Performing Cultures of Equality

Edited by Emilia María Durán-Almarza, Carla Rodríguez González, and Suzanne Clisby

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Chapter 7

Gender-Based Violence and the Performance of Masculinity: A Comparative Analysis of the Documentary Films *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *Serás hombre*

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7 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE PERFORMANCE OF MASCULINITY

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILMS *MA L'AMORE C'ENTRA?* AND *SERÁS HOMBRE*

Orianna Calderón Sandoval and Adelina Sánchez Espinosa

Performativity and Emotionality: Performing Gender-Based Violence and Masculinity in Documentary Cinema

As opposed to aggression, which could be related to survival instinct, violence always implies the conscious will to inflict harm on another and is based on the assumption of an asymmetric power relation, insofar as it implies some form of annihilation of the other as equal (Bernárdez, García, and González 2008, 19). In patriarchal societies, the exercise of violence is inextricably linked with social constructions of masculinity and with the gender inequalities resulting from 'masculine domination' (Bourdieu 2000). Not only are men constantly encouraged to subdue the other, but violence against women has also been legitimised as the instrument for men to correct women's transgressions of gender norms, regardless of how oppressive those norms might be (Lorente Acosta 2001, 167). Consequently, gender-based violence is one of the main issues on feminist agendas all over the world, and the feminist movements in the countries where the films discussed in this chapter have been produced, Italy and Spain, are no exception.[1] For instance, the Italian movement *Non una di meno* ('not one [woman] less') has brought together activists, artists, journalists, and academics to demand a stop to violence against women.[2] On November 25, 2017, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, this movement organised a demonstration in Rome where they launched a 'Feminist Plan Against Male and Gender Violence'. Their position is that violence is systemic—that is, individual violent episodes are part of a larger structure of violence based on entrenched behaviours connected with the social construction of the so-called 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Therefore, laws are necessary but represent only a small part of a more

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comprehensive approach which needs to operate at all levels of cultural (re)production, including education and the media. In the Spanish context, the implementation in 2004 of the Organic Law for Measures on Integral Protection against Gender Violence was a legal landmark which crystallised decades of feminist fighting.[3] This law, nevertheless, has its lights and shadows since the toll of gender-based violence has not been reduced and there are not enough material resources allocated to its actual implementation (Bernárdez, García, and González 2008, 11). The law certainly marked a growing interest in the mainstream media to expose cases of gender-based violence. However, as feminist thinkers (Navarrete, Ruido, and Vila 2005; Bernárdez, García, and González 2008; Villaplana Ruiz 2008) have highlighted, this interest has often meant a superficial appropriation of feminist discourses, representing women as fearful and dependent beings who can only overcome what is portrayed as an exceptional, extreme situation if they receive protection and assistance from others. Thus, the State and the media present themselves as experts in the subject at the expense of women's representation as 'assisted and subsidised victims' (Navarrete, Ruido, and Vila 2005, 161). Additionally, the hyper representation in the mass media of only the most brutal manifestations of gender violence renders women's subordination invisible at almost all levels within a system in which physical violence is one of the many manifestations of a much larger structural problem (Bernárdez, García, and González 2008, 33).

In opposition to such portraits of gender-based violence in the mass media, the directors of our two case studies, Elisabetta Lodoli and Isabel de Ocampo, propose a different approach: to place the focus on men as perpetrators, analysing the interrelation between the performance of hegemonic masculinity and the (re)production of gender-based violence. In her now classical study *Masculinities* (1995), Raewyn Connell identified two patterns in the connection between the performance of masculinity in a patriarchal society and the exercise of violence:

> First, many members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance. Intimidation of women ranges across the spectrum from wolf-whistling in the street, to office harassment, to rape and domestic assault, to murder by a woman's patriarchal 'owner', such as a separated husband. . . . Second, violence becomes important in gender politics among men. Most episodes of major violence (counting military combat, homicide and armed assault) are transactions among men. (2005, 83)

According to Connell, these patterns are held and reproduced through four paradigms of masculinity in patriarchy: hegemonic, subordinated, complicit, and marginalised. 'Hegemonic masculinity' is not fixed but contingent in that it occupies 'the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable' (76). It manages to present itself as legitimate due to a correspondence between cultural practices

and institutional power so that, for instance, men from the top levels of business, the military, and the government convincingly claim their authority without having to employ direct violence. Hegemonic masculinity also defines itself in opposition to 'subordinate masculinity', which is embodied by certain homosexual men. Subordination comes from the association of gayness with femininity, such that effeminate heterosexual men are also 'expelled from the circle of legitimacy' (79). 'Complicit masculinity' is performed by the majority of men who, without meeting the normative standards of hegemonic masculinity, 'benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women' (79). And finally, 'marginalised masculinity' refers to the differences between men due to other structures of inequality such as race and class. More recently, transfeminist philosopher Sayak Valencia has reflected on how certain marginalised masculinities resort to direct violence in an attempt to achieve hegemonic masculinity. She calls them '*endriago* subjects' (2010, 90).[4] Within a context of structural violence, where living a desirable life becomes the privilege of a few and hyper-consumerism leads to the frustration of many, *endriago* subjects, in a perverse reinterpretation of entrepreneurial freedom, resort to violent mechanisms in order to transcend their own victimisation. And in so doing, they become victimisers themselves, by violating laws while maintaining absolute obedience to the demands of the market, to their (male) bosses, and to the dictates of hegemonic masculinity.

The documentary films we discuss in the next sections critically explore this interrelation between gender-based violence and the performance of masculinity. Our proposal is to analyse how the aforementioned typology of masculinities is displayed in these films by paying attention to the performative and affective dimensions of documentary cinema. The 'performative' and 'performance' are understood following the interpretations by Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 2015) and Stella Bruzzi (2000). As for the affective dimensions of cinema, we rely on Ilona Hongisto (2015), Anneke Smelik (2007), and Sara Ahmed (2004, 2014).

Elaborating on JL Austin's concept of 'performativity' as a way to refer 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, Judith Butler explains that one becomes a woman or a man by means of repeated acts which, like performative utterances, depend on social conventions and bring about our becoming one gender or the other. Importantly, rather than something we can freely choose, this repetition is regulated by power dynamics:

> Performativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms. . . . This iterability implies that 'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat

> of ostracism and even death controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not, I will insist, determining it fully in advance.
> (Butler 1993, 95)

The moment we are born we are forced to enact the gender that we are assigned. Something, however, might go 'awry' or queer in such enactment, thus opening up possibilities for change. Butler points 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, these deviations from gender norms are often punished rather than celebrated. She also points out that they are also linked with unequal distributions of vulnerability: 'those who do not live their genders in intelligible ways are at heightened risk for harassment, pathologisation, and violence' (34). Gender performativity theory is at the basis of Butler's discussion of Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning* (1991), which portrays the African-American, Latino, gay, and transgender communities involved in the drag balls of New York City during the 1980s. Butler asserts that this documentary manages to render gender performativity visible through the drag figure (1993, 125), while also exposing the fact that deviation from the norm is penalised, as the different fates of two of the main characters show—that is, the murder of Venus Xtravaganza, whose performance fails to pass as that of a light-skinned woman, and the commercial success of Willi Ninja, who passes as a straight man. Similarly, the patriarchal system rewards the successful performance of hegemonic masculinity, while failure to perform gender norms by subordinate or marginal masculinities is usually punished.

While Butler's analysis focuses mainly on the contents of the documentary she discusses, Stella Bruzzi, a film studies scholar, has developed an understanding of the form and production process of documentary cinema as performative. Bruzzi claims that the truth of documentary cinema 'comes into being only at the moment of filming' (2000, 7). She argues against classic and mainstream ideas of authenticity that rely on unmediated transparency and lack of intervention from the filmmaker. Instead, she thinks that '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' (8). Building on Bruzzi and on Butler, we propose here that performativity can help us reflect on the power of documentary 'to bring about a new situation or to set into motion a set of effects' (Butler 2015, 28). We consider it useful to bring into this conversation the affective dimension of documentary cinema, since as Ilona Hongisto has argued, 'moments of affection' (2015, 107) might be those at which 'change or transformation through affect' (104) occurs. Hongisto, a film studies scholar who specialises in the ethics and aesthetics of documentary cinema, uses the term

'moments of affection' to refer to 'ruptures and breakpoints where transformation can begin' (137) or encounters 'between a documentary work that depicts bodies at the throes of potential—in a state of becoming—and the ways in which the film in question facilitates the viewers' tapping into the bodies' passages from one experiential state to another' (103). Hongisto's performative approach changes the ethical stakes of documentary cinema 'from producing accurate and authentic representations to creatively contributing to the transformability of actual beings in the real' (12). For new materialist methodologies, a key to understanding how this transformation might happen is to be found in affective flows. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed, an intersectional feminist scholar, proposes emotionality as a tool to describe 'how texts are "moving", or how they generate effects . . . [and] the way in which texts name or perform different emotions' (2014, 13). She explores 'how emotions work to shape the "surfaces" of individual and collective bodies' (1) in various texts, by taking a specific emotion as a point of entry. She approaches emotions as 'effects rather than origins' (196) but asserts that emotions also have performative effects, since they repeat past associations in 'generating their object' (32). While challenging the idea that emotions are located in the text or in any specific place or subject, Ahmed pays attention to how the very acts of naming emotions produce such emotions as effects: 'the different words for emotion do different things precisely because they involve specific orientations towards the objects that are identified as their cause' (13). Therefore, with emotionality as her methodological tool, she tracks 'how words for feeling, and objects of feeling, circulate and generate effects: how they move, stick, and slide' (14). Anneke Smelik has also highlighted the importance of emotion and affect for contemporary film studies where the main question has moved from what a film means to what a film does (2007, 190). Similar to Hongisto's 'moments of affection', Smelik identifies 'moments of becoming' in cinema—that is, affirmative moments 'of resistance, of change, of escaping from an identity that imprisons us' (191). These moments, she argues, are those at which spectators can establish an affective relationship with the film.

Moving from the above considerations to our specific case studies, we pose the following questions: how do affects and emotions work in and through gender-based violence so as to generate performances of masculinity? How could specific 'moments of affection' or 'becoming' open up possibilities for restoration and change, thus performing cultures of gender equality? In the next two sections, we try to find answers to these questions. We first summarise the documentary films *Ma l'amore c'entra* (Lodoli 2017) and *Serás hombre* (de Ocampo 2018). Then, with hate and anger as our entry points, we close-read selected scenes from each film. We incorporate opinions expressed by Lodoli and de Ocampo themselves, as well as reactions from audiences attending screenings of these films.[5]

Ma l'amore c'entra?: Male Anger and Violence in the Promise of Happiness

The director of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* (*Is It About Love?*), Elisabetta Lodoli, was unsure about making a film about gender-based violence because she was tired of the victimising gaze on women from mass media. She had directed *Stolica* (*Chair*, 2013) 20 years after the end of the Bosnian War, and it was a question from a woman in the audience after a screening of the film that made her turn her gaze towards perpetrators. The woman asked Lodoli if she had never thought of interviewing those who had inflicted violence on others: 'it is always the victims speaking and we don't get to understand the reasons for such evil. And above all, these people escape their responsibility in some way'.[6] Lodoli then decided that 'it was certainly more interesting to have men speak at this point'.[7] She approached the making of *Ma l'amore c'entra?* as a research project, trying to understand the connections between masculinity and gender-based violence. She did not attempt to judge her filmed subjects. She simply wanted to grasp the origins of gender violence in heterosexual romantic relationships: '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'.[8]

Ma l'amore c'entra? presents the testimonies of three men who committed violent acts against their female partners. Their voices join four other narrative strands in the film: shots of domestic interiors, Emilia-Romagna landscapes, found footage, and domestic objects on a theatre stage. Each testimony starts with the description of the violent act they committed followed by the men's reflections upon arriving at the Modena-based *Liberiamoci dalla violenza* Centre (LDV; 'Let's Free Ourselves from Violence'). The psychologists working in this centre provide guidance for men who have committed violent acts against their partners and who want to change. The protagonists' faces are never shown and, as we discover at the end of the film, they are actors performing as the real men who were interviewed by Lodoli. A precedent of re-enacted interviews in feminist documentary cinema can be found in Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989), in which 'natural' interviews are combined with staged interviews conducted as performances, 'to call attention to the politics of interviews, and to set into relief the manipulations that tend to be taken for granted in documentary' (Minh-ha 1992, 165). In *Ma l'amore c'entra?* we never see the 'real' interviews, since the men involved asked to remain anonymous. While we see re-enacted interviews by three actors who are presented as if they were the actual characters, hidden in shadows or behind panes of etched glass, the actions they describe are never re-enacted. Rather, Lodoli shows empty everyday spaces in which these 'normal' individuals—as opposed to the stereotype of violent men as monsters—carry out their lives: their homes, streets, and the countryside.

The editing of the film combines the performed interviews with archival footage that helps reconstruct the sociocultural context in which the testimonies are inscribed. The sequences with the domestic objects on a theatre stage highlight the contrast between the pretended security of home and the violence that takes place there. They produce an uncanny atmosphere which mainly operates at an affective level: against a tense musical background, shots of broken plates, hanging knives, and flickering light bulbs on a dark stage are presented at a fast pace with repetitions and jump cuts. Lodoli co-produces the reality she films: the 'real' testimonies collected at the beginning of the production process end up generating a performance staged for the purpose of her filming.

We would now like to direct our attention to how affects and emotions work in the performances of masculinity and gender-based violence in the film. As such, we aim at exploring how certain 'moments of affection' could open up possibilities for change, thus performing cultures of gender equality. Hate and anger are the affects named throughout the film: as the origins of the violent acts, as emotions experienced when the three men were witnesses of violence, and as feelings directed towards themselves for having been unable to control their violent outbursts. Therefore, we take those emotions as our entry points into the testimonies of two of the characters. At the end of this section, we describe what we consider possible moments of affection or becoming for the characters and for the audience.

The first testimony is that of Giorgio, who describes himself as a righteous man: 'I have a strong sense of justice' (Lodoli 2017, 00:14:25) he asserts and tries to justify his violent temperament arguing genetics and ethics.[9] What he identifies as the origin of his anger is feminism. He openly blames women's liberation movements for male violence. His criticism of 'rebellious' women, rather than his recognition of men's responsibility for their own violence, echoes the sexist belief that feminism is 'the origin of bad feeling' (Ahmed 2010, 65). Ahmed coins the expression 'feminist killjoy' to describe this identification of feminists with the cause of unhappiness: 'Any deviation from gender roles defined in terms of women being trained to make men happy is a deviation from the happiness of all' (55). Giorgio's reasoning is also in line with the ways in which patriarchy has strived to legitimise violence against women as a rightful way for men to force them to follow gender norms (Lorente Acosta 2001, 167). In the scene we hear Giorgio's voice-over while we see archival footage showing a girl and a boy: he plays with a gun and she kisses a doll. The voice-over of the girl normalises female submission: 'little girls have to say "yes, Sir little boy" to the little boys going to war' (Lodoli 2017, 00:30:55). As Giorgio complains about the 'brashness and arrogance' (00:32:07) that women have begun to show since the 1970s and argues that 'the phenomenon of violence exists because women have started to compete with men' (00:32:31), 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 stand out. This juxtaposition of testimonies and archival footage renders gender performativity visible—that is, 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 testimony of Luca, the origin of anger is located in the unfulfilled promise of the happy housewife. Ahmed has traced the genealogy of the 'fantasy figure' of the happy housewife (2010, 50) and has discussed how happiness has been used to keep women compliant with patriarchy, sustaining an unequal gender division of labour. One of her references is the 1762 work *Emile* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, where he maintains that women should only receive education in order to become good housewives: 'For Rousseau the good woman has a duty to keep the family together, to preserve the integrity of its form. . . . It is women's duty to keep happiness in house' (55). Another one of her references is to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), in which the frustration and anger behind the illusion of the happy American housewife is exposed.

We first listen to Luca's description of his violent act as we see wide shots of buildings at night. He argues that his violence erupted after seeing his wife being violent 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, . . . seeing my partner's violence' (Lodoli 2017, 00:11:14). As Ahmed explains, certain affects stick to certain bodies (2010, 4): while men's anger outbursts are normalised, women's anger explosions are demonised. The latter becomes clearer later on in Luca's testimony. This time we see archival footage of families at the beach as we listen to Luca admitting that he longs for 'a beautiful family . . . This desire I have for the cookie cutter family, the perfect family' (00:40:58). When his partner fails to meet these stereotypes and, what is more, when she claims that anger is what she feels in the domestic sphere, Luca feels legitimised to resort to violence so as to bring her back to the correct 'gendered script' (Ahmed 2010, 59).

Nevertheless, between the lines of these toxic testimonies, we can also identify 'moments of affection' at which a possibility of 'affirmation and becoming' (Smelik 2007, 191) outside the framework of hegemonic masculinity could take place for both characters onscreen and those watching them. Each of the three men completed a therapeutic programme at the LDV Centre, which *Ma l'amore c'entra?* reflects accurately. As LDV psychologist Giorgio Penuti asserted at the film premiere at Bologna's MAST Foundation in February 2018:

> The path of change is an act of courage. . . . It forces [the perpetrators of domestic violence] to look inside themselves, which they are not used to, discovering something that is really disturbing. They discover how much they have invested on their partner in a phantasmatic way,

> pretending that the woman would adapt to their needs. . . . We work with them to give them hope.[10]

Ahmed has warned that merely transforming so-called 'bad feeling into good feeling' (2014, 193) does not mean that inequalities and damage get repaired. What could be useful for enabling the performance of cultures of equality is that the film creates a space for men on both sides of the screen to reflect on their emotions and behaviours in connection with the perpetuation or eradication of an unequal system. This might lead them to a breakpoint 'where transformation can begin' (Hongisto 2015, 137). Giorgio describes this awareness as being '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' (Lodoli 2017, 00:46:31). Luca makes fun of the fact that his wife now calls him 'Father Pio'. This reveals that he is haunted by his former identity as a violent man and also that he is consciously fighting this identity: 'Father Pio is ironic, seeing someone who used to be the devil and now offers his hand for help. . . . I don't stir up the conflict, I try to mediate' (00:47:44).

Another interesting comment after the film premiere in Bologna was made by journalist Paolo di Paolo. He said that the emotion he felt while watching the film was embarrassment:

> How is it possible that we men, we human beings do not find the words to talk about this violence? Because this embarrassment which does concern my gender, as a male, was something I had to look in the face, to ask myself what I could say. . . . 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.[11]

Even though the film only partially manages to ask its subjects to be accountable for their actions (since they use the screen mainly to justify their actions, even blaming their partners), di Paolo's experience of spectatorship indeed demanded response-ability from him. Another spectator, psychoanalyst Massimo Recalcati, asserted that though laws are no longer permissive towards gender violence, decades of patriarchal order have nurtured many of the traits embedded in gender norms. He also responded to the question raised by the title of the film: despite the cliché, 'love doesn't have anything to do' with gender-based violence.[12]

Serás hombre: The Anger of Marginalised Masculinity and Violence in Gore Capitalism

After having portrayed women as victims of sex trafficking in her fiction films *Miente* (2008) and *Evelyn* (2012), director Isabel de Ocampo thought that a change of strategy could help her connect better with male audiences. Thus, in 2013 she started the production of *Serás hombre*

(*You'll Be a Man*), a documentary film intended to convey the message that gender-based violence involves men as either perpetrators or partners in crime and it is, therefore, a men's problem in the first place (Calderón Sandoval 2019). Along similar lines to the feminist critiques mentioned earlier in this chapter (Navarrete, Ruido, and Vila 2005; Bernárdez, García, and González 2008; Villaplana Ruiz 2008), de Ocampo disapproves of the ways in which mass media and governmental representations tend to victimise and blame women:

> Concerning the fight against gender violence in Spain, right now, we are at that preschool stage of 'it's your fault, woman'. The responsibility for getting away from gender-based violence is yours in that you have to report it to the police. But the discourse should actually 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 poking your finger into a wound, digging around in the dirt of a subconscious in which men don't want to deal with their own education.[13]
>
> (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 339)

This is the reasoning behind her decision to explore the relation between gender-based violence and the construction of masculinity within a patriarchal framework, placing particular emphasis on sex trafficking. This is also why she decided to interview male experts only and to have men as her main film subjects.

In order to promote empathy from her spectators, de Ocampo supplements talking-head format interviews with four narrative strands which are closer to those of fiction films embodied by more developed characters. Hence, two characters are presented with an arc—that is, as experiencing a transformation over the course of the film: an ex-pimp—Rafa—and a performance artist—Abel. The other two strands are discussion sequences: a high school class and a meeting in an advertising agency. Rafa's arc is one of repentance, moving from training newbie pimps to claiming that he will destroy the sex-trafficking network that he himself built. The core of Abel's arc is the search for his father who was a client of his mother, a drug-addicted prostitute. He describes this as 'a process of denunciation' (de Ocampo 2018, 00:52:53), not as an act of reunion, completion, or empathy, thus subverting a patriarchal narrative in which finding the father and achieving masculinity in so doing would be the ultimate goal. The sequences of the advertising agency meeting show a group of marketing experts discussing the design of a campaign against gender-based violence (00:46:40) while the sequences of the high school class focus on fatherhood (00:36:18). The interviews with experts are interweaved through the rest of the sequences.

De Ocampo's strategy to present only male voices as valid could be interpreted as, paraphrasing Audre Lorde's famous phrase, using the master's tools to dismantle the master's house (Lorde 2007). However, the

results of her decision are controversial. The men in *Serás hombre* come across as authority figures: at the end of the day, they are white European middle-class men placed in settings that highlight their epistemological superiority. In this regard, one particularly problematic sequence is that where Pol Galofre, a trans activist, talks about his experience. His testimony is intended to convey a different approach to masculinity, one that challenges biological essentialism. Nevertheless, the editing interweaves his testimony with philosopher Joan Melich's transphobic reading of transsexuality in the following terms: '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 or think that way' (de Ocampo 2018, 00:28:52). Thus, instead of complementing each other, the putting together of the two testimonies ends up reproducing a hierarchy where the academic expert seems to understand the trans experience better than the trans person.

The performative element in *Serás hombre* is mainly related to the film's capturing of 'the performance of reality' (Bruzzi 2000, 123) in the sequences with the most developed narrative plots. These sequences, Rafa's and Abel's arcs, are interesting examples of performances of masculinity and their being recorded within a documentary format allows for a closer examination. As with *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, our main focus is on how affects and emotions work in the performances of masculinity and gender-based violence, as well as the possibilities opened up by certain 'moments of affection' towards the performance of gender equality. We take hate and anger as our entry points, since those are, once again, the dominant affects in the portraits of Rafa and Abel.

The opening sequence in Rafa's arc is his training of newbie pimps. We are shown shots of a sordid brothel office where Rafa is talking to a young procurer advising him to see women as money if he wants to make it big in the sex trafficking business (de Ocampo 2018, 00:03:35). This argument is pervaded by what Sayak Valencia has called 'gore capitalism': the economics of globalisation in areas where predatory exploitation is part of the logic of the market (2010, 15). Gore capitalism is sustained by a rigid construction of gender and, especially, by the exercise of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic, violent, masculinity is nurtured by the hatred towards the feminine which lies at the heart of patriarchy. As gender violence expert Miguel Lorente Acosta explains in the film: 'culture establishes that being a man is not being a woman' (de Ocampo 2018, 00:05:05). Women are regarded as radical others against whom men desperately try to differentiate themselves. Moreover, they are dehumanised, turned into exchange objects whose worth depends on how they are exploited in men's paths, as Rafa's attitude and behaviour demonstrate at the start of his arc. Women are what he sells in order to become a successful and proud 'businessman of the night' (00:11:10). Therefore, the origin of Rafa's hate and anger is precisely the failure to become such a successful embodiment of hegemonic

masculinity. In an eloquent sequence, Rafa asks the newbie why he wants to become a pimp, to which he replies:

> I don't want to be a sheep in a company, 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 such [sic] bad 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.[14] (01:03:58)

These words provide a clear picture of Sayak Valencia's '*endriago* subjects' (2010, 90). Unable to embody hegemonic masculinity, in this case due to their social class and failure to fulfil the male provider patriarchal role, these marginalised masculinities resort to extreme violence as a tool for empowerment and capital acquisition. Structural violence and social inequalities, with gender inequality at its core, create the scenario for these frustrated men to transfer their hatred from the exploitative system of gore capitalism towards women who are turned into objects of consumption and exchange. When we interviewed de Ocampo, she revealed that the aforementioned scenes were staged performances of what Rafa used to do as a pimp. She had met Rafa in 2010, during the pre-production of her fiction film *Evelyn*. To her surprise, on contacting him again in 2016, he told her that he was no longer working in prostitution and that he regretted having done so in the past. Still, they decided to set up these scenes so audiences could get a glimpse of the hell of sex trafficking. Towards the second half of *Serás hombre*, Rafa claims to have undergone a transformation and expresses regret and remorse for having done so much harm to the women he trafficked.

Nevertheless, Rafa's violent ego re-emerges intact in the last sequence. After developing Rafa's and Abel's arcs separately, the director brings them together for the denouement of the documentary. When Rafa, invited by Abel to one of his performances, doesn't turn up, de Ocampo suggests Abel should visit Rafa at the nightclub that used to be his brothel. It is interesting to see Rafa being intimidated by Abel's questioning and portrayed, for the first and only moment in the film, as vulnerable (de Ocampo 2018, 01:21:20). The tension between them escalates as their encounter moves forward, eventually becoming a masculinity performance contest. At the bar counter, Rafa starts explaining how the business works by pointing at bottles of different sizes and prices: 'A woman is this, she is a bottle and gives me money. . . . We have the clients. This is the waiter. I am this one. And above me, the government social policies' (01:23:45). Rafa then starts justifying himself, arguing that he was being manipulated and asks Abel if he had ever tried to commit suicide, to which Abel replies that he has. Rafa tells him that he has shot himself twice. Finally, in a brutal performance

of his dominant masculinity, Rafa asks for a billiard cue and smashes all the bottles, proudly saying: 'Now it's me who wants to destroy all this' (01:26:19). Abel hugs him and explains that, despite all his qualms and complaints, he respects him for what he has just done. Abel ends up, therefore, performing a complicit type of masculinity that ultimately celebrates Rafa's arrogant way of claiming his role as the boss.

What becomes evident in this sequence is that they are both trapped by a patriarchal construction of hegemonic masculinity, based on competition and the concealment of one's vulnerabilities. This behaviour, along with Rafa's paternalistic and victimising tone when talking about women in the film, casts doubt on his repentance. As a female spectator from a focus group organised by de Ocampo before the premiere puts it: 'Of course, this man Rafa, what he says, he is an enormous liar. He tells you what he wants you to hear. He is such a manipulator'.[15] The main concern shared by several viewers was that this final sequence ended up reinforcing hegemonic masculinity rather than the opposite. Consequently, this cannot be considered a 'moment of affection' for change to take place.[16]

There are moments in the film, however, when we can envision possibilities for transformation as is the case with the high school class sequence. The teacher dismantles gender stereotypes and elicits other ways of understanding what being a man could mean. The models of masculinity that the film offers as alternatives to those that are violent are indeed those of this teacher and the father he invites to his class. The latter arrives with his two-year-old daughter and answers questions about his experience of fatherhood. De Ocampo describes this sequence as luminous and tender: 'He gave us a beautiful history lesson. You could understand the extent to which kids inherit prejudices and preconceived ideas'.[17] As part of the GRACE research project, Orianna Calderón Sandoval carried out participant observation in the shooting of this sequence in June 2016. The crew, especially the gaffer, a man in his 30s, showed interest in the teacher's lesson and, once the shooting was over, approached him with questions. The students also expressed curiosity about the content of the 'fake' class during a shooting break. It is in this sense that we can verify that the very action of making this film co-created a space for discussion and reflection, 'a moment of affection and becoming', for those involved on either side of the camera. After a screening organised at the University of Granada in 2018, a female professor of Gender Studies praised the potential of this sequence:

> The teacher is a hymn to hope. . . . To see [the adolescents] in the classroom is to imagine them within an exciting chain of values: pupils and students breaking out of their stereotyped boxes and learning from the teacher as coeducator and as a committed and sensible man.[18]

In the focus group and at the private screening of *Serás hombre* most reactions concentrated on Rafa as a character and the violent, though also

fascinating and charismatic, type of masculinity he performs. It was interesting to realise, however, that some other spectators, though admitting the importance of exposing hegemonic masculinities, chose to pay more attention to the other masculinities shown by the film: men, like the teacher, who construct themselves on their awareness of gender politics and against the inequalities that sustain male privileges.

Final Thoughts: Performing Cultures of Gender Equality with Documentary Cinema

In their exploration of the connections between the performance of hegemonic masculinities and gender-based violence, *Ma l'amore c'entra?* and *Serás hombre* manage to set into motion three ways of performing cultures of gender equality. The first is Lodoli's and de Ocampo's response to mainstream representations of gender-based violence which tend to focus on the most brutal expressions of violence, portraying women as vulnerable victims who need to be protected, thus allowing men to escape their responsibility while also rendering invisible the structural inequality which sustains the whole system. What these directors do to counter these biased depictions is to turn their gaze towards men, asking them to be accountable for the roles they play in the perpetuation of gender-based violence.

The second way in which these films contribute to building cultures of gender equality is by means of their representation of intimate journeys through the affects and emotions connected with the (de)construction of masculinity. Their attention is directed towards how patriarchal constructions of masculinity have privileged men at the expense of women, resulting in the use of violence against the latter in order to keep gender norms intact. In both films, anger and hate are at the basis of the violent performances of hegemonic masculinity on display. What the characters name as the origin or object of their anger and hate is precisely their failure to fulfil gender norms. In *Ma l'amore c'entra?*, men try to explain their violent outbursts as responses to challenges to their idealised images of femininity and family life, while the men in *Serás hombre* try to justify their violence as attempts at embodying an idealised image of hegemonic masculinity. In both cases, therefore, gender-based violence is directly linked to the prevalence of toxic gendered performances.

While happiness is exposed as problematic, both films do open up possibilities for hope through moments of affection or becoming where opportunities for transformation are envisioned. This is the third way in which the performance of cultures of equality is set into motion. In Lodoli's film we follow the characters' therapeutic process as they delve into their emotions and embrace a much-needed change. As for de Ocampo's film, a gender equality perspective on education is proposed as the main arena for transformation. In short, as we have suggested in this chapter, paying attention to the affective and performative dimensions of documentary films like

Ma l'amore c'entra? and *Serás hombre* does indeed help us understand that the eradication of gender-based violence is inescapably linked to a different performance of masculinity, one that does not legitimise itself by means of exploitation and dominance.

Notes

1. The choice of a Spanish and an Italian case study firstly stemmed from our work package being based at the Universities of Granada and Bologna. The pertinence of the comparative analysis lies on the fact that both films were produced and released during the same time span (2016–2018), in south-European countries with a similar type of hegemonic masculinity, as well as with long-standing feminist movements in which gender-based violence is a hot topic of the current agenda.
2. Originally called *Ni una menos* in Argentina, where it was created in March 2015. For more information on the Italian branch, see also Tomasso Trillò's discussion of this movement in Chapter 6 in this volume.
3. The 'Ley Orgánica de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género' establishes a series of measures that range from supporting victims in labour matters to the creation of centres which would cover measures related to security, justice, education, and health.
4. The *endriago* monster is a literary character that combines human features with those of a hydra and a dragon. It is one of the monsters killed by the protagonist of *Los quatro libros del Uirtuoso cauallero Amadis de Gaula* (Rodríguez de Montalvo 1508), an influential chivalric romance novel in Hispanic letters.
5. This data was collected through interviews and fieldwork carried out as part of the GRACE project.
6. 'Parlano sempre solo le vittime, allora noi non capiamo le ragioni del male. E soprattutto, queste persone sfuggono in qualche modo alla loro responsabilità' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 643). All interviews cited in this chapter were carried out by Orianna Calderón Sandoval and all translations from these interviews are ours.
7. 'Sicuramente era più interessante far parlare gli uomini a questo punto' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 643).
8. 'Capire, appunto, che cosa passava nella loro testa, quali erano le loro storie di vita, perché erano arrivati a quel punto lì' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 645).
9. The language spoken in the film is Italian, with English subtitles. We use these subtitles as sources for the quotations.
10. > Il percorso di cambiamento è un atto di coraggio. . . . 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. . . . lavoriamo con loro per dargli speranza.
    >
    > (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 650)

    All translations from the cited screenings are ours.
11. > Ho pensato è possibile che noi uomini, noi esseri umani non troviamo le parole per commentare questa violenza? Perché questo imbarazzo che invece questo si è di genere, di me come maschio, era qualcosa che dovevo guardare in faccia, che cosa posso dire io. . . . 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.
>
> (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 651)

12. 'No, l'amore non c'entra' (in Caruso 2018).
13. > 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.
    >
    > (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 339)
14. The language spoken in the film is Spanish, with English subtitles. We use these subtitles as sources for the quotations.
15. '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' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 394). This focus group was organised by de Ocampo in Madrid with both of us and fifteen friends of hers on June 9, 2018. The informal discussion was led by de Ocampo.
16. We might argue, however, that these sequences could spark change among certain spectators through a different mechanism closer to what Jose Esteban Muñoz defines as 'dis-affection' or 'dis-identification' (1999).
17. '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' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 381).
18. 'El maestro es otro canto a la esperanza. . . . 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' (in Calderón Sandoval 2019, 404).

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