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Blowing Glitter Through Straws. Revolutionary Moods in Lizzie Borden’s "Born in Flames" and Jill Godmilow’s "Far from Poland"

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The article analyzes two 'genre-bending' films – Lizzie Borden's Born in Flames (1983) and Jill Godmilow's Far from Poland (1984) – as unique spaces of reflection on the temporality of revolution and revolutionary politics of emotion. Drawing on Jonathan Flatley's work about creating and refreshing revolutionary moods, the author shows how both films worked against the dominant 'structure of feeling' of the mid 1980s – feelings of fatigue, hopelessness and exhaustion with political engagement. The author also examines how both filmmakers use different visual mechanisms and aesthetic tools to generate oppositional moods and revive revolutionary spirits. Instead of trying to establish a straightforward emotional identification of film viewers with the presented movements (the actually existing Polish Solidarity movement in Far from Poland and a fictional multiracial and cross-class radical feminist coalition in Born in Flames), both filmmakers reject what Bertolt Brecht called "crude empathy" and instead insist on the necessity of an ambiguous emotional relationship with diverse political subjects.

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Blowing Glitter Through Straws. Revolutionary Moods in Lizzie Borden's "Born in Flames" and Jill Godmilow's "Far from Poland"

> How should we answer those history professors who will (and do) accuse our (future) will of being (past) unreality? It is obvious that we are talking about different things – it is as if we were both speaking of a great bear, but for them it means some distant constellation of stars, while for us it means the present reality of a ferocious animal.
>
> Antonio Negri, *Domination and Sabotage*, 1977

For the subjugated, the time of revolution is always now. For bystanders (both sympathetic and hostile), it is constantly relegated to the future. Furthermore, like the history professors from Antonio Negri's treatise on proletarian self-valorization, the bystanders look to the past as proof of the impossibility of radical change. (Future) will is accused of (past) unreality – the failures or shortcomings of historical revolutionary movements are paraded as threats to alternative visions. These two understandings of the appropriate moment for action are impossible to reconcile. How could it be otherwise if the two groups differ so radically in their execution of the most basic communicative act, that of attaching signified to signifier? Whereas for the history professors the great bear lives light years away – beautiful and awe-inspiring, yet also harmless – the revolutionary proletariat sees it as a dangerous beast. In fact, as Negri writes in the next sentence, the beast is for them an object of identification: "We are this developing, animal reality; we have the same strength, the same necessity and the same fierce irreducibility."[1]

Negri's pamphlet – part theoretical study, part political manifesto, written in the culminating moment of the autonomist movement struggles[2] – employs a wide range of mechanisms to elicit the reader's affective engagement, as well as to install an urgent feeling of the necessity of radical change, understood by Negri as the destructuring of the capitalist system. These conscious fluctuations of tone – from irony to anger, from hopeful passion to distanced reflection – could be seen as exercises in what Jonathan Flatley has called "refreshments of a revolutionary mood," the work of tending to passions that have the natural tendency of waning. As Flatley asks in his inspiring writings on the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, established in 1969 in Detroit: "How can a collective sustain and refresh itself? How can a revolutionary counter-mood, once awakened, be maintained and directed?"[3] In this article, I will try to show the importance of reflecting on time – past, present, future – in the process of establishing and refreshing revolutionary moods. In order to do so, I turn to two titles by feminist filmmakers, both produced in the same historical moment of the decline of revolutionary affect (and more generally, as Fredric Jameson has noted, a postmodernist "waning of affect")[4] – Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames* (1983) and Jill Godmilow's *Far from Poland* (1984). These two genre-bending films provide unique spaces of reflection on the time(s) of revolution and its politics of emotion. The films themselves perform the emotional labor of generating oppositional moods, proving that – as Flatley claims – "the aesthetic can itself create a space for different affective attachments, an affectsphere [...] – some transformed version of the present that we can attach to instead of the present world – so that we can survive our detachment from objects in this world and be hopeful about trying to make another."[5] In the present political climate of raging protests against police brutality directed at communities of color and indigenous cultures, the ongoing fight for a redefinition of climate politics, struggles against income inequality, and the battles for reproductive rights and against the discrimination of queer ways of life – to name but a few – the development of a blueprint for stoking revolutionary moods against reactionary defenses of the status quo seems not merely important, but literally life-saving.

"It's here, it's that time."

Honey in Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*. Courtesy of Lizzie Borden and Anthology Film Archives, New York

Initially, the temporal dynamic of both narratives and their points of departure seem slightly counterintuitive or even counterproductive. The experimental independent feature film *Born in Flames* begins with the caption "New York City. Ten years after the social-democratic war of liberation" laid over TV-style footage of a New York City plaza, onto which a white, besuited male announcer enters. "This week of celebration commemorating the tenth anniversary of the war of liberation is a time when all New Yorkers take pride in the most peaceful revolution the world has known. It is time to look back on the events of a decade ago, to consider the progress of the past ten years and to look forward to the future," he says, in a cheerful, confident tone. We're in a post-revolutionary moment, which strikes us as strange in a film *about* revolutionary action. And yet, in this short opening scene we find the film's political stakes embedded in crystalized form, albeit presented *à rebours*, communicated by an embodied representative of the system. If the white male TV newscaster describes a universal subject ("all New Yorkers") united in an indisputably positive emotion (pride), engaged in reflecting on the past and imagining the future, then the politics of *Born in Flames* derives its strength from a multiplicity of identities, a wide range of emotions, and a focus on the present, as well as the use of a non-hierarchical mediasphere. The film's true revolutionaries are the black, brown, and white (mostly) queer women of New York, who organize through pirate radio broadcasts, in domestic and public spaces, making demands on behalf of working-class women, whose needs have been deferred to an unspecified future of gradual transition to full equality. As Honey, an underground radio announcer says:

> We still see the depression from the oppression that still exists both day and night. We are the children of the light and we will continue to fight. Not against the flesh and blood, but against the system that names itself falsely. For we have stood on the promises far too long now, that we can all be equal under the cover of a social democracy – where the rich get richer and the poor just wait on their dreams.

The women operating in the ahierarchical Women's Army engage in organizing networks of self-help (setting up childcare, supporting strike actions, assembling bike patrols protecting women from sexual attacks), but also in plotting the next revolution. As we will see, these preparations include the emotional labor of generating a mood just right for radical action: a mixture of anger, confidence, trust, and hopefulness.

In a similarly confusing way to Borden's film, the experimental documentary *Far from Poland* gradually reveals its starting point as a sort of failure, and its temporality as belated. "I want to begin by how this whole thing came about," are the first words of director Jill Godmilow, addressing the viewer directly from in front of

Jill Godmilow, *Far from Poland*, 1984, digitalized 16mm film (digital betacam). Collection of Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

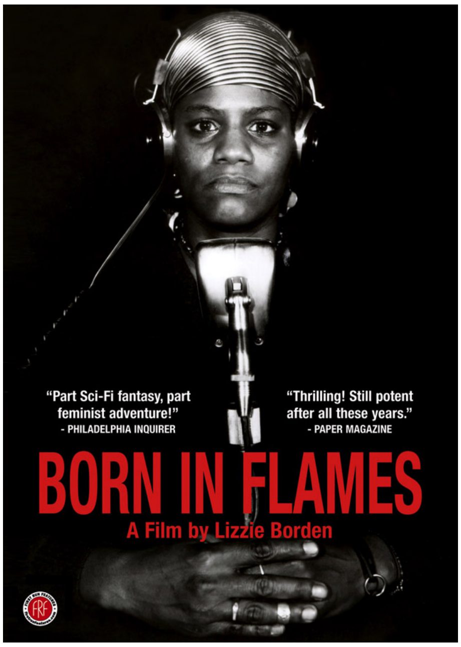
a blank flipchart. She introduces her object of interest – the Polish Solidarity movement, founded in August 1980 as a result of the Gdańsk shipyard strike, functioning in opposition to the structures of the socialist state – and places herself within the narrative as a direct witness of the revolutionary excitement in Poland. In the eighth minute of the film, Godmilow discloses her first failure – despite having secured funding for the documentary (an often insurmountable obstacle for independent filmmakers "steeped in the documentary traditions of the left," as she is later, somewhat ironically described), the Polish government denies her entry visa. If Godmilow's goals are as stated in the film's opening sequence – "I was determined to tell the real story" – then, we ask ourselves, how can she expect to achieve them without carrying out standard documentarian procedures: conducting interviews, gathering information and footage, and – not least – getting a "feel" of the situation on ground? The second failure on which the film's reception rests is the failure of the movement itself – following a sixteen-month period of wide-ranging and intensely emotional activity, the movement was delegalized with the introduction of martial law on December 13, 1981, its leaders jailed and its energy quickly dissipating. Both of these failures – which ultimately enable reflection on the questions of revolutionary time and emotional politics posed above – are inseparably related to Godmilow's aesthetic medium of choice, the documentary film, which – in the classic, somewhat outdated definition of the genre – is expected to maintain a strict connection to the real, to rely on original, hitherto unseen material, and to address issues relevant to the contemporary moment. In subsequent interviews, Godmilow narrated her failure as a generative moment of recognizing her unwillingness to succumb to the traditional rules of the genre:

> I could not speak of Poland at all in the genre I knew and practiced because I could not shoot footage in Poland.

> I remember thinking: there's something wrong here. Why should I accept this tradition that said I couldn't speak about events without their archival or actuality footage? […] That's actually how I began to address the limits of the genre, and to understand what the presence of that validating, authenticating footage was all about.[6]

As the film's "moodiness" quickly makes clear, one of the reasons behind Godmilow's reluctance to abandon the project of making a film about the movement – besides the challenge of asking questions about the document's relation to reality[7] – was precisely her own emotional connection to it. Fascination with the movement, excitement about its potentials and tactics, compassion toward workers suffering from food shortages and difficult working conditions – all of these emotions lock Godmilow in a strongly empathic connection with Solidarity, an attachment which becomes perhaps the most significant theme of the film.

Resisting dominant structures of feeling


"Part Sci-Fi fantasy, part feminist adventure!" - PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
"Thrilling! Still potent after all these years." - PAPER MAGAZINE
BORN IN FLAMES
A Film by Lizzie Borden
FRF

Both films set up complex questions about the relationship between temporal dynamics, revolutionary action, and the politics of emotion – the first presenting an urgent need for revolution in a post-revolutionary moment; the second operating within a framework of belated passionate documentary reflection on a stunted revolution. Both Borden and Godmilow, albeit in different ways, work to generate what Flatley calls "revolutionary counter-moods" – moods that enable seeing change as possible. "Counter-moods" work against dominant "structures of feeling," to use Raymond Williams's complex category describing "characteristic elements of impulses, restraints, tones; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought."[8] Although the question of the dominance or ubiquity of structures of feeling at a given (historically and culturally specific) moment is bound to pose challenges for scholars attracted to Williams's category (as it did for Williams himself),[9] it shouldn't be overly controversial to describe the dominating cultural mood of the first half of the 1980s in Western late-capitalist culture as being somewhat stifled, a mixture of acquiescence and passivity, or of hopelessness and resignation for those with previous political investments.[10] This dominant "structure of feeling" rested upon a paradox and a trap, perhaps most poignantly explored by Fredric Jameson in his writings on postmodernism: that in times of constant movement and change, the accumulation of styles and images, we are in fact hopeless about the possibility of structural reorganizations of the dominant order. As Jameson notes in *Antinomies of Postmodernity*:

> What we now begin to feel, therefore – and what begins to emerge as some deeper and more fundamental constitution of postmodernity itself, at least in its temporal dimension – is henceforth, where everything now submits to the perpetual change of fashion and media image, that nothing can change any longer.[11]

This public mood of a "waning of collective hope in a particularly conservative market climate"[12] is cited by Borden as the direct impulse to begin and continue making *Born in Flames* (production began in 1978 and ended five years later):

> It seemed that every political person I knew was becoming more and more cynical and hopeless… How could you not be when you see people working for an issue for twenty years that is then wiped away in a second by a conservative government. […] As a result of this cynicism people have begun to separate and become more and more involved in expressing themselves individually. […] All desire to act is gone. Everyone knows nothing will work.[13]

Whereas Borden describes a situation akin to Negri's conversation with history professors, tutoring him and his comrades about "(future) wills being (past) unrealities" (in Borden's cultural context, the past would be 1960s political activism), in her fictional universe the filmmaker establishes a structure of feeling which seemingly opposes that of 1980s mainstream America and yet results in the same eradication of radical thinking – feelings of satisfaction, joy, and pride derived from the progress made by the first socialist democratic society facilitated by the "peaceful war of liberation." In the America of *Born in Flames*, this structure of feeling is revealed as dominant and yet not universal: felt only by those experiencing class, race, and gender privilege – white male newscasters, white female journalists of the *Socialist Youth Review*, white male party members – and yet *presented* as universal by the dominant media (network television, the mainstream press, and party materials). Eye-rolling, sighing, or smirking at the propaganda of success and progress seeping from television screens is just one of the ways in which Adelaide Norris (Jean Satterfield), Zella Wiley (Florence Kennedy), and other activists perform counter-mood work.

Jill Godmilow, *Far from Poland*, 1984, digitalized 16mm film (digital betacam). Collection of Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

In Godmilow's film, the dominant structure of feeling is embodied by her fictional partner Mark (Mark Magill), who seems to be the director's only connection to the outside world. Mark moves in and out of their shared kitchen and the space doubling as a dining and viewing room, intent on forcefully removing passionate Jill from her self-perpetuated mood. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a relationship of two artists, his interventions are often mediated by artistic means – in one of the first scenes, Mark leaves a surprise cassette in Jill's video recorder featuring a short mockumentary in which, dressed as a shipyard welder, he delivers an ironic speech about Jill's ideals as a leftist documentarian; in another he performs a skit, pretending to receive a call from Karl Marx (to whom, for some reason, he speaks in Russian), who tells "Jillsky" to "come home." As Godmilow tells us at the beginning of the film: "Mark's main sense of Marxism was of the Harpo and Zeppo variety." However, Mark's use of aesthetic tools to puncture Jill's elevation and earnestness may be related not only to his profession, but also to the postmodern practice of pastiche, performing the distanced testing of different languages, all of which are perceived to be equally empty and thus interchangeable. As Jameson writes in his influential essay "Postmodernism," which was published in the same year as Godmilow's film:

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction

> that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists.[14]

Although "not incompatible with a certain humor […] nor […] innocent of all passion,"[15] Mark's endlessly repeated pastiche performances seem both mean and meaningless (as well as slightly misogynist and culturally insensitive). "He was tired of my speeches. I was tired of his jokes," says narrator-Jill, to which Mark later adds further fatigue: "I'm tired of these Poles sleeping on our sofa." His interventions don't arise from a polemical ideological position (as parody would), but from an irritation with elevated political moods per se. This "tiredness" is in fact the dominant cultural structure of feeling, which gains even more ground after Solidarity's collapse. "Could it be that you're the first press agent for a movement that's F-A-I-L-E-D?" Mark asks malignantly, in an intentionally poor imitation of an Eastern European accent. "Get another movement" is his cynical solution, one angrily rejected by Jill and later described by Mark as "just a joke."

Visualizing counter-moods and feeling difference

If the two filmmakers are united in their insistence on seeing the bear as a bear (an act, as I have shown, which is dependent on their capability of feeling outside of the dominant structures of feeling), then how do they enable the viewer to partake in this vision? In other words, how do they foster an emotional identification with the struggles and subjects they portray, and what sort of affective relationship between the viewers and the images best serves their needs? One answer would be to reflect on the category of empathy, which – in its most straightforward form – seems strongly rejected by both filmmakers. In yet another seemingly counterproductive measure, Borden and Godmilow refuse to facilitate a one-dimensional, homogenous, stable emotional connection between the viewers and the movements. In fact, as viewers, we are constantly pushed to reflect on our feelings of compassion, affection, and supportive investment (to name just a few) – who they're directed at, the levels on which we are affected by them, and what it is that makes us feel. Borden and Godmilow thus seemingly reject what Bertolt Brecht called "crude empathy" – identification with the "represented other" that eliminates the possibility for a critical understanding of the social complexities producing the represented situation and subjects. Jill Bennett, who follows Brecht in this critical stance toward crude empathic identification, describes crude empathy as "grounded in [...] affinity, *feeling for* another insofar as we can imagine *being* that other."[16] In an interview devoted to her relationship with the documentary genre, Godmilow seems to point to a similar danger:

> Structured into most traditional documentaries is an unspoken promise to its audience that they can have a particular feeling about themselves. The audience is invited to believe: "I learn from this film because I care about the issues and people involved and want to understand them better; therefore, I am a compassionate member of society, not part of the problem described, but part of the solution." The documentary film knits us into a community of "we" – a special community by dint of our new knowledge and compassion. The real contract, the more hidden one, enables the viewer to feel: "thank God that's not me."[17]

Luckily, as Brecht was eager to emphasize, rejecting empathy as a model for building a relationship between audience and representation is not tantamount to doing away with emotions:

> A creation that more or less renounces empathy need not by any means be an "unfeeling" creation, or one which leaves the spectator's feelings out of account. But it has to adopt a critical approach to his emotions [...]. Emotions, instincts,

> impulses are generally presented as being deeper, more eternal, less easily influenced by society than ideas, but this is in no way true. The emotions are neither common to all humanity or incapable of alteration.[18]

In other words, in order to achieve more than vain, brief identification with the other, to avoid assimilating the other into one's own needs, emotions need to be historicized – uncovered as "historical" and connected to "particular interests."[19] The effect – "a rich and sometimes complicated emotional curve in the spectator, a fusion of feelings and sometimes even a conflict between them"[20] – opens up the possibility of developing a critical understanding of underlying structures and ideologies, as well as an emotional connection based on recognizing differences instead of similarities. Or, as Bennett writes in her post-Brechtian recuperation of empathy, generating "a feeling for another that entails an encounter with something irreducible and different, often inaccessible."[21]

Adelaide Norris (center, played by Jean Satterfield) and other activists in Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*. Courtesy of Lizzie Borden and Anthology Film Archives, New York

Such a dynamic is clearly at work in the fragmented structure of *Born in Flames*. The film, as if mimicking the complicated, rotating, plural leadership within the Women's Army, is a suturing of short presentations of conversations and situations shedding light on various – often contradictory – positions on female dissent and revolutionary action. For some oppressed women, the Women's Army doesn't do enough ("It's all talk and no action. It's all rhetoric," shouts DJ Isabel from Radio Ragazza); others feel obligations toward different collectives ("I'm involved in some other women now"); still others place their faith in individual resistance ("I'm not going to join the forces, I've got my own forces"). These positions are articulated throughout the film, interspersed with quick montages of women doing things – close-ups of hands performing manual labor (wrapping meat in cellophane, putting a condom on a penis, painting nails, preparing fast-food orders, dishwashing, arranging medical equipment on a hospital tray, cutting hair), women shopping, reading, caring for themselves, playing with their children, talking with each other over the phone and face to face, cooking and doing laundry, marching in demonstrations, dancing.[22] Radical organizing is woven into everyday life – a necessary yet non-dominant thread. As Jayna Brown writes in *A World on Fire: Radical Black Feminism in a Dystopian Age*:

> What the film ultimately asks us to understand is that revolutionary change is not a destination but a practice. This practice is based in a continual questioning and requires that we defy and destabilize dominant paradigms and then we sit in the ambiguity of not knowing what might be.[23]

The film situates unambiguousness, composure, and clarity of vision – or rather the belief in their existence – on the side of power and privilege: audible in the confident pronouncements of newscasters critiquing protesters and relaying the government's firm statements, detectable in the belief placed in the ruling party by the editors of the *Socialist Youth Review*, and visible in the surveillance materials gathered and remarked on by the secret services ("Homosexual?" "Yes. Women's Army appears to be dominated by blacks and lesbians" – we hear agents commenting on a photograph of Norris kissing another woman). But the movement – inconsistent, diverse, spontaneous, emotional – eludes stable definitions. This ambiguity complicates not only the formulation of clear political goals, but also identification – how are the women of *Born in Flames* to connect, and how are we as viewers to align ourselves with such a fractured and heterogeneous movement? This is of course a challenge consciously woven into the film by Borden herself: "Instead of telling the viewer that he or she could not belong, the viewer was supposed to be a repository for all these different points of view and all these different styles of rhetoric."[24] As Brown emphasizes, the film "does not emotionally ask us to agree with any one person's or party's solution, [...] refusing a white liberal feminist model of personal discovery or catharsis."[25] It does however – through immediate and intimate settings, including close-ups of the radio presenters looking deep into the viewer's eyes – force us to recognize the activists' differences and try to conceive an affective response capable of accommodating their plurality. Or, as Teresa de Lauretis brilliantly put it in her 1985 essay on the film: "*Born in Flames* [...] allow[s] me 'to see difference differently,' to look at women with eyes I've never had before and yet my own."[26]

Whereas Borden seeks to promote a politics of difference by representing heterogeneous – often contradictory – identities and attitudes toward activism, Godmilow turns her attention to the plurality of representations and mediations through which politics is performed. Both strategies can be seen as emphasizing the need for a plurality of emotional responses to political action, seeing this emotional heterogeneity (often denounced as instability in the liberal mediasphere) as the only viable way of sustaining revolutionary moods. In *Far from Poland*, this necessary emotional complexity is visualized throughout the film, perhaps most poignantly in the scenes where Godmilow examines her own source materials. Through shots of the director sitting at her viewing table (two

Jill Godmilow, *Far from Poland*, 1984, digitalized 16mm film (digital betacam). Collection of Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw television screens arranged on the opposite wall) and her living room (one small TV placed on a coffee table next to a glass of whiskey with ice and an ashtray), as well as close-ups images of further television sets, we become witnesses to Godmilow watching: Polish TV broadcasts; her own documentations of pro-Solidarity demonstrations in New York City and an interview with Polish émigré intellectuals Irena Grudzińska-Gross and Jan Gross; materials gathered for the film *Was Heisst Solidarnosc* by German filmmakers Andreas Tanzler and Karin Margolis that Godmilow obtains for her project; as well as glaringly opposing interpretations of the Solidarity movement in speeches delivered by Michael Harrington (political theorist and founding member of the Democratic Socialists of America) and Ronald Reagan. Sometimes the materials are commented on by the director in a voiceover or through her conversations with Mark, other times not. Whatever the character of Godmilow's interference – a voiced-over joke,[27] a shot of a shaky hand holding a cigarette, an industrial still life composed of a helmet, work gloves, and a metal chain placed on a television set, or an accurate imitation of Harrington's speech – what we are made aware of is the director's emotional work, which becomes an essential part of the project (and perhaps of every documentary project). By uncovering its mode of production, the film also discloses its affect of production, forever abandoning any conceit of documentary objectivity, but also revealing this affective field as fluid, unstable, and ambiguous. Jill is enthusiastic about the movement, but she is also worried about it, unsure of its nature, torn about her own ethics, obsessively attached, and – yes – somewhat irritated by the emotional loftiness of her reactions. As with Borden's work, the emotional politics of engaging and identifying with a revolutionary movement are heterogeneous and self-contradictory. And yet they are presented, in all their ambiguity, as an indispensable part of participation in politics. There is after all a reason why Mark's character – whom

I previously described as the embodiment of the dominant structure of feeling, characterized by cynicism and a talent for postmodern pastiche – is allowed to keep returning. Not only does he keep track of time ("It's 5 AM," "Looks like it's going to be a white Christmas after all"), but he also serves as a convenient sparring partner for Jill – often voicing legitimate concerns about her work ethics (a Western director looking in on a peripheral struggle from a safe and privileged position) and work-life balance. Mark's ironic criticisms provide the viewer with a space to momentarily withdraw from Jill's intensity, as does the use of another filmic convention utilized by Godmilow, that of melodrama. Scenes of Jill and Mark's affection, always preceded by vicious bickering, strike us as sentimental: a woman lifted from her chair, eyes sealed, a kiss planted on her lips. This "soap-opera" intensity does not wane with the end of the kiss. In one scene, a lofty piano track (immediately recognizable to Polish viewers as the patriotic melody of the early 20th-century *Rota*)[28] plays as Jill asks Mark if she should make pancakes before turning Harrington's speech back on. In another, a Christmas Eve kiss accompanied by the carol *O Come All Ye Faithful* (first hummed by Mark as part of his counter-mood effort) becomes an ending, but a fake one – a blackout followed by an epilogue sign and another twenty minutes of film. This stretching of the melodramatic mood provides for a certain distancing effect, depriving the scenes of the purity of Jill's emotional engagement. Paradoxically, the conventional deployment of melodramatic affect – through the heterosexual kiss – suddenly reveals the scenes of emotional struggle as (necessarily) constructed.

Anna Walentynowicz (Ruth Maleczech) in Jill Godmilow's *Far from Poland*, 1984, digitalized 16mm film (digital betacam). Collection of Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

The distancing effect – employed in a Brechtian manner – is also utilized in the innovative re-enactments scattered rhythmically throughout the film, as well as the purely fantastic ending of *Far from Poland*. Perhaps most confusing for the film's original, non-Polish viewers, these sequences grew out of Godmilow's willingness to translate written testimonies into visual performances, but also from her incisiveness about the emotional capacities of testimonial media. And so, the re-enactment of an interview with Anna Walentynowicz, one of the leaders of the August 1980 shipyard strikes and an influential player in the Solidarity movement, precisely demonstrates the challenges of the dramatic embodiment of historical events and people. From the beginning, the material is framed as being staged. As we watch a hand loading a tape into a tape recorder, a woman entering the room, and another woman pouring tea, an off-screen male voice explains:

> The following interview with Anna Walentynowicz was first published in *Tygodnik Powszechny* in January 1981. The exact location of the interview is unknown, but it probably took place in a meeting room in the local Solidarity office. Here the journalist Hanna Krall is played by Elżbieta Komorowska. The crane operator by Ruth Maleczech. The interview was first published under the title *Perhaps People Aren't Bad After All*.

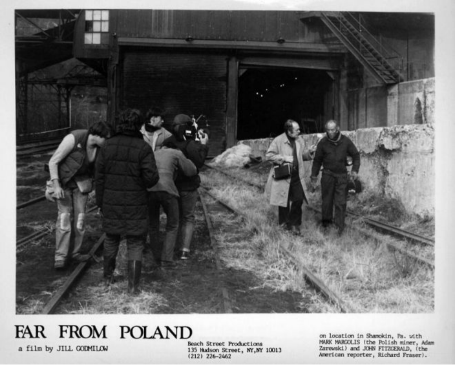
The re-enactment, however, is not only about text, becoming much more than a straightforward way of introducing written documents into the framework of a visual medium. The stage is set: a New York high-school gym redecorated as a space for organizing with a bulletin board and announcements in Polish; Maleczech, wearing a modest checkered dress and hair-do, is styled as Walentynowicz; tea is served in glasses. On the other hand, as viewers we are constantly reminded of the distance between the original scene of the interview, its printed text, and the re-enactment. As when the deep male voiceover explains that the Polish term "państwo" used by Walentynowicz to describe her childhood employers is impossible to translate (being a linguistic naturalization of the feudal practices of the Polish countryside), or when a genuine clip of Walentynowicz is suddenly inserted into the re-enactment, the Solidarity organizer revealed to have a much less striking presence than the captivating New York avant-garde actress. Whereas Maleczech, in Godmilow's words, "used a low voice and a seductive speaking style," the "real Anna Walentynowicz […] has a thin annoying voice and a ferocious authoritarian style."[29] Of course – and this is what Godmilow's film proves through repeated interventions – the original clip of the famous crane operator, filmed during the August 1980 strikes, is only a little closer to her "realness" than Maleczech's act of "not becom[ing], but respeaking, reperforming [Walentynowicz's] words."[30] An excellent illustration of Brecht's claims about acting (although achieved through measures broader than acting), Godmilow's complex staging of Maleczech's performance does not quell emotional identification, but instead renders our reactions more complex.

Geographies and temporalities of emotional identification

In the remaining re-enactments of textual material – an interview with a government censor published in *Tygodnik Solidarność*, statements of Polish miners gathered from Solidarity meeting transcripts – Godmilow's interventions are less frequent, but no less poignant. Staged in natural spaces and in a cramped car, the censor's naïve and disconnected statements are punctuated by bursts of canned laughter, a repeated symbolic punishment for the disengagement, cluelessness, and cynicism of the anonymous functionary. The last re-enactment perhaps demands the most from the audience. Through this seemingly straightforward conversation about the difficult political decisions of the Solidarity trade union in times of extreme economic crisis, Godmilow challenges the viewer to address the cultural geography of emotional identification. The staging comes directly after Michael Harrington's speech about Solidarity, in which he proposes an interpretation of the movement as being truly socialist. Harrington proceeds to poignantly criticize the hypocrisy of mainstream American media:

> the *New York Times* has supported every single strike in human history on the other side of the Iron Curtain while not supporting a single strike here. And we have to say to that kind of double standard: we will have none of it! We would like to see the public employees' right to strike defended in the United States as well as in Poland!

Is it perhaps then meaningful that an imagined conversation between an American journalist (John Fitzgerald) and a composite character based on several Polish miners (Mark Margolis) is staged on the premises of a then-operating coaling mine in Shanokin, Pennsylvania? This information is not disclosed in the scene – in fact, the interview opens with a voiceover stating "August 1981 at the Dębienko mine. Interview with Adam Zarewski, miner" – but viewers find



FAR FROM POLAND
a film by JILL GODMILOW

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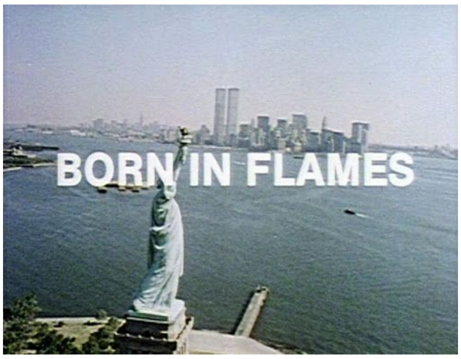
on location in Shamokin, Pa. with MARK MARGOLIS (the Polish miner, Adam Zarewski) and JOHN FITZGERALD, (the American reporter, Richard Fraser).

themselves distrustful of the authenticity of the images, especially when the narrator discloses the fictional character of "Adam Zarewski" and names the actors playing both roles. However, he still insists that "the location is the Dębienko mine in Upper Silesia." The nine-minute interview is staged as being conducted *en route*: from the moment the miner appears in a dark, wet tunnel leading to a coal shaft (which we also get to see in flashbacks of him working), wearing blue overalls and a helmet with a headlamp, he and the interviewer sit down for just a second, swiftly proceeding to walk through the dark, dilapidated spaces of the mine – the narrow corridors, steep staircases, and bleak gray courtyards covered in ash. "But Adam, the newspapers blame Solidarity for the crisis," the journalist gullibly exclaims at one point. "Mr. Richard, I'm sure it is not the same in your country, but here we learned a long time ago not to believe everything we read," replies Zarewski. Although we never find out what news outlet Mr. Richard works for, John Fitzgerald's slightly distracted and naïve performance could be read as the ironic representation of an out-of-touch media pundit. Performed against the backdrop of a landscape that is in fact the site of ongoing labor, an everyday environment for tens of thousands of workers in North America, the interview with a Polish miner conducted by an American journalist should perhaps be read in tandem with Harrington's denunciation of the ideological character of American journalists' investment in labor movements "on the other side of the Iron Curtain" and their open hostility toward local labor struggles, which had in fact been regularly erupting in the 1970s and 1980s.[31]



If the coal mine in Shamokin, Pennsylvania plays the part of a geographically distant space – its eerie similarity raising questions about the actual scale and nature of differences between working-class lives under capitalism and socialism – the streets of 1970s and 1980s New York seem to be playing themselves in *Born in Flames*. Borden shot the film between 1978 and 1983 on a very low budget, which didn't allow her to build sets and forced her to film actual events taking place in New York *as if* they had been arranged for the shoot, as when she films the three editors of the *Socialist Youth Review* at a demonstration in Washington Square Park. Paradoxically, the documentary quality of the material, the DIY unadorned aesthetic of New York cityscapes, born at least in part from budgetary constraints, serves as an excellent visualization of the main feature and fault of Borden's post-revolutionary political utopia – its uncanny correspondence to the previous order. New York still looks the same; its streets are as dangerous as they always were for single women; its construction sites as precarious; the apartments dark and cramped; the stoops populated by homeless people seeking shelter. And while the city is the site of some pleasures – dancing in the streets, attending concerts, chatting with neighbors – these arise from community-initiated practices of taking back spaces which are at best neutral and at worst oppressive toward women, sexual minorities, people of color, and the poor. This is in fact an accurate description not only of Borden's political fiction, but also of New York at the dawn of the neoliberal era. As Lucas Hildebrand writes, in the 1970s, "New York City [...] became an early testing ground for major economic and political shifts toward neoliberalism," initiating methods of governing which "amounted to class warfare: social programs were cut, minorities and working-class laborers who had struggled for enfranchisement were further marginalized, and the business sector was privileged as a way to rebuild the city's capital."[32] In the post-revolutionary reality of *Born in Flames*, the government pronounces itself as socialist, and yet seems to be engaged in a constant practice of redrawing the map of those deserving of protection – as when it reformulates its workfare program, which originally promised to guarantee jobs to all members of the labor force, into a program privileging "male breadwinners."[33] The labor reform is presented as the government's rapid response to the violently suppressed demonstrations of young white men, who turn up to occupy state buildings and surrounding public spaces (here again Borden repurposes footage of actual riots). The visualizations of angry male dissent and the raw violence of the state function in opposition to the failed protests of female workers who have been fired as a result of the reform, particularly from jobs traditionally coded as male, such as construction work.

A gendered emotional response to state discrimination becomes especially visible when we consider the extended temporality of female discrimination. Whereas the men immediately turn to dissent as a way of exerting pressure against perceived inequity, the women are slower in building up anger, despite the long-lasting structural sexism which connects the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary moments. This becomes especially visible in Norris's failed appeal to the three white female editors of the *Socialist Youth Review*. Norris delivers a powerful narrative about extended discrimination toward women, connecting past to present:

> [It's] better now? You know, the way our mother brought us up, there were eight of us. And she took care of us doing domestic work all by herself. And abortions, she couldn't even think about abortions and daycare, mhmm, we took care of

> ourselves, no one took care of us. Plenty of women nowadays live in that same manner, black women, Latin women, young women, living in that same lifestyle.

But her message about the power of acknowledging the present falls flat with the evidently more privileged women: "If we remove the only structure that exists for progress, we dissipate everything. It will be worse than it was before," replies one of the editors.

Adelaide Norris (Jean Satterfield) with her mentor Zella Wiley (Florence Kennedy) in Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*. Courtesy of Lizzie Borden and Anthology Film Archives, New York

It is the ineffectiveness of familiar forms of protest – solidarity strikes, petitions, demonstrations, angry speeches, alternative media productions, the rhetorical persuasion of potential allies – which drives Norris to start considering armed struggle as a potential way forward, a way of accelerating the revolution. "What took you so long?" asks her mentor Zella Wiley. But as Stephen Dillon notes in his consideration of the "temporality of violence" in *Born in Flames*, Norris's decision to undertake armed struggle does not place the beginning of violence at some point in the future (after arms are secured, after women are trained, and so on), but as existent. "I'm telling you it's already happening. It's here. It's that time," says Norris to a Women's Army member expressing doubt about the psychological effect of violence on those who exercise it. As Dillon writes, "the time is right for counter-violence, because state violence is already the past, present, and future. Norris mobilizes a black feminist analytic where there is no outside to the forms of violence, terror, and subjugation produced by white supremacy, anti-blackness and heteropatriarchy."[34] When Norris is killed in prison after returning from a trip to North Africa to procure connections with other feminist revolutionary movements, a diverse coalition of women – members of the Women's Army, punk activists, and the editors of the *Socialist Youth Review*, no longer loyal to the Party – slowly configures around the idea of revolutionary intervention.

Once again, emotional organizing is revealed as a crucial element of the revolutionary process, and is carried out through the use of media: music, radio talk, press articles, and even the hijacking of a crystallized image of power – the presidential address. The last 30 minutes of the film abound in aesthetic forms meant to generate changes in attitude – instances of reclaiming dominant media are accompanied by the intensified use of underground forms. The aesthetic objects produced by the revolutionaries are ingenious and extremely well thought-through, utilizing the qualities of a given medium to produce pointed effects. Of course, these objects are meant to motivate not only those located within the world of *Born in Flames*, but also the film's audience. As in *Far from Poland,* our emotional response is at least in part activated by the possibility of witnessing the response of those within the frame – as when we see Honey staring into the eyes of Adelaide, a large photo of whom is printed on the front of the *Socialist Youth Review* with the headline "Suicide? Or assassination attempt." Norris's powerful presence is mediated through the photograph, and yet – despite the photo being styled as a mugshot – it also seems to exceed the boundaries of the medium, brazenly looking at us from the newspapers hung side by side in a kiosk. The political power of direct address is activated through a number of media, either organized by the activists themselves (such as the united Radio Phoenix Ragazza, which comes into being after the stations, led by Honey and DJ Isabel respectively, are burned down by "vandals") or intercepted, as in the spectacular operation of the now-armed Women's Army, whose members interrupt the broadcast of a presidential address to transmit the speech of Zella Wiley, in which she denounces the government's cover-up of Norris's murder. "She was murdered because she was against the betrayal of women. We're being sold down the river – at home, at work and in the media," says Wiley in her address to those gathered in front of their TV screens, describing present violence with language that painfully echoes its past usage.[35]

Isabel (Adele Bertei), Radio Ragazza DJ in Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*. Courtesy of Lizzie Borden and Anthology Film Archives, New York

The film sequence following the Women's Army's bloodless (albeit violent) attack on a television station illustrates the necessity of the struggle for language and gaining control of the media. All-male TV newscasters describe the participants as "female terrorists" (and, somewhat less harshly, as a "girl gang"), and denounce them as separatist, selfish, and counter-revolutionary ("struggl[ing] for selfish ends, for ends that are against the aims of all the people, which is embodied by this revolutionary government"). The activists are diagnosed as living proof of the existence of "primary female masochism, which manifests itself as secondary female sadism." The male publisher of the *Socialist Youth Review* accuses its female editors of "turning a malcontent into a hero." For the movement, the only reaction to language violently relegating feminist politics to the sphere of the irrational, emotional, and selfish is the further acceleration and radicalization of regaining the means of media production. Or, as the newspaper editor turned radical feminist activist puts it: "What we're aiming for, for at least some length of time, is that we have control of the language, we have control of describing ourselves." In one of the scenes following the mainstream denunciation of the Women's Army, a funky 80s broadcasting lead is abruptly interrupted, and we see one of the former editors of *Socialist Youth Review*, the brightly lit close-up of her face shot against a dark background. "We interrupt this program to bring you a special message from the Women's Army, and what's more we will continue to make this kind of direct action until everyone understands and is prepared to do something about the way the government has betrayed women," she says. The film then transitions to a shabby New York City street – we see a young black woman standing on the sidewalk, gazing calmly into distance; a subway train passing behind tenement buildings aboveground; and young people jumping over a high gate into a parking lot filled with U-Haul trucks. We recognize them as members of the Women's Army, now breaking into two trucks, starting them up, shouting and laughing on the way. The sequence is soundtracked by an all-female version of Bob Marley's *No Woman No Cry* and the continuation of the speech that had disrupted the television broadcast. One of the last direct addresses to the audiences both within and outside the film's narrative is an instance of revolutionary mood-making through conscious phrasing, choice of tone, succinct and confident wording, and – for the audience watching *Born in Flames* – its pairing with Marley's political anthem, here performed *by* women *for* women, as well as images of the beginning of what we suspect will be the Women's Army final action in the film. The speech is worth quoting in its entirety:

> Look at the reality of your lives. We live in a fake socialist state, which exists in name only. The government thinks that socialism was instituted ten years ago after the war of liberation. It denies the very basis of true socialism, which is constant struggle and change. Wasn't the war of liberation fought to create an egalitarian state? Why then does the government attack women, putting them out of their jobs and relegating them to secondary positions at home? The media, the tool of the government, reinforces their position by promoting images of women as wives and mothers. We are surrounded by the very images our mothers sought to destroy. Decades of women's work for socialism, for freedom

> of choice, equality of opportunity is being swept away. Once again, we are being placed outside politics. It isn't only women who have suffered – you know the way this pattern continues – blacks, Latinos, all ethnic and social groups suffer as the old sex, race, class divisions re-emerge. There can be no true socialism until we are all represented in government. We demand a quota system which is truly expressive of our numbers, and we will not stop fighting until we get proportionate representation in government.

In their act of renegotiating the meaning of socialism, reminding their audiences of past struggles whose goals were either never attained or briefly achieved and then swept away, the Women's Army is in fact performing a similar rhetorical operation to the Polish Solidarity movement, in what Jill Godmilow, following Michael Harrington, describes as "calling the bluff of the government." It should perhaps also be noted that it is not only the movements who are doing the work of reclaiming potentially emancipatory languages, but also the two female filmmakers themselves. Working within the highly masculine filmmaking structures of documentary and independent film, both Borden and Godmilow confidently carve out a space for themselves, subverting genre divisions, conventions, and rules in order to tend to issues they are emotionally invested in. They are in fact reclaiming filmmaking as emancipatory. Just as the movements within the films generate opposition from dominant cultural forces, the films themselves were also met with incredulity and confusion, at least by some of their contemporary audiences, generating critiques pointing precisely to the mechanisms which I have treated here as immensely generative, attacking the films' emotionality, genre-bending, and insistence on heterogeneity and diversity as indispensable parts of radical politics.[36]

Poetic justice

If the beginnings of the two films – the reflections on revolution, time, and emotions – are tellingly peculiar, then their endings cannot be expected to be straightforward. They are, however, natural conclusions to the emotional politics of both. *Born in Flames* concludes with a bomb attack on the broadcast antennas topping the World Trade Center – an attack on a device responsible for the circulation of anti-feminist images, sitting atop an architectural structure which constituted a material and symbolic figuration of state and capital.[37] As Eric Darton shows in his "biography of the World Trade Center," the edifice epitomizing the new era of global capitalism was built on the former grounds of Radio Row, a bustling, diverse merchant neighborhood, and its construction was part of the radical transformation of public space in New York City.[38] The Women's Army's action somewhat eerily prefigures both the 1993 bombing and the 9/11 attacks, yet its visual representation seems more passionate than threatening and violent. Preceded by another speech, this time by DJ Isabel, who insists that "this fight will not end in terrorism, in violence, [instead] it begins by a celebration of the rights of alchemy, […] the illumination of dark chaotic night by light," and by a newscaster's speech criticizing the state's generosity and calling for a new politics of austerity, the blast on the roof of the World Trade Center comes as a surprise, and yet is also surreal and beautiful, instead of being the realistic depiction of an act of terror. The affective power of the scene is another side-effect of Borden's creativity within the constraints of a tight budget. Left with only 200 dollars for special effects, in order to depict the explosion, Borden and effects specialist Hisao Taya built a model of the Twin Towers and blew glitter through a straw, then slowed the image down in post-production. Although the technique remains invisible to the viewer, it provides a striking metaphor for Borden's belief in the power and emotional potential of underground revolutionary organizing.

Godmilow achieves a similarly ambiguous and uncanny effect through narrative means, situating the end of her 1984 "dramatary" in 1988, when – still emotionally hung-up on the movement – she claims to receive an unexpected gift from Andrzej Wajda: outtakes from his film about the fate of General Wojciech Jaruzelski (First Secretary of the Polish United Worker's Party and Prime Minister) after the successful take-over of power by Solidarity. Placed under house arrest in a picturesque mountain villa, the general is released after five years and allowed to begin a new life as gardener. In the last scene of this sequence, we see him walking off into a serene natural landscape. "Tomorrow I shall be putting in the tulips for the coming spring," he says. In Godmilow's alternative history, the revolutionary social movement is portrayed as victorious, and the despised general as transformed and dedicated to renewal. The first part of the epilogue is built from a number of false statements: it is not 1988; Godmilow has not received any materials from Wajda; "the great Polish director" never made a movie titled *Dear Mr. Prime Minister*; Solidarity did not gain power in 1983; and General Jaruzelski never changed his profession to gardener. This staged piece of alternative history is perhaps then another of Godmilow's attempts at providing temporary refuge, a space for generating emotions contrary to those which she and her friends in Poland grappled with – the director while finishing her film about a movement that failed, and Poles subjected to life under martial law. Although in the second and final part of the epilogue Godmilow forces herself to report on the difficult living conditions in Poland, and makes a confession about the topics she did not touch on in the film (including "the ambiguous role of the Catholic Church, the influence of Western bankers and the 26-billion-dollar Polish debt, the issue of Polish antisemitism, the curious role of the CIA in Solidarity's affairs"), the emotional intensity of *Far from Poland*, achieved through diverse aesthetic means, doesn't seem to wane, even at the moment of its director's visible depletion.

After all, the exhaustion of emotional energy can also be the beginning of its renewal. Both a glitter explosion and the sending of an authoritarian leader into a secluded natural setting constitute fictional acts of poetic justice. At the time of the films' premieres, neither the broad, multi-race feminist coalition of *Born in Flames* nor the Polish Solidarity movement had achieved its goals; neither was even remotely close to success. Despite this, working against dominant structures of feeling, both filmmakers were intent on stoking revolutionary moods, while simultaneously providing honest accounts of the exhaustive emotional labor we will need to undertake if we wish for alternative political projects to succeed.

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1 Antonio Negri, "Domination and Sabotage: On the Marxist Method of Social Transformation," in: idem, *Books for Burning: Between Civil War and Democracy in 1970s Italy*, trans. Arianna Bove, Ed Emery, Timothy S. Murphy, and Francesca Novello (London: Verso Books, 2005), 260.

2 For an outline of the movement's dynamic, see: Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "Anatomy of Autonomy," trans. Jared Becker, Richard Reid, and Andrew Rosenbaum, *Semiotexte* 3 (1980). Thank you to Michael Hardt for introducing me to this and other essays on 1970s politics of multiplicity, and to the participants of the seminar *Periodizing the 1970s* at the Literature Department at Duke University for fruitful conversations about dissent and its representations.

3 Jonathan Flatley, "Refreshments of Revolutionary Mood," in: *Literary / Liberal Entanglements: Toward a Literary History for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Corinne Harol and Mark Simpson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 105. About political mood-work in the context of the League, see also: Jonathan Flatley,

"How a Revolutionary Counter-Mood is Made," *New Literary History* 43 (2012).

4 Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* I (146) (1984).

5 Flatley, "Refreshments of Revolutionary Mood," 135.

6 Jill Godmilow and Ann-Louise Shapiro, "How Real Is the Reality in Documentary Film?," *History and Theory* vol. 36, no. 4 (1997), 89.

7 In most academic articles devoted to *Far from Poland*, the film becomes an example of a creative struggle with the fetishization of truth and objectivity in documentary practice. See: Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

8 Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," in: idem, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.

9 Ben Highmore's excellent recapitulation of the term's history shows that Williams constantly grappled with its phrasing, circling around such words as "patterns" (to replace "structures") and "experience" (to replace "feeling"), and was himself ambivalent about the possibility of precisely grasping the contents and fluctuations of a given moment's structures of feeling, preferring to call them a "cultural hypothesis." See: Ben Highmore, "Cultural Feelings (some theoretical coordinates)," in: idem, *Cultural Feelings: Mood, Mediation and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

10 As Annie Ernaux succinctly describes the 1980s in her "emotional history" of France of the second half of the 20th century: "We were civilized, increasingly concerned with hygiene and personal grooming, users of products that rid our bodies and homes of nasty odors. We joked: 'God is dead, Marx is dead, and I don't feel so good either.' We had a sense of play. […] In any case, compared to '81, our hearts were no longer in it. We had neither expectations or hopes." See: Annie Ernaux, *The Years*, trans. Alison L. Strayer (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2017), 154, 158.

11 Fredric Jameson, "The Antinomies of Postmodernity," in: idem, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London: Verso Books, 1998), 59.

12 Ibid., 60.

13 Lizzie Borden and Betsy Sussler, "Born in Flames," *BOMB* no. 7 (1983), 29. For a reconstruction of the cultural landscape of the late 1970s and early 1980s (including non-dominant structures of feeling of the black feminist movement), see: Lucas

Hildebrand, "In the Heat of the Moment: Notes on the Past, Present, and Future of *Born in Flames*," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 23:1 (2013).

14 Jameson, "Postmodernism," 65.

15 Ibid., 66.

16 Jill Bennett, *Empathic Visions: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 10.

17 Godmilow and Shapiro, "How Real Is the Reality in Documentary Film?," 83.

18 Bertolt Brecht, "Notes to Die Rundkopfe and Die Spitzkopfe," in: idem, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willet (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 101.

19 Bertolt Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect," *Brecht on Theatre*, 145.

20 Brecht, "Notes to Die Rundkopfe and Die Spitzkopfe," 101.

21 Bennett, *Empathetic Visions*, 10.

22 On the role of music in *Born in Flames*, see: Jayna Brown, "A World on Fire: Radical Black Feminism in a Dystopian Age," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 117:3 (July 2018).

23 Ibid., 584.

24 Anne Friedberg, "An Interview with Lizzie Borden," *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory* vol. 1:2 (Winter 1984), 38.

25 Brown, "A World on Fire," 591.

26 Teresa de Lauretis, "Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema," *New German Critique* no. 34 (Winter 1985), 165.

27 "A Pole goes over to the candy store to buy chocolates for his children, but he turns away when he sees a line stretching around the block. So, he goes to another store to buy soap powder, but he sees a line just as long. He goes around the corner to buy toilet paper. The line is even longer. By now he's so frustrated he decided the only solution is to shoot General Jaruzelski. He gets a gun and marches off to the Communist Party headquarters. When he gets there, he finds he is twentieth in line."

28 On the role of sound and music in the Solidarity movement, see: Andrea F. Bohlman, *Musical Solidarities: Political Action and Music in Late Twentieth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

29 Godmilow and Shapiro, "How Real Is the Reality in Documentary Film?," 91.

30 "Interview with Jill Godmilow (and Harun Farocki)," in: Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema 4: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2005), 135.

31 In the mining industry alone, the 1970s and 1980s saw a number of intense strikes: the thirteen-month Brookside Strike in 1973–1974 (the topic of Barbara Kopple's engaged documentary *Harlan County, USA*, shot during the strike), the 28-day national Bituminous Coal Strike of 1974, the 110-day national Bituminous Coal Strike of 1977–1978, the three-year Arizona copper mine strike which began in 1983. On working-class movements in the U.S., see: Sharon Smith, *Subterranean Fire: A History of Working-Class Radicalism in the United States* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2018); Brandon Weber, *Class War, USA: Dispatches from Workers' Struggles in American History* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2018).

32 Hildebrand, "In the Heat of the Moment," 7.

33 A more complicated stance is adopted by the film's revolutionary Women's Army in relation to a different reform of the government – the act of granting wages for housework. Although taken from feminist political vocabulary, this act is perceived as a reformist cover-up and proof of the unwillingness to commit to broader structural changes. For more on the film's politics in relation to reproductive and domestic labor, see: Beth Capper, "Domestic Unrest: Social Reproduction and the Temporalities of Struggle in Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*," *Third Text* 31:1 (2017).

34 Stephen Dillon, "It's here, it's that time. Race, queer futurity, and the temporality of violence in *Born in Flames*," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 23:1 (2013).

35 The phrase "to be sold down the river" means to be betrayed, and originated from the practice of selling slaves in Northern slave-state port towns situated on the Mississippi or Ohio rivers, to be transported to states situated in the South, known for brutal living and working conditions on cotton plantations. The transactions separated the (usually male) slaves from their families, who remained in the North. See: Lakshmi Ghandi, "What Does 'Sold Down the River' Really Mean? The Answer Isn't Pretty," *Npr.org*, January 27, 2014,

https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/01/27/265421504/what-does-sold-down-the-river-really-mean-the-answer-isnt-pretty.

36 Perhaps most telling is Roger Ebert's 1½-star review of *Far from Poland*, in which he simultaneously names many of techniques crucial to the film *and* fails to comprehend their goals and significance: "All of this leads, essentially, nowhere. […] *Far from Poland* quickly exhausts our interest in Godmilow's problems. […] The 'interviews' are not very well done. […] All of the interviews have the same weakness: The words come forth too fluently, too smoothly, so that they sound like a text that has been memorized, rather than a real person groping for expression in an unfamiliar language. The scenes in Godmilow's life also have a staged quality. […] The film never convinces us that it is necessary. Every journalist has had the experience of spending hours, days or weeks on an assignment, only to have to return to the editors and say, 'There just wasn't a story there.' That's Godmilow's basic statement in *Far from Poland*, and I don't think she needed a film to make that statement." See: Roger Ebert, "Far From Poland," https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/far-from-poland-1985. About the audience's irritation with Borden's film, particularly its insistence on difference and conflict as productive, see: Hildebrand, "In the Heat of the Moment,"; de Lauretis, "Aesthetic and Feminist Theory."

37 In a scene of planning the attack, a Women's Army member looks at the copies of Minoru Yamasaki's plans of the buildings, their lean, elegant, almost ephemeral twin towers sketched on a white background.

38 It is important to mention that the merchants of Radio Row put up an intense and lengthy fight against the project. See: Eric Darton, *Divided We Stand: A Biography of New York City's World Trade Center* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

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