, un linguaggio non pietistico. Non c’era niente da piangere, c’era solo da conoscere, no? E quindi questo stesso criterio è un po’ il criterio di tutti i nostri lavori, dai primi, che sono legati alle persone disabili, fino adesso al lavoro che stiamo continuando a fare che è *Lunàdigas*.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>753</sup> “l’interesse verso questo tipo di argomento che sono un po’ intimi, un po’ personali, poco comuni (...) A me piace fare domande e sentire veramente le risposte, per lo meno cercare di capire che cose pensano veramente le persone”. Marilisa Piga. Skype interview. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2017. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

would like to add that *Lunàdigas* has never thought that being a lunàdiga is better than being a mother. We don't believe this at all. We try to keep ourselves very far from such an idea. In the film there are also mothers, there are also women who are not mothers and are not happy with this condition, who would have liked to have them. We just want to discuss the topic. **Many women answer this question with their lives, with their experiences.**<sup>754</sup>

Both filmmakers agree on the fact that **objectivity** in documentary filmmaking doesn't exist, since there is always a subjective point of view. However, talking about their **response-ability** as filmmakers, Nesler highlights the **polyscopic narrative** of *Lunàdigas*:

What helps us is that in the film we have not made a choice, we have not said, "being a lunàdigas is better than being a mother", we did not say, "the elderly know more". We have a very large number of experiences. **Perhaps this brings us closer to an idea, I would never say of objectivity, but of the multiplicity that makes the argument, right?**<sup>755</sup>

Nesler and Piga started the *Lunàdigas*' project in 2007. Finding the women who would accept to share their **testimonies** was not an easy task. They remember how their friends wouldn't let them record their conversations. The first women who accepted to take part in the film were public figures: artist Maria Lai, astrophysicist Margherita Hack and actress Veronica Pivetti. The next spaces through which they opened up the topic were feminist circles, such as the groups from Florence and Bologna. They notice how recently more and more women of all ages are speaking up.

Piga mentions that, out of the women they interviewed, no one has asked them to delete her testimony afterwards. As a matter of fact, Nesler adds, the reactions of the

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<sup>754</sup> "Perché le posizioni che si esprimono sono posizioni di autonomia rispetto a questo diktat naturale. È una donna che sceglie, è una donna che si chiede, una donna che cerca di rendere visibile le sue ragioni. Vorrei dire che *Lunàdigas* non ha mai pensato che essere lunàdigas sia meglio che essere madri. Noi non abbiamo per niente in testa questa cosa. Cerchiamo di tenerci molto lontane, nel film tu vedrai, ci sono anche mamme, ci sono anche donne che non sono mamme e non sono contente di questa condizione, che avrebbero voluto averli. Noi vogliamo solo trattare il tema. Tante donne che rispondono con la loro vita, con la loro esperienza, questa domanda." Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>755</sup> "La cosa che ci aiuta è che appunto noi nel film non abbiamo fatto una scelta, non abbiamo detto 'lunàdigas è meglio che madre', non abbiamo detto 'le anziane sanno di più'. Noi abbiamo un numero molto largo di esperienza, questo forse avvicina a un'idea, non direi mai di oggettività, ma di molteplicità che fa l'argomento, no?" Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

filmed women after watching *Lunàdigas* have been very positive: “all of them were very happy that we are talking about this topic. And each of them has felt protagonist of the pulling out of this issue from the taboo, from the unknown.”<sup>756</sup> At first, they had thought of including only menopausal women, but they changed their mind when they realised that there were lots of young women who, despite being in their twenties, have decided they will not have any children. While struggling to gather testimonies, the filmmakers realised that **they also had to be in the film** for coherence’s sake, even though none of them wanted to do it at the beginning:

Marilisa and I have many years of experience. But **we had never thought of passing that border from behind to the front of the camera** (...) It terrified us to do it (...) But **we understood that we had asked our filmed women such intimacy, such an ability to make public the private that we could not hide**. It would have been a betrayal. And so we made this inhuman effort.<sup>757</sup>

It was difficult because we understood that we had to, that **we could not leave our filmed women alone**. And so we also understood that **we had to be among them** (...) This was perhaps the most complicated part, that is, to be seen, to tell a bit of our personal things. In short, it was a good decision, we still think so, but a difficult one.<sup>758</sup>

Piga and Nesler conceive documentary filmmaking as a **performative act** that composes the real and that demands **response-ability** from the ones working on it. They appear within the frame at the same level of their filmed subjects and, in this way, they question **hierarchies** between who records and who is recorded, who speaks and who is spoken about. In Barad’s terms, they blur the boundaries between subjects and objects. They add another layer of performativity with the paper-doll sequences. The idea behind

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<sup>756</sup> “tutte sono state molto contente del fatto che si parli di questo argomento. E si sono ognuna di loro, sentita protagoniste di questo tirare fuori questo tema, dal tabù, dallo sconosciuto.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>757</sup> “Marilisa ed io abbiamo una esperienza di tanti anni alle spalle. Ma mai avevamo pensato di passare quel confine da dietro ad avanti alla macchina (...) Ci terrorizzava farlo (...) Però abbiamo capito che avevamo chiesto alle nostre testimoni, una tale intimità, una tale capacità di fare pubblico il privato, che noi non potevamo nasconderci. Sarebbe stato un tradimento. E quindi abbiamo fatto questo sforzo disumano.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>758</sup> “È stato difficile perché abbiamo capito che dovevamo, non potevamo lasciare sole le nostre testimoni. E quindi abbiamo capito anche che dovevamo stare in mezzo a loro (...) Questa è stata forse la parte più complicata, cioè, farsi vedere, farsi raccontare un po’ le proprie cose personali. Insomma, è stata una cosa ben fatta, ancora lo pensiamo, ma un po’ difficile.” Marilisa Piga. Skype interview. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2017.



these, according to Piga, was to render evident the absurdity of prejudices, “of the things that most people think about women without children.”<sup>759</sup>

It is interesting to point out similarities and differences between *Lunàdigas* and another contemporary documentary on the same issue, *Sbagliate* (Maria Daria Menozzi and Elisabetta Pandimiglio, 2015). An evident difference is the name: Nesler and Piga wanted to find a word that didn’t have a negative connotation, while “sbagliate” is translated as “wrong women”, women who have made a mistake. Both films gather testimonies, but in *Sbagliate*, the women are not famous, they always appear in small groups and their testimonies are given much more time onscreen.

The stories of three women structure the film directed by Menozzi and Pandimiglio. In the final sequence, all of them have lost an important aspect of their lives: partner, job and mother, respectively. One of them, appears in the first sequences saying that it is difficult to find women willing to share their testimonies on this issue. Even though this gives some degree of reflexivity to the film, the directors, who are also childfree women, never appear within the frame. Up to now, the two projects haven’t established any dialogue between them.

Working with women’s testimonies presented yet another challenge when Piga and Nesler began the process of **editing**: “we realised that we had to reduce a precious conversation with a woman that was significant for us, which might have lasted two hours, to one minute.”<sup>760</sup> This is one of the reasons why they decided to make a **webdoc**, two years before the documentary film was ready. On the webdoc, they could present the complete version of all the testimonies: “the fact that we can put everything online leaves our heart quiet. In this way everyone can make their own movie.”<sup>761</sup> Moreover, it was a first step towards their long-term project of an online archive, which is already set up.

The *Lunàdigas*’ webdoc had its premiere in January 2015. It is no longer available because it has given way to the online “living” archive (archivio vivo). The “impossible monologues” of famous lunàdigas from reality and fiction, written by Carlo A. Borghi, have been published in a book which includes thirty more. The production and distribution companies are the same behind another case study, *Una nobile rivoluzione*:

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<sup>759</sup> “di cose che la maggior parte delle persone pensa delle donne senza figli.” Marilisa Piga. Skype interview. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>760</sup> “Ci siamo accorte che una conversazione preziosa per noi, con una donna per noi significativa, che magari durava due ore, noi dovevamo ridurla a un minuto.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>761</sup> “lascia il cuore tranquillo, il fatto che possiamo mettere tutto in rete. Quindi ognuno si fa il suo film.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

the Bologna-based “Pierrot e la Rosa” and “Kinè”. They won two regional funds: one from Lazio and one from Sardinia. However, Nesler and Piga admitted that the low budget forced them, not just to work for free, but also to spend their own money on many occasions. As in the case of Cangelosi, they accept this **precarity** due to the freedom they gain in making **an independent film**. Nesler points out that they have also had the support of **an extended network**: “we were lucky to have so many people close to us that maybe could support us for part of road, completely free of charge, as a political adhesion to a project.”<sup>762</sup>

The film, completed in October 2016, **premiered** at the “Visione dal Mondo” International Film Festival in Milan. It took place a few weeks after the launch of the “Fertility Day” campaign. Promoted by health minister Beatrice Lorenzin, the “Fertility Day” had the goal of raising awareness about the so-called “danger of falling birth rates” in Italy by means of slogans such as “Beauty knows no age. Fertility does”<sup>763</sup>. The reactions against this campaign, considered sexist and racist, were numerous. The controversy was also mentioned in various reviews of *Lunàdigas*.<sup>764</sup>

The film was also selected at the “Visioni Italiane” Film Festival in Bologna, the “Ananti de sa Ziminera” Festival in Sardinia, the “Est Film Festival” in Montefiascone, the “Segnare il tempo” Film and Woman International Festival, the “Mediterraneo” Video Festival in Salerno, and the “Divine” Queer Film Festival in Turin. At an international level, it premiered at “Chouftouhonna”, an international feminist art festival of Tunisia, where it was recognised as best film in 2017. In Latin America, it was selected at the Women’s Film Festival of Santiago de Chile, the “Femuciq” Quito Independent World Film Festival, and the MICGénero in Mexico.<sup>765</sup> *Lunàdigas* also got the prize for best documentary at the Porn Film Festival of Berlin 2017. This came as a surprise for the filmmakers, but Marilisa considers that this festival selected the film because of the way in which it tackles a taboo subject:

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<sup>762</sup> “noi abbiamo avuto la fortuna di avere vicino a noi tante persone che magari un tratto di strada ci hanno voluto sostenere di aiutare a titolo completamente gratuito, come un’adesione politica ad un progetto.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin. For instance, I translated the film’s subtitles into Spanish for free, so that they could show the film in Latin-American film festivals.

<sup>763</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/05/italy-fertility-day-posters-sexist-echoes-of-fascist-past>>.

<sup>764</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.elle.com/it/blog/news/g1390324/fertility-day-lunadigas-film-diritto-non-fare-figli/>>.

<sup>765</sup> Other festivals in which *Lunàdigas* has been selected are: Ierapetra International Doc Film Festival, Equinox Women’s Film Festival, Queer Lisboa, “Luststreifen” Film Festival in Basel, Femmes en resistance in Paris, and Film Festival for Women’s Rights in South Korea

**There are no judgments**, we make people say what they feel, what they want. Of course **there is always mediation in the editing**, in the things you choose, but we really wanted this thing to be clear, I think we succeeded in giving no judgment on any reason for this choice. Nor saying, “mothers are bad”, for Christ’s sake! Nor saying, “but, in fact, we are right”, no! We have simply told and brought to light a conviction. And this has counted in the decision of the Berlin festival.<sup>766</sup>

*Lunàdigas* is included in the catalogue of the platform “Movieday”, which makes it possible for people to gather and organise a screening of the film in any part of Italy.<sup>767</sup> According to Nesler, the organisation of **screenings** all over Italy has been an important commitment for them: “the community of *Lunàdigas* is a large community, at least at an Italian level, one of many cities. And therefore, we tried to bring the film to the cities where our filmed women were, to show them the work together. And so we always went to introduce it, to be there.”<sup>768</sup>

At the end of my interview with Nesler at the Turin Film Festival, one of the participants of the film, Susi Monzali, joined us and highlighted that an important part of the **distribution** has been possible thanks to “the fact that *Lunàdigas*, in building community, is also building networks of relationships with women, and these women become distributors of the film because through this relationship that they are building, the film goes around.”<sup>769</sup>

When asked about the **public** to whom they were speaking, Nesler said that they wanted it to be as wide as possible: “our conviction was ‘we want to break this silence’. For men, for women, whoever wants to know the reasons behind this choice. So it was neither an Italian public nor a women-only audience. It was an audience who was curious

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<sup>766</sup> “Non ci sono giudizi, noi facciamo dire alle persone quello che sentono, che vogliono. Certo c'è sempre una mediazione nel montaggio, nelle cose che scegli, pero siamo riuscite, volevamo proprio che questa cosa fosse chiara, che non davamo nessun giudizio su nessuna ragione, nessun motivo su questa scelta. Ne dicendo, ‘le madri fanno male’, figuriamoci! Ne dicendo, ‘ma, infatti, abbiamo ragione noi’, no! Noi abbiamo semplicemente raccontato e portato in luce una convinzione. E questo ha contato nel giudizio del festival di Berlino.” Marilisa Piga. Skype interview. November 16<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>767</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <[http://www.movieday.it/movie/index?movie\\_id=1084](http://www.movieday.it/movie/index?movie_id=1084)>.

<sup>768</sup> “la comunità di *Lunàdigas* è una comunità come minimo italiana ma larga, di tante città. E quindi noi abbiamo cercato di portare il film nelle città in cui c'erano nostri testimoni per far vedere loro il lavoro insieme. E quindi siamo sempre andate anche noi a presentarlo, a essere lì.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>769</sup> “il fatto che *Lunàdigas*, nel costruire comunità sta costruendo anche reti di relazione con donne, e queste donne diventano anche loro stesse distributrice del film perché attraverso queste relazione che si stano costruendo il film va in giro.” Susi Monzali. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

to go beyond.”<sup>770</sup> The film has a Facebook page with 6,630 likes<sup>771</sup> up to April 2019. They have also opened a private Facebook group<sup>772</sup>, in which women who identify as *lunàdigas* share their experiences and opinions; it has 885 members and is only in Italian.

Nesler recalls that, at a screening in Catania, a man from the audience complained, saying that the film was “an exclusively Italian work.”<sup>773</sup> She explains that they had worried before about this situation and that, after being invited to the festival in Tunisia, they realised that it is “a topic about which women urgently need to speak at all latitudes (...) *Lunàdigas* does not stop here. Now the project, the ambition would be to work with the women of the Mediterranean area.”<sup>774</sup> It is in this sense that both filmmakers insist on calling *Lunàdigas* **a transmedia project and a community**, rather than just a documentary film. They also emphasise their **affective connection** with their work: “Marilisa and I tell each other, this is the legacy we will leave to other women”<sup>775</sup>. The problem they currently face is lack of funding for the maintenance and growth of their online archive.

I attended a screening of *Lunàdigas* at the “Divine” Queer Film Festival of Turin, in November 2017. There were approximately seventy people in the audience. Rym Amami, from the “Chouftouhonna” Feminist Art Festival, Nicoletta Nesler and Susi Monzali introduced the film. The three of them celebrated the opportunity of building bridges between cultures by opening up the discussion about this issue. Monzali said:

With *Lunàdigas*, I have had the opportunity to find, not just bridges, but to find homes (...) I have had the fortune to accompany *Lunàdigas* with Nicoletta at various festivals and there have been moments when we felt particularly at home, this is one of those. But what we want to say with this is that the issues we are dealing with in these days, frontiers, walls, languages, words, communication that goes beyond, that puts bodies together, that puts them in communication, are the

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<sup>770</sup> “la nostra convinzione era ‘vogliamo rompere questo silenzio’. Per uomini, donne, chi vuole conoscere le ragioni che ci sono dietro a questa scelta. Quindi non era né un pubblico italiano, né un pubblico di sole donne. Era un pubblico curioso di andare oltre.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>771</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/lunadigas/>>.

<sup>772</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lunadigas/>>.

<sup>773</sup> “Questo è un lavoro tutto italiano.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>774</sup> “un tema di cui le donne hanno urgenza di parlare a tutte le latitudine (...) *Lunàdigas* non si ferma qui. Adesso il progetto, l’ambizione sarebbe quella di fare un lavoro con le donne del Mediterraneo.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>775</sup> “Marilisa ed io ci diciamo, questa è l’eredità che lasceremo ad altre giovarne donne.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

issues on which we are all working, it is in that place where these walls are torn down. That is **the place of the possibility of building possible networks for possible changes.**<sup>776</sup>

The **reactions from the audience** were positive. One woman, for example, said: “I have always been, I am and will be a *lunàdiga*. Thanks to this film, I have understood that it is not common for all women to feel motherhood as an obligation, a destiny, and so on. So, you did a really wonderful job, thank you.”<sup>777</sup>

On the website there are forty-one **testimonies**, of which some are included in the film, such as that by Lea Melandri. One of them thanks the filmmakers for their film, which she describes as “light in presentation but deep in content”<sup>778</sup>, and calls herself a *lunàdiga* despite having two children who are already grown-up, because she has always felt inadequate in her maternal role. Another woman praises *Lunàdigas*, “a non-film film”, for finding a word “that does not contain a denial or a deprivation, a word in which to recognise oneself, even when you do not belong entirely to it (...) *Lunàdiga* is a word that opens up worlds of study, comprehension, assonance, reminiscences and flashes of intuition.”<sup>779</sup>

Another woman thanks the filmmakers, saying that their film created the first situation in which she hasn't felt alone in her being a *lunàdiga*: “Thanks for the fantastic work of awareness that you carry out, there is great need to let people know that we are neither alone nor weird.”<sup>780</sup> On its Facebook page, the film has received 5 out of 5 stars, and several women have published positive comments, for example:

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<sup>776</sup> “Con *Lunàdigas* io ho avuto l'opportunità di trovare, non solo ponti, ma di trovare case (...) io ho la fortuna di accompagnare *Lunàdigas* con Nicoletta a vari festival e ci sono stati dei momenti in cui ci siamo sentite particolarmente a casa, questo è uno di quelli. Ma cosa vogliamo dire con questo, che le questioni di cui stiamo trattando in questi giorni, frontiere, muri, linguaggi, parole, comunicazione che va oltre, che mette insieme corpi, che gli mette in comunicazione, sono le questioni su cui ci stiamo misurando tutte e là, in quel luogo dove questi muri vengono abbattuti. Là è il luogo della possibilità di costruire reti possibili per dei cambiamenti possibili.” Susi Monzali. Screening at the “Divine” Queer Film Festival in Turin. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>777</sup> “Sono sempre stata, sono e sarò una *lunàdiga*. Ho capito grazie anche a questo film che non è una realtà comune a tutte le donne quella di sentire la maternità come un obbligo, un destino, eccetera. Quindi, avete fatto un lavoro davvero splendido, grazie.” Screening at the “Divine” Queer Film Festival in Turin. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>778</sup> “un modo leggero nella presentazione ma profondo nei contenuti.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.lunadigas.com/storie/piera-dattena/>>.

<sup>779</sup> “che non contenga una negazione o una privazione, in cui riconoscersi, anche quando non vi si appartiene del tutto (...) *Lunadiga* è una parola che apre mondi di studio, comprensione, assonanze, reminiscenze e lampi d'intuizione.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.lunadigas.com/storie/c-anni-37/>>.

<sup>780</sup> “Grazie del fantastico lavoro di sensibilizzazione che portate avanti, c'è grande necessità di far sapere che non siamo sole né strane.” Date of access: April 2019.

I am very lucky to have been given the opportunity to watch such an inspiring work of art. It is beautifully crafted and documented to treat a delicate topic in a simple and honest way. *Lunàdigas* is a genuine testimony of women's willingness to defy the norms of society and to assert their right to make their own choices. Thank you for being brave enough to make *Lunàdigas* and to give us the chance to discover it.

A tremendously significant piece of work for all the women that claim their right to making the choice freely! It brings the issue to the table gracefully through a smart, humorous, theatrical and intimate approach. The brave women featured are an inspiration. A BRILLIANT documentary!<sup>781</sup>

### 6.4.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Lunàdigas* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

**In its production process**, *Lunàdigas* materialises two key aspects of the feminist movement: starting from oneself and showing that the personal is political in our gendered experience of the world. Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga decided to make a film about women without children as a way to come to terms with a decision they themselves had made. They had experienced in first person the social pressure surrounding the so-called maternal instinct and turned the audiovisual medium into a tool for enacting the performative right to appear of women who challenge the desire to become mothers as something inherent to the female sex.

The filmmakers show a clear understanding of their response-ability towards the realities they co-create with the film. They appear onscreen, reflecting on their own paths, thus subverting the hierarchies traditionally connected with filmmaking. The testimonies of the dozens of women who share their thoughts with them are not judged as good or bad. Rather, as Nesler states when explaining why *Lunàdigas* is a feminist and a political

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<<https://www.lunadigas.com/storie/chiara/>>.

<sup>781</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/pg/lunadigas/reviews/>>.

film: “the positions that are expressed are positions of autonomy with respect to this natural diktat.”<sup>782</sup> Autonomy, diversity and freedom are the driving axis of the documentary. With the pretext of making a film, Piga and Nesler create a public and political safe space for debating a taboo topic, thus adding a layer to the practice of the consciousness-raising groups.<sup>783</sup>

Feminist practices are reflected in **the film’s form**. Since the first sequences, the filmmakers make their point of view explicit, so that we look *with* them. Still, even though the film is told from Piga and Nesler’s situated perspectives, they manage to build a polyscopic narrative by means of various intra-actions with more than seventy women. Filmmakers and filmed subjects use the camera and the screen to enact their performative right to appear and to set up alliances. They also mobilise a series of affective effects, either by celebrating joy, freedom and solidarity, or by sharing feelings of distress and anger.

Indeed, the performative community of *lunàdigas* that is set into motion at the production level has continued during the **distribution** and **reception** stages. This community has played an important role in dealing with the precarity with which *Lunàdigas* has been made, for example, by helping build a self-distribution network. To counterbalance the violence of the cuts inherent to the editing process, the complete testimonies are available on the film website. They have also shared and discussed the movie with the women who appear in it. The reactions from the public have been positive. A frequent comment is that of gratitude for breaking the silence and for proposing a name with which many women identify.

As detailed in the corresponding section, **the contents** are tackled in a way that translates three well-known feminist practices: starting from oneself, small groups, and the combination of irony and sense of humour in the re-vision of women’s lives. The personal decision of not having children is presented as always already entangled with the political context, particularly with the social construction of gender. The goal of the film is for childfree women to be able to claim their right to exist by adopting a name that doesn’t stress lack. The term proposed in the film is “*lunàdigas*”. With its chorus of

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<sup>782</sup> “Perché le posizioni che si esprimono sono posizioni di autonomia rispetto a questo diktat naturale.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>783</sup> In the early seventies, “Italian feminism was experimenting with a political practice closely linked to a female experience of knowledge, both individual and collective. It grew within a logic, the centre of which was the small group (...) The small group is a ‘centrifugal centre’ of dissemination of discourse, where knowledge and self-knowledge are articulated and realised in the form of political commitment and experience” (Bruno and Nadotti 1988: 7-8).

female voices, the film renders visible several situations in which gender organises and legitimises inequalities, specially concerning the imposition of gender roles and lack of support for mothers. The social obligation to fulfil a predetermined role, naturalised as maternal instinct, is mentioned by several women:

...he once told me that **a childless woman had no reason to live** (Min. 11:10).

...it was **taken for granted that you had to marry and have children**; not one, one was not acceptable (Min. 18:50).

When the doctor told me **I was going to be a mother**, I thought, ‘Good, **I have nothing more to decide**’” (Min. 40:10).

We **women are mothers by nature** and we’ve been created to generate children (Min. 42:29).

there’s still **something in our cultural, legal, economic system**, which **discredits non-motherhood** (Min. 1:07:48).<sup>784</sup>

Motherhood as a threat against women’s freedom is a recurring aspect, highlighted even by the filmmakers:

Until I was 14, I wanted to be a boy. I felt limited just because I was female. “**If you were male, you would be free**”, my mother used to say. **I was furious because it was so unfair** (Min. 00:33).

**She had a very independent nature. Anyhow she got married, had three children.** And took care of us and our home. (...) Unlike my father, my mother never asked us to make her a grandmother. **She always encouraged us to be free** (Min. 01:40).

...children symbolise family, **a lack of freedom, they are a symbol of women’s slavery** (Min. 12:52).

...having children means to have no freedom (Min. 27:41).

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<sup>784</sup> The emphases in the quotes from the film are mine.



...a continuing obligation that would **deprive me of the chance to choose to be free**, because there was another human being who depended on me (Min. 46:05).

...having **a child curtails your freedom** in some sense (Min. 47:46).

In this sense, the film doesn't really engage with alternatives for turning motherhood into something feasible and compatible with women's freedom, for instance, by extended networks of care. There is, however, general recognition of motherhood, starting from the tribute that Nesler and Piga pay to their own mothers. Many filmed women consider that the consciousness-raising process of the small groups is a much-needed political and therapeutic action. As for visualising gender equality, the main proposal put forward by the film is the name itself (i.e. *lunàdigas*), a name without negative connotations, which even celebrates the queer gender performativity of women who never give birth.

*Lunàdigas* celebrates rebellious childfree women such as Lilith, Rosa Luxemburg, Jeanne d'Arc and Coco Chanel, whose monologues can be diffractively read with various testimonies. For instance, the relationship of women with their own bodies, regarded as cause of distress but also of pleasure and discovery:

**I couldn't even pronounce the word "body"**. Luckily, the '68 was coming (...) In those years, **I learned to listen to my body**, but I still feel some embarrassment to say "body" (Min. 30:54/ 31:57).

To me, **the Tree of Knowledge is the body in all its parts, especially the most intimate ones**. There we find the source of passion, which makes the blood run through one's veins and smells like ambrosia. (Min. 16:00).

**My body was revealing and defining itself along with the other women's** (Min. 31:32).

I revolutionised their way to dress (...) without busts, nor corsets. **The female body is finally comfortable** inside a black dress as aerodynamic as a sports car: la petite robe noire. (Min. 37:55)

Jeanne d'Arc's monologue brings out the issue of burning lesbian women as witches at the stake. In the film, lesbians have a minor participation, but they do put forward an important argument: in contemporary Italy, the LGBT community is being pushed to have children and become parents in order to have their right to exist acknowledged, "to legitimise their human existence" (Min. 28:55). Nevertheless, there's also a subversive reading of LGBT militancy as another kind of motherhood (segment 14.1).

At the first part of the documentary, the directors assert: "To have a name means to exist" (Min. 15:15). They claim a name of their own, get together and exchange experiences to overcome the feelings of inadequacy towards the maternal instinct that society imposes on them. In its linguistic context, "performativity is a way of naming a power language has to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects" (2015: 28).

With their film, their ongoing archive and the virtual community they are building, "the legacy we will leave to other women"<sup>785</sup>, Nesler and Piga visualise, not only the social pressure suffered by women who don't want to have children, but also diverse ways in which motherhood can be experienced. Paraphrasing Trinh T. Minh-ha, Piga and Nesler provoke, facilitate and "solicit a new seeing" (2005:13) towards childfree women: a way that sees their queer gender performativity as legible, political and livable.

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<sup>785</sup> "Marilisa ed io ci diciamo, questa è l'eredità che lasceremo ad altre giovarne donne." Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

## 6.5 *Ma l'amore c'entra?/Is it About Love?* (Elisabetta Lodoli, 2017)

I don't want to make a movie against them. I keep saying this. I was curious to hear what they had to say, trying to suspend judgment, but not looking for excuses to absolve them (...) we need to understand them (...) moments of contact, moments of listening, can also serve us women to grow, to understand how we are at the level of emotional relationships. (Elisabetta Lodoli, director of *Ma l'amore c'entra?*).<sup>786</sup>

*Ma l'amore c'entra?* is a 52 minute documentary film directed by Elisabetta Lodoli, with the support of the Bologna-based Italian Women's Library and the Modena-based LDV Centre (Liberiamoci dalla Violenza/Let's Free Ourselves From Violence). The psychologists working at the LDV Centre provide guidance for men who have committed violent acts against their romantic partners and who want to change their behaviour. Lodoli got to know this centre by means of Annamaria Tagliavini, who was the director of the Italian Women's Library for many years. They wanted to make a documentary film about gender-based violence, but decided to change the focus from women as victims, towards men as perpetrators who have to be accountable for their actions.

As with the previous case studies, the analysis is divided into two parts: form and content, and production and reception. I first present a segmented description of the whole film. Then I close read it through my theoretical apparatus. As for production and reception, I discuss insights raised by Lodoli in an interview carried out as part of this research project in February 2018. I incorporate opinions expressed by people who attended a screening of the film at the MAST Foundation in Bologna, also in February 2018. Finally, I read this analysis through a sample of testimonies and online reviews.

### 6.5.1 Form and Content: Re-enacting the Emotions of Male Violence

*Ma l'amore c'entra?* can be divided into twenty segments, some of which are subdivided into sections. The segments can be classified into six narrative waves entangled

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<sup>786</sup> “Io non voglio fare un film contro di loro. Questo lo continuo a dire. Ero curiosa di ascoltare che cosa avessero da dire, cercando di sospendere il giudizio, ma non cercando delle scuse per assolvergli (...) ci serve capirle (...) dei momenti di contatto, dei momenti di ascolto, possono servire anche a noi donne per crescere, per capire come siamo al piano delle relazione affettive.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018. Original interview in Italian, all translations are mine.

throughout the film: wave 1, television news; wave 2, theatre stage; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage. Each segment is described below.<sup>787</sup>

1. Credits, title and introduction (wave 1, television news; wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes).

1.1 The logos of the production companies appear on a black screen: Maxman Coop, Associazione Orlando, the Emilia-Romagna region, Arancia Film, Marechiaro Films, Home Movies, Azienda di Modena, Centro LDV, Unipol, Casa di Risparmio of Modena, and the municipality of Modena.

1.2 Crime reports. The shadow of a man is reflected on the ground as we listen to the voice-over of different television journalists reporting gender-based crimes committed by a male romantic partner, e.g. “At nineteen he kills his six month pregnant ex-partner” (Min. 00:54), “Kicked and punched in front of her underage kids” (Min. 1:07). In the background there’s tense music interrupted by interference sounds. This music continues as the frame is occupied by a dark theatre stage on which there are three chairs and a television with no signal. Plates and light bulbs hang from the ceiling, evoking an uncanny atmosphere.

The voices stop, as the screen appears to have lost signal. The grey waves slowly fade into a snowy ground. We now see various wide shots of snowy landscapes of the Emilia-Romagna region. As the screen is occupied by the wide shot of a highway, the title of the film appears on the upper right corner. The word “amore” is in red, while the rest of the words are in white. Then we see the name of the filmmaker, Elisabetta Lodoli. At the end of the sequence, the snowy ground occupies the frame again.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, distress and anger.

2. Paolo’s testimony. First part. The violent act (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage).

A 52-year-old man stands behind etched glass, so that his face is totally blurred. His name, Paolo, appears briefly on the lower right corner. He narrates his violent act: his wife and daughter began arguing while packing for holidays. A wide shot of a highway

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<sup>787</sup> In the film version that was used for the analysis, the language spoken is Italian, with English subtitles. I have resorted to these subtitles for the transcriptions. The documentary film has copyright protection. The DVD can be ordered directly with the filmmaker, Elisabetta Lodoli, at the film Facebook profile: <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/>>.

across the countryside and a motorcycle passing by is combined with his portrait behind the glass. He recalls: “At that moment I felt physically sick, it made me suffer to see them fight for something that seemed so insignificant to me, at a moment that was supposed to be happy, leaving for a vacation together” (Min. 2:54).

The camera shows details of the drawing of a woman and the photographs of a puppy and a couple kissing each other, as the disturbing electronic music plays in the background. Paolo goes on with his narration: “And this feeling mounted inside me, and turned into uncontrolled rage. It was a feeling I had never felt in 52 years” (Min. 3:21). A wide shot of the motorcyclist on the highway is followed by rhythmic sequences of chairs and plates flying across the uncanny dark stage presented in the first sequence. Paolo describes how he first yelled at them, pushed, slapped and kicked his wife and then hit his daughter. The image of the glass dissolves into the drawing of the woman. Then we see a rhythmic sequence of frames that show details of a disc player, a disc collection, books and furniture.

We see several shots of the highway and the motorcyclist as Paolo says that they left him, he started crying, he decided to leave with his motorcycle, and stayed away from home for a few days. The frame with a medium shot of the motorcyclist is repeated three times. Tense music begins playing as we see a fragment of found footage: a full shot of an empty male suit, arranged as if an invisible man was sitting at a table. Then there’s a sequence with various shots of the entrance, the corridors and the room of a modest hotel. He explains that he decided to tell his parents what he had done and to turn himself in to the police. However, at the police station they told him he couldn’t turn himself in for what he had done, because they only accepted testimonies of the victims. They put him in contact with the LDV Centre.

The music changes, now with a lighter tone, as we see various shots of the centre in Modena, including details of cardboards in which words such as “emotion” and “anger” are written. The frame is then occupied by a flickering light bulb and other objects from the uncanny stage that we have seen previously. Two men are sitting on the chairs at the stage, their faces are totally covered in darkness. Paolo arrives, places a chair next to them and sits down. He says: “Why did my anger express itself against the people I love the most? This is what I asked myself” (Min. 9:33).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, disgust, distress, fear, shame, confusion, exhaustion and love.

3. Luca's testimony. First part. The violent act (wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

The image of a busy road in the city works as transition. The frame is occupied by the image of sound waves on a voice recorder, as we listen to Luca's testimony. These images are combined with wide shots of urban landscapes and with the male shadow on the ground that appears in the first sequence. He says that, on arriving at the LDV Centre, he felt fearful:

There were many emotions at play, the discovery of what I wanted to understand about myself. The first meeting was a negative one for me, I had the feeling of something adverse, as if someone wanted to modify my personality, my behaviour, and was accusing me of what I had done. I felt I was being judged as a monster. (Min. 10:05).

The tense electronic music plays in the background as we see wide shots of buildings at night. Several windows in all of them are illuminated. We can barely see a few people through some of these windows, as Luca narrates the episode in which he committed violence against his wife due to a disagreement on how to behave with their son:

She literally dragged him -like an animal to the slaughterhouse- to his room and sat him on a chair, giving him a timeout. That was when my anger erupted. It was in defence of my child. I never slapped anyone or was ever violent. But seeing my partner's violence... because I interpreted this as violence. (Min. 11:14)

He narrates how he hit her and that the children were scared "but mostly because they saw their mother crying, because she was frantic" (Min. 12:15). The frame is again occupied by the image of sound waves on a voice recorder, as Luca says that his mother also got into the fight and that his wife called the police.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, shame, anger and distress.

4. Giorgio's testimony. First part. His violent temper and crossing limits (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

The three men are sitting on the dark stage that has appeared in previous sequences. Giorgio stands up and, speaking to a chair, recalls why he would fight with his wife:

It bothered me if my wife raised her voice. I already raise my voice, are both of us going to raise our voices? I'm the irritable one, you have everything to lose. And silence bothered me. My wife for example, because it's typical of all women, when they are immobilized by a man's violence they shut down in defence because of their submission and inferiority (...) my wife shut down to avoid conflict, and this enraged me even more. It was a challenge, an insult, it was disrespectful to me. (Min. 12:49).

The tense electronic music starts playing as we see wide shots of countryside landscapes, highways and houses, and then an electric fence as it closes automatically. Giorgio's voice-over is still heard, as he looks through the window:

I was only at ease when I crossed the threshold of my house. When I entered my gate, there I felt 90% safe (...) I tried to avoid the hot spots for trouble, rush hour, public spaces (...) My tolerance threshold was very low because in those places you see injustice of the worst kind. I can't be quiet about it. I have a strong sense of justice (Min. 14:25).

There's a rhythmic sequence of shots of cars in the street and traffic lights accompanied by music. Next we see Giorgio's dark profile again, which is combined with rhythmic shots of flowers, leaves and grass moved by the wind, as he continues with his testimony:

My violence is old but mostly with men (...) I've found out that I can also be violent with women. To be clear: with the ones I live with, my wife, the ones I love. Before I felt that my violence had no reason to exist with women, with men it was sort of justified, even if wrong in principle. With men I have no filters (...) I become an animal (Min. 15:25).

Rhythmic sequence accompanied with tense music that starts with the fence that suddenly opens up and then a series of shots showing knives and plates hanging on the uncanny dark theatre stage. The flickering light bulb is also shown with various jump cuts. Giorgio, still in dark profile against the window, continues with his testimony: "A woman could make me furious, but I was able to control myself (...) My wife was the one who told me, 'you're crossing the limit'" (Min. 16:34).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, contempt, love and fear.

5. Group. The anger burst (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 4, individual testimonies; and wave 6, found footage).

Found footage in sepia tone shows trees and grass moved by the wind. The voice-over of Paolo starts describing how he feels before getting violent: “You feel frustrated unaccepted, uninvolved, unacknowledged” (Min. 17:28). In full shot, we see the three men sitting on the dark theatre stage; their faces are totally covered in shadow. Paolo keeps on describing his physical uneasiness just before anger bursts out. Giorgio also describes his feelings: “When the anger rushes in, I don’t know what I’m doing anymore. The chairs fly like kisses (...) And then I ask myself: ‘what have I done?’”(Min. 17:59).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: frustration, shame, anger and confusion.

6. Paolo’s testimony. Second part. His reflection about violence (wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; and wave 6, found footage).

Paolo explains that there can be many situations that might spark anger, but that “the common denominator is not being able to handle your anger and being violent against your partner, your wife, your girlfriend” (Min. 18:35). He goes on to talk about the group experience, which he considered “the most touching moment, because you confront yourself with other situations, other realities” (Min. 18:54).

Music starts playing as we see found footage in sepia tone of a woman waking up a child, and then of a man reading a book to the same child. Paolo says that all the stories he heard in the group had violence at their core. In the found footage, a group of six men jump and dance in the countryside. Paolo continues: “If I’m honest, it was the journey that helped me understand what violence really is, under every point of view” (Min. 19:45).

The found footage in sepia tone shows two lizards fighting with each other. Paolo is shown in medium close-up, behind etched glass. He says that his wife didn’t go to the police. In a panning movement, the camera shows an urban landscape, as Paolo reflects on what’s wrong with his own behaviour, which places lots of attention on small details. Several shots of objects and corners of a bathroom are combined with his figure behind the glass.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, love, joy and discomfort.

7. Metaphors of violence (wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes).

We see various wide shots of highway tunnels, on which graffiti with love messages can be read. The camera goes inside one of the tunnels. Around the dark



uncanny theatre stage, there are several vocabulary cardboards hanging. On these cardboards there are images and words related to violence, such as fear, guilt, bitch and slap. A male voice-over says these words in a violent tone, as the shots change rhythmically. The sequence finishes with long shots of broken plates on the floor of the stage.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger, fear and distress.

8. Luca's testimony. Second part. Previous warning signs (wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

The dark uncanny theatre stage is now shown from a different angle. The three men are sitting on the chairs, with their faces entirely covered in shadows. Behind them, we see the broken plates on the floor and some of the vocabulary cardboards with words and images. In medium shot, Luca starts narrating that, according to his partner, there had been violent moments previously, but that he doesn't remember anything about them:

I only remember raising my voice, I squeezed her hand once to support her, to shake her in her instinct to speak out, to always go against what I was saying. But not such intense violence, so dramatic, no, never (...) a few times I hit the table with my fist or I threw an object, not at someone just out into space (Min. 22:13).

In full shot, he hangs the vocabulary cardboard of the letter "M" with the word "Monster" written on it.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: anger and discomfort.

9. Paolo's testimony. Third part. Family history (wave 6, found footage; wave 4, individual testimonies; and wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes).

Found footage of the highway. With voice-over, Paolo says that his father was not a violent man. He appears behind etched glass saying that he was a happy kid and adolescent. Music plays in the background as we see found footage of children on a slide and various shots of romantic graffiti in the streets, including one that refers to the Spanish film based on an Italian novel, *Three Steps Above Heaven* (Min. 24:11). Paolo praises his parents for having been together for twenty-five years without "moments of violence, of any kind" (Min. 24:07).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, love and nostalgia.

10. Giorgio's testimony. Second part. Family history (wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage).

The sequence starts with wide shots of the countryside and of the façade of a rural house. Giorgio is again shown in profile, against the window. His image is combined with various shots of an old kitchen. He narrates:

I realised after many years that what was normal and common for me, others pointed out, the psychologists I mean, wasn't so normal at all (...). On my mother's side I come from a patriarchal family, where the old man was the first to eat, actually the old man and the children, then the men, and lastly the women. (Min. 24:45).

A few shots of the light bulbs are followed by found footage in black and white that shows men eating at a table. We see Giorgio again and then the camera goes through a gloomy house with very partial lighting, making visible only a few details of the floor and a small bicycle. Meanwhile, he says that his father had "different values" (Min. 25:40) and that he had a wife, but also had a relation with his mother: "for me this was normal, because my father, I'm speaking to two women so I understand that this will come as a surprise to you, but my father was able to get both wives to accept the situation" (Min. 26:24).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: surprise, joy, shame and anger.

11. Luca's testimony. Third part. Family story (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage).

Various shots of vocabulary cardboards, which lie next to the broken plates, as a male voice-over says: "love, family, end" (Min. 26:54). The camera pans across a child's vocabulary cardboard with drawings that refer to neutral objects, such as table, sun, church, moon. Then it moves across notes made by the hand of a child, in which we can read the word "mother". With voice-over, Luca admits that he didn't have a happy family life: "because my father was violent with my mother" (Min. 27:19). We see a sailor coat hanging in a white room and then the sound waves of the voice recorder that appears in the first segment of his testimony.

More details of the sailor coat and pictures hanging next to it, all connected with sailing, are shown as Luca narrates that his father was almost never at home, because he

worked in the Military Marines: “I was always very close to my mother, she was also a father figure to me, so when I saw those acts, that also belittled her as a person, there was a strong sense of rebellion, but obviously I was little and there was nothing I could do” (Min. 27:49).

Found footage image of a man, a woman, a boy and a girl walking away; the frame in which the girl turns towards the camera is repeated seven times. The girl is then shown crying on the floor, as Luca says that being witness to so much violence “was devastating for a child” (Min. 28:14). The images of the sound waves in the voice recorder reappear, as his voice breaks down and he states that he doesn’t want to give more details.

Found footage images of a group of women and a child walking and laughing in a garden. The voice-over of Luca is heard as he recalls that, as a child, he got a diary as a present: “The first thing I did, I poured out my emotions on seeing my father hit my mother” (Min. 28:49). Close shots of a sailor cap next to the sailor coat. Found footage of a young woman smoking on a balcony. The music is tense.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, fear, distress, anger and surprise.

12. Giorgio’s testimony. Third part. The patriarchal context (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 4, individual testimonies; and wave 6, found footage).

A full shot of the three men sitting on the dark uncanny theatre stage is combined with found footage images of a boy and a girl who kiss each other. The boy hugs her in a patronising way, as Giorgio says in voice-over:

Why are men more violent than women? It’s in their genetics I think, in their nature. We’re made that way. We are educated that way from the time we’re children. Our mothers involuntarily teach us old and bad habits. So by nature and by education a little boy assumes this aspect of command, of authority, towards those who are weaker and towards women, who he sees as something to protect but also to guide, to manage. But I don’t think I’m an exception, I think I represent 90% of all men. These problems emerge today here because probably you women have gained a position that allows you to wage a war against us, and it’s a fair war, it’s a war that allows us to listen to you and if we’re able to reach this equilibrium it’s because something has shifted (Min. 29:25).

Found footage images of a girl and a boy. He plays with a gun. In medium shot, he points with the gun towards the camera. She is shown in medium shot as well, kissing a doll. Meanwhile, the voice-over of a girl says: “Little girls have to go to church and little boys go to war. Little girls have to make doughnuts for the little boys going to war. The little girls have to say ‘yes Sir little boy’ to the little boys going to war” (Min. 30:55). The frame is again occupied by the image of the three men sitting on the dark uncanny theatre stage. Giorgio says:

I’m not saying the responsibility lies with women. I’m simply stating what women have become with this emancipation, with this independence. Sometimes there’s this arrogance that I can’t find a place for, a justification. Just as I don’t accept, and we all cannot accept, patriarchy I also cannot accept a woman, and we see many of them, who acts the same way with a man who is weak and fragile. (Min. 31:12).

Found footage shots of a parade of giant inflatable figures, among which we see the figure of Superman and the figure of Marilyn Monroe with giant breasts and heavy makeup. Meanwhile, we listen to the voice-over of a group of women clapping and singing: “But why, don’t we ever decide, from now on we’ll be the ones to decide” (Min. 31:42). Giorgio is shown in medium close-up, sitting on the dark uncanny theatre stage. He says: “Towards the end of the 70s, the beginning of the 80s, that was when this change started to happen. Until then I never saw women who had this brashness or arrogance with men” (Min. 32:07).

Found footage of a boy and a girl dancing and making faces, as we listen to the voice-over of the group of women clapping and singing: “Beware, the witches are back” (Min. 32:26). The voice-over of Giorgio is heard on top of the singing voices. He is then shown again in the theatre stage, in medium close-up:

The phenomenon of violence exists because there starts to be a form of competition with the man. The man has to be smart and understand that today, in contemporary times, he can’t be in command, he has to share, but it’s even worse if the woman is the one in command. (Min. 32:31).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: love, discomfort, fear, surprise, anger, confusion, joy, disgust and frustration.

13. Violence on the news (wave 1, television news; wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 6, found footage).

The camera focuses on a corner of the uncanny theatre stage where a television is on, but without signal. The camera opens up, so that we see the three men looking at the television. We listen to the voice-over of different television journalists reporting gender-based crimes committed by a sentimental partner, e.g. “Another case of feminicide in 2017... Stabbed four times in her sleep” (Min. 33:07). The music is very tense, as we see found footage images of a woman sitting with two children, looking into the camera.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, distress and anger.

14. Luca’s testimony. Fourth part. His reflection about violence in connection with his family story (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage).

Luca is in medium close-up, sitting at the dark uncanny theatre stage, with the cardboards hanging at the back. Reflecting upon the violence he committed, he says:

We hurt ourselves. We especially hurt the person who suffers the trauma and we also hurt our children. I realised it because my children had a way of addressing their mother that was a bit aggressive (...) Small examples that made me understand. Even if they didn’t see my behaviour, they definitely sensed it from the tone of my voice, the words I said to their mother. For them it was an example to follow: “Dad did it, I’ll do it too.” (Min. 33:33).

Found footage of a boy riding a bike in the countryside. Wide shot of the moon and of a train moving forward. Then we see the sound waves in the voice recorder, as we listen to the voice-over of Luca recalling that he left home when he was young, so as to escape, first from his father and then also from his mother. The images of the sound waves are combined with travelling shots in a city at night, followed by various rhythmic shots of a person walking in the city at night.

Found footage of a baby being dressed and held by a woman, a man playing with a baby in a stroller, and a woman carrying a baby, as the voice-over of Luca reads a mail that his father sent him for his last birthday: “I’m wondering if I should apologise for being too strict. If I was wrong, forgive me, I did it out of love” (Min. 36:30). The camera pans over the sailor’s stuff and then shows details of the e-mail. We see the sound waves on the voice recorder as Luca reads his answer: “Now that I’m a father too I’ve learned a

lot from my children. I learned to be strict and lenient (...) Rest easy, I've also made my mistakes with you" (Min. 37:14). Found footage of a child playing with a small lizard with a tense sound in the background.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, anger, shame and love.

15. Paolo's testimony. Fourth part. His reflection about violence (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 4, individual testimonies; and wave 6, found footage).

The camera travels across part of the theatre stage that is covered with broken plates. There are also family photographs scattered around. Paolo walks around and picks up the photo of a family holiday and then one of a catholic marriage ceremony. He is then shown in medium close-up sitting at the dark theatre stage, with the vocabulary cardboards hanging at the back. Reflecting upon the violence he committed, he says:

One of the reasons why my violence surfaced was certainly a sense of guilt, feeling that I was not being paid with gratitude, not feeling useful or valued, it really weighed on me in those years (...) there were some relapses but they were always of verbal violence, psychological, never physical. And this made my old fears return (Min. 38:24).

Found footage out of focus of a family party is followed by a wide shot of the three men sitting on the stage of the theatre. Paolo continues with his narration, enumerating the fears he has: "to perform beastly acts again, lose my family, be left alone, not be comforted by anyone (...) there was always the thought of what had happened" (Min. 39:37).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: distress, fear, anger and shame.

16. Luca's testimony. Fifth part. Reflection about his family (wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 5, domestic interiors; and wave 6, found footage).

Found footage out of focus that shows a sunset. Wide shots of people relaxing at the beach, various of which are parents with children, as the voice-over of Luca says that he didn't want his children to suffer what he suffered as a child: "I like a beautiful family. It's beautiful to be at the table with your children (...) It's a beautiful warmth. I never had that. This desire I have for the cookie cutter family, the perfect family, was achieved in some ways. But clearly you trip, you fall" (Min. 40:58). The images of the sound waves on the voice recorder are combined with long shots of a woman, a man and a baby in the countryside, followed by close shots of plants.

Close shot of a letter written by a boy to his parents, hoping that they will reconcile soon. Close shots of earrings and long shots of a dressing table are followed by images of sound waves on the voice recorder, as Luca recalls that he liked his wife's "calmness and tranquillity (....) She's a different sort of woman, she pursues sincere emotional attachments. She was a girl who was, and still is, of good principles, a moral person, very smart too. So her female appeal charmed me right away" (Min. 41:57).

Found footage of a group of young people laughing at a woman who lies on the ground and holds a man from his ankle as he walks, raises his arms and makes fun of her. Shots of an unmade bed as Luca says: "I was the happiest dad in the world because I said: 'I found a woman who is able to be a mother, a partner'" (Min. 43:06). Long shots of a child's room, as Luca recalls that the problems began when their first child was born: "I shifted the attention of my affection, of my love, towards my son" (Min. 43:25). Images of sound waves in the voice recorder, as he recognises that he went to the LDV Centre thanks to his wife.

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: joy, distress, love, fear and discomfort.

17. Paolo's testimony. Fifth part. Final thoughts (wave 1, television news; wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

We see the image of the shadow of a man walking slowly again. The camera focuses on a corner of the theatre stage where a television is on, but without signal. The news' audio is hardly heard. The camera opens up, so that we see the three men looking at the television. Paolo is shown in medium close-up as he says:

I learned to look at forms of violence in 360 degrees, but everyone who speaks of violence only sees one kind of it, they see the violence on TV (...) they're right to make certain things sensational but behind the fact that they're making them sensational, there's also an attempt to make entertainment (Min. 44:20).

He says that, for him, watching this kind of news is "like reliving that moment" (Min. 45:06). The voice of the journalist rises and Paolo turns off the television. The three men are shown sitting on the theatre stage and then again the medium close-up of Paolo as he explains:

I learned that the important thing is to recognise the moments when certain situations could lash back for anyone and risk turning into violent acts. And I think

this happens to everyone, it happens to you women too. The ability to recognise moments that are at risk of becoming violent situations makes me more attentive, reflective, makes me listen rather than abuse my power during a confrontation, and this is an exercise, it's something I learned here (Min. 45:45).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: discomfort and shame.

18. Giorgio's testimony. Fourth part. Final thoughts (wave 2, theatre stage; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

Giorgio is shown in medium close-up, on the dark theatre stage, as he says: "it's as if they had let me turn on a light bulb in a room in which I didn't even think there was electric power (...) I see something that wasn't before the way it is now" (Min. 46:31).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: hope.

19. Luca's testimony. Sixth part. Final thoughts (wave 2, theatre stage; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; and wave 4, individual testimonies).

The camera opens up so as to show the three of them sitting on the dark theatre stage. Luca says that his wife is not afraid of him anymore and even calls him "Father Pio" (Min. 47:18). Close shot of a glass bottle with very little milk in it. The three men stand up, two of them walk away with their chairs. Luca picks up the bottle from the ground, puts it on his chair and then walks away. Full shot of the bottle of milk on the chair. As we see wide shots of the highway from inside a car, Luca says:

Father Pio is ironic, seeing someone who used to be the devil of the situation now extends his hand, opens his arms. It's almost as if pushing me to say how is it possible, you used to be such a violent person, and now you're a little saint? Alright, I get it, I'm all for this mitigation of anger (...) she's tired because her work is wearing her out (...) I don't go and stir up the conflict, I try to mediate (...) she sees there has been an evolution, a total change (...) she always finds something to latch onto when we argue. I'm not saying she goes back to what happened in the past but she smartly alludes to it. I pretend not to listen to those inputs (...) I turn round and go to get the milk (Min. 47:44).

Affects/emotions evoked in this segment: fear, anger, joy, hope and surprise.

20. Closing and credits.

Instrumental music plays in the background. On the black screen we read that the three names are pseudonyms and that the three men went to the LDV Centre in Modena

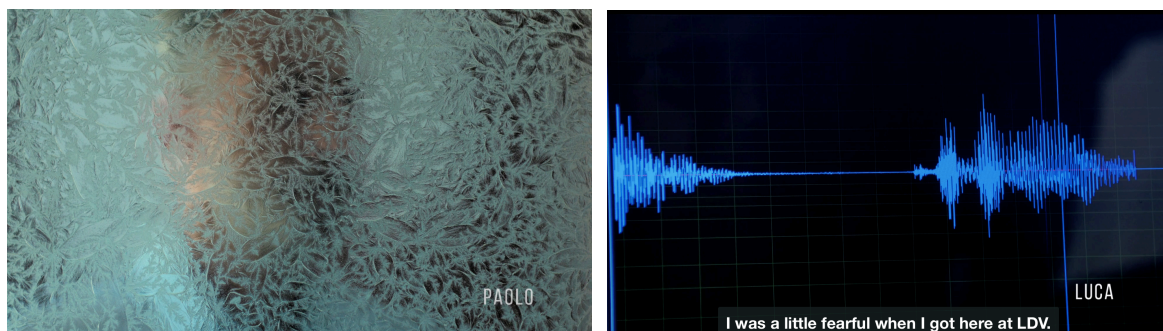


to look for help so as to change their violent behaviour. It is also stated that the interviews were carried out at the centre by Lodoli, Roberta Barboni and Federica Iacobelli. The filmmaker expresses gratitude with the three men and with the LDV centre psychologists.

Next, the credits roll. The scriptwriting is by Lodoli and Iacobelli. The executive production is by Barboni. The original idea is credited to Anammaria Tagliavini. The actors who play the roles of the men are: Giorgio – Lorenzo Ansaloni; Luca – Andrea Lupo; and Paolo – Andrea Santonastado.

### 6.5.1.1 Close Reading and Analysis

*Ma l'amore c'entra?* touches a key aspect of the **feminist audiovisual agenda**: gender-based violence. As in one of my Spanish case studies, *Serás hombre*<sup>788</sup>, the director shifts the attention from women as victims to men as perpetrators, so that the focus is placed on the role that the construction of masculinity plays in the perpetuation of this kind of violence. In this sense, the **feminist countervisuality** practice enacted by Elisabetta Lodoli is precisely this change of gaze that tries to place responsibility and accountability on men. She makes “visible the invisible” testimonies (Kuhn 1994: 67) by resorting to performative strategies which turn the faces and voices of the interviewees in performances by actors behind etched glass or in the sound waves of a voice recorder (figure 48). With these testimonies, Lodoli intends to make sense of the logics behind androcentric violence while opening up other possibilities of becoming men.



**Figure 48.** Making invisible testimonies visible

<sup>788</sup> Vid. *Supra*. Chapter 4.5 *Serás Hombre/You'll Be a Man* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2018)

Still, just as in the aforementioned case of *Serás Hombre*, using the master's tools to dismantle the master's house<sup>789</sup> can become problematic and controversial. Lodoli exclusively presents male characters telling their own versions of the violent incidents. Even though they recognise their mistakes, they try to justify themselves and even blame their female partners for provoking them. Moreover, while Spanish director Isabel de Ocampo included a choir of male experts who spoke from a feminist perspective, Lodoli only puts forward the testimonies of the three violent men, thus giving them the sole narrative authority. Their voices constitute the thread that joins the six **narrative waves** of the film: wave 1, television news; wave 2, theatre stage; wave 3, Emilia-Romagna landscapes; wave 4, individual testimonies; wave 5, domestic interiors; wave 6, found footage.

The individual testimonies (wave 4) of the three characters (Paolo, Luca and Giorgio) follow a similar structure: the violent act, the reflection about violence upon arriving at the LDV Centre, the familiar background, and the final thoughts looking to the future. Their faces are never shown and, as we discover at the end of the film, they are actors performing as real men who were interviewed by Lodoli, Barboni and Iacobelli.

In this sense, the main **mode of representation** of the film is the **performative mode**: the filmmaker co-produces the reality she films. Not only are the interviews re-enacted, but also are the spaces in which the narrated actions take place, from houses (wave 5) to highways (wave 3). The performative documentary emphasises the embodied and affective dimensions of our knowledge, experience and memory of the world. Still, it always joins “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political” (Nichols 2010: 204). The three men talk about their personal experience and delve into their own feelings, but their testimonies are always framed within a material/physical context (figure 49).



<sup>789</sup> Paraphrasing Audre Lorde's well-known phrase “The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house” (1984; 2007).



**Figure 49.** Domestic interiors and Emilia-Romagna landscapes

The socio-historical context is also reconstructed by means of the found footage (wave 6). Segment twelve, in which Giorgio describes the clash between a patriarchal ideology and the feminist movement, exemplifies this dialogue between the personal-individual and the political-collective. Resorting to gender stereotypes, he argues that men are more violent than women due to genetics and blames women's emancipation for men's violence. Meanwhile, we see found footage images of a girl and a boy: he plays with a gun and she kisses a doll (figure 50). The voice-over of a girl vindicates female submission by saying: "The little girls have to say 'yes, Sir little boy' to the little boys going to war" (Min. 30:55).

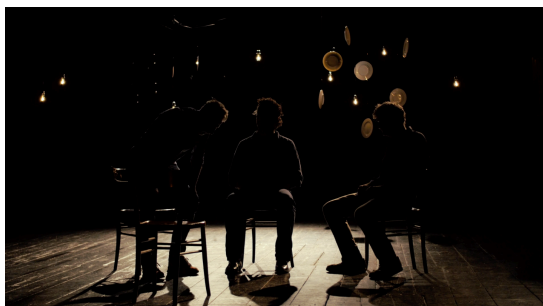


**Figure 50.** Archive footage and gender stereotypes

Giorgio complains about the “brashness and arrogance” (Min. 32:07) that women show since the seventies, as we see found footage shots of a parade of giant inflatable figures, among which, the figure of Superman and the figure of Marilyn Monroe with giant breasts and heavy makeup. Cutting together apart<sup>790</sup> waves 4 and 6 (i.e. individual testimonies and found footage) in these sequences renders **gender performativity** visible: the ways in which gender is a kind of enactment of **gender norms** that “inform the lived modes of embodiment we acquire over time” (Butler 2015: 29).

Due to the combination of performative sequences with found footage material that reveals the film’s constructed character, the film also has a **reflexive mode of representation**. Another example of reflexivity is when the interviewees show awareness of their interlocutors, as when Giorgio says: “*I’m speaking to two women so I understand that this will come as a surprise to you*, but my father was able to get both wives to accept the situation” (Min. 26:24). This mode is also relevant for yet another narrative wave: the sequences that take place in the dark theatre stage in which the three characters sit together (wave 2).

Performativity and reflexivity are combined with a **poetic mode of representation** in order to create an uncanny atmosphere with tense music, shadows, broken plates, hanging knives and flickering light bulbs (figure 51). The editing of these audiovisual metaphors of violence has a rhythmic pace, which plays with repetition and jump cuts. There are two sequences, number one and thirteen, that tackle media representation of domestic violence with the same poetic, reflexive and performative strategies: a television is on but without signal, so that we only listen to the voice-over of journalists reporting gender-based crimes with gruesome details (wave 1). During the second sequence in which these pieces of news are referred to, Paolo expresses the distress they provoke in him and criticises the use of sensationalism for publicity’s sake. He turns the television off, as he says that violence is much more complex.



<sup>790</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 1. Section 1.1.4 Materiality, Emotionality and Performativity



**Figure 51.** An uncanny atmosphere and audiovisual metaphors of violence

*Ma l'amore c'entra?* is also an intimate journey through the affects and emotions connected with the (de)construction of masculinity and gender-based domestic violence. In this sense, one way in which the film operates as an **eccentric technology of gender** is as a re-vision of what it means to be a man and of how to deal with male violence. In terms of “**emotionality**”, the structure of the film follows a specific arch of emotions. Anger/rage are the **affects** that traverse the whole film: as the origin of the violent act, as an emotion experienced when they were witness of violence, and as a feeling directed towards themselves for having being unable to control it. The description of the anger outburst is frequently accompanied by a vivid and physical description of discomfort. The contradiction of associating such a feeling with love is also latent throughout the film.

Love and care are evoked with found footage images of domestic scenes involving children and those we assume to be their parents. The contrast between the pretended security of home and the violence that takes place in it according to the testimonies is highlighted with the uncanny atmosphere of the theatre stage that plays with domestic imagery, like broken plates and hanging knives. **Idealised happiness**, “the promise of happiness” (Ahmed 2010), is also problematised in the film: Paolo’s violence erupts when he sees his image of the happy family holiday frustrated, while Luca admits that he longs for “a beautiful family (...) It’s a beautiful warmth. I never had that. This desire I have for the cookie cutter family, the perfect family” (Min. 40:58).

In a similar way, Giorgio presents himself as a righteous man and tries to justify his violence as a necessary and ethical act: “I can’t be quiet about it. I have a strong sense of justice” (Min. 14:25). He blames women’s liberation movement for male violence in general: “These problems emerge today here because probably you women have gained a position that allows you to wage a war against us” (Min. 29:25). Giorgio’s criticism of “arrogant” women, rather than his recognition of men’s responsibility for their own

violence, echoes what Ahmed calls **the feminist killjoy**: “Any deviation from gender roles defined in terms of women being trained to make men happy is a deviation from the happiness of all” (2010: 55).

Similarly, the image that Luca describes of his wife responds to the **stereotype of the happy housewife**, “she was a girl who was, and still is, of good principles, a moral person (...) I was the happiest dad in the world because I said: ‘I found a woman who is able to be a mother, a partner’” (Min. 41:57 / 43:06). He says that his violence erupts when he sees her being violent with their son, thus destroying his idealised image of her. We can read Giorgio’s and Luca’s testimonies diffractively with Miguel Lorente’s description of male chauvinist violence:

It is an aggression against women who do not follow gender norms or the gender scheme, those who do not remain submissive or who do not accept the sponsorship and the imposed authority of men. Therefore, in a certain way, violence against women is done to defend the female gender as conceived and created by an androcentric society. (2001: 167).<sup>791</sup>

The three men argue that their violence erupted when they saw their -androcentric-female and family ideals questioned. Their violent acts are only justified in a patriarchal context in which “the woman is one more element on which to establish order, which must remain in the corresponding place and playing the assigned role, since otherwise the social structure thus constructed would become unstable” (Lorente 2001: 40).<sup>792</sup> Such logic is the one that allows Giorgio to present himself as “a righteous” man. The only thing that he admits after his encounter with the LDV Centre psychologists is a change in his way of thinking about what he considered “normal” in a family. But, unlike Paolo and Luca, he doesn’t recognise having felt shame or guilt for what he did.

They show gratitude towards the LDV Centre staff. After the therapeutic process, a possibility of **affirmation and becoming in cinema** outside the framework of toxic masculinity opens up, functioning as “the moment of resistance, of change, of escaping from an identity that imprisons us” (Smelik 2007: 191). In segment eighteen, Giorgio

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<sup>791</sup> “Se trata de una agresión contra las mujeres que no siguen las normas o el esquema del género, aquellas que no se mantienen sumisas o que no aceptan el patrocinio y la autoridad impuesta del hombre. Por lo tanto, en cierto modo, la violencia contra la mujer se hace para defender el género femenino concebido y creado por una sociedad androcéntrica.”

<sup>792</sup> “la mujer es un elemento más sobre el que asentar el orden, que debe permanecer en el lugar correspondiente y desempeñando el rol asignado, puesto que de lo contrario la estructura social así construida cobraría inestabilidad.”

describes this awareness “as if they had let me turn on a light bulb in a room in which I didn’t even think there was electrical power” (Min. 46:31). Luca’s testimony also points in this direction: he makes fun of the fact that his wife now calls him “Father Pio”, a situation which reveals that his former identity as a violent man haunts him. Paolo realises that the key lies in being able to handle one’s own anger before it materialises into a violent act: “The ability to recognise moments that are at risk of becoming violent situations makes me more attentive, reflective, makes me listen rather than abuse my power during a confrontation, and this is an exercise, it’s something I learned here” (Min. 45:45).

The three men never talk among each other but they are placed together during most of the sequences at the theatre stage, complementing their points of view. This performative strategy renders visible **differences between** men, as well as **differences within** men: looking closely into themselves, the three of them recognise having contradictory feelings, as well as opinions that have changed over time (for instance, Luca’s relation with his father).

In the next section, I read through an interview with Elisabetta Lodoli held for this research project, a debate after a screening at the Bologna’s MAST Foundation in February 2018, and a sample of online testimonies and reviews.

### **6.5.2 Production and Reception: A Non-Judgemental Gaze at Violent Men**

The necessity of making a film about violence against women in heterosexual romantic relationships was first proposed to Elisabetta Lodoli by Annamaria Tagliavini, who was the director of the Italian Women’s Library for many years and is a member, as Lodoli herself, of the Bologna-based “Associazione Orlando”. Lodoli, whose passion for cinema has its origins in her childhood, wasn’t sure about making this film, especially because she was tired of the victimising gaze with which women tend to be portrayed in audiovisual productions that deal with gender violence.

Before making *Ma l’amore c’entra?*, Lodoli directed two documentary films about conflict situations: *La pace a due voci/Two Voices Peace* (1992), about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and *Stolica/Chair* (2013), recorded twenty years after the end of the war in Bosnia. In an interview carried out for this research project in February 2018, Lodoli explained that, with those films, she learned to make in-depth interviews and to analyse conflicts in which “it is difficult to have only one position (...) it is not black and

white, but complexity.”<sup>793</sup> Moreover, it was the reaction of a woman from the audience who watched *Stolica* in Bologna that gave her the idea of turning the gaze towards the violent perpetrators. After the screening, a young woman asked her if she “had never thought of interviewing, instead of the victims, those who had inflicted things (...) only the victims always speak, we do not understand the reasons for the evil. And above all, these people escape their responsibility in some way”.<sup>794</sup> This made Lodoli and Tagliavini decide that, for their gender-based violence documentary, “it was certainly more interesting to have men speak at this point.”<sup>795</sup>

We can read Lodoli’s reasoning diffractively with that of Isabel de Ocampo, director of my Spanish case study *Serás hombre*.<sup>796</sup> Working in the Spanish context, de Ocampo realised that the official discourse against gender-based violence was always directed towards women, as if the problem and the responsibility of getting out of it were exclusively theirs. She put it like this:

...the true discourse should be: “Men, you are mistreating women, you are raping women, you are using prostitution, what’s wrong with you guys?” But of course, **that means putting your finger in a wound, in a dark area of the subconscious in which men don’t want to face their own education.**<sup>797</sup>

What Lodoli wanted to do was exactly that: placing the focus on that “dark area of the subconscious” in which men would have to “face their own education”. However, by portraying only these men explaining themselves, she fell in a trap that was perceived by de Ocampo as well: “I realised that our approach was mistaken, that if I interviewed prostitution clients, deep down, I would give them power, I would give them a voice (...) we can’t give voice to prostitution clients, we have to give voice to feminist men.”<sup>798</sup> The

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<sup>793</sup> “è difficile avere una sola posizione (...) non è bianco e nero ma è la complessità.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>794</sup> “se non avessi mai pensato a intervistare, invece che le vittime, coloro che avevano inflitto le cose (...) parlano sempre solo le vittime, allora noi non capiamo le ragioni del male. E soprattutto, queste persone sfuggono in qualche modo alla loro responsabilità”. Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>795</sup> “sicuramente era più interessante far parlare gli uomini a questo punto.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>796</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 4.5 *Serás Hombre/You’ll Be a Man* (Isabel de Ocampo, 2018)

<sup>797</sup> “...el discurso verdadero sería: ‘hombres estáis maltratando mujeres, estáis violando mujeres, estáis utilizando la prostitución, ¿chicos qué os pasa?’ Pero claro, eso es meter el dedo en una herida, meter el dedo en una zona oscura del subconsciente en el cual los hombres, pues no quieren enfrentarse a su propia educación.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>798</sup> “Yo me di cuenta de que nos estábamos equivocando en el enfoque, que si yo me dedicaba a entrevistar a clientes de prostitución, en el fondo, les iba a dar poder, les iba a dar voz (...) no podemos



result of Lodoli's decision is that she runs the risk of eliciting empathy with these violent men, without being critical enough with the system that allows them to justify their actions.

Tagliavini put Lodoli in contact with the people from the Modena-based LDV Centre, which had been opened in 2011 with the financial support of the Emilia-Romagna region. Lodoli highlights that “men can go for free to this centre, which is not little, it helps a lot; they can go anonymously and without having to be obliged by judicial complaints.”<sup>799</sup> At this point, Tagliavini stopped working actively in the project and Lodoli began going to the LDV Centre with Roberta Barboni, the film executive producer, and Federica Giacobelli, with whom she carried out the interviews and wrote the script. The trust bond was firstly built with the psychologists of the centre, who proposed the men that they considered were ready to talk about their experience without negative consequences for their own therapeutic processes.

The need for privacy in terms of not showing their faces or their voices was established from their first encounter. In Lodoli's opinion, the three men who accepted to take part in the film wanted to turn their experience into testimonies which could help others. In this sense, she explains that, even though empathy is easier for her when listening to victims, she tried to approach her filmed subjects with respect and curiosity. She acknowledges that these men were “a step ahead of many men who have never even thought of it”<sup>800</sup>. She was not moved by the will to judge them but by that to better understand the origins of gender violence in heterosexual romantic relationships:

It wasn't a matter of acquitting them or of judging them guilty, they were telling something they had already done. It was a matter of understanding, precisely, what was going on in their heads, what their life stories were, why they had come to that point there, not so much to justify it, but in short, because I think that we live in a world of women and men. **Unless we decide to live only among women and to cut all relations with them**, we need the comparison with them. **We need to understand them**. Then, of course, men have to follow their path, we women do

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darle voz a los clientes de prostitución, tenemos que darle voz a los hombres feministas.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>799</sup> “gli uomini, in questo centro, possono andare gratuitamente, che non è poco, aiuta molto, in anonimato e senza dovere essere spinti da denunce.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>800</sup> “un paso avanti rispetto a tanti uomini che non ce hanno neanche mai pensato” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

not replace them in their path, but moments of contact, moments of listening, can also serve us women to grow.<sup>801</sup>

The title of the film stems from a question raised by Italian feminist writer Lea Melandri, who points out that nine out of ten men who manifest a problem with violence against their romantic partners are men who function normally in social contexts outside of the family. With this in mind, Lodoli approaches violence from the perspective of the sentimental education that is being reproduced in our societies: “there is certainly something that needs to be better investigated, which must be questioned in how we live emotional relationships, even if love not only does not justify violence but is not even an expression of it, violence is not an expression of love”<sup>802</sup>. She also wanted to take distance from sensationalist portraits of violence, focusing on episodes of domestic violence which did not arrive to the fatal levels that are usually exploited on the news.

The starting point of the film production, which took two years, was the interview process with the three men whose names remain anonymous. Lodoli wanted to dismantle the stereotype of violent men as monsters or sick people and present them rather as “normal” individuals. In this regard, she began to think about the spaces in which these men carry out their everyday lives: their houses, the streets and the countryside of the Emilia-Romagna region. Another important element was that of the windows on the facades of buildings, which is also present in the movie poster: “these stories of violence are hidden. That is, we all know them but we do not want to talk about them and we do not want to hear them. And they happen behind the windows, so that’s why there are so many windows in this movie”<sup>803</sup>.

Lodoli decided to work with three actors. However, within the film, she presents the actors’ images as if they were the real characters. Therefore, they always appear

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<sup>801</sup> “Non era una questione di assolvere o di giudicare colpevole o meno, loro raccontavano qualcosa che avevano già fatto, ma di capire, appunto, che cosa passava nella loro testa, quali erano le loro storie di vita, perché erano arrivati a quel punto lì, non tanto per giustificare ma insomma perché penso che, viviamo in un mondo di donne e di uomini. Meno che non decidiamo di vivere solo fra donne e di non avere più relazioni con loro, diciamo che il confronto con loro ci serve; ci serve capirle. Poi, certo gli uomini devono fare il loro percorso, noi donne non ci sostituiamo a questo loro percorso, pero dei momenti di contatto, dei momenti di ascolto, possono servire anche a noi donne per crescere.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>802</sup> “anche se l’amore non solo non giustifica la violenza ma non è nemmeno una espressione, la violenza non è una espressione dell’amore, pero qualcosa che va meglio indagato, che va messo in questione, sicuramente in come viviamo le relazione affettive c’è.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>803</sup> “queste storie di violenza sono nascoste. Cioè, le sappiamo tutti ma non gli vogliamo parlare e non gli vogliamo sentire. E avvengono dietro le finestre, quindi tante finestre ci sono in questi film.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

hidden in shadows or behind etched glass panes. But she felt that she was missing a stronger representation of violence:

It was a problem because **I didn't want to recreate the scenes of violence, but then their words, the testimonies were certainly very strong but were already mediated**, so I feared that the testimony would be a bit bland (...) not enough to represent the fear and the force of the violence of which they spoke (...) at some point I thought, everything takes place behind the windows, hidden to most people, but the symbolic place within which this type of violence takes place is the house, and therefore, as an element, which space reminds more of the domestic intimacy if not the kitchen? That theatre that can be a very, very stylised kitchen, there are dishes, there are knives (...) **the possibility of using objects of domesticity, objects of domestic use that become weapons**, that can become weapons.<sup>804</sup>

She decided to place the three actors together in this space, the so-called theatre-kitchen, also as a way of signalling the group therapy that the original interviewees carried out. Even though the interviews were made separately, in these sequences Lodoli establishes kinds of dialogues between them. In designing this space, she was inspired by the work of the Argentinian contemporary artist Silvia Levenson, who works mainly with glass. The other element that she uses to evoke the threat of violence is music: “Music that is never harmonic, or maybe a bit harmonic and then it is interrupted because this is precisely what, how to say, this life of a couple who cannot always be harmonic.”<sup>805</sup>

The last narrative wave that she incorporated was that of the archival footage from the Italian Amateur Film Archive Home Movies of Bologna. This material was used to give form to the cultural context. The interviewees had pursued a therapeutic path mainly on an individual scale, so Lodoli felt that the collective-social connection was missing:

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<sup>804</sup> “Era un problema perché se non voglio fare le scene di violenza però le loro parole, certo, le testimonianze erano sicuramente anche molto forti però erano già mediati, quindi temevo che fosse un po' blanda la testimonianza (...) potesse non dare ragione invece della paura e della forza della violenza di cui loro parlavano (...) a un certo punto ho pensato che, certo si svolge tutto dietro le finestre, nascosto ai più, però il luogo simbolico all'interno del quale questo tipo di violenza vive è la casa, e quindi, quale elemento, quale spazio ricorda di più l'intimità domestica se non la cucina, quel teatro che può essere una cucina molto molto stilizzata, ci sono i piatti, ci sono i coltelli (...) la possibilità di usare gli oggetti della domesticità, oggetti di uso domestico diventano armi, possono diventare armi.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>805</sup> “Una musica che non è mai armonica, forse un po' armonica e poi s'interrompe perché appunto è questo che, come dire, questa vita di coppia che non riesce ad essere sempre armonica” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

The historical part, the more reflective part on what is feminism, where we are culturally, the sexist culture: for this the archival footage has greatly helped (...) these **old materials also give a sense of how a man-woman culture is also deeply rooted in the past** and comes from afar.<sup>806</sup>

[found footage] helped me **to historicise the violence but also to create the possibility to work on cultural stereotypes**, on gender stereotypes, right? Because the belief, let's say the point of view from which we set ourselves was, we worked on the idea that violence is not a disease, we are not talking about a sick man. There are variations, disturbances, but in this case we were not talking about diseases, very often they are not diseases. **Violence is precisely the product of a culture that resists**, and in some way I wanted to include this culture. So I worked on bringing together these languages.<sup>807</sup>

When asked about her relation with feminism, Lodoli defined it as transversal in her life but made it clear that she doesn't consider herself a militant anymore:

I was part of the feminist movement and I had my moment of militancy, especially in 1977 in Bologna (...) **I cannot call myself a militant, but I think that if one is feminist it's difficult not to remain one. For me to be a feminist is a way of seeing the world, a way of being in the world** and I notice it even though, let's say, I do not militate in feminist groups, I do not do politics but I think these points of view on the world are, in short, part of my formation and my way of being.<sup>808</sup>

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<sup>806</sup> “La parte storica, la parte più riflessiva su cosa è il femminismo, dove siamo culturalmente, la cultura maschilista: per questo è il materiale di repertorio ha molto aiutato (...) questi materiali vecchi danno anche il senso di come una cultura uomo-donna sia anche molto radicata nel passato e viene da lontano.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

<sup>807</sup> “mi hanno aiutato a storicizzare la violenza ma anche a creare la possibilità di lavorare sugli stereotipi culturale, sugli stereotipi di genere, no? Perché la convinzione, diciamo il punto di vista dal quale ci siamo posti, abbiamo lavorato su quello che la violenza non è una malattia, non è un uomo malato. Ci sono variazioni, disturbi, ma in questo caso non erano malattie, molto spesso non lo sono. La violenza è appunto prodotto di una cultura che resiste, quindi questa cultura in qualche modo io la volevo mettere. Quindi ho lavorato sull'incrociare questi linguaggi.” This quote was part of the presentation that Lodoli made of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* at a screening held by Bologna's MAST Foundation in February 2018.

<sup>808</sup> “Io ho fatto parte del movimento femminista e ho avuto il mio momento di militanza, soprattutto negli anni 77 a Bologna (...) non posso definirmi una militante, ma penso che se uno è femminista è difficile che non lo rimanga. Per me essere femminista è un modo di vedere il mondo, un modo di stare al mondo e me lo accorgo dietro anche se, diciamo, non milito in gruppi femministi, non faccio politica pero penso che questi punti di vista sul mondo mi sia, insomma, fa parte della mia formazione e del mio modo di essere.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

Nevertheless, she showed reluctance towards defining her film as a feminist film or even as a political film. She argued that she doesn't believe in labels or in what she considers "ideological" films:

In as much as it speaks of a very important question, an open conflict, it can also be seen as a political film. **But I don't give a label to my film**, that's the last thing I want to do: "a feminist film", "a political film", "a film made by a female director". Then later, whomever writes can think, can write whatever s/he wants. **I did not want to make an ideological film**, I don't want that these labels make people think of it as **an ideological film that knows what it wants to say from the beginning, with pre-established theses** (...) surely, I am a woman with my feminist path, I am a woman in a world of women and men, and I also deal with issues that concern us but **I did not necessarily start with the idea of making a militant film.**<sup>809</sup>

Lodoli approached the making of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* as a research project, trying to understand the connections between masculinity and gender-based violence. Rather than a pre-established thesis to prove, she wanted to open up discussions and raise yet more questions. She doesn't judge the three men whose testimonies she gathered, but she also leaves the spectators only with their one-sided versions to reflect upon.

In terms of production, apart from "Associazione Orlando", the project was supported by the production company Maxman Coop, founded in 1998 by free-lance filmmakers, among which, Paolo Marzoni, one of the editors of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (Pietro D'Onofrio is the other editor). Marzoni introduced Lodoli to Roberta Barboni, who became the executive producer of the film. Together, they searched for public and private funds: on the one hand, a regional grant from the Modena bank and from the Emilia-Romagna region; on the other hand, money from Unipol, an Italian insurance company. There was also participation of the aforementioned Home Movies association,

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<sup>809</sup> "Nel senso che parla di una questione molto importante, di un conflitto aperto, certo, può essere anche visto come un film politico. Però io non do etichetta al mio film, è l'ultima cosa che io voglio, 'un film femminista', 'un film politico', 'un film che ha fatto una regista donna'. Poi dopo, chi ne scrive può pensare, può scrivere quello che vuole. Non ho voluto fare un film ideologico, non voglio che queste etichette possano far pensare a un film ideologico che parte sapendo cosa vuol dire e sapendo che cosa, con delle tesi precostituite (...) certo, io sono una donna con il mio percorso di femminista, sono una donna in mondo di donne e uomini, e sono, mi occupo anche di questioni che ci riguardano però non necessariamente sono partita con l'idea di fare un film militante." Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

as well as two other Italian audiovisual production companies, “Arancia Film” and “Marechiaro Film”.

The film had its premiere at the International Rome Film Festival (Festa Internazionale del Cinema di Roma) in November 2017. It was also selected at the “Extra Doc” Festival 2017, at the “Sguardi Altrove” International Women’s Film Festival 2018, at the “Riviera” International Film Festival 2018 and at the “1905 International Human Rights” Film Festival in Hong Kong and Taipei. Being produced in the Emilia-Romagna region, *Ma l’amore c’entra?* has also been supported by the association “Documentaristi Emilia-Romagna”<sup>810</sup>, for example, with its inclusion in the itinerant showcase “Doc in Tour” 2018 and the publication of a review on its online magazine devoted to documentary, “Emilio Doc”<sup>811</sup>.

Lodoli emphasises the importance of the word of mouth and the organisation of special screenings, such as the one held at the “Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico” (Audiovisual Archive of the Worker and Democratic Movement), the one I attended at the Bologna-based MAST Foundation, and the one that was organised on the International Women’s Day 2018 at the Italian embassy in Washington DC. She complains about the lack of interest that documentary cinema receives in Italy, especially in terms of exhibition in movie theatres and television. Her film has been included by the Italian public television in its purchasing office to offer it to other distributors, but they didn’t acquire it.

In Lodoli’s perception, there have been more women than men interested in the film. She remembers an occasion in which a woman told her that her partner cried when he saw the film. She says she is happy with the reactions of the public: “an audience that is interested, curious, that gets impressed. It is a film that raises many questions, isn’t it? And even for men who are, let’s say, interested in the subject, I see that the film works, so much so, that other centres for violent men have started to ask for it”<sup>812</sup>.

I attended the film’s premiere in Bologna in February 2018, with a screening at the MAST Foundation, an international cultural and philanthropic institution that focuses on art, technology and innovation. Lodoli introduced the film and there was a debate

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<sup>810</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 5. Section 5.4.3 Inequalities Faced by Feminist and Independent Documentary Filmmakers

<sup>811</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.emiliodoc.it/2018/02/09/ma-lamore-centra/>>.

<sup>812</sup> “un pubblico che è interessato, che è colpito, curioso. Un film che suscita molte domande, capito? E anche dagli uomini, diciamo, interessati all’argomento, vedo che il film funziona, tanto è che cominciano a chiedercelo anche altri centri di uomini maltrattanti” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

moderated by Gian Luca Farinelli, the director of the Cinematheque. Among the participants there were experts such as psychoanalyst Massimo Recalcati, journalist Paolo di Paolo, and LDV Centre psychologist Giorgio Penuti.

Farinelli complimented Lodoli on her work, which he described as “so difficult, so brave, so unique in its choice (...) telling this complex story in such a personal way”<sup>813</sup>. He also said that, despite presenting a terrible issue and generating a feeling of anguish, the film turns on a light of hope. To this, Giorgio Penuti, a psychologist working at the LDV Centre, added that the film is an extraordinary portrait of the men’s trajectory that he sees at the centre:

We work with men who come to us voluntarily, who are hurt themselves from the moment they realise that they have made unacceptable gestures, gestures they are responsible for and which they have addressed to a person who is so important to them (...). The path of change is an act of courage, it is difficult (...) it forces them to look inside themselves, which they are not used to, discovering something that is really disturbing or discovering how much they have invested in an inappropriate way on the partner in a phantasmatic way, pretending that the woman would adapt to their needs (...) above all, we work with them to give them hope, here is the good news. They are men who have made mistakes but also men who try not to make mistakes anymore, authentic men. **We would like more men to recognise themselves in these people and undertake an attempt at change.**<sup>814</sup>

Journalist Paolo di Paolo joined the debate because of an article he wrote in September 2017 for *L’Espresso* newspaper called “Maschi smettiamola di tacere sulla violenza contro le donne”<sup>815</sup> (Men, Let’s Stop our Silence about Violence against Women), in

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<sup>813</sup> “così difficile, così coraggioso, così unico per la scelta (...) di raccontare questa storia così complessa in una maniera così personale.” Gian Luca Farinelli. Screening at Bologna’s MAST Foundation. February 2018.

<sup>814</sup> “Ne lavoriamo con uomini che vengono da noi volontariamente, sono ferite e colpite loro stessi dal momento in cui si accorgono de avere compiuto dei gesti inaccettabili, dei gesti di cui hanno la responsabilità e di averli rivolti proprio verso la persona che per loro è così importante (...) Il percorso di cambiamento è un atto di coraggio, è difficoltoso (...) li costringe a esplorare lo sguardo dentro si stessi, cosa a cui non sono abituati, scoprendo qualcosa che è davvero perturbante o scoprendo quanto loro hanno investito in modo inappropriato su un altro, sulla compagna nel modo fantasmatico e quindi pretendendo che la donna se adeguasse ai loro bisogni (...) soprattutto, lavoriamo con loro per dargli speranza, ecco la buona notizia. Sono uomini che hanno sbagliato ma anche di uomini che cercano di non sbagliare più, uomini autentici. Vorremo che più uomini si riconoscessero in queste persone e intraprendessero un tentativo di cambiamento.” Giorgio Penuti. Screening at Bologna’s MAST Foundation. February 2018.

<sup>815</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<http://espresso.repubblica.it/visioni/2017/09/22/news/il-silenzio-di-noi-maschi-di-fronte-alla-violenza-sulle-donne-e-solo-un-alibi-1.310615>>.

which he recognises that that men need to break the silence, recognise their responsibility and start envisioning ways to change the sentimental education given to children. During his intervention, he said that the emotion he felt while watching the film was embarrassment:

But it does not embarrass me only, as a male-born human being, it embarrass me as a person who becomes a spectator in the strict sense of the word (...) the confessions that these men make, their voices, more or less disguised, are voices that put you in front of something that you would rather not see (...) a private area into which you should not trespass. The one in which we feel involved and not involved at the same time because we do not have to be there, but the film, the director's gaze places us there, it places us in the listening position (...) I thought: **how is it possible that we men, we human beings do not find the words to talk about this violence?** Because **this embarrassment that does concern my gender, as a male, was something I had to look in the face, to ask myself what I could say.** And then I had to make an effort and say, even if I am not that violent man, I hope I will never be him, but I cannot take it for granted that I won't. **His violence concerns me.** Because that violence has had a concrete, real and general effect, even by abstracting it, and it is something to which I must pay attention.<sup>816</sup>

It's worth noticing that, even though the film only partially manages to ask men to be accountable for their actions (since they use the screen power mainly to justify their actions, even blaming their partners), di Paolo's experience of spectatorship was indeed one demanding response-ability from him. Importantly, he admits that those men's violence directly concerns him as a man. At the debate, there was also a psychoanalyst, Massimo Recalcati, who asserted that patriarchy in Italy is already overcome; an affirmation that many women from the audience dismissed. He then argued that

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<sup>816</sup> “Ma non mette in imbarazzo soltanto me, come essere umano nato maschio, mette in imbarazzo me come persona che diventa spettatore proprio nel senso stretto del termine (...) la confessione che fanno questi uomini, la loro voce stessa, la loro voce più o meno dissimulata è una voce che ti mette davanti qualcosa che io non vorrei vedere (...) la zona del privato che non dovrebbe oltre passare. Quella in cui ci sentiamo coinvolti e non coinvolti allo stesso tempo perché non dovremo essere lì, ma il film, lo sguardo della regista ci mette lì, ci mette nella condizione di ascolto (...) Ho pensato è possibile che noi uomini, noi esseri umani non troviamo le parole per commentare questa violenza? Perché questo imbarazzo che invece questo sì è di genere, di me come maschio, era qualcosa che dovevo guardare in faccia, che cosa posso dire io. E allora dovevo fare uno sforzo e dire, anche se quell'uomo violento non sono io, spero di non esserlo mai ma non posso dare per scontato di non esserlo, la sua violenza mi riguarda. Perché quella violenza ha avuto un effetto concreto, reale e generale anche astraendolo, e una cosa verso la quale devo avere attenzione.” Paolo di Paolo. Screening at Bologna's MAST Foundation. February 2018.



patriarchy as the right of men sustained by law has been overthrown, but the fact that laws have changed doesn't mean that male violence has disappeared:

Patriarchal ideology, if not dead, is exhaling its last spasms. This is my impression judging by how we conceive the importance of women in society. By the mere fact that there is a film like this, which has men as protagonists who talk about the violence they exert on women. **In the field of patriarchal ideology, this would have been unthinkable.** If patriarchy is to found the violence of men over law, today it is no longer so. The violence of men continues to exist, this film gives an intense representation, but it is no longer based on law. On codes such as honour killing. There have been many victories of the women's movement in this field. **But does the fact that men's violence is no longer based on law make this violence less intense?** Make it evaporate? **No, and this is the point.** Indeed it can be said that **it exacerbates this violence, makes it more erratic,** more anarchic.<sup>817</sup>

Law might not enforce these violent acts anymore, but decades of patriarchal order have nurtured many of the values embedded in gender norms. Some men, who see their authority being questioned, react with anger. This echoes Miguel Lorente's explanation of gender-based violence as structural violence in patriarchy:

Structural violence has its origin and is based on the socio-cultural norms and values that determine the established social order. It arises, therefore, from within, and acts as a stabilising element of coexistence under the designed pattern, since it contributes, through the submission and control of women, to maintain the scale of values, to reduce the points of friction that may arise in romantic relationships between men and women, and from there to relations between men and women in society as a whole. (40: 2001)<sup>818</sup>

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<sup>817</sup> “L'ideologia patriarcale, se non è morta sta esalando i suoi ultimi spasmi. Questa è la mia impressione di come concepiamo l'importanza delle donne nella società. Il solo fatto che esista un film dal genere, che abbia come protagonisti degli uomini che vanno a parlare della violenza che esercitano sulle donne. Nel campo dell'ideologia patriarcale, questo sarebbe stato impensabile. Se patriarcato è fondare la violenza degli uomini sul diritto, oggi non è più così. La violenza degli uomini continua a esistere, questo film da un'intensa ripresentazione, ma non è più fondata sul diritto. Nelle codice come il delitto d'onore. Tante vittorie del movimento delle donne in questo campo. Ma il fatto che la violenza degli uomini non si fondi oggi più sul diritto rende meno intensa questa violenza, la fa evaporare? No, questo è il punto. Anzi si può dire che esaspera questa violenza, la rende più erratica, più anarchica.” Massimo Recalcati. Screening at Bologna's MAST Foundation. February 2018.

<sup>818</sup> “La violencia estructural se caracteriza porque tiene su origen y se fundamenta en las normas y valores socio-culturales que determinan el orden social establecido. Surge, por tanto, desde dentro y actúa como elemento estabilizador de la convivencia bajo el patrón diseñado, puesto que contribuye a

On the film's Facebook page<sup>819</sup>, with 905 likes, there are links to reviews, all of which are in Italian. I have selected five reviews, in which the critics engage with the materiality and emotionality of the film, so as to identify the effects and affects that they emphasise. Two reviews are from 2017 and three are from 2018. One is published in *zeronegativo.org*, the official blog of the "Avis" association, which is constituted by volunteers who donate their blood periodically and anonymously. It is written by journalist Federico Caruso. Another one is from the *cinematografo.it* digital magazine and is written by film critic Angela Prudenzi. One more is published in the association Documentaristi Emilia-Romagna's online magazine "Emilio Doc". The other two are reviews written by academics, which have been shared on the film's Facebook page.

The title of the article written by Caruso in February 2018 paraphrases a quote from Giorgio: "Violenza di genere: quando le sedie volano come fossero baci" (Gender Violence: When Chairs Fly as if They Were Kisses)<sup>820</sup>. Caruso attended the screening at the MAST Foundation, and he starts his article by putting together the title of the film, *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, with the answer given by the psychoanalyst, Massimo Recalcati: No, love doesn't have anything to do with violence, "so be careful not to fall into the cliché that part of the Italian press has accustomed us to"<sup>821</sup>.

In terms of form, Caruso highlights that, in order to achieve the authenticity of the story, Lodoli resorts to "a double deception: the actors take the place of the real characters, but they act with their faces covered, making their negation a central element of the cinematographic discourse"<sup>822</sup>. He also points out that, during the first part of the film, the spoken word seems to play a central role, but "then its presence and density are reduced as the film develops. As if, once the familiar situations are outlined, the image is

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mantener la escala de valores, a reducir los puntos de fricción que puedan presentarse en las relaciones de pareja entre hombres y mujeres, y desde ahí a las relaciones entre hombres y mujeres en la sociedad en general, por medio de la sumisión y el control de la mujer."

<sup>819</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/>>.

<sup>820</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/violenza-maschile-elisabetta-lodoli/>>.

<sup>821</sup> "Attenzione dunque a non cadere nei cliché ai quali ci ha abituato una parte della stampa italiana". <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/violenza-maschile-elisabetta-lodoli/>>. Date of access: April 2019. In this regard, Caruso mentions a study carried out by Chiara Gius and Pina Lalli from the University of Bologna, in which they found out that, during 2012, in the coverage of cases of femicide in three major Italian newspapers (*Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* and *La Stampa*), the most common frames within which femicide were told were romantic love and loss of control: <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/femminicidio-amore-raptus/>>.

<sup>822</sup> "un doppio inganno: gli attori prendono il posto dei personaggi reali, ma recitano col volto coperto, rendendo la sua negazione un elemento centrale del discorso cinematografico." Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/violenza-maschile-elisabetta-lodoli/>>.

recognised as having a stronger power of representation”<sup>823</sup>. He considers that the film should be screened at schools and praises Lodoli for having found the balance in the representation of men who commit violence against their partners: neither as monsters, nor falling into “an excessive empathy towards those who appear as fragile men, frightened by themselves and by what they have done (...) The risk is that one, terrible, of taking responsibility away from the guilty.”<sup>824</sup>

The article published on *cinematografo.it* in November 2017, written by Angela Prudenzi, emphasises the fact that Lodoli’s gaze is never judgemental. Prudenzi regards the decision of interviewing men rather than women as precise, and comments on the ways in which the form of *Ma l’amore c’entra?* subverts documentary cinema’s authenticity:

Far from the canons of documentary as a direct capture of reality, [Lodoli] reconstructs the events using a visual device whereby voices, bodies in the shadows and faces hidden by etched glass belong to actors, almost wanting to multiply a distance effect that turns, however, into its opposite. As through the grids of a confessional in which we do not see who is speaking, and yet the words, which are the exact ones collected through long interviews, weigh like boulders.<sup>825</sup>

In the article published by the “Emilio Doc” online magazine in February 2018, written by film critic Erica di Cillo, the non-judgmental gaze of the filmmaker is also praised. She describes *Ma l’amore c’entra?* as “the most urgent and pressing”<sup>826</sup> work of Lodoli’s filmography. The other aspect highlighted in this review is the lack of a unidirectional answer to the problem: jealousy, frustration and patriarchal culture are among the factors

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<sup>823</sup> “per poi ridurre la sua presenza e la sua densità man mano che il film si sviluppa. Come se, una volta delineate le situazioni familiari messe in scena, si riconoscesse all’immagine un potere più forte di rappresentazione”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/violenza-maschile-elisabetta-lodoli/>>.

<sup>824</sup> “un’eccessiva empatia verso quelli che appaiono come uomini fragili, spaventati da se stessi e da ciò che hanno fatto (...) Il rischio è quello, terribile, di deresponsabilizzare il colpevole.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.avis-legnano.org/blog/violenza-maschile-elisabetta-lodoli/>>.

<sup>825</sup> “Lontano dai canoni del documentario come presa diretta della realtà, ricostruisce le vicende servendosi di un dispositivo visivo per cui voci, corpi nell’ombra e volti celati da vetri smerigliati appartengono ad attori, quasi a voler moltiplicare un effetto di distanza che si trasforma tuttavia nel suo contrario. Come attraverso le grate di un confessionale non vediamo bene chi parla eppure le parole, che sono quelle esatte raccolte attraverso lunghe interviste, pesano come macigni.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.cinematografo.it/recensioni/ma-lamore-centra/>>.

<sup>826</sup> “il più urgente e pressante”. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.emiliodoc.it/2018/02/09/ma-lamore-centra/>>.

under consideration. Nevertheless, in the end, Lodoli “does not intend to reveal the truth, but to clarify, to provide the opportunity for further discussion”<sup>827</sup>.

One of the reviews shared on the film’s Facebook page in December 2017 is written by Daniela Brogi, film critic and professor of contemporary literature. She shares the point of view expressed by di Cillo, describing *Ma l’amore c’entra?* as “a work that manages to weave creativity and civil discourse in a non-didactic or prejudicial manner, because it does not explain, it does not judge, but composes: a multi-strand story that works on reactions”<sup>828</sup>. Brogi considers that the film’s main political merit is that it “says the simplest and most direct thing to say: that femicide is a male pathology”<sup>829</sup>. Lodoli brings men into the frame, visually and symbolically: “this time, instead of the victims, the word is given to those who have committed violence”<sup>830</sup>.

The other review that Lodoli shares on the film’s Facebook page, in January 2018, is written by sociologist Cristina Odone, who wrote a PhD thesis on her fieldwork in a centre for violent men. Odone explains that, for her thesis, she carried out interviews at a similar centre to Modena’s LDV but located in Florence, and she was surprised when, watching *Ma l’amore c’entra?*, she found out that men were employing very similar metaphors to describe their actions, something that, in her opinion, reveals the cultural roots of this behaviour. She identifies some of the key aspects within the imaginary of a violent man that Lodoli puts forward: the idealisation of a model of harmonious family that becomes almost an obsession, violence as an extreme means of re-establishing hierarchies and male hypersensitivity with respect to their “honour”, always at stake in any conflict or discussion.

Odone agrees with Caruso on the fact that Lodoli manages to represent these men “with great tact, finding the right balance between proximity and distance (...) without slipping into essentialism or tracing ‘profiles’ or ‘types’ of violent men.”<sup>831</sup> She considers that the screening of this film can have the effect of rendering visible “to what extent men

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<sup>827</sup> “non ha intenzione di rivelare la verità, piuttosto di fare chiarezza, di fornire lo spunto per una discussione ulteriore”. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.emiliodoc.it/2018/02/09/ma-lamore-centra/>>.

<sup>828</sup> “un’opera che sa intrecciare creatività e discorso civile in maniera non didascalica o pregiudiziale, perché non spiega, non giudica, compone: una storia a più fili e che lavora sulle reazioni”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1524657050935994>>.

<sup>829</sup> “dice la cosa più semplice e diretta da dire: che il femminicidio è una patologia maschile”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1524657050935994>>.

<sup>830</sup> “stavolta, invece che alle vittime, la parola viene data a coloro che hanno compiuto la violenza”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1524657050935994>>.

<sup>831</sup> “con grande tatto, trovando il giusto equilibrio tra prossimità e distanza. (...) senza scivolare nell’essentialismo né tracciare “profili” o “tipi” di uomini violenti.” Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1551891184879247>>.

-all men- are willing to confront themselves concerning violence, starting from their own experience so as to manage to talk openly and publicly with the many women who have long ago taken the initiative”<sup>832</sup>. We can read this as an invitation for men to follow that feminist principle of “start from themselves” as gendered beings.

### 6.5.3 Summary and Research Question

As a summary of this case study, in this section I gather insights from the four levels of analysis (content, form, production and reception) bearing in mind my research question: which material-discursive practices in *Ma l'amore c'entra?* can be read as feminist, and what do they do in terms of visualising social in/equalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, on both sides of the camera and the screen?

**In terms of production**, the idea of making a film about gender-based violence was originated within the Bologna-based “Associazione Orlando”, a key space for the Italian feminist movement since the seventies. Coming from a feminist background but distrustful of labels and films that are made to prove a thesis, director Elisabetta Lodoli decided to approach *Ma l'amore c'entra?* as a research project in which she wanted to place the focus, not on the victims, but on the perpetrators of violence. In this way, she re-directed the responsibility to those who commit violence or, as one of the reviewers puts it, she stated “the simplest and most direct thing to say: that femicide is a male pathology”.<sup>833</sup>

The anonymity of the three interviewees was respected. Even though she didn't feel empathy with her interviewees, Lodoli tried to avoid judging them. Rather than imposing a univocal explanation, she tried to provide the spectator with various entry points to the phenomenon via the three testimonies, the found footage sequences, the music and the audiovisual metaphors that evoke anguish and threat. However, the film does give the narrative authority to the voices of three men who give their versions of the situations: they recognise their mistakes and go through therapeutic sessions, but still try to justify their actions within an androcentric frame, which blames their anger bursts on their female partners. It is only by diffractively reading their arguments with what

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<sup>832</sup> “fino a che punto gli uomini –tutti gli uomini– sono disposti a mettersi in gioco sulla violenza, partendo dalla propria esperienza diretta per arrivare a parlarne apertamente e pubblicamente insieme alle molte donne che da tempo hanno preso l’iniziativa”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1551891184879247>>.

<sup>833</sup> “la cosa più semplice e diretta da dire: che il femicidio è una patologia maschile”. Date of access: April 2019. <<https://www.facebook.com/malamorecentra/posts/1524657050935994>>.

feminist experts such as Miguel Lorente (2001) or Sara Ahmed (2010) have explained, that we can trace the connections between apparently isolated cases of violence against the female partner on one hand, and a structure of gender inequality that rests on keeping women under control and within the patriarchal definition of the female gender on the other hand.

Still, in terms of **content**, the film does ask men to be response-able for their violence and manages to make visible the invisible: not only by re-enacting the interviews with actors, but by proposing an intimate journey through the affects and emotions connected with masculinity and violence. Men as main characters in cinema is nothing new; however, men reflecting about their own gendered self and questioning, albeit partially, violent acts against their female partners, can speak of this film as an eccentric technology of gender.

The image of idealised family happiness and the stereotype of the happy housewife are problematised with the testimonies of these men who connect their anger outbursts with their frustration for not being able to achieve “the promise of happiness” (Ahmed 2010). For Giorgio, who defines himself as a righteous man but resorts to several stereotypes and contradictions in his arguments, the figure of the feminist killjoy plays an important role in male’s violence:

I’m not saying the responsibility lies with women, I’m simply stating **what women have become with this emancipation**, with this independence. Sometimes there’s **this arrogance** that I can’t find a place for, a justification. Just as I don’t accept, and we all cannot accept patriarchy **I also cannot accept a woman**, and we see many of them, **who acts the same way with a man who is weak** and fragile (Min. 31:12).

The phenomenon of **violence exists because there starts to be a form of competition with the man**. The man has to be smart and understand that today, in contemporary times, **he can’t be in command, he has to share**, but it’s even **worse if the woman is the one in command** (Min. 32:31).<sup>834</sup>

Giorgio acknowledges gender equality, but regards it as a threat for male privilege. His testimony is very interesting in its explicitness concerning the confusion faced by men who have grown up in a patriarchal society, but then see its values increasingly

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<sup>834</sup> The emphases in the quotations from the film are mine.

questioned by the feminist movement. The other two interviewees, Luca and Paolo, assert that after going through the therapeutic process, they can now envision the possibility of being outside the framework of toxic masculinity:

Father Pio is ironic because seeing someone who used to be the devil of the situation and now extends his hand, opens his arms. It's almost as if pushing me to say how is it possible, **you used to be such a violent person, and now you're a little saint?** Alright, I get it, I'm all for this mitigation of anger (...) I don't go and stir up the conflict, **I try to mediate** (...) she sees there has been an evolution, a total change (Min. 47:44).

As for the **form**, the film's reflexivity brings attention to how it is constructed and criticises the sensationalist way in which mass media portrays gender-based violence. Performativity is employed in the re-enactments of people and spaces. The poetic mode is evident in the construction of an uncanny atmosphere in a setting that plays with domestic imagery, such as broken plates and hanging knives. The found footage also helps in the visualisation of inequalities that are translated in gender norms, e.g. the boy playing with a gun and the girl playing with a doll.

Despite being low budget, the production of this film was not extremely precarious, since it got public and private funding. **Distribution** is the area in which the inequalities faced by independent filmmakers have become more evident. The public television didn't want to buy it and it has been screened only in festivals and special events.

As for the **reception** of the film, men and women have had positive reactions. Probably, the fact that the three characters are not portrayed as "monsters" but as men who might change makes it easier for spectators to identify with them. This is gathered by journalist Paolo di Paolo, who admits that his affective reaction towards the film is that of embarrassment, but accompanied by the urge to speak out about violence. Similarly, Cristina Odone sees the film as an invitation for men to overcome silence and to face the difficulties of looking inside themselves and deconstructing the patriarchal culture within which they have built their identities.

## **Chapter 7. A Diffractive Reading of Feminist Material-Discursive Practices in Contemporary Spanish and Italian Documentary Cinema**

Less interested in drawing out the differences between texts (or their sameness), a comparative-diffractive reading would be aware of itself as an effect of this specific apparatus (this reader with proficiencies and limits, embedded in these historical, linguistic, political struggles) and of the diffraction patterns that result from the productive passing through one another of two or more elements. (Birgit M. Kaiser 2014: 287).

Re-turning is a process of spatial and temporal diffraction in the turning over and over again across time and space. What might be regarded by some readers as repetition in the text, is in fact a deliberate diffractive methodology of re-turning, expressing practice/theory differently, in this way sedimenting the ideas for the reader and ourselves, as a worlding practice. (Murriss and Bozalek 2019: 11).

Birgit M. Kaiser defines diffractive reading as “radically performative” (2014: 281) because it is by reading texts together that certain patterns emerge, so that reading in itself becomes a productive event. Karen Barad describes diffracting as re-turning, not “as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again” (2014: 168). According to her, “[d]iffraction is not a set pattern, but rather an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling” (2014: 168). Following these ideas, what I carry out in this chapter is a diffractive reading of the feminist material-discursive practices identified in my ten case studies. I re-turn (to) practices that I have described separately, thus (re)producing patterns of differences, overlappings and entanglements between them.

As explained in the first chapter, diffractive reading “allows us to affirm and strengthen links between schools of thought or scholars that only apparently work toward the same goals” (Van Der Tuin 2011a: 27). From different positions, all of the filmmakers from my sample deal with social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender. What my diffractive reading hereby attends to are “entanglements in reading



important insights and approaches through one another” (Barad 2007: 30): these insights have emerged in and through my intra-actions with the filmmakers and their films.

Looking separately at each case study as a diffraction apparatus, I have identified various patterns of differences being used as legitimations for inequalities. This time I also want to look at differences as tools for creativity and multiple entry points. To think diffractively about a variety of insights “gives us the opportunity to become more attuned to how differences are being created in the world, and what particular effects they have on subjects and their bodies” (Geerts and Van Der Tuin 2016).<sup>835</sup> My focus here is on what the films and the insights they raise become during the encounter with the other films, through my own gaze which is, in turn, informed by a feminist film theory toolbox.<sup>836</sup>

I argue that the ten films discussed in this dissertation render social in/equalities intelligible by means of what I understand as feminist material-discursive practices. As explained in the first chapter, within her agential realism framework, Barad “describes practices as intra-active doings that are material-discursive” (Sauzet 2015: 43). What I aim to do in this chapter is to analyse entanglements “between concepts and the practices through which they become meaningful” (Sauzet 2015: 44) in the context of feminist documentary filmmaking.

I follow two steps: I identify feminist material-discursive practices at four levels of analysis: content, form, production and reception of the films. And I pay attention to a series of key concepts at each level. In this way, I read material-discursive practices through one another, along two axes: 1. The four levels of each film; 2. The concepts with which I frame each level. Therefore, the chapter is divided into four sections: contents, forms, production practices, and reception effects.

In the case of contents, I point out what I call countervisuality practices in (re)framing realities through the entanglements of narrative waves.. As for the form, the focus is on the politicisation of diverse modes of representation. The analysis of production practices is double-layered because I enact two cuts: In the discourses of the filmmakers, I identify self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions concerning four key concepts, i.e. documentary cinema, equality, gender and feminism(s). I follow the new materialist premise that “conceptualisations need to be

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<sup>835</sup> <<http://www.newmaterialism.eu>>. The quotes from Geerts and Van Der Tuin (2016) are from the COST Action IS1307 New Materialism. Networking European Scholarship on “How Matter Comes to Matter” website. By May 2019, the website was no longer accessible.

<sup>836</sup> *Vid. Infra*. Chapter 2. Theoretical Apparatus: A Toolbox for a Response-able Gaze

regarded as a practice in their own right” (Hongisto, Kontturi and Tiainen 2015: 15) or, as expressed by Sauzet, concepts are also “material-discursive practices that emerge as phenomena in complex practices” (2015: 39).

Finally, in discussing reception practices, I concentrate on affective identification and/or intellectual reflections from the audiences. In this section, I also talk about three activities that I engaged with as part of the GRACE project dissemination outputs: the making of two video-essays with fragments from *No existimos*<sup>837</sup>; *Cuidado, resbala* and *Yes, We Fuck!*<sup>838</sup>; a screening plus debate at “Associazione Orlando” in Bologna (case study *Una nobile rivoluzione*); and a cycle of screenings and debates that I organised at the University of Granada (case studies *Cuidado, resbala*; *Yes, We Fuck* and *Serás hombre*).<sup>839</sup>

## 7.1 Contents: Countervisuality, Framing and Narrative Waves

Visuality, as explained in chapter 2, makes the world intelligible in ways that help sustain a specific authority. It is in this sense that Nicholas Mirzoeff proposes a way of thinking with and against visuality. He advocates for “the right to look” (2011: 475), which is a refusal to allow authority to impose a unique way of seeing. He coins the word “countervisuality” to refer to a resistant vision structured around the tension between the “need to apprehend and counter a real that does exist but should not, and one that should exist but is as yet becoming” (2011: 477). It is neither an artificial construction nor a reflecting mirror of reality. Rather, it “tries to make sense of the unreality created by visuality’s authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative” (2011: 485).

I argue that feminist cinema can be considered a form of countervisuality, balancing between the lived reality of gender inequalities and imagined alternatives to it. A key material-discursive practice for feminist countervisuality is framing, i.e. to make cuts and to draw boundaries through the intra-actions between human and non-human agents of observation. According to Ilona Hongisto, framing is the main practice through which documentary films participate in “the real as process” (2015: 12). It is directly linked with the way in which reality is rendered intelligible. Therefore, the question in

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<sup>837</sup> “Filming Grace. Audiovisual Translations of Academic Research on Cultures of Gender Equality”. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://graceproject.eu/news/filming-grace/>>.

<sup>838</sup> “Not Seeing Well: Notes on Feminist Ways of Seeing”. Video-essay, part of the GRACE online exhibition *Footnotes on Equality*. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://footnotesonequality.eu/videos/>>.

<sup>839</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 4, sections 4.1, 4.4 and 4.5 and chapter 6, section 6.2

this section is: How do my case studies (re)frame reality? I would like to point out that the ten case studies are built with a polyscopic narrative (Jay 1994: 592), composed of different narrative waves entangled through the film editing. In this regard, I pay attention to how films and filmmakers create knowledge with and through their different narrative waves.

The topics from the Spanish and Italian feminist audiovisual agendas that are tackled in the ten documentary films that I have analysed in previous chapters are:

1. Gender-based violence with emphasis on sex trafficking and masculinities; with emphasis on domestic violence and masculinities; and with emphasis on the experiences of female refugees in Spain and France.
2. The right to one's own body with emphasis on motherhood; and with emphasis on the LGBT rights movement.
3. The right to one's own body and sexual self-awareness with an emphasis on the right to abortion; and with an emphasis on transgender/gender non-conforming subjects and functional diversity.
4. Labour rights/women working conditions with emphasis on care labour; and with emphasis on memory and "the differential distribution of precariousness" (Butler 2015: 33) in a neoliberal context.

In the case of *Pays Barbare*, the subject matter is not directly linked to the Italian feminist agenda, though it can be considered as one of those "films that reframe Italy by engaging with changing national and transnational contexts from a position of (...) marginality", as pinpointed by Luciano and Scarparo (2013: 20). Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi may not frame explicitly gendered marginalities but, from an intersectional feminism perspective, they do look from and against the oppression of so-called minority groups.

Various topics on the list overlap. The two most common issues, present in both national agendas, are gender-based violence and the right to one's own body. What I argue in the next paragraphs is that, from their various perspectives and with different degrees of effectivity, all of these films operate as feminist countervisuality devices capable of making sense of certain aspects of the androcentric unreality "created by visuality's authority while at the same time proposing a real alternative" (Mirzoeff 2011: 485).

Gender-based violence has received significant mainstream media attention but, in many cases, this has been translated into women being portrayed as vulnerable victims who need to be protected (Villaplana 2008: 169). Interestingly, the three case studies that deal with gender violence opt for not showing women. In two of them, *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *Serás hombre*, the reframing/countervisuality practice is changing the focus from women as victims to men as perpetrators, trying to ask men to be accountable and response-able for the violence they commit. However, by giving narrative authority exclusively to men, who many times talk about women in a victimising tone or even blaming them, both cases offer a problematic framing of the issue.

The six narrative waves of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* are all entangled around the testimonies of the three characters (wave 4), complemented by audiovisual metaphors of violence in an uncanny theatre-kitchen (wave 2) and found footage sequences that evoke the reinforcement of gender norms (wave 6). *Serás hombre* has a more complex construction: it entangles the narrative arcs of two main characters (the ex-pimp Rafa and the performance artist Abel; waves 1 and 3), two groups discussions (high school and advertising agency; waves 4 and 5) and, importantly, interviews with experts who provide tools for reading the experiences of the characters (wave 2). The latter are missing in the Italian case, which leaves the film without a strong feminist counterpart.

In *No existimos*, the violence faced by female refugees in their home countries, throughout their transit and in their European host countries is rendered visible in ways that allow women to remain invisible. In this case, appearing onscreen, rather than empowering, would place the film subjects in a more vulnerable situation, so the filmmaker enacts a countervisuality strategy that turns inexistent images into five informative and affective audiovisual narrative waves. Her own reflections on the process of visualising these realities in a documentary video essay are part of a narrative wave (wave 2). And, in a similar strategy to that of *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, emotions such as fear and anxiety are evoked by audiovisual metaphors (wave 1).

While visibility in the three aforementioned films is not desirable, the enactment of the right to appear is at the basis of those films in which the main issue is the right to one's own body: *Una nobile rivoluzione*, *Yes, We Fuck!*, *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli*, and *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*. In these four films, collective public presence is the best way to fight violence against individuals.

*Una nobile rivoluzione* renders visible strategic alliances between the feminist and the LGBT civil rights movement in Italy, while also showing the two lives led by

transsexual activist Marcella Di Folco, firstly as a man in Rome, secondly as a woman in Bologna. With such a protagonist, the film sets into motion a queer performativity of gender norms that questions the dominant visibility of the androcentric, coherent and stable subject. In its editing of six narrative waves (e.g. archive footage, Marcella's voice recordings, reconstruction road trip and conversations about Marcella) the film evokes a queer cinematic time-space in which present and past, living and dead, coexist.

In *Yes, We Fuck!*, the right to one's own body and the alliances between feminist and LGBT movements add another layer, intersecting with functional diversity and sexuality. This is a postporn transfeminist film, which shows sexually explicit images that seek to question mainstream ideals of desirability, as well as sexual practices framed by ableism and heteropatriarchy. Feminist postporn cinema explores feminist countervisuality in the field of sexually explicit representations. Desirable bodies in mainstream porn have heteronormative characteristics. The representation of the rebellious and diverse bodies of the filmed subjects in *Yes, We Fuck!* questions pathology, monstrosity, voyeuristic curiosity and/or pitiful solidarity. Instead, they appear as both, desiring and desirable. The film consists of six ten-minute stories, which could be analysed as six narrative waves providing spectators with diverse entry points, tackling different kinds of functional diversity and possible alliances with transgender/gender non-conforming activists.

The other two case studies that deal with the right to one's own body, specifically regarding reproduction rights, also enact the performative right to appear of their filmed subjects. *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli* tackles the taboo surrounding women who decide not to have children. The filmmakers' countervisuality strategy questions the dominant visibility, starting from what Mirzoeff identifies as its first operation: naming.<sup>840</sup> They are aware of the importance of claiming a name of their own, so they propose a new word to define women without children, which doesn't have a negative connotation: "lunàdigas". The playful structure entangles five narrative waves: apart from the dozens of interviews with different lunàdigas, the filmmakers incorporate self-reflexive testimonies, avatar sequences, "impossible monologues" and discussions held in small groups.

In the case of *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*, the feminist countervisuality practice enacted by the dozens of women who were involved in the production process

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<sup>840</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 2.1 Countervisuality through Feminist Glasses.

has to do with their turning their cameras to record a massive demonstration against a draft bill banning the right for abortion. Moreover, even though the film is fundamentally the register of an event that took place in 2014, it establishes a genealogy between a contemporary feminist fight and those held by feminist activists decades ago. This is attained by articulating four narrative waves: the demonstration, preparations, archival footage and international support. The playful element, indeed an aspect that is present in the four case studies that deal with the right to one's own body, is very important in the songs and performances that move forward this film.

The enactment of the collective right to appear is also a fundamental aspect of *Cuidado, Resbala*. Labour rights and difficult working conditions faced by women are at the core of this film about domestic workers in Spain. As a feminist countervisuality device, it exposes the discrimination encountered by domestic workers within an economics framework that places care labour in the hidden part of the iceberg sustaining the markets. The editing of its six narrative waves allows us to develop different insights: Placing at the same level two narrative waves, interviews with academic experts (wave 3) and voices of domestic workers (wave 2), produces knowledge in a horizontal way. The animated sequence, wave 4, visualises patterns of difference employed by structures of inequality within the framework of the sexual division of labour. Organisations of domestic workers and demonstrations (waves 5 and 6), signal the empowerment attained when moving from individual struggle to collective action. And the reflexive voice-over (wave 1) asks the spectator to identify with the point of view of a female illegal immigrant who works as a domestic worker, a subject which decenters masculinity and whiteness.

Working conditions faced by women is also at the core of *Triangle*. This film is constructed as a parallel narration, or indeed what we can call a diffractive reading of two tragedies that took place at knitwear factories: the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York in 1911, and the collapse of a ghost textile workshop in Barletta in 2011. Both tragedies caused the death of many female workers. What the film's palimpsestic and feminist countervisuality practices render visible are the different effects of both tragedies: while the fire ignited a change in legislation to protect workers and the strengthening of the union movement, the collapse of the building in Barletta one century later, seemed to have provoked only mourning, void and paralysis, as a result of normalised precarity. The movement back and forth in time and space enacted in the film is achieved through the editing of six narrative waves, including archive footage, voice

recordings, an interview with a survivor, and images of the process behind clothing manufacturing and selling.

Memory and palimpsest strategies that read the past through the present are also crucial in *Pays Barbare*, where the “right to look where none technically exists” (Mirzoeff 2011: 478) is enacted upon archive footage originally filmed as material for the Italian colonialist project in Libya and Ethiopia, during Mussolini’s fascist regime. The countervisuality enacted in this film is not an openly feminist one, but can be productively read through intersectional feminist lenses. The filmmakers reframe colonial material through their oppositional gazes, evident in their voice-over comments that confront past with present, and in their detailed explorations within each frame, looking for what’s hidden in the margins. In *Pays barbare*, found footage operates at three indexical levels: It is a trace of a colonial archive; within the frame, held by the filmmaker’s hand, film strips are tangible objects in “a relation of physical contact and co-presence” with the body that re-records them; and they are also deixis inasmuch as they point towards a presence, make present the objects they refer to, i.e. the ghosts from the past that haunt the present (Olivieri 2012: 41). These levels are conveyed through the six entangled narrative waves: archive footage; music; reflexive voice-over; singing voice-over; reading voice-over; and photos.

All in all, I identify two patterns in which feminist material-discursive practices operate at the level of content: enacting the right to appear or enacting the right to look back and/or against the grain. The first pattern, in which the filmed subjects are empowered as they enact their right to appear as political subjects in the public space, is clear in *Una nobile rivoluzione*; *Yo decido*; *Lunàdigas*; *Yes, We Fuck!*; and *Cuidado, resbala*. A feature shared by these four films is their vindication of humour, joy and pleasure, even in protest. Playfulness is approached as a way of claiming social rights.

In the cases of *Triangle* and *Pays Barbare*, the filmmakers enact their response-ability to look back, reading narrative waves from the past with waves from the present. In a different way, the directors of *Serás Hombre*, *Ma l’amore c’entra?* and *No existimos* enact their right to look against the grain: in the first two cases, gender violence is analysed from the side of the perpetrators and masculinity is dissected inasmuch as it’s socio-culturally constructed; in the two last cases, response-ability towards the filmed subjects implies that visibility would be threatening and therefore, the filmmakers resort to other modes of visualisation.

## 7.2 Forms: Politicised Modes of Representation

As described in chapter 1, Bill Nichols identifies six modes of representation in documentary cinema: expository, observational, participatory, poetic, reflexive and performative. The first three are the dominant modes within the realist documentary tradition. The poetic, reflexive, and performative modes of representation have more characteristics in common with experimental counter-cinema. In chapter 2, after briefly referring to the debate between realist and experimental advocates in documentary feminist cinema and paraphrasing Julia Lesage (1984: 246)<sup>841</sup>, I concluded that feminist material-discursive practices have the potential to politicise both, expository-observational-participatory and poetic-reflexive-performative modes of representation. What I discuss in this section are the diverse ways in which the filmmakers from my sample politicise such modes of representation, visualising gender in/equalities in and through their films.

In the sample there are four documentary films in which the main modes of representation are the expository, observational and/or participatory ones (*Serás hombre*; *Yes, We Fuck!*; *Cuidado, resbala* and *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad*), and four in which the main modes are the poetic, reflexive and/or performative ones (*No existimos*; *Lunàdigas, ovvero delle donne senza figli*; *Ma l'amore c'entra?*; and *Pays Barbare. Una nobile rivoluzione* and *Triangle* are cases in which the observatory-participatory and the reflexive-performative modes of representation are equally present. However, it must be taken into account that in all the expository-observational-participatory cases there are also performative sequences.<sup>842</sup> Rather than organising this section by case studies, I will discuss insights raised by these films concerning each mode of representation.

The **expository mode** frequently resorts to voice-over as a kind of voice-of-God which makes sense of the images: “The commentary is therefore presumed to come from some place that remains unspecified but associated with objectivity or omniscience” (Nichols 2010: 168). This mode exemplifies the epistophilia usually associated with documentary cinema: rather than visual pleasure, the spectator looks for the pleasure of getting to know something. What I identify in the four films from my sample which

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<sup>841</sup> *Vid. Supra.* Chapters 1 and 2. Sections 1.1.4.1 Documentary Cinema Modes of Representation, and 2.2.1 Realist Documentary Cinema vs. Feminist Counter-Cinema

<sup>842</sup> Performative as a mode of representation is different from the performativity of documentary cinema, a characteristic shared by all documentary films in spite of their modes of representation. *Vid. Supra.* Chapter 1



employ voice-over to describe the images is that the embodied/situated gaze of the filmmaker replaces the voice-of-God.

In the opening sequence of *Una nobile rivoluzione*, Simone Cangelosi's voice-over makes it clear that his reconstruction of the story of Marcella di Folco is a personal-political task. The opening sequence of *Cuidado, resbala* also introduces one of the film directors' (Carolina Suárez) voice-over. Her testimony as a female immigrant who used to be a domestic worker also links her personal problems with a collective political dimension. She sets up the tone of the film as that of a research journey which, disrupting the aforementioned epistophilia, remains an open process. Similarly, the voice-over of the filmmaker-narrator in *No existimos* expresses the challenges she faces in relation with constructing the film and admits not managing to find universal solutions, nor definite conclusions. *Pays barbare*, the only film in my sample which entirely resorts to voice-over, employs this formal strategy as a means to subvert the intentionality with which the colonial footage materials were originally filmed. The filmmakers' voice-over comments put into dialogue the past with the present in a palimpsestic way that scrambles time linearity and denounce power inequalities traversed by gender, race and nationality.

**Observational documentary** privileges observation of the social actors without comments or interventions from the director(s), who simply register(s) the events that take place. Nevertheless, from the moment that the camera is placed in a certain angle, framing a specific portion of reality, there's a clear intervention of the filmmaker. This "fly-on-the-wall" approach is politicised in the three films from my sample which more openly resort to the observational mode of representation. In *Yo decido*, the cameras are placed at the service of a public demonstration organised by feminist groups, in which the filmed subjects enact their performative right to appear as political subjects with the right to demand rights in the public space. In *Triangle*, the sequences that render visible the otherwise invisible processes behind the production of clothes, also visualise the production of workers, machines and "the differential distribution of precariousness" which places poor women at an extremely vulnerable position (Butler 2015: 33).

A crucial aspect of *Yes, We Fuck!* is that we listen to the filmed subjects' discourses but we also see their practices, engaging in various sexual activities that fall out of what Gayle Rubin calls the "charmed circle of sex" (1984; 2006: 153). As a post-porn film, this documentary employs the observational mode to show people with functional diversity in sexually explicit images, which, in the words of co-director Antonio Centeno, allows them to create a "different collective imaginary (...) images that

have not been there, for we had no reference, no example of diverse bodies in sexual or pleasurable attitudes”<sup>843</sup>. It’s important to mention that Centeno himself, being quadriplegic, appears in one of the stories, thus questioning the distance usually attached to observational cinema.

In the **participatory mode of representation**, the filmmaker appears in the same reality as that of those being filmed, rather than in the detached world of commentator (expository mode) or witness (observational mode): s/he “enters into the social actor’s world through interviews, conversation, provocation, or other forms of encounter” (Nichols 2010: 158). A common strategy of participatory documentary is the use of “talking heads”. The political impact of this tool depends on “who is talking about what and how” (Halpern 1984: 267). This is indeed a difference that matters: whether this resource is used to represent an official and authoritarian position, or as an empowering tool for people who represent themselves and tell their own stories in front of the camera. Juhasz has argued in favour of the use of talking heads as a visual portrait of women in the self-conscious act of narrating themselves: “women’s self-discovery as a route towards feminist *collective identity* and political action” (1994: 181). The latter describes to a great extent what happens in four of the documentary films from my sample which employ a participatory mode of representation. There are other two participatory documentary films among my case studies but their effects are quite different, as explained below.

In *Cuidado, resbala*, the testimonies of various domestic workers are distressing, particularly when they describe the unfair situations they experience, but in this process of self-narration, they also become aware of how patterns of differences have led to inequalities. Moreover, in many cases, presenting their testimonies in front of the camera is an empowering and affirmation tool, especially for those women who have got organised to demand labour rights. Similarly, the talking heads of the women and men who are interviewed in *Yo decido* have an empowering effect for audiences, emphasising positive emotions such as joy, hope and solidarity born out of a collective and political claim against a law that creates anger and distress at individual and personal levels.

The talking heads in *Yes, We Fuck!* offer an important balance to the observational sequences with sexually explicit images, for instance, when Linda Porn

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<sup>843</sup> “ese imaginario colectivo diferente (...) queríamos poner esas imágenes que no estaban, que no teníamos ninguna referencia de cuerpos diversos en actitud sexual o de placer”. Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

expresses her reasons for being a sex worker, claiming her agency against a victimising and/or an objectifying gaze. The interview with Mariella in *Triangle* has a similar effect: despite the tragic situation she has been through, she speaks with pride and dignity, her testimony being regarded as valid and important in the reconstruction of the history of the female working class condition.

In contrast, talking heads in *Serás hombre* are problematic inasmuch as they give yet more authority to white European men whose epistemological superiority is emphasised. Still, in most of the cases, they use that position of power to dismantle masculinity as a social construct that sustains an unequal gender system. With this chorus of male experts, gender inequalities are discussed, though not in depth, from the perspective of economics, violence, religion and sexuality. Finally, *Una nobile rivoluzione* replaces talking heads with informal conversations that blur boundaries and hierarchies between the filmed subjects and the filmmaker. The latter has an active presence in front of the camera and within the frame, in congruence with the friendship that bounded him to the deceased protagonist.

The **poetic mode of representation** stresses “visual and acoustic rhythms, patterns, and the overall form of the film” (Nichols 2010: 150). Poetic documentaries gather their raw material from the historical world, but transform it in diverse ways. Instead of developing direct engagements with specific individuals, they explore formal patterns with temporal rhythms and spatial juxtapositions. Rather than factual knowledge or persuasion, this mode stresses mood and affect. As a result, it “is particularly adept at opening up the possibility of alternative forms of knowledge to the straightforward transfer of information” (Nichols 2010: 162). Two films from my sample employ this mode in order to translate violent acts and their effects into audiovisual metaphors.

*No existimos* challenges the traditional ways in which gender violence is portrayed, because instead of exposing women as victims who would give their personal testimonies in front of the camera, it resorts to poetic strategies to elicit emotions linked with their embodied experiences. For example, we hear a musical pattern similar to a heartbeat, which points at the human bodies that are not visible in the film, but on which the effects of gender violence, borders, laws and trials are materialised beyond the screen. Music is also an important element for the construction of an uncanny atmosphere in a setting that resorts to domestic imagery, such as broken plates and hanging knives, in *Ma l'amore c'entra?* The editing of these audiovisual metaphors of violence has a rhythmic

pace, which plays with repetition and jump cuts so as to convey tension and fear in a way that departs from the graphic and gruesome details commonly used in television news.

The **reflexive mode of representation** calls attention to documentary cinema's conventions by exposing its constructed character, as well as its representational processes: "we now attend to *how* we represent the historical world as well as to *what* gets represented" (Nichols 2010: 194). The focus is on the text itself and on the negotiations between filmmaker and spectators. Four films from my sample heavily rest upon reflexive modes of representation, while a pair of them incorporate reflexive sequences.

A sub-genre of reflexive documentary cinema is the compilation film made with archival or stock footage. Mulvey underlines that this kind of films are always "constructed around a gap or dislocation between the original archival raw material and the new reading offered by its rearrangement" (2011: 251). This is exactly what *Pays Barbare*, the only film from my sample entirely made with found footage, does. It offers a critical reflection on the Italian colonialist project in Libya and Ethiopia during Mussolini's fascist regime, by means of a revision of archival footage. By amplifying, repeating and delaying frames, the filmmakers render visible the invisible horrors of colonialism. And with their ironic voice-over comments, they read the past through the present and contest images that were originally recorded with a colonial intentionality.

Another common aspect of the reflexive mode of representation is that it subverts the general assumptions and expectations that spectators have towards documentary cinema, e.g. we generally accept that the interviews shown are authentic and spontaneous, nor scripted nor rehearsed. This is clearly seen in *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, since the three interviews are indeed re-enactments of the original interviews carried out by the filmmaker. *Lunàdigas* also calls attention to its constructed character by combining conventional participatory segments of interviews and group discussions with performed fictional monologues and sequences in which the filmmakers interrogate themselves about the best way to approach the discussion.

Self-reflexivity is also a strong element of *No existimos*, as we listen to the voice-over of the filmmaker-narrator making her position explicit and expressing the challenges she faces in relation with constructing the film. This reflexivity is less present in *Cuidado, resbala* and *Triangle*. In the first case, the opening and closing sequences with the reflexive voice-over make the camera felt as embodied and with a specific gaze/point of view (that of a female immigrant and domestic worker). In the second case, found

footage and voice recordings from New York in 1911 are interwoven with images from Barletta in 2011, thus exposing the constructed character of the filmmaker's reading of the two events.

Finally, the **performative mode of representation** emphasises the subjective and affective dimensions of our knowledge of the world. Information and facts yield to “an expressive quality that affirms the highly situated, embodied, and vividly personal perspective of specific subjects” (Nichols 2010: 203). Despite the centrality it gives to personal experience, it always joins “the particular to the general, the individual to the collective, and the personal to the political.” Performativity is particularly emphasised and politicised in four documentaries from my sample.

The performative mode of representation requests spectators “to experience what it feels like to occupy the subjective, social position” (Nichols 2010: 204) of the filmed subjects. This is particularly strong in two stories of *Yes, We Fuck!* that also have the peculiarity of moving from an optic visuality to a haptic visuality: performative formal strategies are employed to represent female pleasure in coherence with the filmed subjects' bodies, one being blind and the other quadriplegic. Performativity employed to render visible a journey through affects and emotions is also a key aspect of *Ma l'amore c'entra?*

In *Una nobile rivoluzione*, Simone Cangelosi acknowledges his subjective point of view, located in-and-out gender, since the first segment of the film. In this way, he inscribes the film with a transgender gaze that looks *with* the transgender characters instead of *at* them (Halberstam 2005: 78). Similarly, the directors of *Lunàdigas* present themselves within the diegesis of the film as part of that community of rebellious women who name and affirm themselves in front of the camera, enacting their performative right to appear. Moreover, the whole film is traversed by a playful and ironic sense of humour.

With my ten case studies I have corroborated what Lesage (1984) asserts: feminist material-discursive practices can politicise realist (expository-observational-participatory) or experimental (poetic-reflexive-performative) documentary films. The expository voice-of-God is replaced by an embodied transgender gaze (*Una nobile rivoluzione*). The observational mode is used to register a demonstration for the right to abortion (*Yo decido*). Talking heads are empowering tools for vulnerable subjects who claim their agency against paternalistic and victimising approaches (*Cuidado, resbala*; *Yes, We Fuck!*; *Triangle*), or transform these power spaces in platforms for dismantling masculinity as a social construct that provides men with privileges at the expense of

women (*Serás Hombre*). Poetic resources operate as metaphors of gender-based violence (*No existimos; Ma l'amore c'entra?*). A feminist reading detects palimpsests of sexism and racism in colonial footage thanks to the manipulation enacted by the filmmakers upon the materials they work with (*Pays Barbare*). And the performative right to appear makes it possible for a community of rebellious women to name and affirm themselves in front of the camera (*Lunàdigas*).

### **7.3 Production Practices: Positions, Tensions and Effects/Affects in the Entanglements of Documentary Cinema, Feminism, Gender and Inequalities**

To discuss production practices and processes, I propose two cuts in order to facilitate reading the insights of the filmmakers through one another: I identify self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions concerning four key concepts, i.e. documentary cinema, feminism(s), gender and equality. I follow the new materialist premise that concepts are not pre-established categories but “material-discursive practices that emerge as phenomena in complex practices” (2015: 39). In this regard, I analyse what a feminist position means in terms of what it does at the level of production decisions.

In chapter 1, I develop my definition of **documentary cinema** as a diffraction apparatus, i.e. technologies that co-produce and record the processes through which human elements (e.g. the filmmakers) and non-human elements (e.g. the camera) intra-act with other human and non-human parts of the world (e.g. filmed subjects and objects, spectators, screens). As expected, none of my interviewees define documentary in these exact terms, but they do share an understanding of documentary filmmaking as a series of intra-actions that co-composes realities depending on how the observation apparatus is designed. Therefore, they all emphasise the importance of **situating their gazes**, i.e. stating the position from which they work:

When you make a documentary there is no objective position, **what exists is your position and what you have to do is to explain it as best as possible** (...) part of the work is that, in the process of making the documentary, there is a reflection on what has been your interaction with that reality that you intend to reflect, right? **How that reality has transformed you, how you have also transformed that reality** (...) to say “my position is this and I am looking from here, I come from

here, my background is this, my ghosts are these, I am obsessed with these things and well, my process has been this”. To situate, **to situate what your gaze is.**<sup>844</sup>

**A documentary is also fiction**, I mean, there’s also a staging in which **I, the director, have intervened**. I admit that, at any given moment, such staging gets out of my hands and that’s where the magic of documentary takes place. **When I lose control of the steering wheel, when I lose the reins: that is the real magic**. But there is a steering wheel that I have tried to direct, that is clear, you have to accept it.<sup>845</sup>

Their vision of objectivity is close to Barad’s definition: “Objectivity, instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about accountability to marks on bodies, and responsibility to the entanglements of which we are a part” (in Dolphjin and Van Der Tuin 2012: 52). Their gazes are not only situated, but also **accountable and responsible towards their filmed subjects and their audiences**, in terms of how they make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world:

**Cinema is not objective**. It is a language (...) The great deception about cinema is that, since it is made up of moving images and therefore it is mimetic of reality, it is regarded as reality. It is a reality like any other part of reality, and **it is a language that speaks of reality, discourse, representation**, to put it better (...) I worried about restoring Marcella, about not betraying Marcella. Because I know that a film, perforce can betray and regardless of how much you try to stop it, **it betrays reality**. It always conveys just a small part of reality.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> “Cuando haces un documental no existe una posición objetiva, lo que existe es tu posición y lo que tienes que hacer es explicarla lo mejor posible (...) parte del trabajo es que en ese proceso de hacer el documental, haya una reflexión sobre cuál ha sido tu interacción con esa realidad que pretendes reflejar, ¿no? Cómo eso te ha transformado a ti, cómo tu has transformado también a esa realidad (...) decir ‘mi posición es ésta y yo estoy mirando desde aquí, vengo de aquí, mi background es éste, mis fantasmas son éstos, estoy obsesionado con estas cosas y bueno, mi proceso ha sido este’. Situar, situar cuál es tu mirada.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016. All emphases in this section are mine.

<sup>845</sup> “un documental también es ficción, o sea, también hay una puesta en escena en la que yo directora he intervenido. Que a mí, en un momento dado, esa puesta en escena se me va de las manos y ahí es donde surge la magia del documental, lo reconozco. Cuando yo pierdo el volante, cuando yo pierdo las riendas, esa es la verdadera magia. Pero que hay un volante que yo he intentado dirigir, eso está claro, tienes que aceptarlo.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>846</sup> “Il cinema non è oggettivo. E un linguaggio (...) Il grande inganno sul cinema è che, siccome è costituito di immagine in movimento e quindi è mimetico alla realtà, sia quindi la realtà. E realtà come qualsiasi altra parte di realtà, ed è linguaggio che parla della realtà, discorso, rappresentazione per dir meglio (...) mi preoccupavo di restituire Marcella, non tradire Marcella, perché appunto so che un film per forza di cose può tradire, e per quanto ti sforzi di impedirlo tradisce la realtà. Dice sempre una piccola parte della realtà.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Bologna.

We believe that a **film about fascism, about “fascisms” is important, even if we don’t like the word fascism, even if we don’t want to use it anymore.** When the euro crisis took place in Greece we felt that **this film had to be made.** It’s something we must accomplish. You can’t change things, but **you have to act with the only force you have: your work.** (Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi in Censi 2013: 82).<sup>847</sup>

All of the interviewees consider their work in terms of a **social commitment** that demands **direct experience** from them. In this regard, they define their cinema as political. Their films are **haunted by a reality with which they have to intra-act** responsibly:

I see it as a tool of political activism, of creative expression and **creative expression for me is political**, I mean, for me there is nothing that is not political. **Love is political and creation is love**, that is what creating is, it is the energy of the universe and **channelling that energy in order to transform the power structures**, to transform the social structures and renew all of this, **that is to do politics.**<sup>848</sup>

I believe that **the construction of a discourse that makes sense**, which is close to the reality it is intended to describe, **must also pass through experience** itself.<sup>849</sup>

**I don’t agree with the patriarchal model, which for me is where you really don’t have any connection** (...) the only thing you do is choose a topic, which can be a social issue and then you develop it, but it doesn’t touch you.<sup>850</sup>

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<sup>847</sup> “Crediamo sia importante un film sul fascismo, sui ‘fascismi’, anche se la parola fascismo non ci piace, non la vogliamo più usare. Quando c’è stata la crisi dell’euro in Grecia abbiamo sentito che questo film dovevamo farlo. È qualcosa che dobbiamo portare a termine. Non puoi cambiare le cose, ma devi agire con la sola forza che hai: il tuo lavoro.”

<sup>848</sup> “Lo veo como una herramienta de activismo político, de expresión creativa y la expresión creativa para mí es política, o sea, para mí no hay nada que no sea político. El amor es político y la creación es amor, crear es eso, es la energía del universo y canalizar esa energía para transformar las estructuras de poder, para transformar las estructuras sociales y renovar un poco todo esto, eso es hacer política.” Oliva Acosta. Personal interview. 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in Cádiz.

<sup>849</sup> “Creo que en la construcción de un discurso que tenga sentido, que sea cercano a la realidad que pretende describir, hay que pasar también por la experiencia propia.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>850</sup> “Yo no estoy de acuerdo con el modelo patriarcal, que para mí es, donde realmente tú no tienes ningún vínculo (...) lo único que haces es coger un tema, que puede ser un tema social y desarrollarlo pero no te está tocando.” Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.



...these works go through you. It is not as if you are stating something silly, you are actually doing things which make **you question your whole life**.<sup>851</sup>

The intense **off-screen work** that documentary filmmaking requires also questions objectivity as a mirror passively gazing at a fixed reality. Rather, the filmmakers recognise the impact that their intra-actions have on **the emergence of the “realities” that the camera captures**:

I believe that there is a point of view, which allows what exists, to exist in another form, and therefore to become, in some way, **a representation of something that is not simply reality, but a relationship that exists between the one who looks and what is filmed**. It is in that space in between, in that relationship, that reality is fulfilled, that reality exists (...) for example, that interview with Mariella is not just a conversation with Mariella, it is Mariella who is at the centre of the frame, framed in a certain way, with a certain light, who speaks in a certain way, who relates to me in a certain way. All these elements make you understand that **such a conversation is the result of lots of work** (...) in the space between what I film and myself, reality is accomplished. In time, in the passage of time, reality becomes full. So the time factor is always fundamental. **That’s why I think documentary cinema is the highest expression of being in the world**.<sup>852</sup>

The ‘analytical camera’ allows us **to move closer, to descend in the depths of the photogram. To intervene** on the scroll speed, on detail, on colour. **To fix and reproduce** archive material in uncommon forms” (Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi in Lissoni 2012).

In chapters 1 and 2, I propose a working definition of **feminist documentary cinema** as an eccentric technology of gender due to its interrogations beyond the essentialist binary

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<sup>851</sup> “estos trabajos te atraviesan. No estás planteando ninguna tontería, estás haciendo cosas que a la hora de plantearlas no queda de otra que cuestionarte tu propia vida.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>852</sup> “Io credo che esista il punto di vista, che permette a ciò che esiste di esistere in un’altra forma e quindi di diventare, in qualche modo, rappresentazione di qualcosa che non è semplicemente la realtà, ma il prodotto della relazione che c’è tra chi filma e ciò che viene filmato. In quello spazio in mezzo, nella relazione, esiste la realtà (...) per esempio, quella intervista a Mariella non è solo una conversazione con Mariella; lì Mariella sta al centro del fotogramma, viene inquadrata in un certo modo, con una certa luce, parla in un certo modo, si relaziona con me in un certo modo. Tutti questi elementi ti fanno capire che quella conversazione è frutto di un lavoro enorme. (...) nello spazio tra me e ciò che filmo si compie la realtà. Nella durata, cioè nello scorrere del tempo, la realtà diventa piena. Quindi il fattore tempo è sempre fondamentale. Ecco perché io penso che il cinema documentario sia la espressione più alta dello stare al mondo.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

opposition of femininity/ masculinity, which enacts a queer performativity of gender norms and creates the conditions of visibility for “an eccentric discursive position outside the male (hetero)sexual monopoly of power/knowledge” (de Lauretis 1990: 127). I resist a closed and prescriptive definition, resorting instead to an open definition of feminist cinema as that in which the filmmakers understand “their being creators of representation as a political task” (Ruido 2006: 2).<sup>853</sup> I also agree with Sophie Mayer’s definition of a feminist film, filmmaker, film theorist or film viewer as that characterised by “a stance of ongoing public activism, rooted in but not limited to gender equity” (2015: 20).

In the Italian sample, various filmmakers acknowledged that feminism has been transversal in their lives, but showed **tension towards feminism as a label** with which they didn’t want to identify their films:

I cannot call myself a militant, but I think that **if one is feminist it’s difficult not to remain one**. For me to be a feminist is **a way of seeing the world, a way of being in the world** (....) But **I don’t give a label to my film**, that’s the last thing I want to do, “a feminist film”, “a political film”, “a film made by a female director”. Then later, whomever writes can think, can write whatever s/he wants. **I did not want to make an ideological film**, I don’t want that these labels make people think of an ideological film that knows what it wants to say from the beginning, with pre-established theses.<sup>854</sup>

**I’ve never wanted to be caged in a word** (...) I find it limiting (...) I’ve never loved the screening of films related to a so-called “female cinema”, although I have often received invitations in beautiful settings from beautiful people that I have gladly accepted (....) **I’ve never loved definitions**. Of course I’m happy to see that in these days we are talking about feminism again.<sup>855</sup>

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<sup>853</sup> “su labor como generadoras de representación como un trabajo político.”

<sup>854</sup> “Non posso definirmi una militante, ma penso che se uno è femminista è difficile che non lo rimanga. Per me essere femminista è un modo di vedere il mondo, un modo di stare al mondo (....) Pero io non do etichetta al mio film, è l’ultima cosa che io voglio, ‘un film femminista’, ‘un film politico’, ‘un film che ha fatto una regista donna’. Poi dopo, chi ne scrive può pensare, può scrivere quello che vuole. Non ho voluto fare un film ideologico, non voglio che queste etichette possano far pensare a un film ideologico che parte sapendo cosa vuol dire e sapendo che cosa, con delle tesi precostituite.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018.

<sup>855</sup> “Non ho mai avuto il desiderio di essere ingabbiata in una parola (...) La trovo limitante (...) Non ho mai amato le proiezioni dei film legate al ‘cinema al femminile’, anche se ho spesso ricevuto inviti in contesti bellissimi da persone bellissime che ho accettato volentieri (....) Le definizioni non le ho mai amate. Di certo c’è che in questi giorni che si parla nuovamente di femminismo, io sono contenta.” Costanza Quatriglio. Skype interview. 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

What I notice in both cases is precisely the fear of being trapped within a closed definition and a fixed way of doing things. One of the filmmakers from the Italian sample, Simone Cangelosi, is a trans man. He explains that he doesn't identify as feminist, but that he acknowledges **the debt** that the transsexual movement has **with the feminist movement**:

Being over and done with my female identity, I don't think in these terms any longer. Certainly I do not claim this definition but this does not mean that I would dislike people to think of me as a feminist. I believe that **feminism is one of the most important and positive political movements in the Twentieth century. Certainly I am the result of the struggles of the feminist movement, as surely I am the result of the struggles of the transsexual movement**, of the people who struggled and managed to obtain concrete results: laws, health protection, real possibilities of life, a dignified life. And therefore I am also the result of the revolution of feminist thought, because **the questioning of gender and the revolution of man-woman relationships began with feminism (...)** **The LGBT movement has debts towards feminism** because it all comes from there. Without the feminist debate there wouldn't have been any other: being able to tell one's own sexual identity, self-determination to the world, a vision that goes back to the early seventies, which has its roots in feminism.<sup>856</sup>

Indeed, in his documentary film, Cangelosi puts in practice two important feminist mottos: "the personal is political" and **starting from oneself**. The same is carried out by the directors of *Lunàdigas*, who are the only ones from the Italian sample openly identifying as feminist. Their appearing in front of the camera, within the frame, is regarded as an act of responsibility and empathy with their filmed subjects:

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<sup>856</sup> "Avendo chiuso con l'identità femminile, non ho più pensato in questi termini. Certamente non mi approprio di questa definizione ma questo non significa che non mi faccia piacere se uno pensa che io sia femminista. Credo che il femminismo sia una dei movimenti politici dal basso più importanti o tra i più importanti e anche dei più positivi che ha avuto il Novecento. Certamente sono frutto delle lotte del movimento femminista come sicuramente sono frutto delle lotte del movimento transessuale, delle persone che hanno fatto quelle lotte e che sono riuscite ad ottenere risultati concreti: leggi, tutela della salute, cioè possibilità reali di vita, di una vita dignitosa e quindi sono anche frutto della rivoluzione del pensiero femminista, perché la messa in discussione del genere e la rivoluzione dei rapporti uomo-donna è iniziata con il femminismo (...). Il movimento LGBT ha dei debiti verso il femminismo perché viene da lì, se non ci fosse stata quella messa in discussione non ci sarebbe stato tutto il resto, poter dire al mondo la propria identità sessuale, l'autodeterminazione, una visione che risale ai primi anni settanta, che ha radici nel femminismo." Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Bologna.

This film would not exist, this project would not have happened if Marilisa and I had had children (...) *Lunàdigas* is made with that theory that we have learned from feminism, which is that of **starting from ourselves** (...) Marilisa and I have many years of experience. But we never thought of **passing that border, from behind to the front of the camera** (...) we understood that we had asked our filmed women such intimacy, such an ability to make public the private that we could not hide. It would have been a betrayal (...) **we could not leave our filmed women alone**. And so we also understood that we had to be among them.<sup>857</sup>

In the Spanish sample, all the interviewees identify themselves as feminist. The directors of *Cuidado, resbala* reckon that a **subjective approach** is a feminist material-discursive practice that echoes the second wave feminist premise of **“the personal is political”**:

For me, **objectivity does not exist**; there is always a vision, some starting premises, and a mind that thinks (...) for me, it is interesting to **start with the feminist premise of “the personal is political”**. For us it was a starting premise to share our own experiences and to be able to construct a discourse from there.<sup>858</sup>

For this group of filmmakers, making a film is a way of **translating their feminist knowledge through the audiovisual**. They consider that a documentary film can reach wider publics and can be used as **didactic material**. They define themselves as **radical feminists**, whose film touches an issue that is relevant for any kind of feminism, especially in the current economical crisis:

In the end, the documentary makes our position about placing care at the centre very clear, right? The system has to change. That is a **position that goes to the root, which is radical, and is there, and is feminist** (...) It is a critique of social organisation as we know it, which is absolutely patriarchal, so I think that insofar

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<sup>857</sup> “Questo film non ci sarebbe, questo progetto non ci sarebbe stato se Marilisa ed io avessimo avuto dei figli. (...) *Lunàdigas*, diciamo che è fatto con quella teoria che noi abbiamo imparato nel femminismo che è quello del partire da noi stesse (...) Marilisa ed io abbiamo una esperienza di tanti anni alle spalle. Ma mai avevamo pensato di passare quel confine da dietro ad avanti alla macchina (...) abbiamo capito che avevamo chiesto alle nostre testimoni, una tale intimità, una tale capacità di fare pubblico il privato, che noi non potevamo nasconderci. Sarebbe stato un tradimento (...) non potevamo lasciare sole le nostre testimoni. E quindi abbiamo capito anche che dovevamo stare in mezzo a loro.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>858</sup> “Para mí la objetividad no existe, siempre hay una visión, unas premisas de partida, una mente que piensa (...) para mí es interesante partir de la premisa feminista de: ‘lo personal es político’. Para nosotras fue una premisa de partida poner en común desde nuestras vivencias propias y poder construir un discurso.” Vanessa Gómez. E-mail interview. January 2017.

as it questions, criticises and highlights **all the contradictions of the patriarchal system and its economic correlate, which is capitalism, it is absolutely feminist.**<sup>859</sup>

Other filmmakers from the Spanish sample have an understanding of **feminism** that is closer to the idea of **equality**, **“normalisation”** and **“integration”**:

**What feminism pursues is equality** and, somehow, we all mobilised in this sense because we believed that the issue of abortion is an issue that affects women absolutely, directly, it affects their freedom, their decision-making capacity, their physical integrity, so, well, of course, **if that law had gone ahead, it would have left women in a situation of inequality** and in a situation of vulnerability, then of course, yes, yes, it is absolutely, **it is a documentary that has a feminist vision.**<sup>860</sup>

Is it a feminist film? Yes, I mean, **it speaks for the equality of rights, in that sense it is feminist, clearly.** But that is an adjective that is often highly degraded; that connotation degrades the product, saying “it is a subject only for girls”. It’s not like that, no! That’s why I tell you, the interviews I did were specifically with men (...) yes, **it is a feminist documentary because it talks about such a clear problem, I mean, so clear, wanting to control the body of the woman,** that yes, I could define it as such. But it seems insufficient to me; it is political. **Militant and political for a cause, I mean, they want to crush the rights of women and in that sense it is feminist.**<sup>861</sup>

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<sup>859</sup> “Al final, el documental como que deja muy claro, ¿no?, un poco nuestra postura, de cuidado al centro y de que el sistema tiene que cambiar. Esa es una postura que va a la raíz, que es radical y está ahí, y es feminista (...) Es una crítica a la organización social tal y cual la conocemos, que es absolutamente patriarcal, entonces, yo creo que en la medida en que cuestiona, critica y pone en evidencia todas las contradicciones del sistema patriarcal y su correlato económico que es el capitalismo, es feminista a morir.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>860</sup> “el feminismo lo que persigue es la igualdad y, de alguna manera, todas en este sentido nos movilizamos porque creíamos que, el tema del aborto es un tema que afecta a las mujeres absolutamente, directamente, en su libertad, en su capacidad de decisión, en su integridad física, entonces, bueno, claro, si esa ley hubiera salido hacia adelante, hubiera dejado a las mujeres en un, en una situación de desigualdad y en una situación de desprotección, entonces claro, sí, sí, absolutamente es un, es un documental que tiene una visión feminista.” Chus Gutiérrez. Personal interview. 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>861</sup> “¿Es feminista? Sí, es decir, está hablando por la igualdad de derechos, en ese sentido es feminista, así de claro. Que es un adjetivo que está muy degradado muchas veces, esa connotación degrada el producto, es decir, “es que es un tema sólo para chicas” Que no, que no. Por eso yo te digo, yo concretamente las entrevistas que hice eran a hombres (...) sí que es un documental feminista porque habla de un problema tan claro, o sea, tan claro de querer controlar el cuerpo de la mujer que sí, lo podría definir así. Pero me parece poco, es político. Militante y político por una causa, es decir, que

Of course **I'm a feminist. I find it difficult to understand that women are not.** But I understand that many men also declare themselves feminists at the moment they say and affirm that equality should be achieved (...) They still have a lot of fear of the term and I believe that this will only be overcome through the most complete naturalness (...) There is a very partial, very biased understanding of what the feminist movement is and what it has been and what it has meant. So this is what you have to tear down. Yes, of course, we try to do this and we frequently articulate our discourse with this normalisation. **We have discovered that there are actions that must be more forceful, more radical, but at other times very normalised actions generate many benefits for us.**<sup>862</sup>

In chapter 1, I introduce the concepts of equality and gender equality as contested: Within a liberal perspective, “equality implies ‘same as men’, where the yardstick is that already set by men. Instead of a radical shift in the gender order, women therefore are required to fit into the prevailing androcentric structures” (Lazar 2007: 16). However, as Lazar also argues, the ideal of achieving equality remains “historically important for politically disadvantaged groups of women who have been systematically denied equality under the law” (2007: 16). One of the traps of the equality discourse is having a law that recognises same rights for everybody irrespective of their sex, but letting gender binarism and the yardstick set within a male privilege framework unchallenged.

Many filmmakers from the sample highlight the need to **challenge the liberal perspective of equality**. One of them identifies **androcentrism** as a key problem: “because in the end there are no men and women, right? What there is, is either men or not men. And in that non-men, are included women, a boy, a black guy, a queer.”<sup>863</sup> In the process of making their films, many of them realised that **inequalities are**

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quieren aplastar los derechos de la mujer y en ese sentido es feminista.” Ana Díez. Personal interview. 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>862</sup> “claro que soy feminista. Dificilmente entiendo que las mujeres no lo sean. Pero entiendo que muchos hombres se declaren también feministas en el momento que dicen y afirman que la igualdad tendría que estar conseguida (...) Siguen teniendo mucho miedo al término y yo creo que eso sólo se vence desde la naturalidad más total. (...) Hay un entendimiento muy parcial, muy sesgado de lo que es el movimiento feminista y lo que ha sido y lo que ha implicado. Entonces esto es lo que hay que derribar. Sí, claro, nosotras intentamos hacerlo y muchas veces articulamos el discurso con esta normalización. Hemos descubierto que hay acciones que deben ser más contundentes, más radicales, pero otras muchas veces las acciones muy normalizadas nos generan muchos beneficios.” Virginia Yagüe. Personal interview. 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017 in Cádiz.

<sup>863</sup> “Es que al final no hay hombres y mujeres ¿no? Lo que hay es, son hombres y no-hombres. Y en ese no-hombres, entramos mujeres, un niño, un negro, un marica.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

**intersectional:** “It is something that appears as an evidence, it comes almost on a par, I mean, the variable woman, domestic worker, immigration, come as three axes with their vulnerabilities and potentials, right?”<sup>864</sup>

As Lazar, the directors of this film (*Cuidado, resbala*) reject “that too-easy, egalitarian speech of egalitarianism that ‘we are all people’ [and consider that] it is still important to defend ourselves, not defend, but to assert ourselves as women at least against certain types of inequalities that are so obvious and so common.”<sup>865</sup> In line with this political need to situate themselves as women, one of the filmmakers asserts that **one or two token women cannot change the entire system**. Rather, from her point of view, it is necessary to support the 50/50 discourse:

[Having] only one woman is rotten. **When there is only one woman in a position of power, that power is still masculine.** By adding one, adding three, this does not change. It must be a **50/50 story, which is about occupying positions (...)** in direction, in production, in making decisions about what is being done.<sup>866</sup>

**Where there are many women, other things appear**, that don’t emerge where there are many men. Obviously it is not a genetic issue or anything, but simply, that’s still the evidence, isn’t it? Where there are many women it may be possible for other things to appear, **it’s possible to deconstruct hierarchical structures, patriarchal structures of power.** To conceive a different normality other than the one that is given (...) **Even if many powerful women reproduce patriarchal power structures.**<sup>867</sup>

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<sup>864</sup> “Es algo que aparece como una evidencia, viene casi a la par, o sea, la variable de mujer, empleo doméstico, inmigración, vienen como tres ejes con sus vulnerabilidades y sus potencialidades, ¿no?” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>865</sup> “No ese discurso facilón, igualitario, del igualitarismo de que ‘todos somos personas’ (...) sigue siendo importante defendernos, no defendernos sino enunciarlos como mujeres, por lo menos frente a determinados tipos de desigualdades que son tan evidentes y tan cotidianas.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>866</sup> “Sólo una mujer está chungo. Cuando hay sólo una mujer en un espacio de poder, ese poder sigue siendo masculino. Por añadir una, añadir tres, no cambia. Debe ser una historia de 50/50, que es una historia de ocupar espacios (...) en dirección, en producción, en la toma de decisiones de qué es lo que se está haciendo.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>867</sup> “Donde hay muchas mujeres aparecen otras cosas que no aparecen donde hay muchos hombres. Evidentemente no es una cuestión genética ni nada, pero simplemente todavía, la evidencia sigue siendo esa, ¿no?, donde hay muchas mujeres puede ser posible que aparezcan otras cosas, es posible deconstruir las estructuras jerárquicas, patriarcales, estructuras de poder. Plantearse otra normalidad que no sea la que viene dada (...) A pesar de que muchas mujeres poderosas reproducen estructuras de poder patriarcales.” Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

One filmmaker discusses the **problem of equality** understood as “same as men”, directly **in connection with filmmaking**: “I think that’s a serious problem, right? (...) we always have to resemble the model that has been imposed on us (...) But the system that they have generated doesn’t interest me, I don’t want to be like them, I don’t want to direct by yelling at everyone.”<sup>868</sup> Other filmmakers from the sample are **suspicious** about the **equality discourse** and prefer to nuance it in reference to **diversity**:

The question of **equality is problematic**. Equal in what way? **Equal in rights, fine up to that point**. But then another thing is how equality is usually interpreted. In the end **it is taken as uniformity**, as treating equally, if you want equality I will treat you the same, right? It is precisely because we are different that **you have to treat us differently so that we are equal in rights** (...) For me it is more interesting to speak in terms of diversity. You’re talking about the same thing in the end, but I prefer to focus from the angle that words like diversity, difference, give you.<sup>869</sup>

I want to **have the same economic and social conditions as men, but I don’t want to be like them** (...) What I want is to have the same advantages and conditions as them, all that of course. And that for me is **social equality** (...) I have my female friends who are directors and many of them don’t have a platform, they have an idea of wanting to achieve the same goals. What, **are we going to fight to have an equality like that, when the male chauvinist model is horrible?**<sup>870</sup>

In one case, it is actually the **acknowledgement of differences**, which lies at the heart of their **political position**:

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<sup>868</sup> “Yo creo que ese es el grave problema que existe, ¿no? (...) siempre nos tenemos que parecer al modelo que nos han impuesto (...) Pero el sistema que han generado no me interesa, no quiero ser como ellos, yo no quiero dirigir dando gritos.” Ana Solano. Phone interview. 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>869</sup> “Lo de la igualdad es problemático. ¿Iguales en qué? Iguales en derechos, hasta ahí sí. Pero luego otra cosa es cómo se suele interpretar la igualdad. Al final se coge como uniformidad, como tratar igual, si quieres igualdad te voy a tratar igual, ¿no? Justamente porque somos diferentes nos tienes que tratar diferente para que seamos iguales en derechos (...) para mí es más interesante hablar en términos de diversidad. Estás hablando de lo mismo al final, pero me gusta más enfocar desde el ángulo que te dan las palabras como diversidad, diferencia.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>870</sup> “Yo quiero tener las mismas condiciones tanto económicas como sociales que los hombres, pero no quiero ser igual a ellos (...) lo que quiero es tener las mismas ventajas y condiciones que ellos, eso por supuesto. Y eso para mí es la igualdad social (...) Tengo mis amigas directoras y muchas de ellas no están en un planteamiento, están en un planteamiento de querer conseguir los mismos objetivos. ¿Qué, vamos a luchar por tener una igualdad como esa, cuando el modelo machista es horroroso?” Ana Solano. Phone interview. 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.



When we talk about diversity, we stress the fact that **we are all different**, we all do things differently (...) if it is not a political question, what is it? It is charity, it is solidarity, I mean, it has to be political (...) what is at stake is not what we do with these strange people. **What is at stake is what we do with human fragility, what we do with that need of others.** That, if that is not political, I mean, **it is politics of the first order**, it must be.<sup>871</sup>

In line with this position, it is in the **recognition of diversity** where some of the filmmakers identify **improvements for the population as a whole**, for example:

Incorporating functional diversity in any social area is not only about guaranteeing the rights of a group of people, which would already be important in itself, but also that, **in this process of including functional diversity, you generate a social environment which is better for the whole population**, isn't it? This is made very clear, it is more visible, when we talk about urbanism, when we talk about architecture, when we talk about transport, but also when we talk about occupation, and we suspect that it is also the case when we talk about sexuality.<sup>872</sup>

Despite the general rejection of the androcentric model as the yardstick for equality, in the discourses of some of the filmmakers there's **tension with the idea of privilege** as something to look for, and which just a few Western women have attained. One filmmaker connects the invisible **privilege of colonialism** with the **privilege of sexism** that most men don't see:

As a European, the word colonialism sounds to me very far away. And of course, I think, it's my privilege, **a privilege is actually invisible**, right? (...) I live it as: "what are they talking about, if colonialism is forgotten". And I realised that it was

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<sup>871</sup> "Cuando hablamos de diversidad, ponemos el acento en el hecho de que todas somos diferentes, todas hacemos las cosas de manera diferente (...) si no es una cuestión política, ¿qué es? Es caridad, es solidaridad, o sea, esto tiene que ser una cuestión política (...) lo que está en juego no es qué hacemos con la gente rara. Lo que está en juego es qué hacemos con la fragilidad humana, qué hacemos con ese necesitar de los demás. Eso, si eso no es política, o sea, es política de primer orden, debe serlo." Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>872</sup> "Incorporar la diversidad funcional en cualquier ámbito social no es sólo que con eso garantizas los derechos de un grupo de personas, que ya sería importante de por sí, pero es que además, en este proceso de incluir la diversidad funcional, generas un entorno social en el que estés operando, que resulta mejor para el conjunto de la población, no. Eso se hace muy evidente, es más visible, cuando hablamos de urbanismo, cuando hablamos de arquitectura, cuando hablamos de transporte, pero también cuando hablamos de ocupación, y sospechamos que también cuando hablamos de sexualidad." Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

the same argument that many friends of mine had told me about male chauvinism: “But is it my fault? No, if it isn’t my fault, it’s not my problem”, and I would say: “No, you have a privilege and you don’t see it”. Well, **the same thing happened to me with colonialism, I have a privilege and I don’t see it.**<sup>873</sup>

**Awareness of the inequalities faced by women** in the audiovisual industry has motivated some of the interviewees to become members of **women organisations** such as the Andalusian Association of Women in Media (AAMMA) and the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media (CIMA). One of the Spanish filmmakers comments that **not all members** of such associations **are feminists**:

There are women who are, like, more into feminism, and others have got in because they are women in a world of men and they are restless for that reason. But within the collective there are people who are well educated. And somehow **their coming together means that their colleagues go into feminism**, whoever wants to do it. There are some that are truly amazing.<sup>874</sup>

She contrasts AAMMA with CIMA, which also points at tensions **within different kinds of feminist audiovisual productions**: “I feel that CIMA is a bit more elitist (...) they have people that, at the national level, are more powerful, they have made feature-length films and there is like a kind of, I don’t know, for example I find it difficult for CIMA to recognise me as a partner”<sup>875</sup>. There’s tension in terms of **lack of feminist awareness** among women filmmakers in these associations:

I think that CIMA wants to incorporate, well, I don’t know, this is my personal point of view, but it is true that **they want to incorporate a feminist point of**

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<sup>873</sup> “Como europea, la palabra colonialismo me suena como a muy lejano. Y claro pienso, es mi privilegio, un privilegio en realidad es invisible, ¿no? (...) lo vivo como de qué me están hablando, o sea, si el colonialismo está olvidado ya. Y me di cuenta de que era el mismo argumento que muchos amigos míos me decían, sobre el machismo: ‘¿pero tengo yo la culpa? No, si yo no tengo la culpa no es problema mío’, y yo decía: ‘no, tú lo que tienes es un privilegio y no lo ves’. Bueno, pues lo mismo me pasó con el colonialismo, yo tengo un privilegio y no lo veo.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 in Madrid.

<sup>874</sup> “Hay mujeres que están como más en el feminismo y otras están como más, han entrado porque son mujeres en un mundo de hombres y están inquietas por eso. Pero dentro del colectivo sí hay peña que está bastante formada. Y de alguna manera su encuentro hace que las compas vayan entrando en el feminismo, quien quiera hacerlo. Hay algunas que están muy cañeras.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>875</sup> “Siento que CIMA es un poco como más elitista (...) tienen gente que a nivel nacional es como más potente, que han hecho largos y hay como una especie de, no sé, a mí por ejemplo me cuesta que CIMA me reconozca como compañera.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

**view**, but they don't have it, or not that much. Within the organisation there is a very individual gaze, one of "me, the filmmaker", and there is no analysis of what is happening to women within the film industry. It has to be very hard.<sup>876</sup>

This filmmaker also notices that many women in **power positions within the film industry** don't want to get involved in issues concerning gender inequalities. She notices **a lack of sorority** in the audiovisual industry:

**Some women got on the board of the SGAE** [General Society of Authors and Editors] **through the quota** (...) And sometimes, women filmmakers themselves, many times, when you are already inside a structure, they don't want to participate in this thing about gender, right? Rather they think that they have attained a kind of status, a higher status, right? I think that happens sometimes. **Women filmmakers who are in other status do not want to fight for the recognition of the rights of women.**<sup>877</sup>

Opening up opportunities for **more women filmmakers** is seen as crucial not just due to **representativity** but also as something that gives a **more accurate portrait** of the reality experienced by everybody:

I think it has to do with **the gazes, telling other kinds of stories** (...) the more women there are in cinema, the more they incorporate life stories that have to do with what they know. In directing, in scriptwriting and that sort of things. It is true that it also has to do with a theme of representativeness but it goes beyond representation, it will make cinema much closer to the reality of people (...) I do insist that, **when women work in cinema, they make other types of productions**

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<sup>876</sup> "Yo creo que CIMA quiere incorporar, bueno, no lo sé, este es mi punto de vista personal, pero es verdad que quiere incorporar un punto de vista feminista pero no lo tiene. O no lo tiene tanto. Dentro de la organización hay una mirada como muy individual, como de 'yo cineasta', y no hay un análisis de que nos ocurre a las mujeres dentro de la industria del cine. Que tiene que ser también como muy duro." Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>877</sup> "Por cuota entraron algunas mujeres en la junta directiva de la SGAE (...) Y a veces hay ahí como, incluso las propias mujeres cineastas, muchas veces cuando tú ya estás dentro de una estructura, no quieren participar de esta cosa del género, ¿no? Sino que estás en un estatus, como un estatus superior, ¿no? Yo creo que a veces eso se nota. Las mujeres cineastas que están en otro estatus no quieren luchar por un reconocimiento de los derechos de las mujeres." Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

and you can see that in what they do (...) it is very evident in festivals, one can notice when it is a product of a guy, what a guy tells, and what a girl is telling.<sup>878</sup>

However, another filmmaker within the same group emphasises that just having **more female filmmakers doesn't mean a change of content** in terms of gender stereotypes:

What happens is that frequently, **with that female gaze, we continue reproducing the same stereotypes of gender**, humour and narrative. And really, the fact that there are **more women making films doesn't mean that the narrative is different**, because if you haven't deconstructed yourself, **if you haven't reflected on how we are telling the stories, you are reproducing the classic structures of cinema** and the same characters, the same scripts.<sup>879</sup>

During the interview, one of the filmmakers realises that **gendered positions within the film industry**, which tend to locate women in the makeup, wardrobe and production departments, echo **the sexual division of labour that assigns care labour to women**:

There are **sectors within the audiovisual that are gendered**, "women for production". Years ago I met a teacher who had been in the sector for many years and she asked me, "Are you working?" And I said "yes". "You're in production, aren't you?" And I said, "No, I direct." Which is a much more creative sector (...)  
But production would be more like...

-Like the secretary

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<sup>878</sup> "Yo creo que tiene que ver con las miradas, contar otro tipo de historias (...) cuantas más mujeres haya en el cine, más incorporan historias de vida que tienen que ver con lo conocido por ellas. En dirección, en guión y ese tipo de cosas. Es verdad que también tiene que ver con un tema de representatividad pero va más allá de la representatividad, va a hacer un cine mucho más cercano a la realidad de la gente (...) yo sí que insisto que, cuando las mujeres se incorporan al cine, hacen otro tipo de producciones y se ve en lo que hacen (...) eso se ve mucho en las muestras, se ve cuando es un producto de un chico, lo que cuenta un chico, y lo que está contando una chica." Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>879</sup> "Lo que pasa es que muchas veces, con esa mirada de mujer se siguen reproduciendo los mismos estereotipos de género, de humor, de narrativa. Y realmente el hecho de que haya más mujeres haciendo cine no implica que la narrativa sea diferente porque si tú no te has deconstruido, no has reflexionado sobre cómo estamos contando las historias, estás reproduciendo las estructuras clásicas del cine y los mismos personajes, los mismos guiones." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

**-It's caregiving! It's reproduction,** it's like keeping, making it possible for everything to take place, **we are the caregivers of the audiovisual.** And to some extent, that's also why it's harder to be a director or a screenwriter.<sup>880</sup>

These filmmakers also stated that **creative jobs are traversed by deep gender inequalities**, where men are conceived as creators, while women have to take care of the so-called mundane tasks:

Creative spaces, whether audiovisual or whichever, belong to a **masculinised world. Because in order to create you must have a lot of time.** So, of course, there comes a time when you are a certain age and you have a family, they continue to create, they lock themselves in their room and that's it, but the other way round that commitment does not take place (...) working in the arts is very clear, it generates some egos too, "I am creating here". My goodness. **How am I going to bother you about having to go to the pharmacy, bothering you with such mundane things when you're creating.** Of course, **"I am creating, you go to the market."**<sup>881</sup>

In chapter 1, I follow a gender-in-the-making definition that borrows from Teresa de Lauretis's understanding of **gender** as a sociocultural-technological production carried out in and through (material-discursive) practices in arenas such as the media, family, religion and academy. Even though all the interviewees conceive gender as socially constructed and connected with the **legitimation of inequalities**, most of them agree on the need to keep on talking about the political subject "women". In one case, though, gender is referred to in **essentialist terms**:

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<sup>880</sup> "Hay como sectores dentro del audiovisual que están generizados, 'las mujeres para producción'. Hace años me encontré a una profesora que lleva muchos años en la carrera y me preguntó, '¿qué, estás trabajando?' Y le dije 'sí'. '¿Estás en producción, no?' Y le digo, 'no, en realización'. Que es un sector como mucho más creativo (...) Pero producción sería más como...-Como la secretaria. -¡Es los cuidados! Es la reproducción, es como mantener, hacer que todo se pueda dar, somos las cuidadoras del audiovisual. Y como que, por eso es más difícil ser directora o guionista." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>881</sup> "Los espacios creativos, el que sea vamos, sea audiovisual, sea otro, es un mundo masculinizado. Es que para crear hay que tener mucho tiempo. Entonces, claro, llega un momento en que tienes una edad y tienes familia, ellos siguen creando, se encierran en su habitación y ya, pero al revés ese compromiso no se genera (...) el arte es muy claro, esa sensación de, como genera unos egos también, 'estoy aquí creando'. Madre mía. Como te voy a molestar a ti con que tengo que ir a la farmacia, molestándote con cosas tan cotidianas cuando estás creando. Claro, 'yo estoy creando, tú vete al mercado'." Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

In certain women, I begin to notice, I don't know how to call it, within the artistic languages, **a certain emotion or a different sensitivity** (...) Women don't make wars, why? "Because they had to take care of their children", that's not true. **Women have destroyed absolutely nothing**, ever (...) **there's a different language**, I mean, we are different (...) unless you adopt the macho role and adopt a completely patriarchal role, **we don't behave the same in any case**, under any circumstances.<sup>882</sup>

Other interviewees consider that a feminist film doesn't have to be **a film about women**. One of the filmmakers recognises the **tension of deconstructing gender** on the one hand, and **positioning themselves as women** due to a political strategy on the other hand:

In smaller **spaces of reflection or theorising**, one thinks, let's see when we will get over the idea, I mean, **if you want to deconstruct gender, let's stop thinking like women** (...) and suddenly, well, at work when I see and say it is still important to defend ourselves, not defend, but **to assert ourselves as women, at least against certain types of inequalities that are so obvious and so common**, right? And **we're going to deconstruct ourselves on the inside**; we do not even care about being women, or being men. But for example, **why think that it is necessary to have the quotas**, all these things, which in the end, it is that without them, they are not there.<sup>883</sup>

For one of the filmmakers, her **female gender** has been something **oppressive**. Her self-position as a feminist person comes from childhood and she sees it as **inherently attached to being a woman**. However, she detaches herself from what she calls "**institutional feminism**" and acknowledges several tensions with how feminism has

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<sup>882</sup> "En ciertas mujeres se empieza a notar, no sé como llamarlo, dentro de los lenguajes artísticos, una cierta emoción o una cierta sensibilidad diferente (...) Las mujeres no creamos las guerras, ¿por qué? 'Porque tenían que cuidar a los hijos', eso no es verdad. Las mujeres no hemos destruido absolutamente nada, nunca (...) sí que hay un lenguaje distinto, o sea, que somos diferentes (...) a no ser que adoptes el rol machista y adoptes un rol completamente patriarcal, no nos comportamos iguales ninguna en ningún caso, en ningún caso." Ana Solano. Phone interview. 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>883</sup> "En espacios más reducidos de reflexión o de teorización se piensa, 'a ver cuándo superamos la idea, o sea, si quieres deconstruir el género, vamos a dejar ya de pensar como mujeres'. No ese discurso facilón, igualitario, del igualitarismo de que 'todos somos personas'. Pero sí, bueno, vamos a trascender incluso nuestra idea de mujeres, o por qué es tan importante serlo; y de repente, bueno, si es que todavía, en el trabajo cuando veo y digo, sigue siendo importante defendernos, no defendernos sino enunciarlos como mujeres, por lo menos frente a determinados tipos de desigualdades que son tan evidentes y tan cotidianas, ¿no? Y al interior, vamos a ir deconstruyéndonos. Igual ya no nos importa ni ser mujeres, ni ser hombres. Pero por ejemplo, por qué pensar que es necesario tener las cuotas, todas estas cosas, que al final, es que si no, no están." Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

been understood in politics. For instance, **she rejects victimisation** that leads to **frustration and impotence**:

I don't fit in the model of feminism, I mean, **the model of conventional feminism**. I always say this: **I am here thanks to the suffragists**, I mean, we wouldn't be here, I mean, if you don't do that analysis, it is an outrage. But that does not mean that I share the approach or that I have to continue to militate in certain parties (...) **I don't believe in political feminism**, and when I say political feminism I say a feminism of today's politics (...) **I cannot stand women who enter into governments and end up being absorbed by them**, you know? By power, by any political party, you know? (...) **That institutional feminism where nothing is surprising, nothing allows me to think.**<sup>884</sup>

I think that **a victim mentality doesn't help us**. Besides, it is something that the system loves, "oh, yes the feminists, of course, poor creatures" (...) we are not capable, well, the system doesn't help us of course, but neither are we able to create another, another new vision, are we? And **not to be supported by the paternalism** that both political parties and society in general have.<sup>885</sup>

The feminist positions of my interviewees lead to or are directly connected with their production practices. While in some cases (e.g. *Cuidado, resbala*) the starting point was informed by feminism, in other cases (e.g. *Yes, We Fuck!*) the process itself of making the film made the directors realise the importance of feminism. Resorting to the diffraction metaphor, we can look at their **films as records of the learning process** that the filmmakers follow in making them. Some filmmaking practices were designed in line with a feminist approach that **subverts conventions** of documentary cinema, for

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<sup>884</sup> "Yo no entro dentro del modelo de feminismo o sea, del modelo de feminismo convencional. Siempre digo esto: yo estoy aquí gracias a las sufragistas, o sea, no estaríamos aquí, o sea, si no haces ese análisis es una barbaridad. Pero eso no quiere decir que comparta el planteamiento ni tenga que seguir militando en partidos determinados (...) no creo en un feminismo político, y cuando digo un feminismo político digo un feminismo de la política que se hace hoy en día (...) A mí me apena mucho, o sea, yo personalmente, no resisto mujeres que entran dentro de los gobiernos y que al final son fagocitadas por ellos ¿no? Del poder, de cualquier partido político, ¿no? (...) ese feminismo institucional donde nada es sorpresa, nada me permite pensar." Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>885</sup> "Pienso que el victimismo no nos va bien; aparte que es algo que le encanta al sistema, 'ya están las feministas, claro sí, pobrecitas' (...) no somos capaces, bueno, el sistema por supuesto no nos ayuda, pero tampoco somos capaces de generar otra, otra nueva visión ¿no? Y no estar apoyadas de ese paternalismo que tienen tanto los partidos políticos, como la sociedad en general." Ana Solano. Phone interview. 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

example, replacing the unique **gaze of the author** with a cooperative model. The filmmakers who decided to **produce their films in a collective way** reckon that they managed to **challenge power relations** in their teamwork: “in the process you could see that they come from feminism and the assembly movement.”<sup>886</sup>

A very important issue for most of the interviewees is their relationship with the filmed subjects, for example, **involving them in the decisions concerning how they wanted to be portrayed**. In many cases, people accept to put their bodies in front of the camera due to their sharing of “a stance of ongoing public activism” (Mayer 2015: 20). The power relation that comes with the camera is softened by creating a **trust bond** with the filmed subjects. As an effect of this, **shame and fear** in front of the camera are, at least partially, overcome. Most of the filmmakers admit having got surprised by **the generosity of the filmed subjects** in their willingness to share experiences with them:

People are very generous, that is real, because it's not just standing in front of the camera, which also complicates everything much more, but it is, in essence, an **opening up of doors of experiences, emotions** and such, that, well, each person has them where they have them and then suddenly it's a torrent of emotions, you know? Because it's very intense (...) the experiences are very hard. And of course, because everyone has already evolved, they are in a certain place, and when you put the camera in front of them, and you ask them to talk about all that process, damn, well, that's where one has to be, I'm telling you, very generous.<sup>887</sup>

This is connected with the importance feminist filmmakers give to **intra-acting responsibly with the filmed subjects**, for example, by turning off the camera at certain moments of strong affective responses, and respecting people's decision if later on they express discomfort with appearing in the film:

**You stop filming when someone starts to cry** (...) “let's stop, we will not use this as material”. Anyway, you always have that fear, because you take the material and

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<sup>886</sup> “en el proceso se notaba que vienen del feminismo y del movimiento asambleario.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>887</sup> “La gente es muy generosa, eso es real, porque ya no es sólo ponerse delante de la cámara, que además lo complejiza todo mucho más, pero es que, en el fondo, el estar abriendo puertas de vivencias, de emociones y de tal, que bueno, cada una las tiene colocadas donde las tenga colocadas y que de repente es un torrente de emociones, ¿sabes? Porque es muy intenso (...) las vivencias son muy duras. Y claro, pues cada una ya ha evolucionado, está en un sitio y cuando le pones delante la cámara, y que tiene que hablar sobre todo ese proceso, joder, pues es que hay que ser, ya te digo que muy generosa.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.



that person keeps on reflecting over things and when s/he sees it again, you don't know how s/he will react. **You're always afraid they will tell you that you that they don't feel comfortable with what has come up**, that they don't want to see their face there, I don't know. But you know that you have to accept it.<sup>888</sup>

The horizontal relation that the filmmakers want to establish also means that they are **not judging** the filmed subjects, even when they don't agree with what they say or do:

There are no judgments, **we make people say what they feel, what they want**. Of course there is always mediation in the editing, in the things you choose, but we succeeded, we really wanted this thing to be clear, that **we gave no judgment on any reason for this choice** (...) all of them [the filmed subjects] were very happy that we are talking about this topic. And **each of them has felt protagonist of the pulling out of this issue from the taboo**.<sup>889</sup>

**I don't want to make a movie against them**. I keep saying this. I was curious to hear what they had to say, **trying to suspend the judgment, but not looking for excuses to absolve them**, for God's sake, not at all. **It wasn't a matter of acquitting or judging guilty or not**, they were telling something they had already done, but of understanding, precisely, what was going on in their heads, what were their life stories, why they had come to that point there, not so much to justify it, but in short, because I think that we live in a world of women and men. Unless we decide to live only among women and to no longer have relations with them, we need the comparison with them. **We need to understand them**.<sup>890</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> “Dejas de rodar cuando hay un llanto (...) ‘vamos a parar, no vamos a utilizar esto como material’. Igual siempre tienes ese miedo porque tú te llevas el material y esa persona se queda reflexionando y cuando lo vuelva a ver, no sabes cómo va a reaccionar. Siempre tienes el miedo de que te diga que no se siente cómoda con lo que ha surgido, que no quiere ver su cara ahí, no sé. Igual sabes que hay que aceptarlo.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>889</sup> “Non ci sono giudizi, noi facciamo dire alle persone quello che sentono, che vogliono. Certo c'è sempre una mediazione nel montaggio, nelle cose che scegli, pero siamo riuscite, volevamo proprio che questa cosa fosse chiara, che non davamo nessun giudizio su nessuna ragione, nessun motivo su questa scelta (...) tutte sono state molto contente del fatto che si parli di questo argomento. E si sono ognuna di loro, sentita protagoniste di questo tirare fuori questo tema, dal tabù, dallo sconosciuto.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>890</sup> “Io non voglio fare un film contro di loro. Questo lo continuo a dire. Ero curiosa di ascoltare che cosa avessero da dire, cercando di sospendere il giudizio, ma non cercando delle scuse per assolvergli, per carità di Dio, questo no. Non era una questione di assolvere o di giudicare colpevole o meno, loro raccontavano qualcosa che avevano già fatto, ma di capire, appunto, che cosa passava nella loro testa, quali erano le loro storie di vita, perché erano arrivati a quel punto lì, non tanto per giustificare ma insomma perché penso che, viviamo in un mondo di donne e di uomini. Meno che non decidiamo di vivere solo fra donne e di non avere più relazioni con loro, diciamo che il confronto con loro ci serve; ci serve capirle.” Elisabetta Lodoli. Skype interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018.

In one case (*Cuidado, resbala*), **the affects** involved in the intra-action with the filmed subjects while recording the film, **had an effect on the visualisation of in/equalities within the film**. The encounter with distressing testimonies in the first interviews made it urgent for the filmmakers to look for alternatives beyond victimisation. Working with real people also forced most of the filmmakers to **change the structure they had firstly envisioned**. For example, these filmmakers had planned to follow the process of a small group of domestic workers that would meet every Sunday for several weeks, but this wasn't possible due to the difficulties that the women had to meet every week for such a long period of time:

One of the first problems was **managing to get together**. We did it on a Sunday, of course, because there could be no other day. We also assumed that we had to work for at least one entire day (...) And in the end they left, we didn't have people, I mean, some of them were at first more resilient but in the end it wasn't possible (...) maybe what happened was that we wanted to make a very powerful story with a group of women, but with whom **there was no contact, we had no real relationship**. So it was very complicated.<sup>891</sup>

In two of my case studies, the filmed subjects didn't want to be visible. It's interesting to notice that two filmmakers whose final approach onscreen is totally different (*No existimos* and *Yes, We Fuck!*), acknowledge the existence of **mainstream visibility** of their subjects (people with functional diversity and female refugees), but the problem is the way in which they are portrayed, i.e. mainly as victims or as objects without agency.

A shared **tension** among all the filmmakers is the need to find **a balance between reaching a wide audience and making films that raise difficult topics**. This is a key issue, because their main objective is to reach people who aren't interested in these themes:

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<sup>891</sup> “Uno de los problemas primeros era conseguir juntarnos. Eso lo hicimos en domingo, por supuesto, porque no puede haber ningún otro día. Planteamos que además teníamos que hacer unas jornadas de un día como mínimo (...) Y al final se fueron, nos quedamos sin gente para poder, o sea, algunas al principio fueron más resistentes pero al final no fue posible (...) quizá lo que pasó, lo que quisimos hacer, fue hacer una historia como muy potente con un grupo de mujeres, pero con el que no había contacto, no teníamos realmente ninguna relación, entonces era muy complicado.” Carolina Suárez and Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

For me the most important thing is that my cinema addresses the world, raising these issues and these contents -LGBT, queer, trans and feminist, if you want- because **it is the world that has to change**. It is the world that must be shaped in a new way (...) Marcella also said that we must conduct the battles **speaking first between us but then always bring out these issues**, because the message and the struggles for change are made by **addressing those who are not like us**. So thinking about all these labels, if you ask me how I define it, I'll reply that I call it political cinema (...) this for me is **to do politics, to go where they usually don't see you, where they don't listen to you**. Otherwise what sense does it make?<sup>892</sup>

One of the filmmakers looks for non-conventional modes of representation, avoiding a certain kind of realist cinema that mainly resorts to recording demonstrations (*No existimos*). Another one describes her strategy as **presenting radical theses in a subtle and progressive manner** to prevent an a priori rejection from the mainstream audience:

**The documentary doesn't start directly as a militant and super radical documentary; it starts gently. And in that starting softly, it reaches many people.** When it is already convincing you at the end, we say: "this is what we want to tell you". Here comes our radical part. Many people who may have that kind of niche, or who support the discourse of equality, of institutions, see the documentary, it's a super radical documentary, and they realise that the documentary doesn't go in that direction. The documentary moves gently, you see? **The position, the situation of the female domestic worker, and little by little it becomes more radical.**<sup>893</sup>

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<sup>892</sup> "Per me la cosa più importante è che il mio cinema si rivolga al mondo, porgendo fuori queste tematiche e questi contenuti -appunto LGBT, queer, trans e femministe se vuoi-, perché è il mondo che deve cambiare. È il mondo che deve essere plasmato in modo nuovo (...) Anche Marcella diceva che dobbiamo condurre le battaglie parlando prima tra di noi ma poi portare sempre fuori le questioni, perché il messaggio e le lotte per il cambiamento si fanno rivolgendoci a chi non è come noi. Quindi pensando a tutte queste etichette, se tu mi chiedi come lo definisci, io ti rispondo che lo definirei un cinema politico (...) questo per me è fare politica, è andare dove di solito non ti vedono, non ti ascoltano. Altrimenti che senso ha?" Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>893</sup> "El documental no entra a saco como un documental militante súper radical, va entrando suavito. Y en ese entrar suavito, llega a mucha gente. Cuando ya te está convenciendo al final te dice: "esto es lo que te queremos decir". Ahí viene nuestra parte radical. Mucha gente que a lo mejor tiene esa especie de nicho, o que está en el rollo de la igualdad, de las instituciones, ve el docu, es un docu súper radi y se da cuenta que el documental no va por ahí. El documental va entrándote como suavito, no. La postura, la situación de la mujer trabajadora del hogar y poco a poco va siendo como más radical." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

One of my case studies (*Serás hombre*) was designed with the specific goal of reaching men who could become potential aggressors, **an audience who wouldn't watch a documentary with a feminist perspective** a priori:

**I will try to make a documentary that connects with men.** I will not do it for feminists, or for women who already know all this, but I will try to give it an attractive package for the target that I thought this had to be directed, which is, well, men who have never considered the education they have received in general (...) I speak of that group that is there in society, that man which can end up being an abusive partner because he doesn't reflect on things, because they live installed in their privileges and you will not change them from there. **If for them, a feminist is an interference, if for them a woman is not a voice of authority, I said, don't worry, women out,** stay calm, I am going to give you the message without any interference because, in the end, what I want is to connect with you.<sup>894</sup>

A related tension/obstruction faced by the documentary films analysed in this research project is their **limited distribution** in comparison with mainstream cinema. There's a shared feeling that the **film industry doesn't have any interest in the production of feminist contents**:

**The film industry says that it's not interesting to tell feminist stories** (...) It says that it is not striking, a story of women, that it doesn't sell, that it doesn't fill the theatres. I think that's why many people end up reproducing the commercial film script. There are cases of very different authors, millions of **unknown documentary filmmakers**, but professional filmmakers, we can perhaps name only a few, like Icíar Bollaín.<sup>895</sup>

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<sup>894</sup> "Voy a intentar hacer un documental que conecte con los hombres. No lo voy a hacer para las feministas, ni para las mujeres que ya se saben todo esto, sino que voy a tratar de darle un envoltorio como un poco atractivo para el target que yo pensaba que esto tenía que llegar, que es, pues bueno, hombres que en general no se han planteado nunca la educación que han recibido (...) hablo de ese grupo que está ahí en la sociedad, ese que puede llegar a terminar siendo un maltratador porque no se plantea las cosas, porque viven instalados en sus privilegios y no les vas a cambiar de ahí. Si para ellos, una feminista es una interferencia, si para ellos una mujer no es una voz de autoridad, yo dije, no te preocupes, fuera mujeres, tú tranquilo que yo te voy a dar el mensaje limpito de interferencias porque yo, al fin y al cabo lo que quiero es conectar contigo." Isabel de Ocampo. Q&A. 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 in Granada.

<sup>895</sup> "La industria cinematográfica dice que no es interesante contar historias feministas (...) Dice que es poco llamativo, una historia de mujeres, eso no vende, que eso no llena las salas de cine. Yo creo que por eso muchas acaban reproduciendo el guión comercial cinematográfico. Pero sí hay casos de autoras muy diferentes, documentalistas desconocidas millones, pero cineastas profesionales, podemos sacar quizá alguna, Icíar Bollaín." Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

While industrial production companies consider **feminist contents as not profitable**, there's also a tendency among many documentary filmmakers and video-artists to **despise politically committed films** because of an alleged **lack of artistic value**:

From that world of creative artists there is as a **pejorative look at what is political or social** (...) From that discourse of creation, artistic theory and artistic documentary, **the militant discourse is considered second class** (...) there are many fellow artists who come to a project like ours, full of feminist theory, and they don't know what to do with it, they say something like "what is it, what do I do, talking about care-giving?" (...) **That type of art is not recognised by those in the creative spheres, by artists.** We are not located, in Málaga, within an artistic medium; we are social militancy.<sup>896</sup>

In the case in which the film has sexually explicit images (*Yes, We Fuck!*), **copyright** has been a problem for distribution. Tensions regarding this film have also arisen in relation with its portrait of **prostitution and sexual assistance**. A female participant, who had been filmed as a sexual worker, asked not to be shown in the final version of the film because she considered that **the project was not feminist**. On the website "Tribuna Feminista", three articles against sexual assistance have been published (the film is not mentioned though).<sup>897</sup> The directors of this film are **in favour of the legalisation of prostitution**. On the contrary, two female filmmakers that were also interviewed expressed utter **rejection and even disgust towards prostitution and (post)porn** films:

If you legalise prostitution you are launching the idea that using women's bodies for sexual pleasure is legitimate (...) I believe that **equality is incompatible with prostitution** as an institution (...) **Prostitution has nothing to do with women's freedom**. It has to do with an economic situation that is incompatible with life and with dignity.<sup>898</sup>

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<sup>896</sup> "Desde ese mundo de artistas creadores hay como una mirada peyorativa a lo que es político o social (...) Desde ese rollo de creación, teoría artística, documental artístico, el rollo militante y tal, como que se considera de segunda categoría (...) hay muchos compañeros creadores artistas que les llega un proyecto como el nuestro, muy teórico feminista y no saben qué hacer con eso, se quedan, como '¿esto qué es, qué hago, hablando de los cuidados?' (...) Ese tipo de arte no se reconoce desde las esferas creadoras, de artistas. No estamos ubicadas en Málaga dentro de un medio artístico, somos la militancia social." Leonor Jiménez and Carolina Suárez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>897</sup> *Vid. Supra*. Chapter 4. Section 4.4

<sup>898</sup> "Si tú legalizas la prostitución estás lanzando la idea de que utilizar el cuerpo de las mujeres para tu placer sexual es legítimo (...) yo creo que la igualdad es incompatible con la prostitución como institución la prostitución no tiene nada que ver con la libertad de las mujeres. Tiene que ver con una

Three of my case studies are available for free online. The problem that one of the filmmakers identifies is that **most of the people that see these films are already interested** in the issues being portrayed. Another interviewee defines this situation as “a terrible endogamy”<sup>899</sup>. Due to these tensions and difficulties all of them conceive audiovisual production as **an elitist practice**: “something very complex, expensive and somehow only accessible to a small group of people”.<sup>900</sup> In this sense, another shared tension is the lack of financing that leads to **precarity** and **self-exploitation**. Many times, the filmmakers prefer the lack of resources as long as they can talk about the issues they care about, keeping their creative freedom:

I placed myself in a **very marginal cinema, in the economic sense of the term**. In fact, they are also marginal themes because topics like transsexualism, if treated in this way, are not so mainstream (...). **If to earn money, I must be in the industry, submit to ten thousand conditions, then no**. I'd rather do it myself (...) being a very free film, a film that was made completely out of the strictly television canons, the RAI had no interest in buying it (...) I gained in terms of freedom of expression. I wouldn't have been able to do it differently, being a film about Marcella, because it was born of a very personal need.<sup>901</sup>

In order to overcome this obstruction, I have identified two kinds of strategies developed by the interviewees, an individual one and a collective one. In both cases, the filmmakers acknowledge that solidarity is not easy to find within the film industry: “I think that the audiovisual medium is very hard, isn't it? It is very competitive, there are very few resources and people somehow or other fight for the few there are.”<sup>902</sup> The **individual approach** is based on the possibility of being one's own producer, working with

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situación económica que es incompatible con la vida y con la dignidad.” Isabel de Ocampo. Q&A. 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 in Granada. The other filmmaker who shares this opinion is Ana Solano.

<sup>899</sup> “esta endogamia tan terrible”. Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>900</sup> “algo muy complejo, caro y de alguna manera que sólo es accesible a un pequeño grupo de gente.” Leonor Jiménez. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>901</sup> “Mi sono posizionato in un cinema estremamente marginale, nel senso economico del termine. In effetti sono anche temi marginali perché temi come il transessualismo se trattati in questo modo diciamo non sono così mainstream (...) Se per guadagnarci devo, essere nell'industria, sottostare a diecimila condizionamenti, no. Piuttosto me lo faccio da solo (...) essendo che il film è stato in maniera molto libera, e il film è stato fatto completamente fuori dai dei canoni strettamente televisivi, la RAI non ha avuto interesse ad acquistare il film (...) io ci ho guadagnato in termini di libertà espressiva. Non sarei riuscito a farlo diversamente un film su Marcella perché essendo nato da un bisogno anche molto personale, lo volevo fare così.” Simone Cangelosi. Personal interview. 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Bologna.

<sup>902</sup> “Yo creo que el medio audiovisual es muy duro, ¿no?, es muy competitivo, hay muy pocos recursos y la gente de alguna manera se pelea por los recursos que hay.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

affordable equipment. The filmmaker who has followed this path (*No existimos*) describes new technologies as a source of freedom and independence:

Why work with new technological tools? Because they really give you **immense freedom, they open up your field of thought** and you can somehow impregnate your language with who you really are (...) **There is no systematic paternalism to stop you.** I mean, it restrains you, because if I had very little money, you have to ask for **a loan from the bank**, all of that stuff, which is tiresome, of course. But it's nothing compared to what might be, that they condition you, that you need them to give you money.<sup>903</sup>

But this is only possible for filmmakers who have a stable financial status. In opposition, other filmmakers reckon that filmmaking is **a collective task** and prefer strategies such as **activist alliances and crowdfunding**: “we were lucky to have so many people close to us that maybe wanted to support us for a stretch of road, completely free of charge, as a political adhesion to a project.”<sup>904</sup> Most filmmakers resort to self-exploitation. There is general awareness of **lacking self-care**:

I did the calculation one day and **domestic workers earn twice as much as I did** while making *Evelyn* (...) I saw myself without money, I had **no time to look for work**, dedicated 24 hours a day to women's associations and I had a breakdown (...) I realised that in the world of activism, you can dedicate yourself to it, as long as you are very careful to have your financial support covered because otherwise, it can end up destroying you.<sup>905</sup>

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<sup>903</sup> “¿Por qué trabajar con nuevas herramientas tecnológicas? Pues porque realmente te dan una libertad inmensa, te abren muchísimo el campo del pensamiento y puedes de alguna manera impregnar tu lenguaje de lo que tú realmente eres” / “No hay un paternalismo del sistema que te coarte. Hombre, te coarta, porque si yo tenía muy poco dinero, tienes que pedir un crédito al banco, todo esto, pues es fastidioso, evidentemente. Pero eso, no es nada comparativamente con lo que puede ser que te condicionen, que te tienen que dar dinero.” Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>904</sup> “...noi abbiamo avuto la fortuna di avere vicino a noi tante persone che magari un tratto di strada ci hanno voluto sostenere di aiutare a titolo completamente gratuito, come un'adesione politica ad un progetto (...) questa è l'eredità che lasceremo ad altre giovarne donne.” Nicoletta Nesler. Personal interview. 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

<sup>905</sup> “Yo un día hice el cálculo y las señoras de la limpieza ganan el doble que yo gané haciendo *Evelyn* (...) Me veía sin dinero, me veía sin tiempo para buscar trabajo, dedicada 24 horas al día a las asociaciones de mujeres y entré en corto circuito (...) me di cuenta de que en el mundo del activismo, hay que dedicarse a ello pero con mucho cuidado de tener las espaldas económicas cubiertas porque si no, puede ser muy destructivo para ti.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

The filmmakers' positions and practices are connected with the **effects they want to provoke** in the audiences. Most of them agree on **wanting people to think and feel**: neither to educate them nor to tell them how reality is. They consider it fundamental to work in the fields of **art and education** so as to touch **people at an intellectual level, but also at an emotional one**:

**We never intended for the documentary to describe a certain reality in the sense “look, this is the reality, I filmed it and I put it here in front of you so that you know it too”. That’s impossible, there are as many realities as people. So we thought that the stories that we would include had to contain something, either in the idea or in the development of the story, or in the image, or in both if possible, of course; they had to contain some element that could get embedded in the people’s minds like a splinter that was incompatible with the previous vision that one had about functional diversity and sexuality (...)** So that, after seeing the documentary, the effect was not so much that of knowing what the sexuality of people with functional diversity is, but **to have the feeling that one has no idea and that one has to rethink things.**<sup>906</sup>

I want the viewer **to move in their chair and to feel uncomfortable (...)** I am very interested in guiding or creating those clear and defined intervals so that you can think or that **create instability or anguish** in you or you don't know why this is happening (...) **you have to leave asking yourself a load of questions.**<sup>907</sup>

**Giving a lot of information to the viewer** also means that I am, not that I am manipulating him, but I am creating a state of mind that, otherwise, would make a conventional documentary that sends them to sleep (...) **what I intend is to get them to think (...)** **to create enough anxiety**, somehow. You can't manage to read

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<sup>906</sup> “Nunca hemos intentado que el documental describiese una cierta realidad, así ‘mira, ésta es la realidad, la he filmado y te la pongo aquí delante para que tu también la conozcas’. Eso es imposible, hay tantas realidades como personas. Entonces sí pensamos que las historias que pusiésemos contuviesen algo, bien en la idea o en el desarrollo de la historia, o bien en la imagen o bien en ambas de ser posible, claro, contuviese algún elemento que se incrustase en la cabeza de la gente como una esquirla que resultase incompatible con la visión previa que uno se hace acerca de la diversidad funcional y de la sexualidad (...) De manera que, que después de ver el documental, el efecto fuese, no tanto de tener la sensación de saber cómo es la sexualidad de las personas con diversidad funcional, sino tener la sensación de que uno no tiene ni idea y que tiene que replantearse las cosas.” Antonio Centeno. Skype interview. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>907</sup> “A mí me interesa que el espectador se mueva en su silla y esté incómodo (...) A mí me interesa muchísimo, ahí guiar o crear esos intervalos claros y definidos para que se pueda pensar o te pueda crear a ti inestabilidad o angustia, o no sepas por qué esto se está produciendo (...) tienes que salir haciéndote un montón de preguntas.” Ana Solano. Phone interview. 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016.



it. In fact, it's very subtle because **it is an emotional game and it works**, because later on I will give you all that information but you don't know it and you leave the cinema without knowing what I have done. You always have the doubt as to whether this text has actually appeared at some point or if I am only treating it as an image.<sup>908</sup>

The audiovisual language first has to grab you in the guts, unprepared, it has to make you feel whatever it is that you are feeling and then, after the film is over, the idea reaches your brain (...) **What I want is to achieve a change of consciousness** and I have achieved it once, with my film, which was one of the least seen films of its year in Spain. I managed to achieve that it was seen by one person and it has changed his life, that of this man. If the same thing happens with my documentary, **that just one person who has the power to change things sees it**, we exponentially multiply this change of consciousness that we want.<sup>909</sup>

Most of the filmmakers assert that, to achieve the desired effects, material-discursive **practices have to take place beyond the documentary film**. In some cases, the filmmakers feel **frustrated** due to the difficulties in having the impact they would like to have with their films. The **affects that result from having made their documentary films** range from excitement and joy to distress and impotence. Some highlight the satisfaction of being able to generate discussion with their films, while others feel that this is not enough:

It was really interesting; it has been **truly uplifting**. Uplifting because at first it seemed like it was just Madrid. That in Málaga nothing moves, that in Madrid there is movement, and suddenly you realise how it also works in other spaces. It has

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<sup>908</sup> “Dar mucha información al espectador también significa que lo estoy, no lo estoy manipulando, sino que le estoy creando una situación de estado de ánimo que, de otra manera crea un documental convencional que les duerme (...) lo que pretendo es lograr que piensen (...) crear bastante ansiedad, de alguna manera. Tú no llegas a leerlo. De hecho, es muy sutil porque es un juego emocional y funciona, porque luego yo te voy a dar toda esa información pero eso tú no lo sabes y te vas del cine sin saber qué he hecho. Siempre te queda la duda de si realmente ese texto en algún momento ha aparecido o yo sólo estoy tratándolo como una imagen.” Ana Solano. Phone interview. 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

<sup>909</sup> “El lenguaje audiovisual primero te tiene que coger de las vísceras, desprevenido, te tiene que hacer sentir lo que quiera que sea que estás sintiendo y luego ya, después que ya se acaba la película, la idea llega a la cabeza (...) Lo que quiero es lograr un cambio de conciencia y lo he conseguido una vez. He conseguido una vez que con mi película, que fue una de las menos vistas de su año en España, la vio una sola persona y le ha cambiado la vida, que es este hombre. Si con el documental que yo haga pasa lo mismo, que lo vea una sola persona que tiene el poder de cambiar las cosas, vamos multiplicando exponencialmente este cambio de conciencia que queremos.” Isabel de Ocampo. Personal interview. August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017 in Madrid.

been a very interesting experience, really. A very nice project. Now, there are eighteen workshops on the issue of care and rights of domestic workers. **The audiovisual truly reaches people**, its capacity for getting out there is immense.<sup>910</sup>

These are hours and hours of my time, of my life, for **four tremendous years**. After finishing this project, **I ended up almost in a depression**. Because you come from a very hard job with these women and **you know you cannot do anything**, that the only thing you do is this. For me, this is all I do.<sup>911</sup>

In this section, I have diffractively read my working definitions of documentary cinema, feminism, in/equalities, and gender, with some of the material-discursive practices that the filmmakers from my sample enact in their filmmaking production process.<sup>912</sup> Apart from their self-positions, I have discussed tensions, effects and affects surrounding these concepts. For instance, while some filmmakers identify as radical feminists who want to change the system from the roots, others understand feminism as a fight for equality and integration that should be normalised. There's also tension among filmmakers who are aware of gender inequalities but reject feminism as a label for their cinema.

Similarly, while everybody agrees on the need for equal rights, most filmmakers prefer to put forward their demands in terms of diversity and difference. Another tension is that of gender understood as socially constructed but then being discussed in essentialist terms. The effects that they want to achieve cover an emotional and an intellectual level, but there's general agreement that for change to happen, actions must be taken beyond the screen. This will be further discussed in the next section, in which I look at reactions (effects and affects) provoked and evoked by the films.

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<sup>910</sup> “Fue súper interesante, vaya, ha sido un subidón. Un subidón porque al principio parecía que era sólo Madrid. Que en Málaga no se mueve nada, que en Madrid sí hay movimiento y de repente te das cuenta como sí funciona en otros espacios. Ha sido una experiencia muy interesante, la verdad. Un proyecto muy chulo (...) Ahora hay dieciocho talleres de cuidados, sobre el tema de cuidados y derechos de las trabajadoras del hogar. Es que el tema audiovisual es que llega, es que es inmenso la capacidad que tiene de proyectarse.” Montserrat Clos. Personal interview. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 in Málaga.

<sup>911</sup> “Esto son horas y horas de mi tiempo, de mi vida, durante cuatro años tremendos. Yo después de terminar este proyecto, acabé casi en una depre. Porque vienes de un trabajo muy duro con las mujeres y sabes que no puedes hacer nada, que lo único que haces es esto. Para mí, es que lo único que hago es esto.” Ana Solano. Personal interview. June 29<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Madrid.

<sup>912</sup> In the case of *Pays Barbare*, a feminist practice is indeed the one enacted by my own reading of the filmmaker's political stance against fascism and colonialism.

#### 7.4 Reception Effects: Affective and Intellectual Practices of Witnessing

In “Mediating Memories. The Ethics of Post-9/11 Spectatorship” (2010), Anneke Smelik reflects on the ways in which spectators can assume an ethical position amid the global media culture. In order to escape from fear, impotence, anxiety and passivity, Smelik follows Haraway’s proposal of politicising practices of witnessing through the figure of the “modest witness”: “Witnessing is seeing; attesting; standing publicly accountable for, and physically vulnerable to, one’s visions and representations” (Haraway 1997: 267). Elaborating on this idea of the modest witness, Smelik proposes two ways in which viewers might react to audiovisual messages: “affectively through empathy or identification, and intellectually through reflexivity and knowledge. Either way, ethical accountability involves an active and affirmative response” (2010: 322).

These two answers, affective or intellectual, are also present in many of the responses that the documentary films from my sample generated in the audiences among which I carried out fieldwork (it must be stated that the reactions I discuss are quite limited and specific). I will also refer to my own response to three case studies, which was expressed in my using fragments from them in a couple of video-essays that became part of the GRACE project dissemination pieces.<sup>913</sup> I have organised this section in two blocks, affective and intellectual reactions, in turn divided into two sections, empathy and identification or reflexivity and knowledge. These are discussed in the intra-actions with so-called negative emotions (e.g. anger/distress/fear/nostalgia/embarrassment) or so-called positive emotions (e.g. joy/hope/empowerment/gratitude/excitement).

The films that deal with the right to one’s own body provoked lots of affective reactions in a positive tone. *Lunàdigas* generated empathy and identification among the viewers, mainly based on gratitude for breaking the silence about women who decide not to have children. This has been enforced by the virtual community continued by the film website and a Facebook group. There, more than forty women have shared their testimonies as “lunàdigas”, for instance: “Thanks for the fantastic work of awareness that you carry out. There is great need to let people know that we are neither alone nor

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<sup>913</sup> “Filming Grace. Audiovisual Translations of Academic Research on Cultures of Gender Equality” and “Not Seeing Well: Notes of Feminist Ways of Seeing”. Video-essays. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://graceproject.eu/news/filming-grace/>> and <<http://footnotesonequality.eu/videos/>>.

weird.”<sup>914</sup> Spectators describe *Lunàdigas* as brave, inspiring, smart, humorous, and brilliant. In this case, identification leads to active responses in eradicating prejudices against childfree women, starting with such women self-perception. For example:

I have always been, I am and I will be a lunàdiga. **I have understood thanks to this film that it is not a reality common to all women to feel motherhood as an obligation**, a destiny, and so on. So, you did a really wonderful job, thank you.<sup>915</sup>

Similar affective reactions are evoked by *Yo decido*, which indeed echoes responses provoked by the demonstration against a draft bill banning the right for abortion that the film portrays. In the reviews that I discuss in the corresponding chapter, a common argument is that **affective empathy** contributes to a **better understanding** of the issue. For example, one male reviewer points out that an authoritarian past haunts the film:

Beyond the noise of the protest, the **excitement** of some of the declarations, the **bitter sadness** of others (...) it is impressive to see in parallel the images of decades ago confronting those of yesterday. They are so similar that, in effect, it is **frightening** (...) [*Yo decido*] is **steeped in enthusiasm, anger, fright, the healthy and brilliant exercise of commitment**; all of this together. **And that, besides exciting the spirit, helps to understand.**<sup>916</sup>

Another reviewer praises the emphasis that the film places on positive affects. She underlines that it isn't only an audiovisual record of the demonstration, but also “a story of courage and determination, of music and songs. Because it could have been a sober documentary, but it rather shows the joy of women who see that more and more people join the same cause”<sup>917</sup>.

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<sup>914</sup> “Grazie del fantastico lavoro di sensibilizzazione che portate avanti, c'è grande necessità di far sapere che non siamo sole né strane.” Date of access: February 2019. <<http://www.lunadigas.com/wpph/chiara/>>.

<sup>915</sup> “Sono sempre stata, sono e sarò una lunàdiga. Ho capito grazie anche a questo film che non è una realtà comune a tutte le donne quella di sentire la maternità come un obbligo, un destino, eccetera. Quindi, avete fatto un lavoro davvero splendido, grazie”. Q&A Session. November 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Turin.

<sup>916</sup> “Más allá del ruido de la protesta, de la emoción encendida de alguna de las declaraciones, de la tristeza amarga de otras (...) impresiona ver en paralelo las imágenes de hace décadas enfrentadas a las de ayer mismo. Se parecen tanto que, en efecto, asusta (...) cada segundo del documental destila entusiasmo, rabia, susto, el sano y brillante ejercicio del compromiso. Todo junto. Y eso, además de excitar el ánimo, ayuda a comprender.” *El Mundo* website. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/2014/07/10/53be3d4de2704e2a5d8b456f.html>>.

<sup>917</sup> “una historia de coraje y determinación, de música y canciones. Porque podría haber sido un documental sobrio, pero prefiere mostrar la alegría de las mujeres que ven que más y más personas se

Affective identification that leads to and/or enriches intellectual responses was also characteristic of several reactions provoked by *Una nobile rivoluzione*. For example, at the screening that I organised and moderated at “Associazione Orlando” in Bologna, two viewers expressed their gratitude for the emotional understanding sparked by the film:

Woman: **The editing of the film, the editing of the memory as well, helps to understand what you once lived** and perhaps didn't understand. And it happened to me this evening because **reviewing those years, with people I knew, with whom I lived indirectly or directly, it really helped me to understand certain meanings, difficulties, putting aside all the intellectual part and looking instead at the emotional one.** And so, I really thank you tonight.

Woman: I also saw in these two works [*Dalla testa ai piedi* and *Una nobile rivoluzione*], great generosity (...) **We are all in there also in a deep sense**, which I think Simone's and Marcella's stories tell: that of becoming. Who am I? I'm a man, I'm a woman, I'm gay. **Who am I? Who do I want to become?**<sup>918</sup>

**Affective identification** is also very strong in the reactions generated by the postporn film *Yes, We Fuck!* Surprise and interest were mixed with gratitude and excitement in the three screenings that I attended in Granada. The spectators at the Granadian Federation of People with Physical and Organic Disability (FEGRADI), many of which had some kind of functional diversity condition, had intense emotional reactions: “For me, it was one of those days that won't be forgotten in a lifetime, due to all of the emotions that the interventions, the documentary, aroused within me (...) everything was amazing!”<sup>919</sup> Affective reactions of empathy also motivated the search for individual and collective **active responses**:

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unen a la misma causa”. Date of access: January 2019. <<http://www.videodromo.es/critica-de-cine/yo-decido-el-tren-de-la-libertad/41871>>.

<sup>918</sup> “Il montaggio del film, il montaggio della memoria anche, aiuta a capire quello che prima vivevi e forse lì non lo avevi capito o comprendevi. E a me è successo questa sera perché rivedendo quelli anni, con persone che conoscevo, con cui ho vissuto indirettamente o direttamente, mi ha aiutato veramente a capire certi significati, difficoltà, scaricando tutta la parte troppo intellettuale e guardando invece quelle emotive. E quindi, davvero io stasera ti ringrazio. / Ho visto in questi due lavori, anche una grande generosità (...) Ci siamo tutti anche in un senso profondo che secondo me raccontano la storia di Simone e la storia di Marcella: quel diventare. Chi sono? Sono uomo, sono donna, sono gay, chi sono? Chi voglio diventare?” Q&A Session. February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 at “Associazione Orlando” in Bologna.

<sup>919</sup> “Para mí fue uno de estos días que no se olvidan en la vida por todas las emociones que me despertaron las intervenciones, el documental (...) fue todo brutal!” Testimonies publicly shared by Eduardo Perujo (Dubi Perujo) on his Facebook profile. Date of access: January 2019.

Woman: I went in being one person and I'm going to leave being another (...) that **they gave me their first experience through a video; that was a gift for me.** I cannot question absolutely anything now (...) the person who touches herself at the end, with her own hand, that is fabulous, it is beautiful what she does. I mean, what she gives me is wonderful, with her own hand, with her own skin, because I thought the other person was going to do it (...) but no, she gives it to herself, with her own skin. **That's a gift, that's power, that's freedom, that's feminism, that's me** (...) Those people turned the finger on me and told me, "you, with the heteronormative body, maybe it turns out that you haven't had one pleasant experience", as they did in some of those experiences that they showed us (...) **They gave me a slap in the face and told me "that's not true, you haven't questioned your heteronormativity enough."**

Woman: **How different but also how similar** (...) I've noticed that what is claimed, in a way I feel it too, that's why I was also very moved, to say "how cool" **because it is not only that collective's struggle, it is ours as well.**<sup>920</sup>

In one of the screenings, however, this film evoked affective reactions but connected with negative emotions, particularly anger and distrust concerning the portrait of sex work and sadomasochism. This echoes the feminist debate, currently strong in the Spanish context, about the abolition of prostitution or its legalisation as sex work:

Woman: **I was shocked** by the part in which you included the sex worker with the theme of masochism, also when she commented on culture and spirituality, because in general, everything that you have done seemed very horizontal, I found it super interesting, but **the case of the sex worker, who calls herself such, seemed to me like a vertical thing, reproduction of power from top to bottom**

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<sup>920</sup> "entré una y voy a salir otra de este sitio (...) que su primera experiencia me la regalaran a mí a través de un video; eso fue un regalo para mí. No puedo cuestionar absolutamente nada ahora (...) la persona que se toca al final, por ella misma, con su propia mano, es fabuloso, es bellissimo lo que ella hace. O sea, eso que ella me regala es maravilloso, con su propia mano, con su propia piel, porque yo pensé que la otra persona le iba a hacer (...) pero no, se lo regala con ella misma, con su propia piel. Eso es un regalo, eso es potencia, eso es libertad, eso es feminismo, eso soy yo (...) Esas personas me voltearon el dedo a mí y me dijeron "tú, la que tienes el cuerpo heteronormativo, pues resulta que a lo mejor no has tenido ni siquiera una práctica placentera", como lo lograron ellos en alguna de esas prácticas que nos presentaron (...) me voltearon una cachetada y me dijeron "no es cierto, tu heteronormatividad le falta cuestionarse" / Qué diferente pero también qué parecido (...) he visto que lo que se reivindica, en cierta manera también lo siento yo así, por eso también me ha emocionado mucho, de decir qué guay porque en realidad la lucha no es solo de ese colectivo, es de todas, de todis, de todes." Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

(...) There is a moment when she says that sadomasochism is rejected by society, but now we have *Fifty Shades of Grey*, ultimately **sadomasochism is one of the most mainstream things, and it is a thing of power and domination, when I thought that in the other stories it was a horizontality of sharing.**<sup>921</sup>

Affective reactions stemming from negative emotions were also frequent in the case of *Serás hombre*, which deals with sex trafficking and masculinities. The emotions evoked by the main character (an ex-pimp) ranged from **tenderness, pity and even empathy to hatred, disgust and distrust**. A few men said that, after watching the film, they felt the need to look inside of them and expressed **frustration** with the lack of solutions. Other female spectators considered that a possibility of being men otherwise could be found in the approach to care labour described by the character that the teacher embodies, but only a few male spectators expressed open identification with this character.

In the case of *Ma l'amore c'entra*, a man from the audience in a screening in Bologna expressed that the emotion he felt while watching the film was **embarrassment**. **This affective reaction** that arose his **identification** in turn led him to reflect about possible **active responses**:

I thought, **how is it possible that we men, we human beings do not find the words to comment on this violence?** Because **this embarrassment that does concern my gender, as a male, was something I had to look in the face, to ask myself what I could say**. And then I had to make an effort and say, **even if that violent man is not me**, I hope I will never be but I cannot take it for granted that I won't, **his violence concerns me. Because that violence has had a concrete, real and general effect**, even by abstracting it, and it is something to which I must pay attention.<sup>922</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> “Me ha chocado la parte en la que incluiste a la trabajadora sexual con el tema del masoquismo, incluso cuando ella ha comentado lo de cultura y espiritualidad, porque en general me ha parecido muy horizontal todo lo que habéis hecho, me ha parecido súper interesante, pero el caso de la trabajadora sexual, que ella misma se llama así, me ha parecido una cosa vertical, reproducción de poder de arriba abajo (...) Hay un momento en que ella dice que el sadomasoquismo está rechazado por la sociedad, pero tenemos ahora cincuenta sombras de grey, en el fondo el sadomasoquismo es una de las cosas más mainstream, y es una cosa de poder y de dominación, cuando a mí me ha parecido que en las otras historias era una horizontalidad de compartir.” Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>922</sup> “Ho pensato è possibile che noi uomini, noi esseri umani non troviamo le parole per commentare questa violenza? Perché questo imbarazzo che invece questo sì è di genere, di me come maschio, era qualcosa che dovevo guardare in faccia, che cosa posso dire io. E allora dovevo fare uno sforzo e dire, anche se quell'uomo violento non sono io, spero di non esserlo mai ma non posso dare per scontato di non esserlo, la sua violenza mi riguarda. Perché quella violenza ha avuto un effetto concreto, reale e

In one of this film's reviews, a sociologist who had carried out fieldwork in a centre for violent men, identifies a list of key aspects within the imaginary of a violent man that *Ma l'amore c'entra?* also puts forward: the idealisation of a model of harmonious family that becomes an obsession, violence as an extreme means of re-establishing hierarchies, and male hypersensitivity with respect to their "honour", which is always at stake in any conflict or discussion. In this case, which was also that of the psychologists who commented on the film at a screening I attended, the reactions towards the film are more **intellectual, leading to knowledge and reflexivity**.

Another film that provoked distress and anger in the spectators was *No existimos*. In this case, an example of **affirmative response** was that of a woman who wanted to help with the distribution of the film:

Thank you for **this wonderful documentary that has moved me. I don't understand so much about experimental cinema but** I think the information that you transmit has been concise and **it touches very deep inside**. My question is whether you are going to continue presenting this documentary or **how we can collaborate to spread it.**<sup>923</sup>

In the case of this film, most of the reactions were **intellectual**. In a screening attended by audiovisual communication students, the questions were mainly about the film's formal strategies. The moderator expressed an intellectual response that moved **from identification to reflexivity** concerning gender inequality in Europe:

[*No existimos*] goes beyond the simple issue of women, of refugee women who have to go into exile, because what it really raises is that such a situation occurs because of their being women. And these women you have spoken with are not in their countries; they are in Europe, and **it is in Europe where they have that problem too**. They had it in their country but they also have **this problem in Spain, they also have it in France, which we assume to be developed countries working for women's equality**, equal conditions, and so on. But they are aware

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generale anche astraendolo, e una cosa verso la quale devo avere attenzione." Q&A session. February 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Bologna.

<sup>923</sup> "En primer lugar agradeceremos este maravilloso documental que a mí me ha emocionado. Igual no entiendo tanto de cine experimental pero creo que la información que transmitáis ha sido concisa y que llega, llega muy dentro. Mi pregunta es, ahora, si vais a seguir pues presentando este documental o de qué forma podemos colaborar para difundirlo." Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.



that, perhaps precisely because they come from outside, we live with our level, eh, on a daily basis, but **they come looking precisely for that difference in Europe and they do not find it there either.**<sup>924</sup>

A similar affective and intellectual response was provoked in another screening, held within the framework of an independent film festival. The spectators expressed their **distress** and acknowledged the suitability of the film in connection with contemporary events concerning migration and gender violence within and beyond European borders:

Young Latin American woman: **This happens in Mexico, this happens in Spain,** here too there are many cases of femicide that are hardly shown (...) **this is not happening only in Iraq, Israel, Afghanistan, Latin America,** no, it happens constantly and **we are totally exposed as a gender.**<sup>925</sup>

*Pays Barbare* evokes mainly **intellectual reactions linked with negative emotions**. For example, Raffaele Meale describes the film as alienating, painful and lacerating, but he praises its relevant lucidity for current Italian politics: “The ‘barbarian country’ is also the Italy of the twenty-first century, in which fascism has not been defeated but finds glimpses of air in other forms.”<sup>926</sup> Meale expresses anger and frustration at the lack of distribution for a film like this.

*Triangle*, which also reads the present through the past but in a portrait of precarious working conditions faced by women in the textile industry, provoked mostly **intellectual reactions filled with indignation and rage**. One of the reviewers from the sample that I discussed in the corresponding chapter praises the film’s evocative power and argues that, in its portrait of Barletta’s harsh reality, it manages to render visible the

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<sup>924</sup> “va más allá, yo creo del simple tema de la mujer, de las mujeres refugiadas, que se tienen que exiliar, porque realmente lo que se plantea es que la situación es por ser mujer. Y que estas mujeres con las que has hablado no están en sus países, están en Europa, y que es en Europa donde tienen ese problema también. Lo tenían en su país pero es que ese problema lo tienen también en España, lo tienen también en Francia, que nos suponemos países desarrollados en donde se trabaja por la igualdad de la mujer, igualdad de condiciones, etcétera, etcétera. Pero ellas son conscientes de que, quizás precisamente porque vienen de afuera, nosotras convivimos con nuestro nivel, eh, diariamente, pero ellas vienen buscando precisamente esa diferencia en Europa y tampoco la encuentran.” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at the University Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid.

<sup>925</sup> “Esto pasa en México, pasa en España, aquí también hay muchísimos casos de femicidio que igualmente se evidencian (...) esto no está pasando solamente en Irak, Israel Afganistán, Latinoamérica, no, nos pasa constantemente y estamos totalmente expuestas como género.” Q&A session. October 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 at Sala Berlanga in Madrid.

<sup>926</sup> “Il ‘paese barbaro’ è anche l’Italia del Ventunesimo Secolo, in cui il fascismo non è stato debellato ma trova spiragli d’aria sotto altre forme.” Date of access: March 2019.

<<https://quinlan.it/2013/12/08/pays-barbare/>>.

“progressive lowering of the level of what is considered lawful, or even humanly acceptable”<sup>927</sup> in the context of neoliberalism. She thinks that the main character’s **pride and dignity** are the only possible **hope** among the tragedies shown in the film.

As mentioned previously, *Una nobile rivoluzione* evokes affective reactions out of empathy and identification. But it also provokes **intellectual reflections** mainly in connection with “critical nostalgia” (Boym 2001; Fortunati 2005; Gamberi 2013): a driving force that turns the film into a work of mourning which helps overcoming a loss, while also recovering necessary genealogies. This affect and these particular effects were mentioned by the director himself and by one of the reviewers, the latter describing it as “amazement wrapped in nostalgia”.<sup>928</sup> She defines the film as “an important and useful work to make known and to recognise the value of a great and unique experience, to remember a noble figure.”<sup>929</sup> In this sense, intellectual responses are linked with **an affirmative activist stance**, for example:

*Una nobile rivoluzione* is also an opportunity, in this particular historical and social phase, to reflect on the value and sense of certain achievements. **To forget the long, patient and risky work that lies behind a whole series of freedoms and guarantees too often taken for granted today, means not understanding -apart from their urgency and necessity- their fragility; ultimately it means ceasing to watch over their defence, and therefore putting them at risk.** If Marcella Di Folco, with her noble revolution, has left us an inheritance, this is without a doubt that of **concreteness, perseverance and courage.**<sup>930</sup>

**Intellectual reactions leading to affirmative activist response** were frequent at the screening that I organised of *Yes, We Fuck!* at the University of Granada. These were informed by **empowerment** on one hand, but also **impotence** on the other hand:

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<sup>927</sup> “progressivo abbassamento del livello di ciò che è considerato lecito, o anche solo umanamente accettabile.” Date of access: February 2019. <<https://www.mymovies.it/film/2014/triangle/>>.

<sup>928</sup> “stupore avvolto dalla nostalgia”. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.fuorivista.eu/?p=584>>.

<sup>929</sup> “Un lavoro importante e utile per far conoscere e riconoscere il valore di un’esperienza grande e unica, per ricordare una figura nobile.” Date of access: April 2019. <<http://www.fuorivista.eu/?p=584>>.

<sup>930</sup> “Oltre che un doveroso –ma sobrio e mai ridondante– omaggio a una figura importante nell’ambito dell’attivismo per i diritti civili, *Una nobile rivoluzione* è anche l’occasione, in questa determinata fase storica e sociale, per riflettere sul valore e sul senso di determinate conquiste. Dimenticare il lavoro lungo, paziente e rischioso che sta dietro tutta una serie di libertà e tutele troppo spesso oggi date per scontate, significa non comprenderne –oltre che l’urgenza e la necessità- anche la fragilità; significa, in ultimo, cessare di vigilare sulla loro difesa, e dunque metterle a rischio. Se Marcella Di Folco, con la sua rivoluzione nobile, ci ha lasciato un’eredità, questa è senza dubbio quella della concretezza, della perseveranza e del coraggio.” Date of access: February 2019. <<http://www.pointblank.it/recensione/una-nobile-rivoluzione/>>.

Woman: There are a lot of things to learn there, right? To **remove our own taboos because it is beautiful that in Spain, a country that is so ultraconservative and sexually repressed**; that is the stereotype, right? We imagine that, **but these things are taking place, they are also there.**<sup>931</sup>

Woman: I wanted to ask you about the solutions. Apart from making visible what we don't see, from our point of view as social workers, sometimes **I don't know very well what my role, as a social worker is, what else can we do** from your point of view?<sup>932</sup>

Similar were the reactions evoked by *Cuidado, resbala*, especially at the screening that I organised at the University of Granada. For instance, a young woman praised how the film renders visible domestic workers, not just as victims of structural violence but also from an empowered position. She found these testimonies **inspiring for active responses**, imagining a different way of organising life: “For me the debate would be how to organise work within the time frame that remains after vital social reproduction. And I think we are always doing it the other way around, organising life around work.”<sup>933</sup> People at this screening engaged in **a discussion about possible solutions**. A man who works as a trainer in the field of care labour argued that legislation changes haven't been enough, and complained about the ways in which private companies have perverted what could have been a guarantee for better working conditions. In general, spectators appreciated the way in which the film takes the example of domestic workers and care labour as a starting point for a solid critique of capitalism and patriarchy. An online reviewer puts it like this:

The success of *Cuidado, resbala* is that **it begins by articulating its discourse from below, from the place where the exploitation is more evident and raw,**

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<sup>931</sup> “Hay un montón de cosas que aprender allí, ¿no? Quitarnos tabús nosotros mismos porque es precioso que en España, un país tan ultraconservador y sexualmente reprimido, ¿es el estereotipo, no? Imaginamos eso, pero se están dando estas cosas, igualmente están ahí.” Q&A session. April 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Granada.

<sup>932</sup> “Yo quería preguntaros sobre las soluciones. Aparte de visibilizar lo que no vemos, desde nuestro punto como trabajadoras sociales, que a veces no sé muy bien cuál es mi función como trabajadora social, qué más podemos hacer desde vuestro punto de vista.” Q&A Session. October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

<sup>933</sup> “para mí el debate sería cómo organizar el trabajo a través de los tiempos que nos quedan después de la reproducción social vital. Y creo que siempre estamos al revés, organizando los tiempos de vida en torno al trabajo.” Q&A session. October 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the University of Granada.

**which is none other than the place of female domestic workers.** From there, and picking up that thread, **it ends up proving that the push to let one's life be annihilated in exchange for sustenance is never far away** for anyone.<sup>934</sup>

In his article “Encoding, decoding”, Stuart Hall describes three manners in which messages are decoded by their recipients: dominant, negotiated and oppositional ways (1993: 101-103). The active engagement of the spectators that I have discussed in this section exemplifies mainly a negotiated decoding. These audiences don't take the messages uncritically (dominant decoding), nor do they reject their frameworks (oppositional decoding). Rather, they acknowledge the messages at an abstract level, but then, at a situated level, they make their own ground rules in accordance with their own experiences and emotions.

Hall also explains that, for meanings to have effects, spectators should articulate them in practice: “Once accomplished, the discourse must then be translated - transformed, again- into social practices if the circuit is to be both completed and effective. If no ‘meaning’ is taken, there can be no ‘consumption’. If the meaning is not articulated in practice, it has no effect.” (1993: 91). In this sense, the last example of affective and intellectual responses that I would like to bring into consideration is my own response to three case studies (*No existimos*; *Cuidado, resbala*; and *Yes, We Fuck!*). This can be regarded as an articulation of meaning in practice, as expressed in my making of two video-essays that combine excerpts from the films, my interviews with the filmmakers and my own emotional reactions to them.

The idea of generating materials with and from some of the analysed documentary films was also inspired by a classroom methodology developed by Sofie Sauzet, in which she proposes the use of “snaplogs” (i.e. blogs with photos) as diffraction apparatus “to draw the students away from learning *about* practices, and orient them towards performing situated knowledges *in and through* practices” (2015: 37). The making of these videos was part of the GRACE project dissemination activities, specifically one called “Filming GRACE”, which was coordinated by Columbia University professor Frances Negrón-Muntaner, with my general assistance.

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<sup>934</sup> “El acierto de *Cuidado, resbala* consiste en empezar a articular su discurso desde abajo, desde el lugar en el que la explotación resulta más evidente y descarnada, que no es otro que el lugar de las mujeres que se dedican al trabajo doméstico. A partir de ahí, y tirando de ese hilo, se acaba por comprobar que la pulsión de dejarse aniquilar la vida a cambio de un sustento nunca anda demasiado lejos para nadie.” Asombrario—Juan García Única blog. Date of access: January 2019. <<https://asombrario.wordpress.com/2013/06/15/cuidado-resbala/>>.

The main goal of “Filming GRACE” was for the fifteen GRACE Early Stage Researchers to create videos that could expand on and share our research projects with a broader public. We had three encounters during 2017 and 2018, and several Skype meetings. Our key guideline, put forward by professor Negrón-Muntaner, was to think about the audiovisual not just as an instrument to convey information, but also as a method and as a way of producing knowledge in itself. The final results ranged from interviews with boxers and playwrights, to experimental juxtapositions of sounds and images that spark insights that we might have reached through academic readings and argumentation, but that onscreen emerge at a more affective level.

I made two videos, one is available on the GRACE project website<sup>935</sup> and the other one became part of the “Footnotes on Equality” exhibition, another GRACE dissemination output.<sup>936</sup> In both of them, my working premise was exploring ways in which Karen Barad’s diffractive methodology could be adapted as an editing strategy for reading diverse approaches to the visualisation of gender in/equalities through fragments from contemporary feminist documentary films, opinions expressed by their filmmakers, and my own gaze as a researcher.

The first video is only about Ana Solano’s *No existimos*. I tried to establish a dialogue between fragments of the film and three more elements: Solano’s reflections on her work, the reaction of a person from the audience at a film festival, and my own interpretations as a researcher. In this way, I also tried to render visible the various levels that make up a film: not just its form and content, but also its production processes and reception responses. My voice-over is present in this short video as Solano’s interviewer.

In my second video, “(Not) seeing well. Notes on Feminist Ways of Seeing”, I read through fragments from *Cuidado, resbala*, and *Yes, We Fuck!*, opinions expressed by two of their filmmakers (Carolina Suárez and Antonio Centeno), theoretical tools (Barad, Haraway, Mirzoeff, hooks), and my own gaze as spectator and researcher. It can be described as an audiovisual register of the event of my reading these films through concepts such as countervisuality, diffraction, patterns of differences and their effects, the right to appear, vulnerability, precarity and in/equality.

In this video I went beyond the interviewer position, explicitly putting myself within the film by means of my own reflections about the embodied discomfort of not

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<sup>935</sup> Date of access: April 2019. <<http://graceproject.eu/news/filming-grace/>>.

<sup>936</sup> GRACE online exhibition *Footnotes on Equality*. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://footnotesonequality.eu/videos/>>.

seeing well (I have severe myopia), and being told by androcentric standards that feminism is not a good way of seeing. By working on various cuts of the video with the feedback of professor Negrón-Muntaner, I moved from a more abstract/stream of consciousness approach to that of an explicit lecture, upon finally reaching a synthesis which I used as material for a seminar with the GEMMA-Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies students at the University of Granada. They found the video inspiring, also as an example of knowledge production otherwise.

Either emotional or intellectual (and both at the same time in many cases), reactions generated by the ten films from my sample illustrate what an ethical spectatorship can look like: that is, a kind of spectatorship in which audiences feel “accountable for, and physically vulnerable to, one's visions and representations” (Haraway 1997: 267). Active responses went from self-reflexivity that could lead to committed action (e.g. *Ma l'amore c'entra?*), recovery of genealogies (*Una nobile rivoluzione*) and self-acceptance/self-love (*Lunàdigas* and *Yes, We Fuck!*) up to the decision to employ these tools for the defence (*Yo decido*), the critique (*No existimos*, *Serás Hombre*, *Pays Barbare* and *Triangle*), and the transformation of the here and now (*Cuidado, resbala*). In my own practical re-elaboration of three of these films, my embodied affective reactions lead to the search for intellectual arguments<sup>937</sup> so as to be able to enact active responses: this thesis is indeed an example of my attempt to look beyond androcentric visuality regimes.

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<sup>937</sup> In my video-essay I say: “the silence and shame, the blurred visions and indistinct figures that have surrounded me at different moments in my life have encouraged me to try to look beyond what's taken for granted” (Min. 5:24). Then I continue: “I guess that explains why I have become a feminist film researcher” (Min. 5:35). “Not Seeing Well: Notes of Feminist Ways of Seeing”. Video-essay, part of the GRACE online exhibition *Footnotes on Equality*. Date of access: April 2019. <<http://footnotesonequality.eu/videos/>>.

## Conclusions

The idea is not to prescribe or instruct, but to offer an imaginary and to inspire a different ‘how’ of research (...) Reading texts through and around one another, rather than against each other. Taking someone’s work to new and unpredictable places. Creating provocations, new imaginaries and imaginings and new practices (...) diffractive readings are not guided by a ‘lack’, but are affirmative, creative, connecting, non-representational and ethical. (Murriss and Bozalek 2019: 10-11).

As I stated in the introduction, this thesis was written over the course of three years, which was the duration of my Gender and Women’s Studies PhD programme, and of my contract as one of the fifteen Early Stage Researchers of the GRACE-Gender and Cultures of Equality in Europe project.<sup>938</sup> With this dissertation, I have aimed at enriching possible alliances between feminist practices, documentary cinema and academic knowledge by building a bridge between feminist new materialism(s), specifically Karen Barad’s diffractive methodology, and feminist (documentary) film theory. Diffraction as a visualisation metaphor and as a reading (but also looking/thinking/imagining) strategy has been my main tool for analysing how feminist material-discursive practices in contemporary documentary cinema (can) visualise gender in/equalities.

In the next paragraphs, I will reflect upon the objectives and hypothesis established in the introduction, in light of the results obtained through my research process. Next, I will present a list of the contributions that my thesis might offer to feminist documentary film theory and practice. Finally, stemming from my work’s limitations, I will enunciate future research lines.

**Objective 1:** Building a bridge between feminist documentary film theory and a diffractive methodology, by approaching non-fiction cinema that deals with social inequalities as a diffraction apparatus

The first chapter of this thesis has laid the theoretical and methodological foundation for my proposal of encountering documentary films as diffraction

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<sup>938</sup> GRACE project website. Date of access: May 2019. <<http://graceproject.eu>>.

apparatuses: that is, as technologies that make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world in specific ways, by means of intra-actions between human and non-human agencies and objects of observation. In order to render this definition operational, I have proposed three analytical tools: materiality, emotionality and performativity.

Diffraction is a multi-layered concept. In this dissertation, I have applied it at three levels. Firstly, I have argued that any documentary film can be analysed as a diffraction apparatus. Secondly, I have diffractively read the intra-actions through which a sample of ten documentary films, each one separately, makes the world intelligible and participates in co-creating the real from an intersectional feminist perspective. Thirdly, I have diffractively read the insights raised by each film so as to identify patterns of feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema.

**Objective 2:** Developing what I call a “feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze” by bringing together different insights from feminist film theory

The second chapter of this dissertation has developed such toolbox in a diffractive way, i.e. reading diverse insights through one another. Organised around the concepts of visibility, countervisuality and the gaze, my theoretical journey has covered from John Berger’s male western gaze (1972) and Laura Mulvey’s male gaze ([1975] 1988) up to bell hooks’s oppositional gaze (200b), Judith/Jack Halberstam’s transgender look (2005), and my own definition of a feminist situated gaze inspired by Donna Haraway (1988). Following Domitilla Olivieri (2012), I have also proposed a working definition of feminist documentary cinema that focuses on what it does, rather than on what it is: an open definition of feminist cinema in its material-discursive practices.

**Objectives 3 and 4:** Identifying feminist material-discursive practices in a sample of documentary films produced in Spain and Italy over the last six years (2013-2018), and analysing the effects that these practices have, particularly in terms of visualising gender in/equalities on both sides of the camera, and on both sides of the screen

These two goals are at the core of chapters three, four, five and six, that is, the overviews of the feminist agenda(s) in Spanish and Italian documentary production, and my analysis of ten case studies. I hereby summarise my findings as a list of nine propositions for feminist documentary filmmaking that I illustrate with the case studies. Importantly, I did not define these propositions a priori; instead, they have been



elaborated in my intra-actions with the films and their filmmakers as this research project moved forward:

### **I. To translate insights from the feminist movement and from feminist theory into an audiovisual language**

Women's freedom to decide over their own bodies and their sexuality is at the core of *Yo decido* and *Yes, We Fuck!* Feminist economics frames *Cuidado, resbala*'s visualisation of inequalities surrounding care labour. Gender-based violence is tackled from different perspectives in *No existimos*, *Serás hombre* and *Ma l'amore c'entra?* Starting from oneself, the personal is political and gender-non-conforming lives are all visualised with irony and humour in *Una nobile rivoluzione* and *Lunàdigas*.

### **II. To challenge androcentric epistemologies by means of audiovisual formal strategies**

We have seen that a certain editing can facilitate, for instance, horizontal knowledge production (*Cuidado, resbala*) or construction of genealogies within the feminist movement (*Yo decido*). Another strategy is that of the self-reflexive voice-over, whose impact is very clear in *No existimos* and *Pays Barbare*. In the case of *Lunàdigas*, the filmmakers resort to the audiovisual medium to claim a name of their own.

### **III. To encourage identification and/or empathy with subjects that stray from the androcentric norm**

By means of strategies such as reflexive-performative sequences and respectful testimonies, identification with various "eccentric others" is encouraged. These range from a female domestic worker (*Cuidado, resbala*) and a seamstress in the south of Italy (*Triangle*) to a transgender activist (*Una nobile rivoluzione*) and women who decide not to have children (*Lunàdigas*).

### **IV. To show awareness of the politics traversing affects on both sides of the camera and the screen**

We have seen a tendency to move from affects such as distress and anger experienced at an individual level to feelings of empowerment and solidarity by means of the collective struggle against inequalities. *Cuidado, resbala*; *Yo decido*; *Yes, We Fuck!*, *Una nobile rivoluzione* and *Lunàdigas* vindicate humour, joy and pleasure. The nostalgic

drive of *Una nobile rivoluzione* operates as a strong reminder of the need to defend civil rights that tend to be taken for granted. Instead of resorting to painful testimonies that nurture a victimising depiction of female refugees, the director of *No existimos* resorts to poetic audiovisual metaphors to convey the emotions experienced by her interviewees. Similarly, with Mariella's testimony, *Triangle* opens up a different possibility of affirmation in cinema, not as a victim, but as a worker proud of her job. In the case of *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, we have discussed the problematic stereotype of family happiness when confronted with the testimonies of men who connect their anger outbursts with their frustration after seeing their androcentric ideals questioned.

#### **V. To set into motion non-hierarchical and responsible/response-able ways of generating audiovisual contents**

We have seen two examples of cooperative-like organisation, which is the case of the collective films *Cuidado, resbala* and *Yo decido*. Another important aspect that we have discussed is the importance given to respectful and horizontal relationships between filmmakers and filmed subjects, clear in *Yes, We Fuck!*, *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, *No existimos*, and *Lunàdigas*. In the latter, it was indeed their response-ability towards their filmed subjects which led the directors to appear within the frame at the same level of their interviewees and, in this way, to question hierarchies between who records and who is recorded, who speaks and who is spoken about. The creation of a community of lunàdigas has played an important role in dealing with the precarity with which the film has been made, for example, by building a self-distribution network. We have also pointed out that *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *No existimos* avoid a sensationalist approach, but highlight the anguish and the menace that gender-based violence generates by means of visual metaphors and music.

#### **VI. To reach audiences for whom the films are particularly relevant and who may not have easy access to independent productions or may not be interested a priori**

We have said that *Cuidado, resbala*; *Yo decido*; and *Yes, We Fuck!* are available for free online and several screenings have been organised by collectives who are particularly concerned with their contents. We have also discussed that, for the directors of *Una nobile rivoluzione*; *Serás hombre* and *Ma l'amore c'entra?* the main goal has been to reach those who ignore the realities of gender non-conforming people or

who haven't questioned their own responsibility towards gender-based violence and/or the reproduction of toxic masculinity.

### **VII. To open up possibilities for active responses and/or become a tool for activism**

We have seen that the majority of the case studies were made with the intention of becoming tools for political action. This is very clear in *Cuidado, resbala* (expose inequalities faced by domestic workers are structural problems), *Yes, We Fuck!* (visualise subjects with functional diversity as sexual beings that desire), *Yo decido* (support a massive demonstration led by a feminist group against a draft bill banning the right for abortion), *Lunàdigas* (create a safe space for childfree women to be able to claim their right to exist), *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *Serás hombre* (invite men to overcome silence concerning gender-based violence and to deconstruct the patriarchal culture within which they have built their identities).

### **VIII. To render visible and/or strengthen (trans)feminist genealogies and alliances**

We have mentioned, for instance, that *Yo decido* has as a central pillar the fact that the feminist fight for women's right to self-determination has a long history behind and that it's necessary to remain aware of the need to keep on defending rights. We have also discussed the potential for strategic alliances among different groups who struggle against a social and economic condition within which gender has played a key role, which is clearly visualised in *Una nobile rivoluzione* and *Yes, We Fuck!*

### **IX. To subvert androcentric visualities by means of strategies such as haptic visuality and poetic audiovisual metaphors**

We have seen the importance played by poetic audiovisual metaphors as a way of acknowledging the violence of representation, doing justice to the pain caused by gender-based violence but without falling into sensationalism (*No existimos* and *Ma l'amore c'entra?*). As for haptic visuality, two examples we have discussed are those of *Yes, We Fuck!* (there is no image while we listen to a blind woman and the sense of touch is highlighted in the story of a quadriplegic woman) and *Pays Barbare* (the filmmakers render visible the origin of the materials they work with, even holding the filmstrips within the frame).

**Objective 5:** Revealing patterns between the ten case studies by reading through one another (i.e. diffractively) insights raised in each one of them.

In chapter 7, I have brought together the ten case studies so as to identify patterns in the insights that each one raises concerning feminist material-discursive practices at four levels: content, form, production and reception. In the case of contents, after pointing out what I call countervisuality practices in (re)framing specific realities that highlight the role that gender has played in the construction and legitimisation of social inequalities, I detect two patterns in which feminist material-discursive practices operate in these films: enacting the right to appear (*Una nobile rivoluzione*; *Yo decido*; *Lunàdigas*; *Yes, We Fuck!*; and *Cuidado, resbala*) or enacting the right to look back (*Triangle* and *Pays Barbare*) and/or against the grain (*Serás Hombre*, *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *No existimos*).

As for the forms, I have placed the emphasis on the politicisation of diverse modes of representation. With my ten case studies I corroborate what Julia Lesage asserts in the context of the so-called realist debate (1984): feminist material-discursive practices can politicise realist (expository-observational-participatory) or experimental (poetic-reflexive-performative) documentary films. The analysis of production practices is double-layered because I enact two cuts in the discourses of the filmmakers to read their insights through one another: I identify self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions concerning four key concepts, i.e. documentary cinema, equality, gender and feminism(s).

All the interviewees share an understanding of documentary cinema that is congruent with its definition as a diffraction apparatus: they acknowledge the importance of situating their gazes and the impact that their observation and editing apparatuses have on their co-creation of realities. They also feel accountable towards their filmed subjects and audiences. All the filmmakers from the Spanish sample identify themselves as feminist, but while some understand this as changing the patriarchal system from the roots (*Cuidado, resbala* and *No existimos*), others understand feminism as a fight for equality and integration that should be “normalised” (*Yo decido* and *Serás Hombre*).

In the case of Italian filmmakers, with the exception of the directors of *Lunàdigas*, there's general suspicion towards feminism as a label for their cinema (*Triangle* and *Ma l'amore c'entra?*). The situation of *Una nobile rivoluzione* is peculiar, because the director does not consider his film feminist but he admits the debt he has with the feminist movement. Similarly, the directors of *Pays Barbare* never had a feminist agenda,

though they have always defended a politically committed filmmaking practice. Another tension arises in connection with equality. While everybody agrees on the need for equal rights, most filmmakers prefer to organise their demands in terms of diversity and difference. In the case of gender, even though all the interviewees conceive it as socially constructed and connected with the legitimation of inequalities, most of them agree on the need to keep on talking about/working with the political subject “women”.

In discussing receptions practices, I have identified patterns of affective identification and/or intellectual reflections from the audiences. Either emotional or intellectual (both at the same time in a few cases), reactions generated by the ten films from the sample illustrate what an ethical and responsible/response-able spectatorship might entail: self-reflexivity that could lead to committed action (e.g. *Ma l'amore c'entra?*), recovery of genealogies (*Una nobile rivoluzione*) and self-acceptance/self-love (*Lunàdigas* and *Yes, We Fuck!*); as well as the employment of audiovisual tools for the defence (*Yo decido*), the critique (*No existimos*, *Serás Hombre*, *Pays Barbare* and *Triangle*), and the transformation of the here and now (*Cuidado, resbala*).

With these results, I can assert that I have demonstrated **the general hypothesis** that I took as my working axis: Feminist material-discursive practices enacted either by documentary filmmakers, filmed subjects or film spectators, have effects on the visualisation of in/equalities in and through the films content and form, but also in and through their contexts of production and reception. In order to identify these effects, contemporary documentary cinema that deals with social inequalities rooted in, but not limited to, gender, can be analysed as a diffraction apparatus, i.e. technologies that create boundaries and make the world intelligible through intra-actions between human and non-human agencies of observation and objects of observation.

In this regard, an important **contribution of this dissertation** is the implementation of a feminist new materialist theoretical and methodological approach to the analysis of feminist practices in documentary cinema, which acknowledges the complexity of the intra-actions taking place between the human and non-human agencies and objects of observation involved in any documentary film. Such theoretical and methodological approach is rooted in the diffraction metaphor elaborated by Karen Barad (2007). This is my proposal for thinking about and building upon patterns of differences within feminist documentary practices. I'll go over this main contribution by separating it into five parts:

**Contribution 1.** I have developed an understanding of documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus: technologies that make cuts and boundaries within phenomena so as to make part of the world intelligible to another part of the world in specific ways

As we have seen, this onto-epistemological turn has ethico-political effects, as it moves from the representational paradigm in the analysis of documentary cinema to an analysis of how practices matter and may contribute to the transformation of the real. If we recognise this potential of documentaries, we can envision their impact upon the opening up of possibilities for re-making the world.

**Contribution 2.** I have built a feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze

This resource can be applied in a wide diversity of contexts for discussing fiction and non-fiction cinema from an intersectional feminist perspective. I have also proposed and applied three tools for the analysis of documentary cinema as a diffraction apparatus: materiality, emotionality and performativity.

**Contribution 3.** I have applied the method of diffractive reading to documentary cinema at two levels: I diffractively read the intra-actions through which a documentary film makes the world intelligible and participates in co-creating the real at the levels of content, form, production and reception; and I diffractively read the insights raised by feminist material-discursive practices in different films to identify patterns of differences and their effects

A diffractive gaze acknowledges the active participation of the researcher/viewer in the development of specific patterns that would not emerge under different circumstances. That's why, throughout this dissertation I have tried to be as explicit as possible concerning my analytical tools. Most of the films within my sample render explicit a feminist commitment in their contents and formal strategies (*Cuidado, resbala; Yo decido; No existimos; Serás hombre; Lunàdigas; Ma l'amore c'entra?*). In other cases, their directors have expressed their feminist ethics, which are also present in the film's formal decisions (*Yes, We Fuck!* and *Una nobile rivoluzione*). There are, however, cases in which what the filmmakers have expressed is an understanding of their work as political and gendered, but without claiming any feminist genealogy (*Pays Barbare* and *Triangle*).

Reading these films diffractively with my feminist toolbox, incorporating insights raised by the filmmakers in personal interviews and by spectators at public screenings, becomes a productive event that is indeed feminist and political in all cases. In this sense, a feminist situated gaze can also be regarded as a diffractive gaze committed with critically following processes, differences and their effects in the texts, but also beyond the texts. This diffractive gaze differs from bell hooks's oppositional gaze because rather than looking against, it first makes sense of androcentric visuality regimes, but then looks beyond and in spite of them so as to engage in the re-making of the world otherwise.

**Contribution 4.** I have assembled a theoretical and methodological framework that allows for reading insights through one another without falling into dichotomous, hierarchical and/or prescriptive statements about what feminist material-discursive practices in non-fiction cinema do and could do

A diffractive thinking follows the processes through which differences come to matter in each intra-action between human and non-human agencies and objects. Adapting the diffraction metaphor for the analysis of documentary cinema from an intersectional feminist perspective opens a way out of dichotomous debates (e.g. realist cinema versus counter-cinema) and universal definitions. Instead, multiple and provisional patterns emerge. For instance, while some filmmakers consider the visibility of their subjects a political and desirable goal, others find it problematic and resort to other strategies for translating specific realities into poetic and/or performative narrative waves. The ways in which feminist practices (can) politicise documentary cinema are diverse and can be present at any or at all of the four levels: content, form, production and/or reception. What is needed is a critical gaze attentive to records of processes, how differences are being made and what effects these differences have: a responsible/response-able stance on both sides of the camera and the screen.

**Contribution 5.** I have drawn a preliminary mapping of Spanish and Italian documentary films that deal with gender issues, identifying continuities but also specificities

Due to time and scope limits, the overview of the feminist agendas in the non-fiction audiovisual production in Spain and Italy carried out in this dissertation is very limited. However, I do consider that I have taken important steps in tracing a genealogy of feminist practices in the documentary production of two Southern European countries that haven't been analysed in academia as comprehensively as Anglophone contexts.

The annexes in which I have enlisted over a hundred films that I encountered during my research process can be conceived as archives under permanent construction and as resources for teaching with and through documentary cinema. I would like to highlight that, despite the small size of the samples from both countries, they allow to have a clear idea of how diverse feminist issues are being translated into contemporary non-fiction audiovisual productions.

In Spain, for instance, I have discussed a so-called typical militant film about an “old” feminist issue like the right to abortion (*Yo decido*), along with films that tackle “more recent” issues from a transfeminist or a transnational perspective, such as postporn queer-crip alliances (*Yes, We Fuck!*) and the critique of precarity within the global care chain (*Cuidado, resbala*). The other two case studies expose alternatives to an institutional portrait of gender-based violence that has rested on the victimisation of women: the filmmakers turn their gaze towards men as perpetrators (*Serás hombre*) or resort to poetic ways of representing subjects under extremely vulnerable conditions (*No existimos*).

In the case of Italy, I have looked at a documentary film (*Lunàdigas*) that recovers traditional practices from the feminist movement of the seventies: discussions held in small consciousness-raising groups of women, insights raised by starting from oneself, and ironical/playful approaches to one’s own gendered experience of the world. I also analyse a film that, once acknowledging this genealogy, opens up possibilities in the search for strategic alliances with the LGBT civil rights movement (*Una nobile rivoluzione*).

The other three Italian films under discussion exemplify the third category identified by Luciano and Scarparo in cinema directed by women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is, reframing Italy in accordance with changing (trans)national contexts (2013: 20). In my examples, however, there’s a film co-directed by a man, since I don’t link the feminist character of a film with the gender of its filmmaker. The issues tackled are: precarious working conditions (*Triangle*), gender-based violence in heterosexual couples (*Ma l’amore c’entra?*), and the return of fascism (*Pays Barbare*).

An in-depth mapping and diffractive reading of fiction and/or non-fiction feminist productions in the Southern European context is one of the possible **research lines to be developed in the future**. In order to build a genealogy of feminist practices in Spanish and/or Italian (documentary) filmmaking, a much more exhaustive work would have to



be carried out, particularly in terms of establishing relations, patterns and dialogues between feminist movement, feminist theory and feminist interventions in audiovisual productions at both national levels.

In this dissertation I have privileged qualitative over quantitative analysis. To a great extent, I did so because there was quantitative data already available, produced by associations such as CIMA (the Association of Women Filmmakers and from the Audiovisual Media in Spain) and EWA (the European Women's Audiovisual Network). Importantly, another research line that has been envisioned is indeed a future collaboration with EWA, for the update of their research activities concerning gender inequality in the European film industry. Specifically, I would work with my supervisor, professor Adelina Sánchez Espinosa, in the gathering and analysis of data about women's presence in the Spanish film industry.<sup>939</sup>

Working with EWA can also strengthen an aspect that I don't develop in this dissertation but that would be key in overcoming inequalities and the ever-present menace of precarity that keeps on characterising feminist practices in fiction and non-fiction filmmaking: elaborating public policies at national and European levels so as to foster equality in the film industry at the stages of production, distribution and exhibition.

Finally, in congruence with my desire to bring into dialogue feminist film theory and feminist filmmaking, I also have the project of articulating some of the tools developed in this dissertation in practical workshops for responsible/response-able film/video production and/or spectatorship. I am convinced that feminisms can contribute a lot to film theory and to another possible and necessary approach to filmmaking. This is something to bear in mind as a postdoctoral research fellow.

I hope that the results of this thesis will provide strong arguments to explore and strengthen strategic links between documentary cinema, feminist practices and different ways of producing knowledge that are informed by horizontal and collaborative onto-epistemologies and ethico-politics. I also expect to foster understandings of filmmaking and watching as legitimate spaces for political action, empowerment of women and gender non-forming subjects, and co-creation of conditions under which, as Judith Butler puts it, "vulnerability and interdependency become livable" (2015: 218). Informed by

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<sup>939</sup> In September 2018, professor Sánchez Espinosa and I attended a research workshop organised by EWA in Potsdam-Babelsberg as a preliminary activity before launching their new research project. The results of their previous work (in which Spain was not included due to lack of funds) are discussed in chapter 2. *Vid. Supra*. Section 2.1.5.1 European Contemporary Context Data. Another possible project, developed with researchers from the GRACE team would focus on the topic of curating equalities from a decolonial perspective in European museums.

feminist ethics, the human and non-human agencies and objects of observation that interact on both sides of the camera can open up many possibilities for “the construction of discursive sites of resistance to exclusion, fixity and oppressive meanings of gender/sex” (Lykke 2010: 34).

Just like my master dissertation, this PhD thesis is a point of arrival and a new starting point. It represents the culmination of my doctoral studies and of my Marie Curie Early Stage Researcher experience, but it is also the beginning of new ways to continue weaving feminist knowledges inside and outside the academy. Along these years, I have understood that we need to develop oppositional gazes to look against androcentric visuality regimes, but we also require diffractive ways of seeing beyond and in spite of such regimes: making sense of the inequalities that the mirror reflects, but also proposing and enacting real alternatives to these violent visualities by following processes, recognising differences, and critically engaging with the sites where the effects of those processes and differences appear. Patterns of differences have been exploited as pretexts for structures of social inequalities. It’s about time we claim them as inspiration for co-creating the world otherwise.

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- *Noi Donne* (1944-present)
- *Poder y libertad* (1979-present)
- *Screen* (1950-present)
- *Vindicación feminista* (1976-1979)

### Films and Videos

- Aguirre, Arantza and José Luis López Linares (2006, Spain): *Hécuba, un sueño de pasión*
- Aguirre, Arantza (2009, Spain): *Bejart. El esfuerzo y el ánimo*
- Aguirre, Arantza (2016, Spain): *Dancing Beethoven*
- Akerman, Chantal (1975, Belgium and France): *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*
- Akerman, Chantal (1993, France): *D'est*
- Akerman, Chantal (19996, France): Chantal Akerman par Chantal Akerman
- Albrechtsen, Mette Carla and Lea Glob (2016, Denmark): *Venus. Let's Talk about Sex*
- Alexandre, Margarita and Rafel Torrecilla (1953, Spain): *Cristo*
- Alexandre, Margarita and Rafel Torrecilla (1955, Spain): *La ciudad perdida*
- Alexandre, Margarita and Rafel Torrecilla (1956, Spain): *La gata*
- Allan, Catherine, Judy Erola, Allie Light and Joan Musante (1974, USA): *Self Health*
- Álvarez, Mercedes (2004, Spain): *El cielo gira*

- Álvarez, Mercedes (2010, Spain): *Mercado de futuros*
- Álvarez, Regina and Xavier Villaverde (2009, Spain): *Gitanos en Buenos Aires*
- Amenábar, Alejandro (2009, Spain): *Agora*
- Andreu, Cristina (1988, Spain): *Brumal*
- Anzellotti, Daniele and Francesco Del Grosso (2009, Italy): *Negli occhi*
- Armengou, Montse and Ricard Belis (2016, Spain): *Jo també vull sexe!*
- Arribas, Marta and Ana Pérez (2004, Spain): *El tren de la memoria*
- Arribas, Marta and Ana Pérez (2009, Spain): *Cómicos*
- Ashur, Geri, Peter Barton, Marilyn Mulford and Stephanie Pawleski (1971, USA): *Janie's Janie*
- Ballús, Neus (2013, Spain): *La plaga*
- Barrera, Carmen Dolores and Iñaki Peñafiel (2006, Spain): *¿Qué tienes debajo del sombrero?*
- Barriga, Cecilia (1991, Spain): *Meeting Two Queens*
- Barriga, Cecilia (2004-2005, Spain): *El origen de la violencia*
- Barrionuevo, Andrea (2016, Spain): *Club de Reyes*
- Bartolomé Cecilia (1978, Spain): *Vámonos Barbara*
- Bartolomé Cecilia and José (1981, Spain): *Después de... Atado y bien atado*
- Bartolomé Cecilia (1996, Spain): *Lejos de África*
- Bergman, Ingmar (1957, Sweden): *Det sjunde inseglet*
- Biemann, Ursula (1999, Switzerland and Mexico): *Performing the Border*
- Bofarrull, Anna (2009, Spain): *Notes al peu*
- Bofarull, Anna (2010, Spain): *Hammada*
- Bolláin, Icíar (2003, Spain): *Te doy mis ojos*
- Bolláin, Icíar (2014, Spain): *En tierra extraña*
- Borden, Lizzie (1983, USA): *Born in Flames*
- Broinowski, Anna: (1997, Australia): *Sexing the Label*
- Cabeza, Elisabet and Esteve Riambau (2005, Spain): *La doble vida del faquir*
- Cabeza, Elisabet and Esteve Riambau (2009, Spain): *Máscaras*
- Cervera, Anna (2015, Spain): *A la puta strasse. 2º acto*
- Ciccone, Anne Riitta (2002, Italy): *L'amore di Màrja*
- Cifredo, Alicia (2013, Spain): *Tocaoras*

- Citron, Michelle (1979, USA): *Daughter Rite*
- Coixet, Isabel (1988, Spain): *Demasiado viejo para morir joven*
- Coixet, Isabel (2005, Spain): *The Secret Life of Words*
- Coixet, Isabel (2008, Spain): *Elegy*
- Coixet, Isabel (2009, Spain and Japan): *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*
- Coixet, Isabel (2011, Spain): *Escuchando al juez Garzón*
- Coixet, Isabel (2017, Spain): *The Bookshop*
- Coll, Mar (2010, Spain): *Tres dies amb la família*
- Comencini, Cristina (2002, Italy): *Il più bel giorno della mia vita*
- Comencini, Cristina (2008, Italy): *Bianco e nero*
- Comencini, Francesca (2004, Italy): *Mi piace lavorare*
- Comencini, Francesca (2008, Italy): *In fabbrica*
- Comencini, Francesca (2009, Italy): *Lo spazio bianco*
- Concejero, Paloma (2013, Spain): *Antonio Vega. Tu voz entre otras mil*
- Cortesina, Helena (1921, Spain): *Flor de España o la leyenda de un torero*
- Costa, Renate (2010, Spain and Paraguay): *108 Cuchillo de palo*
- Damian, Anca (2015, Romania, France and Poland): *The Magic Mountain*
- d'Errico, Corrado (1936, Italy): *Il cammino degli eroi*
- de la Morena, Raúl (2005, Spain): *Editar una vida*
- de la Morena, Raúl (2007, Spain): *Feldpost 23558*
- de la Morena, Raúl (2009, Spain): *Tsitsanu, camina!*
- de Lillo, Antonietta (2004, Italy): *Il resto di niente*
- de Ocampo, Isabel (2008, Spain): *Miente*
- de Sica, Vittorio (1948, Italy): *Ladri di biciclette*
- Delgado, Fernando (1934, Spain): *Doce hombres y una mujer*
- Deren, Maya (1943, USA): *Meshes of the Afternoon*
- Díaz, Mar (2016, Spain): *The Spanish Dancer*
- Díez, Ana (1989, Spain): *Ander eta Yul*
- Díez, Ana (2000, Spain): *La mafia en La Habana*
- Díez, Ana (2002, Spain): *Galíndez*
- Díaz, Natalia (2008, Spain): *Rompe el día*

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- D'Onofrio, Alberto (2008, Italy): *Confessioni di un gay cattolico*, Part of the television series *Erotika Italiana*
- D'Onofrio, Alberto (2008, Italy): *Scene da un matrimonio*. Part of the television series *Erotika Italiana*
- D'Onofrio, Alberto (2008, Italy): *Grassi, grossi e Pelosi*. Part of the television series *Erotika Italiana*
- Dordi, Loredana, Marina Tartara and Tilde Capomazza (1977 to 1981, Italy): *Si dice donna. Fatti, ricerche, domande sul ruolo femminile*. News programme
- Dulac, Germaine (1923, France): *La Souriante Madame Beudet*
- Elam, Joann (1978, USA): *Rape*
- Eldaief, Mona and Jehane Noujaim (2014, USA): *Rafea: Solar Mama*
- Epremian, Pia (1967, Italy): *Proussade (J'ai noyé les mots dans mon ventre)*
- Esteban, Cristina (1994, Spain): *Ojala, val del Omar*
- Fellini, Federico (1969, Italy): *Satyricon*
- Fellini, Federico (1973, Italy): *Amarcord*
- Fellini, Federico (1980, Italy): *La città delle donne*
- Fernández, Isabel (2014, Spain): *Corredores de fondo*
- Ferreira, Patricia, Chus Gutiérrez, Laura Mañá, and Inés París (2010, Spain): *Ellas son África*
- Flanders, Elle (2005, USA): *Zero Degrees of Separation*
- Funari, Vicky and Sergio De La Torre (2006, USA): *Maquilápolis [City of Factories]*
- Gagliardo, Giovanna (1977, Italy): *Maternale*
- Gallone, Carmine (1937, Italy): *Scipione l'Africano*
- García del Pino, Virginia (2012, Spain): *El jurado*
- García del Pino, Virginia (2014, Spain): *Basilio Martín Patino, la décima carta*
- García Ribot, Maite (2014, Spain): *Cartas a María*
- Ghaemmaghami, Rokhsareh (2016, Switzerland, Germany, USA and Iran): *Sonita*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1975, Italy): *Erat Sora*

- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1976, Italy): *Cesare Lombroso–Sull’odore del garofano*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1979, Italy): *Karagoez et les brûlures d’herbes parfumés*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1981, Italy): *Essence d’absinthe*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1986, Italy): *Dal Polo all’Equatore*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1986, Italy): *Ritorno a Khodorciur. Diario Armeno*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1990, Italy): *Uomini anni vita*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1991, Italy): *Archivi italiani-II fiore della razza*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1994, Italy): *Diario africano*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1995, Italy): *Prigionieri della Guerra*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1996, Italy): *Lo specchio di Diana*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (1998, Italy): *Su tutte le vette è pace*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (2003, Italy): *Frammenti elettrici n.3 Corpi*
- Gianikian, Yervant and Angela Ricci Lucchi (2004, Italy): *Oh! Uomo*
- Grifi, Alberto and Gianfranco Baruchello (1965, Italy): *La Verifica incerta*
- Grifi, Alberto (1972-73, Italy): *Anna*
- Grifi, Alberto (1976): *Parco Lambro*
- Gómez, Sara (1974, Cuba): *De cierta manera*
- González Sinde Angeles (2003, Spain): *La suerte dormida*
- Guggenheim, David (2015, USA and United Arab Emirates): *He Named Me Malala*
- Gutiérrez, Chus (2005, Spain): *El calentito*
- Hammer, Barbara (2008, Germany): *A Horse is Not a Metaphor*
- Harlan, Richard (1933, Spain): *Odio*

- Herrera, Lucía and Juan Luis Ruiz Fernández (2009, Spain): *L'escaezu. Recuerdos del 37*
- Hershman Leeson, Lynn (2010, USA): *Women Art Revolution! A Secret History*
- Hitchcock, Alfred (1958, USA): *Vertigo*
- Howard, Silas and Harriet Dodge (2001, USA): *By Hook or by Crook*
- Ilarraz, Estela (2007, Spain): *Próxima estación*
- Institute Luce (1927-1945, Italy): *Giornale Luce*
- Iquino, Ignacio (1980, Spain): *La caliente Julieta*
- Jordà, Joaquim and Nuria Villazán (1999, Spain): *Monos como Becky*
- Klein, Jim, Miles Mogulescu and Julia Reichert (1976, USA): *Union Maids*
- Labate, Wilma (1997, Italy): *Lavorare stanca*
- Labate, Wilma (2001, Italy): *Domenica*
- Labate, Wilma (2007, Italy): *Signorina Effe*
- Lacuesta, Isaki (2002, Spain): *Cravan vs. Cravan*
- Lajolo, Anna, Guido Lombardi and Alfredo Leonardi as “Videobase” (1970, Italy): *La casa è un diritto, non un privilegio*
- Lajolo, Anna, Guido Lombardi and Alfredo Leonardi as “Videobase” (1973, Italy): *Lotta di classe alla Fiat*
- Lajolo, Anna, Guido Lombardi and Alfredo Leonardi as “Videobase” (1974, Italy): *Omsa Sud. Dopo un Anno di Lotta*
- Lajolo, Anna, Guido Lombardi and Alfredo Leonardi as “Videobase” (1975, Italy): *Lottando la vita, Emigrati italiani a Berlino*
- Lajolo, Anna, Guido Lombardi and Alfredo Leonardi as “Videobase” (1979, Italy): *Il lavoro contro la vita*
- Ledo, Margarita (2004, Spain): *Santa Liberdade*
- Lerner, Mike and Maxim Pozdorovkin (2014, Russia and UK): *Pussy Riot. A Punk Prayer*
- Lesmes, Eva (2001, Spain): *El palo*
- Lodoli, Elisabetta (1992, Italy): *La pace a due voci*
- Lodoli, Elisabetta (2013, Italy, USA, Bosnia and Herzegovina): *Stolica*
- Longinotto, Kim and Jano Williams (1993, USA): *Dream Girls*



- Lumbreras, Helena (1968, Spain and Italy): *Spagna 68. El hoy es malo, pero el mañana es mío*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Llorenç Soler (1970, Spain): *El cuarto poder*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1973, Spain): *El campo para el hombre*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1976, Spain): *Primer aniversario de la muerte de Txiki en Cerdanyola*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1976, Spain): *Manifestació Diada a Sant Boi de Llobregat*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1976, Spain): *Osuna*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1976-1977, Spain): *¿El Prat? Un río a desviar*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1977, Spain): *Diada, 11 de septiembre de 1977*
- Lumbreras, Helena and Mariano Lisa as “Colectivo Cine de Clase” (1977-1978, Spain): *A la vuelta del grito*
- Lumbreras, Helena (1983, Spain): *Escuela de San Ildefonso*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1974, Italy): *Cenerella psychofavola femminista*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1976, Italy): *Autocoscienza*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1976, Italy): *Antistrip*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1977, Italy): *Le Sibille*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1978, Italy): *Il mare ci ha chiamate*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1981, Italy): *Ricciocapriccio*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1987, Italy): *Didone non è morta*
- Mangiacapre, Lina and The Nemesiache (1991, Italy): *Faust Fausta*
- Mangini, Cecilia (1958, Italy): *Ignoti alla città*
- Mangini, Cecilia (1959, Italy): *Stendali*
- Mangini, Cecilia (1960, Italy): *Divino amore*
- Mangini, Cecilia, Lino del Fra and Lino Micciché (1961, Italy): *All'armi siam fascisti!*
- Mangini, Cecilia (1962, Italy): *La canta delle marane*

- Mangini, Cecilia (1965, Italy): *Felice natale*
- Mangini, Cecilia (1974, Italy): *La Briglia sul collo*
- Manresa, Laia and Sergi Dies (2010, Spain): *Morir de día*
- Marazzi, Alina (2012, Italy): *Tutto parla di te*
- Massadian, Valérie (2017, France): *Milla*
- Mateos, Bárbara (2017, Spain): *Ad Ventum. Hacia el viento*
- Medina, Elena and José Fernández (2005, Spain): *Cambia de vida. El viaje de Xixon Sound*
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. (1983, USA): *Reassamblage*
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. (1989, USA): *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*
- Minh-ha, Trinh T (1991, USA): *Shoot for the Contents*
- Miró, Pilar (1976, Spain): *La petición*
- Miró, Pilar (1979, Spain): *El crimen de Cuenca*
- Miró, Pilar (1980, Spain): *Gary Cooper, que estás en los cielos*
- Miró, Pilar (1982, Spain): *Hablamos esta noche*
- Miró, Pilar (1986, Spain): *Werther*
- Miró, Pilar (1992, Spain): *Beltenebros*
- Miró, Pilar (1993, Spain): *El pájaro de la felicidad*
- Miró, Pilar (1995, Spain): *El perro del hortelano*
- Miró, Pilar (1996, Spain): *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños*
- Monsell, Pilar (2014, Spain): *África 815*
- Monti, Adriana (1976, Italy): *Bagagli*
- Monti, Adriana (1977, Italy): *Il Filo del Desiderio*
- Monti, Adriana (1978, Italy): *Ciclo continuo*
- Mulvey, Laura and Peter Wollen (1977, UK): *Riddles of the Sphinx*
- Munt, Silvia (2003, Spain): *Gala*
- Murugarren, Ana and Joaquín Trincado (2005, Spain): *Esta no es la vida privada de Javier Krahe*
- Muscardin, Laura (2008, Italy): *Billo-Il Grand Dakhaar*
- Nelson, Carlota (2010, Spain): *Anclados*
- Negri, Anna (2008, Italy): *Riprendimi*
- Nichiarelli, Susanna (2009, Italy): *Cosmonauta*

- Passola, Isona (2009, Spain): *Cataluña-Espanya*
- Peirce, Kimberly (1999, USA): *Boys Don't Cry*
- Pérez, María (2015, Spain): *Malpartida Fluxus Village*
- Pérez Granado, Verónica (2018, Spain): *Tetuaneros*
- Perojo, Benito (1932, Spain): *El hombre que se reía del amor*
- Pi Brujas, Rosario (1935, Spain): *El gato montés*
- Pi Brujas, Rosario (1937, Spain): *Molinos de Viento*
- Piovano, Emanuela (1998, Italy): *Le complici*
- Piovano, Emanuela (2011, Italy): *Le stelle inquiete*
- Piovano, Emanuela (2016, Italy): *L'età d'oro*
- Plattner, Patricia (1999, Switzerland and India): *Made in India*
- Portillo, Lourdes (2001, USA and Mexico): *Señorita extraviada*
- Potter, Sally (1979, UK): *Thriller*
- Potter, Sally (1993, UK): *Orlando*
- Pujol, Ariadna (2005, Spain): *Aguaviva*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2000, Italy): *Ècosaimale?*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2000, Italy): *Il bambino Gioacchino*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2001, Italy): *L'insonnia di Devi*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2002, Italy): *La borsa di Helene*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2003, Italy): *L'isola*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2005, Italy): *Comandare. Una storia Zen*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2006, Italy): *Il mondo addosso*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2008, Italy): *Migranti in cammino*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2012, Italy): *Terramatta*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2013, Italy): *Con il fiato sospeso*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2014, Italy): *LampeduSani*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2014, Italy): *9x10= Novanta*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2015, Italy): *87 ore*
- Quatriglio, Costanza (2018, Italy): *Sembra mio figlio*
- Reguera, Nely (2005, Spain): *Muxia, a Ferida*
- Riahi, Arash and Arman (2013, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Greece and Belgium): *Everyday Rebellion*

- Rodríguez, Manane (2010, Spain): *Memorias rotas*
- Rodríguez, Assumpta (2010, Spain): *Globalización*
- Ros, Mireia (2010, Spain): *Barcelona, abans que el temps ho esborri*
- Rossellini, Roberto (1945, Italy): *Rome, città aperta*
- Ruido, María (1997, Spain): *La voz humana*
- Ruido, María (2015, Spain): *L'oeil imperative*
- Ruttmann, Walter (1927): *Berlin: Die Sinfonie Der Großstadt*
- Sáenz de Heredia, José Luis (1941, Spain): *Raza*
- Salvador, Dolores and Carlos Molinero (2005, Spain): *La niebla en las palmeras*
- Sánchez, Sandra (2011, Spain): *Tralas luces*
- Sandrelli, Stefania (2009, Italy): *Christine Cristina* (2009)
- Sanmartí, Anna (2009, Spain): *La tierra habitada*
- Sanz Fuentes, Nayra, and Javier (2012, Spain): *Tan antiguo como el mundo*
- Scandurra, Sofia (1977, Italy): *Io sono mia*
- Scorsese, Martin (1974, USA): *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*
- Segovia, Mercedes (2002, Spain): *El Estado de Florida contra J.J Martínez*
- Shub, Esfir (1927, USSR): *Fall of the Rumanov Dynasty*
- Silanus, Adriano, Priscilla Berardi, Raffaele Lelleri, Valeria Alpi and Jonathan Mastellari (2012, Italy): *Sesso, amore and disabilità*
- Simón, Carla (2017, Spain): *Estiu 1993*
- Sol, Jo (2016, Spain): *Vivir y otras ficciones*
- Spada, Marina (2006, Italy): *Come l'ombra*
- Spada, Marina (2009, Italy): *Poesia che mi guardi*
- Sternberg, Josef von (1930, Germany): *Der blaue Engel*
- Tarantino, Quentin (2003, USA): *Kill Bill 1*
- Tarantino, Quentin (2004, USA): *Kill Bill 2*
- Taviani, Giovanna (2010, Italy): *Fughe e approdi*
- Tercero Ramiro, Sonia and Susan Youdelman-Azcona (2012, Spain): *Huellas en el cielo*
- Tognazzi, Maria Sole (2010, Italy): *Ritratto di mio padre*
- Toro, Frank (2004, Spain): *El sexo de los ángeles*

- Torre, Lucinda (2008, Spain): *Resistencia*
- Truffaut, François (1959, France): *Les quatre cents coups*
- Varani, Sabrina (2017, Italy): *Pagine nascoste*
- Varda, Agnès (1985, France): *Sans toit ni loi*
- Varda Agnès (2000, France): *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse*
- Varda Agnès (2000, France): *Les demoiselles on teu 25 ans*
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## **Annex 1. Information Sheet and Consent Form**

### **GRACE Information sheet**

I, Orianna Aketzalli Calderón Sandoval, as Early Stage Researcher of the Marie Curie GRACE-Gender and Cultures of Equality project and PhD student at the University of Granada working under the supervision of Dr. Adelina Sánchez Espinosa, hereby ask you to participate in a research project whose purpose is to identify what contemporary documentaries do and what they can do in terms of visualising social in/equalities in Europe, by means of a feminist analysis of fe/male, de/colonial and inappropriate/d gazes, as well as modes of representation and production in a sample of Spanish and Italian documentaries made between 2013-2018.

I would like to ask if you would accept to carry out an interview about your work as a filmmaker. It will be a one-to-one interview, it will last an hour approximately, and I will ask you to let me record audio and/or video.

All data will be held on my password-protected laptop and backed-up in password-secured files in an external hard drive.

You are free to withdraw at any time and without adverse consequences and an undertaking that any information gathered until such time will not be used, i.e. will be destroyed.

In case that a second interview is considered of potential benefit for the research process, I might contact you again under the same circumstances, i.e. clear information about the purpose of the research project and the possibility for you to accept, decline or withdraw at any time.

You will be informed of the results of the study.

The contact details of the researcher are:

Orianna Calderón

orianna@correo.ugr.es

University of Granada

Avda. del Hospicio, s/n C.P. 18010 Granada

Tel.: (34) 958 243 000

“Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact the Vice-Rector's Office at the University of Granada. Tel: +34 958 24 30 08 / E-mail: vicinv3c@ugr.es”

## **Standardised GRACE Informed Consent Form (Interviews and Focus Groups)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken by Orianna Aketzalli Calderón Sandoval, and I understand that the purpose of the research is to identify what contemporary documentaries do and what they can do in terms of visualising social in/equalities in Europe, by means of a feminist analysis of fe/male, de/colonial and inappropriate/d gazes, as well as modes of representation and production in a sample of Spanish and Italian documentaries made between 2013-2018

I understand that:

1. The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me;
2. I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research study;
3. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party i.e. that I will remain anonymous;
4. If I consider information to be sensitive I may decline to share it, or withdraw consent after having shared;
5. The data collected and the analysed results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals;
6. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Participant Signature:

Date:

The contact details of the researcher are:

Orianna Calderón

orianna@correo.ugr.es

The contact details of the Research Ethics Committee are:

Vice-Rector's Office - University of Granada

Tel: +34 958 24 30 08

E-mail: vicinv3c@ugr.es

## Annex 2. Data Sheets of the Documentary Films from the Sample

### A2. 1 CUIDADO, RESBALA

**Directed by:** María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suárez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno

**Title in English:** *Careful-Care, Slippery* (\*there is no official translation of the title)

**Country of production:** Spain

**Year of production:** 2013

**Length:** 62 minutes

**Production companies:** Circle of Women (Círculo de Mujeres), The Inverted Gaze (La Mirada Invertida), and Malaga City Council (Diputación de Málaga-Recursos Europeos y Cooperación Internacional).

**Script by:** María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suárez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno

**Photography by:** María Camacho Gómez, Montserrat Clos Fabuel, Mercedes Cordero Suárez, Vanessa Gómez Martínez, Carolina Suárez Rasmussen and Leonor Jiménez Moreno

**Animation by:** How Audiovisuales

**Music by:** Diego Álvarez

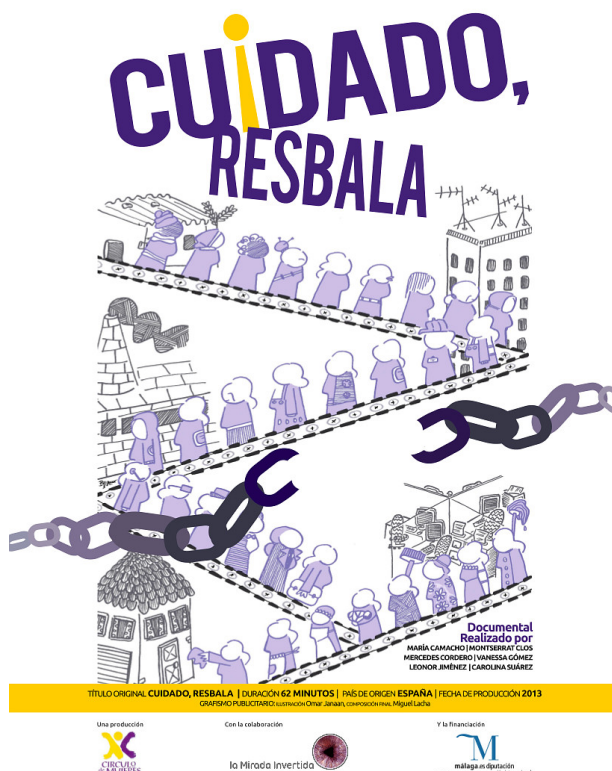
**Musicians:** Javier Gómez Bello, Elena Cid Iriarte, Natalia Cid Iriarte, Sara Beyermann

**Release date:** March 2013

**Festivals:** 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Málaga Film Festival (2013)

**Distribution:** The complete documentary is available online for free: <<https://vimeo.com/67552738>>.

The language spoken in the film is Spanish. There is no version with English subtitles available.



## A2.2 YO DECIDO. EL TREN DE LA LIBERTAD

**Directed by:** Women Filmmakers' Collective (Colectivo de Mujeres Cineastas)

TERESA FONT,  
OLIVA ACOSTA, CARLOS AGUILERA, CLARA ALONSO, NIEVES ALONSO, SABINA AMBROGI, MAITE ANDREU,  
PILAR AÑÓN, TAMARA ARÉVALO, ANA ARTAL, BEGOÑA AROSTEGUI, ROBERT BAHAR, GUADALUPE BALAGUER TRELLES,  
JAIMÉ BARROS, PATRICIA BELÉN, AMPARO BELLA, MACARENA BERJANO, LARA BLANCO, NIEVES BOJ, SARA BOLEA,  
ICIAR BOLLAÍN, PILAR BONDURREI, VICTORIA BORRAS, SARA BUIL, TERESA BURGOS, SERGIO BURMANN, JARA BUSTOS,  
NATALIA CABANILLAS, REBECA CALLE, LAURA CALVO, EVA CAÑO, ALMUDENA CARRACEDO, MARIVÍ CARRILLO,  
ESTHER CASTRO, IRIA CASTRO, TATIANA CHAV, GEORGINA CISQUELLA, ELISA COLL, ISABEL COLL, MIRELLA CUESTA,  
PILAR DE LA TORRE, IONA DE MACEDO, CONCHI DEL RÍO, LAURA DEL SOL, EMMANUELLE DEPAIX,  
ELENA DÍAZ, PAKA DÍAZ, ANA DÍEZ, EVA DÍEZ, MARTA DURRUTI, DAVID EGEA, JULIA ESCUDERO, INÉS ESPAÑA,  
DANIELA FEJERMAN, PATRICIA FERREIRA, MARTA FIGUERAS, EMMA FOLGADO, NINA FONT,  
AMPARO FORTUNY, MELANIA FRAGA, ELENA FREZ, NOELIA FRESCO, EDUARDO G. CASTRO, MONTSE GABAS,  
SARA GALLARDO, MARIROS GALLEGO, BEATRIZ GARCÍA, DIANA GARCÍA, DELFINA GARCÍA, ESTHER GARCÍA,  
LUIS MIGUEL GARRIDO, CARLOS GASTÓN, ANDREA GAUTIER, CONCHA GIL, ANABEL GIMENO, LALA GOMA,  
JULIETA GÓMEZ BIDONDO, JUAN CARLOS GÓMEZ, PAQUITA GÓMEZ, ROSA GONZÁLEZ, ÁNGELES GONZÁLEZ-SINDE,  
ANGELINES GRACIA, MARISA GRACIA, TERE GRACIA, SUSANA GUARDIOLA, CHUS GUTIÉRREZ, TEO GUTIÉRREZ,  
PAQUITA GUTIÉRREZ, ALFONSO HERNIDA, MARÍA HERMINIA LÓPEZ, MACARENA HERNÁNDEZ, MAYRA HERNÁNDEZ,  
ADRIANA HOYOS, PALOMA HUELÍN, MARI CARMEN IRANZO, ANDREA JAURRIETA, LA SOLFÓNICA, PILAR LAINEZ,  
VICKY LAMMERS, CARMEN LANGARITA, CATALINA LASCANO, EVA LESMES, MARÍA JOSÉ LÓPEZ, MILAGROS LÓPEZ,  
SHEILA LÓPEZ, CHELO LOUREIRO, MABEL LOZANO, ALICIA LUNA, PAULA LUPIAÑEZ, BELÉN LLANOS, JUANA MACÍAS,  
ÁNGELES MAESO, TERE MAINAR, PEPE MALDONADO, JOAQUÍN MANCHADO, SERGIO MANGAS, ELENA MANRIQUE,  
LAURA MAÑÁ, ASCEN MARCHENA, IVÁN MARÍN, PALOMA MARINA, ÁNGELES MAROÑO, NIEVES MAROTO,  
BEATRIZ MATEOS, ISABEL MELENDEZ, SONIA MÉNDEZ, MARÍA DEL CARMEN MÉNDEZ, RAQUEL MENDIGUREN,  
LAURA MERINO, MARTA MIRÓ, ZELTIA MONTES, ANA MORENO, ESTEBAN MORENO, ESTER MORENO, MARTA MORENO,  
REYES MORENO, ALEXIA MUÑOS, ÁNGELES MUÑIZ, CARMEN MURLANCH, JOSEFINA MUSULEN,  
TERESA NUÑO DE LA ROSA, JORDI OLIVER, PAULA ORTIZ, NEREA OSUNA, NELI OTIN, ISABEL PALACIOS, ANDREA PARALTA,  
BEGOÑA PIÑAR, PAZ PIÑAR, MIRIAM PORTÉ, ELISABETH PRANDI, ANGELINES PUENTE, GRACIA QUEREJETA, BETTY RÍOS,  
PATRICIA RODA, COVADONGA RODRÍGUEZ, MANANE RODRÍGUEZ, RITA RODRÍGUEZ, LUISA ROMERO, MIREIA ROS,  
IRENE RUBIO, ISABEL RUIZ, PILAR RUIZ, PATRICIA SAAVEDRA, ELENA SALCEDO, CARMEN SAN MARTÍN,  
ALMUDENA SÁNCHEZ, ANGELINES SÁNCHEZ, FÁTIMA SCHULLENBERG, ALBA SOTORRA, CARLA SUBIRANA,  
EVA TABOADA, IRLANDA TAMBASCIO, DULCE TENDERO, LÚA TESTA, CLAUDIA THIELE, PEDRO TORIBIO,  
DOLORES TORRANO, PILAR USED, EVA VALIÑO, GLORIA VÁZQUEZ, JOSÉ VERDÚ, CARLOTA VICENTE, GEMA VILLA,  
LOURDES VILLAMAYOR, ELENA VISANZAI, ROCÍO WESTENDORP, VIRGINIA YAGUE, LYDIA ZIMMERMANN, ESTHER ZUNICA

**Title in English:** My Choice. The Freedom Train

**Country of production:** Spain

**Year of production:** 2014

**Length:** 42 minutes

**Production:** Women Filmmakers' Collective and crowdfunding

**Script and photography by:** Women Filmmakers' Collective

**Release date:** July 10<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Festivals:** San Sebastián International Film Festival, “Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres” (Political Cinema Directed by Women) in Spain and Latin America, Extremadura Documentary Film Festival, Soria Short Film Festival, Women’s Cinema Festival in Huesca, Edinburgh Spanish Film Festival, Festival of Choice in London, Women’s Cinema Festival in Rouen, Women’s Film Festival from the Mediterranean in

Marseille, “Coupe Circuit” Festival in Belgium, and the International Festival of Women in Film and Television in Mexico City.

**Awards:** In 2014: the “Clara Campoamor” Award from Seville, the “Pasionaria” Award, the “Collective 8<sup>th</sup> March” Award, the “Aragón Dignidad” Award, the “Mulleres en Acción” Award from the Theatre Festival of Cangas, and the “Mujeres en Unión” Award from the Union of Actors and Actresses. In 2015: the Equality Award from La Rinconada City Council, the “Alcalde José Fernandín” Award, and the Audience Award at the “Coupe Circuit” Festival in Belgium.

**Distribution:** It can be found online for free in the film website. The language spoken in the film is Spanish, with subtitles available in English and French.

**Website:** <<http://eltrendelalibertadfilm.blogspot.com>>.



## A2.3 NO EXISTIMOS

**Directed by:** Ana Solano

**Title in English:** We Don't Exist

**Country of production:** Spain

**Year of production:** 2014

**Length:** 66 minutes

**Production:** Ana Solano and Belén Herrera

**Script by:** Ana Solano

**Research by:** Ana Solano, Tamara Bueno and Marta Zein

**Voice off and translation:** Farida Djeniche

**Music by:** Iván Solano

**Release date:** In Paris: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014. In Madrid: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**Festivals:** In 2015 and 2016: “Muestra de Cine Político Dirigido por Mujeres” (Political Cinema Directed by Women) in Spain and Latin America; Erie International Film Festival (USA); Human District-International Film Festival of Human Rights (Serbia); FIDOCs-International Documentary Film of Santiago de Chile; and the New Filmmakers Platform Madrid Film Festival. In 2017: Women Media Arts and Film Festival (Australia).

**Distribution:** Movies for Festivals

**Website:**

<<http://www.noexistimos.com>>.





## A2.4 YES, WE FUCK!

**Directed by:** Antonio Centeno and Raúl de la Morena

**Country of production:** Spain

**Year of production:** 2015

**Length:** 59:19 minutes

**Production companies:** Verkami  
crowdfunding campaign

**Script by:** Antonio Centeno and Raúl  
de la Morena

**Research by:** Andrea García-  
Santesmases

**Photography by:** Raúl de la Morena

**Logo by:** Raúl de la Morena

**Music by:** Sonia Basco and Raúl Morales

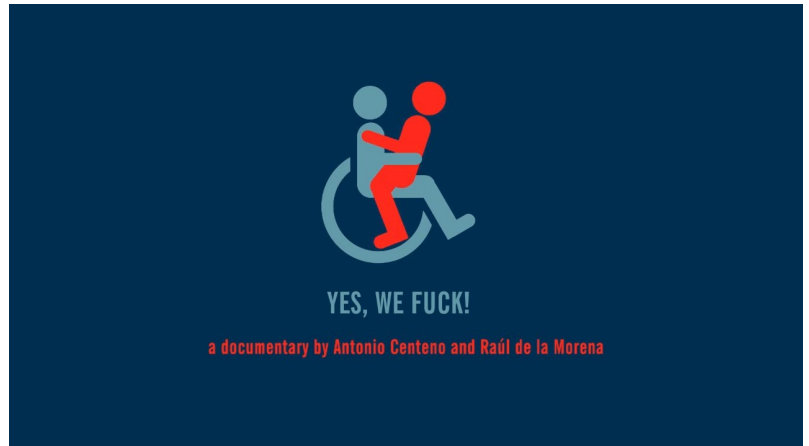
**Release date:** 11<sup>th</sup> April 2015

**Festivals:** In 2015: Berlin Porn Film Festival, “Fish and Chips” Turin Film Festival, FlixxFest International Film Festival, “L’Alternativa” Barcelona Independent Film Festival, Creative Commons Barcelona Film Festival, “Inclús” Barcelona International Film and Disability Festival, Holy Fuck Amsterdam Pornographic Film Festival, “This Human World” Vienna International Human Rights Film Festival, Cine//B Santiago de Chile Festival, Lesbisch Schwule Filmtage Hamburg/ International Queer Film Festival, Cineuropa Festival, “Imperfectu” Festival in Mexico, Capacities Festival in Tenerife, and the postporn festival “Muestra Marrana” in Spain, Mexico City and Quito. In 2016: the BFI Flare London LGBT Film Festival, “La Fete du Spip” Lussane Festival, and the PopPorn Sao Paolo Film Festival.

**Awards:** Best Documentary at Berlin Porn Film Festival; Best Documentary at “Fish and Chips” Turin Film Festival; Best Documentary LGBT at FlixxFest International Film Festival.

**Distribution:** 3BoxMedia. It can be found online for free. The language spoken in the film is Spanish, with subtitles available in English, French, Italian and German. <<https://vimeo.com/123177395>>.

**Website:** <<http://www.yeswefuck.org>>.



## A2.5 SERÁS HOMBRE

**Directed by:** Isabel de Ocampo

**Title in English:** You Will Be a Man

**Country of production:** Spain

**Year of production:** 2018

**Length:** 94 minutes

**Production companies:** Isabel de Ocampo, Gris Medio and Orreaga Filmak, Ad-Hoc Studios, a public Spanish subsidy, and regional funds from Gipuzkoa, Salamanca and Sabadell.

**Script by:** Isabel de Ocampo

**Editing by:** Eloi Tomas

**Photography by:** Carlos Muñoz, Efthymia Zymvragaki, Ruben Sainz, Sheila Rodríguez, Nuria Gámiz, Alvaro Ruiz, Joel Pérez, Dani Fernandez, Jota Parro, Jose Luis Novillo, Sara Martinez, Leticia Iniesta, Sara Gallego, Susana Siscart and Miquel Rubis

**Music by:** Antonio Escobar - Antipop

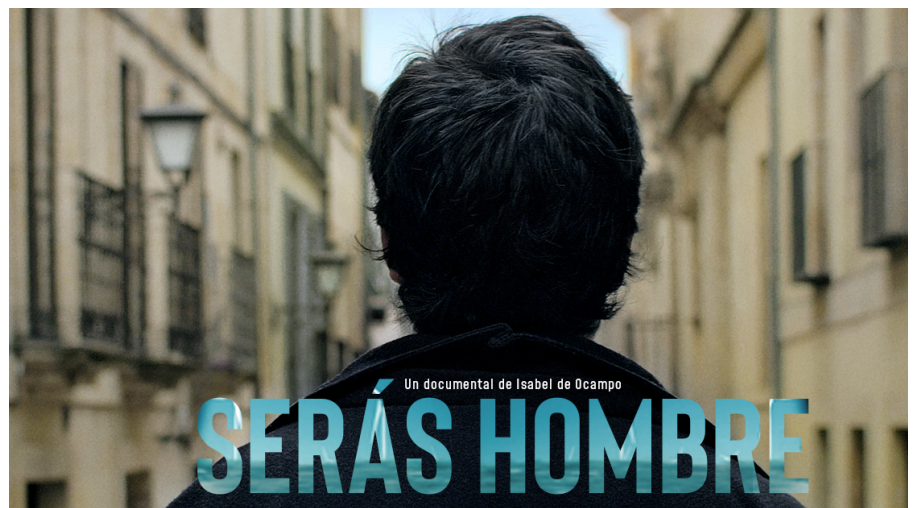
**Release date:** 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018

**Festivals:** “MiradasDoc” Festival 2017 and “SEMINCI” Valladolid International Film Festival 2018

**Awards:** First prize for project development at the “MiradasDoc” Festival

**Distribution:** Gris Medio

**Website:** <<http://serashombre.com>>.



## A2.6 PAYS BARBARE

**Directed by:** Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi

**Title in English:** Barbaric Land

**Country of production:** France

**Year of production:** 2013

**Length:** 63 minutes

**Production companies:** Les Films d'Ici, ARTE France, and La Lucarne. Sylvie Brenet and Serge Lalou. With the support of the Centre National du Cinema et de l'Image Animée, the Centre National des Artes Plastiques, and the Procirep Angoa-Société des Producteurs.

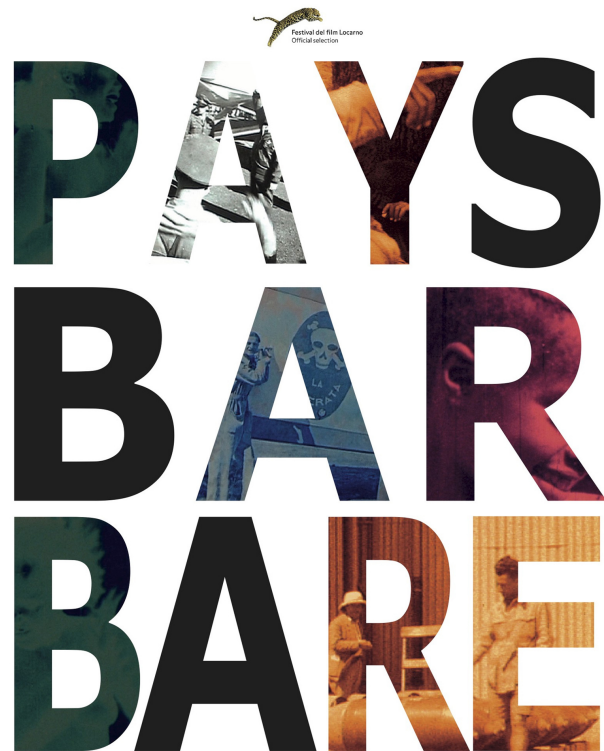
**Script and Editing by:** Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi

**Music by:** Giovanna Marini and Keith Ullrich

**Release date:** August 2013

**Festivals:** Locarno Film Festival, Torino Film Festival and International Festival Filmmaker in Milan (2013); FEST-Author Film Festival in Serbia.

**Distribution:** Feltrinelli



Un film de Yervant Gianikian et Angela Ricci Lucchi



LES FILMS D'ICI présentent  
en association avec ARTE FRANCE - LA LUCARNE avec la participation du CENTRE  
NATIONAL DU CINEMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE - CONTRIBUTION FINANCIÈRE  
avec le concours du CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS PLASTIQUES  
IMAGE/MOUVEMENTI, MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DE LA  
COMMUNICATION avec le soutien de la PROCIREP ANGOA distributeur italien  
FELTRINELLI produit par SYLVIE BRENET SERGE LALOU musique GIOVANNA  
MARINI KEITH ULLRICH montage mixage étalonnage YERVANT GIANIKIAN  
ANGELA RICCI LUCCHI



## A2.7 UNA NOBILE RIVOLUZIONE

**Directed by:** Simone Cangelosi

**Title in English:** A Noble Revolution

**Country of production:** Italy

**Year of production:** 2014

**Length:** 85 minutes

**Production companies:** Kiné Società Cooperativa, Pierrot e la Rosa, Gianluca Buelli, Claudio Giapponesi and Simone Cangelosi, with the contribution of the Emilia Romagna Film Commission, in association with the Bologna Cinematheque Foundation, Liliana di Folco, Roberto Gramaccioni, Fausto Tomei, and Murielle Moise

**Script by:** Simone Cangelosi and Roberto Nisi, in collaboration with Fulvia Antonelli and Silvia Silverio

**Editing by:** Fabio Bianchini Pepegna

**Photography by:** Debora Vrizzi

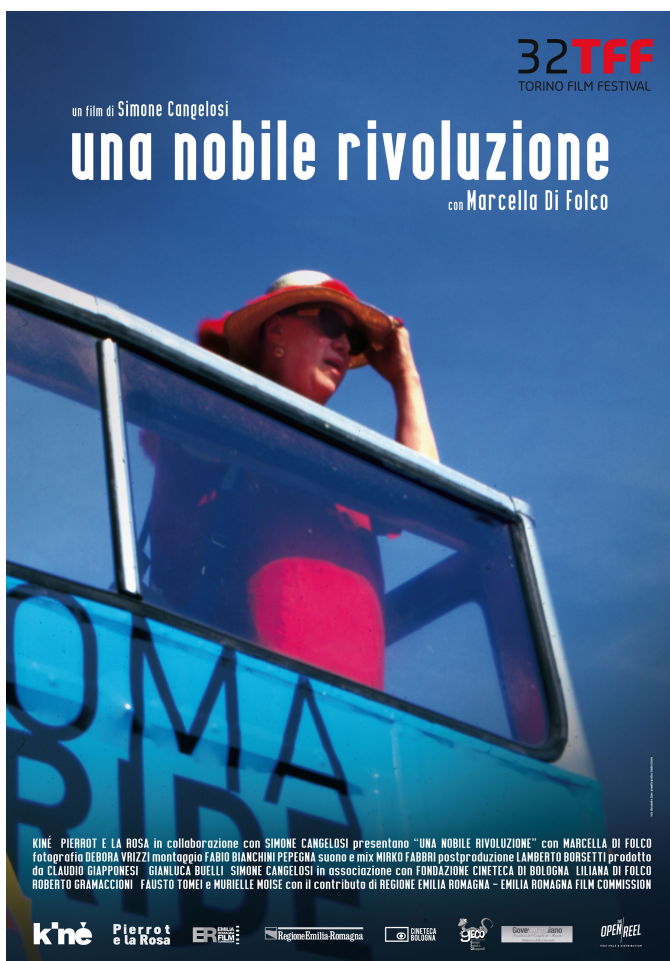
**Release date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014

**Festivals:** 2014 Torino Film Festival and 2018 Trieste Film Festival within the section "Varcare la frontiera. Corpi/Bodies"

**Distribution:** Cineteca di Bologna

**Website:**

<<http://www.unanobilerivoluzione.it>>.



## A2.8 TRIANGLE

**Directed by:** Costanza Quatriglio

**Country of production:** Italy

**Year of production:** 2014

**Length:** 62 minutes

**Production companies:** Doclab, Factory Film and RAI Cinema, in association with the Luce Cinecittà Institute and with the support of the Apulia Film Commission, the “Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico” (Audiovisual Archive of the Worker and Democratic Movement), the Lazio Regional Direction and the Unione Donne in Italia (Women’s Union in Italy)

**Script by:** Costanza Quatriglio and Nella Condorelli

**Editing by:** Letizia Caudullo

**Photography by:** Vincenzo Condorelli

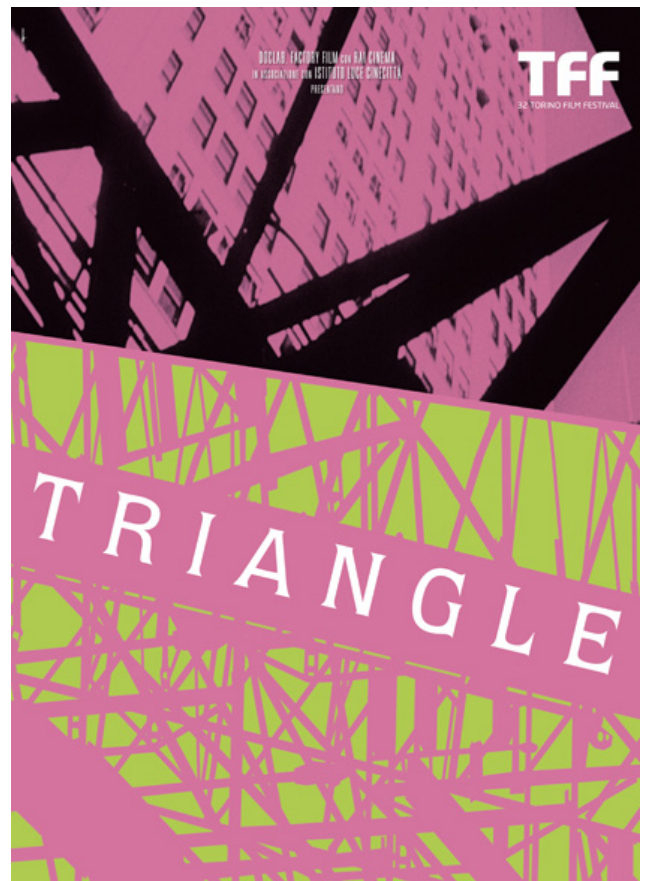
**Music by:** Teho Teardo

**Release date:** 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**Festivals:** 2014 Torino Film Festival, 2018 Perugia Social Film Festival, and 2019 Working Title Film Festival in Vicenza

**Awards:** Cipputi Award at Torino Film Festival 2014, and Nastri d’argento DOC: Cinema del reale for Best Documentary 2015

**Distribution:** Luce Cinecittà Institute



## A2.9 LUNÀDIGAS, OVVERO DELLE DONNE SENZA FIGLI

**Directed by:** Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga

**Title in English:** Lunàdigas. Or Women Without Children

**Country of production:** Italy

**Year of production:** 2016

**Length:** 78 minutes

**Production companies:** Kiné Società Cooperativa, Pierrot e la Rosa, Gianluca Buelli and Claudio Giapponesi

**Script by:** Nicoletta Nesler and Marilisa Piga

**Editing by:** Andrea Lotta

**Photography by:** Debora Vrizzi

**Music by:** Irma Toudjian

**Release date:** 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**Festivals:** In 2016: “Visione dal Mondo” International Film Festival in Milan, “Visioni Italiane” Film Festival in Bologna, the “Ananti de sa Ziminera” Festival in Sardinia, and Hacker Porn Film Festival. In 2017: “Divine” Queer Film Festival in Turin, the “Est Film Festival” in Montefiascone, “Segnare il tempo” Film and Woman International Festival, “Les rencontres du cinéma italien”, “Chouftouhonna” in Tunisia, Women’s Film Festival in Santiago de Chile, “Femuciq” Quito Independent World Film Festival in Ecuador, and Porn Film Festival in Berlin. In 2018: Mediterranean Video Festival in Salerno, Ierapetra International Doc Film Festival, Equinox Women’s Film Festival, Queer Lisbon, “Luststreifen” Film Festival in Basel, Femmes en resistance in Paris, MICGénero in Mexico, and Film Festival for Women’s Rights in South Korea

**Awards:** Best film at the “Chouftouhonna” Festival, Best documentary at the Mediterranean Video Festival, and Audience award at Queer Lisbon

**Distribution:** Kiné Società Cooperativa and Susi Monzali

**Website:** <<https://www.lunadigas.com/>>.



## A2.10 MA L'AMORE C'ENTRA?

**Directed by:** Elisabetta Lodoli

**Title in English:** Is it About Love?

**Country of production:** Italy

**Year of production:** 2017

**Length:** 52 minutes

**Production companies:** Maxman Coop, Associazione Orlando, the Emilia-Romagna region, Arancia Film, Marechiaro Films, Home Movies, Azienda di Modena, Centro LDV, Unipol, Casa di Risparmio di Modena, and the municipality of Modena

**Script by:** Elisabetta Lodoli and Federica Iacobelli

**Editing by:** Pietro D'Onofrio and Paolo Marzoni

**Photography by:** Andrea Dalpian

**Release date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017

**Festivals:** In 2017: International Rome Film Festival (Festa Internazionale del Cinema di Roma), and Extra Doc festival. In 2018: Sguardi Altrove International Women's Film Festival, Riviera International Film Festival, and 1905 International Human Rights Film Festival in Hong Kong and Taipei



## **Annex 3. Summaries**

### **A3.1 Summary**

This thesis brings together feminist documentary film theory and feminist new materialism(s) to describe how feminist material-discursive practices in a sample of Spanish and Italian documentary cinema made between 2013-2018 (can) visualise gender in/equalities. The objectives are: 1. Building a bridge between feminist documentary film theory and Karen Barad's diffractive methodology by approaching non-fiction cinema that deals with social inequalities as a diffraction apparatus. 2. Developing a feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze by gathering different insights from feminist film theory. 3. Identifying feminist material-discursive practices in a sample of documentary films produced in Spain and Italy over the last six years (2013-2018). 4. Analysing the effects that these feminist material-discursive practices in documentary cinema have, particularly in terms of visualising gender in/equalities on both sides of the camera and on both sides of the screen. 5. Revealing patterns between the ten case studies by reading through one another (i.e. diffractively) insights raised in each one of them.

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. The first chapter develops the methodological framework around Karen Barad's concept of diffraction, understood as a reading strategy of various insights and as a visualisation metaphor that moves from representationalism to performativity. Documentary cinema isn't approached as a representation of the so-called real world out there, which is then mirrored by the camera, but as a diffraction apparatus that makes boundaries within phenomena to make the world intelligible in specific ways, through the intra-action of human and non-human elements such as the filmmakers, the camera, the screen and the spectators. To analyse feminist material-discursive practices in documentary films, I propose three tools: materiality (Domitilla Olivieri; Ilona Hongisto), emotionality (Sara Ahmed), and performativity (Bill Nichols; Judith Butler; Stella Bruzzi).

The second chapter brings together various insights from feminist film theory, organised around the concept of the gaze. This part, which functions as a feminist toolbox for a response-able gaze, starts with a revision of Nicholas Mirzoeff's visuality and countervisuality, and then follows a theoretical journey from John Berger's male western gaze and Laura Mulvey's male gaze up to bell hooks's oppositional gaze, Judith/Jack Halberstam's transgender look and my own definition of a feminist gaze elaborated upon Donna Haraway's situated knowledges.



The third and fifth chapters contextualise the production of Spanish and Italian documentary feminist cinema respectively, so as to trace a possible genealogy of contemporary non-fiction audiovisual productions made from a feminist perspective in both countries. The fourth chapter presents the analysis of five Spanish documentary films: *Cuidado, resbala* (2013); *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014); *No existimos* (2014); *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015); and *Serás hombre* (2018). The sixth chapter presents the analysis of five Italian documentaries: *Pays Barbare* (2013); *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2014); *Triangle* (2014); *Lunàdigas. Ovvero delle donne senza figli* (2016); and *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (2017).

In the seventh chapter, I read insights from the ten case studies through one another so as to identify patterns of continuities and differences concerning feminist material-discursive practices at four levels of each documentary film: content, form, production and reception. In terms of contents, I detect two patterns in which feminist material-discursive practices may operate: enacting the right to appear or enacting the right to look back and/or against the grain. As for the forms, I exemplify how feminism politicises Bill Nichols's six modes of representation. My analysis of production practices is elaborated along my interviewees' self-positions/situatedness, tensions/obstructions, and effects/affects/emotions regarding four key concepts: documentary cinema, equality, gender and feminism(s). And in the case of reception practices, I identify patterns of affective identification and/or intellectual reflections.

As conclusions, I present a list of nine propositions for feminist documentary filmmaking elaborated in and through my intra-actions with the films from the sample and their filmmakers: 1. To translate diverse insights from the feminist movement and from feminist theory into an audiovisual language; 2. To challenge androcentric epistemologies by means of audiovisual formal strategies such as editing and self-reflexive voice-over; 3. To encourage identification and/or empathy with subjects that stray from the androcentric norm; 4. To show awareness of the politics traversing affects on both sides of the camera and the screen. 5. To explore non-hierarchical and responsible/response-able ways of generating audiovisual contents; 6. To reach audiences for whom the films are particularly relevant and who may not have easy access to independent productions or may not be interested a priori; 7. To open up possibilities for active responses and/or become a tool for activism; 8. To render visible and/or strengthen (trans)feminist genealogies and alliances; and 9. To subvert androcentric visualities by means of strategies such as haptic visibility and poetic audiovisual metaphors.

### **A3.2 Riassunto**

Questa tesi riunisce elementi della teoria femminista del film documentario e dei nuovi femminismi materialisti per descrivere come una serie di pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive in una selezione di documentari spagnoli e italiani realizzati tra il 2013-2018 visualizzano disuguaglianze di genere. Gli obiettivi sono: 1. Costruire un ponte tra la teoria femminista del film documentario e la metodologia diffrattiva di Karen Barad, per avvicinarsi ai film documentario sulle disuguaglianze sociali come apparato di diffrazione. 2. Sviluppare una cassetta degli attrezzi femminista per uno sguardo responsabile/in grado di rispondere che riunisca prospettive diverse della teoria cinematografica femminista. 3. Identificare pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive in un campione di documentari prodotti in Spagna e in Italia negli ultimi sei anni (2013-2018). 4. Analizzare gli effetti che queste pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive hanno sul documentario, in particolare in termini di visualizzazione delle disuguaglianze di genere su entrambi i lati della telecamera e dello schermo. 5. Rivelare i modelli tra i dieci casi studio attraverso una lettura diffrattiva delle idee presentate in ognuna di esse.

La tesi è strutturata in sette capitoli. Il primo capitolo sviluppa la metodologia dal concetto di diffrazione di Karen Barad, inteso come strategia di lettura da diverse prospettive e come metafora di visualizzazione che sostituisce il rappresentativismo con la performatività. Invece di avvicinarsi al film documentario come rappresentazione del cosiddetto mondo reale che sarebbe semplicemente riflesso dalla telecamera, viene analizzato come un dispositivo di diffrazione che stabilisce limiti nella realtà per renderlo intelligibile in modi specifici, attraverso le intra-azioni tra elementi umani e non umani come i registi, la macchina da presa, lo schermo e gli spettatori. Per analizzare le pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive nei documentari, propongo tre strumenti: la materialità (Domitilla Olivieri, Ilona Hongisto), l'emotività (Sara Ahmed) e la performatività (Bill Nichols, Judith Butler, Stella Bruzzi).

Il secondo capitolo riunisce vari aspetti della teoria cinematografica femminista organizzati attorno al concetto dello sguardo. Questa parte, che funge da toolbox femminista per uno sguardo responsabile/reattivo, inizia con una revisione della visualità e della contro-visualizzazione di Nicholas Mirzoeff, e poi traccia un percorso teorico dallo sguardo maschile occidentale di John Berger e dallo sguardo maschile di Laura Mulvey, allo sguardo di opposizione di bell hooks, lo sguardo transgender di Judith/Jack Halberstam e la mia stessa definizione di uno sguardo femminista che raccoglie le conoscenze situate di Donna Haraway.

Il terzo e il quinto capitolo contestualizzano la produzione del documentario femminista spagnolo e italiano, rispettivamente, per tracciare una possibile genealogia di documentari contemporanei realizzati con coscienza femminista in entrambi i paesi. Il quarto capitolo presenta l'analisi di cinque documentari spagnoli: *Cuidado, resbala* (2013); *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014); *No existimos* (2014); *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015); e *Serás hombre* (2018). Il sesto capitolo presenta l'analisi di cinque documentari italiani: *Pays Barbare* (2013); *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2014); *Triangle* (2014); *Lunàdigas. Ovvero delle donne senza figli* (2016); e *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (2017).

Nel settimo capitolo, leggo diffrativamente le riflessioni dei dieci casi studio, identificando schemi di continuità e differenze nelle pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive presenti a quattro livelli: contenuto, forma, produzione e ricezione. In termini di contenuto, rilevo due modelli in cui le pratiche femministe materiali-discorsive possono operare: esercitando il diritto di apparire o il diritto di guardare indietro e/o in opposizione. Riguardo alle forme, esemplifico il modo in cui il femminismo politicizza le sei modalità di rappresentazione proposte da Bill Nichols. La mia analisi delle pratiche di produzione si concentra sulle posizioni/situazioni, sulle tensioni/ostacoli e sugli effetti/affetti/emozioni dei miei intervistati rispetto a quattro concetti chiave: film documentario, uguaglianza, genere e femminismo/i. E nel caso delle pratiche di ricezione, identifico modelli d'identificazione affettiva e/o di riflessioni intellettuali.

Come conclusioni, presento un elenco di nove proposte da prendere in considerazione nella realizzazione di documentari femministi, elaborati dalle mie interazioni con i documentari analizzati e i loro registi: 1. Tradurre diversi aspetti del movimento femminista e della teoria femminista in un linguaggio audiovisivo; 2. Sfidare le epistemologie androcentriche attraverso strategie audiovisive formali, come il montaggio e la voice-over autoriflessiva; 3. Incoraggiare l'identificazione e/o l'empatia con soggetti che si discostano dalla norma androcentrica; 4. Essere consapevoli delle implicazioni politiche che influenzano gli affetti su entrambi i lati della fotocamera e dello schermo. 5. Esplorare forme non gerarchiche e responsabili di generazione di contenuti audiovisivi; 6. Raggiungere un pubblico per il quale i contenuti sono particolarmente rilevanti e che non hanno facile accesso a produzioni indipendenti o potrebbero non essere interessati a priori; 7. Aprire possibilità di risposte attive e/o diventare strumenti per l'attivismo; 8. Rendere visibili e/o rafforzare genealogie e alleanze femministe; e 9. Sovvertire le visioni androcentriche attraverso strategie come una visualità tattile e metafore audiovisive.

### **A3.3 Resumen**

Esta tesis reúne elementos de la teoría feminista del cine documental y de los nuevos feminismos materialistas con el fin de describir cómo una serie de prácticas feministas material-discursivas en una muestra de documental español e italiano producido entre 2013 y 2018 visualizan, o pueden visualizar, desigualdades de género. Los objetivos son:

1. Construir un puente entre la teoría feminista del cine documental y la metodología difractiva de Karen Barad, abordando el cine de no ficción sobre desigualdades sociales como un aparato de difracción.
2. Desarrollar una caja de herramientas feminista para una mirada responsable/capaz de responder que reúna diferentes perspectivas de la teoría feminista del cine.
3. Identificar prácticas feministas material-discursivas en una muestra de documentales producidos en España e Italia durante los últimos seis años (2013-2018).
4. Analizar los efectos que tienen estas prácticas feministas material-discursivas en el documental, particularmente en términos de visualizar las desigualdades de género a ambos lados de la cámara y de la pantalla.
5. Revelar patrones entre los diez estudios de caso mediante una lectura difractiva de las ideas planteadas en cada uno de ellos.

La tesis se estructura en siete capítulos. El primer capítulo desarrolla el marco metodológico a partir del concepto de difracción de Karen Barad, entendido como una estrategia de lectura de diversas perspectivas y como una metáfora de visualización que reemplaza el representacionalismo con la performatividad. En vez de abordar el cine documental como representación del llamado mundo real que simplemente sería reflejado por la cámara, se le analiza como un aparato de difracción que establece límites dentro de la realidad para hacerla inteligible de maneras específicas, a través de intra-acciones entre elementos humanos y no humanos como las/os cineastas, la cámara, la pantalla y las/os espectadoras/es. Para analizar prácticas feministas material-discursivas en documentales, propongo tres herramientas: materialidad (Domitilla Olivieri; Ilona Hongisto), emotividad (Sara Ahmed) y performatividad (Bill Nichols; Judith Butler; Stella Bruzzi).

El segundo capítulo reúne diversos aspectos de la teoría feminista del cine organizados en torno al concepto de la mirada. Esta parte, que funciona como caja de herramientas feminista para una mirada responsable/capaz de responder, comienza con una revisión de la visualidad y la contravisualidad de Nicholas Mirzoeff, para luego trazar un recorrido teórico desde la mirada occidental masculina de John Berger y la mirada masculina de Laura Mulvey hasta la mirada de oposición de bell hooks, la mirada transgénero de Judith/Jack Halberstam y mi propia definición de una mirada feminista que recoge los conocimientos situados de Donna Haraway.

Los capítulos tercero y quinto contextualizan la producción del documental feminista español e italiano, respectivamente, para así trazar una genealogía posible de documentales contemporáneos realizados con conciencia feminista en ambos países. El capítulo cuarto presenta el análisis de cinco documentales españoles: *Cuidado, resbala* (2013); *Yo decido. El tren de la libertad* (2014); *No existimos* (2014); *Yes, We Fuck!* (2015); y *Serás hombre* (2018). El capítulo sexto presenta el análisis de cinco documentales italianos: *Pays Barbare* (2013); *Una nobile rivoluzione* (2014); *Triangle* (2014); *Lunàdigas. Ovvero delle donne senza figli* (2016); y *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (2017).

En el séptimo capítulo, leo difractivamente los diez estudios de caso, identificando patrones de continuidades y diferencias en las prácticas feministas material-discursivas presentes en cuatro niveles: contenido, forma, producción y recepción. En cuanto a los contenidos, detecto dos patrones en los que pueden operar las prácticas feministas material-discursivas: ejerciendo el derecho a aparecer o el derecho a mirar atrás y/o en oposición. En cuanto a las formas, ejemplifico cómo el feminismo politiza los seis modos de representación planteados por Bill Nichols. Mi análisis de las prácticas de producción se centra en las posiciones/situaciones, las tensiones/obstrucciones y los efectos/afectos/emociones de mis entrevistadas/os con respecto a cuatro conceptos clave: cine documental, igualdad, género y feminismo(s). Y en el caso de las prácticas de recepción, identifico patrones de identificación afectiva y/o de reflexiones intelectuales.

A modo de conclusión, presento una lista de nueve propuestas a considerar en la realización de documentales feministas, elaboradas a partir de mis intra-acciones con los documentales analizados y sus directoras/es: 1. Traducir diversos aspectos del movimiento feminista y de la teoría feminista a un lenguaje audiovisual; 2. Desafiar las epistemologías androcéntricas por medio de estrategias formales audiovisuales, como la edición y la voz en off auto-reflexiva; 3. Fomentar la identificación y/o empatía con sujetos que se aparten de la norma androcéntrica; 4. Tener conciencia de las implicaciones políticas que atraviesan los afectos a ambos lados de la cámara y de la pantalla. 5. Explorar formas no jerárquicas y responsables de generar contenidos audiovisuales; 6. Llegar a audiencias para las que los contenidos sean particularmente relevantes y que no tengan acceso fácil a producciones independientes o puedan no estar interesadas a priori; 7. Abrir posibilidades para respuestas activas y/o convertirse en herramientas para el activismo; 8. Hacer visibles y/o fortalecer genealogías y alianzas feministas; y 9. Subvertir visualidades androcéntricas mediante estrategias como una visualidad háptica y metáforas audiovisuales.

#### Annex 4. List of Spanish Documentary Films that Deal with Gender Issues

Original Title	Translation	Year	Director	Synopsis
Margarita y el lobo	Margarita and the Wolf	1969	Bartolomé, Cecilia	Margarita y Lorenzo se casan, pero poco a poco empezarán a distanciarse llegando a la separación. (ICAA)
O todos o ninguno	All or None	1975-1976	Lumbreras, Helena & Class Cinema Collective	Un documental sobre la lucha de unos obreros de una empresa metalúrgica de Cornellá (“una ciudad andaluza en Cataluña”). < <a href="https://documusac.es/helena-lumbreras-y-el-colectivo-cine-de-clase">https://documusac.es/helena-lumbreras-y-el-colectivo-cine-de-clase</a> >
Ocaña, retrato intermitente	Ocaña, An Intermittent Portrait	1978	Pons, Ventura	The 'Ramblas' in Barcelona are homosexuals, transvestites, prostitutes, pimps and other marginalized people. Their hidden live is the sujet of this portrait of the painter José Pérez Ocaña. (FILMAFFINITY)
Después de... No se os puede dejar solos	And After... One Cannot Leave Them Alone	1981	Bartolomé, Cecilia and José	Esta película es una muestra del cine militante de los años 60. Los protagonistas son de lo más heterogéneo (desde políticos y profesionales de distintos campos hasta ciudadanos de a pie) y expresan sus opiniones acerca de los cambios acaecidos durante la Transición española. La inconveniencia de algunos testimonios y la sensación de crispación transmitida, hicieron que la película fuera “secuestrada” por la Administración, que impidió su estreno hasta noviembre de 1983. (FILMAFFINITY)
Función de noche	Evening Performance	1981	Molina, Josefina	La actriz Lola Herrera representa todas las noches el monólogo de Miguel Delibes "Cinco horas con Mario". A medida que pasa el tiempo, experimenta un gran cambio en su personalidad, llegando a confundir su vida con la de Carmen Sotillo, el personaje de la función. Encerrados en su camerino, Lola Herrera y Daniel Dicenta, separados tras varios años de matrimonio, hablan y discuten mientras repasan su vida en común. (FILMAFFINITY)

Sexo oral	Oral-Aural Sex	1994	Gutiérrez, Chus	Con formato de entrevistas enfrente de una cámara, un grupo de personas de toda edad y condición narra sus experiencias en torno al sexo. (FILMAFFINITY)
Amores que matan	Loves That Kill	2000	Bollaín, Icíar	Acercamiento al tema de la violencia familiar o doméstica desde una propuesta controvertida y novedosa en España: las terapias para hombres maltratadores. (ICAA)
El camino de Moisés	Moses's Way	2002	Barriga, Cecilia	Retrato de Moisés, un “terrorista del género” a través de su historia, sus allegados, su entorno, en el que relata una historia de transición y las dificultades que genera en cuanto a una aceptación “total” como hombre o como mujer en la que la toma de decisión es fundamental para el crecimiento y aceptación social como ciudadano. (ARES < <a href="http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/18_barriga_cecilia/">http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/18_barriga_cecilia/</a> >)
A la deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina	Adrift through the Circuits of Feminized Precarious Work	2003	Precarias a la Deriva (collective)	Toda la labor de recorrer y acompañar los itinerarios de las trabajadoras precarias ha quedado plasmada en este vídeo: a la deriva por los circuitos de la precariedad femenina, donde el nombre del colectivo se confunde con el título del trabajo, con un doble efecto: a la vez que diluye la autoría de la investigación (verdaderamente coral y polifónica, tramada entre muchas mujeres), pone de relieve que la precariedad más que un adjetivo del trabajo es un modo de la existencia actual. El vídeo está confeccionado como un tapiz de relatos, crónicas, entrevistas y conceptualizaciones que teorizan lo que las derivas van volviendo visible. El proyecto está ubicado en la ciudad de Madrid. (hamacaonline < <a href="https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/precarias-a-la-deriva-a-la-deriva-por-los-circuitos-de-la-precariedad/">https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/precarias-a-la-deriva-a-la-deriva-por-los-circuitos-de-la-precariedad/</a> >)

Tiempo Real	Real Time	2003	Ruido, María	Images, words and political praxes from the bodies of precariousness: notes for a discourse theory. It is not a measurement. Nor is it a coordinate or the statement of a convention. The moment that expresses the margins of representation, the cadence needed for discerning the constructive quality of the image, is real time (artist's website <a href="http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/488">http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/488</a> )
Extranjeras	Foreign Women	2003	Taberna, Helena	Extranjeras (Foreign Women) shows the least known and most typical aspects of other cultures through the experience of various immigrant women living in Madrid. We see these women's everyday existence: their family environments, how they live and what they work at. We are given the chance to know what happens to their dreams, and where their affections lie. We also discover the new places they have created in order to meet and exchange experiences with one another, how they adapt to their new environments, while maintaining the customs which they have inherited from their respective cultures. (ICAA).
Sentenciados sin juicio	Sentenced Without Trial	2004	Blay, Eliseo	El documental muestra el sufrimiento que padecieron numerosas personas homosexuales encarceladas durante el franquismo por su condición sexual y el silencio que rodeó y todavía rodea a este hecho. (FILMAFFINITY)
Mujeres en pie de guerra	Women Ready for War*	2004	Koska, Susana	7 women ready for war. 7 women ready for peace, the voice of women who fought for freedom and against fascism from the beginning of the Spanish Civil War up until Franco's death. Sara Berenguer, María Salvo, Rosa Laviña, Rosa Díaz, Neus Catalá, Teresa Buígues, Carme and Merçona Puig Antich. Revolution, war, exile, resistance, prison and trade unionism. Their experiences, their feelings, their voices. (ICAA)
In...Correctas 1	In...Correct Women 1	2004	Solano, Ana	Testimonies of women who have faced domestic violence. < <a href="http://www.historianuevosrealizadores.es/historia/ana-solano">http://www.historianuevosrealizadores.es/historia/ana-solano</a> >



Escenario doble	Double Scenario	2004	Villaplana, Virginia	Plano fijo americano en el que un chico sentado habla de su proceso de reasignación de género el cual contrasta con el plano conjunto de un espectáculo dragking. Alegre y optimista el primero en cuanto que ha conseguido con el apoyo de su entorno abandonar su condición biológica de mujer para ser hombre ahora reconocido “externamente”, la segunda -la performer Myriam Marzouk- ironiza sobre la construcción y la mascarada de los roles de género desde el gesto. (ARES < <a href="http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/102_villaplana_virginia/">http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/102_villaplana_virginia/</a> >)
Anonymous Film Portrait. Fuera del Paraíso	Anonymous Film Portrait. Out of Paradise	2004	Villaplana, Virginia	Recuperación de la voz y el pensamiento de la poeta Lucia Sánchez Saornil (Madrid1895-Valencia1970) fundadora del movimiento libertario “Mujeres Libres”, y de la relación personal que la escritora anarquista mantuvo con América Barroso, que fue su compañera sentimental hasta el fin de sus días (hamacaonline < <a href="https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/anonymous-film-portrait-fuera-del-paraiso/">https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/anonymous-film-portrait-fuera-del-paraiso/</a> >)
Ni locas ni terroristas	They're Not Crazy, Nor are They Terrorists	2005	Barriga, Cecilia	Around 1984, five women from Galicia, Dora Fernández, Josefa Román, Fina Sánchez, Sara López and Carmen Avendaño, had something terrible in common: children who had died from or were addicted to drugs. These tragic events led them to spontaneously join to fight tirelessly to defeat their enemy: drug- trafficking. They initiated a relentless battle... and won (ICAA)
La quadratura del cercle. Història del Bloc Feminista de Tarragona (1977-2001)	Squaring the Circle. History of the Feminist Block of Tarragona (1977-2001)	2005	Les filles de Lilith (collective)	Documental en que, combinando imágenes de archivo y entrevistas, se hace una crónica de los acontecimientos más significativos de las luchas feministas de los años 70 en Tarragona, y por extensión, en Cataluña. (EIGE < <a href="https://eige.europa.eu/lv/rdc/library/resource/MIIOC00047824c?lang=lv">https://eige.europa.eu/lv/rdc/library/resource/MIIOC00047824c?lang=lv</a> >)

Manola coge el autobús	Manola Gets the Bus	2005	Gutiérrez, Sally	La protagonista de este vídeo de carácter documental es Manola, una mujer de 87 años que cada mañana coge un autobús desde su barrio de Getafe, y desde ahí se desplaza hacia otros barrios del entorno de Madrid como Aranjuez o Fuenlabrada. Manola es un personaje que vivió la guerra civil y la posguerra pero lo que destaca el trabajo no es esa relación sino la fortaleza, el coraje, y el optimismo con que Manola se ha enfrentado y logrado sobrevenir las penurias y dramas personales a lo largo de su existencia (Hamacaonline < <a href="https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/manola-coge-el-autobus/">https://www.hamacaonline.net/titles/manola-coge-el-autobus/</a> >).
Reyita	Reyita	2006	Acosta, Oliva and Elena Ortega	This is the story of an “ordinary, normal” woman who was born in 1902: Maria de los Reyes Castillo, Reyita. A woman whose story would have gone unnoticed, even by her family, if her daughter Daisy hadn’t rescued it in a book. Through its pages and the vivid memories of her relatives, the documentary offers a journey through a life that reveals the value of everyday things. Reyita was a poor black woman, a victim of racial discrimination from childhood, but she was able to rebel against the destiny that her era had in store for her. (ICAA).
Dones contra el franquisme	Women Against the Franco Regime*	2006	de la Morena, Raúl	Documental sobre las mujeres que lucharon contra el franquismo. Soledad Real, Trinidad Gallego y María Rodríguez son unas de esas grandes luchadoras (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://www.rauldelamorena.com/documentales.htm">http://www.rauldelamorena.com/documentales.htm</a> >

El crimen de una novia	The Crime of a Bride	2006	Guerrero, Lola	This film recounts the true events that inspired Lorca to write "Bodas de sangre" seen through the eyes of María Botto. Rafael Amargo asks this actress to play the part of the bride in the production, a mixture of theatre and dance, based on the work of the Spanish poet and playwright. What starts out as simply the interest of an actress to get to know and understand her character becomes a journey of initiation in search of the reality behind the events, the Nijar crime that took place on 22 July 1928 in a small village in Almeria (ICAA).
Las esquinas del arcoiris	The Different Corners of the Rainbow	2006	Mora, Purificación	Las esquinas del arco iris gai no son todo lo onduladas que pudiera parecer. Dani es un inmigrante cubano discriminado por su sexualidad. Los vecinos de Chueca opinan sobre el hecho de que su barrio sea monopolizado por el colectivo gai. La aprobación de la ley de matrimonios entre homosexuales presenta la realidad más actual del colectivo LGTB. Este cortometraje documental es una muestra de todas estas realidades en la ciudad de Madrid. (LesGaiCineMad Catalogue 2006 online)
In...Correctas 2	In...Correct Women 2	2006	Solano, Ana	Testimonies of women who have faced domestic violence. < <a href="http://www.historianuevosrealizadores.es/historia/ana-solano">http://www.historianuevosrealizadores.es/historia/ana-solano</a> >
Im Fluss	Downstream	2007	Barriga, Cecilia and Claudia Lorenz	Two 70-year-old women from Zurich have developed a close relationship over the past thirty years. Almost every day in summer they take a swim and float in the river that runs through their city. During one of their swims, they reflect on friendship, love and ageing (ARES < <a href="http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/18_barriga_cecilia/">http://www.aresvisuals.net/fichas/18_barriga_cecilia/</a> >)
I moltes altres dones	And Many More Women*	2007	Beas, Nahxeli, Sonia Trigo, Begoña Montalbán, Andrea Corachán, Marta Muñoz and María Romero	Documental que recoge la historia del bar LaSal de Barcelona, lugar de reunión y movilización feminista durante los años 70. (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://mariaromerogarcia.com/i-moltes-altres-dones/">http://mariaromerogarcia.com/i-moltes-altres-dones/</a> >

Voces contra la trata de mujeres	Voices against Trafficking of Women	2007	Lozano, Mabel	This documentary hopes to bring the general public closer to the problematic issue of trafficking with women for sexual exploitation that is considered to be the slavery of the twenty first century. Through testimonies from twelve women of different nationalities who have had the courage to tell us about their experiences, this documentary tries to show all the elements involved in this complex problem. The figures are alarming and this trade is on the increase. We have travelled to Rumania, the country where most of these women come from at the moment, to obtain some of these wrenching testimonies. (ICAA).
De eso no se habla	You Don't Speak About That*	2007	Navarrete, Carmen and Ana	A collage film about gender violence. < <a href="http://artecontraviolenciadegenero.org/?p=2005">http://artecontraviolenciadegenero.org/?p=2005</a> >
La Moma	Moma*	2007	Sebastián, Samuel	"Soy Maribel, una transexual de Castellón, siempre me sentí así desde que tengo uso de razón y todo lo que voy a contar es muy doloroso por los recuerdos que afloran..." Este es el comienzo de la historia de Maribel, la primera transexual que cambió de sexo en Castellón gracias a la nueva ley de identidad de género. (< <a href="http://www.filmotech.com/V2/ES/FX_FICHAPELICULA.ASP?ID=5151">http://www.filmotech.com/V2/ES/FX_FICHAPELICULA.ASP?ID=5151</a> >)
Cuarto Creciente	Waxing Moon	2008	Cabello Padilla, Ana	¿Por qué la sociedad piensa antes en un hombre gay que en una mujer lesbiana cuando hablamos de homosexualidad? (LesGaiCineMad Catalogue 2008 online)
Tapologo	Tapologo	2008	Gutiérrez Dewar, Sally and Gabriela	In Freedom Park, a squatter settlement in South Africa, a network of women, many of them former sex-workers, created a network called Tapologo. They learn to be Home Based Carers for their community, transforming degradation into solidarity and squalor into hope. Catholic bishop Kevin Dowling participates in Tapologo, and raises doubts on the official doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding AIDS and sexuality in the African context. (ICAA).

Plan Rosebud 1 & 2	Plan Rosebud 1 & 2	2008	Ruido, María	Plan Rosebud 1 is focused on the recent social debate around “The Historical Memory Act” in Spain, and the current relations between the sites of memory and the politics of memory that are produced through cultural industries. Plan Rosebud 2 focuses on the Spanish Transition, the period that took place after the end of Franco’s rule, placing it in its cultural context, as well as on the final years of the Labour Party's rule in Great Britain during the seventies and the rise of the conservative leader Margaret Thatcher. (Artist’s website) < <a href="http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/493">http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/493</a> >.
Por el hecho de vivir	Because of Living	2008	Sigler, Carmen and Sofía Segura Herrera	Un vídeo sobre la menopausia acerca de la cual un grupo de mujeres habla y debate, asumiéndola como algo natural en sus vidas, rompiendo ideas preconcebidas, tabús y clichés (Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo < <a href="http://www.caac.es/descargas/foll_ayg08.pdf">http://www.caac.es/descargas/foll_ayg08.pdf</a> >)
Nedar	Swim	2008	Subirana, Carla	A personal documentary by the filmmaker to give her own family a past. The starting point is the mysterious execution of Subirana’s grandfather after the Spanish Civil War. It is a story about the fragility of personal identity shared by women and a profound reflection about the cruel secondary effects of aging in the transmission of the collective memory. A remarkable achievement, executed with a beautiful simplicity. < <a href="https://www.llull.cat/offices/newyork/actualitat_detalle.cfm?id=34217&amp;url=nedar-a-movie-by-carla-subirana-screening-at-university-of-harvard.html">https://www.llull.cat/offices/newyork/actualitat_detalle.cfm?id=34217&amp;url=nedar-a-movie-by-carla-subirana-screening-at-university-of-harvard.html</a> >

Heridas	Wounds	2009	Barranco, Susanna	Wounds is the result of an on-field project with women and transsexual people about domestic violence. This audiovisual project intends to show how violence against women is violence against everything the aggressor considers inferior, everything which, in fact, represents womanliness. (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/wounds-2009/heridas/">http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/wounds-2009/heridas/</a> >
La mujer, cosa de hombres	Woman, Men's Business*	2009	Coixet, Isabel	Capítulo dirigido por Isabel Coixet en torno al tradicional papel de la mujer en la sociedad española y la repercusión que tienen en los medios los delitos por violencia de género. < <a href="https://www.cineenvioleta.org/la-mujer-cosa-de-hombres/">https://www.cineenvioleta.org/la-mujer-cosa-de-hombres/</a> >
¿No queríais saber por qué las matan? Por nada	Didn't you Want to Know Why they Kill them? Well, No Reason	2009	Fernández Martorell, Mercedes	A documentary based on actual events following anthropological research on the abuse of some men towards their partners. 3 years of research. 700 trials. 59 interviews. 62 minutes to understand why they kill them. (ICAA).
Señora de...	Mrs... What's His Name	2009	Ferreira, Patricia	The film gathers together first-hand accounts from various generations of woman in Spanish history who were not even allowed to dream. The only thing they could do was resign themselves to their lot and accept that they had been born at a time when their voices, their hopes and even their thoughts were silenced. Women from the city and the country, from the sea and inland, who face their memories as they speak for the first time about their lives, about customs which would be intolerable in western society today but which were a fact of life for women in Galicia and Spain in recent history. (ICAA).

Granada 30 años después, 5000 feminismos más	Granada After 30 Years and 5000 Feminisms	2010	Barriga, Cecilia	Thirty years after the first feminist meeting ever held in Spain (1979), people take to the streets in Granada again and stand up for the ideas held by today's feminism in its wide variety of identities. A transgender and transgenerational celebration: explosive, enthusiastic, contagious (Punto de Vista Film Festival < <a href="http://www.puntodevistafestival.com/en/ficha_película.asp?IdPeli=120&amp;Urtea=2011">http://www.puntodevistafestival.com/en/ficha_película.asp?IdPeli=120&amp;Urtea=2011</a> >)
La luna en ti	The Moon Inside You	2010	Fabianova, Diana	The Moon Inside You is a fresh look at a taboo that defines the political and social reality of both women and men in a more profound way than society might be willing to admit. Facing the menstrual etiquette with doses of humour and selfirony, the documentary approaches the subject through both personal and collective references, thus challenging our preconceived idea of womanhood (filmmaker's website) < <a href="https://dianafabianova.com/moon-inside-you-movie/">https://dianafabianova.com/moon-inside-you-movie/</a> >
Vindicación	Vindication*	2010	Koska, Susana	Explora sobre lo personal y lo político, la insumisión civil y la militancia política, sobre lo femenino y lo feminista. Una mirada personal a la historia política de las mujeres de los últimos años del siglo XX. Mujeres que vivieron en primera persona los cambios que se producían durante la transición política cuentan sus experiencias y sus pensamientos sobre una época que cambió la historia de España < <a href="https://www.cineenvioleta.org/vindicacion-de-susana-koska-debate-coloquio/">https://www.cineenvioleta.org/vindicacion-de-susana-koska-debate-coloquio/</a> >
Las sabias de la tribu	The Wise Women of the Tribe	2010	Lozano, Mabel	This is a story about eight women, who belong to very different environments but who share a common denominator; they are all over sixty, they are transgressors and fighters and in spite of the difficulties faced by all the women in their generation they have managed to achieve what they wanted. (ICAA).

Guerriller@s	Warriors	2010	Pujantell, Montse	<p>“Warriors” is a documentary that puts forth a reflection about the sexual identity, an approach to the gender development and its “control strategies”, based on a heterogeneous group of activists who stand for the transsexual and transgender community. (Promofest &lt;<a href="http://www.promofest.org/films/guerrilleras">http://www.promofest.org/films/guerrilleras</a>&gt;).</p>
En la próxima estación	At the Next Station	2010	Rodríguez, Beatriz	<p>“I always said I was the most orphaned orphan of all orphans. After all, my parents are alive and I’m here”. This is Sumi’s summary of her situation when she is with her peers. After being abandoned on a train, this girl ends up in a home for orphaned and abandoned children in Basundhara, Orissa, in the North of India. Sumi finds girls with different histories there, but also girls whose stories are similar to her own. Lives which start to crisscross. Girls who share the same hope of growing older in better conditions to those of their childhoods. Through the education they receive from the home coordinators, they try to twist their destiny around. What they have to live with, and what they finally find, doesn’t always correspond to what they dreamed with. (ICAA)</p>
Fake Orgasm	Fake Orgasm	2010	Sol, Jo	<p>Lazlo Pearlman is a conceptual artist, a reputation of clichés, an activist that can blow up our prejudices and dogmas about sex and identity. What appears to be a reflection on the fun lies in our sexual life suddenly becomes a poignant speech about gender theory and the constant construction of our identity. “Fake Orgasm” hits the mind and forces a change of perspective to rethink some concepts with which we have been educated. We will have to find new drawers where classify things as our manhood, our pale or our Barbie superstar. (ICAA)</p>



Nagore	Nagore	2010	Taberna, Helena	Seen through the eyes of Asun Casasola, mother of Nagore Laffage, we take a look at the woman's life since her daughter was murdered. The crime, committed during Pamplona's San Fermín celebrations in 2008 by a psychiatric intern, shook society and hit the media headlines as never before. The trial took place in November 2009, with the defendant being convicted of manslaughter. Asun, her family, and all those who support them, continue their struggle to see justice done and have the culprit sentenced for murder with intent. (ICAA).
Empieza en ti	Start with You*	2010	Vergonyós, Marta	Documentary, made over 10 years with a group of women who had experienced situations of sexist violence, focused on the recovery process through art. The documentary is a collaborative project carried out by the same protagonists. (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://www.martavergonyos.net/portfolio/empieza-en-ti/">http://www.martavergonyos.net/portfolio/empieza-en-ti/</a> >
Las Constituyentes	The Constituents	2011	Acosta, Oliva	The documentary is about 27 women, members of parliament and senators, who were protagonists of politic change during Spain's transition towards democracy, because of the parliamentary role which they played during the first constituent term in office in 1977 after the transition to democracy (ICAA).
Vacíos	Voids	2011	Barranco, Susanna	The project of documentary Voids was conceived as a way to offer a perspective about domestic violence which is often unknown to most people -the one from the aggressors themselves. (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/voids-2011/vacios/">http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/voids-2011/vacios/</a> >

Mi sexualidad es una creación artística	My Sexuality is an Artistic Creation	2011	Egaña, Lucía	My sexuality is an artistic creation documents the postporn scene taking important place in Barcelona within the last decade. Through the archive material, DIY postporn videos, performances documentation and public space interventions, and seven interviews with artists and groups such as Diana pornoterrorista, María Llopis, Post-Op, Go Fist Foundation o La Quimera Rosa, Lucia traces the origins of this movement, their personal motivations and referents (Annie Sprinkle, The Volcano LaGrace, Cindy Sherman, Marina Abramovic, Beatriz Preciado, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault or Dona Haraway), to address the key issues on which postporn rotates. It is about the uncovering its causes, motivations and peculiarities, with the quest to build other forms of representation of sexuality where art and political activism are impossible to separate. < <a href="http://www.ttv-i.net/?p=834">http://www.ttv-i.net/?p=834</a> >.
En la mano de King Kong	In the Hand of King Kong	2011	Lozano, José Luis	Amelia Valcárcel, the Philosopher. Amelia Valcárcel, the State Counselor. Amelia Valcárcel, the woman who was discriminated yesterday at 11:30. All speaking Amelias open to the camera. Questions and reflections, vindications and dramatic effects, humor and echoes of movies seen, King Kong prisoner of his own character and a gesture without gender ensnaring himself and us, which make us a puzzle in wich we discover ourselves as a jigsaw piece. To upset in order to declare no more! and open up the hand. We're equal or I'm not playing. (ICAA)

Vidas transexuales	Transsexual Lives	2011	Popova, María	Nadia, Zam, Gabriela, Marta, Tes, Pol y Dani comparten sus puntos de vista sobre la transexualidad. Siempre supieron quienes eran, pero el camino a la felicidad ha sido largo y distinto para cada uno. Hay palabras que pueden definir a una persona que ha recorrido este camino y estas palabra no son “trastorno mental” ni “enfermedad”. < <a href="http://www.cineenvioleta.org/vides-transsexualesvidas-transexuales/">http://www.cineenvioleta.org/vides-transsexualesvidas-transexuales/</a> >
La mujer del eternauta	El Eternauta’s Wife	2012	Aliaga, Adán	It’s now over fifty years since the adventures of Juan Salvo, “El Eternauta” were first published. The Argentine artist, Héctor Oesterheld –the scriptwriter-, created a highly metaphorical and political comic strip that, contrary to the norm at the time, took place in Buenos Aires, far away from the usual settings depicted in most other comicstrips (US, France). Unfortunately, Héctor Oesterheld was one of the victims of the military repression and, to this day, he is one of the many missing persons that fill a whole country’s memory with sorrow. But Elsa Sánchez, his partner and closest ally during many years is still with us. She is the wife of “El Eternauta”. A woman who survived Hector’s disappearance and the murder of their four daughters: Beatriz, Estela, Diana y Marina. A woman whomanaged to overcome a dire situation and to forge ahead during those difficult years, when repression and death were ever-present, protagonists of one of the darkest periods in Argentina’s history. (ICAA)

El vestido zombie: el traje de novia un signo entre la vida y la muerte	The Zombie Dress: The Wedding Dress a Sign between Life and Death*	2012	Bernardez Rodal, Asunción and María Gallego	Una reflexión sobre el traje de novia desde el punto de vista intelectual feminista. Las filósofas Ana de Miguel y Luisa Posada, la activista y presidenta de la LGBT Boti García, la doctora en Bellas Artes Marian López Cao, las dramaturgas Itziar Pascual y Margarita Borja, la historiadora Rosa Capel, la directora del Magazine El Mundo Silvia Nieto y la conservadora del Museo del Traje Concha Herranz, entre otras, son algunas de las voces protagonistas de El vestido zombi. < <a href="https://www.jotdown.es/events/el-vestido-zombie-el-traje-de-novia-un-signo-entre-la-vida-y-la-muerte/">https://www.jotdown.es/events/el-vestido-zombie-el-traje-de-novia-un-signo-entre-la-vida-y-la-muerte/</a> >.
La primavera	Springtime*	2012	Farnarier, Christophe	Mountains have been a natural haven for men for thousands of years. But life there is hard, difficult, slow, repetitive, silent and solitary. Carme and her family live in the Serra Cavallera mountain range in Ripollès. The life of this family offarmersis marked by the seasons of the year. Day after day, Carme struggles to work and live, as did the generations of women before her, in harmony with the rhythms ruled by nature. Another year arrives, and with it comes the spring. (ICAA)
Donde viven las mujeres	Where Women Live*	2012	García Serrano, Manuel	DONDE VIVEN LAS MUJERES is made up of 5 stories of women mixing fiction and reality to create a powerful social and cultural commentary recognizing the tremendous contributions of women to family well-being and societal development and to the building of a better world for men and women alike (ICAA).

Testigos de un tiempo maldito	Witnesses of a Damned Time	2012	Larrauri, Javi	A film about Franco's spanish dictatorship repression against gay, lesbian and transexual people. During that period, homosexuality was illegal in Spain. There were several laws created in order to illegalize homosexuality. It has been illegal in Spain until 26th December 1978, punished with imprisonment in jails or concentration camps. Some jails were specifically dedicated for homosexual prisoners, as the one placed in Huelva or another one placed in Badajoz. In some others jails there were specific modules for gay or transexual prisoners. In the Carabanchel prison in Madrid, the top floor was used for that purpose. From that floor some gay or trans prisoners committed suicide jumping to the ground. < <a href="http://www.javilarrauri.com/represaliados/witnesses_of_a_damned_time.html">http://www.javilarrauri.com/represaliados/witnesses_of_a_damned_time.html</a> >
Dormíamos, despertamos	We Were Sleeping, We Woke Up	2012	Linares, Andrea, Alfonso Domingo, Daniel Quiñones and Twiggy Hirota	A feature film in which an attempt is made at presenting a wide variety of persons involved in the 15-M movement, including Clara, Juan, Ax, Enrique, Inés, Edgar, Carlos, Carmina, Raúl, María José, Arancha, Vlad, Graciela, Nikky, Álvaro, Noelia, Eduardo and all who mobilized to occupy plazas and streets to question the economic, political and social outrages being suffered. Among other issues, the film examines evictions, cuts in the healthcare system and education and, in general, the loss of rights of all sorts. (ICAA)
Piratas y libélulas	Pirates and Dragonflies	2013	De Ocampo, Isabel	De Ocampo follows the staging of a play by a group of pupils in a high school in Las Tres Mil Viviendas, a conflictive area in Seville. "Raúl y Julia" is the version, adapted to the present day, of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" presented by Los Shespirs (in a joking reference to the English author), a group formed by gypsy and non-gypsy pupils in which there are difficulties and conflicts, but also joy and the desire for self-improvement. (ICAA)

Con la pata quebrada	Barefoot in the Kitchen	2013	Galán, Diego	A chronicle of how Spanish cinema has portrayed women, and their evolution from the 1930s to this day, by means of 180 film fragments. It also reviews the history of this country (ICAA).
Tomar el escenario	Taking the Stage	2013	Idoate Ibáñez, Elena	How often do we see women on the stages of the alternative music scene? The presence of women is still not normalized. The alternative scenes have practices and values that allow women to express themselves freely and comfortably. But some patriarchal attitudes persist: sometimes openly sexist, others more subtle, and in some cases invisible. Through more than twenty interviews, we enter the musical participation of women who break traditional roles that society and the music culture had reserved for them. Girls who have paved the way, have consolidated and defended their positions, have battled stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes, and who are present naturally in the music space. < <a href="http://tomareleescenario.blogspot.com/p/sinopsiteaser.html">http://tomareleescenario.blogspot.com/p/sinopsiteaser.html</a> >
Hijos e hijas del alarde	Sons and Daughters of the Alarde	2013	Olasagasti, Eneko and Jone Karres	The film looks at the difficulties faced by women who wish to participate in the "Alarde" arms parades in the Bidasoa area. The documentary looks at how events have evolved and their social repercussion over the years in Irún and Hondarribia. A film about the feelings of those who favour the participation of women in the "Alarde" arms parades of Irun and Hondarribia and those who oppose it. The celebrations running throughout the day in both towns serve as the backdrop for the story. The first part explains the Alarde since it first started, its history, its mise-en-scene, its composition and its characteristics. The second narrates the beginning of the conflict and how it developed in the early years, in the 90s. The third part looks at the present day through the years 2011 and 2012, reflecting on the present situation of the "Alardes" and their future. (ICAA)

Manzanas, pollos y quimeras	Apples, Chickens and Quimeras	2013	París, Inés	Lali is Guinean. She came to Spain because a sailor told her that in our country the apples were as big as balloons and giant chickens ran up and down the Gran Via. Lali is one of the women who show us their real situation and their inner most feelings, her life's projects, hopes and chimeras in this documentary that breaks down stereotypes and for the first time gives a voice and a face to a forgotten, invisible group of women in Spanish society: black Africans. (ICAA).
Las Maestras de la República	The Republican Female Teachers	2013	Pérez Solano, Pilar	The republican female teachers were a group of women who participated in the conquest of women rights and the modernization of education, based on the principles of democratic public schooling. This documentary, through the depiction of the life of a teacher of the time, and unreleased archive images, shows us the legacy given to us by the republican teachers that continues to this day (ICAA).
Bref	Bref	2013	Pitouli, Christina	Documentary about the ritual of female genital mutilation in the African communities of Spain. < <a href="https://www.christinapitouli.com/about">https://www.christinapitouli.com/about</a> >
La maleta de Marta	Marta's Suitcase	2013	Schwaiger, Günter	Marta suffered years ago the brutal assault of her ex-husband and was about to die. Now her attacker has been released from prison and is sure he will try again. In her home where she hides she shows us her day to day struggle to overcome the trauma and fear. Harald, psychotherapist's consulting to men "MännerWelten" helps violent men to leave male violence and analyzes the possible causes. (ICAA).

Los recuerdos del hielo	Frozen Memories	2013	Solé, Albert	In 1983, four Catalan scientists reached Antarctica and pitched their tent on a small site on Livingston Island in order to pressure the Spanish government to sign the Antarctic Treaty and place the Juan Carlos I Antarctic Base there. The leader of the expedition, Dr. Antoni Ballester, suffered a stroke. Josefina Castellví had to direct the tiny facility with great energy and limited means. After her retirement 20 years ago, Josefina made a decision to return to the lost paradise of the most intense years of her life. In the year of the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Spanish base, she prepared what will be his farewell tour of the white continent. (ICAA)
La guerra contra las mujeres	War Against Women	2013	Zin, Hernán	Three years filming in ten different countries have been required to make WAR AGAINST WOMEN, the most ambitious documentary ever filmed about the use of rape as a weapon of war. A quieted and ignored topic up to date, which makes victims impossible to be fixed and let criminals unpunished (ICAA)
Tres instantes, un grito	Three Moments, A Shout	2014	Barriga, Cecilia	Three instances of public outrage. In Madrid, La Puerta del Sol was taken to the cries of "They don't represent us", in New York, on Wall Street they sang to the sound of "We are 99%" and in Santiago, Chile, students, after seven months of occupation, handed over their college whilst shouting "Chilean education is not sold, it is defended". (ICAA)
Parts naturals. Benvingut a casa	Natural Birth. Welcome Home	2014	Bertran, Ester and Anna Cañigueral	Lydia and Esteban decided to have her second child at home. An option that very few women choose in Catalonia. Some due to ignorance, others because they consider it unsafe. In this documentary we will find the experiences of women who have given birth at home and the professionals who have attended them, breaking certain taboos surrounding this practice. (ICAA)



Tocaoras	Female Flamenco Guitarists*	2014	Cifredo, Alicia	The director of the documentary meets, by chance, Antonia Jiménez, a flamenco guitar player: she is the first professional female player the director knows. After this meeting, and with the help of two friends, she travels looking for more “TOCAORAS”, from the past, present and future of the flamenco history. Along the journey, lots of voices of this and other disciplines discuss with proximity, rhythm and sense of humor, the reason why women have always been apart of this role... or it was not so? (ICAA)
La mujer y el agua	Woman and Water	2014	Collado, Nocem	In rural India, women are tasked with providing water to their families, which also means being held responsible for their physical health – but often access to water depends on forces beyond their control. Bottled water companies pump aquifers dry, leaving towns without groundwater, while “untouchables” are only allowed access to contaminated sources. Control of water means controlling people’s ability to live, so in Women and Water it becomes a dramatic conduit into the intersection of resource issues and social injustice in contemporary India. < <a href="https://dceff.org/film/women-and-water/">https://dceff.org/film/women-and-water/</a> >.
Born Naked. Madrid, London, Berlin	Born Naked. Madrid, London, Berlin	2014	Esteban, Andrea	Andrea and Paula, homosexuals of 23 and 25 years, will show us, through their personal experience, the reality of young lesbians of their generation in Madrid, London and Berlin. Travelling through these three cities, we will meet different organised groups who will describe their proposals and attitudes towards their sexual orientation. With a riveting and edgy style, Born Naked introduces us to individuals who refuse to be labeled by society. A generation who fights for their right to reinvent themselves. (ICAA).

Tanger Gool	Tanger Gool	2014	Gautier, Juan	Fatima works at a small Bir Chifa community teaching local women how to organize and fight for social improvements. She meets the Strait Gazelles, a female football team based in Tangiers. With just a few supporters, the team survives thanks to the passion and the financial struggle of all the girls. During dinner with some friends they come up with an idea to help them: planning a football match against a European team as a means to give them visibility, supporting female football and creating abridge between cultures. (ICAA)
Tomaremos las calles. Mujeres en Lucha	We Will Take the Streets. Women Fighting*	2014	Larrauri, Javi	Tomaremos las calles muestra la lucha de varias mujeres pertenecientes a distintos movimientos sociales actuales en el Estado español: activistas del movimiento de vivienda o de educación, mujeres del carbón, activistas de asambleas del 15M, lesbianas queer, periodistas ciudadanas o yayaflautas funden sus testimonios y su lucha en un recorrido por la protesta social contemporánea donde las protagonistas son exclusivamente las mujeres. < <a href="http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/2018/05/07/tomaremos-las-calles-muestra-cine-lesbico-2018/">http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/2018/05/07/tomaremos-las-calles-muestra-cine-lesbico-2018/</a> >.
Boliviana	Bolivian Woman*	2015	Agudo, Mariano	Una mujer baja a la mina para sobrevivir. Una anarquista es candidata a las elecciones. Una niña oculta su rostro para trabajar. Una joven busca el cambio social a través del hip-hop. Cuatro mujeres, cuatro historias, en un país en lucha por su destino. Bolivia. < <a href="https://festivaldemalaga.com/pelicula/ver/1201/Boliviana">https://festivaldemalaga.com/pelicula/ver/1201/Boliviana</a> >

El gran vuelo	The Great Flight	2015	Astudillo, Carolina	In the early years of the Franco dictatorship, Clara Pueyo Jornet, an active militant in the Communist Party, escapes from Les Corts prison in Barcelona by the front door. From that moment, she vanishes without a trace. She had been living on the run and she sought to escape from the rigidity of her own party. Her story is also the story of the women of her time and their struggle for freedom in a society that tried to repress them (ICAA).
Las Sinsombrero	The Women without a Hat*	2015	Balló, Tania, Manuel Jiménez Núñez and Serrana Torres	It seeks to recover the memory of the Spanish women writers, artists and philosophers of the golden generation of 1927. Due to the overt chauvinism of this period these women have all but been eradicated from the cultural history of their country. This documentary seeks to pull them from out of the shadows and demonstrate the exceptional creative abilities and talents they possessed. Most of the women created their most important works in exile in Latin America and the US. (FILMAFFINITY)
Loba	Loba	2015	Bechard, Catherine	Giving birth at home? That's getting harder and harder to do. In the world today, 20 million caesareans are performed each year. That's more than double the 15% recommended by the WHO. Loba is a journey through Europe and Latin America to discover how we experience natural childbirth in such an artificial society. (ICAA)

Tchindas	Tchindas	2015	Garcia Pérez, Pablo and Marc Serena	In 1998 she was interviewed by a local newspaper, explaining her story for the first time. It was her only media appearance, but it was enough to become well-known around Cape Verde, even in the islands she has never visited. Now, tchinda is the local byword for gay Cape Verdeans. Without setting out to do so, she has become a legend, one of the best-known women in this archipelago 500 km off the coast of Senegal. She is now 35 and has won the respect of her neighbours, sometimes by force, as the scar on her nose reminds us. She is a leader. She is tireless, loyal and fascinating. A woman of action, able to unite a whole neighbourhood, she deserves to be the first Black African trans woman to be recognised on the big screen. (ICAA)
Chicas nuevas 24 horas	New Girls 24 Hours	2015	Lozano, Mabel	This documentary shows us step by step how to set up a business that moves 32 billion dollars per year. The huge business of sex slavery, where everything is profit, since a woman's body, if they are young and take care of themselves, can even be sold on multiple occasions during the same day, and all against their will. Do you want to learn this business? Do you want to be a part of it? Or do you just want to watch? 'Chicas nuevas 24 horas' is not a unique film for mixing a false documentary with an investigation in five countries, but due to focusing on the wickedness that sex slavery business implies. (ICAA).

Flamencas: Mujeres, fuerza y duende	Flamenco Women: Strength and Duende*	2015	Medina, Marcos and Jonathan González	Desgarradora, chamana, revolucionaria, mágica, de sangre caliente, sufridora, madre, amiga, hermana. Nos vamos a acercar a todas esas mujeres cuyo don, ya sea el cante, el baile o el toque, forma parte de ese preciado legado que aún hoy continúa creciendo, sin dogmas ni protocolos. Desde el siglo XIX hasta hoy día, contamos con cientos de mujeres que han prestado su vida a esta cultura, tanto manteniendo vivo el flamenco de raíz, como influenciándose de él para crear otras músicas. < <a href="http://laventanaclubcultural.com/event/documental-flamencas-mujeres-fuerza-y-duende/">http://laventanaclubcultural.com/event/documental-flamencas-mujeres-fuerza-y-duende/</a> >.
El viaje de Carla	Carla's Journey	2015	Olmeda, Fernando	Thirty-two years after leaving Guimar (Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain) to get a life according to their gender identity and free of existing social prejudices in his hometown, Carla Antonelli returns to reconnect with their memories and take stock of his life. < <a href="http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/arcoiris-el-viaje-de-carla/">http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/arcoiris-el-viaje-de-carla/</a> >.
El viaje de las reinas	The Journey of Queens	2015	Roda, Patricia	The Journey of Queens is about twelve actresses, eight of whom are veterans. They play twelve important queens in world history. This feature film does not focus on the stories of these twelve queens; it narrates the theatrical creation process by starring these women as they play their roles in the official work. (ICAA)
Asamblea de Mujeres de Granada: 40 años de lucha feminista	Granada Women Assembly: 40 Years of Feminist Fight*	2015	Sigler, Carmen	Este documental se propone la tarea de servir de memoria histórica que registre la trayectoria de la Asamblea de Mujeres de Granada y sus 40 años de lucha feminista. Desde el momento en que surge esta asociación, a mediados de los 70 hasta la actualidad, se recorren los años de reivindicaciones, debates, propuestas, movilizaciones, jornadas, actividades... en los que este colectivo ha participado. (Granada Women Assembly website < <a href="http://asambleamujeresgranada.com/documental-asamblea-de-mujeres-de-granada/">http://asambleamujeresgranada.com/documental-asamblea-de-mujeres-de-granada/</a> >)

Tomboys, marimachas, trans, bedesemeras: Versiones de la masculinidad femenina	Tomboys, Butches, Trans, Women BDSMers. Versions of Female Masculinity	2015	Tóxica, Elena and Toxic Lesbian (collective)	Mediometrage que narra las particulares versiones de la masculinidad de Delfy, Emmanuelle, Leticia y Dita, basándose en sus testimonios reales. Visualmente integra pintura y fotografía animadas así como videoocreación, y para los títulos de crédito se realizó la performance que configura la imagen principal de la película. < <a href="https://inoutdistribution.com/movie/tomboys-butches-trans-women/">https://inoutdistribution.com/movie/tomboys-butches-trans-women/</a> >
Boxing for Freedom	Boxing for Freedom	2015	Venegas, Silvia and Moreno, Juan Antonio	Sadaf Rahimi is the best female boxer in Afghanistan, but she must deal with her country's traditions, fear and her own fate in order to be a free woman. Sadaf and her sister Shabnam joined the newly created women's boxing team at the age of 13, when they returned to their country after being refugees in Iran. Her boxing and academic achievements will turn Sadaf into an example for many Afghan young women, but her path will not be without threats and difficulties. (ICAA).
Carmen Laforet. La Chica Rara	Carmen Laforet. The Strange Girl	2016	Arribas, Marta and Ana María Pérez	Some lives finish leaving many unanswered questions. The life of the writer Carmen Laforet is one of them. Her trajectory, which took her from the brilliancy to personal and literary darkness, is full of mystery. "El miedo y la gloria" will plunge into the Laforet's unique world, trying to clear up the aura of mystery around the writer, to untangle the skein of theories about her success, her work and her personal decline. (ICAA)
La niña del gancho	The Basketball Girl*	2016	Barrera, Raquel	Encarna está a punto de cumplir 99 años. Pero cada noche sueña que aún juega a baloncesto como en 1931, cuando la bautizaron como "La niña del gancho". Como hace 70 años, cada día lee el diario, guarda las noticias sobre deporte femenino y las plastifica para su archivo personal. Ya que nadie se acuerda de las mujeres pioneras del baloncesto, lo hace ella. (ICAA)

Sheroes	Sheroes	2016	Caro Martín, Carlos	Sheroes nos lleva hasta la India, donde nos cuenta la historia del sueño de cinco mujeres con el objetivo de empoderar a la mujer en este país y de visibilizar para erradicar los ataques sufridos con ácido. Las protagonistas (Rupa, Neetu, Geeta, Ritu y Chanchal) a las que conocemos trabajando en la empresa que han creado, el Café SheroesHangout. Esta cafetería no es sólo su trabajo, sino que tratándose de un país como la India, se trata de una manera de tener independencia económica, al mismo tiempo de convertirse en una muestra de activismo social, protesta y sensibilización. < <a href="http://www.mujeremprendedora.net/sheroes-cortometraje-sobre-empoderamiento-mujer-india/">http://www.mujeremprendedora.net/sheroes-cortometraje-sobre-empoderamiento-mujer-india/</a> >
Free. Hadijatou contra el Estado	Free. Hadijatou Vs The State	2016	Cornet, Rosa and Eulalia Goma	Hadijatou Mani is the first woman ever to take legal action against the State of Niger for allowing her status as slave and not protecting her. She won the case back in 2009. An unprecedented trial and a turning point in the fight against modern slavery. Her experience, along with that of other women facing similar situations, gives us first-hand insight as to what slavery is like in the 21st century. (ICAA)
Carrasca	Carrasca	2016	Cortés, Alejandro	The living will of a grandmother painter who returns from death to fight for her art in a world of men < <a href="http://www.promofest.org/films/carrasca">http://www.promofest.org/films/carrasca</a> >.
Primavera rosa en México	Pink Spring in Mexico	2016	De la Torre Espinosa, Mario	Although gay marriage was legalized , Mexico ranks second in the world in the rate of murders committed against the LGBT population. Although activists have risked their lives to denounce this fact, impunity surrounding these hate crimes. < <a href="http://offecam.com/primavera-rosa-en-mexico/">http://offecam.com/primavera-rosa-en-mexico/</a> >.

Alcaldessa	Ada for Mayor	2016	Faus, Pau	ADA FOR MAYOR follows Ada Colau for one year, from her time spent organizing the anti-eviction fight in Barcelona to the day she is sworn-in as its mayor. The intimate chronicle -featuring Colau's own video diary- and privileged access to the inner-workings of a new citizen platform reveal an extraordinary journey in which two prevalent themes are united: a historic victory illustrative of the political changes taking place in southern Europe, and the inner struggle of someone who fears becoming what she has so often questioned. (ICAA)
Bolingo, el bosque del amor	Bolingo. The Forest of Love	2016	González Salgado, Alejandro	BOLINGO, THE FOREST OF LOVE tells the journey made by several women from the heart of Africa to North Morocco looking for the "European dream". This journey will get them into a trip to motherhood at Bolingo or some other awaiting camp settled next to the Moroccan-Spanish border. < <a href="http://widehouse.org/film/bolingo-the-forest-of-love/">http://widehouse.org/film/bolingo-the-forest-of-love/</a> >.
Alalá (alegría)	Alalá (Joy)	2016	Malvárez, Remedios	Flamenco, a space of knowledge, transformation and freedom. Alalá (Happiness in the language Caló - Spanish and Portuguese Romani-) shows the social portrait of a popular Sevillian neighborhood that only comes to light in the pages of events, which in recent years has been transformed into a multicultural space, which despite the difficulties in which they used to live the never lost the joy. (ICAA)
Boconas	Big Mouth Women*	2016	La Mirada Invertida (collective)	Yolanda , Victoria, Emiliana and Sdenka are immigrants and domestic workers. They are also radio speakers on Radio Deseo, the community radio anarchist of the feminist group Mujeres Creando of Bolivia. < <a href="https://donaicinema.wordpress.com/792-2/">https://donaicinema.wordpress.com/792-2/</a> >



Joana Biarnés, una entre tots	Joana Biarnés, One Among All	2016	Moreno, Oscar and Jordi Rovira	She spent three hours in the suite of the Beatles, tricked Roman Polanski under a false identity, was staff photographer of the artist Raphael, chose the dress of Massiel for Eurovision, blushed when Clint Eastwood kissed her. She was a close friend of Xavier Cugat, Fernando Rey, Joan Manuel Serrat, the Duchess of Alba, the Cordobés, Lola Flores, Salvador Dali ... This is the untold story of Juanita Biarnés, the first woman in Spain that worked as photojournalist. A pioneer who overcame the prejudices of his time, that triumphed in her job, who immortalized the great figures of history and, when he could have become a legend, disappeared. (ICAA)
Excluidas del paraíso	Excluded from Paradise	2016	Pérez de Eulate, Esther	In the XXI century, what mechanisms produce and perpetuate patriarchy? Through relevant voices of feminist thinkers, the documentary will try to answer this question. (ICAA)
Nunca fuimos super woman	We Have Never Been Super Woman	2016	Romero, Paula	5 women, 5 life stories and one city, Jerez de la Frontera (Cadiz), converge in this documentary. The testimonial memory of the protagonists analyzes the representation of women in Spanish society since childhood. An overview of the last fifty years of Spanish history, giving voice to women who never chose to be "superwoman" < <a href="https://nuncafuimossuperwoman.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/teaser/">https://nuncafuimossuperwoman.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/teaser/</a> March 2017>
En tránsito	In Transit	2016	Tejedor, Oskar	EN TRANSITO deals with the realities faced by thousands of Latin American mothers who travel to Europe alone in search of financial stability, and the consequences of the long-distance transnational relationship they establish with their sons and daughters. These are extreme situations which aren't discussed or known about and will have significant repercussions throughout their lives. (ICAA)

Manolita, La Chen de Arcos	Manolita, La Chen de Arcos*	2016	Vegas, Valeria	Manolita was born seventy years ago in a village of Andalusia. She was linked very early to artistic and entrepreneurial activities. She jumped to the tabloids in the 80's after adopting Mary, a three years old girl with Down Syndrome who today continues under her tutelage. Manolita managed to be the first transsexual woman who becomes a mother. < <a href="http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/2017/06/10/manolita-la-chen-arcos-2/">http://www.lesgaicinemad.com/2017/06/10/manolita-la-chen-arcos-2/</a> >
Arreta	Attention	2016	Zafra, María and Raquel Marques	Some changes in our body we fervently long for, will on and bring about ourselves; others strike mercilessly without warning and crush us. Arreta looks at bodies and the changes they undergo, with a realisation that illness and death are part of life. (L'alternativa Film Festival website < <a href="http://alternativa.cccb.org/2016/en/films/hall/arreta">http://alternativa.cccb.org/2016/en/films/hall/arreta</a> >
Desnudas	Nude	2017	Barranco, Susanna	Nude is a documentary project that delves into the perspective of gender, thinking over the position of women in a field as broad and ambiguous as prostitution, from a raw, intimate and delicate view, from the honesty of testimonies that break their silence and show themselves beyond their skin. From Barcelona, one of the meccas of illegal prostitution in Europe, we will travel to the city of Amsterdam to observe the functioning of a regulated sector with the aim of answering the questions of a global phenomenon. (Filmmaker's website) < <a href="http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/nues-in-progress/desnudas/">http://labarrancofilms.com/en/portfolio/nues-in-progress/desnudas/</a> >

María Moliner. Tendiendo palabras	María Moliner*	2017	Calavia, Vicky	Una presencia femenina nos conduce a través de los hechos importantes en la vida de María Moliner, destacando los términos que los definen y dibujan, y las definiciones que de éstos ofrece María en su propio diccionario, de manera que es una narración contada a través de sus propias palabras, destacando la fuerte impronta que la personalidad de María plasma en su obra magna: el Diccionario de Uso del Español < <a href="https://tendiendopalabras.com">https://tendiendopalabras.com</a> >
La manzana de Eva	Eve's Apple	2017	Colón Armario, José Manuel	Eve's apple is a documentary film shot in 4K reporting the barbarity of Female Genital Mutilation, showing how international agencies and private and public entities fight and look for alternative measures to end this reprehensible practice. (ICAA)
Tamaia 25 anys de sororitat front la violència masclista	Tamaia 25 Years of Sorority Against Male Violenc	2017	Cooptecniques (cooperative)	Documental realizado con motivo de los 25 años del colectivo "Tamaia, vivir sin violencia" que recoge las voces de diferentes mujeres que han formado parte del nacimiento y crecimiento de esta cooperativa y su lucha para construir un mundo libre de violencias machistas. < <a href="http://cooptecniques.net/es/tamaia-25-anys-de-sororitat-front-la-violencia-masclista/">http://cooptecniques.net/es/tamaia-25-anys-de-sororitat-front-la-violencia-masclista/</a> >.
Sexismo y medios de comunicación	Sexism and Media*	2017	Navarrete, Mabe	Un documental que aborda la problemática de la discriminación de género desde los medios de comunicación, siendo éstos un instrumento determinante en la sociedad, analizando y distinguiendo las distintas formas que se emplean. Haciendo un recorrido en el tiempo, pero centrándose más en la actualidad, demuestra lo poco que ha cambiado la situación en materia de género. < <a href="https://filmfreeway.com/1326829">https://filmfreeway.com/1326829</a> >

Lo que dirán	Some Might Say	2017	Nuñez, Nila	Present-day events become deeply symbolic in a film that acts as an allegory of a social divide. Two friends with very different visions of the relationship between identity and personal appearance meet to talk about a garment that has sparked great controversy in the West: the hijab. < <a href="http://alternativa.cccb.org/2018/en/films/paralelas/lo-que-diran">http://alternativa.cccb.org/2018/en/films/paralelas/lo-que-diran</a> >
Nobody is Perfect	Nobody is Perfect	2017	Pérez, Beatriz	El relato sincero de los pensamientos, vivencias, miedos e inseguridades de Álex en el momento de tomar una decisión de vital importancia, nos demuestra que romper tabúes y derrumbar barreras y prejuicios comienza por el coraje y la aceptación de uno mismo y de la propia identidad. < <a href="http://www.docsbarcelona.com/es/doc/nobody-is-perfect/">http://www.docsbarcelona.com/es/doc/nobody-is-perfect/</a> >
A palabra xusta	The Right Word	2017	Piñeiro, Miguel	Una maestra y pedagoga de 92 años regresa a una casa parada en el tiempo. Allí Antía Cal Vázquez “Tita” inicia una conversación con sus recuerdos, las imágenes de una vida atrapadas en viejas fotografías, el paisaje de montaña que rodea la casa y la memoria del amor de su vida < <a href="https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film260453.html">https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film260453.html</a> >.
En la brecha	In the Gap	2017	Reig Valera, Claudia	Retrato colectivo de la desigualdad de género en el trabajo. Descubrimos el testimonio de siete mujeres que ejercen profesiones tradicionalmente masculinizadas a través de una navegación interactiva. Una estibadora, una técnica de sonido, una mecánica de automoción, una entrenadora de fútbol, una chef, una cirujana y una CEO de deportes electrónicos son las protagonistas de este webdocumental. < <a href="http://www.docsbarcelona.com/es/docsbarcelona-2018/industria/panel-master-classes-mesas-redondas/en-la-brecha-sessio-interactiva/">http://www.docsbarcelona.com/es/docsbarcelona-2018/industria/panel-master-classes-mesas-redondas/en-la-brecha-sessio-interactiva/</a> >.

Singled [Out]	Singled [Out]	2017	Relea Ventura Ariadna and Mariona Guiu	SINGLED [OUT] tells the story of five educated women in four corners of the world: Jules in Melbourne, Manu in Barcelona, Shu and Yang in Shanghai, and Melek in Istanbul -they all travel solo in a world where pairing up is the norm. Together with the voices of some well-known experts in the areas of sociology, law and demography, the film unveils modern love in the era of choice, and is a journey to the heart of being a single woman today. < <a href="https://singledoutfilm.com/en/the-film/">https://singledoutfilm.com/en/the-film/</a> >.
Mater amatísima	Mater amatísima	2017	Ruido, María	In the images of the mother, encoded during centuries, the material conditions needed for the production of a representation are combined with the material conditions of reproduction. Although being a mother is a rich, complex experience, oftentimes infused with tensions and even disappointments, generated precisely by unrealistic expectations, the mythical motherhood designed by the patriarchal system is naturalized as the impulse of female humans and is presented a relationship without conflicts or contradictions. Given the fetishizing and normalizing character that is given to motherhood in patriarchy in order to perpetuate the social order, do we truly choose to be mothers? Why is care, of fundamental vital labor, presupposed as an especially appropriate task for women? (artist's website) < <a href="http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/602">http://www.workandwords.net/en/projects/view/602</a> >

Muna	Muna	2017	Zannou, Santiago	A través de diferentes historias protagonizadas por mujeres en diversas regiones de Etiopía, y con una carta como elemento unificador, se da visibilidad y presencia a la mujer africana. Las distintas historias cuentan el día a día de estas mujeres, heroínas cotidianas, que en silencio y comunión trabajan duro para sobrellevar su vida y apoyar a quienes las rodean. Mujeres que desafían las dificultades del mundo en que les ha tocado vivir con perseverancia, esfuerzo, dignidad, sensibilidad y mucha firmeza. < <a href="https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film955237.html">https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film955237.html</a> >.
Mujeres, mano a la arena	Women, Hand to The Sand*	2018	Bello, Nacho	Largometraje documental sobre la mujer en la lucha canaria. Durante siglos, la lucha se ha considerado un deporte principalmente masculino. Las mujeres ni lo practicaban ni siquiera era común que asistieran a los terreros a disfrutar de las luchadas. Pero con el tiempo las mujeres comenzaron a acudir. Y hoy en día algunas se han atrevido también a practicarlo, luchando contra la incomprensión e indiferencia de la mayoría de la sociedad. < <a href="https://es.linkedin.com/in/nacho-bello-15212b115">https://es.linkedin.com/in/nacho-bello-15212b115</a> >
Las pieceras	Women Who Work by Piece*	2018	Cooptecniques (cooperative)	Largometraje documental realizado a partir del material del proyecto "Pieceras S.A" llevado a cabo por Territoris Oblidats en 2013. < <a href="http://cooptecniques.net/es/las-pieceras-treball-extra-domestic-s-a/">http://cooptecniques.net/es/las-pieceras-treball-extra-domestic-s-a/</a> >.
Yeses	Yeses Theatre*	2018	Forneiro, Miguel Ángel	Thirty years ago in Yaserías, the former Madrid women's prison, a civil servant and graduated from Drama School named Elena Cánovas founded "Teatro Yeses", a drama company formed by female inmates. This is the story of their journey. And it is as well a meditation on the therapeutic and liberating character of drama, whose practice has helped women to get in touch with their emotions. As well as an education, theater gave them the ability to fend for themselves. < <a href="http://www.promofest.org/films/yeses">http://www.promofest.org/films/yeses</a> >

Ciencia con nombre de mujer	Science with a Woman's Name*	2018	Gallardo, Sara	Recupera a las mujeres científicas de la Historia y da a conocer sus aportaciones a la ciencia sirviéndose de los testimonios de mujeres mayores que no pudieron estudiar y de científicas de la Universidad de Cádiz. Animando así a las mujeres jóvenes a elegir estudios relacionados con la ciencia. < <a href="http://www.alcances.org/ficha-pelicula/ciencia-con-nombre-de-mujer">http://www.alcances.org/ficha-pelicula/ciencia-con-nombre-de-mujer</a> >
Benvidas ao club	Welcome to the Club	2018	Granxeiro, Carmen PG	La esclavitud del siglo XXI, en Lugo, tiene nombre carioca. A finales de 2009, la aparentemente tranquila ciudad de Lugo se convierte en protagonista de titulares e informativos. Algunos conceptos que hasta entonces sonaban lejanos resuenan ahora con fuerza en la vida cotidiana de los caminos y aceras oscuras bajo las luces de neón intermitentes. El mayor proceso visto en España contra la trata se publica en los medios de comunicación tras un año de instrucción bajo secreto de sumario. La operación Carioca entra en los hogares y se convierte en parte de nuestras conversaciones. Pero, ¿somos conscientes de lo que realmente oculta? < <a href="https://www.publico.es/videos/729243/documental-benvidas-ao-club">https://www.publico.es/videos/729243/documental-benvidas-ao-club</a> >
El proxeneta. Paso corto, mala leche	The Pimp. Slow Gait, Bad Blood	2018	Lozano, Mabel	“El Proxeneta. Paso corto, mala leche” está protagonizado y contado en primera persona por Miguel, “El Músico”, un exproxeneta y dueño de algunos de los más importantes macroburdeles de España, condenado y sentenciado a 27 años de cárcel, que ha confesado con pelos y señales cómo ha evolucionado la prostitución en España y en el mundo, y cómo a principios de los años noventa surgió el espeluznante negocio de la trata y se empezó a secuestrar mujeres de “deuda”, cuya única salida era la prostitución. (ICAA)

Mujeres que corren	Women Who Run	2018	Mitre, Cristina and Juanjo López	Why are there not more women running in Spain? The reason is none other than historical. For more than 30 years, athletics was “discouraged” for women for being “exhibitionist and masculinizing.” Women from very different times, with very different personal and professional backgrounds, but who have something in common: running made them free. < <a href="http://mujeres-que-corren.com/en/documentary-film/">http://mujeres-que-corren.com/en/documentary-film/</a> >.
Cárceles bolleras	Dyke Jails	2018	Montagut, Cecilia	Andrea took a drug mule trip from Argentina. She was taken directly from Barcelona airport to prison. Katia was imprisoned for two years at Martutene correctional facility in the Basque Country. Marta Dillon, journalist and feminist, visited over several years the female prisoners at the Ezeiza prison in Buenos Aires and captured their experiences in the book “Captive Hearts“. These stories, along with those of other ex-prisoners and researchers, are part of the documentary “Cárceles Bolleras”, that pictures the reality of women behind bars and how gender inequality affects their lives there. Under these circumstances, lesbian desire becomes a form of resistance to the penitentiary institution. Through these interviews, we depict the prison universe we are unallowed to access. (ICAA)
I Hate New York	I Hate New York	2018	Sánchez, Gustavo	From the underground scene of the most radical and fascinating city in the world comes the revolutionary story of four transgender activists, their fierce struggle and emotional fight to create an identity of their own. (IMDb)
Not a Step Back! No Surrender!	Not a Step Back! No Surrender!	2018	Suñol, Héctor	Portrait of how the people of Catalonia lived the nine months of application of article 155 of the Spanish Constitution for Spain after the referendum (1-0) celebration for independence. The film explains all that in a series of music videos, focused on a small Catalan village, Les Borges Blanques. < <a href="https://filmfreeway.com/notastepbacknosurrender">https://filmfreeway.com/notastepbacknosurrender</a> >



Tódalas mulleres que coñezo	All the Women I Know	2018	Teixeiro, Xiana do	Ranging from the personal to the political, women tell of their experiences in streets still dominated by aggressive masculinity. Tódalas mulleres que coñezo weaves a fearless discourse on fear out of three revealing conversations between friends, colleagues and secondary students to fashion a nonviolent analysis of violence. < <a href="http://alternativa.cccb.org/2018/en/films/paralelas/todallas-mulleres-que-conezo">http://alternativa.cccb.org/2018/en/films/paralelas/todallas-mulleres-que-conezo</a> >
Ainhoa, yo no soy esa	Ainhoa, That's Not Me	2018	Astudillo, Carolina	Ainhoa Mata Juanicotena was born into a family that filmed, recorded and photographed their daily life for many years. In her adolescence, at the end of the eighties, Ainhoa began to write about things she did not want to tell anyone. Her diaries, that she kept until her death, describe a woman different from the one that her relatives and friends had known. Intimate journals, that reveal an infinity of themes related to the female experience, which other women have written about throughout history. No matter the geographical or temporal distance, issues, sensations and moods converge. < <a href="https://carolinaastudillo.com/en/portfolio/ainhoa-thats-not-me/">https://carolinaastudillo.com/en/portfolio/ainhoa-thats-not-me/</a> >
Hotel explotación: Las Kellys	Hotel Exploitation: The Kellys	2018	Cisquilla, Georgina	More than two hundred thousand women work as chambermaids in Spain, but they are as fundamental as they are invisible in the hospitality sector. Two years ago, in October 2016, the Kellys (those who clean the hotels) decided to organize to claim their rights. They have been victims of outsourcing and many of them have been left out of hotel staff, without rights and exposed to dismissal when they are off. < <a href="https://www.coolturalanzarote.com/en/events/hotel-exploitation-the-kellys-documentary/">https://www.coolturalanzarote.com/en/events/hotel-exploitation-the-kellys-documentary/</a> >

### Annex 5. List of Italian Documentary Films that Deal with Gender Issues

Original Title	Translation	Year	Director	Synopsis
La Donna nella Resistenza	Women of the Resistance	1965	Cavani, Liliana	Documentary composed of interviews with female partisans who survived the German invasion of Italy in World War II. < <a href="https://letterboxd.com/film/women-of-the-resistance/">https://letterboxd.com/film/women-of-the-resistance/</a> >.
Essere Donne	Being Women	1965	Mangini, Cecilia	This documentary is one of the earliest film enquiries on women's condition in Italy, seen in its different aspects: social, economic, psychological. Starting from an analysis of the feminine role models proposed by the cultural industry - the movie starts with fashion magazine models - the film finds its protagonists among real women, of all ages and from all regions: workers in the factories, peasant women, those who do piece-work at home, farm labourers, emigrants, housewives, old women and very young girls who do household work and take care of children while their mothers are out at work; working women who take part in the Unions' struggles in defence of their jobs, against unemployment, against being fired and against exploitation in the factories and in the country as well as against the use of labourers at home which violates the laws on the condition of workers, working women who fight for peace, freedom and democracy, together with all democratic and progressive-minded citizen. (AAMOD)
Aggettivo donna	The Adjective Woman*	1971	Miscuglio, Annabella and the Feminist Film Collective	Film dedicato alle donne e sulle donne. La questione femminile in tutti i suoi aspetti è messa in evidenza attraverso interviste a donne in differenti situazioni e condizioni. Le donne anziane che lavorano da anni ai mercati generali sin dalla prima mattina e che poi tornano a casa e continuano a lavorare come casalinghe, poi le operaie di una fabbrica occupata, una casalinga, una donna che racconta della sua esperienza con il sesso e una donna che racconta del suo aborto clandestino, una neo mamma che racconta della sua maternità e poi le interviste a delle bambine della scuola elementare che già, nonostante loro, subiscono un'educazione basata su valori del patriarcato. (AAMOD)

La lotta non è finita	The Struggle is Not Over	1973	Miscuglio, Annabella and the Feminist Film Collective	Il collettivo femminista di cinema realizza questo documentario per testimoniare i momenti di lotta, riflessione e dibattito del movimento femminista, sottolineando le questioni cogenti del movimento di liberazione (sessualità, aborto, violenza, lavoro) alternando alle immagini delle manifestazioni dell'8 marzo 1972 e 8 marzo 1973 momenti di confronto collettivo e situazioni di ironico divertimento. (AAMOD)
È solo a noi che resta la decisione	We are the Only Ones Who Must Decide*	1975	Bruno, Isabella	A research film about abortion < <a href="http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zap-39_8-Schegge3.pdf">http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zap-39_8-Schegge3.pdf</a> >.
Donne emergete!	Women, Rise up!*	1975	Bruno, Isabella	Un reportage sul movimento femminista a Roma < <a href="http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zap-39_8-Schegge3.pdf">http://storieinmovimento.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Zap-39_8-Schegge3.pdf</a> >
8 di marzo, giornata di festa et di lotta	8th of March, A Day of Celebration and Struggle	1975	Cooperativa Arcobaleno	A historical revision of Women's Day (Miscuglio 1988: 159)
Il femminismo	Feminism*	1976	Baldazzi, Anna	A revision of the feminsit movement in Italy
Marisa della Magliana	Marisa from Magliana	1976	Boggio, Maricla	Il ritratto di una donna forte e coraggiosa, Marisa, che nel quartiere della Magliana affronta con determinazione le prove della vita quotidiana, al contrario del compagno, che sfugge alle proprie responsabilità, comprese quelle di padre. < <a href="http://www.mariclaboggio.it/pagine/schede/magliana_film.html">http://www.mariclaboggio.it/pagine/schede/magliana_film.html</a> >
Il rischio di vivere	The Risk of Living	1976	Carini, Ana and Anabella Miscuglio	“A study of motherhood from the points of view of desire, culture, and reality” (Miscuglio 1988: 159).
Aborto: parlano le donne	Abortion: The Women Speak	1976	Maraini, Dacia	Testimonies of women who have had an abortion. < <a href="http://www.fondazionebadaracco.it/biblioteca/S_Aborto(Maraini).htm">http://www.fondazionebadaracco.it/biblioteca/S_Aborto(Maraini).htm</a> >

Madre, ma come?	Mother, But How?	1977	Polizzi, Rosalia	Il documentario, attraverso testimonianze di donne, racconta la difficoltà di realizzare una maternità serena e consapevole in relazione a problemi quali la salute, il lavoro, gli asili nido, la contraccezione, l'aborto. Il film è interamente costruito sulla base di testimonianze raccolte in varie parti d'Italia e in varie situazioni: una fabbrica occupata da donne operaie, un asilo nido, un consultorio, la corsia di un reparto maternità. La vicenda di una emblematica maternità fa da filo conduttore all'inchiesta. (AAMOD)
Sono arrivati quattro fratelli	Four Brothers Have Arrived*	1979	Boggio, Maricla	Girato a Venezia, il film racconta la storia di Marina, una giovane donna che attraverso una serie piuttosto inconsueta di vicissitudini riesce ad adottare quattro bambini, fratelli tra loro, rimasti in brefotrofo per circa due anni. La troupe accompagna Marina per un'intera giornata, secondo le tappe consuete: accompagnamento dei bambini a scuola, lavoro al negozio di cesti e bambù, sosta al mercato per la spesa, incontri con l'assistente sociale, la sorella, i compagni dei bambini, le maestre, preparazione del pranzo, collaborazione ai compiti, gita in un'isola. < <a href="http://www.mariclaboggio.it/pagine/schede/fratelli_film.html">http://www.mariclaboggio.it/pagine/schede/fratelli_film.html</a> >
Processo per stupro	A Trial for Rape	1979	Rotondo, Loredana	18-year-old Fiorella has reported four men to the police for rape. A women's collective from Rome uses video cameras to film what happens in the courtroom. The camera picks out how a wall of male complicity forms and how Fiorella shifts from being the accuser to the accused. < <a href="https://mubi.com/es/films/a-trial-for-rape">https://mubi.com/es/films/a-trial-for-rape</a> >
I fantasmi del fallo	The Phantasms of the Phallus	1980	Miscuglio, Annabella and the Feminist Film Collective	Realizzato all'interno della serie sul tema sessualità e costume dal titolo L'inconscio e i suoi rituali, il documentario è dedicato al cinema pornografico, che viene analizzato e scoperto attraverso l'esposizione della sua produzione. < <a href="http://www.fondazioneesc.it/events_detail.jsp?IDAREA=9&amp;ID_EVENT=2313&amp;GTEMPLATE=events.jsp">http://www.fondazioneesc.it/events_detail.jsp?IDAREA=9&amp;ID_EVENT=2313&amp;GTEMPLATE=events.jsp</a> >

AAA Offresi	AAA Offer*	1980	Miscuglio, Annabella and the Feminist Film Collective	Racconta di Véronique La Croix, 27 anni, parigina di origini cecoslovacche, madre di una bambina ma soprattutto prostituta. Di stanza a Roma, riceve al civico 50 di via San Martino ai Monti, quartiere Esquilino: i clienti le telefonano dopo aver letto su un giornale il suo annuncio (già, A.A.A. offresi...). < <a href="https://www.glianni80.com/a-a-a-offresi/">https://www.glianni80.com/a-a-a-offresi/</a> >
L' altro sguardo - Cinema donne	The Other Gaze- Women Cinema*	1980	Miscuglio, Annabella	Firenze - "Incontro internazionale del cinema delle donne" a cura dell'associazione "Sheherazade": dibattito con le autrici e brani dei loro film. (AAMOD)
Percorsi Metropolitan	Metropolitan Itineraries*	1983	Miscuglio, Annabella	La giornata, i sogni, il modo di vivere e di pensare di quattro ragazze punk e di una ragazza impegnata politicamente. "Il mio film ritrae due differenti tipi di donne e conduce attraverso il mondo dei giovani nella metropoli: da un lato mostra l'impegno politico del movimento extra-parlamentare, dall'altro la cultura degli outsiders, come per esempio i punk e gli skinheads. Descrive due diversi modi di essere donna - due differenti modi di vita - due forme di protesta radicale in due diversi mondi". (AAMOD)
Scuola senza fine	School Without End	1983	Monti, Adriana. In collaboration with Lea Melandri, Amalia Molinelli, Ada Flaminio, Antonia Daddato, Teresa Paset, Rina Aprile, Micci Toniolo, Paola Mattioli, and Maria Marinotti	The 150 Hours Courses were an educational experiment implemented in Italy beginning in 1974, available to factory workers and farmers initially, and expanding to include women a couple of years later. The courses were non-vocational; they were not intended to improve one's productivity at work, but rather to allow for personal and collective growth. The courses sought to help workers reflect not only upon their working conditions but also on their lives. A large part was devoted to the re-elaboration and reinterpretation of what was defined as the "lived experience" of those attending: their experiences with work, emigration, cultural and language discrimination, union struggles, etc. Scuola Senza Fine shows how the experiment extended into the lives of women taking the course, most of whom were housewives. The film was produced in collaboration with these students as part of their studies for the class, turning the curriculum's questions about the representation of women into questions about the representation of themselves. < <a href="http://cinenova.org/database/filmdetail.php?filmId=499">http://cinenova.org/database/filmdetail.php?filmId=499</a> >

D'amore lo sguardo. Registe a Torino	The Look of Love. Female Filmmakers in Turin*	1986	Piovano, Emanuela	Filmmaker's production company website: < <a href="http://www.kitchenfilm.eu/index.html">http://www.kitchenfilm.eu/index.html</a> >
Il Corpo, il gesto, le donne, il cinema	Body, Gesture, Women, Cinema*	1987	Piovano, Emanuela	Filmmaker's production company website: < <a href="http://www.kitchenfilm.eu/index.html">http://www.kitchenfilm.eu/index.html</a> >
Epistolario immaginario	Imaginary Epistolary*	1988	Piovano, Emanuela	Durante l'esperienza in carcere come animatrici realizzammo questa singolare opera. < <a href="https://emanuelapiovano.wordpress.com/epistolario-immaginario-videolettre-dal-carcere/">https://emanuelapiovano.wordpress.com/epistolario-immaginario-videolettre-dal-carcere/</a> >
Le Rose blu	The Blue Rose	1990	Piovano, Emanuela, Anna Gasco and Tiziana Pellerano. In collaboration with a group of prisoners at the Vallette prison in Turin	Le rose blu nasce dall'esperienza di lavoro del gruppo Camera Woman, attivo dalla metà degli anni Ottanta con seminari e stage di cinema-video, contattato nel 1987 per realizzare un laboratorio di alfabetizzazione visiva all'interno del carcere torinese. Delle videolettre girate per quell'occasione rimane quella di Lidia, autrice della poesia da cui deriva il titolo, testimonianza ultima che inframezza riprese in 16 mm poi gonfiate in 35 di un racconto che vuole gettare uno sguardo dentro ad una realtà irraccontabile: «L'elaborazione di una sceneggiatura di e con le detenute stavolta anche comuni è il punto di arrivo di quest'esperienza, del tutto nuova, dell'esigenza dell'universo carcerario italiano di confrontarsi e parlare al di fuori di e su se stesso» (Piovano). Frammentato in capitoli, tra dramma reale e momenti quasi distesi, questo "documentario d'invenzione" sceglie un linguaggio poetico in cui si amalgamano rituali tesi a mimare la vita fuori, sempre nella consapevolezza di una distanza incolmabile, ispezionando celle e personalità, storie e modi di essere. < <a href="https://www.mymovies.it/film/1990/leroseblu/">https://www.mymovies.it/film/1990/leroseblu/</a> >

Quando l'eroe e un mezzo soprano	When the Hero is a Mezzo Soprano*	1993	Rap, Cristina and Patrizia Pivetti	Documentary about the roles "transvestite" in the opera which shows a selection of pieces from the 18th to the 20th century. The habit of giving male roles to women is very common in baroque opera and has become a tradition that includes many works. The filmmakers show the power of fascination that is exercised on women audience when the hero is incarnated on stage in a female voice and body, when the female interpreter enters the territory of otherness. < <a href="https://www.cineffable.fr/festivals/8efestival/Films8/filmsQS.htm">https://www.cineffable.fr/festivals/8efestival/Films8/filmsQS.htm</a> >
Angelesse	Lady Angels	1994	Torre, Roberta	Ritratti di donne palermitane come sul palcoscenico di un teatro. Raccontano la loro vita nei quartieri di periferia , lontane da una città che conoscono solo per " sentito dire". Un ritratto folgorante della condizione femminile nel sud italia e non solo. < <a href="http://www.robertatorre.com/?p=631">http://www.robertatorre.com/?p=631</a> >
Pazza d'azzurro	Nietta's Diary	1996	Romano, Gabriella	Nietta's Diary is a film about the lesbian relationship of Nietta Apra and Linda (Flafi) Mazzuccato in pre and post war Italy. The film centres upon the passionate love story as recounted through Nietta's unpublished diary. By the time of her death in 1990, Antonietta Apra was an established art historian. She made no secret that she was a lesbian, even in fascist Italy, and her relationship with translator Flafi Mazzuccato lasted 40 years. < <a href="http://cinenova.org/database/filmdetail.php?filmId=48">http://cinenova.org/database/filmdetail.php?filmId=48</a> >
Elsa Morante	Elsa Morante	1997	Comencini, Francesca	Francesca Comencini est partie sur les traces d'Elsa Morante. Patiemment, elle a rencontré ses intimes, filmé en noir et blanc les lieux où elle a vécu et qui furent les théâtres de ses fictions, retrouvé les rares images de cette femme secrète. Elle nous offre un reflet subtil d'une des figures les plus fascinantes de la littérature italienne dont l'œuvre compte parmi les plus belles pages sur les gestes, les mots et les créations de la mère et de l'enfant. < <a href="http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/4013_1">http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/4013_1</a> >

Sole	Soul&Soil	2000	Barbanente, Mariangela	In Puglia le donne che trovano lavoro come braccianti devono sottostare a ben più che semplici lunghe ore di fatica e impegno. sono soggette ai capricci dei procacciatori di manodopera a basso costo, i caporali. un lembo di terzo mondo in italia: le storie di vita, teresa e daniela che lottano per ritornare padrone del loro futuro. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/sole">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/sole</a> >
Un mondo senza povertà	A World Without Poverty	2000	Freccia, Ilaria	Sofia Akther is studying sociology in New Zealand and has just returned to his country, Bangladesh, to do a thesis on Grameen Bank. This bank, also called the “Bank of the Poor” was born from the theories of the Nobel Prize for Peace Muhammad Professor Yunus and is the only bank that lends money without requiring collateral to organized groups of women. This system also known as “micro-credit” now exported around the world, had launched a challenge against the entire global banking system. Today, the Grameen Bank has 95% of women clients and Bangladesh, has triggered a real earthquake economic and cultural. < <a href="http://fedorafilm.it/en/chi-siamo/ilaria-freccia/un-mondo-senza-poverta-2001-bangladesh/">http://fedorafilm.it/en/chi-siamo/ilaria-freccia/un-mondo-senza-poverta-2001-bangladesh/</a> >
Un'ora sola ti vorrei	For One More Hour with You	2002	Marazzi, Alina	Italian documentary filmmaker Alina Marazzi tries to piece together the life of her mother who passed away in 1972 when she was 7 years old. Through a patchwork of home movies, recordings and diary entries, Alina crafts a moving tribute to the universal power of love. < <a href="https://mubi.com/es/films/for-one-more-hour-with-you">https://mubi.com/es/films/for-one-more-hour-with-you</a> >
Zappaterra	Landtiller	2002	Pandimiglio, Elisabetta and Cesar Meneghetti	Margherita Ianelli is a semi-illiterate farmwoman from Marzabotto who has gone back to school to learn how to write at the age of eighty. She runs through her memories to re-evoked a painful page in Italian history in the Nazi-Fascist massacres in the Apennine regions around Bologna in the fall of 1955. < <a href="https://vimeo.com/243962312">https://vimeo.com/243962312</a> >



Invisibili	Invisible	2002	Pedroni, Tania	Flessibilità, mobilità, precarietà, disponibilità al rischio: sono le parole d'ordine del nuovo capitalismo che stanno cambiando radicalmente lo scenario del lavoro contemporaneo. E gli individui? Come cambiano, come si adeguano? A che prezzo? Storie di donne -e di vite- che diventano flessibili e spesso rimangono invisibili. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=28003">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=28003</a> >
Lavori in corso	Works in Progress	2002	Rubini, Irene	Can a girl be a prostitute and a feminist at the same time? The march of the "red umbrellas" at the Venice Biennale, i.e. the International Sex Workers Congress, provides a good opportunity to sketch a profile of Carla Corso, chairwoman of the Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes in Italy. The film outlines her life, her ideas, her great friendship with her colleague and co-founder of the Committee, Pia Covre and their activism. Personal experiences are described and interwoven with interviews with men and women who give their opinions on prostitution. < <a href="http://www.triestefilmfestival.it/archivio/2008/www.retecivica.trieste.it/alpeadria/Default0cdc-2.html?pagina=dbfilm_scheda.asp&amp;tabella_padre=sezioni&amp;ids=19&amp;tipo=-&amp;comunicato=423">http://www.triestefilmfestival.it/archivio/2008/www.retecivica.trieste.it/alpeadria/Default0cdc-2.html?pagina=dbfilm_scheda.asp&amp;tabella_padre=sezioni&amp;ids=19&amp;tipo=-&amp;comunicato=423</a> >
Papayoni. Creatura immorale	Papayoni. Immoral Creature*	2002	Vuolo, Cristina and Federica Tuzi	The directors explore Nepal's traditional values and religion, focusing on the condition of women: their daily life and the discriminations they face. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1175232/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1175232/</a> >
Il terzo occhio	The Third Eye	2002	Nicchiarelli, Susanna	Caramanico Terme, inverno 2003. Sei donne, di età e provenienza diversa, si concedono alcuni giorni di relax a "La Reserve", una beauty farm fra gli Appennini. Fin da subito si instaura nel gruppo una speciale complicità, nutrita dall'intimità dei loro corpi vicini, a confronto. La cura del corpo diventa così una scusa per parlare, mettersi in discussione, confidarsi pensieri e opinioni sulla femminilità, sul corpo, sul sesso. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=27861">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=27861</a> >

La zattera di sabbia	The Sand Raft	2003	Sandri, Isabella	In a chorus of voices, of testimonies and considerations, the Tuareg tell how, in 1990, in the North of Mali, there has been a great Tuareg rebellion and how thousands of civilians have been killed by the Mali Army and by the militia pro-government of Ghanda Koy as a retaliation to the attacks of the Popular Front and the Liberation Islamic Front of Azaward. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=125664">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=125664</a> >
Kaiko e Venere	Kaiko e Venere	2004	Dalle Vedove, Nadia and Lucia Stano	Kaiko e Venere è un documentario a metà tra la conversazione e il soliloquio. Le storie quotidiane di due donne si snodano e si intrecciano al loro mestiere: la scultura. Spiritualità, sofferenza, rinascita, ricerca, vuoto, esplosione: sono gli elementi ispiratori delle introduzioni ai loro racconti. Le due artiste ci fanno attraversare il tempo delle loro esperienze unendo passato e presente con il filo rosso della scultura. Due personalità e due percorsi molto diversi tra loro: una ricerca inarrestabile per Junko Imada, pianista che ha scelto la scultura e l'arte visiva; una perseveranza nell'esprimere la Bellezza per Manuela Fanelli. Due donne che creano con la materia espressioni di se stesse e dell'universo umano. < <a href="http://www.bellariafilmfestival.org/film/704/lucia-stano-kaiko-e-venere.html">http://www.bellariafilmfestival.org/film/704/lucia-stano-kaiko-e-venere.html</a> >
E Giorgia sia	Let It Be Giorgia*	2004	Dassoni, Roberto	Documentario sulla vita di una giovane transessuale che sta per affrontare la riconversione sessuale. < <a href="http://www.posthuman.it/profilo/roberto-dassoni">http://www.posthuman.it/profilo/roberto-dassoni</a> >
Bellissime. Il Novecento dalla parte di Lei	Simply Beautiful. The Twentieth Century from Women's Perspective	2004	Gagliardo, Giovanna	Simply beautiful is not a documentary or an inquiry, but an attempt to show the progression of the Italian woman in the last century. < <a href="https://mubi.com/es/films/simply-beautiful">https://mubi.com/es/films/simply-beautiful</a> >
Donne in viaggio	Travelling Women*	2004	Mazza, Cristina	4 donne e la storia di 60 anni dell'UDI. < <a href="http://www.url.it/donnestoria/film/storia/docstodonne.htm">http://www.url.it/donnestoria/film/storia/docstodonne.htm</a> >

Ad occhi aperti	Eyes Wide Open	2004	Mereghetti, Elisa	Catherine Phiri was a 40 year-old nurse from Malawi, mother of two children, who discovered to be HIV-positive following the death of her husband. Risking isolation and violence in a conservative society such as that of her country, Catherine decided to speak about her condition in public, and to break the silence surrounding AIDS. She thus became a respected leader and a source of inspiration for many people. The association which she founded in 1994, the Salima HIV/AIDS Support Organization (SASO), is dedicated to the support of AIDS orphans, to the spreading of information on HIV-AIDS and to the assistance and care of AIDS patients. Catherine Phiri was an exceptional example of the capacity of African women to react to adversities, of their ongoing commitment to new experiences of solidarity, self-organization and social creativity. As her illness progressed, Catherine continued in her own battle till the very last day, with the same determination and courage which has characterized all her life. < <a href="https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/9b7d1cf8-69a6-444f-a385-fe63f4966991/eyes-wide-open-exploring-todays-south-america/docs-for-sale">https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/9b7d1cf8-69a6-444f-a385-fe63f4966991/eyes-wide-open-exploring-todays-south-america/docs-for-sale</a> >
Máquilas	Factories	2004	Sandri, Isabella and Giuseppe Gaudino	Ciudad Juarez è una città in mezzo al deserto, nel nord del Messico, al confine con El Paso (Texas). È lì che vengono rigettati i clandestini che non riescono a passare il Rio Bravo per andare negli Stati Uniti. Intelligentemente il capitale – straniero – ha deciso di impiantare lì circa 400 fabbriche, le maquilas, perché a Ciudad Juarez è tutto permesso, si prende ciò che si vuole e si paga poco o niente, non ci sono controlli, né regole da rispettare. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=29924">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=29924</a> >
Di madre in figlia	From Mother to Daughter	2004	Sargentini, Fabiana	Interviste a donne diverse che rispondono a due questioni: "In cosa somigli a tua madre? In cosa tua madre somiglia a te?". Donne che si raccontano: madri, figlie, anziane... La gestione del rapporto di sangue più profondo, ancestrale, biologicamente originario. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/dimadreinfiglia">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/dimadreinfiglia</a> >

Sidelki/Badanti	Caregivers	2005	Bernardi, Katia	<p>Il filmato si accosta al mondo dell'immigrazione delle donne dell'Europa dell'Est, cercando di stabilire una relazione profonda e significativa che colga lo spessore dei sentimenti, delle motivazioni e dei bisogni che stanno alla base delle scelte tanto radicali intraprese da queste donne. Attraverso voci, immagini e testimonianze, il filmato si fa interprete di questo lungo viaggio, sospeso tra speranza, nostalgia e spesso sogni negati. Storie di donne che, qui, incontrano e condividono storie di altre donne.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/UTDQ/video.htm">http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/UTDQ/video.htm</a>&gt;</p>
Uno virgola due	One Point Two	2005	Ferreri, Silvia	<p>L'Italia da anni è il paese con la più bassa natalità al mondo, un paese in via d'estinzione. Una specie in via d'estinzione. L'autrice srotola il filo della sua storia familiare, dalle sue antenate alle sue sorelle, e segue, attraverso le loro vite, l'abbassamento dell'indice della natalità italiana dal 1900 al 2005. Oggi la situazione è grave e il problema comincia ad essere evidente. Le donne italiane hanno in media poco più di un figlio a testa, per la precisione uno virgola due. Quali sono le ragioni? Parlando con le donne, l'autrice ne scopre molte, ma la ragione principale è che l'Italia non è un paese pronto a sostituire la figura della «madre» con quella della «madre lavoratrice».</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=45709">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=45709</a>&gt;</p>

Manoorè. Donne al lavoro al tempo della globalizzazione	Manoorè. The Voice of the Women	2005	Menziozzi, Maria Daria	Awa from Senegal, Rita from Brazil and Catherine from Malaysia come to Turin, in the north of Italy, to attend training courses at the ILO (International Labour Organisation) Centre. They study the problems and the challenges that globalisation make for the world of labour, particularly in the countries of the so-called Southern Hemisphere. Great questions, such as the lack of the fundamental human rights, the feminisation of poverty and the globalisation of the union movement. We follow Awa to Dakar, Rita to San Paolo, Belo Horizonte, Catherine to Kota Kinbalu and Kuala Lumpur, to tell about their professional and private lives and the social vicissitudes. Not just in the offices of the local unions and the factories during the meeting and demonstrations, but also in their homes with their families and friends. The tale culminates at the World Social Forum in Bombay, where Catherine and some of the lecturers from IOL went in January 2004. < <a href="https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/f8fbd274-9748-47c6-bb6f-75dfb9cb5b43/manoorè-the-voice-of-the-women/docs-for-sale">https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/f8fbd274-9748-47c6-bb6f-75dfb9cb5b43/manoorè-the-voice-of-the-women/docs-for-sale</a> >
La stoffa di Veronica	Veronica's Fabric	2005	Rossi Landi, Emma	Veronica is thirty-eight years old, she comes from Rumania and she has been sentenced to eight years in prison for trafficking in human beings, but she doesn't lose heart. < <a href="http://www.lab80.it/Films/view/distribuzione/315">http://www.lab80.it/Films/view/distribuzione/315</a> >
Pecore nere	Black Sheep	2005	Sarno, Elena	Four African lesbians (3 Ugandan, 1 South-African) speak for themselves. They exist, they are, but their very being is denied, offended, threatened. They tell themselves with temper, grace and freedom. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1167550/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1167550/</a> >
Le famiglie arcobaleno	Rainbow Families	2006	Dalle Vedove, Nadia and Lucia Stano	This work has been realized to present the Rainbow Families Association of Homosexuals' Parents during an important Meeting hold in Milano in November 2006. < <a href="http://www.trustnelnomedelladonna.org/The%20festival%27s%20films.htm">http://www.trustnelnomedelladonna.org/The%20festival%27s%20films.htm</a> >

Nel lavoro di Sandra	At Sandra's Work	2006	De Stefano, Giangiacomo	<p>Il documentario racconta la battaglia quotidiana che molte trans portano avanti per l'affermazione di una identità riconosciuta a partire dal diritto al lavoro. La storia di Sandra è il racconto di un percorso in cui l'inserimento nel mondo del lavoro diviene momento di realizzazione personale. In un coro a più voci, altre protagoniste dell'universo transessuale e transgender, impegnate da anni nella battaglia per il riconoscimento dei diritti civili di chiunque decida di cambiare sesso, aiutano a capire il tormento e le inquietudini che accompagnano il percorso di trasformazione. "Nel lavoro di Sandra" racconta, attraverso il corpo della protagonista, una storia collettiva.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/ESS/video.htm">http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/ESS/video.htm</a>&gt;</p>
Bellissime. Dal 1960 ad oggi dalla parte di Lei	Beautiful Women. From 1960 to the Present from Women's Perspective*	2006	Gagliardo, Giovanna	<p>Attraverso immagini di repertorio, spezzoni di film, voci e canzoni che hanno scandito il Novecento, Giovanna Gagliardi ricostruisce dalla parte delle donne la seconda parte del XX secolo, dal 1960 in poi. Dai volti delle dive all'orgoglio di tante altre ragazze madri, esemplificate da Stefania Sandrelli, fino alle adolescenti in minigonna, alle prime automobiliste, alle piazze gremite di donne che lottano per la propria emancipazione sociale e politica. Voci di donne, da Tina Anselmi con le sue rivendicazioni a favore della parità dei diritti tra uomo e donna, a Gemma Capra che l'uccisione del marito, il commissario Calabresi, strappa alla "normalità" della sua esistenza, fino alle donne che ci rappresentano nelle istituzioni politiche oggi in Italia e negli altri Paesi. Cinquant'anni raccontati dal punto di vista delle donne e del loro impegno per cambiare il mondo, se stesse e gli uomini.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="https://www.cinematografo.it/cinedatabase/film/bellissime-seconda-parte-dal-1960-ad-oggi-dalla-parte-di-lei-/47668/">https://www.cinematografo.it/cinedatabase/film/bellissime-seconda-parte-dal-1960-ad-oggi-dalla-parte-di-lei-/47668/</a>&gt;</p>
Storia del movimento femminista in Italia	History of the Feminist Movement in Italy*	2006	Reale, Lorella	<p>Questa storia del movimento femminista dal dopoguerra ad oggi è raccontata in due parti – la prima va dal 1945 al 1968; la seconda dal 1968 ad oggi – attraverso l'uso di repertori video della Rai, la cronaca nera, il cinema e la musica, e le interviste contemporanee a testimoni dell'epoca, a protagoniste, e ad esperti (storiche e storici, medici, filosofe, giornalisti, ginecologi, giuriste).</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.trustnelnomedelladonna.org/Lorella%20Reale.htm">http://www.trustnelnomedelladonna.org/Lorella%20Reale.htm</a>&gt;</p>

Staffette	Couriers	2006	Sangiovanni, Paola	The film deals with women who were part of the resistance movement of World War 2 working as couriers transporting food and supplies. < <a href="https://offscreen.com/view/paola_sangiovanni">https://offscreen.com/view/paola_sangiovanni</a> >
Dalla testa ai piedi	From Head to Foot	2007	Cangelosi, Simone	The film records the transition from being a woman to being a man that the director made between the late 1990s and 2005. Simone Cangelosi started work on the project in 1998 as a sort of visual diary following his physical and psychological transformation step by step. Being so bound up with the main character's life, however, the documentary itself changed over the years and turned into something quite different from what had been planned at the outset. < <a href="https://dafilms.com/film/2278-from-head-to-foot">https://dafilms.com/film/2278-from-head-to-foot</a> >
Vogliamo anche le rose	We Want Roses Too	2007	Marazzi, Alina	This stunning visual masterpiece is an exuberant testament to the resolve of women of the '60s and '70s sexual revolution and feminist movement in Italy. Acclaimed director Alina Marazzi takes viewers on a gorgeous storytelling journey through archival footage, advertisements, and colorful images juxtaposed with the true-life struggles and first person narrations of three diverse Italian women: Anita, who is struggling with an oppressive father and the strict rules of her Catholic faith; Teresa, who must resort to a heartbreaking illicit abortion; and Valentina, a militant feminist caught between love and her commitment to the movement. < <a href="http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c729.shtml">http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c729.shtml</a> >
Ma la Spagna non era cattolica?	But Wasn't Spain catholic?	2007	Marcias, Peter	Durante su primer año de gestión el gobierno de Zapatero aprobó muchas leyes, entre ellas, el matrimonio gay. En este escenario la televisión española decidió realizar un documental sobre la opinión de la gente común, en un medio ambiente dominado por el catolicismo y muy cercano al Vaticano. El director de la investigación, se encontraría a si mismo involucrado en una situación personal: una mujer que él amó tiempo atrás en Madrid, está ahora viviendo en Roma y manteniendo una relación amorosa con otra mujer. < <a href="https://lesbian-lips.com/ma-la-spagna-non-era-cattolica/cards/1619/">https://lesbian-lips.com/ma-la-spagna-non-era-cattolica/cards/1619/</a> >

Io giuro. Appunti di donne soldato	I Swear. Pictures of Women Soldiers	2007	Martinelli, Maria	"I swear" was born from the need of talking about a female profile of our time: young women who confront with a male role: "the soldier". The documentary talks about "how and what" is possible to add, "starting from being woman", to the role of the soldier and describes Universe of the Army looking through the eyes of the girls who decide for this way. It is a frame of a closed world, with strong roles. "A big family" that, like every ideal boxes, embraces you, asking all, and gives you back the protection and the security. After a first test for admission, the young women soldiers have to affront the training of ten weeks, after that hard and tiring work they could arrive to their aim. < <a href="http://www.archiviodelcinemaitaliano.it/index.php/scheda.html?codice=OPEYOH572012">http://www.archiviodelcinemaitaliano.it/index.php/scheda.html?codice=OPEYOH572012</a> >
L'altra metà del cielo	The Other Half of the Sky	2008 and 2012	Annibali, Laura	Laura Annibali interviews herself and other homosexual women looking for ideas and reflections that look at the past to grasp the present and go beyond. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1422066/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1422066/</a> >
Caccia alle streghe	Witch Hunt*	2008	Gangi, Sofia	Documentario strutturato come un escursus storico, dalla nascita negli anni '70 a Palermo del movimento LGBT fino al Gay Pride tenutosi nel giugno 2008 a Roma. Storie di gay, lesbiche e transessuali che hanno deciso di raccontare, con interviste di carattere personale e politico, la loro vita, il loro percorso di legittimazione e affermazione. "L'idea di realizzare il documentario in una città come Palermo – racconta Sofia – è nata dall'esigenza di dare voce ad amici ed amiche, compagni e compagne, che vivono nel silenzio, poichè questa società, che si professa aperta e di larghe vedute, rifugge la comprensione di un amore difforme da quello che i modelli sociali di riferimento ci trasmettono. < <a href="https://www.cinemagay.it/film/caccia-alle-streghe/">https://www.cinemagay.it/film/caccia-alle-streghe/</a> >



Giorgio-Giorgia. Storia di una voce	Giorgio-Giorgia. Story of a Voice	2008	Mingozzi, Gianfranco	Giorgia O'Brien (born Giorgio Montana) was one of the greatest divas on the Italian stage in the 1950s and '60s. She had the clear voice of a soprano, but could also reach all the registers of a baritone, bewitching the public for thirty years. The story of an existence forged by diversity and challenge, but also shaped by love, friendship and research. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=48246">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=48246</a> >
Lady Truck, una vita on the road	On the Road	2009	Guidotti, Carolina	Il mondo delle autostrade italiane visto dagli occhi delle donne. La giornata di tre camioniste, diverse per età, personalità e pensieri. Scappate dalla routine di una vita ordinaria e di un'attività sedentaria, ogni giorno macinano chilometri sul loro bestione affrontando ritmi massacranti e situazioni difficili. Tutte e tre fanno parte di un club, Lady Trucks Driver Team, che, oltre a promuovere la solidarietà femminile in un mondo ancora segnato dal maschilismo, partecipa a diverse iniziative in favore di associazioni benefiche. < <a href="http://buonastrada.altervista.org/2010/03/carolina-guidotti.html">http://buonastrada.altervista.org/2010/03/carolina-guidotti.html</a> >
Over the Rainbow	Over the Rainbow	2009	Martinelli, Maria and Simona Coccozza	Daniela and Marica live together since three years and they are in love. Daniela and Marica chose to be clear and true about their sexuality without hiding anything. Daniela and Marica want a baby. Over the Rainbow narrates the conflicts, disappointments and hopes of an Italian lesbian couple that doesn't hide and claims the desire of maternity, in a forced trip abroad for reaching their dream. This documentary tells the story of Daniela and Marica during the seven months before their trip to Copenhagen for the artificial insemination at the "Nina Stork" clinic. It narrates how their parents, colleagues and friends react to their decision to have a baby. < <a href="http://www.popcultdocs.com/portfolio-articoli/oltre-larcobaleno-2/?lang=en">http://www.popcultdocs.com/portfolio-articoli/oltre-larcobaleno-2/?lang=en</a> >
Russulella	Russulella	2009	Pescetti, Margherita	The film narrates the life as an elderly person of Russulella. One of the last living "femminielli" of Naples, Russulella, whose life was once one of partying, travelling and performing, today finds herself living in the cramped space of a one-room apartment. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1979321/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1979321/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl</a> >

Il mio cuore umano	My Human Heart	2009	Quatriglio, Costanza	My Human Heart, title taken from the singer's autobiographic novel, is a journey through the places and emotions of Nada Malanima, who generously and with sincere verve goes back over her experience as a woman and artist: raised in the countryside of Tuscany between the 1950s and 1960s and becoming a singer through the powerful will of her mother, Nada at fifteen suddenly became the icon for an entire generation. Today, with the freedom of an artist experiencing a new lease on life, she tells us about her laceration from that rural world, reckoning both with life and the contradictions of a deeply loved profession. < <a href="http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=52633">http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=52633</a> >
Ragazze la vita trema	Girls, Life is Trembling	2009	Sangiovanni, Paola	Their names are Alessandra, Liliana, Marina and Maria Paola. They were teenagers in the 1960s, young adults in the following decade when women's lib began. Their public and private lives – from the stage to free radio stations, from feminist collectives to street demonstrations – are intertwined with Italian history and the ideas of utopia of that that time. More than just a black and white memory. < <a href="http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=52924">http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=52924</a> >
Ritratto di famiglia con badante	Portrait of a Family with Caregiver	2009	Speciale, Alessandra	Si chiamano Natalia, Luz, Elisabeth. Sono centinaia di migliaia oggi in Italia. Un esercito di donne che approdano clandestinamente e si prendono cura dei nostri anziani. Sono le assistenti familiari, comunemente chiamate “badanti. Nei fatti sono in comunicazione intima con noi, condividono lo stesso spazio esistenziale, anche se spesso non comunicano. Sono testimoni silenti delle nostre relazioni più intime, quelle familiari, del rapporto con il padre e la madre. Che immagine ci restituiscono del nostro “nido familiare”? Dei nostri vecchi e dei loro figli? Nell’alternare due dimensioni, quella intima e quella pubblica, e due luoghi, una casa privata e uno sportello della provincia milanese, si delineano le identità dei soggetti (anziano, badante e familiare) e le loro problematiche di relazione: nasce il ritratto di una nuova famiglia. Una regista, la sua famiglia, la badante. Un film sul problema della complessità dei rapporti interpersonali nelle relazioni di cura. < <a href="http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/UOCC/video.htm">http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/UOCC/video.htm</a> >

Altar. Cruzando Fronteras, Building Bridges	Altar. Cruzando Fronteras, Building Bridges	2009	Zaccaria, Paola and Daniele Basilio	Examines the life, work, and cultural significance of Gloria Anzaldua, poet and visual artist, and those she inspired in women's Chicano art. The work highlights the struggle for women's and gay rights. < <a href="http://www.worldcat.org/title/altar-cruzando-fronteras-building-bridges/oclc/754733650">http://www.worldcat.org/title/altar-cruzando-fronteras-building-bridges/oclc/754733650</a> >
Il corpo delle donne	Women's Bodies	2009	Zanardo, Lorella, Cesare Cantù and Marco Malfi Chindemi	This project took off as a matter of urgency. It all started with the observation that women—real women—are an endangered species on television, one that is being replaced by a grotesque, vulgar and humiliating representation. We sensed the enormity of this loss: the erasure of women's identity is happening right before our eyes, but without a proper reaction, not even from women themselves. This led us to select television images that share a common manipulative exploitation of the woman's body, to let people know what is happening—not only people who never watch television, but especially those who watch it but “don't see.” < <a href="http://www.ilcorpodelledonne.net/english-version/">http://www.ilcorpodelledonne.net/english-version/</a> >
Non c'era nessuna signora a quel tavolo. Il cinema de Cecilia Mangini	There Was No Woman at that Table. The Cinema of Cecilia Mangini	2010	Barletti, Davide and Lorenzo Conte	A life at the cinema and for cinema, the lifetime story of Cecilia Mangini, who in her films told thirty years of the history of our nation. In this Barletti & Conte documentary, a new life is given to the images of an Italy not so distant in reality: the Italy of the growing economic boom, with its lacerations, its dramas and its vitality. A piece of history from our nation, seen through the lens of one of the main figures of the greatest times of Italian cinema and culture. < <a href="http://www.sguardialtrovefilmfestival.it/nw/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Sguardi-Altrove-2012-Catalogo.pdf">http://www.sguardialtrovefilmfestival.it/nw/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Sguardi-Altrove-2012-Catalogo.pdf</a> >
Felliniana	Felliniana	2010	Cangelosi, Simone and Luki Massa	Towards the end of the 1960s, when he was for longtime world-famous director, on the set of a film that was about to end Federico Fellini accidentally bumped into a face that was so interesting that he decided to cast the person and use him instead of another actor. And this was how, almost like a thunderbolt, the cinematic career of Marcello Di Falco, than Marcella Di Folco, began. < <a href="http://www.triestefilmfestival.it/archivio/2018/album/felliniana/index9ed2.html?lang=en">http://www.triestefilmfestival.it/archivio/2018/album/felliniana/index9ed2.html?lang=en</a> >

Creative Women of Lake Bunyonyi	Creative Women of Lake Bunyonyi	2010	Cini, Laura	Sulle magiche rive del lago Bunyonyi, nell'angolo sud-occidentale dell'Uganda, le donne si danno da fare per garantire la sopravvivenza all'intera famiglia e un futuro dignitoso ai loro numerosi figli. Per le donne senza istruzione, il matrimonio precoce e infelice è un destino certo. < <a href="http://www.cinemafricano.it/creative-women-of-lake-bunyonyi/">http://www.cinemafricano.it/creative-women-of-lake-bunyonyi/</a> >
Via Padova. Istruzioni per l'uso	Via Padova. User's Manual	2010	Ciniselli, Giulia and Anna Bernasconi	Maria is a grandmother of four, she is a caregiver and every week she sends parcels of gifts to Moldavia. Rosario is a single mother, she has two jobs and comes from Ecuador. Lola is an Argentinean prostitute and Tomoko a Japanese pop artist. Nihal arrived from Egypt in her wedding dress and lives in the apartment building where drugs are pushed. Jenny and Dorothea are 16 and they chase them out of the shops because they are Roma. Fragments of lives meet in Milan in Via Padova, 4 kilometres that go from the city centre to the outskirts. < <a href="http://www.mircinema.it/en/via-padova-users-manual/">http://www.mircinema.it/en/via-padova-users-manual/</a> >
Il lupo in calzoncini corti	The Wolf in Shorts	2010	Dalle Vedove, Nadia and Lucia Stano	Luca and Francesco allow us to follow them during an experience that will change their lives. They've been together for the past 13 years and their desire of becoming parents could become true thanks to a Canadian clinic which is assisting the couple with the process of "surrogacy". A woman has agreed to carry out the pregnancy and the day they will arrive at the airport holding a child in their arms, will be the first day of a new life for the couple; but to get there the journey is long and complex, and the couple will have to deal with difficult issues such as inseminations gone wrong, new insemination attempts all fueled by a great deal of will power and determination. "Our family is made up of 5 people: me, my sister, my brother, my mom and my other mom". Joshua is 7 years old and has two mothers, and with the help of his brothers he will tell us the story of his life and the world he lives in. With the aid of a handy cam he will amaze us like only a child can do. < <a href="http://www.illupoincalzoncincorti.com/en/film/">http://www.illupoincalzoncincorti.com/en/film/</a> >

Avoir toute ma tête	With All My Mind*	2010	Del Bianco, Alessia and Nicola Gencarelli	Nel Dipartimento di Guédiawaye, alla periferia di Dakar, il livello di dispersione scolastica e di analfabetismo è tra i più alti al mondo. La maggior parte delle ragazze sono escluse dal sistema scolastico tradizionale, si sposano molto presto e vengono impiegate nella vendita di gelati, noccioline e altri prodotti locali. Djeinaba, 17 anni, è nata in un villaggio della Guinea e non è mai andata a scuola. Prima di arrivare in Senegal, ha trascorso l'infanzia aiutando la nonna nelle faccende domestiche. Sokhna, 21 anni, dopo due bocciature è stata costretta a lasciare gli studi alle soglie del diploma. Codou 24 anni, un divorzio alle spalle e una bambina di tre anni, ha lasciato la scuola coranica dopo sette anni. Da qualche mese, tutte e tre frequentano un centro di formazione professionale e immaginano un futuro, nel loro paese o forse altrove. < <a href="http://trecentoatesta.blogspot.com/p/avoir-toute-ma-tete.html">http://trecentoatesta.blogspot.com/p/avoir-toute-ma-tete.html</a> >
J'attends une femme	Waiting for a Woman	2010	Malta, Chiara	Mireille disegna per Olivia una donna nuda e una cane. Anna si trucca. Priscillie e Virginie si spogliano. Milo conosce le gambe delle ragazze. Annie è a suo agio con gli strumenti del suo mestiere. Françoise legge le carte. Christian è geloso. E io filmo questo piccolo teatro e ti sto aspettando. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/jattendsunefemme">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/jattendsunefemme</a> >
Le stanze delle donne	Women's Rooms*	2010	Savorelli, Silvia	Heidi si definisce creatrice di borse con materiali di riciclo, Elisabeth illustratrice di libri per l'infanzia, Antonella consulente creativo e Martina oscilla tra la costumista attrezzista e l'aiuto regista teatrale. Ma per nessuna di loro è facile trovare una semplice definizione per qualificare il loro lavoro. Che cosa hanno in comune quattro donne di età e formazione così diversa? Vivono a Bolzano, una città simbolo e di confine, nel cuore dell'Europa, ma soprattutto lavorano da casa, si sono costruite il laboratorio, ufficio e studio all'interno della loro abitazione domestica.. Sono le nuove lavoratrici autonome, flessibili, non più le "lavoranti a domicilio" per l'industria manifatturiera. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lestanzedelledonne">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lestanzedelledonne</a> >

Re-Cordis	Re-Cordis	2011	Antonini, Paola, Annalisa Moniga and Federica Vairani	Ritratto a più voci di Felicia Impastato, la mamma di Peppino Impastato, conduttore di Radio Out, ucciso dalla mafia nel 1978. Le donne che hanno conosciuto mamma Felicia ne descrivono la personalità e l'impegno, ma soprattutto la capacità di mantener viva la lotta per la libertà di parola contro poteri forti ed occulti, iniziata da un gruppo di ragazzi ed ancora oggi più che mai necessaria. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/recordis">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/recordis</a> >
Aicha è tornata	Aicha is Back	2011	Baigorria, Juan Martin and Lisa Tormena	Through the stories of 6 Moroccan women, the documentary goes into deep in the women migration back in the "Triangle of Death", the main places of emigration from Morocco to Southern Europe, in the reasons of emigration and in the big difficulties of the failure of migrations. < <a href="https://www.openddb.com/movies/aicha-is-back/">https://www.openddb.com/movies/aicha-is-back/</a> >
Diversamente etero	Otherwise Hetero*	2011	Lizzadro, Marica	La notte di Capodanno del 2010 due concorrenti del "Grande Fratello" si baciano in TV. Sono due ragazze eterosessuali, ma, vista l'assenza totale di lesbiche nella cultura popolare italiana, diventano icone dell'amore tra donne. Così, se le associazioni GLBT le archiviano come l'ennesimo episodio di trash televisivo, moltissime ragazze iniziano a seguirle. E denunciano la differenza tra la versione "ufficiale" della loro storia e quella che le fan "ricostruiscono", guardando il live 24 ore su 24 del reality e postando su YouTube gli estratti dei loro video. Le fan si riconoscono in quella storia "dal basso", molte scoprono grazie ad essa l'attrazione per altre donne ed entrano in contatto tra di loro sul web, cambiando la propria vita. Diversamente Etero racconta la storia di questo fenomeno e riflette sulla visibilità lesbica in televisione, attraverso i filmati censurati dalla tv e le interviste a fan, giornalisti, esperti di comunicazione e attivisti del mondo GLBT. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/diversamenteetero">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/diversamenteetero</a> >

Le Coccinelle Sceneggiata Transessuale	Le Coccinelle Neapolitan Transsexual Melodrama	2011	Pirelli, Emanuela	Le Coccinelle non sono drag queen né aspirano ad essere curatissime femme fatale, non interpretano i playback di Raffaella Carrà e non si travestono da icone del pop. Gennaro, Tonino, Genny e Giacinto sono quattro signore napoletane, quattro trans dei vicoli di Napoli. Nelle sale di ristoranti arredati in finto barocco, Le Coccinelle cantano e recitano le loro sceneggiate, raccontando la prostituzione, il giudizio degli “altolocati”, l’ipocrisia dei clienti ma anche l’amicizia con le donne dei quartieri e la gioia di vivere del popolo napoletano. Di fronte ad una platea di famelici invitati al banchetto di nozze, si realizza quest’esilarante commistione di sacro e profano, antico e moderno, normale e diverso. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lecoccinellesceneggiatransessuale">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lecoccinellesceneggiatransessuale</a> >
Essere Lucy	Being Lucy	2011	Romano, Gabriella	Portrays the life of 85-year-old Italian male-to-female transsexual Lucy who lived through the most dramatic moments of recent history, from fascism to deportation to Dachau concentration camp, from the Italian economic post-war “miracle” to sexual liberation. < <a href="https://mubi.com/films/being-lucy">https://mubi.com/films/being-lucy</a> >
Licenziata!	Fired!*	2011	Tormena, Lisa	Omsa, a stocking factory that has been in Faenza for fifty years, suddenly shuts down in order to be relocated in Serbia. 350 people are fired, and nearly all of them are women. A group of these workers, who are living thanks to unemployment benefits, have decided to tell their story of anger and disappointments through street theatre. An original and functional battle, which helped to make the Omsa controversy known at a national level, and allowed these determined women to be heard. Although most of them are in their forties or fifties, these workers have given up the hope that they may find a new, decent job in the future. < <a href="https://vimeo.com/74642575">https://vimeo.com/74642575</a> >
2033	2033	2012	Bencivelli, Silvia and Chiara Tarfano	Pensieri di una giornalista scientifica free lance. Non è una precaria, è una free lance: in questo mondo senza prospettive di impiego fisso, sa di dover combattere da sola e di dover camminare sulle proprie gambe. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/duemilatrentatre">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/duemilatrentatre</a> >

Il mio genere	My Gender	2012	Cioncoloni, Martha and Cesare Bonifazi Martinozzi	This film tells the story of Emanuele or Lele, born a girl and his journey to become a FtM man. He explains very eloquently about his growing up years and the slow understanding about his own desires linked to different events in his life that make him decide on the transition. < <a href="https://www.kalpana.it/eng/film/transsexual_film_festival/short_films.htm">https://www.kalpana.it/eng/film/transsexual_film_festival/short_films.htm</a> >
Adele Cambria, diario di una giornalista ribelle	Adele Cambria, Journal of a Rebel Journalist*	2012	Formisano, Francesca	Adele Cambria, figura centrale della cultura italiana, si racconta. Dall'infanzia a Reggio Calabria, sua città natale, alla laurea in legge. L'arrivo a Roma, l'approccio al giornalismo nel '56, l'impegno politico e il sostegno al movimento femminista sin dagli albori, la straordinaria l'amicizia con Pier Paolo Pasolini (è stata anche attrice in alcuni suoi film), le numerose collaborazioni giornalistiche, il teatro, le opere narrative, la televisione e molto altro. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/adelecambriadiariodiunagiornalistaribelle">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/adelecambriadiariodiunagiornalistaribelle</a> >
Le lesbiche non esistono	Lesbians Don't Exist	2012	Landi, Laura and Giovanna Selis	Partendo da un titolo provocatorio, le due giovani registe toscane Laura Landi e Giovanna Selis hanno voluto dimostrare come la comunità lesbica nel nostro Paese si trovi ancora a combattere contro tabù di natura omofoba. In particolare, a emergere è un diffuso atteggiamento "negazionista" che tende a ignorare, se non escludere, l'esistenza dell'L World, condannandolo all'invisibilità. Non è un caso che una delle tante ragazze qui intervistate dichiarò: "Le lesbiche, in effetti, è come se non ci fossero", come a sottolineare l'esistenza un rimosso nella coscienza collettiva nazionale in cui sono state confinate le donne omosessuali. Un susseguirsi di voci e testimonianze tra omogenitorialità e rapporto coi genitori, tra discriminazione e affettività. Piccoli sketch anche de Le brugole, il duo di cabaret tutto al femminile proveniente da "Zelig Off". Riuscito esempio di produzione dal basso, sovvenzionato attraverso il meccanismo del crowdfunding. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lesbichenonesistono">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/lesbichenonesistono</a> >



Johanna Knauf Diretrice D'Orchestra: Music to the People!	Johanna Knauf Orchestra Director: Music to the People!	2012	Lelli, Silvia	Cosa succede quando una donna fonda e dirige un'orchestra? Ecco l'attività e il metodo di Johanna Knauf, una delle pochissime donne-direttrici al mondo. Il suo metodo fonde musica, istinto e socializzazione, si dice di lei che sia una maga che fa cantare 'anche i sassi'. Quel che è certo è che fa lavorare assieme centinaia di dilettanti e di professionisti fino ad eseguire le più grandi opere nei luoghi più importanti della città di Firenze. Trova la musica 'dentro' chiunque e sa darle forma esteriore, restituendola a più gente possibile non solo nel ruolo di ascoltatori ma di esecutori e interpreti attivi: una politica culturale applicata che rivoluziona la prassi competitiva, tecnicista e 'conservatrice' dei 'Conservatori'. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/johannaknaufdirettricedorchestra-musictothepeople">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/johannaknaufdirettricedorchestra-musictothepeople</a> >
Donne in movimento. Il femminismo a Genova negli anni Settanta	Women on the Move. Feminism in Genoa in the Seventies*	2012	Pangrazio, Gianfranco	Il video propone un percorso nel femminismo genovese promosso dall'Associazione per un Archivio dei movimenti della città ligure. Alcune delle protagoniste raccontano, in testimonianze individuali e di gruppo, idee, scoperte, conflitti, conquiste, discontinuità e legami con il passato e con il presente. Le parole delle attiviste dell'epoca sono messe a confronto con alcune voci di donne delle generazioni successive. < <a href="https://www.mymovies.it/film/2012/donneinmovimentooilfemmini-smoagenovanegliannisessanta/">https://www.mymovies.it/film/2012/donneinmovimentooilfemmini-smoagenovanegliannisessanta/</a> >
Amica nostra Angela	Our Friend Angela*	2012	Pizzuti, Nadia	Portrait of the Neapolitan philosopher Angela Putino (1964-2007), an important figure of Italian feminism. The film combines testimonies from people close to Angela and images of the places where she used to be*
Io, qui. Lo Sguardo delle Donne	I, Here. The Women's Gaze	2012	Quatriglio, Costanza	Quindici minuti in cui vengono presentati i ritratti di donne diverse che si misurano con i problemi di ogni giorno: il lavoro, la maternità, il futuro. Insieme a testimonianze di altre persone, che conducono vite differenti. < <a href="https://www.cinematografo.it/cinedatabase/film/io-qui---lo-sguardo-delle-donne/56568/">https://www.cinematografo.it/cinedatabase/film/io-qui---lo-sguardo-delle-donne/56568/</a> >

A casa non si torna. Stori di donne che svolgono lavori maschili	We Won't Go Back Home. Stories of Women Doing Male Jobs*	2012	Rongoni, Lara and Giangiacomo de Stefano	Ci sono lavori considerati maschili che le donne svolgono già da tempo. Lavori duri e massacranti che testimoniano la caparbieta e il coraggio di alcune donne che, nel silenzio generale, continuano a superare i limiti imposti da un malinteso senso comune. Le protagoniste del documentario si fanno testimoni delle difficoltà che alcune lavoratrici sono costrette ad affrontare, ma anche dell'orgoglio che hanno nel condurre il proprio lavoro e la propria esistenza. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/acasanonsitorna">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/acasanonsitorna</a> >.
Hijab	Hijab	2012	Silvestri, Maria Grazia	Racconta di come, durante le ultime Olimpiadi, le abbiamo viste partecipare determinate e vincere con i loro veli e i loro sorrisi: sono le atlete dei paesi musulmani. La regista, giornalista sportiva, le ha incontrate in luoghi e momenti ufficiali e non. < <a href="https://portalegiovani.comune.fi.it/urlnews/rubriche/7406.html">https://portalegiovani.comune.fi.it/urlnews/rubriche/7406.html</a> >
Fuoristrada	Off Road	2013	Amoruso, Elisa	Pino is a mechanic and a rally car champion who decides to become a woman. As a transgender, he meets Marianna. Beatrice and Marianna fall in love. Fighting the prejudice of established society, both dressed as brides, the two of them manage to get married in Rome. In high heels, Pino/Beatrice continues to work as a mechanic and to pursue his passion for off-road racing. A love story, a ride through the life of a a very unconventional family living in a very conventional country, Italy. < <a href="https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/7896b156-5400-411a-b2fe-c4aa21988114/off-road/docs-for-sale">https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/7896b156-5400-411a-b2fe-c4aa21988114/off-road/docs-for-sale</a> >
In viaggio con Cecilia	Travelling with Cecilia	2013	Barbanente, Mariangela and Cecilia Mangini	Summer 2012. Two Italian women directors on a journey want to tell through a film on the road the changes that have occurred in their region, their homeland, and the main issues of the films shot by one of them, Cecilia, about fifty years ago. The film goes through places and ages and the archival footage interacts with the images of the present. The journey becomes the chance to face with the questions that were the core of Cecilia's search: how to approach the industrialization that drags up Italy and its people from an obsolete dimension, meantime throwing it in a cruel and contradictory dimension. Answers will be found meeting the people, through personal perspectives on a public interest theme. (IMDb)

Lei è mio marito	She is My Husband	2013	Bartolini, Gloria Aura and Annamaria Gallone	Roberta and Alessandro fell in love when they met in Corsica eight years ago. Since his adolescence Alessandro, a successful Venetian lawyer, had been tormented by a secret he has never revealed to anyone: the desire to become a woman. A desire that later grew to be a necessity for him. After they got married in December 2012, Alessandro decided to fly to San Francisco to undergo sex reassignment surgery. A difficult, long thought over decision which brought many consequences but, thanks to unconditional support from Roberta, these never undermined their love. An extremely important step, leaving behind the past in which Alessandro used to hide his true inclinations, and towards a new and bright future. This story about three crucial years in their relationship is told by directors Annamaria Gallone and Gloria Aura Bartolini through interviews, confessions and film footage. < <a href="http://www.loversff.com/indice-alfabetico/ca_23582.html?id_film=3588&amp;lan=en">http://www.loversff.com/indice-alfabetico/ca_23582.html?id_film=3588&amp;lan=en</a> >
Non ci è stato regalato niente. Storia di una partigiana	We Weren't Given Anything for Free. The Story of an Italian Partisan	2013	Esser, Eric	Annita Malavasi was just 22 when the Germans occupied Italy, their former allies, in 1943. As a partisan in the Italian resistance named "Laila", she moved throughout the Apennines with and between fighting units, delivering information, transporting weapons, and taking part in battles. She spent over a year in the Apennines, fighting against the German occupation. At the same time, she had to assert herself against the men of the male-dominated Italian society. By the end of the war, Laila had risen among the ranks to become one of the few female commanders in the Italian resistance. < <a href="https://www.festivalfocus.org/film/85924/we-werent-given-anything-for-free/">https://www.festivalfocus.org/film/85924/we-werent-given-anything-for-free/</a> >
Dal profondo	From the Depths	2013	Pedicini, Valentina	Sardinia, nowadays. Dal Profondo is entirely shot 500 meters below the sea level in the Nuraxi Figus coal mine. Patrizia, the only Italian female coal miner, will guide us into most impenetrable places of the last coal mine in Italy and into the souls and stories of her fellow workers. < <a href="https://www.slingshotfilms.it/from-the-depths/">https://www.slingshotfilms.it/from-the-depths/</a> >

Donne dentro	Inside Women*	2013	Pellegrino, Marzia	Tre generazioni di donne raccontano drammi ed esperienze di violenza quotidiana, testimonianze dirette della tragedia quotidiana di chi subisce violenza domestica. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/donnedentro">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/donnedentro</a> >
Gesù è morto per i peccati degli altri	Jesus Died for the Sins of Others	2014	Arena, Maria	Franchina, Meri, Marcella, Santo, Totino e Wonder sono trans che si prostituiscono da decenni nel quartiere San Berillo di Catania, tra loro c'è anche una donna, Alessia. Il quartiere è un pugno di strette vie in rovina lasciate al degrado per 50 anni e oggi più che mai contese da interessi economici sempre più pressanti. Invitati dal politico di turno a immaginare un futuro diverso, le trans rimettono in gioco desideri e paure frequentando un corso per badanti. Questa novità s'innesta ma non muta i ritmi della particolare comunità di San Berillo in cui il tempo è scandito dalle feste dedicate a Santi e Madonne più che delle stagioni. Come novelle Samaritane, le butrane di San Berillo si raccontano attraverso aperti dialoghi tra le vie del loro quartiere, rivendicano i loro diritti, presentano l'intimità delle loro famiglie e della loro solitudine davanti alla porta in attesa dei clienti. Chi sarebbero loro dopo la 'riqualificazione' del quartiere? A nessuno importa, ma per tutti è facile immaginarle accanto alle maschere troppo truccate che restano impresse al guidatore nelle strade a scorrimento veloce ai margini di ogni città. < <a href="http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/TUOO/video.htm">http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/TUOO/video.htm</a> >
L'amore che sbrana	Tearing Love	2014	Bussolati, Mariella	Un documentario che affronta il tema della violenza sulle donne attraverso le voci delle vittime, la forza delle loro parole. Storie di brutalità e sopraffazione che aiutano a comprendere il senso di perdita di chi subisce violenza, ma anche il malessere di chi la provoca (tra le tanti voci femminili, la confessione di un uomo che la violenza l'ha commessa). Dal dolore e dalla paura però si può uscire: con la forza di volontà e con il sostegno di chi ascolta e appoggia tante donne nel percorso di riappropriazione di sé. < <a href="https://www.mymovies.it/dizionario/recensione.asp?id=84109">https://www.mymovies.it/dizionario/recensione.asp?id=84109</a> >

Registe	Women Directors	2014	Dell'Erba, Diana	Registe è un viaggio all'interno del mondo del cinema visto con uno sguardo inedito ed un taglio originale: da parte dell'occhio femminile. Un viaggio in cui lo spettatore viene condotto da una straordinaria figura, posta fuori dal tempo, la pioniera del cinema Elvira Notari (1875-1946), interpretata da Maria de Medeiros. Attraverso un insieme di testimonianze che vogliono contribuire a dipingere l'odierna realtà, viene ripercorsa la regia italiana al femminile da un punto di vista storico, dagli esordi ai nostri giorni, tramite l'incontro con le registe italiane contemporanee, da Lina Wertmüller, Francesca Archibugi, Francesca Comencini, Wilma Labate a Donatella Maiorca Roberta Torre, Maria Sole Tognazzi, Susanna Nicchiarelli, per citarne sono alcune. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=79401">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=it&amp;did=79401</a> >
Vite al centro	Living in the Malls	2014	Ferrero, Fabio and Nicola Zambelli	The "24/7" economic model has become successful after the liberalisation of the opening hours, after the "Salva Italia" decree. The new job contracts didn't distinguish anymore between working and days and holidays and, changing the balance between working and spare time, they impose an always more frenetic pace. The majority of large-scale distribution employees are women around 35. Many of them are also mothers who carry on their own family, in a country in which the welfare spending decreases every year. The documentary "Lives in the malls" comes from the need to show how families change, beginning from female workers in the malls, which are a stable presence in peripheries and a resource for young people searching for a job, in such a moment of crisis. < <a href="https://www.openddb.com/movies/lives-in-the-malls/">https://www.openddb.com/movies/lives-in-the-malls/</a> >
Conversazione con Sofia Scandurra: Questioni di Genere Dietro la Macchina da Presa	Conversations with Sofia Scandurra: Gender Issues Beyond the Camera	2014	Lelli, Silvia	The last interview with the director of the first feminist italian movie "Io sono mia" < <a href="http://www.antropologiche.it/video/">http://www.antropologiche.it/video/</a> >

Sbagliate	She Wrong	2014	Menozzi, Maria Daria and Elisabetta Pandimiglio	Davanti a una tavola apparecchiata, sul divano, al salone di bellezza, Cristina, Ivana, Carla, Valeria e le altre si raccontano. Sono tutte childfree, donne sbagliate secondo il pensiero comune. Finiscono per scambiarsi segreti mai rivelati, a volte neanche a se stesse. Dalle storie nasce una riflessione collettiva. La parola si fa consapevolezza, coscienza, politica. Durante tre anni di riprese, la vita porta piccole e grandi novità. Per alcune, veri sconvolgimenti. < <a href="http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/TCZQ/video.htm">http://www.italiandoc.it/area/public/wid/TCZQ/video.htm</a> >
Amara	Amara	2014	Mollese, Claudia	Un viaggio sulle tracce di un personaggio leggendario nella provincia del sud Italia, la scoperta di una città invisibile, sospesa tra riti di devozione e di trasgressione. Mara è una trans che con la sua storia ha dato scandalo nella città di Lecce dagli anni '50 fino al momento del suo testamento. A tracciarne il ritratto sono i racconti di chi l'ha conosciuta e ha incrociato con le proprie esistenze la sua vita chiacchierata, eccessiva. La voce roca di Lola, quella colta e sensuale di Principessa, quella emozionata di Anna, quella lucida di Vanda intrecciano ai ricordi di Mara il racconto di frammenti delle loro esistenze. Una città nuova al confine tra memoria e desiderio, pubblico e privato, prende così forma, tra processioni di santi, stranieri che attendono lo sgombero dalle loro abitazioni e vicoli che girano su stessi. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/amara">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/amara</a> >
Per tutta la vita	Forever	2014	Nicchiarelli, Susanna	Forty years ago, the referendum on divorce marked a fundamental step in transforming Italian customs and society. Today, this right we take for granted is recounted by couples who were among the first to make use of it. Susanna Nicchiarelli, the director of Cosmonauta and La scoperta dell'alba, with pop cheerfulness and emotional participation, depicts a sentimental and social past that is still close and as up-to-date as ever. < <a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=86469">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=86469</a> >

Torri, checche e tortellini	The Queens Tower	2015	Adriatico, Andrea	<p>In 1982, for the first time in Europe, a government body provided a meeting place for gays. And what a place! It was a 13th-century tower, part of the ancient city wall. The Cassero di Porta Saragozza was one of the most important milestones in the history of the Italian LGBT community. This was also a monumental step for the social evolution of Bologna, traditionally the city of the three "Ts" (torri, tette e tortellini - towers, tits and tortellini). The film shows the main stages which led the city council to make this unusual decision and the activities of Cassero in its early years. These begin from the 80's, and we see the movement change from a revolutionary organisation fighting for rights for gays to an established institution playing a central role in the cultural life of Bologna. Rediscovered photos and videos, performances by drag queens and the history of the organisation told by its protagonists, among them Franco Grillini, Beppe Ramina, Alessandro Fullin and Valérie Taccarelli. And the last president of Cassero, which has now moved to another location: the first president never to have entered the original legendary headquarters.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.loversff.com/GLBT/programma/Indice-A-Z/ca_23582.html?id_film=3947&amp;lan=it&amp;lan=en">http://www.loversff.com/GLBT/programma/Indice-A-Z/ca_23582.html?id_film=3947&amp;lan=it&amp;lan=en</a>&gt;</p>
Scarti	Scraps	2015	Cataleta, Alessandra	<p>Scraps is a documentary feature film made by editing video scraps, part of a not broadcasted shooting footage filmed for an Italian tv documentary series. By telling her way to build a relationship with the characters, the filmmaker reflects on what "ethical approach" means for a storyteller, especially for a storyteller working for Italian television today.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="https://www.riff.it/php/show.php?id=11186">https://www.riff.it/php/show.php?id=11186</a>&gt;</p>

Al di là dello specchio	On the Other Side of the Mirror	2015	Grasso, Cecilia	Eyes Wild Drag is a group of performers and activists who have been staging shows and workshops inside and outside Italy since 2007, to spread the art and culture of the drag king world. They are a combative collective who, among their many initiatives, organized the international festival of queer art Genderotica and a World Tour, which reached the rest of Europe and the United States in 2012. What is the idea behind their shows? All you need is a mirror. As in Alice in Wonderland, you only have to look at yourself in the mirror to leave the dimension you live in and enter a new reality. A reality without borders or rules, where everyone has the chance to be themselves. Thanks to the support of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (Experimental Cinematography Centre) Foundation, director Cecilia Grasso shows us what happens "behind the scenes" from both a professional and a human point of view. < <a href="http://www.lovessff.com/GLBT/programma/Indice-A-Z/ca_23582.html?id_film=4527&amp;lan=en">http://www.lovessff.com/GLBT/programma/Indice-A-Z/ca_23582.html?id_film=4527&amp;lan=en</a> >
Violenza invisibile	Invisible Violence*	2015	Lelli, Silvia and Matilde Gagliardo	Il documentario tratta di varie forme di violenza agite sulle donne, focalizzandosi sulle forme di violenza meno visibili: quelle strutturali, culturali, domestiche, psicologiche, collegandole al contesto socioculturale attuale. Queste forme di violenza sono 'Invisibili' perché nascoste tra le pareti delle case, e perché si celano nell'omertà culturale, nelle abitudini quotidiane, nella discriminazione di genere come 'normalità', tutti elementi che costituiscono il terreno fertile in cui forme di violenza più eclatanti - fisiche, femminicidi - affondano le radici. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/violenzainvisibile">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/violenzainvisibile</a> >
Fuori!	Out!	2015	Luperini, Ilaria and Chiara Tarfano	Fuori! is an episodic documentary, the main characters are well known people from the LGBTQ Italian community. These characters tell stories about themselves in their different Italian cities, from north to south. They meet citizens to talk about common sense and prejudices about homosexuality, rights and their exposure in Italy. < <a href="http://www.siciliaqueerfilmfest.it/sqff/sq-2016/2016-programma/panorama-queer/fuori-chiara-tarfano-ilaria-luperini/">http://www.siciliaqueerfilmfest.it/sqff/sq-2016/2016-programma/panorama-queer/fuori-chiara-tarfano-ilaria-luperini/</a> >



Eco de femmes	Women's Echo	2015	Piccinini, Carlotta	Six women, Zina, Cherifa, Halima, Fatima, Mina and Jamila, who live in the rural areas of Morocco and Tunisia share their dreams and their fight for emancipation through their work. They're connected by a common goal to achieve recognition for their professional identity and gender. They have created farming cooperatives where they combine their ancient knowledge with the development of new products for the local and international markets. < <a href="http://www.carlottapiccinini.com/works/eco-de-femmes/">http://www.carlottapiccinini.com/works/eco-de-femmes/</a> >
Lina Mangiacapre. Artista del femminismo	Lina Mangiacapre. Artist of Feminism	2015	Pizzuti, Nadia	Lina Mangiacapre (1946-2002) left a legacy of paintings, novels, poems, movies and plays, opening new ways for women's freedom. This documentary features stock footage, original drawings and animations shot in Lina Mangiacapre's house and in some zones of Naples < <a href="https://www.openddb.com/movies/lina-mangiacapre/">https://www.openddb.com/movies/lina-mangiacapre/</a> >
Tutte le anime del mio corpo	Every Soul of my Body	2015	Rossi, Erika	After her mother's death, a woman finds her war diary - written during WWII. She had always thought that her father was the resistance hero, but she discovers who her mother really was – a girl who became a partisan -, her intimate thoughts about the meaning of pain and war, and her willingness to take action and fight. The daughter carries the words of the diary as a gift in her everyday life: she is a psychotherapist who cares for foster children. Isn't the woman in the diary the same one that passed down to her the values she believes in? < <a href="http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=98526">http://www.filitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=98526</a> >
Varichina - La vera storia della finta vita di Lorenzo de Santis	Varichina - The True Story of the Fake Life of Lorenzo De Santis	2016	Barbanente, Mariangela and Antonio Palumbo	The astonishing story of the first homosexual in Bari, a town in Apulia, in the south of Italy, in the seventies. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6256768/">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6256768/</a> >

Essere Rossana Rossanda	Being Rossana Rossanda*	2016	Chiaretti, Maria	Un ritratto potente, vivo, forte di Rossana Rossanda, una delle intelligenze più libere, coraggiose e acute del panorama politico e intellettuale italiano, e non solo, dagli anni Sessanta a oggi. Attraverso rarissime immagini d'epoca e cinque faccia a faccia realizzati per l'occasione nella sua casa di Parigi, il film racconta il percorso umano e professionale della "ragazza del secolo scorso", in realtà ancora oggi capace di una preziosa lettura del presente. < <a href="https://www.cinetecamilano.it/film/essere-rossana">https://www.cinetecamilano.it/film/essere-rossana</a> >
Femminismo!	Feminism!	2016	Columba, Paola	Uno sguardo militante sul ruolo della donna. Dalle battaglie femministe degli anni '70 alle ragazze della Youtube generation che spesso si dichiarano "non femministe" ed equiparano il femminismo al maschilismo. Il corpo come strumento per conquistare popolarità, il sesso separato dall'identità, vecchi e nuovi stereotipi, dalla pubblicità alla TV, ai videogames. Mutilazioni sociali, violenza di genere, Pussy Riot e Femen. Le sfide del futuro. Con tante donne: attiviste, politiche, scrittrici, attrici che il Femminismo lo hanno vissuto. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/femminismo">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/femminismo</a> >
Violenza svelata	Revealed Violence*	2016	Lelli, Silvia	Nuove storie quotidiane, mostrano la varietà delle forme di violenza. Il silenzio è il meccanismo che riproduce e perpetua questa violenza endemica. Per questo donne e uomini hanno deciso di raccontarla a piena voce. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/violenzasvelata">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/violenzasvelata</a> >
Anna Piaggi. Una visionaria della moda	A Dreamer in the Fashion World	2016	Marazzi, Alina	Celebrated for her eccentric outfits, and an intimate friend of designers Karl Lagerfeld, Dolce & Gabbana, de Castelbajac, and Manolo Blahnik, Anna Piaggi was the living testament to the connections between art, society, and culture. She changed fashion and helped grow her passion on a global scale. Here is the story of an amazing journalist. (IMDb)
Senza rossetto	Without Lipstick*	2016	Mazzina, Emanuela and Silvana Profeta	Quando nel '46, le donne vanno per la prima volta a votare si raccomanda loro di non mettere il rossetto perché potrebbe sporcare la scheda e renderla nulla. Un progetto sull'immaginario femminile alla vigilia di quelle prime elezioni. < <a href="https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/senzarossetto">https://www.cinemaitaliano.info/senzarossetto</a> >

La mia casa e i miei coinquilini. Il lungo viaggio di Joyce Lussu	My Home and My Neighbours	2016	Piccinini, Marcella	Joyce's house in Fermo, in the Marches, is a house that breathes life, a life that can often be very dramatic, but one that is also steeped in poetry. The period of her exile, with Emilio Lussu, in Paris, the struggle of Sardinian women, the translation of poets who wrote "useful poetry," of the kind that strikes you directly, without needing too many words, the knowledge of other realities and of sentiment. < <a href="https://vimeo.com/202018243">https://vimeo.com/202018243</a> >
La forza delle donne	Women's Strength	2017	Aprati, Laura and Marco Bov	Un viaggio drammatico quanto magico fra le donne, donne che migrano e donne che accolgono, osservate nel loro confronto profondo e disincantato. Uno sguardo su un mondo tutto al femminile: dal Kurdistan al Libano, immortalato nel suo vissuto assolutamente quotidiano della guerra. < <a href="https://www.mymovies.it/film/2018/la-forza-delle-donne/">https://www.mymovies.it/film/2018/la-forza-delle-donne/</a> >
Non é amore questo	This is Not Love	2017	Sala, Teresa	A movie about Barbara. She tells about love and sex. About her childhood and her future, about the search for intimacy, about being a daughter and not a mother. Barbara sheds all of her defenses, and shows herself naked to the audience. Barbara is disabled. Images describe her everyday life. The camera follows her, spies her, caresses her. It never leaves her, becoming almost an obsession, in a quasi-voyeuristic game that gives the impression of peeking through a keyhole. Non è amore questo is an experimental short feature that mixes the language of fiction films with those of documentaries and home movies, and with the narrative structure of epistolary journals. < <a href="https://www.openddb.com/movies/this-is-not-love/">https://www.openddb.com/movies/this-is-not-love/</a> >

Lievito madre. Le ragazze del secolo scorso	Mother Yeast. The Women of the Last Century*	2017	De Gregorio, Concita and Esmeralda Calabria	The questions of the girls of today find answers in the words of the girls of the past century. Lievito madre intertwines three generations, mixing the story of the film's authors with those of the protagonists. From interviews with the main characters of our times, famous or unknown, from our home family movies – us, our mothers and grand mothers – to the interviews with the youngest generation, a story emerges, our story, told with one voice made up of many voices: the mother yeast that created us. Adele Cambria, Giovanna Tedde, Natalia Aspesi, Nada Malanima, Esterina Respizzi, Lea Vergine, Giulia Maria Crespi, Luciana Castellina, Benedetta Barzini, Giovanna Marini, Emma Bonino, Cecilia Mangini, Inge Feltrinelli, Dacia Maraini and Piera Degli Esposti reveal for the first time something very private: something about themselves. < <a href="https://www.labiennale.org/en/cinema/2017/program-cinema-2017/concita-de-gregorio-esmeralda-calabria-lievito-madre-le-ragazze-del-secolo-scorso-0">https://www.labiennale.org/en/cinema/2017/program-cinema-2017/concita-de-gregorio-esmeralda-calabria-lievito-madre-le-ragazze-del-secolo-scorso-0</a> >
Être e durer	To Be and to Last	2017	Mignani, Serena	An Italian mother is dealing with her hyperkinetic son's adolescence. They bump into Parkour and get trapped in its joyous physical routine, until one day a young kid dies jumping off a school's rooftop. The mother leaves to research the discipline's roots and its impact on different cultures, asking scientists and other women to relieve her sense of maternal responsibility. While she travels the world to unveil a philosophical side of Parkour, her son gains his emancipation through the extreme. < <a href="https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6301324/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl">https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6301324/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl</a> >

Normal	Normal	2019	Tulli, Adele	<p>A genre-bending documentary that reflects on how female and male identities are performed in everyday interactions, through a collage of immersive scenes filmed all over Italy. Capturing some of the most iconic moments in people's life, from birth to adulthood, NORMAL reveals how our gender defines us in most of the things we do, affecting our gestures, desires, behaviours, and aspirations. At the gym or at the beach; in a disco or in a church; at funfairs, public parks and beauty centres: NORMAL explores the collective choreographies of gender in ordinary and familiar situations, resulting in a ballet of moving images that depict the events while simultaneously meditating on their significance. Do we live in a world of constant performance? With its open form and contemplative pace, NORMAL offers a riveting experience into the spectacle of gender in everyday life, inviting the audience to question and unravel the very idea of normality.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=120013">http://www.filmitalia.org/p.aspx?t=film&amp;l=en&amp;did=120013</a>&gt;</p>
Io sono femminista!	I am a Feminist!*	2019	Rossano, Teresa	<p>Il femminismo, le lotte, la rivoluzione. Bologna, anni Settanta: i luoghi, le pratiche, le manifestazioni del Marzo. I percorsi e le strade attraversate da donne che lo dicevano ieri e lo dicono oggi con orgoglio: IO SONO FEMMINISTA! Interviste a: Lucia Alessandrini, Gabriella Dalla Ca', Roberta Gavazzi, Manuela Ghesini, Patrizia Gubellini, Benedetta Jandolo, Antonietta Laterza, Anna Lisei, Rossella Marchesini, Anna Orsini, Patrizia Pulga, Sandra Schiassi, Piera Stefanini, Rita Visani.</p> <p>&lt;<a href="https://www.openddb.it/film/io-sono-femminista/">https://www.openddb.it/film/io-sono-femminista/</a>&gt;</p>