

Sexual Violence in Films of Contemporary Latin American Women Film Makers

Marcia Espinoza-Vera, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer in Hispanic Studies

School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies

The University of Queensland

Queensland 4072 Australia

Email: m.espinozavera@uq.ed.au

Phone: 61733656846

Abstract

*In the last two decades an important number of women filmmakers from Latin America have made films that challenge the dominant ideology using cinematography to denounce gender injustices. These women have dared not only to challenge the hierarchical order but have attempted to denounce sexual violence perpetrated against adolescent girls by their own fathers, brothers or other members of their community. The film directors studied in this article are the Mexicans Dana Rotberg (*Ángel de fuego*, 1991) and Marisa Sistach (*Perfume de violetas*, 2000) as well as the Peruvian Claudia Llosa (*Madeinusa*, 2005). In spite of the differences in the treatment of the subject, the three films studied here take a feminist perspective in that they have attempted to denounce the injustices to which adolescents are submitted by virtue of their sex in typically patriarchal societies.*

Keywords: *sexual violence, rape, incest, women filmmakers, Latin American cinema.*

1. Introduction

One of Latin-America's most renowned film directors is the Argentinian María Luisa Bemberg (1922-1995). Her films caught the attention of international film goers and placed a Latin American female film director in a position usually reserved for men. Bemberg was a staunch feminist; most of her films address subjects relating to feminine subversion and her protagonists are women who do not conform to living in a patriarchal society. In the last couple of decades other women from this continent have followed in the footsteps of Bemberg and have made films that challenge the dominant ideology using cinematography to denounce gender injustices. Some of these film directors have dared not only to challenge the hierarchical order but, in addition, attempt to denounce such terrible things as sexual violence perpetrated against adolescent girls by their own fathers, brothers or other members of their community. The film directors studied in this article construct a feminine perspective from which to denounce the sexual abuse suffered by adolescents in an oppressively male-dominated society.¹In this work I will be analysing the films, *Ángel de fuego* (1992) of Mexican film director, Dana Rotberg; *Perfume de violetas* (2001) of another Mexican film director, Maryse Sistach, and *Madeinusa* (2006) of the Peruvian film director, Claudia Llosa. These films focus on the incest and rape of which Latin American adolescents are victims. I have selected these three films because they have had great impact both in their country of origin and internationally, not only because of their subject matter, but also because of their great artistic merit.

Sexual abuse has always been considered to be one of the greatest problems faced by society. In spite of the fact that it is well known that sexual abuse occurs in all societies, studies show that it is most commonly found in the most economically disadvantaged social classes. A study carried out in the United States fairly recently shows that one in four women has been a victim of rape or attempted rape. In 84% of

cases, the woman concerned knew her attacker (Renzetti, 8). One of the first feminist critics to examine this subject was Susan Brownmiller; in her book *Against our will* she maintains that the inequality between sexes in the patriarchal system gives men power over women which allows violence to prevail. Brownmiller also points out that social stratification is a fundamental feature in the sexual domination of women and she adds that masculine ideology justifies sexual harassment, the trivialization of violence and the denigration of female victims of sexual abuse (Brownmiller, 14). In Latin America violence against women is very common and is deeply rooted in the culture; women have been brought up in a society which encourages feminine passivity and in which male aggression is treated as normal. Nevertheless, there are a number of economic factors that influence the dependence of women, and these imply a marked inequality in relation to men, who are generally the aggressors. That said, studies carried out on this continent (as well as in Asia and Africa) indicate that young women run a greater risk of suffering sexual abuse at the hands of their own partners or others, than men, and also, than older women (Heisse, 1999).

2. The films

2.1. *Perfume de violetas*

The first film to be studied is about the rape of a young secondary school student in Mexico City. *Perfume de violetas (nadieteoye)*, directed by Maryse Sistach in 2000, is the first film of a trilogy which examines sexual abuse of adolescents in Mexico.² Sistach wrote the film script with her partner Jose Buil, and directed the film, which won many awards both in Mexico and overseas.³ Maryse Sistach, who was born in Mexico City in 1952, is considered to be one of the principal exponents of the so-called “new Mexican cinema”; her training in Social Anthropology is clearly evident in the making of her films. The subjects tackled by Sistach from the very beginning of her career show a very clear social critique. Her first film, titled *Los pasos de Ana*, is about a divorced mother of two who tries to survive in a work environment hostile to women; not dissimilar to that of a film director.⁴ This film had very good reviews and reminds us of one of the subjects treated by Luisa Bemberg with regard to the position of women in a male dominated world.⁵

Perfume de violetas (nadieteoye) is based on a real story. The director comments that, whilst reading the red pages in a Mexican newspaper, her attention was drawn to the case of an adolescent girl who had been murdered by a friend because of the perfume that she used to disguise the smell that lingered on her after having been raped by friends of her brother, who had made her become a prostitute. The story had such an impact on her, that despite having to wait several years to accomplish it, she never gave up trying to bring it to the screen. The main character in the film is Yéssica, a 15-year old who lives in a rudimentary house in a poor area on the outskirts of Mexico City; Yéssica lives with her mother, her stepfather and her three stepbrothers; she studies at a secondary school and has problems with her mother as she is rebellious and argumentative. At her new school, Yéssica, who has been expelled from her previous school for being rude to a teacher, meets Miriam, a serious and studious girl. The friendship starts because Yéssica likes the smell of violets of Miriam's hair and tells her so. This is the beginning of a very intense friendship; Miriam is very attracted to Yéssica's strong and free spirit. For Yéssica, Miriam represents the fortunate life that she would have liked to have had: a modest house in a respectable area, a generous mother who buys clothes and makeup for her, and even gives her money. By contrast, Yéssica's mother is constantly worried about money and is mostly concerned about her younger children. Most of the arguments with her mother are about the household chores her mother demands that she does for her older stepbrother, Jorge – thus perpetuating the ‘machista’ tradition whereby the women have to serve the men. The young girl tries to rebel against what she considers to be an injustice, but her mother threatens to throw her out. Jorge not only insults her but also is cowardly enough to use her to make some easy cash. The boy works as a helper to a bus driver; one day when Yéssica is going to school she finds herself on a dead-end street with the bus

driver; the man forces her onto the bus, the girl tries unsuccessfully to run away; this is the first time that she is sexually assaulted by the man. In the meantime, Jorge has stayed outside protecting the vile act being perpetrated by his friend. With the money he gets from the 'transaction', the boy buys himself the trainers he has wanted.

According to Lisa Fontes and Kathy McCloskey, sexual abuse perpetrated against adolescent girls within and outside their families is a product of the subjugation of women, and a way of allowing it to continue; they state that according to the WHO report, one in five women has been sexually abused as a child; this report stipulates that the numbers of sexual abuse perpetrated against adolescents, within and outside the family continues to rise; many women state that their first sexual experience occurred without their consent (from 24% in Peru up to 40% in South Africa) (Renzetti, 152).

The rape scene in *Perfume de violetas* is presented in a subtle way by Sistach; we see the girl's school bag, her school things and her make-up scattered on the floor. The loud, modern music accompanying this scene emphasises the humiliation of the girl without our seeing what happens. From this moment on we witness Yéssica becoming more and more affected by her situation. She chooses to hide what is happening from her mother, since knowing her circumstances, she suspects she won't get much support; she also hides it from her teacher and the head mistress. Feelings of pain, anger and frustration are growing in Yéssica. Her only consolation is Miriam's friendship; but even this friendship will be wrecked by her erratic behaviour. In one of the scenes of the film, we see Yéssica steal a bottle of (violet) perfume at a market she and her friend visit. When they find her out, she takes off, leaving her friend Miriam to take the consequences of her actions. And, when she has the chance, she steals some money that Miriam's mother has put aside. From this moment, the woman forbids her daughter from seeing Yéssica; Miriam tries to avoid being friends, but the girl's reaction is violent: when they come across each other in the school toilets after a disagreement, Yéssica pushes Miriam who falls, bangs her head and dies. In the last scene of the film we see how Yéssica, when realises the gravity of the situation, goes off to hide in her friend's house. The unfortunate Miriam's mother, will find her lying down in her daughter's bed.

After several screenings of *Perfume de violetas*, both in Mexico and in other countries, Sistach was given a standing ovation by the public, and the realistic nature of the film was praised not only because it took on the subject of sexual abuse – a subject that is still very much taboo in many societies – but also for portraying the lack of communication between children and their parents. Furthermore, this film is a general denunciation of violence against women since the mothers of the main characters also suffer the abuse of masculine power. Yéssica's mother seems to fear not only physical punishment from her partner but also the economic restrictions that he can impose on her. In the same way, Miriam's mother is subjected to sexual harassment by her boss who takes advantage of women's financial vulnerability. In her case, we see a woman who is affectionate towards her daughter and anxious to do the best for her; in Yéssica's case, the mother figure is distant and lacking in understanding. Indeed, challenging the traditional belief of the kindly, selfless mother, the director has chosen to depict an adult female character as not only submissive in the face of machismo but also lacking in any kind of solidarity with or affection for her daughter. When Yéssica refuses her demands to serve her stepbrother, her mother beats her and insults calling her "useless baggage". The attitude of the mother, by demanding that her daughter submit to masculine power promotes the prevalence of the role that patriarchal society has imposed on women. That is, a being destined to serve men. In the same way, the woman does not value the formal education her daughter is getting nor the opportunities that this will afford the girl to progress socially, and to become economically independent. It is true that the woman, trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, cannot see the grave consequences of her attitude towards her daughter. On the other hand, when Miriam's mother learns that Yéssica is being sexually abused, she tells her daughter not to take any notice as it is probably the girl's fault and that she has probably

provoked what has happened to her. We can see then, how the very mothers of these girls perpetuate machismo and the awful consequences that this has for the adolescents concerned.

In Sistach's film, both the family environment and the streets of the marginal neighbourhoods that Yéssica frequents constitute a threat, also public spaces such as the school she attends is a hostile environment for her. Here, Yéssica is also the victim of harassment by her peers when, after one of the rape episodes, her schoolmates notice blood on her dress, and mock her for it. Her aggressive reaction to this constitutes 'macho' behaviour for them. She is also punished by the headmistress who reprimands her for what she takes to be a lack of hygiene. Even so, when questioned by the head mistress she does every possible to hide the humiliation she is being subjected to and refuses to denounce the people responsible. The repression engendered in a patriarchal society, where the culture inculcates a sense of shame under these sort of circumstances, adolescents are even less likely to speak out. Effectively, the shame that victims of rape feel, as well as a sense of being in some way to blame for their predicament, has been widely studied by psychologists specialising in these situations (Koss, 198). In this case, Yéssica feels, quite mistakenly, that she is to blame for what is happening to her and that not even her school is a place of refuge.

2.2. *Ángel de fuego*

Dana Rotberg (Mexico, 1959) in her film *Ángel de fuego* (1992) denounces the danger to which adolescents from lower social classes are exposed in Mexico. Rotberg, who has been successful since her first forays into cinema, handles the script, the sets and the production of her films. This film, in spite of stirring up a lot of controversy because of the subject matter, won several prizes, mainly overseas.⁶ *Ángel de fuego* depicts an incestuous relationship between Alma, a 13-year old girl, and her father. Both live and work in a second-rate circus that becomes a brothel at night. The father works as a clown and the girl as a fire eating trapeze artist; the mother – presumably a prostitute – has left the circus and left the child in her father's care. Alma realises that she has become pregnant by her father when he dies after a long illness. The girl is thrown out of the circus when she refuses to abort her child so that she can become a prostitute, which is what the circus manager wants.

Incest has had a place in narrative fiction since time immemorial, particularly since the story Oedipus Rex, and is a common subject in universal literature, including medieval allegories and the works of William Shakespeare. In the recent history of North American Literature, in the decades of the 80's and 90's, a large number of autobiographical novels and memoirs about incest emerged which had great impact, transforming the subject into a kind of literary and television 'boom', and 'talk shows' (such as *Oprah*) where this subject was discussed, became very popular. The emergence of the topic of incest in these settings generated much interest amongst academics and researchers as well as in the areas of literary criticism, sociology and psychology. For some these narratives express an empirical reality about women's lives, for others, the literature about incest documents a constant in the life of many children, who have remained silent (Harkins, 2009). According to Florence Rush this subject has remained taboo mainly because women's narratives have been silent. Therefore, in her opinion, these narratives have emerged only because feminist and civil rights movements have changed the expectations with regard to literary subjects and have opened up new opportunities for the publication of an "alternative" literature (Rush, 2).

The aforementioned can be applied perfectly well to what has happened with women writers and film directors who have decided to portray family violence in Latin America. Sara Cooper maintains that the representation of the family as a space in which violence, cruelty and incest take place, and which is the centre of social dysfunction, is not in any way new. Cooper argues that in the case of Hispanic Literature, for example, the mythical homogeneity and cohesion of the family unit are called into question. However, while divorce and the birth of babies to unmarried mothers are no longer a phenomenon, incest continues to represent the most serious violation of the social order (Cooper, 2004). Indeed, the family unit is the most

basic representation of the social order; the place where we learn to interact and define our roles in the private and public spheres – incest is a threat to this order. With regard to Latin American narratives, the taboo subject of incest arose during the Romantic period as a metaphor for the cult of forbidden love and to the supremacy of individual desire. Stories such as Jorge Isaac's *María* (Colombia, 1867) or Juan Leon Mera's *Cumandá* (Ecuador, 1879) are well known for taking on this subject. Towards the end of the Romantic period examination of the social implications of incest gave way to political symbolism. In the novel *Aves sin nido* (Perú, 1889) by Clorinda Matto de Turner, for example, the writer makes a metaphorical criticism of men's brutality against women. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the subject of incest not only constitutes an important subject in Latin American women's literature, but that it has a central place in cinematographic narrative as a space of re/de construction of the symbolism of *pater familias*.⁷

Ángel de fuego manifests many elements of the magical surrealism so peculiar to Latin American culture, using highly intense images and frenzied imagination which disguise places wracked with desolation and destitution. At the circus, which is located on the outskirts of Mexico City and which operates from an old tent surrounded by dilapidated minibuses used by the circus workers as sleeping quarters, patriarchal domination is clearly evident. The circus manager, Rito, a homosexual, manages the finances of the place and exploits the women who work there, ridiculing them in front of a sparse audience and forcing them into prostitution. They are there to support the men and are the principal source of income for their survival. Indeed, Alma represents one of the main sources of money because her act as a trapeze artist is the most popular. Rito cannot accept Alma's pregnancy as it will prevent him from making money out of her trapeze act or her body for sexual purposes. The masculine dominance that Rito exerts aggressively over the women in the circus is also used by Alma's father over his daughter, but in a more subtle way. From the beginning of the film we see him as a man weakened by ill health, from which he shortly dies, and therefore the image he conveys is deceptively inoffensive. The family bond between the man and the girl has developed to a point whereby they have transgressed convention and descended into an illicit sexual relationship between father and daughter.

Incest in the film is presented as though it were something quite normal between father and daughter, in fact, in one of the scenes, we see Alma initiating the sexual act. The director's take on incest differs from other films about incest in which generally it is the man who intimidates and forces sex upon his son or daughter. The censure here is, from my point of view, the psychological abuse the father inflicts upon the childish innocence of his daughter. In the absence of a mother the man has seduced Alma from childhood and she has clung to the only form of affection and love that she has ever known. For this reason, the responsibility for the sexual abuse falls not only on the father, but the mother as well, as she has abdicated her role as protector of her daughter's vulnerability against masculine sexual appetites. The film shows an apparently remorseful woman who tries unsuccessfully to save her daughter from the situation she finds herself in. We are given no concrete evidence as to her reasons for abandoning the family in the first place; but we can, however, deduce that it was an act of defiance against patriarchal authority and that the woman has wanted to escape from an unjust situation. Nevertheless, this act of subversion has fatal consequences for her daughter.

When Alma is forced to leave the circus in order to protect the child she is carrying, she finds herself in another world full of absurd magic, of poverty and desperation on the streets on the margins of Mexico City. With her red trapeze artist costume she is seen by others as an exotic and marginal character. After several failed attempts to earn a living with her circus act, she realizes how difficult it is to become part of an environment which is completely hostile for her. When she meets Refugio and her son, the discovery of religion seems to give hope of salvation to Alma; she believes she has found a place with people who, up to a point, are much like her and with whom she and her child could eventually make a home. The evangelist Refugio (who some call "the enlightened") uses puppets and biblical passages for her sermons, and goes

about the streets of the outer suburbs promising resurrection and the life eternal to anyone who will listen and follow her precepts. Alma is fascinated by the promises of redemption which make her believe that one day she will go to paradise and be reunited with her father. Refugio finds out about Alma's situation and considering that the child Alma is carrying has been conceived in sin, suggests that Alma enrol in her book of pardon, but only if she agrees to undergo acts of penance in order to purify herself. Alma accepts, but the penance imposed by Refugio is so extreme that Alma has a miscarriage. Disillusioned, Alma returns to the circus where she finally gives into the demands of the manager and becomes a prostitute for a while. One day, fed up with the situation, she decides to go back to visit Sacramento and to take her revenge upon Refugio. The young man, who is being trained as a future redeemer – for which must undergo rigorous penance, including self-flagellation – allows himself to be seduced by Alma and ends up having sexual relations with her. Sacramento, when he realises he has failed his mother and his beliefs, commits suicide. Alma then returns to the circus to carry out her final act of vengeance: she sets it on fire and seated on her trapeze, dies in the flames. As Geetha Ramanathan rightly points out, religion, rather than being a means of redemption, is a source of enormous cruelty for the child the physical abuse that she suffers at the hands of Refugio – as does her own son – and the emotional damage that she has suffered since birth lead her to decide to end her own life (Ramanathan, 123).

In *Ángel de fuego* many of the scenes take place in Mexico City and its impoverished neighbourhoods with dusty streets, dark alleys, graffiti-riddled walls, and make-shift markets and fairs. All of them are sinister places full of danger and enormous cruelty for the dispossessed such as Alma. Aggression breeds aggression, and the inhabitants who suffer it also perpetuate it. This happens to Alma who ends up committing a criminal act in reprisal against the violence of which she herself has been a victim. In the same way, the violence to which Alma has been exposed, is a consequence of the values and *machista* traditions that are so deeply ingrained in Latin American society, but, as we have seen, social disintegration and marginalization also play a part. They are products of the disadvantaged economic situation endured by the adolescent's family.

2.3. *Madeinusa*

As it is well known, the vulnerability of adolescents, the machismo and the brutality of sexual abuse inflicted on them, are not exclusively Mexican problems, but are seen to a greater or lesser extent throughout Latin America, and indeed, throughout the rest of the world. In the film *Madeinusa*, made by the internationally acclaimed Peruvian director, Claudia Llosa (1976), the protagonist is also an adolescent who suffers because of her sex and social condition.⁸ *Madeinusa* (who probably got her name from labels of products made in the USA) is a girl of indigenous origin; she is 14 and lives with her father and her sister in a mountain village in Peru. Their mother, as in the case of Alma, has left home leaving the children in the responsible 'care' of their father, Don Cayo. The people of the village are distinguished by their religious fervour. Each year during Holy Week, from Good Friday onwards; at the moment of Christ's death on the cross until Easter Sunday, and according to the traditions of the village and to the scriptures, people can do whatever they like as God sees nothing, and therefore sin does not exist. This allows an orgy of unbridled drinking, theft, sex, even incest being acceptable. Don Cayo takes advantage of the power invested in him as patriarch of the village and arranges things so that his daughter is chosen to represent the Holy Virgin in the Holy Week celebrations. His intention is to deflower his daughter that very night. *Madeinusa* refuses to accept the tradition and, when an opportunity unexpectedly presents itself, she chooses to give her virginity to a stranger who has arrived in the village. When Don Cayo discovers this, he gets angry but still demands that *Madeinusa* and her sister, Chale, go to bed with him. The girls do not try to resist, resigned to their fate. After the incestuous act, *Madeinusa*'s father locks her up so that she can't see the stranger again; *Madeinusa* manages to escape and asks the young man to take her to Lima where she thinks she'll find her mother. The

young man reluctantly agrees but just as they are leaving she remembers that she has left her most precious possession at home: some earrings given to her by her mother when she left for the city. She returns to find her father in bed, drunk. When Madeinusa discovers that her father has destroyed her treasured earrings, she becomes angry and decides to make a chicken soup for him and laces it with rat poison. The semiconscious Don Cayo drinks the soup his daughter has made. Chale discovers what she has done and in a moment of solidarity supports her sister by going out and shouting that the 'gringo' has killed her father. Madeinusa reacts spontaneously and joins in banging on doors denouncing what has happened. In the last scene of the film we see Madeinusa, having recovered bits of her broken earrings and holding one of her dolls, very happy, because, as she tells the bus driver, she's going to see Lima for the first time.

With this first film, Claudia Llosa received great international success. The traditional customs of the village where Madeinusa lives can be seen in the film; the images of saints and virgins during the Holy Week celebrations make it original and attractive. The authenticity of the locations and the naturalness of the actors (most of whom were not professionals) make the story very realistic. This film, just like those already analysed, portray male domination in a purely *machista* society. The abuse of power, referred to previously is evident in the figure of the mayor and Madeinusa's father, as well in some of the other men who take advantage of the festivities to steal pigs and chickens from defenceless women. By the same token, the incest portrayed here, as in the case of *Ángel de fuego*, is seen in the vulnerability of the adolescents in the face of the older, powerful man. The girls are resigned to suffering sexual humiliation since the tradition is so deeply rooted in their society.

The only character who represents the maternal role here is a woman who, given the job of dressing the girl crowned as 'virgen', realises that she has been deflowered by a man who is not her father and laments the fact saying, "and your father has waited so long for this"; thus adding her voice to a whole cohort of women who insist on maintaining patriarchal traditions. Madeinusa, nevertheless, in an act of defiance of the dominant system, has preferred to give her virginity to a passing stranger instead of to her father. By contrast, in *Ángel de fuego*, Alma, the victim, becomes murderer. The final 'happy' – or at least, optimistic ending – presented by the author of *Madeinusa* differs from *Ángel de fuego* and takes the viewer by surprise as, despite the atrocity committed by the girl, one cannot but admire her single-mindedness. Alma, the innocent victim of her circumstances, ends up setting fire to herself to punish everyone and destroying herself as well; Madeinusa, on the other hand, emerges defiant from her adventure, her desire for freedom undiminished even with the limitations of a destiny that the society into which she was born allows her.

3. Conclusion

It is notable that although both *Ángel de fuego* and *Madeinusa* examine incest cinematographically in very different ways, both have the figure of the absent mother in common. The mothers of Alma and Madeinusa have decided to abandon their families, with no consideration for the young girls they leave behind. Rotberg and Llosa have chosen to portray women who have rebelled against masculine domination; Alma's mother leaves the family home preferring to be independent working as a prostitute, rather than allowing herself to be exploited by her husband and the circus manager. In the case of *Madeinusa*, the woman has escaped from the abusive power of her husband who not only controls the household but the whole village as well. Both sacrifice the welfare of their daughters. From this point of view, the two film directors challenge the patriarchal canon by portraying women who are far from the idealised model of the self-sacrificing woman, dedicated to her children, the image of the Virgin Mary, pure and submissive. Instead, they portray these women as selfish, looking for self-fulfilment and happiness; though neither film reveals whether they succeed in this or not.

In spite of the differences in the treatment of the subject, the three films studied here take a feminist perspective in that they have attempted to denounce the injustices to which adolescents are submitted by

virtue of their sex in typically patriarchal societies. The fact that the film directors studied have tackled the difficult and delicate subjects of rape, incest, prostitution, suicide and murder makes them particularly audacious. It goes without saying that the three authors have put forward their socio-political views by making artistically quality films.

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¹ Worth noting that even today, the majority of experts are in agreement with the assertion of Lewis Okun who stipulates that feminism is “the most important theoretical approach to conjugal violence/women abuse.” (*Woman abuse: Facts replacing myths*. p.100).

² *Perfume de violetas, (nadie te oye), 2000; manos libres (nadie te habla), 2004; la niña en la piedra (nadie te ve), 2006*. The three films deal with the complexity of socio-cultural problems and in particular the machismo that allows the oppression of adolescent girls and influences their education. The sexual violence suffered by adolescent girls by members of the male sex is present in the trilogy. *Manos libres* deals with the violence of express kidnapping, a very pertinent and topical issue in present-day Mexico. In the case of *La niña en la piedra*, violence is perpetrated on a girl by a school mate; although there is no rape, the girl is sexually harassed by a boy whose advances she rejects, with fatal consequences.

³ The film won five Arieles in Mexico and five Coral awards in Havana, amongst many others.

⁴ Sistach believes that women film directors need to invent a new language based on their own experiences; she declares “women’s words should be written into our culture. The false image that cinema generally gives of women should be destroyed. For a long time we have allowed ourselves to be portrayed as glamorous objects. We do not want to carry on being the decorative object around which men’s stories revolve, nor do we wish to be identified with unreal women, products of male fantasy. It is about owning or repossessing our image and in so doing finding our identity”. In Elissa J. Rashkin. *Women Film makers in Mexico. The Country of Which We Dream*, p.90

⁵ See *Señora de nadie* (1982) by María Luisa Bemberg.

⁶ Was awarded at the Cannes Film Festival, France.

⁷ See for instance the novels *Por la Patria, Diamela Eltit*, 1986; *Oxido de Carmen*, Ana María del Río, 1986; *El daño*, Andrea Maturana, 1997; *Mapocho*, Nona Fernández, 2002; *Cansadoya de sol*, Alejandra Costamagna, 2002; and Laura Senio Blair’s article :*Residual effects: The recurring Theme of Incest in Contemporary Chilean women’s Narrative*, *Letrasfemininas XXXVI Num 2*, pp 183 – 198.

⁸ Her second film *La teta sustada* (2009), has won numerous awards, amongst them the coveted Bear at the Berlin Festival. This film touches on rape during times of war.