

# Dissecting fear, politicising rage. Spanish feminist documentaries against rape culture<sup>1</sup>

*Disecionar el miedo, politizar la rabia. Documentales feministas españoles contra la cultura de la violación*

# 2

ARTICLE



## Elena Oroz

University Carlos III of Madrid (UC3M)

PhD Assistant Professor at Carlos III University of Madrid (UC3M) in the Department of Communication and Media Studies. Member of the TECMERIN research group and of the Spanish Film University Institute at UC3M. Her areas of study are documentary, Spanish cinema and feminist film theory. She is the author of more than 20 book chapters and articles published in academic journals and, among others, she has co-edited the books *Lo personal es político. Documental y Feminismo/The Personal is Political. Documental y Feminism* (Government of Navarra, 2011) and *Entrevistas con creadoras del cine español contemporáneo. Millones de cosas por hacer* (Peter Lang, 2021). She is a member of the association *Mujeres y Cine. MYC* and the Latin American Women's Audiovisual Research Network (RAMA).

elortega@hum.uc3m.es

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9535-8395>

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### Abstract

This article addresses three Spanish feminist documentaries that, embedded in current social and political debates, deal with sexual violence against women: *Nagore* (Helena Taberna, 2010), *Tódalas mulleres que coñezo* (All the Women I Know, Xiana do Teixeiro, 2018) and

*La cosa vuestra* (It's Your Thing, María Cañas, 2018). The contribution analyses the formal strategies employed to deconstruct rape myths and their impact on the gendered regulation of public space. It also reflects how these films promote affective solidarity as a basis for collective feminist politics.

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## KEYWORDS

Feminism, documentary, Spanish cinema, rape culture, affective solidarity

## Resumen

Este artículo examina tres documentales feministas españoles que, insertos en actuales debates sociales y políticos, abordan la violencia sexual contra las mujeres: *Nagore* (Helena Taberna, 2010), *Tódalas mulleres que coñezo* (Xiana do Teixeiro, 2018) y *La cosa vuestra* (María Cañas, 2018). Se analizan las estrategias formales

empleadas para deconstruir los mitos que sustentan la cultura de la violación y su impacto en la articulación del espacio público en clave de género. Igualmente, se reflexiona sobre cómo estas obras promueven una solidaridad afectiva para articular una política feminista colectiva.

## PALABRAS CLAVE:

Feminismo, documental, cine español, cultura de la violación, solidaridad afectiva.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term rape culture has gained notable popularity in academia, activism and the media for growing feminist online content (Mendes, 2015; Keller *et al.*, 2016; Phillips, 2018) and specifically as a response to sexual violence against women, through transnational campaigns such as the SlutWalk movement (2011), the #MeToo (2017) or the viralization of the performance *A Rapist in Your Path* by *LasTesis* (2019).

In the recent debate on sexual violence in Spain, no case has been as relevant as that of *La Manada* (The Wolf Pack). The gang rape of an 18-year-old woman during the *San Fermín* festivities in 2016 shook Spanish society, received unprecedented international coverage and opened a broad legislative debate, also triggered by feminist mobilisations against its coverage and controversial judicial process. In the first sentence, handed down by the Court of Navarra on 26 April 2018, the defendants were convicted of sexual abuse, but not of rape, arguing that there was no physical violence or intimidation. On that day, rallies were held across

the country to show support for the victim. The banners and slogans - with their correlates on social media - challenged many of the rape myths, such as the questioning of the victim's testimony ("Sister, I believe you") or the scrutiny of female behaviour ("Alone, drunk, I want to go home!"). The existence of a feminist community was also emphasised ("This is our pack") and the judicial system was challenged ("It's not abuse, it's rape", "Patriarchal justice").

These demonstrations are evidence of the current momentum of feminism in Spain and its mobilizing capacity, mainly around abortion and violence (Campillo, 2019; Abrisketa and Abrisketa, 2020; Moreno and Camps, 2020; Gómez Nicolau *et al.*, 2021). The *La Manada* case also demonstrates how women-led movements have contributed to legally redefining rape (Freeman, 2013).

Although the first sentence was appealed and the Supreme Court ruled that the facts fell under sexual assault, in parallel to this appeal, most parties committed to a legislative change on the terms harassment, abuse and rape

(Abrisketa and Abrisketa, 2020). In September 2022, the Law on the Comprehensive Guarantee of Sexual Freedom, known as the “only yes is yes” law, was passed, based on consensus in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, ratified by Spain in 2014. Shortly after coming into force, this law has proved to be highly controversial, as sentences have been revised, in some cases benefiting convicted offenders, which has led to heated accusations about its possible inconsistencies or sexist interpretations by the judiciary. At the time of writing, the debate on its reform is still open. Despite legal advances and increased social sensitivity, it seems clear that the approach to sexual violence continues to generate controversy and is an issue on which parties shape their agendas. Moreover, there is no univocal position from the Spanish feminist movement either (Alabao, 2022).

In this context, and with the aim of inserting them into public debates, this article focuses on three Spanish feminist documentaries that examine rape culture: *Nagore* (Helena Taberna, 2010), *Tódalas mulleres que coñezo* – All the Women I know (Xiana do Teixeiro, 2018) and *La cosa vuestra* – It’s Your Thing (María Cañas, 2018). The aim is to analyse the formal strategies used by these documentaries to deconstruct rape myths and their consequent impact on the gendered regulation of public space. Attention will also be paid to the affective solidarity (Hemmings, 2012) present in these works and which operates as a trigger for a feminist community.

## 1.1. RAPE CULTURE

The term rape culture was coined in the 1970s by feminists who politicized rape, identifying it as a tool of patriarchal power aimed at enforcing female subordination (Brownmiller, 1976; Herman, 1978). Herman (1978) analysed sexual violence as a male prerogative in a socio-cultural context in which aggressive male sexuality is considered a healthy, normal and desired trait; its counterpart being the objectification of women and the subjugation of their sexual agency. In line with these early conceptualizations, in their influential volume *Transforming a Rape Culture* (2005), Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth identify a wide range of behaviours - unwanted comments, touching or rape - as part of an ideological framework that “condones physical and emotional terrorism against women and presents it as the norm” (p. XI). Thus, it is worth noting that heteronormativity forms the basis underpinning rape culture, designating normative and idealised constructions of masculinity and femininity and differentiated spheres of action.

On the other hand, rape culture is perpetuated and reinforced by a series of myths that, while varying across societies and cultures, follow a pattern of exonerating the perpetrator, delegitimising and/or blaming the victim, and suggesting that only certain types of women are raped. The importance of rape myths, in the Barthesian sense, lies in their power and significance in shaping the understanding of sexual violence and the media, judicial and social responses to it (Schmidt, 2004). The naturalization of male

sexuality as insatiable and violent allows for the justification of aggressions, considering them excusable or inevitable in certain scenarios (Herman, 1978; Buchwald *et al.*, 2005; Mendes, 2015). In other cases, the perpetrator's conduct tends to be framed within the limits of exceptionality and monstrosity, turning him into an unintelligible subject (Barjola, 2018). On the other side of the coin, these myths encourage the responsibility to fall on the victims, fostering suspicions about their actions, appearance or sexual past and/or feeding the belief that they are the ones who seek or wish to be assaulted (Lonsway and Fitzgerald, 1994; Schmidt, 2004; Mendes, 2015, Barjola, 2018). These *enticements* include behaviors that go beyond traditional chaste femininity - going out at night, drinking alcohol, wearing provocative clothing or flirting (Mendes, 2015) - and are read as transparent indications of sexual availability, whether or not explicit refusals or consents are involved.

The discursive framework that weaves rape culture reverts to the subjectivity of women, whether or not they have experienced sexual violence. In her analysis of discourses on sexual terror, Barjola (2018) highlights the disciplinary function of narratives that entail both "fear of physical punishment and self-control of risks, as well as mechanisms learned and internalized in women's everyday practices" (p. 138). Consequently, rape culture articulates a feminized cycle of fear, characterized by perceiving the street as a hostile space, fearing aggression, or glimpsing the consequences of such an act. It thus shapes public space by demarcating as potentially dangerous and conducive to sexual assault a series of places from which women, as always-already victim (Fanghanel, 2019),

must exclude themselves, guarding against the inevitable harm ascribed to them (Mendes, 2015; Barjola, 2018).

## **1.2. DOCUMENTARY COUNTER-REPRESENTATIONS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND FEMINIST AFFECTIVE POLITICS**

Media representations of rape have been the subject of extensive research and some of the work cited on rape culture has highlighted the role they play in naturalizing rape (Brownmiller, 1976, Herman, 1978; Barjola, 2018). As Kitzinger (2009) summarizes, the media is a key space for defining rape and shaping social perceptions about its constitutive parameters, perpetrators and victims. The author highlights its role in disseminating rape myths, as its coverage "can decontextualize abuse, encourage racism, promote stereotypes of women (as virgins or whores), blame victims and excuse assailants" (Kitzinger, 2009, p. 76).

Restricting ourselves to the cinematographic and audiovisual sphere, the representation of rape in television series has been examined in order to point out the reification of a heroic and guardian virility that simultaneously safeguards an untainted masculinity and contains feminist positions (Cuklanz, 2000); in films produced in a post-feminist framework, where individual responsibility is emphasized over collective activism (Projansky, 2001); or in auteur cinema, problematizing the ambiguous representations and readings of this violence in high cultural forms based on hermeneutic operations that appeal to a distanced intellectualism or that directly elide aggression (Russell, 2010).

If, broadly speaking, audiovisuals on rape outline a violent, victim-blaming and victimizing universe for women, it is crucial to pay attention to the counter-representations that destabilize these logics and build interpretative frameworks that have an impact on female empowerment (Barjola, 2018). In this respect, feminist documentaries stand as a privileged field of political intervention and study. If the documentary is a mode of representation that nourishes and mediates public debate and social life (Nichols, 2001), feminist practices, since their origins, have inserted denied subjectivities into the public sphere and have politicized issues such as women's work, reproductive health, or sexual violence (Lesage, 1990; Mayer, 2011). However, academic approaches to documentaries that deal with rape are scarce, with the work of Lesage (1978, 1990) standing out. This scholar identifies the features of dominant representations of rape "as the ultimate form of possession" (1978) and feminist filmic strategies that, on the contrary, avoid voyeurism, stigmatization and the incidence of trauma as the only possible expression of the violence suffered. In these films, women narrate their experiences, often ineffable, in their own terms, expressing denied emotions such as rage, resulting in the restoration of a damaged subjectivity and a critical analysis of the institutions that sustain violence (Lesage, 1978).

Lesage's emphasis on the affective processes involved in the pioneering documentaries on rape - the joint dissection of pain or indignation - allows us to engage with the notion of "affective solidarity", coined by Hemmings

(2012) to address how contemporary feminist non-fiction also explores possibilities of transformation from the collective. Hemmings theorizes affective solidarity as necessary for social change. In this sense, she suggests that, beyond empathy, affections such as anger, frustration or the desire for connection are what activate a collective politics based on "the desire for transformation out of the experience of discomfort" (Hemmings 2012, p. 158). Thus, the author speaks of an "affective dissonance" which she defines as a gap between women's negative experiences, the patriarchal order and the conditions of social transformation, so that it is this emotional click that activates an analytical process that gives meaning and body to feminism.

This perspective is highly relevant for approaching recent feminist artistic proposals -performance, photography, or illustration- which, in many cases, aim to denounce the structural or symbolic violence suffered by women (Gómez Nicolau *et al.*, 2021). Delimiting a context marked by the current and unprecedented visibility of feminism on a global scale and the consequent attacks wielded by a revitalized popular misogyny, Gómez Nicolau, Medina-Vicent and Gámez Fuentes (2021) examine and vindicate a series of practices that, on the one hand, respond to the pressing need to make female pain, rage and indignation intelligible; and, on the other, rearticulate these negative emotions - traditionally forbidden to subaltern subjects, as they argue on the basis of authors such as Butler and Ahmed - for political, artistic

and social purposes. In tune with this diagnosis, and by way of example, the aforementioned collective LasTesis positions rage as the driving force behind an artistic activism aimed at putting an end to the fear of sexual terror. In their words, “rage can be a virus [...]. The virus travels from where the wound was inflicted to the brain” (LasTesis, 2021, p. 11). In this regard, Martin and Shaw (2021) highlight the transformative role of emotions in the performance *Un violador en tu camino* (A Rapist on Your Way), indicating that “subjugation, pain, humiliation and resistance are embodied, with humiliation re-enacted momentarily, before bodies shift to positions of accusation and empowerment” (p. 7). From our point of view, the feminist documentaries that we will analyze below participate in these assumptions, constituting, from the audiovisual sphere, “expressions of rage and collective empowerment” (Gómez Nicolau *et al.*, 2021, p. 13).

## 2. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

Despite the development of documentaries with a gender perspective in Spain, non-fiction works focusing on sexual violence against women are scarce. With a few exceptions, these works have been produced in the last five years, evidencing the growing interest in the subject. It is worth highlighting the role of Netflix, a platform that, taking advantage of the popularity of

*true-crime*, has adapted this format to the national context, producing miniseries such as *El caso Alcàsser – The Alcàsser Murders* (Elías León Siminiani, 2019), centered on the rape, torture and assassination of three teenagers in a Valencian town in 1992, or *Nevenka* (Maribel Sánchez-Maroto, 2021), about the denunciation of sexual harassment of a politician and the subsequent stigmatization of the victim.

In contrast to these serialized documentary productions, our object of study are three independent documentaries made by feminist directors and whose purpose is to constitute critical tools on sexual violence. We analyze *Nagore* (Helena Taberna, 2010), which focuses on the murder of Nagore Laffage during the *San Fermín* festival in 2008; *Tódalas mulleres que coñezo* (Xiana do Teixeiro, 2018), a documentary that activates an intergenerational debate on the impact of sexual terror; and *La cosa vuestra* (María Cañas, 2018), a found footage piece about the *San Fermín* festival that analyzes the structuring of public space in terms of gender and includes the cases of *Nagore* and *La Manada*.

Based on the theoretical contributions outlined above, we examine the formal operations used to deconstruct rape culture, the myths and institutions that sustain it, as well as its impact on female subjectivity and the perception and articulation of public space. We apply textual analysis adapted to the principles of documentary film and the sub-genre of found footage, a term that refers to works created from pre-exis-

ting images that have not generally been filmed by the author of the piece (Weinrichter, 2009). In the first case, the priority is to consider the modes of representation of reality, its enunciative implications, the textual organization and the relationship with the subjects represented (Nichols, 2001); with regard to found footage, the priority is to observe the operations of re-signification of the archive through its juxtaposition with other visual or sound fragments. Following Lesage's (1990) conceptualization of the aesthetic and political strategies of feminist documentary, we will also discuss the audiovisual mechanisms aimed at representing and politicizing painful and adverse female experiences, which ultimately foster affective solidarity (Hemmings, 2012).

### **3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. THE COLLECTIVIZATION OF PAIN: NAGORE (HELENA TABERNA, 2010)**

Directed by Helena Taberna, *Nagore* deals with the murder of nursing student Nagore Laffage during the *San Fermín* festivities in 2008, by Diego Yllanes, a resident doctor at the University Clinic of Pamplona, after she refused to have sexual relations with him. This participatory documentary brings together the testimony of the victim's family and friends, interviews with

lawyers and representatives of the institutions that acted as popular accusation, records of feminist meetings and archive material from the media and the trial. The film adopts a chronological structure, from the discovery of the body to the verdict, which is occasionally broken up by scenes in which the young woman is remembered.

According to Taberna, the film arose from the need to "offer an affective look at the mother and her pain" (Ana Palacios, 2021). Indeed, Asún Casasola emerges as the driving character of the story and, in doing so, she also sets the tone, with her affective inflections, for a personal and political transformation derived from the collectivization of pain. If the first scenes present a suffering and isolated mother - visiting the cemetery or at home - the narrative eludes her fixation as a subject anchored in mourning. Thus, numerous shots show her in transit - driving, walking or riding a bus to attend a demonstration - which visually reinforces this shift. The dynamism provided by a camera that follows the protagonist and the predilection for the subjective point of view also invite the audience to participate in this process of awareness-raising. If, as Smail (2010) points out, the presentation of pain in documentary has tended to deny the agency of the subjects who embody it and to encourage commiseration rather than solidarity, it can be affirmed that, on the contrary, *Nagore* starts from mourning and

injury to highlight its transformative potential in collective and feminist terms.

In fact, as several participants point out, this case marked a turning point in the social union and reaction to violence against women (Gabilondo, 2017). The documentary shows how Casasola, in her multiple facets, emerged as a unifying and energizing agent in various social circles: friends of her daughter, work colleagues and local feminist groups. Fundamentally for the purposes of this article, in these encounters - occasionally presented as casual conversations - aspects of rape culture are named at a time when the term was not a popular and/or popularized analytical tool. Thus, Nagore's friends reflect on their increased fear after the event, their previous perception of rape as something that only happened in big cities, and the change in their everyday behaviors, so that, as they express, the men were forced to accompany their female friends. Meanwhile, in scenes documenting meetings of a local feminist collective, they discuss legal shortcomings, the education of women in freedom, consent or the weight given to the victim's behavior during the trial. As an indignant Casasola asserts, "they even asked me if my daughter was flirty. They questioned why she went up to his house with him that night". These processes of collective analysis lead to a series of public demonstrations that make up the bulk of the final footage. Specifically, shots are inserted from the *Lunes Lilas* movement, which emerged shortly before Nagore's murder, and which organized monthly rallies to denounce violence against women. In one of these public protests, it is

emphatically stated that "this trial is gender violence from the moment Nagore and all women were denied the ability to say no".

Not least important, the documentary also activates affective solidarity between the subjects represented on screen through scenes in which the young woman is remembered in her personal dimension. In this way, and in contrast to the dominant narratives on sexual violence, the representation of Nagore as only a victim is counteracted. In other words, it problematizes her fixation as a sign of the potentially fatal consequences that befall women in certain contexts (festivities) and at certain times (early morning). To this end, the documentary compiles testimonies from friends and family members who evoke her jovial and affectionate character, her vitality and courage. Despite the melodramatic tone of these scenes, their inclusion responds to an ethical stance. According to Taberna, when filming began, the image of Nagore "is already bloodied and that is why the executioner wins, that is why one of the lines of the documentary is who Nagore was, what this girl was, what she could have been, her views on the world" (Ana Palacios, 2021). Indeed, accounts of sexual terror have been characterized by the indiscriminate dissemination of images of merely aggrieved bodies without paying attention to their possible impact on women, thus reinforcing female control, since "the existence of the tortured body, of the physical torture inflicted on it, launches a direct threat to other women" (Barjola, 2018, pp. 177- 179).

This does not prevent the documentary from offering raw details about the murder, inclu-



ding a judicial reconstruction of the events with the accused. The sequence is disturbing, but its presence in the footage is fundamental in showing a kind of “extreme truth” (Taberna in Ana Palacios, 2021). That is, it allows the audience to assess the perception of the aggressor before and during the trial, which, as the film suggests between the lines, crystallized into a positive image based on his social class and the religious values he espoused. In this respect, it should be remembered that Yllanes was convicted of manslaughter and not murder, ruling out premeditation, a variable - the defencelessness of the victim - which, nevertheless, seems to be refuted by the judicial visual evidence that the documentary gathers. In short, this counter-narrative on sexual terror is based on empathy in the face of pain and the narrativization of collective solidarity, without ignoring the figure of the perpetrator and the different and complex factors at play when it comes to minimizing his sexual crime.

### **3.2. THE POLITICAL DISSECTION OF FEAR: *TÓDALAS MULLERES QUE COÑEZO* (XIANA DO TEIXEIRO, 2018)**

*Tódalas mulleres que coñezo* by Xiana do Teixeiro aims, as its synopsis indicates, to construct a discourse on fear and violence that neither encourages fear nor is violent. Shot in sober black and white, it includes three encounters guided by the director and arranged in an abyss. In the first, a conversation between friends

in which the filmmaker participates as an equal partner, the experiences linked to the fear of sexual violence are dissected. The recording of this dialogue is the trigger for a subsequent discussion between an intergenerational feminist group. Finally, both stories are screened in a high school to promote a debate among the students. At the end of the session, several students approach the director to point out that some of the attendees have not been completely honest. With this coda, the film draws attention to the lack of awareness of the issue and points out “that there is still a long way to go in terms of exposure and debate around the problem of fear” (Pérez Pereiro, 2019, p. 212).

As can be inferred from the summary, this documentary is conceived as a tool for analyzing rape culture through collective dynamics that obey a conscious act of social cohesion in order to arrive at a political analysis of rape (Lesage, 1978). The film thus links up with the aesthetic and political strategies of the first feminist documentary that transferred the dynamics of consciousness-raising groups to the screen, conferring a political force to the conversation seen, in this context, as a tool of resistance and liberation (Lesage, 1990). Regarding these audiovisual strategies, do Teixeiro has pointed out that “dialogue is a powerful learning tool with which to question the audience, since once the film has shown the transversality of sexual violence, it generates a possibility to pick up the debate” (Dopico, 2018, n.p.).

If rape culture constructs the public space, as opposed to the domestic one, as the sphere

where women are potential victims, the film subverts this logic. It is in a square in Lugo where the friends, while drinking beer, talk about the moments in which, throughout their lives, they have suffered different types of macho harassment. In order to generate a climate of complicity and security during the recording, a minimum filming crew made up exclusively of women was used (Dopico, 2018). It should also be noted that the planning supports this sense of trust and respect. As Ledo (2020) remarks, the camera lingers on gesture and emotion, panning from speakers to listeners and then framing the whole group of friends. These movements contribute to the wrapping up of testimonies that, under another gaze, could be spectacularized, dismissed or ignored. Moreover, the shot - counter shot constructs relationships based on emotional interpellation, so that the narration of a violent experience is responded to visually with a gesture of indignation or empathy on the part of the interlocutors. This relational logic, which governs the film as a whole, emphasizes the existence of an affective dissonance that starts from a polyhedral analysis of fear and leads to a mutual recognition of patriarchal injustice. In other words, the documentary device employed by do Teixeira generates a space conducive to sharing adverse experiences that, from a group analysis, allow us to identify rage as a legitimate response and to delve deeper into the structural reasons for sexual violence.

Indeed, the first conversation eloquently exposes how media narratives about rape take effect. These women, born in the early 1980s, highlight the impact that the coverage of the Alcàsser crime, considered the epitome of trash TV in Spain, had on their lives. Based on

this case, the director points out the double dimension of sexual violence: "It is a reality and it is a story that circulates, because women are attacked, but many, many more, the majority, are not attacked, but we live with the tension that it could happen at any moment". A perception that the author exemplifies by recalling the confession of a friend who thought that "it was impossible to become an adult without being raped". In line with Barjola (2018), the documentary shows that rape culture is a discourse that is embodied and how its dissemination, with particular emphasis on liminal spaces, the brutal violence inflicted on bodies and the sobering discourse constructed on the basis of the teenager who stayed at home that night became the prolongation of a symbolic sanction aimed at all women.

As has been advanced, this first conversation is rich in nuances about perceptions of fear in the face of sexual violence and how responses to it are conditioned by a patriarchal system that manifests itself in the family, in close social circles or in legal institutions. In its continuous transition from the personal to the political, from the experiential to the analytical, several aspects of rape culture are brought to light by *Tódalas mulleres*. Firstly, the role of the family in inculcating gender roles that present male sexuality as uncontrollable or deviant, so that self-control falls to women. Secondly, the female friends relate how the perception of fear is strongly determined by the type of places they walk through, poorly lit or busy public spaces (a forest or a street) and the consequent lack of autonomy. Thirdly, they examine the paradoxes of a society that educates women in fear but minimizes these aggressions, thus underpinning a femininity associated with victimiza-

tion, overprotection and paranoia, without the existence of clear tools to confront violence. It is not in vain that the participants state that the burden of reporting - and in some cases events described as low intensity - also falls on the victim, so that the subsequent stigmatization becomes another mechanism of powerlessness in the face of rape culture.

On the other hand, the film's abyssal disposition encourages an intersectional reflection. In the second section, new perspectives are introduced based on the age and the family situation of the participants. Thus, it is eloquent to hear women affirming that sexual terror did not have so much weight in their youth, but that it is present now, pointing to the media as responsible - greater visibility or over-dimension - and pointing to its ultimate function as a key mechanism of female control. In another twist, several mothers express their concern for their children's education, so that they do not reproduce an aggressive masculinity. In short, through its reflexive and intergenerational approach, the film not only accurately and courageously dissects rape culture, but also imprints important historical nuances on its modulation. Thus, it is worth noting that this generation gap also illuminates, or so it can be inferred, some political, cultural and social changes that fostered the narratives of sexual terror, to counteract, ultimately, the advance of feminism during the 1990s (Barjola, 2018).

### **3.3. DISOBEDIENT RAGE: LA COSA VUESTRA (MARÍA CAÑAS, 2018)**

If in *Tódalas mulleres* the affective dissonance is produced through the confrontation of testimonies, in *La cosa vuestra* (María Cañas, 2018) it is achieved through montage. In fact, Cañas is one of the main representatives in Spain of found footage and her practice is characterized by a carnivalesque humor when it comes to questioning media and nationalist discourses, a predilection for audiovisual detritus using the vast audiovisual heritage offered by the Internet and a growing feminist awareness (Fernández Labayen and Rodríguez Ortega, 2013; Oroz, 2013; Oroz, 2014; Álvarez, 2022). Produced within the framework of the *X Films* project of the Punto de Vista Festival, this documentary aims to show the most caricatured, atavistic, and cruel side of the *Sanfermines*. Although it does not focus exclusively on sexual violence, as the author has stated:

[*La cosa vuestra*] is an empowerment of the woman and the animal in the face of the carpetovetonic culture of murder and rape. In the face of violence, it is an ode to feminist self-defense and "*risastencia*", which is humor of all colors and flavours, the agitation of connected crowds, as strategies of insurgency (Cañas, 2018).

In her heterodox approach to *San Fermin* festival, Cañas exposes the tensions and con-

traditions of a festival in which the normal functioning of the city - a traditional city where ultra-orthodox Catholic groups carry great weight - is suspended, without this implying that everyone can enjoy the celebration with the same kind of behavior (Moreno and Camps, 2020). The film is structured through a series of oppositions between the sacred and the profane, the autochthonous and the tourist attraction, the rituals that imply a high degree of masculinity such as the *encierro* (running of the bulls), and the anti-bullfighting and anti-sexual violence demonstrations. Regarding this last point, it is important to point out that, in the context of this festival, the crowd is conducive to sexual violence. That is, women tend to be harassed in front of a public gaze that approves and ignores this violence -thus becoming a manifestation of expressive rather than instrumental male violence (Segato, 2016)- and those who attend the *Sanfermines* consider sexual harassment to be a plausible toll to enjoy leisure time (Moreno and Camps, 2020).

It is the last section of the documentary, about six minutes long, that focuses on sexual violence to examine gender performances in public space. If the bulk of the film had already made explicit how male bodies inhabit the festivity from a socially accepted excess, this segment begins with a succession of shots that show men totally unconcerned and lying hungover in parks, alleyways or on the bonnet of a car. This is followed by three sequences. The first reproduces WhatsApp messages from the group *La Manada* that the five rapists had with their colleagues, the second shows images of the trial of Diego Yllanes taken from the film *Nagore*, and

the last inserts feminist demonstrations against male violence.

This segment is shocking for its content and for its arrangement in a film which until then had shown the most grotesque side of the *Sanfermines*, using parodies of the comedian José Mota or images of a children's home in Uganda where the children play at the running of the bulls. The comedy and laughter that had marked the spectator's response, freezes at one point to give way to the astonishment of seeing on screen messages from *La Manada*, such as "These holidays are a trial by fire to be a wolf" or the description of the gang rape as "a whore of a trip". By highlighting these exchanges, Cañas emphasizes what Segato (2016, p. 18) calls "the male sexual mandate", which is not linked to sexual satisfaction, but to a precept among peers as proof of belonging to the group. For its part, the sequence that recovers Nagore's case focuses on the perpetrator, contrasting images of the trial in which, as the media highlighted, he was shown crying with others that show the excessive inquisitiveness and coldness of the murder, in line with the reading of Taberna's documentary already discussed.

From this contrast, *La cosa vuestra* proposes an emotional leap that goes from paralysis to indignation, to end in the social collectivization of rage through feminist practices. This last issue had already been announced with the previous insertion of images such as the poster "Fear is going to change sides" or the dedication "to all the witches you couldn't burn", illustrated with a sequence from *Las brujas de Zugarramurdi* (Alex de la Iglesia, 2013). It is worthwhile look at

the first slogan that alludes to the performative techniques of violence employed by activist groups in the Basque Country and Navarre (Medeak, 2015) whose aim is to appropriate the moments and spaces that rape culture prescribes as pernicious for women by presenting themselves as a threat to male sovereignty over them. To the rhythm of the assertive song *Se acabó* (It's over) by María Jiménez, the film contrasts images of the crowds celebrating the end of the festivity - the *Pobre de mí* - with those of feminist demonstrations of great performative force thanks to the use of black dresses, hoods and torches and slogans such as "Machete for the macho" or "The night and the parties belong to us". As is also the case in the performance of *LasTesis* (Martin and Shaw, 2021), these demonstrations are an act of disobedience, contravening expectations of women and their behavior in public spaces. In an epilogue, this challenge to the patriarchal symbolic order is emphasized by showing interventions on the famous Osborne bull: painted in the colors of the LGBTQBIQ+ flag or, directly, castrated.

However, the filmmaker deliberately avoids a closed and, above all, victimizing discourse that implies a domestication of female sexuality. As an ironic counterpoint, *La cosa vuestra* includes fragments of humorous videos that reverse the roles of street harassment with the men being harassed - obviously, the response of the harassed is not fear, but surprise and jocularly - and introduces provocative testimonies that avoid drawing hasty conclusions about the objectification of women and their agency.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

From openly feminist positions, the documentaries discussed are conceived as tools for the analysis of rape culture, which record women's experiences, their media and judicial treatment and their impact on the perception of public space in terms of gender. These works stage subjectivities marked by adverse emotions - pain, fear and rage - constituting them as catalyst of a collective knowledge and response that goes through pedagogy, intervention in the public space and the questioning of the social and legal frameworks that shape rape culture. By adopting a dialectical logic based on the confrontation of disparate testimonies or images, these works also stand out for their attention to the ethical and political dimensions of the representation of sexual violence. Their positions are different - and in some cases they do not hesitate to include images that may be violent for the audience - but they coincide in contemplating the offense on female bodies as a trigger for a collective and political response.

It is in this sense that, following Barjola (2018), these documentaries have been considered as examples of counter-representations of sexual terror that link both with pioneering feminist documentary politics and strategies (Lesage, 1978 and 1990) and with current state art manifestations that activate feminist or feminist rage (Gómez Nicolau *et al*, 2021). Specifically, these films reflect on the media's treatment of rape, which is described as stereotypical or sized, and, in the face of this, they seek to avoid female victimization. Women are represented

as subjects of the discourse who, on the basis of their own experiences, also formulate desires for social change and personal freedom. However, far from simplifying the impact and logic of rape culture, this type of assertiveness contemplates fear and pain. As one of the participants in *Tódalas mulleres* relates, there remains a tension between politicized reason (female empowerment) - and the subsequent possibility of an emancipatory future (freedom of movement and action) - and the dictates of fear. As we have sought to point out, following Hemmings (2012), experiences of discomfort cannot be dissociated from collective analysis and doing.

No less importantly, these films subvert the prescription of public space as an unrestricted male domain. Thus, they include gestures of collective and symbolic appropriation of the street, be they collective gatherings that connect with consciousness-raising groups or collective strategies that are subversive and disobedient with respect to established narratives about women's presence in public space.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the historical value of these tapes. Taberna has valued the role

of *Nagore* as an archive of sexual violence in Spain, so that when the *La Manada* case occurred, the media and feminist groups, although in different terms, were able to refer to another case of sexual violence (Ana Palacios, 2021). This is not a trivial issue, as the media's tendency to analyze each rape as a single event depoliticizes sexual violence, separating it from its structural context (Barjola, 2018). Through oral or archival recounting, Cañas' and do Teixeiro's documentaries recall brutal crimes and their effects on the public sphere, contributing to this historicization. In sum, like many contemporary feminist art practices, these documentaries also advocate (re)establishing links of women's struggles against sexual violence and outlining a necessary feminist history of sexual injury that is not paralyzing but mobilizing.

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