

INTERACTION, RESISTANCE AND COOPERATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FILMED SUBJECT'S ROLE IN AND INFLUENCE ON THEIR FILM*

JUANJO BALAGUER

I. INTRODUCTION: DIALECTICS AND AUTHORSHIP

Studies of documentary films have tended to overlook the active role of the people filmed. The relationship between filmmaker and filmed subject has also rarely been addressed, despite the fact that the creative process of making a documentary involves a complex interaction between them. Brian Winston (2013) has pointed out that filmed subjects are sometimes exploited (whether intentionally or not) in the filmmaking process, while Bill Nichols (2010) has described the frictions that can occur between the two as a result of the imposition of the filmmaker's authorial vision. This can negatively affect the people portrayed and their perception of a story that usually involves a part of their own lives.

Kate Nash (2010) explores this relationship in her study of the documentary *Molly and Mobarak* (2003), noting that filmmaker and filmed subject

have a kind of mutual dependence, as their interaction is characterised by the need to cooperate and the expression of acts of resistance aimed at influencing each other. In this way, Nash identifies a more complex approach to the power relations in documentary creation that eschews visions that serve only the filmmaker's role. From this perspective, a film is understood as a discourse mediated by the different voices that participate in its articulation rather than merely the autonomous expression of the filmmaker's intention.

The notion of the *auteur* as the source of a film's meaning has been central to film criticism, particularly since François Truffaut and the French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinema* began promoting the concept of the *politique des auteurs* in the 1950s. In reaction against this approach are numerous critical revisions that conceive of a film as a dynamic space in which different perspectives and discourses coexist, where the director's position should not be the sole focus

of the analysis (John Caughie, 1981). Similarly rejecting the idea of single authorship, in the 1960s numerous filmmakers began forming groups to work together on collective film productions (Monterrubio, 2016), generally in the field of militant cinema. The same decade was also marked by a number of collaborative filmmaking initiatives that challenged the notion of the *auteur* and the conventional creative process that locates the filmmaker outside the context being filmed in a way that precludes any meaningful interaction with the people on the other side of the camera. This cooperative method recognises the importance of including these people in the construction of the narrative.

Beyond these collective and collaborative perspectives, there are a number of cases in the history of documentary film where people have responded to their own portrayal in a film with an outrage, disappointment or simple indifference that has influenced or altered the filmmaker's vision. Jean-Louis Comolli, who also explores the relationship between filmmaker and filmed subject, proposes an approach that can shed some light on this tension, as he points out that the people portrayed in a documentary confront a duality: "their reality, which we came to film, and the other reality of the film that is being made" (2017: 140).

An emblematic example of the complex relationship between filmmaker and filmed subject can be found in the documentary *The Things I Cannot Change* (Tanya Ballantyne, 1967), produced by the National Film Board of Canada (NFBC). This film portrays the daily life of a Montreal family struggling to get by. Peter K. Wiesner (1992) explains that the exposure of the family's life in this documentary when it was broadcast on television led to their being ridiculed by their neighbours. He also suggests that this experience prompted people working on documentary films to reflect on the ethical consequences of filming and exposing people's private lives. Similarly, Marit Kathryn Corneil (2012) notes that:

in most historical accounts, the debate that arose after the screening of *The Things I Cannot Change* became the seedbed for some ideas concerning a more ethical use of documentary. The most pressing issue was the relationship of the filmmaker to his or her subject. (Corneil, 2012: 22)

In an effort to define this problem, Brenda Longfellow (2010) argues that the observational documentary style of *The Things I Cannot Change* resulted in the portrayal of different everyday situations experienced by the family without offering any suggestions for how their condition might be improved. According to Longfellow, the family members "remain objects of a discourse rather than subjects, as recipients of middle-class sympathy (or aversion) and state largesse" (Longfellow, 2010: 163). As Wiesner (1992) points out, to avoid repeating the harm caused by this film in their subsequent initiatives the team behind the NFBC's Challenge for Change program tried to ensure the active participation of the people filmed in the creation process. Longfellow (2010) also makes reference to this shift in focus, describing the redefinition of the power relationship between film crews and communities in the interests of supporting the latter and prioritising their self-representation.

The work of Jorge Sanjinés and Grupo Ukamau demonstrates the relationship of mutual influence between filmmakers and their filmed subjects. As detailed in his book (1979), Sanjinés and this film collective developed an approach to filmmaking aimed at creation in collaboration with the community. This approach necessarily entailed a learning process, as Sanjinés points out in relation to one of Grupo Ukamau's first films, *Blood of the Condor* (Yawar Mallku, 1969). In an interview with Ignacio Ramonet in 1977 (included in the aforementioned book), Sanjinés describes an evolution that began with this film, which did not achieve the expected result and was not well received by the target audience, i.e. the rural Indigenous population. For Sanjinés, the problem was

cultural and reflected the need to find a language in consonance with the “collectivist culture” (1979: 155) of that community. Sanjinés contrasts the reception of *Blood of the Condor* with that of *The Principal Enemy* (Jatun auka, 1974), a subsequent film that benefited from substantial community participation. A few years earlier, the evolution of Grupo Ukamau had also led to the production of *The Night of San Juan* (El coraje del pueblo, 1971), a film in which the community had also participated directly.

In another interview (with Pedro Arellano Fernández and Graciela Yépez in 1977, also published in the book), Sanjinés discusses this evolution again, this time with reference to the film *Get Out of Here!* (¡Fuera de aquí!, 1977). This film’s positive reception contrasts with previous experiences in which the community had understood the narrative as a discourse “looking in from the outside or down from above” (Sanjinés, 1979: 144). For the Bolivian director, this evolution demonstrates that they had managed to develop “a language consistent with Andean culture” (Sanjinés, 1979: 144). This involved a change to Grupo Ukamau’s filmmaking approach, with significant implications for the cinematic language and expressive strategies used to articulate the film:

We believe that the way to make a film should be the result of very careful observation of the culture of a community. We thus also began to feel, for example, that close-ups were an obstacle to a clear understanding of our purpose. We noticed that formally the film removed them from reality, created an obstacle for them. That is why we now use long shots, wide shots. (Sanjinés, 1979: 155)

Dennis Hanlon (2010) explores the shift in Grupo Ukamau’s cinematic aesthetics, suggesting that after the screening of *Blood of the Condor* (1969), Jorge Sanjinés probably recognised the use of the hegemonic cinematic language in the film, especially close-ups and elliptical narrative structures (Hanlon, 2010), techniques that he would therefore subsequently reject. According

to Hanlon, the filmmaker transformed his technical approach in an effort to adopt an Indigenous perspective and aesthetic. This meant avoiding certain elements that had been present in *Blood of the Condor* (1969), such as the focus on the individual, close-up shots and the narrative strategy of suspense. Instead, Grupo Ukamau adopted a new perspective that changed the individual focus to a collective one, while also including a narrator who eliminated the intrigue and replacing the close-ups with long shots or sequence shots (Hilari Sölle, 2019). This approach essentially entailed the adoption of “a series of aesthetic proposals that considered the worldview of Indigenous peoples” (Quiroga San Martín, 2014: 108).

Although Grupo Ukamau’s films are not documentaries, they were all made with the involvement of people and communities they filmed, who were not film industry professionals, and the narration focuses on their story, thereby establishing an interaction and a representation similar to those that can be found in documentary films. Both this example and the experience of the NFBC after the release of *The Things I Cannot Change* demonstrate that the use of certain aesthetic techniques has consequences affecting the depiction and the experience of the people filmed. They also reveal that the interaction of these people with the filmmakers can lay the foundations for a collective reflection and introduce changes to the narrative and the cinematic aesthetics, with effects on the authorial logic so prevalent in cinema. The result may be the application of new approaches and the expression of greater creative diversity in film production.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

This article offers an analysis of the role of the filmed subjects in filmmaking—mainly in the documentary genre—as a result of their interaction with the film crew. The relationship between these two groups has occasionally given rise to a

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revision of the narrative and aesthetic approaches that defined the filmmakers' original vision. In some cases, this has culminated in the production of new films intended to include the perspective of the people filmed, challenging the idea of the film as the work of a single *auteur*. This analysis underscores the importance of these subjects and their active role in film creation, taking into account that their influence is often overlooked because all creative and discursive responsibility is generally attributed to the filmmaker.

The objective of this article is therefore to assess the potential influence of the people filmed in a cinematic production through their interaction with the filmmaker or creative team. More specifically, this influence is evaluated in relation to the aesthetic elements of the film and to the changes it can make to the depiction of the filmed subjects.

The research for this article thus involved a qualitative method based on case studies. The cases selected for analysis facilitate the evaluation of the filmed subject's influence as they consider multiple approaches to a community by the same director or creative team. This allows a comparative analysis between the first film, which is dominated by the filmmaker's vision, and the second, which includes the perspective of the group represented in the wake of their criticism of the first film, thereby reflecting the active role and in-

fluence of the people filmed. Although these case studies constitute a tentative form of research, given that the results depend on the unique nature of each filmmaking experience, they can nevertheless shed light on a question that has rarely been analysed. In this case, the research serves to identify certain specific ways in which the influence of the filmed subject is made evident.

The first case study focuses on the filmmaker Chris Marker, who directed the documentary *Be Seeing You* (*À bientôt j'espère*, 1967) with his SLON collective and with Mario Marret, documenting the workers' strike at the Rhodiaceta textile factory in Besançon, France. After screening the film, the negative criticism of its subjects led Marker and SLON to adopt a different approach in their next film, the documentary *Classe de lutte* [Class of Struggle] (1969), made together with the Medvedkin Group, which is credited with authorship of the film.

The second case study is more recent: director Pedro Costa's film *Ossos* [Bones] (1997), the first film in the trilogy about the Lisbon neighbourhood of Fontainhas. In contrast to Marker's documentary, *Ossos* did not receive negative criticism from its subjects, although they did ask Costa to portray them more directly and authentically (Neyrat, 2011). This request resulted in the documentary *In Vanda's Room* (*No quarto da Vanda*, 2000). This film has been chosen for analysis—rather than his subsequent film *Colossal Youth* (*Juventude em Marcha*, 2006)—because it was Costa's first attempt at a reinvention of his filmmaking approach after his first exploration of Fontainhas in *Ossos*. In this regard, Gonzalo de Lucas (2009) argues that the history of these three films constitutes a "self-critical process to which the filmmaker subjects his first film on Fontainhas with *Vanda*" (De Lucas, 2009: 17-18). For de Lucas, "*Ossos* is a very worthy film, but the other two reveal its more idealistic, romantic tendency, its reliance on a restrained *mise-en-scène* and a measured style" (De Lucas, 2009: 18).

To study the films, Francesco Casetti and Federico Di Chio's (1991) contributions to film analysis are taken as a reference. These authors propose a process of textual analysis that involves breaking down the object of study in order to examine its constituent parts, and then recomposing it in order to understand its overall construction. The films are analysed using this method, and then the first and second approaches are compared and contrasted to deduce the influence of the subject filmed based on the aesthetic and narrative changes identified.

The examination of two case studies further supports the objectives of this research because it allows for the comparison of Chris Marker's and Pedro Costa's respective experiences, providing evidence of the different effects that the filmed subject's interaction with and influence on the filmmaker may have on the film in question.

3. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

3.1 Chris Marker and the SLON collective: *Be Seeing You* (1967) and *Classe de lutte* (1969)

Chris Marker's collective filmmaking experience began with the SLON (*Service de Lancement des Oeuvres Nouvelles*) collective in 1967. According to Trevor Stark (2012), the French filmmaker received a letter from Besançon while he was editing the film *Far from Vietnam* (*Loin du Vietnam*, 1967). The workers at the Rhodiaceta factory in the aforementioned French city had declared a strike and were occupying the factory. After receiving the news, Marker and his team travelled to Besançon on various occasions to work on a documentary. The result was *Be Seeing You* (1967), co-directed with Mario Marret and the SLON collective.

As Lupton (2005) and Stark (2012) both observe, the film received significant criticism from the factory workers, as the director was accused of interpreting the situation through a romantic prism; he was dismissed as incompetent and even

described as having exploited the people who had taken part in the film. Others complained that their demands had not been accurately portrayed and that women only appeared in the film as wives rather than as workers or activists. This experience made Marker aware of the difficulties associated with representing others: "we will always be at best well-intentioned explorers, more or less friendly, but from the outside; [...] the cinematic representation and expression of the working class will be its own work" (Stark, 2012: 126).

This experience informed the making of Chris Marker and SLON's second film in Besançon. The Medvedkin Group, which included some of the factory workers, was founded specifically to make the film, in keeping with Marker's realisation cited above. This second production was thus a collaboration between this group and the SLON collective. The Medvedkin Group was characterised by a de-professionalised approach and "a conception of cinema as a dialogic relation between the film and the filmed" (Stark, 2012: 133). The result, *Classe de lutte* (1969), was credited to dozens of individuals along with Chris Marker. One of its aims was to correct the limitations identified in *Be Seeing You* (Lupton, 2005). Chris Marker and SLON thus took a step back to cede authorship to the Medvedkin Group, which was founded specifically in response to the criticisms made by the members of the French collective in relation to the first film. This group continued to operate afterwards, and a second Medvedkin Group was founded at a Peugeot factory in Sochaux-Montbéliard (Stark, 2012), making films such as *Les trois-quarts de la vie* [*Three Quarters of a Life*] (1971).

In their first documentary on Rhodiaceta, Marker, Marret and the SLON collective explored the strike and the living conditions of the factory workers. The film is marked by a *cinéma vérité* aesthetic, including interviews that expose the involvement of the technical crew. However, some of the film is characterised by an observational approach, where the filmmaker is present in the

situations he films but does not intervene in them. At the same time, the documentary sometimes adopts an expository perspective, prioritising the voice-over of a narrator—whom we identify with the director. This approach is more evident at the end of the film, when the voice-over interprets the events and takes stock of what the strike achieved.

Notable among the characters featured is the activist Georges Maurivard, who is introduced by the voice-over at the beginning of the film. His prominence from the documentary's opening sequences, along with the close-up shots used to show him, frame him as a sort of protagonist, or at least as a symbolic representative of the movement. Maurivard is the first to be interviewed, and he talks about his history as an activist. This is followed by interviews with various workers (about ten in all) offering different details and perspectives on a range of topics, constructing a collective narrative that describes the material conditions of the factory workers: the strike, the union, the importance of culture, communism or working hours.

The representation of the role of women throughout the film warrants a separate discussion. As those critical of the film complained at the time it was screened, women are essentially relegated to the role of wives. In fact, the first woman to speak (Suzanne Zedet, who would later have a leading role in *Classe de lutte*) appears relatively late in the film. Moreover, women's contributions are always very brief and invariably made in the context of interviews with their husbands. They are occasionally framed in close-ups, in what seems an attempt to discern their opinions from their expressions, but ultimately what stands out about the women in the film is their silence, in contrast to their husbands' constant speaking. There is one sequence in which one of the women acquires greater importance, hinting at an interest in giving her more attention, but this fails to counteract the overall male-dominated perspective of the film. The sequence in ques-

tion ends with the woman's husband leaving the house to go to work, while she is shown again, left behind at home. The scene that follows is of the husband at a meeting, at which the woman's absence precludes any possibility of depicting her as a political subject.

Be Seeing You clearly adheres to the classic "I speak about them to you" formulation described by Bill Nichols (2010), while *Classe de lutte* marks a shift towards an "I (or we) speak about us to you" formulation. The first film always features the presence of someone external to the story being told, such as Chris Marker or his film crew. However, it is notable for one scene that shows everything from the perspective of one of the workers, Georges Lièvre-mont, who talks about the inequality between employers and workers while we see a POV shot of someone driving a car. He tells us he always walks to the factory, while his boss travels by car, which seems to suggest that it is the employer's point of view that we are seeing on screen; however, at one point Lièvre-mont remarks that he would like to be in the boss's position, suggesting that the point of view could be either the employer's (as seems to be the case initially, reflecting reality) or the worker's (representing a desire or hope). The camera moves on with the vehicle, which reaches a yard where the workers are looking on, seeming to indicate that we are in fact viewing the scene from Lièvre-mont's point of view.

Chris Marker and SLON's application of the "I (or we) speak about us to you" formulation in their second film on Besançon is reflected in the less important role played by the external narrator. While it is still used in a few moments in *Classe de lutte*, in *Be Seeing You* its use is consistent throughout the film. The narrator in *Classe de lutte* conveys an idea of the coexistence of multiple voices that give the film a kind of polyphony, in contrast to the dominance of the external narrator in *Be Seeing You*.

Moreover, in the second film Suzanne Zedet is given a leading role, with the narration articulat-

ed around her experience. In this sense, Zedet's prominence contrasts with Maurivard's presence in the first film, as while Maurivard is shown at a distance as a key character viewed by the narrator, who constructs a discourse around him, Zedet replaces the external narrator to some extent. In short, the narrative in *Be Seeing You* is plural but mediated by the point of view of an external subject, while in *Classe de lutte* the story is told from the perspective of the group of workers, and especially Suzanne Zedet.

The process of politicising the protagonist and her involvement in the strike as an activist constitutes the main theme of a film in which Zedet serves as a symbol for the other activists. In this way, the documentary addresses one of the most significant criticisms made against *Be Seeing You*: the relatively insignificant presence of women. The film thus begins with Zedet, in a close-up while "*La era está pariendo un corazón*" ("The Age Is Giving Birth to a Heart") by Cuban protest singer Silvio Rodríguez plays on the soundtrack. The camera then follows her through an editing room where she sees her own face on a screen, followed by a group shot of women walking. Thus begins a story with a perspective that is drastically different from the one taken in the previous film.

On the other hand, interviews are still a key feature of *Classe de lutte*, which can be divided into two blocks presenting moments during and after the strike, with March 1969 as a boundary marker between them. The first block focuses on Zedet as the character driving the narrative, showing her interest in activism, her speeches to the crowd, her everyday life and her family. The second block, on the other hand, focuses on Zedet's assessment of her activism, but always mediated by an interviewer's questions.

3.2. Pedro Costa: *Ossos* (1997) and *In Vanda's Room* (2000)

After making his second film, *Down to Earth* (Casa de Lava, 1994), on Cape Verde, the Portuguese

filmmaker Pedro Costa visited Lisbon's Fontainhas neighbourhood, home to some of the relatives of the people he had filmed on the archipelago (Salvador Corretger, 2009). His exploration of the Fontainhas neighbourhood resulted in *Ossos* (1997), a fiction film featuring both professional actors and local residents with no acting experience. Although *Ossos* was successful, for his second film in the same neighbourhood, *In Vanda's Room* (2000), Costa decided to dispense with the hassles of a normal filming schedule. This time, Costa would attempt not only to enter the social spaces where the people portrayed actually live, but also to interact more actively with them with the aim of integrating their ideas into the story being told.

Costa's change of perspective between the two films was inspired by his contact with the people of Fontainhas. The filmmaker's dissatisfaction after the première of *Ossos* and the influence of the Fontainhas locals (especially Vanda Duarte) on his subsequent film are reflected in statements he himself has made. In one interview, he expresses his discontent with *Ossos*, which in his opinion was "incomplete and quite cowardly, because it is protected by filmmaking, by the production team" (Neyrat, 2011: 31). He explains that Vanda, the star of the second film (who had also played an important role in *Ossos*), told him: "you are an artist and I don't understand any of this film" (Neyrat, 2011: 44). He describes his interaction with the people who lived in the neighbourhood as follows:

The people of Fontainhas asked me for more, in the political sense, in the sense of telling me: "You have to do things more directly, you have to show other things, you are hiding too much, you are hiding us" [...]. There are forces in the neighbourhoods, young people, there are sages who say to me: "In any case, you could show the hardships we have" (Neyrat, 2009: 44).

Pedro Costa stresses Vanda's influence on *In Vanda's Room*, even suggesting that she should have appeared in the credits as a co-producer (Desiere, 2021). He also explains that neither he nor

the people of Fontainhas were happy with the result of the film:

We talked about it and decided to do something else, to work differently. It was a very vague idea. One day I just appeared with a small video camera, a backpack, a tripod and some Mini-DV tapes. I started like that. Vanda considered it, permitted it and collaborated. I proposed to do something that was more like a documentary. (Desiere, 2021)

The change was thus initially substantiated in the reduction of the film crew to a bare minimum and in the shift from fiction to documentary. In relation to the film crew, Costa describes how uncomfortable he was filming with such a large team and so much equipment that they seemed to invade the neighbourhood. By way of example, he explains the lighting problems while filming *Ossos*, as at night the beams of the spotlights shone into every corner of Fontainhas's narrow streets, disturbing the locals (Neyrat, 2011). With respect to the change to a documentary format, Jean-Louis Comolli argues that *In Vanda's Room* is characterised by the fact "that the presence of the person filmed [...] has the ability to alter a film's mise-en-scène and influence how it is written" (2017: 31), which is relevant to the evaluation of the Portuguese director's abandonment of fiction in this case.

While the filmed subjects' influence on the evolution of Costa's work is made clear in the filmmaker's own statements, an analysis of his films can shed more light on this change to his cinematic approach. As noted above, *Ossos* is characterised by a stylised technique that is largely absent from *In Vanda's Room*. Telling the fictional story of a couple in Fontainhas who have just had a baby, this film begins with a close-up on Zita Duarte, Vanda's sister, whose gaze engages in a dialogue with the audience or with the filmmaker. Zita Duarte's sole role in the film is that of a witness to the events that unfold in Fontainhas, a presence that guides Pedro Costa on his visit to the neighbourhood. The filmmaker himself is

thus inevitably relegated to the role of an outside observer. Like Zita, another local resident, Clotilde Montrón, appears occasionally as a spectator of the situation experienced by the young mother Tina (played by the actress Mariya Lipkina), her baby's father and her sister (played by Vanda Duarte). The combination of professional actors and local residents of Fontainhas reflects the hybrid nature of a film that mixes the reality of the neighbourhood with the enunciation and logic of a fiction film. This is evident in Zita Duarte's and Clotilde Montrón's perspective from outside the story, even though they are observing it from within the neighbourhood, thereby marking the boundaries of the diegetic world. Zita Duarte also appears in the last scene of the film (as does Montrón briefly) in a busy, noisy street in Fontainhas, while Tina watches from the threshold of a door that ends the film when she closes it.

With *In Vanda's Room*, Pedro Costa adopts a restrained aesthetic to document the daily life of the residents of Fontainhas. The moments in the room with the sisters, Vanda and Zita, alternate with the portrait of the everyday lives of other people and with images of the destruction of the neighbourhood, which was in the process of being demolished and would soon disappear. The documentary approach serves to correct one of the problems with *Ossos*, which the director himself described as its failure to "confront the reality" of the neighbourhood (Neyrat, 2011: 31). However, the film's observational documentary style does not reflect the dynamics of the filming. While part of the film was improvised, the filmmaker explains that many scenes were prepared to some extent, setting up certain interactions that had occurred previously off-camera. In any case, Costa asserts that "everything came from them [Vanda and Zita Duarte]; nothing was mine, there was nothing outside" (Neyrat, 2011: 72). The documentary nevertheless displays this observational approach, which aims for transparency in an effort to erase the artifice that certain visual decisions might

produce. The sole objective of *In Vanda's Room* is to show what happens in front of the camera, as an expression of life in the neighbourhood. Thus, while the first film is notable for the aforementioned scene showing Zita Duarte in a frontal shot where she seems to be looking at the camera or the person filming in a way that identifies Costa as an external presence, no such presence is suggested in the second film. In this sense, as Iván Villarrea Álvarez argues, in *Ossos* numerous staging decisions betray Costa's status as an outsider, "an omniscient gaze on the neighbourhood, more characteristic of a 'voyeur' than a 'traveller'" (Villarrea Álvarez, 2014: 3). However, this perspective is different in the case of *In Vanda's Room*.

4. POSSIBLE SYNTHESIS OF INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

This article has explored the influence on a film of the people or communities who appear in it. Although the active role played by these people is often overlooked, this study has considered some specific cases where their intervention in the creative process is clear, beginning with their interaction with the filmmaker or production team. The analysis of a film—particularly a documentary—should take into account the mediation of these subjects, rather than being limited solely to the film's apparent authorship. The *auteur's* perspective should thus be complemented with the perspectives of the people portrayed, in a dialectical relationship. In this sense, Comolli describes the filming of a documentary as "a learning experience shared by those filming and those filmed" (217: 145).

The analysis of films by Chris Marker and the SLON collective on the one hand, and by Pedro Costa on the other, has demonstrated the visible results of this interaction, which lead to the adoption of different filmmaking approaches. This has an impact on both the representation of the subjects and the use of cinematic language.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE IS PRESENT IN BOTH CASE STUDIES [...] IN THE CASE OF THE FILMS OF CHRIS MARKER AND THE SLON COLLECTIVE, THE PRESENCE OF THE EXTERNAL NARRATOR IN THE FIRST FILM CONTRASTS WITH THE INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE ACTIVISTS' WORLD IN THE SECOND. IN PEDRO COSTA'S FIRST FILM, THE PRESENCE OF TWO LOCAL RESIDENTS WITNESSING THE FICTIONAL NARRATIVE—LOCATED OUTSIDE THE STORY BUT INSIDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD—EXPOSES THE DIVISION BETWEEN THOSE WHO WALK THE STREETS OF FONTAINHAS EVERY DAY AND THOSE WHO ARE MERE VISITORS TO THE DISTRICT. IN HIS SECOND FILM, COSTA SEEKS TO REDUCE THIS EXTERNAL VIEW

On the one hand, in the transition from *Be Seeing You* (1967) to *Classe de lutte* (1969), a protagonist was chosen to drive the narrative, rejecting the approach of the first film, which focused on a group of activists viewed and interpreted from an outsider's perspective. This dispenses with the presence and evaluation of an external party, while also giving a woman a leading role in response to criticism about the representation of women activists in the first film. Moreover, interaction with the filmed community opens film production up to different people through the foundation of the Medvedkin Groups in Besançon and Sochaux.

On the other hand, the transition from *Ossos* (1997) to *In Vanda's Room* (2000) involved a kind of delegation of the narrative upon Vanda and Zita Duarte, offering the opportunity to abandon the outsider's depiction in favour of stepping more decisively into the setting filmed, reducing the mediated nature of their image and allowing the local residents to portray themselves more

directly. In this respect, Comolli suggests that the camera in the second film prompts Vanda to take “all the risks of representation” (2017: 29).

Moreover, as the relationship between *inside* and *outside* is present in both case studies, both are characterised by a clear shift in the perspective between the first and second films. In the case of the films of Chris Marker and the SLON collective, the presence of the external narrator in the first film contrasts with the insider’s view of the activists’ world in the second. In Pedro Costa’s first film, the presence of two local residents witnessing the fictional narrative—located outside the story but inside the neighbourhood—exposes the division between those who walk the streets of Fontainhas every day and those who are mere visitors to the district. In his second film, Costa seeks to reduce this external view by trying to ensure that everything is shown from the inside, from the point of view of the people of Fontainhas (especially Vanda and Zita Duarte), with minimal interference by external elements, including the film crew.

Along with these changes mainly affecting the representation of the filmed subjects, there is also a difference in the aesthetic approach in each case. In Pedro Costa’s case, a key change is the reduction of the film crew to avoid disrupting everyday life in the neighbourhood, as well as the abandonment of a stylised approach that is more evident in *Os sos* than *In Vanda’s Room*. This entails the adoption of a more transparent aesthetic, which, together with the choice of the observational documentary style, represent a limitation on the range of film techniques used, including visual codes such as shot types and camera angles. In the case of Chris Marker and the SLON collective, the most significant change is related to the representation of the subjects. However, there are also some formal alterations, such as the use of a more fragmented editing style, possibly resulting from the more collective creative process. In short, as hinted in the introductory discussion of the films of Jorge San-

jinés and the Ukamau Group above, the two case studies examined here reveal that the intervention of the filmed subjects creates a dialectic that can result in transformations to the filmmaking approach in subsequent works, affecting both formal aspects and the representation of the subjects.

Finally, this analysis also allows a comparison of the two case studies, which are understood here as two different situations reflecting the influence of filmed subjects on the films they appear in. While Chris Marker and the SLON collective take a decidedly collective approach, thereby eroding their status as *auteurs* and undermining the traditional hierarchical order of film production, Pedro Costa maintains the *auteurial* logic but introduces some collaborative dynamics, especially with the contributions of Vanda Duarte. ■

NOTES

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- 1 “In most historical accounts, the debate that arose after the screening of *The Things I Cannot Change* became the seedbed for some ideas regarding a more ethical use of documentary. The most pressing issue was the relationship of the filmmaker to his or her subject” (Corneil, 2012: 22).
- 2 “Remain objects of a discourse rather than subjects, as recipients of middle-class sympathy (or aversion) and state largesse” (Longfellow, 2010: 163).
- 3 “We will always be at best well-intentioned explorers, more or less friendly, but from the outside [...] the cinematic representation and expression of the working class will be its own work” (Stark, 2012: 126).

- 4 “We talked about it and decided to do something else, to work differently. It was a very vague idea. One day I just appeared with a small video camera, a backpack, a tripod and some Mini-DV tapes. I started like that. Vanda considered it, permitted it and collaborated. I proposed to do something that was more like a documentary” (Desiere, 2021).

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INTERACTION, RESISTANCE AND COOPERATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE FILMED SUBJECT'S ROLE IN AND INFLUENCE ON THEIR FILM

Abstract

This article offers an analysis of filmed subjects and their role in and influence on the films they appear in, specifically in the case of documentaries. Two case studies are analysed to evaluate the extent and nature of this influence. The first case is Chris Marker and the SLON collective's documentary *Be Seeing You* (*À bientôt j'espère*, 1967), about a strike by workers at a French factory, whose criticism of the workers led Marker and SLON to take a different approach in a second film, *Classe de lutte* [Class of Struggle] (1969). The second case involves Pedro Costa's film *Ossos* [Bones] (1997), shot in the Lisbon neighbourhood of Fontainhas. The residents' reaction to the film, along with other factors, prompted the director to make another film also set in the neighbourhood, *In Vanda's Room* (*No quarto da Vanda*, 2000). A comparative analysis of the first and the second film in each case allows an evaluation of the influence of the people filmed on the filmmakers' approach. In both cases, substantial changes—both to the narration and to the use of cinematic language—suggest that the *auteur's* perspective as a component of film analysis should be complemented with the examination of the filmmaker's interaction with the filmed subjects and the influence they have on the film.

Key words

Participation; Authorship; Documentary; Chris Marker; Pedro Costa; Collective filmmaking; Representation.

Author

Juanjo Balaguer holds a PhD in Audiovisual Communication from Universidad de Granada. He is currently a Juan de la Cierva post-doctoral fellow at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. His research explores collaborative filmmaking, participatory video and interactive documentary, among other topics. His work has been published in journals such as *International Journal of Communication*, *Studies in Documentary Film*, *European Journal of Development Research* and *Communication & Society*.

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INTERACCIÓN, RESISTENCIA Y COOPERACIÓN: ANÁLISIS DEL ROL E INFLUENCIA DEL SUJETO FILMADO EN LA OBRA CINEMATOGRÁFICA

Resumen

Este artículo propone un análisis del rol e influencia de las personas o colectivos filmados en la obra cinematográfica, específicamente en el ámbito del cine documental. Se analizan dos casos de estudio con el objetivo de valorar el grado y las características de esa influencia. En el primer caso, Chris Marker y el colectivo SLON realizaron *À bientôt j'espère* (1967) sobre una huelga en una fábrica francesa. Las críticas propiciaron una segunda aproximación, que dio lugar a *Classe de lutte* (1969). El segundo caso es Pedro Costa y la película *Ossos* (1997), filmada en el barrio lisboeta de Fontainhas. La reacción de quienes residían en el barrio, además de otros motivos, provocaron una respuesta del director, materializada en *No quarto da Vanda* (2000). El análisis comparativo entre la primera y la segunda película en cada caso posibilita valorar la influencia de las personas filmadas sobre el enfoque cinematográfico de los respectivos autores. Los cambios sustanciales —tanto en la narración como en el uso del lenguaje cinematográfico— permiten concluir que la perspectiva autoral como componente para el estudio de la película debe complementarse con el análisis de la interacción con las personas filmadas y su influencia sobre la obra cinematográfica.

Palabras clave

Participación; Autoría; Documental; Chris Marker; Pedro Costa; Cine colectivo; Representación.

Autor/a

Juanjo Balaguer (Granada, 1993) es doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universidad de Granada. Actualmente es investigador Juan de la Cierva en la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Su trabajo se centra en el cine colaborativo, el vídeo participativo y el documental interactivo, entre otras cuestiones. Ha publicado en revistas nacionales e internacionales como *International Journal of Communication*, *Studies in Documentary Film* y *Communication & Society*.

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