

Digital enunciation devices against violence in contemporary feminist documentary: *Black Box Diaries* (2024) and *Another Body* (2023)

Dispositivos de enunciación digital contra la violencia en el documental feminista contemporáneo: Black Box Diaries (2024) y Another Body (2023)

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This article offers an analysis of the modes of enunciation in first-person documentary films that denounce cases of sexual violence, by means of case studies of the films *Black Box Diaries* and *Another Body*. The research is based on an analytical framework that draws on various theoretical approaches to the contemporary feminist documentary film. The findings reveal similarities between the two films, including the use of point-of-view shots, testimonials recorded on cellphones, and the articulation of a collective voice based on the personal experiences of the victims.

KEYWORDS: Documentary film, feminism, subjectivity, enunciation, sexual violence.

Este artículo propone un análisis de los dispositivos de enunciación en el cine documental en primera persona que denuncia casos de violencia sexual. El método consiste en el estudio de las obras Black Box Diaries y Another Body, mediante un marco de análisis basado en contribuciones teóricas sobre el documental feminista contemporáneo. Los resultados muestran similitudes entre ambas obras: planos subjetivos, comunicación testimonial con el móvil o la articulación de una colectividad a partir de las experiencias personales de las víctimas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cine documental, feminismo, subjetividad, enunciación, violencia sexual.

Este artigo propõe uma análise dos dispositivos de enunciação no cinema documental em primeira pessoa que denuncia casos de violência sexual. O método consiste no estudo das obras Black Box Diaries e Another Body, por meio de um quadro de análise baseado em contribuições teóricas sobre o documentário feminista contemporâneo. Os resultados mostram semelhanças entre ambas as obras: planos subjetivos, comunicação testemunhal por meio do celular ou a articulação de uma coletividade a partir das experiências pessoais das vítimas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cinema documental, feminismo, subjetividade, enunciação, violência sexual.

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INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have seen the consolidation of two parallel developments on the media landscape. One is the unprecedented discursive and aesthetic transformation of non-fiction filmmaking, which has moved beyond the past era of faithful representation of historical reality (Nichols, 2010) to embrace increasingly hybrid forms that combine fiction with non-fiction, along with other intertextual possibilities in contemporary media culture (Català Domènech, 2021; Mínguez Arranz, 2013, 2014; Weinrichter, 2004). The other is the growing presence of fourth-wave feminist movements on digital media platforms, with the denunciation of systemic sexual violence against women emerging as a central focus of both public debate and activist engagement (Cobo Bedía, 2019b). This convergence has resulted in the production of a growing number of non-fiction films directed by women that expose and denounce different forms of violence against women while recovering stories that had been consigned to oblivion by the androcentric gaze. In most cases these films approach their topics critically using counter-hegemonic production and filmmaking strategies (Mayer & Oroz, 2011; Oroz, 2018; Quílez Esteve & Araüna Baró, 2024).

Because of their simultaneously performative and referential nature (Bruzzi, 2000; Nichols, 2010), non-fiction films have come to constitute a space where women can adopt a more subjective perspective to explore and reflect on key concerns of fourth-wave feminist discourse because, as Oroz (2018) suggests, “the politicization of the body, sexuality, and their representation continues to constitute a central aspect of feminist critical discourse and practice” (p. 94). This type of social critique has taken on numerous forms in contemporary non-fiction filmmaking, one of the most typical being the first-person documentary (Mayer & Oroz, 2011; Quílez & Araüna, 2021), which functions as a site of representation and critical reflection that challenges patriarchal film culture while consolidating women as cinematic agents inscribed directly in the films themselves (Yu & Lebow, 2020).

This article analyzes the different modes of production and creation in contemporary non-fiction films from a gender perspective and in light of the cultural, social, and political principles of fourth-wave

feminism, while also identifying the forms of representation and enunciation of victims of gender-based violence in contemporary visual culture, particularly in narratives that straddle the boundary between fiction and non-fiction. The purpose of this analysis is to examine the narrative and aesthetic strategies used in contemporary feminist documentaries to articulate discourses against sexual violence, with a focus on the ways that the victims of that violence are inscribed in the enunciation. This question is explored through two case studies: *Black Box Diaries* (Shiori Ito, 2024) and *Another Body* (Sophie Compton & Reuben Hamlyn, 2023).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The feminist movement, activism, and sexual violence in the digital age

In the twenty-first century, the feminist movement has been characterized by what numerous theorists have labeled “fourth-wave feminism” (Chamberlain, 2017; Cobo Bedía, 2019a; Munro, 2013; Zimmerman, 2017). This movement represents the consolidation of an “affectively intense period of feminist activism” (Chamberlain, 2017, p. 12). For some authors, this fourth wave focuses mainly on sexual violence as a systemic and structural phenomenon, while also expanding its definition to raise awareness about prostitution and pornography as neoliberal forms of violence and exploitation (Cobo Bedía, 2019b).

Denouncing sexual violence as a systemic issue connects with some of the concerns of second-wave feminist movements, such as radical feminism and anti-pornography feminism (Long, 2012; Mackay, 2015), while exposing the current reality of sexual violence on the digital landscape. Phenomena such as deepfake pornography are redefining and exacerbating the ways this violence is perpetrated, turning artificial intelligence technologies into new cyberfeminist battlegrounds (Doh & Karagianni, 2024).

In the context of fourth-wave feminism, which identifies sexual violence as a systemic and structural framework of inequality, the development of these technologies represents an intensification of this violence in digital form. As Cobo Bedía (2024) argues, sexuality “in its many and varied forms constitutes a fundamental part of consumer

culture” (p. 136), and this is especially true today, when digital technologies function as catalysts for the production and dissemination of discourses such as pornography, contributing to their widespread normalization in contemporary culture and in artistic and cultural practices.

Recent studies have documented an increase in forms of sexual violence such as AI-generated deepfake pornography (Umbach et al., 2024), which thrives in the absence of adequate legal protections for its victims. This constitutes a new form of sexual abuse based on images whose inauthenticity (their consumers are often aware that they are fake) does not preclude their emotional impact (Viola & Voto, 2023). These technologies thus reproduce patriarchal violence while also automating and reconstructing it in a new digital dimension.

Fourth-wave feminism has been globalized via the Internet and digital media, which have facilitated the proliferation of “global online feminist communities” as spaces for debate and critique (Munro, 2013), and thus for new forms of feminist cyberactivism (Sánchez-Duarte & Fernández-Romero, 2017). Another common denominator of these communities is their emphasis on the intersectionality of these forms of violence to consider aspects beyond gender (Zimmerman, 2017), as well as the way they “alter and impact upon prevailing affects, adding good feelings of solidarity, proactivity and change, into what might otherwise be an unsettling and upsetting environment” (Chamberlain, 2017, p. 12).

However, this digital paradigm has also created a space for the development of reactionary anti-feminist counternarratives with equal—or even greater—impact. The phenomena described by Faludi (1993) related to the anti-feminist backlash that accompanies every advance achieved for women are amplified in the digital media space, as “popular misogyny is also, like popular feminism, networked, an interconnection of nodes in all forms of media and everyday practice” (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 2). The online environment commonly referred to as the “manosphere” (Ging, 2017; Han & Yin, 2023; Ribeiro et al., 2021) constitutes a space for anti-feminist Internet activism driven not only by political objectives but also by powerful affective dynamics

characterized by hostility, resentment, and violence (Delgado-Ontivero & Sánchez-Sicilia, 2023).

In any case, feminism has achieved a significant level of visibility and presence in the cultural and media sphere over the past decade (Keller & Ryan, 2018), giving rise to a “new cultural life of feminism” (Gill, 2016, p. 1). This consolidation on the contemporary cultural landscape operates within an “economy of visibility” in which categories such as gender “have transformed their very logics from the inside out, so that their visibility of these categories is what matters, rather than the structural ground on and through which they are constructed” (Banet-Weiser, 2018, p. 23). Even while it achieves an increased hypervisibility in media discourse and the cultural industries, contemporary feminism is facing the threat of a loss of its political and activist identity. It is therefore important to analyze feminist forms of media activism together with the way gender-based violence is constructed and represented in public discourse in this new context of feminist cyberactivism in which women are assuming agency over communication (Núñez et al., 2016, p. 863).

Feminist practices and the first person in contemporary documentaries: a collective “I”

In non-fiction filmmaking, feminism has also begun to enjoy greater visibility in the public space, as it addresses issues very familiar to the documentary form (Quílez & Araüna, 2021, p. 108). The democratization of audiovisual media that occurred in the 1970s –thanks to devices such as Super 8 and 16 mm film cameras– gave access to filmmaking to groups that had historically been excluded from the hegemonic structures of the film industry. In the case of women, it provided the opportunity to explore issues related to their gendered condition (Albuissech, 2024).

In the context of contemporary documentary production, women have repeatedly sought to challenge the androcentric gaze constructed by the power structures of the film industry (Gullette, 2004; Mulvey, 1975). As Quílez and Araüna (2021) argue, however, there is evidence that “this increased feminization is correlated with the generally lower costs of these productions compared to fiction films, given

that there are also more women working in low-budget fiction than in commercial fiction” (p. 108).

Feminist agency in filmmaking can therefore be analyzed from two perspectives, as the subject and as the object of the discourse. As Mayer and Oroz (2011) suggest, the purpose of the feminist documentary is to “make women’s stories visible” and to “change the circumstances of oppression that had silenced those stories and the circumstances that had made so many of them traumatic” (pp. 19-20).

One of the forms adopted in contemporary feminist documentary is associated with the correlation between the self-representation of women and the new discursive patterns that have emerged in non-fiction filmmaking in the twenty-first century. A profound aesthetic and discursive shift has occurred in non-fiction films toward what Català Domènech (2021) terms the “post-documentary”, whose objective is not to represent reality itself but to “generate, together with the spectator, a process of reflection on reality” (p. 82). This new context has given rise to what numerous scholars have identified as the “subjective turn” in contemporary documentary (Arnau Roselló & Gifreu Castells, 2020, p. 21), whereby the focus of the discourse is on the enunciating subject, resulting in an approach to documentary filmmaking that is much more concerned with subjectivity, thought, and emotions. This approach ties in with one of the main objectives of feminist documentaries, which is to express silenced or traumatic experiences (Mayer & Oroz, 2011), in what can be described as an “affective turn” that foregrounds the lived experience of both the filmmaker and the women she films (Arfuch, 2016), in contrast to the hierarchical perspective traditionally associated with the classical documentary (Otero-Escudero & Cobo-Durán, 2024). Through subjectivity and affect, these documentaries thus produce a “de-naturalization of the film image and a questioning of its apparently referential character” (Guillamón Carrasco, 2015, p. 287) that breaks with both the stereotypical androcentric perspective on gender diversity and the hegemonic discourses of a male-dominated film and television industry.

The predilection for subjective perspectives in feminist documentaries can be traced back to the earliest interventions by women as active agents in the film industry. As Otero-Escudero and Cobo-Durán

(2024) point out, a number of significant films made in the 1960s were subsequently screened at an exhibition titled “From Object to Subject: Documents and Documentaries from the Women’s Movement” at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1992. In this independently curated collection of 26 films, the filmmakers challenged the way that realist documentary techniques perpetuated hegemonic dynamics (p. 98). At the same time, this movement to embrace subjectivity and construct a counternarrative to the classical documentary has consolidated what Torre-Espinosa (2015) calls *cines del yo* (“cinemas of the self”), in which the filmmaker is inscribed in the soundtrack or the image and acts as the narrator “in a film that tells of realistic events that affect her life in some way” (p. 580). Often referred to as “first-person films”, these documentaries represent an approach frequently excluded from the institutional structures of the fiction film industry, providing a space where female subjects establish a dialogue, find recognition, and in some cases engage in a form of activism.

In the context of fourth-wave feminism, and particularly its “affective” dimension as advocated by Chamberlain (2017), these first-person feminist documentaries are also characterized by a number of aesthetic and narrative elements including “meta-participant observation, autobiographical perspectives, critical interrogation of archival material, and an emphasis on the material and affective conditions shaping the lives of their female or queer protagonists” (Oroz, 2018, p. 108). All these elements combine to create “intersubjective spaces” that in many cases eschew the dominant narrative form of classical documentaries, instead fostering an empathetic and affective dialogue with their audience (Oroz, 2018).

As Albuissech (2024) argues, the representation of sexual violence according to this formula is similar to that of early feminist documentaries in that it presents the point of view of the victims “beyond de-personalized statistics” (p. 202), while avoiding sensationalism and revictimization. However, the on-screen depiction of violence against women in the wake of the affective turn has sparked debate. As Gill (2016) argues, the politicization of affect runs the risk of framing systemic injustice in individualized terms. Conversely, Arfuch (2016) describes these emotions as social and cultural practices that do not

represent a form of self-expression projected outward (inside/out) but instead are integrated into the social body (outside/in) (p. 251). Feelings such as rage can therefore be understood as forces for social change while at the same time potentially being obstructive (Fernández-Romero & Zecchi, 2024).

More than a mere outpouring of emotions with the aim of rendering them visible, the subjective affective turn represents action –and reaction– from a politicized, activist perspective. As Mayer and Oroz (2011) argue, autobiography is a key approach used in feminism to construct a simultaneously individual and collective voice that is essential to cinematic discourse. Feminist autobiographical documentaries thus “position the self in relation to the terms that revolve around the female self, particularly the home, the family, and intimacy” (p. 31).

In first-person documentaries, cinematic enunciation may take a variety of forms, as although these films are invariably subjective, they are not necessarily autobiographical (Fernández Meneses, 2023). The inscription in these films of their creators is explored in contemporary documentary theory through the analysis of enunciation, i.e., the processes that turn a film into a work of non-fiction, rather than that film’s condition as referential truth (Aguilar Alcalá, 2018). Leaving aside the ontological debates related to categories such as *autobiography* and *autofiction*, and the obvious performative dimension that such films entail (Bruzzi, 2000; Nichols, 2010), this subjectivity, understood in the feminist context as both a condition and a social movement, operates in and reflects on the interconnected space between the individual and collective dimensions of filmmaking practice. As Mayer and Oroz (2011) argue, the possibilities of both realist and experimental autobiography have been the subject of open debate in contemporary feminist documentary theory, as each one, in different ways, “claims and at the same time destabilizes authorship and authenticity” (p. 29).

Enunciation in the feminist documentary operates as a productive tension between the intimate expression and representation of the individual and the evocation and identification of a collective that inevitably gives rise to a shared filmmaking practice. As Mayer and Oroz (2011) explain, the pleasure of feminist documentary production arises from many factors, including “the possibility of a complete self (not stable or

unified, but complex and multiple); of expressing that self through the possibilities offered by filmmaking technology; and through the tactile, phenomenological interplay of the audiovisual experience” (p. 41).

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHOD

This article analyzes the enunciative mechanisms employed in contemporary feminist documentaries that expose cases of sexual violence. To this end, it presents two qualitative case studies of the recent documentaries *Black Box Diaries* (Shiori Ito, 2024) and *Another Body* (Sophie Compton & Reuben Hamlyn, 2023). The first stage of the research involved a review of the scholarly literature on non-fiction films, the emergence of subjectivity in productions of this kind, the contemporary feminist documentary, and the concept of first-person films. This literature review facilitated the identification of a series of key theoretical questions that were then applied to the case studies through the development of an analytical framework.

This analytical framework consists of two main dimensions, each in turn made up of various categories. The first focuses primarily on representation in the documentary film, with the aim of identifying how each film constructs its non-fiction discourse in relation to documentary theory, with particular attention to the modes of representation described by Nichols (2010). At the same time, given the increasing hybridity between fiction and documentary in contemporary culture, this dimension also includes a second analytical category with the objective of determining how these two domains intersect in the films chosen for study. The second dimension of the analytical framework is concerned specifically with the forms of enunciation in the films studied in accordance with the theoretical framework applied, related to the role of subjectivity in contemporary documentary and feminist filmmaking. These categories are presented in Table 1.

The application of this analytical framework to the case studies will shed light on the forms of enunciation used in contemporary feminist documentaries, particularly in relation to sexual violence. The analysis of the two films reveals the adoption of different creative approaches,

TABLE 1
ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES BY FORM OF ENUNCIATION

Category	Description
Narrator	This category involves defining whether it is a first-person narration and whether it is biographical or autobiographical, but also whether the figures of narrator, protagonist, and director are the same.
Inscription of subjectivity	This category involves determining the elements of cinematic language used to inscribe the subjectivity of the enunciator; this will also consider narrative questions such as focalization of the narrative and its adaptation to the screen based on the concept of <i>ocularization</i> as defined by Gaudreault and Jost (1995).
Individual-collective connection	In accordance with the review of the literature on feminist contemporary documentary, this category involves the analysis of the construction of a collective subject based on an individual experience, as well as the mechanisms characteristic of film or documentary used to suggest this subject.

Source: The authors.

but also numerous similarities that can be identified between them. To explore these questions, the case study method was complemented with a comparative analysis of *Black Box Diaries* and *Another Body*.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the opening sequence of *Black Box Diaries* (2024), the filmmaker, journalist Shiori Ito (who is also the film's protagonist and narrator), explains the significance of the film's title, which refers to a phrase used repeatedly by the prosecutor that explains why the judicial system is so incapable of adjudicating cases of sexual violence. Throughout the documentary, Ito confronts the limitations not only of the courts but also of law enforcement, the media, political institutions, and ultimately society as a whole, in the case of rape she brought against the journalist Noriyuki Yamaguchi in 2015. Ito documents each stage of a process that culminates in her legal victory in 2022.

On the other hand, *Another Body* (2023) opens with a university student, Taylor Klein, discovering that someone has created a fake online profile in her name, using pornographic videos in which her face has been digitally inserted into images of other women's bodies by means of deepfake technology. Through Taylor's experience, the documentary exposes the growing use of this technology as a new way of perpetrating sexual violence. Over the course of the film, she connects with other women who have experienced similar forms of abuse and embarks on a quest for justice that ultimately reveals the inability of the legal system to protect victims of this new type of violence.

Documentary representation

While Nichols (2010) suggests that a single documentary may incorporate several of the modes of representation described in his work, this analysis considers only the most prominent in *Black Box Diaries* (2024) and *Another Body* (2023). As the protagonist of the first film, Shiori Ito interacts constantly with other people throughout her investigation, as a continuous participant in the story. This places *Black Box Diaries* in the category of the participatory mode, although it is even more exemplary of the performative mode, which, according to Nichols (2010), is characterized by the predominance of experiential, affective, and situated forms of knowledge. The performative mode demonstrates that knowledge may be more effectively derived from personal experience, thereby underscoring "the complexity of our knowledge of the world by emphasizing its subjective and affective dimension" (p. 202). As Weinrichter (2004) argues:

The performative mode stands in opposition to the observational mode due to its insistence on foregrounding the documentary maker's "affective" response to reality; but it also stands in opposition to the participatory mode, as while the latter relies entirely on witnesses, the performative mode presents the subject's intervention as a speech act by someone responding both to reality and to the camera (p. 50).

In *Another Body* the reproduction of documentary modes is different; in particular, the participatory mode is absent, as the protago-

nist and narrator of the story is not the same person as the director—the film was directed by Sophie Compton and Reuben Hamlyn—and there is no direct interaction between them. Instead, Taylor Klein is the one who drives the narration. In this case, the performative mode is combined with the reflexive mode, which is characterized by a questioning of documentary conventions and forms of representation. In this way, the film raises doubts about the “indexical bond between an image and what it represents” (Nichols, 2010, p. 197).

Indeed, a key aspect of *Another Body* is the fact that Taylor Klein does not really exist, as this is the story of a young woman who desires to remain anonymous and therefore participates in the film with her name and face changed to protect her identity. Both the material filmed for the documentary and the archival footage provided by the victim have been altered using deepfake technology, with her face replaced by the face of an actor. The same strategy is applied to Julia, another victim who wished to preserve her anonymity. While the victims’ identities are maintained through their stories and their voices, the documentary breaks with the convention of indexicality by appropriating deepfake technology precisely to draw attention to the loss of that indexical relationship.

The use of deepfake technology in this way is the most significant aspect of *Another Body* in terms of the hybridization of reality and fiction in the two case studies, although the main reason for its use in this case is to protect the victims’ identities. The narrative of the film is thus clearly non-fiction, yet at the same time the filmmaker upends the traditional claims of the documentary form to objectivity by presenting images mediated by digital technology. This choice does not undermine the veracity of the story, but it does demonstrate that in contemporary documentaries—or audiovisual productions in general—the image can no longer be accepted as the point of reference for determining authenticity, as that determination will now depend on a discourse capable of demarcating the boundaries between fiction and the historical world.

Beyond these digitally altered images, the film’s visual language is characterized throughout by overt mediation. With recurring CGI reconstructions, video game footage, and web interfaces, there is barely any room left for the kind of transparent cinematic image that normally

serves as a signifier of the claim to objectivity that characterizes the documentary genre.

Black Box Diaries establishes its commitment to non-fiction from the outset with Shiori Ito's declaration that the film's main objective is to tell the truth, an intention in keeping with her job as a journalist. By following the director-protagonist throughout the investigation, the documentary is able to present events directly as they occur over a period of several years, although at times the referential continuity is disrupted because the conditions of the investigation make certain encounters impossible to film. At these moments, Ito makes use of the neutrality offered by images of the city to accompany certain statements presented in voice-overs, such as the testimony of a police investigator who wished to remain anonymous. In this way, the film documents what cannot be documented visually, reflecting the difficulties associated with an investigative process that is neither straightforward nor transparent for the victims, while attempting to keep within the boundaries of non-fiction –and more specifically, journalistic– filmmaking. Thus, in order to provide more material of relevance to the investigation, the documentary includes images that are significant for their probative value, such as security camera footage of the entrance to the hotel where Noriyuki Yamaguchi committed the rape, and recordings of meetings with the anonymous police informant (although the informant himself is not shown on screen), as well as material that serves as victim testimony, such as videos of Ito speaking directly to the camera on her cellphone and other footage showing her everyday private life.

Modes of enunciation

This section of the analytical framework is divided into three categories: the narrating instance, the inscription of subjectivity, and the connection between the individual and the collective. In relation to the first category, *Black Box Diaries* (2024) is notable for the convergence of the roles of protagonist, narrator, and director. The film's autobiographical discourse is articulated through elements such as superimposed excerpts from Ito's diary that serve to structure the events, Ito herself speaking directly to the camera, first-person video recordings, video

footage of her family and her everyday life and, in general, her constant on-screen presence.

Another Body (2023) similarly establishes an equivalence between victim and narrator through a first-person account centered on Taylor Klein's personal experience, although in this case, the protagonist-narrator is not the director as well. The documentary thus adopts a biographical rather than an autobiographical approach, although the first-person narration inscribes Taylor's subjectivity by means of numerous point-of-view shots, particularly the ones showing the interfaces of websites, social media platforms, and messaging apps.

The second analytical category involves this inscription of subjectivity in the two documentaries. As noted above, the subjective perspective is constructed in *Another Body* through the point of view, specifically by means of a primary internal ocularization technique that allows the spectator to see what Taylor herself sees. The insertion of personal videos from her time at university—including footage that reveals the atmosphere of toxic masculinity created by some of her male classmates— and from her childhood, along with views of her social media profile and videos recorded directly on her cellphone, serve to reinforce the spectator's sense of closeness to Taylor and to structure the narrative around her lived experience and her personal perspective. In this sense, it is significant that the film begins with a view of Taylor's gaze, where we see the pornographic content reflected in her pupil, foreshadowing the importance of the victim's perspective in the film and the shock caused to her by seeing her own face on another person's body. This idea is reinforced later when Taylor describes the disturbing experience of confronting her digitally manipulated image.

The inscription of subjectivity in *Black Box Diaries* also makes use of some of the elements described above, such as point-of-view shots, first-person narration, and excerpts from the protagonist's diary. Although the documentary is profoundly shaped by Shiori Ito's perception and by her narration of the events and her emotions, a rupture is discernible in the sense that, although Ito is the director, she is not always the person operating the camera. This results in the establishment of an external view of Ito that sometimes distances her from the spectator. However, this decision is actually in keeping with the director's

stated objective to conduct a journalistic investigation, as she herself explains at one point in the film: “The only motivation of talking about this, being alive, doing this, is the way for me to be a journalist, to look [at] this, what happened to me, as a sort of third person”. This external gaze, which portrays Ito from a third-person perspective, was thus a technique she chose, which, despite its distancing effect, is equally mediated by her personal perspective.

The third analytical category involves the individual-collective connection in the two films studied. It is notable in each case that the victim’s story begins from an individualized point of view and then progressively shifts toward a collective subject represented by women in general. In *Black Box Diaries*, Shiori Ito’s investigation coincided with the rise of the #MeToo movement, a fact that turned her into a prominent public figure in Japanese society. This is reflected in the documentary, which at the same time frames her experience as part of a broader pattern of widespread systemic violence, and which begins with a content warning to alert viewers who may themselves have experienced sexual violence. This expression of the collective is especially evident in a public event where Ito speaks out against sexual violence to an audience including many women. Fragmented editing showing the women present at the event without focusing on their faces or individual identities (using shots taken from side angles or from behind, detail shots or blurred images) suggests this idea of a collective voice.

In *Another Body*, the violence suffered by Taylor Klein is situated within a broader context by considering the social problem posed by the use of deepfake technology, the existence of online communities in which women suffer such violence on a daily basis, and the identification of other victims of deepfake pornography. At one point in the film, a rapid succession of numerous pixelated images of women underscores both the persistent nature and the global scale of this type of abuse. This point is also highlighted by the presentation of messages extracted directly from online spaces associated with the manosphere. When Taylor contacts the influencer Gibi to inform her that she has also been a victim of this violence, Gibi makes use of her visibility on social media to raise awareness about the issue, prompting responses from numerous women who share their own experiences.

However, both films also point to another collective voice, in this case, one marked by reactionary and toxic behavior, as both stories tell of violence perpetrated by individuals who themselves form part of a community. In *Another Body*, this collective voice is that of the online communities of the manosphere, while *Black Box Diaries* exposes a network with political influence that protects the rapist. Both films also reveal the failure of institutional mechanisms to deliver justice in cases of sexual violence, in addition to the resistance and hostility faced by victims from sectors of society that continue to promote sexist attitudes. In Shiori Ito's film, one notable scene features a series of voice-overs of men spouting misogynistic remarks aimed at discrediting her testimony following the press conference at which she publicly disclosed the assault she had suffered. The voices serve as the soundtrack to a low-angle shot showing the feet of pedestrians walking along a crowded city street, suggesting that such criticisms are common reactions that the victims of sexual violence are constantly subjected to.

CONCLUSIONS

Through an analysis of two recent films, *Black Box Diaries* (Shiori Ito, 2024) and *Another Body* (Sophie Compton & Reuben Hamlyn, 2023), this article has critically examined the modes of representation and enunciation adopted in contemporary documentaries by women who have been victims of sexual violence. Applying an analytical framework organized around the categories of *documentary representation* and *modes of enunciation*, the findings show that the presence of the performative mode is significant in both films. The reflexive mode is also prominent in Compton and Hamlyn's documentary, primarily due to its appropriation of deepfake technology. This situates the film—in strictly formal terms—on the boundary between fiction and non-fiction, by virtue of its questioning of the image's indexical relationship to reality.

The predominance of a performative approach foregrounds the subjectivity of the protagonist, who in Shiori Ito's film is also the narrator and director. Conversely, the protagonist in *Another Body* is also the narrator but not the director, which means that this second film

cannot be classified as autobiographical. These findings support Arfuch's (2016) argument that contemporary documentary locates the experience of either the filmmaker or the woman portrayed at the center of the narrative. Moreover, in consonance with Bruzzi's (2000, p. 6) conception of performativity, the performative mode functions not only as a means of constructing a subjective perspective but also as a source of credibility and authenticity in feminist documentaries. A diverse range of signifiers for expressing subjectivity have been identified, including the use of point-of-view shots, primary internal ocularization, personal or family footage, and cellphone recordings as first-person testimony. Both documentaries are also notable for the use of images taken with a diverse range of recording devices, including the cellphone, which is used in both films as a testimonial medium that facilitates not only the direct denunciation of sexual violence but also the expression of emotions throughout the process documented in each case. On the other hand, the extensive use of archival material is in keeping with the aesthetic and narrative features of first-person feminist filmmaking described by Oroz (2018).

Another focus of analysis in this study is the connection between the individual and the collective. In both films, the performative mode begins with the expression of individual subjectivity before expanding toward broader social processes (Nichols, 2010). In this way, they chart a trajectory from the personal experiences of Shiori Ito and Taylor Klein to a collective subject that fosters community bonds and practices of resistance. At the same time, both films expose communities structured around the perpetration and normalization of violence against women. This issue is particularly prominent in *Another Body*, where the presence of the virtual space is constantly visible in the form of the website interfaces that host this violence. However, the documentary ultimately inscribes these same digital environments with a positive dimension as spaces for denunciation and the formation of protective networks for victims.

In different ways, the two films analyzed demonstrate how contemporary fourth-wave feminist documentaries are able to combine the enunciative and aesthetic resources of contemporary non-fiction filmmaking to denounce sexual violence. In a context characterized by

the ubiquitous presence of anti-feminist counternarratives, the analytical framework proposed here offers a productive critical approach to the study of contemporary visual culture, pointing to promising possibilities for future research, particularly in light of the increasing hybridization of fiction and non-fiction in contemporary film production.

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