
A Politics of Intimacy

A Conversation with Alina Marazzi and Ilaria Fraioli

ABSTRACT This conversation with filmmaker Alina Marazzi and editor Ilaria Fraioli took place on April 20, 2012, as part of a conference on found footage cinema at the Arts Department of the University of Bologna. Marazzi and Fraioli were invited to reflect on their work with archival material in films like *For One More Hour with You* (2002) and *We Want Roses Too* (2007), by a group of scholars with interests in compilation films, cultural memory, and women's cinema: Monica Dall'Asta, Barbara Grespi, Sandra Lischi, and Veronica Pravadelli. **KEYWORDS** Alina Marazzi, archival film, film editing, found footage film, Ilaria Fraioli

Alina Marazzi is today internationally recognized.¹ Her beautiful films, which often manifest an extremely rigorous approach to the reuse of archival material, are appreciated worldwide. Less well known is her editor, Ilaria Fraioli, who, as Marazzi is the first to recognize, is the other most important creator of these films.

Their collaboration began at the time of Marazzi's first feature film, *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (*For One More Hour with You*, 2002), a film that immediately revealed not only a masterful use of editing, but also a rare sensibility vis-à-vis archival material, all of which was recovered from the author's family collections of 8mm home movies, letters, and diaries. Without involving a single newly filmed scene or newly written line of dialogue, *For One More Hour with You* tells with powerful pathos the tragic story of Marazzi's mother, Liseli Hoepli, who killed herself when her daughter was still a child.

The second product of their collaborations was *Vogliamo anche le rose* (*We Want Roses Too*, 2007), a history of Italian feminism in the 1960s and 1970s that was again created using a great deal of archival material, both films and other types of documents. Fraioli's contribution was also key in the making of Marazzi's shot films, *Per sempre* (*Forever*, 2005), a documentary about life in feminine monastic communities, and *Tutto parla di te* (*All About You*, 2012),

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a courageous and cutting, but at the same time judiciously measured, investigation into the difficult reality of postpartum depression, featuring an outstanding Charlotte Rampling.

In the following pages, Fraioli and Marazzi discuss their approach to the practice of found footage film. Through detailed examples from their work, they lead us to the heart of their conceptual laboratory—or, rather, into the dialogic space in which their thinking by images is elaborated. In particular, the wealth of reflections in Fraioli's discourse confirm the treasury of experience and thought that hides in the shadowy places where films come to light, namely, the isolated rooms where film editors work, unseen by either the audience or the critics.² Marazzi's recognition of her editor's important creative role allows Fraioli to come for once to the foreground, revealing the profoundly productive nature of this fortunate relationship of dialogue and artistic exchange between two women filmmakers. What their reflections ultimately confirm is that the cutting room is a privileged place for women's cinematographic expression, which once more encourages us, as feminist scholars, to pay a new critical attention to both editing, conceived as a technique as well as a primary linguistic tool, and the work of female editors.

The following text originated as a collective conversation on the topic of found footage cinema during a conference held at the Department of Arts of the University of Bologna ("Films Beget Films: An Inconclusive Investigation into the Cinema without a Movie Camera," April 19–20, 2012). The transcription was cut and slightly modified to make it suitable for publication. The text was then revised by the authors.

MONICA DALL'ASTA: To start off this conversation, I would like to ask Alina to speak generally about her relationship with archival images. What does it mean for a filmmaker such as yourself, with an important technical as well as theoretical formation, to take on archival footage as privileged expressive material?

ALINA MARAZZI: I will respond in the plural because my relationship with archival material occurs through my collaboration with my editor, Ilaria Fraioli. When working together, we are constantly asking ourselves about cinematographic language, and how to continually reinvent it. We are not satisfied with simply finding interesting materials and lining them up one after the other. In working on both *For One More Hour with You* and *We Want Roses Too*, we constantly tried to interrogate the material and experiment with different solutions. Therefore, in a sense we are also constantly doing research on the cinematographic language; we are never satisfied with creating a well-made film with pretty, or touching, images. We always strive to go deeper.

In the case of *For One More Hour with You*, the encounter with archival images began with finding a private film collection, plus other documents such as photographs, letters, and diaries, that belonged to my family. I would define the encounter with these materials as a totalizing, complete, truly totemic experience. It was a completely different relationship from what I later experienced in *We Want Roses Too*, if for no other reason than because all the documents came from a single source, my family. The commentary of *For One More Hour with You* was built entirely by editing a number of written documents belonging to people in my immediate family circle or close to it. Naturally, addressing those materials was very important from a private and emotional point of view, but also the process of constructing the narrative called for profound formal reflections, which especially surfaced during the editing phase. Working together in the cutting room for almost six nonconsecutive months, we had the opportunity to repeatedly question the images, review them, and work out new associations among them. The result of this comprehensive reinterpretation of the material is a very personal account of my family story through which I reconstructed a relationship with my mother, whom I lost as a child.

For its part, *We Want Roses Too* makes use of many different resources, and the phase of archival research was therefore very long and complicated. The work on the documents we used in *For One More Hour with You*, inspired by the encounter with private material that I already owned, lasted for such a long period of time that I wouldn't know how to calculate it. *We Want Roses Too* came about in a completely different way: the idea was to offer a collective portrayal of two decades in Italian history, between the end of the 1950s and the end of the 1970s, through the stories and voices of different women confronting the theme of sexuality. The point was to work with historical material from those years—be it found footage or a photograph or a sound piece—in such a way as to highlight both its documentary value and its aesthetics and formal qualities in order to render the atmosphere of the period.



Marazzi's mother in *For One More Hour with You* (2002).



A feminist demonstration in the 1970s; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

Retrieving these materials was made possible by several researchers who worked in different institutions, ranging from the RAI archives to collections of experimental and underground cinema, where they made a number of very interesting discoveries.³ In recent years we have seen many images from the 1970s; *We Want Roses Too* was released on the thirtieth anniversary of 1977.⁴ Many Italian authors have written recently about this historical period. Much footage of the 1970s has been broadcast on television, yet the imagery used in these programs tends to all look alike. What Ilaria and I tried to do, in both the research phase and the editing phase, was to look for less-obvious documents, for images that could break the conventional representation of the 1970s (marches, meetings, political demonstrations, and so on). We wanted to find *interior* images to understand what was happening in the home and other places where women were beginning to meet collectively. Looking for experimental films, we found some extremely interesting material shot by both male and female filmmakers, ranging from relatively well-known authors such as Alberto Grifi to such forgotten figures as Mario Masini and Adriana Monti.

MD: Speaking of Adriana Monti, in *We Want Roses Too* you include a sequence from her 1978 film *Ciclo continuo* (Continuous Cycle) that could stand as a



A feminist meeting in the 1970s; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

metaphor for the work of editing. I am referring to the split-screen sequence in which a young woman tries to cut her very long hair using a big pair of scissors, conveying an extremely emotional effect.

AM: Adriana Monti is a filmmaker who moved from Milan to Toronto in the 1980s. Before leaving Italy, she made many Super 8 films that she subsequently donated to the Luigi Micheletti Foundation in Brescia. Nobody, including the author, watched her films again for the following thirty years. In general, the works of these experimental filmmakers are more heard of than seen, and we wanted to bring them out into the open. I had direct contact with Monti, and we exchanged many letters. In one of these letters I wrote: “I am doing this work, and we would like to bring your films back into the light (and above all ask you why you didn’t bring them with you and instead left them to a foundation in Brescia!).” Rediscovering her Super 8 films was just fun. And the work was thrilling, because what we had to deal with in this case were not simply documentary images, but experimental films that she had entirely conceived, shot, and edited herself.

Continuous Cycle, a Super 8 film that Adriana was never able to edit after she had completed shooting, was certainly the most interesting case. Besides the film itself, I also found an article, illustrated with frames from the film, in which Monti explained the project and the motivation behind it. Thirty years later, Ilaria and I worked to



Split-screen effect created by Marazzi and Fraioli from segments of Adriana Monti's *Continuous Cycle* (1978); from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

complete the project following the author's original intention: Monti gave us her specifications through her written correspondence. Her original plan was to employ a split-screen technique, and this was finally achieved in our work according to her wish. We transferred the Super 8 to a digital format and in that way Monti was able to see the footage in Canada. To her it was a true experience of a "continuous cycle," an experience of returning to the past. In one of her letters she wrote:

I would say I got involved in feminism in 1972. My first group was Lotta Femminista, which was inspired by Selma James's Marxist theories in proposing a salary for housework. Grazia Zerman, Franca Barda (Geri), Chiara Gamba, and I produced the first audiovisual Italian work on the condition of women, which was used in the electoral campaign for the referendum on divorce in 1974. In the meantime I was following the Via Disciplini group, a historic Milanese feminist group, which later moved to Via Cherubini before splitting off into a number of different groups.⁵ And I also founded the Group of the Unconscious at Via Plinio, which later split into two groups. I stayed in the same collective as Lea Melandri, and worked with her until I moved out of the country. Our activities included work with

several groups: the Sexuality and Writing group, the Cinema and Adult Education group, the “150 Hours” and teachers group, the “150 Hours” group of Affori, the Gervasia Broxson Cooperative, the Women’s University, and *Lapis* journal. In the meantime, I continued making films.

The letter went on, listing the titles of her films: *Il filo del desiderio* (The Thread of Desire, 1976); *Il piacere del testo* (The Pleasure of the Text, 1977), on the experience of a writing group that Lea Melandri also took part in; *Scuola senza fine* (Never Ending School, 1982), which documented the teaching activities at the 150 Hours school; *Trame* (Plots, 1982); *Gentili signore* (Kind Ladies, 1988); *Ritratti* (Portraits, 1991); and *Belle le mie amiche* (My Beautiful Friends, 1991). In *We Want Roses Too*, the scene that begins the third story reuses the sequence from *Continuous Cycle* showing the woman who is cutting her hair, edited in split screen. In this way, the face of this woman is attributed to Valentina, the writer of the diary that is read by the voice-over in the third part of the film. Other images follow that are taken from *The Pleasure of the Text*, while the color sequence of women running in the snow is from another of Adriana’s films, *Bagagli* (Luggage, 1978), where the woman wearing a white hat is the filmmaker herself.

One of the strongest emotions we had while looking for footage was finding a half-inch tape recorded by Clelia Pallotta, a filmmaker connected to the Libreria delle donne in Milan. In this case too the footage had been preserved, but hadn’t been seen since the time of its recording. The author sent me the tape reels, and we had to find a laboratory that still had a player able to reproduce the open reels. Of course such a laboratory only existed in the United States. The work on the film base, whether it was a film strip or a magnetic base, was always very complex, and bringing these images to light was never easy.

ILARIA FRAIOLI: Concerning the split-screen effect created on the images of *Continuous Cycle*, we restrained ourselves to putting into practice what Monti, perhaps



Frames from Adriana Monti’s *Bagagli* (Luggage, 1978); from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

also because of technical limitations, was unable to do thirty years before. At the time when she made her film, back when editing was still done with a Moviola, you couldn't create a split-screen effect without an optical printer. We are lucky enough to have modern technology: achieving a split-screen effect is certainly much easier in the digital era. For us it was a pleasure and a thrill to be able to complete Monti's project, following the specifications from our "older sister." We felt in a way like the heirs and interpreters of the visual and cinematographic thought of our "correspondent" from thirty years before.

As Alina was saying, the case of the images from *Continuous Cycle* was a peculiar one. We could perhaps define it as an "intermediate" case. We were dealing with material that the author had already planned to edit according to a certain formal hypothesis, a structure where the action of the woman cutting her hair was to be divided into different phases shown simultaneously on the screen. But the project remained unfinished. The fragments of *Continuous Cycle* then situated themselves in an intermediary position between private or personal material, such as Alina's family films that were used in *For One More Hour with You*, and the footage taken from completed films, which we largely employed in the making of *We Want Roses Too*. *Continuous Cycle* is somewhere in the middle of these different types of materials, and it is perhaps for this reason that it is a little special to us.



Illustration from a period women's magazine; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).



A girl on the day of her confirmation in a frame from a home movie ca. 1960; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

I would like to go deeper into the theme of the reuse of archival materials, referring again to *We Want Roses Too*, and focusing on the question of how to relate to the footage's original motivation, that is, the way in which the film was made and edited. During the film's production, we gave ourselves a precise set of rules to respect in reusing archival footage. The practice of image appropriation can in fact be performed in many different ways. Any shot is a fragment that can be extracted from its original context and reinserted into a new narrative, which can modify or even subvert the image's original meaning. In appropriating any piece of material, it was important for us to abide by the rule of preserving the original spirit of the film in which it had first appeared. The story of *We Want Roses Too* covers a period of almost twenty years, which means we had to pay a great deal of attention to the events that historically marked the course of women's emancipation in Italy. Though the issue of fidelity to the documents could seem at first glance an obvious one, a foregone conclusion, it was of momentous importance for us. All of the images we employed in the editing were shot in a given historical moment, made use of a particular technical apparatus, and manifested formal and stylistic traits belonging to a particular time period, with its conventional imagery. This is true even for the seemingly "simplest" images, those that look the furthest from any authorial pretension, for example the TV reports found in the RAI archives, for they too are

pervaded with the feeling of the time, with a sort of visual aura that was important for us to retain to bear witness to the years in which they were produced. Our attitude of extreme attention in this respect has become a point of honor for us, one that has also entailed some difficulties at certain moments in the editing phase.

When I want to create a narrative thread, I need a certain sequence, a certain image: for example the close-up of a working woman getting onto a bus. To decide that I am not going to use an image of the worker that I have, because it was taken in 1975 and I am dealing instead with 1968, can create difficulties. Nevertheless, in our view, this kind of attention to the material is key to the film's final value. At the risk of sounding inelegant, I would like to bring up the case of Giovanna Gagliardo's *Bellissime* (Those Beautiful Ladies, 2004), a film dealing with a similar theme as *We Want Roses Too*, and which was released around the same time as Alina's film. The footage employed in this work is often the same that we used, but Gagliardo seems at times to totally forget the intrinsic nature of the images, in which their "date of birth" also plays a part. At times her film does not respect the images' individual identity, and forgets their origin so as to foreground, instead, the function they take on in the narrative she is creating. Personally I think that the reuse of archival material, and the license to recontextualize images that come from previous works, should imply a dialogic attitude on the part of the author toward the material. While on the one hand there is no reason why one shouldn't revise archival footage and give it a



A working woman getting onto a bus in an archival sequence ca. 1968; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).



A young woman wearing a bridal veil; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

new meaning, on the other, this operation should always be done in the form of a reciprocal exchange.

Perhaps at the extreme opposite end from a film like *Those Beautiful Ladies*, where materials are “hoarded,” sometimes without respect, according to the necessities of the film’s narrative, is what I would define as the “abstraction” of found footage. I’m thinking in particular of *Non Non Non*, an installation presented in 2012 by two pioneers of the found footage film, Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, at HangarBicocca in Milan. In this work, footage of the colonial period is refilmed and decontextualized to the point of cutting the figures out of the images and situating them on a colored background. Compared to *Those Beautiful Ladies*, where the images are “exploited” to tell another story, *Non Non Non* achieves a fragmented or “anti-narrative” abstraction of the archival documents. Our own approach is somewhere in between these two options, with the fundamental objective of putting us into a dialogue with the original material. The reuse of Adriana Monti’s films is a perfectly fitting example: while approaching the images with extreme respect with regard to their nature, we employed them within a different context to convey a new meaning. In *We Want Roses Too* there are several different examples of how it is possible to use archival materials to create a new semantic significance.

BARBARA GRESPI: I find Ilaria’s precision with respect to the use of archival material extremely relevant. I would define this as a philological approach, since it respects not only the visual form, but the historical character of the images, too.

I'm wondering whether this strategy, beyond integrally respecting the document by preserving the "grammar" of its original context, is also functional to highlight the instant in which the rewriting is worked out. That is to say: what I find questionable in a film like *Those Beautiful Ladies* is the erasure of any trace of the intervention operated on the images. For me, this calls forth many questions. One of these brings me back to the idea of female writing, this time understood as the written word. If I remember correctly, all the three films you made together present us with images of letters and diaries: in *Forever* the nuns write letters to the people outside; in *For One More Hour with You* the letters from Alina's mother and her friends are intercut with notes from diaries, which are written somewhat in the form of a letter, destined at times for somebody, and other times for nobody; and the screenplay of *We Want Roses Too* uses the diaries of three women of the 1960s as an outline. In other words, there is a very strong presence of writing in your cinema. It is as if female identity was entrusted to, or placed in, writing.

AM: During one of the very first public screenings of *For One More Hour with You*, which was organized by the Women's University of Milan in a very informal context, something happened that really struck me. During the debate, one of the "older sisters" who had organized the event made note precisely of the strong role of writing in the film. She said it was surprising to observe how the women of her generation had assumed writing as a tool with which to reappropriate their identities, while at the same time reconstructing a relationship of dialogue and exchange with other women. In the Super 8 films of Adriana Monti, women had meetings to write together, or, as in the case of the "150 hours courses," they went to Affori and other neighborhoods on the outskirts of Milan to teach housewives to write stories, perhaps their own stories, in a way that could confer value on their life experiences.

The woman who made this observation went on, stating that the privileged role the practice of writing had played for her generation is today most likely to be attributed to the images, including audiovisual images, perhaps the most powerful means now available to present generations to propose, invent, explore, and investigate a specifically female and feminist poetics. In *We Want Roses Too*, beyond documenting the work of militant feminists on writing, I featured excerpts from authentic diaries written by three women, which I found at the Fondazione Archivio Diaristico Nazionale in Pieve Santo Stefano.⁶ My research began with reading several different diaries from this archive (of both men and women, but in the end I decided to work exclusively with women's writings) because I wanted to recount the passage between the 1950s and the 1970s through intimate and subjective experiences. For a woman at that historical moment, to write down her story meant to give value to her own existence, no matter how ordinary it might be, and this is why writing assumed such a special value. Autobiographical writing has always belonged to female literature; women have expressed themselves



Writing as a female practice in a shot from Adriana Monti's *The Pleasure of the Text* (1977); from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

for generations by writing diaries. In the 1970s, writing and the practice of intimate narration became the starting point for a dialogue between different subjectivities.

VERONICA PRAVADELLI: To continue reflecting on your approach to the history of feminism, I wish to report my experience as a university professor who often teaches women's cinema. I have to say that, these days, speaking about feminism to girls twenty years old is not an easy task. In *We Want Roses Too* you worked to achieve, by means of editing, a merging of the personal and the collective. You combined three personal stories and a number of archival films to create the story of a shared context. This is extremely positive, since today younger people often tend to depict feminism in those years as a collective experience in which singular individuals were at risk of losing their personal autonomy. In your film, on the contrary, the individual and the collective are perfectly synthesized, and this is a highly valuable aspect.

I would also like to remark that, when you address a female filmmaker by referring to her films as "feminist," you often get a somewhat resentful reaction. I remember for example Chantal Akerman's reaction when she was "branded" with

this. What bothers women filmmakers is perhaps the fact that so-called feminist films are usually thought of as films specifically made for women, and that is only a part of the public. This seems obviously limiting. Why should feminist films be necessarily partial? And why should the presence of an explicitly feminist message necessarily clash with the aesthetic element?

AM: First of all, I should clarify that *We Want Roses Too* was not very well received in the more strictly feminist circles. It was often imprecisely perceived as a history of feminism, which in fact it is not. The sequences based on Valentina's diary are the most significant in that direction because they center on the "most feminist" of the three protagonists. But the film is not exclusively concerned with the years of the large feminist mobilizations and that type of militant character. The criticisms that came from certain circles with a long feminist tradition perhaps arose because the film was perceived as not ideological enough, or simply because it doesn't necessarily recognize militant feminism as the motor powering all the changes of the time. *We Want Roses Too* tells the story of women's emancipation since the 1960s but it filters the events through the lives and the personal experience of three women, using this particular approach to depict a change of momentous importance in Italian society, as well as in other countries in the Western world.

The film came from a desire to enter into a dialogue with that time period, with the women who lived through it, with their practices and their ideas, because I was not able to live those moments out personally as I was too young at the time. When I became an adult, I began asking myself: What happened at a certain point that made us forget those experiences? Where do some of my own ways of being and thinking come from? Could a certain sense of frustration about this lack of memory give way to a dialogue with other women and men? My principal concern was interrogating the documents. I chose not to use the form of the interview, and rather let the materials speak directly for themselves, whether they were written, filmed, or recorded. I was not interested in collecting oral memories from women of the time, inasmuch as they would be perceived as declarations mediated by personal interpretation.

Of course the work was not completed without approaching the women who were active at the time, but I never felt the need for anyone to tell me what feminism was like. This may have been problematic for some groups who felt excluded from the process. In any case, the dialogue was very intense afterward, when the film screened in theaters. As already with *For One More Hour with You*, I accompanied the film to numerous screening events, which were always followed by passionate debates. On one occasion I was particularly struck by the presence of a group of very young secondary school students who wanted to see these famous 1960s their parents had been filling their heads with, so as to finally understand them. They were touched by the film in a very direct and emotional way, as they



A frame from footage shot by Alberto Grifi at a countercultural convention in Milan, Parco Lambro, 1976; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

felt involved by its language and the way it presents the documents. It is only in this sense, I believe, that the film gains a political value: by bringing back to the present the moments and the lived experiences of those years. In other words, the whole point in making this film was not to simply offer a portrait of remarkable personalities from the period, but rather to present common women and girls, to rediscover their experiences and the present they lived through. Although we were dealing with the past, we chose to use the present tense, to have all the people who appear in the film speak in the present. After all, the present is in a sense cinema's own tense: maybe this is why the film is able to speak to people of different generations, and to be appreciated by younger women even more than by older ones.

SANDRA LISCHI: Your work provides plenty of food for thought. As Alina observed, the work of weaving footage from different sources is accomplished in different ways in both *For One More Hour with You* and *We Want Roses Too*, which put forth in a very particular way the problem of found footage as a discourse. The film fragments reused in your works seem to have the same role as that played by a single sentence within a line of reasoning, like thinking cogs. This has not to do



The director's wife dealing with the laundry in a frame from Mario Masini's *X chiama Y* (X Calls Y, 1967); from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

exclusively with memory, emotion, or female writing, but rather with thought itself, with the way you think the organization of the material.

Ilaria's call for a respectful attitude toward archival materials is also interesting to me; I read it as an invitation toward establishing something like an ethics of found footage, which I find extremely stimulating. As we know, the methods of reusing archival materials can be very different: deliberate reversals of meaning forcefully pursued and exhibited, provocative assaults on the original images made to achieve a critical or parodic effect, translation strategies that, in order to transmit the original source, end up inevitably betraying it, at least to some extent. Yet, as Ilaria was suggesting, to betray the original is sometimes the best way to salvage its meaning. Oftentimes, the core meaning of a document is best preserved by just those translations that seem to betray it most.

Beyond this issue of translation and betrayal, the emphasis placed on the importance of preserving the aura of the source material seems of utmost relevance to me. This brings to my mind Luchino Visconti's remark about what a difference it can make when an actor in a scene has an original ancient teacup in his hands as opposed to a reproduction of one, no matter how perfect the reproduction may be. The original teacup soaks the film in an aura, a glow, a sense of authenticity that,

by including even the smallest details and the less perceptible aspects, allows the emergence in the image of a more profound and truthful meaning.

In conclusion, I would like to consider the use of sound: the very patient work of stitching, combination, and reasoning that you reserve for the words and images is performed on sound materials, too.

AM: The case of *For One More Hour with You* is different from that of *We Want Roses Too* on the level of sound. The materials used in the former film are 16mm and 8mm home movies; the images are therefore silent. The soundtrack was completely re-created by combining the recording of my voice reading the letters and the diaries, music, and a complex work of sonorization. In some sequences we synchronized the actions on-screen with a lot of offscreen sounds, which contribute to giving the images body, a kind of three-dimensional volume, straining the limits of the screen's frame. In *For One More Hour with You*, many things happen on the level of sound: closing doors, breaking windows, crashing plates, and so on. All in all, there are certain auditory events that, in the moment they present themselves, tell us something in the same way a letter does.

The case of *We Want Roses Too* is different, since many of the sound materials that came from the RAI archives, that is, from television, are tracks extracted from edited footage that often includes a speaker's voice. We also used sound from experimental films by Adriana Monti, Alberto Grifi, Mario Masini, and Annabella Miscuglio. Just as with the visual materials, we tried to adopt a most respectful approach to the sound materials. Of course the principal narrative line is conveyed by the voices associated with the three authors of the diaries, interpreted by three different actresses. Adding to all this, the film has a musical soundtrack that was expressly composed by the Italian band the Ronin.

IF: Responding to Sandra's suggestion regarding the link between translation and betrayal, it is clear that in the moment when the material is dislocated from its original context, to be placed into a new context, it becomes something different, both on the narrative level and/or on the stylistic and formal level. The "inevitability" of betraying or subverting the material belongs to the process of reuse as such; yet at the same time the practice of appropriation also guarantees the survival of archival documents, which otherwise would remain maybe completely respected, yes, but inescapably confined to the past.

I would like to cite as an example the sequence in *We Want Roses Too* with the musical theme from Giuliano Montaldo's *Sacco and Vanzetti* (1971), the famous version of "Here's to You, Nicola and Bart" by Joan Baez. The sequence is taken from a RAI news report about a family like so many others, the Rosa family. While the piece adopts the typical language of an Italian news report of the time, visually the images have an important descriptive value. The narration itself seems decidedly didactic: the family father is depicted as a rather authoritarian man who exercises strong control over his children, and the story concentrates in particular on the

relationship between this paternal figure and his oldest daughter. The young woman continues to respect her father's rules, although she is permeated by the spirit of the times, characterized by the initiatives of feminist collectives, street demonstrations, and so on. Perhaps her desire is to join the movement for women's emancipation, but the coercive presence of her father is a big obstacle. The images of the RAI report describe this situation by outlining the family's domestic routine. In one of the sequences we chose to use, the three older children, two girls and one boy, leave home in the morning to go to school, and as they see the bus, they start running to catch it; once again, the original document tends to highlight this moment merely in a descriptive way, that is, in the context of a reconstruction of a typical day in the life of these kids.

In the beginning we intended to use this sequence in the same way, that is, as a description of these people's life context. Since we began focusing on the figure of the oldest daughter, and her cultural and generational impatience toward her father's style of education, we started to realize that we could obtain a stronger effect by combining these images with others showing political demonstrations, mimosa flowers, long skirts—that is, a series of elements able to reproduce the period's aesthetics and visual imagery.⁷ The footage of the three kids running toward the bus was repeated a second time at a much slower speed, associated to a bit of Joan Baez's song, and the sound of rustling wind in the background. During the editing, Alina and I jokingly called this rustling “the winds of protest”: the idea was to suggest that around the apartment where Mr. Rosa was trying to maintain his authority over his own children, a wind was starting to blow that would at some point throw the windows wide open—a bit like the final image of Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Dreamers* (2003)—and finally bring inside the home what was going on in the outside world. The three kids seem to be “captured” by this wind, and pulled toward the bus, which, as we can imagine, will no longer simply take them to school, but will be the vehicle by which they can distance themselves from a restrictive, authoritarian context. This is a good example of reuse with a double value, where the original meaning of the images is preserved yet simultaneously subverted.

Another point in the film where our intervention shows up clearly is the sequence made from footage of a protest held in Rome, Campo de' Fiori, on March 8, 1972, taken from Alberto Grifi and Massimo Sarchielli's *Anna* (1975). Grifi had filmed the protest using video; it is one of the first Italian films shot on video. The images show close-ups of the police charging on a procession of defenseless women and children (thus presumably women with their own children) who had gone out to celebrate International Women's Day. The choice to use live recording helps to convey the militant spirit that manifests in these materials. That Grifi found himself in that piazza at that precise moment, and filmed what was happening live, was itself a political act: he was there with his video camera to bear witness to the



The Rosa children running to catch the bus in a frame from a RAI news report shot ca. 1968; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

expected violence of the police toward these women. We edited this fragment into *We Want Roses Too*, trying to respect as much as possible its nature as a document. However, at a certain point we edged in something different, obtaining an almost opposite result. During the course of the take, Grifi concentrates in particular on a woman wearing a big fur coat as she is violently clubbed by the police. The sound that accompanies the scene is distinguished by confusion and shouting. We chose to gradually eliminate the sound and apply a slow-motion technique in such a way as to focus attention on the ferocious act, and to further dramatize the moment, bringing it, I believe, to a more intimate and emotional level. It is as if we encountered the emotions and the sensations of that particular woman during that particular violent action.

This result was obtained simply by eliminating the sound, and then in a way the whole audiovisual context, thus allowing the viewer to concentrate on the emotional element connected to the technique of the live recording. Watching these images again today, I can personally perceive something like a “politics of intimacy,” a situation where an act of political denunciation is linked to the destiny of one woman and what is happening inside her. I don’t



A frame from Alberto Grifi and Massimo Sarchielli's *Anna* (1975) showing a police assault on a feminist demonstrator; from *We Want Roses Too* (2007).

know if it has ever happened to any of you to be involved in a sudden incident like this one: all at once, the sounds around you deaden, and you lose cognition of everything that surrounds you to focus uniquely on your own sensations and perceptions. This was the effect we wished to obtain; our strategy was then to subvert Grifi's formal and stylistic intention, while obviously maintaining a complete respect toward his militant cinema, in order to bring that intention into the realm of the private.

MD: I would like to ask you to reflect on the experience of "re-vision," which I consider foundational for found footage cinema: How many times do you need to see an image in order to truly see it? How can you describe this type of experience, keeping in mind that, before reusing the footage to create a new film, you need to first put yourselves in front of these documents as viewers? This condition she defines absolutely the work of the editor, but what does it mean for Alina to be a filmmaker just to the extent that she is a viewer?

IF: The condition by which an editor is above all a viewer is not specific to found footage cinema; it is true for all types of cinema. I would say that every time you see

an image, you see it truly, even if I don't believe that there exists a precise point of arrival when you work on an archival document. But not every image needs to be seen so many times. What is most important is the motivation behind the viewing: depending on the case, it can be either a technical or an emotional viewing, or even a specifically intentional viewing, such as when I look for something that I think can be useful for a particular construction I have in mind. Viewing is an integral part of editing work; if you can't watch, you'll never be an editor!

AM: Ilaria's role as a "spectator" comes constantly to the fore, whether I am searching the archives or filming, as in *Forever* and *All About You*. I'm always asking myself: "What will Ilaria say?" During both the selection of images and the shooting, I cannot forget the fact that she will be watching everything I find or shoot. I choose the images, I find them, and they attract me, because I try to see them through the editor's eyes, that is, through Ilaria's eyes. I wonder if she will like them, or at least if she will be able to see in them something that I was not able to see, and what will happen during our exchange. To date, the story of our collaboration has followed this direction, and this relationship represents a very strong, unavoidable dimension of my work.

BG: Ilaria's definition of cinema as a "politics of intimacy" seems truly illuminating to me. For example, the reuse of "political" footage like the sequence from Grifi's film starts with analysis; editing itself, as you have just described it, points to an analysis of the preexisting material. The strategy of enlarging the images as well as the work on the sound components is instrumental to investigating and revealing what lies inside the images, showing how it is possible to start with a collective scene and end up discovering a more intimate scene. I would like to pose another question, although I'm afraid it may not be answerable: Why does women's cinema so often take private life and autobiography as its starting point, but also end up creating a public discourse out of the private? Why do we need to begin from there?

IF: I'm afraid I cannot add much to that definition, "politics of intimacy." I try to apply it every day in my work as an editor. In responding to a criticism made during the presentation of *We Want Roses Too* at the Libreria delle donne in Milan, where some women complained about the absence of a reflection on the practice of separatism, so crucial in feminism throughout the 1970s, we reminded them that the film was made by an almost all-women troupe: this was already a political choice, a specific way of making movies, which implies a particular reading on many levels. But the question of why we always need to start from ourselves certainly would require a more profound reflection.

MD: I wonder if the politics of intimacy that characterizes *We Want Roses Too* can be said to be integral to *For One More Hour with You* as well. In both cases an extraordinarily courageous gesture is put into action, an exhibition of intimacy that

leads to something truly surprising and emotional. Can we say that looking for the face of a mother you never met is a political action? Or do we need another definition? In any case, it is a question of intimacy.

AM: I am too personally involved to speak objectively here. To take part in the screenings of my films, to discuss them with the audiences and accept the ways in which they react to them, constitutes a very important aspect of my activity. *For One More Hour with You* began as a totally personal, almost secret project; only later did it become a film. Inevitably the film was appropriated by the most diverse array of spectators, who imbued it with their own life experiences. This was not easy for me at first. It was not easy to hear someone say, "This is my story, you told the same story I lived through." "No," I wanted to protest, "this is not your story, it is mine!" Later, however, I began to understand the collective value of the work. Of course, to me it still remains my film, and every time I see it, it is somewhat different. It is almost like a living being that keeps changing in time as I myself change. The fact that I have learned to let it go can indicate, I think, if not exactly a political action, at least an attempt at sharing, at engaging in a dialogue with others. ■

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NOTES

1. Critical accounts of her work in English include Cristina Gamberi, “Envisioning Our Mother’s Face: Reading Alina Marazzi’s *Un’ora sola ti vorrei* and *Vogliamo anche le rose*,” and Fabiana Cecchini, “Alina Marazzi’s Women: A Director in Search of Herself Through a Female Genealogy,” both in *Italian Women Filmmakers and the Gendered Screen*, ed. Maristella Cantini (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

2. For more insights into Fraioli’s poetics of montage, see her article “Poetiche del montaggio,” *Quaderni del CSCI* 4 (2008): 46–51.

3. RAI-Radiotelevisione Italiana is Italy’s public television network.

4. The year 1977 witnessed the culmination of the protest movement initiated in 1969.

5. Monti is here referring to “one of the most interesting and original achievements” of the Italian workers’ movement, as Giuliana Bruno and Maria Nadotti call it in *Off Screen: Women and Film in Italy* (London: Routledge, 1988), 98. First established in 1974, the “150 Hours Courses” were “courses leading to elementary and secondary school diplomas” that were made available to workers wishing to improve their education: “The workers had won this concession from their employers as a contractual obligation, provided free and on factory time, and the Italian State committed itself to organize, fund, and recognize them as regular courses of study.” As Bruno and Nadotti explain, feminist groups spilled over “naturally and spontaneously into the ‘150 Hours Courses’ whenever women teachers and groups of women students met. Important experiences of collective discussion grew out of these gatherings, on themes such as health, the family, motherhood, and sexuality. . . . Undoubtedly the most original and rewarding result of women’s participation in the ‘150 Hours Courses’ took place at the school in Via Gabbro in Affori, on the outskirts of Milan. From 1974 to 1982 the same group of teachers (including Alberti, Melandri, Melchiori and Monti) and students underwent a uniquely deep, long-lasting and creative experience that went well beyond the bounds of the ‘150 Hours Courses.’ It developed into a project funded by the EEC, resulting in the formation of a complete self-managed graphic cooperative, ‘Gervasia Broxon’” (100–101). A reconstruction of Monti’s contribution to the activities of these groups is her “Introduction to the Script of the Film *Scuola senza fine*,” in *Off Screen*, 80–82. For more on the history of Italian feminism, see Fiamma Lussana, *Il Movimento Femminista in Italia. Esperienze, storie, memorie (1965–1980)* (Rome: Carocci, 2012).

6. The mission of the Fondazione Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, based in Pieve Santo Stefano, in the province of Arezzo, is to collect and preserve private and autobiographical writings.

7. Mimosa flowers are a symbol used to celebrate International Women’s Day in Italy.