UNBREAKING BONDS: QUEER PRISON TESTIMONIES FROM THE HOLOCAUST TO TODAY

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the queer prison testimonial practices in a graphic novel, three memoirs, and two films that reproduce a new kind of witnessing. The authors are Luca de Santis with illustrator Sara Colaone, Gabriella Romano, Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque, and Pierre Seel and the directors are Pietro Marcello and Jean Genet. Each of these texts offers a mediated and constructed re-elaboration of an original witnessing encounter which emblematizes the community building nature of these queer prison testimonies. From Italian to French, the project is an intervention in discussions on testimonial theory, Holocaust literature, queer temporality, and queer archive studies as these texts function as the original subject's attempt to mirror and perpetuate a community of listeners. First, I take up the graphic novel's medium as an entryway to community building as I examine de Santis' relationship to the original witness. Then, I explore how queer Holocaust survivors establish their own voice through the primary witness and secondary witness exchange. After, I look at how queer films open up a visual horizon into realizing a utopic time and how the films are a guide to imagining similar horizons. Finally, I explore how the body as a personal archive expands upon the queer turn from the archive. Throughout each chapter, I contend that each text functions pedagogically as it shifts the responsibility from speaker and listener to a communal affective labor. The project overall proposes a practice of community building which repeats itself as it reaches other public members: the foundation and framework behind the witnessing, which involves a meditation and another person, builds community and that community then promotes further community with the reader or viewer.

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INTRODUCTION

Unbreaking Bonds: Queer Prison Testimonies from the Holocaust to Today investigates the process and possible results of bearing witness to a queer subject who has been imprisoned. Queer prison testimony, broadly defined, is the recounting of one's life experience as a queer subject in relation to the experience of incarceration. At the heart of my project is the notion that queer prison testimonies redefine the perception of testimony itself. They foreground speaker's or listener's responsibility, underscore the importance of community building around the act and reception of bearing witness, and establish a fundamental link between identity, corporeality, and imprisonment.

All the queer prison testimonies considered in my dissertation have their origins in prison and because of prison: *In Italia sono tutti maschi* recounts a man's exile imprisonment in fascist Italy (the original witness is Giuseppe B. and the graphic novel is by Luca de Santis and Sara Colaone); *Il mio nome è Lucy* and (the original witness is Lucy and the co-facilitator is Gabriella Romano) *Moi, Pierre Seel* (the original witness is Pierre Seel and the co-facilitator is Jean Le Bitoux) are memoirs of two people sent to concentration camps; *Un chant d'amour* (1950) is an autofictive film loosely inspired by director Jean Genet's imprisonment; *La bocca del lupo* (dir. Pietro Marcello, 2008) investigates a queer romantic relationship between Enzo and Mary that began in prison, and *Princesa* (1996), the story of a trans Brazilian woman, was first written in prison in shared notebooks (the original witness is Fernanda Farias and the co-writer is Maurizio Iannelli). That said, these queer prison testimonies do not focus on imprisonment as the one event of their lives to which they must bear witness. Instead, queer prison testimonies illustrate and condemn how normativity has impacted queer lives before, during, and after their imprisonment. Unlike many testimonies, queer prison testimonies emphasize less the suffering experienced in prison than the conditions that led to their incarceration and what happens to them after.

In her study on the formal mechanisms of testimonials, Kelly Oliver writes of the importance of demonstrating "on the one hand how oppression and victimization undermine subjectivity by attacking the ability for address and response and on the other hand how the structure of address and response is the lynchpin of subjectivity" (*Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* 10). Certainly, queer prison testimonies include similar engagements with the act of testimony. An example of a testimony is Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (1947) understands that the complete witness of Auschwitz is not the author who writes but the one who has died. For example, *Il mio nome è Lucy* looks at queer prisoners in Dachau, as she was not arrested for homosexuality, and the complexities of an experience of the Holocaust that is different from that of non queer inmates. All of the texts convey self-awareness of narrative and creative processes and establish a discourse of communication that insists upon a response from the reader/viewer. Furthermore, a key element of the testimonies I analyze is that, from their inception, they are mediated in a variety of ways, through visual and written means, and through the collaboration of multiple writers or creators. For the queer subjects in the testimonies considered in this dissertation, incarceration leads to the reframing of how they understand the world. Before their imprisonment, these queer subjects were aware of the risk and harm they could (and did) experience at the hands of normativity. However, it is the experience of imprisonment that functions as the Event that allows for reflection and understanding of the violence they experienced before, during, and after their imprisonment. Slavoj Žižek writes in *Event: A Philosophical Journey Through a Concept* that "At its most elementary, event is not something that occurs within the world, but is a change of the very frame through which we receive the world and engage in it" (12). This is not to say that non queer subjects or testimonies do not undergo an Event that shapes their perspective, quite the contrary. Rather, the distinction is that queer prison testimonies are able to express the queer knowledge and pain queer subjects experienced before, during, and after their imprisonment. Being in prison is the physical manifestation of the queer feeling of being "other."

Creating the queer prison testimony is a discursive action of pointing to feeling queer in a normative world. Queer prison testimonies are creations that challenge the notion of what a testimony should be, or the form it takes. Žižek writes that "the truly New emerges through narrative, the apparently purely reproductive retelling of what happened – it is the retelling that opens up the space (the possibility) of acting in a new way" (133). By recreating their lives through different media, these queer subjects are staking their claim in showing what it is like to be queer in a normative world. Imprisonment is not the spark that forced these queer subjects to bear witness to the Event of imprisonment. Their incarceration is the shift allowed them to understand the position they always had before prison; the violence they experience at the hands of the government leads these queer subjects to re-present their story and to acknowledge their imprisonment as the shifting catalyst. Nonetheless, queer prison testimonies take great time and effort to explore all facets of the queer subjects' lives and emotions before, during, and after their imprisonment. Queer prison testimonies reveal that these queer subjects who have been imprisoned already had an Event to which they could bear witness: being queer in a normative world.

The queer prison testimonies I analyze in my dissertation embrace a wide variety of genres and media: a graphic novel, three memoirs, and two films. What these texts share is the focus on incarceration as the experience that provokes an understanding that prison may mirror the queer feeling in a normative society: they are removed from society and violently forced into a prison deprived of freedom. This otherizing and oppression in different of modalities and in different forms. In addition to the literary modality characteristic of the three memoirs, graphic novels and films provide a variety of representations of queer feeling intensified by prison. Films and graphic novels offer another element of emotion, contact, and representation of the 'othered' feeling.

The title of my dissertation, *Unbreaking Bonds: Queer Prison Testimonies from the Holocaust to Today*, aims to suggest several layers of interpretation, including the double-bind that these texts perform. By reworking and reinventing their sense of themselves through their co-produced testimonies, those who bear witness are able to unbreak the violence they underwent. Unbreaking - the inverse of breaking, mending, restoring, or healing - is an important word choice because it evokes to the affective labor forced onto the queer ex-con to react to the harm they underwent by being removed from society at the hands of the state and heteronormativity. Unbreaking is how these queer testimonies are transparent in their need to create a community and to re-establish a sense of belonging or forge a sense of belonging. The texts are not queer simply because of the witness' sexuality or gender identity; rather, these texts are queer *because they were* *created in the first place in response to* injuries and traumas that have to do with the imprisoned subjects' sexuality or gender identity.

These testimonies restore or develop bonds that the imprisoned subjects did not have before sharing their stories with their co-producer and the eventual reader/viewer. In his study of queer discourse, Ernest J. Martínez writes about "shifting the site of queer enunciation" – that is, moving the burden of queer representation from just the one who has experienced the event and testifies to it. Martínez writes, "queer experiences are actually coproduced and shared by larger collectives, even though these larger collectives often deny their own implicatedness in queer sociality" ("On Making Sense" 227). This is applicable to the creation process of the text as many of the facilitators would deny or reject the term co-creator. Through close analysis of the text itself, however, it is possible to tease out how and why these co-facilitators are present in the texts. Recognizing their presence in co-constructing the testimony helps in witnessing the collaborative in real-time while watching or reading these texts.

In this dissertation I argue that queer prison testimonies are different from other testimonies focusing on marginalized positions, as their goal is to repair the queer voices behind these testimonies. This reparation work has to do with 'unbreaking' the imprisoned subjects' broken selves. These selves are broken from the conditions that brought them to prison, by the silence imposed on their life stories, and by the possible expectation, associated with testimonial writing, that they will share every intimate detail of their lives. The imprisoned subject, via their testimony, takes a firm and radical step forward in denying or revealing information to the public. They are hesitant as they recognize they may not have any listeners, which they have not had for most of their lives, and they are unsure as they are pioneering a new kind of testimony; one that invites, but does not demand, a large public to participate in the subjects' self-mending through their testimonies. A pivotal argument of my dissertation is that the reparative reconstruction of queer subjectivity cannot and does not want to be completely accessible or transparent. This inaccessibility is crucial to queer prison testimony because it comes out of the shame they experienced before, during, and after imprisonment. Additionally, this inaccessibility mimics the shifting of their framework for understanding the world: they allow themselves to keep pieces that belong only to them, since normativity and prison stripped most of what they had from them.

The texts analyzed in the following chapters move chronologically from the second world war to the late 1990s. This historical span reflects a shift from a near total silence about queer experiences in public discourse to a societal opening. The protagonists of some of these texts (e.g., *Moi, Pierre Seel* and *Il mio nome è Lucy*) wait several decades before sharing their experience as queer Holocaust survivors: it is through writing or creating films that many of these subjects seem to come to terms with their experience. These testimonies are usually mediated through or with a co-facilitator (*In Italia* is rewritten by Luca de Santis, *Princesa* is co-written with Maurizio Iannelli, *Il mio nome è Lucy* is published under Gabriella Romano's name, Jean Genet reproduces his prison and lived experience through the characters in *Un chant d'amour*, and director Pietro Marcello directs and resplices Enzo and Mary's lives in *La bocca del lupo*). It is important to recognize the queer Holocaust survivor because this figure was one of the launching symbols of queer pride. The first queer Holocaust testimony, *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, published Germany in 1972, was written about the life of Josef Kohout and was published under the pseudonym Heinz Heger. According to Erik Jensen, author of the article "The Pink Triangle and Political Consciousness," Kohout's text was pivotal promoting gay rights movement as "this individual memory provided the framework for a larger collective memory" (325). As the first text to begin forging a path in queer Holocaust testifying, it helped bring the image of the pink triangle to the forefront of gay imagery. The temporal arch I consider ends in the post-gay-liberation period that has created the conditions to recuperate earlier testimonies that had been left invisible.

The co-facilitator/co-creator role is fundamental to this corpus of queer prison testimonies because it helps establish a communal based mode of bearing witness. The binary position of writer and interviewer (facilitator, journalist, listener) within the final product is translated into an amalgamized 'text' that bears witness not only to the queer ex-con but also to the creative process itself. The conditions under which the texts are constructed are traceable through close analysis in relation to narrative strategies, the construction of the implied author, and the implication of multiple witnesses. This permits a new space, an opening, that offers a possibility of change. Queer prison testimony may affect this change since it multiplies the meaning and bearing of testimony. It is not *only* a product that involves the incarcerated queer and interviewer. The queer prison testimony, as its co-creation is constantly recreated when someone new receives the testimony, can build endlessly a community as it implicates not only the interviewer but also the receiver.

Although this project ends chronologically in the late 1990s, it has broad implications for contemporary representations. For example, I see some of the characteristics I investigate mirrored in *XY Chelsea* (2019), a documentary that reconstructs Chelsea Manning's experience, primarily through her military service, imprisonment, release, run for Senate, and reimprisonment. In 2010, Manning, who had disclosed classified documents to Wikileaks, was sentenced for thirty-five years for violating the Espionage Act. During her first prison sentence, Manning came out as trans and wrote many op-eds for *The Guardian* about her experience. In 2017 President Barack Obama commuted her sentence after she had already served seven years. Manning was arrested again in 2019 for refusing to testify in the trial of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's case but was released in 2020. The film includes many interviews with her and some of her close friends and allies, as well as many pictures and recordings from her imprisonment and deployment. The documentary concludes with her second arrest for contempt of court in 2019.[1] The film's title is inspired by her Twitter handle, @xychelsea, where she is quite active. Manning's memoir, *README.txt*, is expected to be released in October 2022.

XY Chelsea comes to mind now in considering the question of what queer prison testimonies are and what they have in common. *XY Chelsea* examines many aspects of Manning's life. Nevertheless, it focuses primarily on questions around her gender identity. The queer prison testimonies that I examine in this dissertation are particularly invested in thinking through the body of the imprisoned subjects and their relationship to the world. Corporeality is a central element as all the subjects endure suffering, in every case of imprisonment. This suffering, inextricably linked to the body, is caused by oppressive, societal norms, and the impossibility - or difficulty - of being a queer subject. *In Italia sono tutti maschi*'s protagonist, Ninella, carries the shame and silence of being arrested during the fascist dictatorship and shipped to an island prison. *Il mio nome è Lucy* presents Lucy's story as she is arrested towards the end of the second world war for desertion when caught in bed with a man and describes her transition as a trans woman. *Moi, Pierre Seel* recounts Seel's bodily trauma during his internment and forced conscription into the Nazi army. *Un chant d'amour* considers queer desire in prison and the physicality behind the abuse experienced there. *La bocca del lupo* investigates a queer romantic relationship that began in prison and the kind of temporal trauma that the imprisoned subjects underwent. *Princesa*'s entire driving force is Farias' attempt to embody her ideal self as she transitions.

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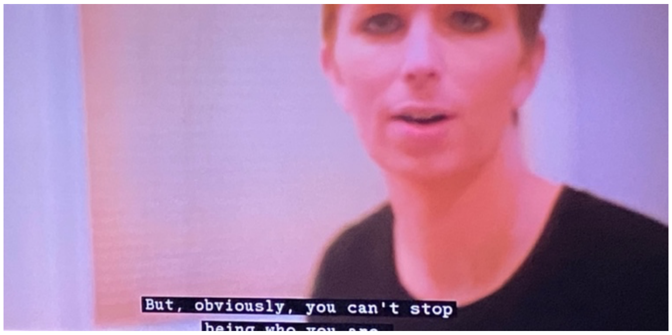
[1] Manning was imprisoned in March 2019 and the issue was eventually settled by March 2020 when she was released.

Corporeality is just as evident in *XY Chelsea*. Manning came out as trans and her identity is linked to her public figure. In one scene, while looking into the bathroom mirror and applying makeup, Manning says, "I saw it [joining the military] as kind of like going cold turkey, from like a drug addiction or something, or like, trying to quit cigarettes or something. But obviously you can't stop being who you are. So, that was always...never gonna happen." (see fig. 1) Manning quickly flits her gaze at the camera while putting on lipstick when she says "but obviously you can't stop being who you are," and looks at the camera through the mirror that is behind her. looks at the camera through the mirror that is behind her.



But, obviously, you can't stop
being who you are.

Fig. 1. Chelsea Manning looking at the camera through a mirror's reflection.

While applying makeup,

Manning seems to understand that this In the act of applying makeup, Manning appears to convey her understanding that this documentary accompanies and constitutes a process of self-creation. Manning is making up her physical appearance in front of the mirror; she decides how she wants to present herself to the world. Her body is how she understands herself and her relationship to her story and public figure: she invents herself, and her body is how others understand her. Directly addressing the camera through the mirror's reflection is a distancing gesture. Manning punctuates her statement that "you can't stop being who you are," which also refers to the documentary itself: the documentary cannot be unmanufactured or unmediated. I argue that the questions and reconstruction we see in *XY Chelsea* belong to a lineage of queer prison testimonies that can be traced from queer Holocaust testimonies to today.

This dissertation is divided in two parts. The first half, comprised of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, focuses on how and why queer prison testimonies create a community that goes beyond the primary witness and the co-facilitator and on the of voice or voices that emerge in this encounter. The second half, Chapters 3 and 4, reveals the praxis behind queer prison testimonies, or what a queer prison testimony may be able to also achieve beyond the as equally important work of community-making. These texts leave footprints that future audiences can follow: how to create a community of their own, to participate in the community provided by the reader/viewer, or to reimagine new possibilities in bearing witness. In considering queer postcolonial narratives Donna McCormack writes that "the forms these histories and desires take are communal, uncertain, tentative, repetitive, and indefinite. Indeed, queer postcolonial histories are an invitation to the reader – a demand and a responsibility placed on the reader – to respond and thus act upon the narrative" (*Queer Postcolonial Narratives* 5). The shapes and nuances of each testimony and chapter are particular and delicate but they nonetheless insist upon themselves, the community they promote, and the horizons they imagine.

The first two chapters are titled "The Queer Prison Voice as Community Maker" and "The Queer Holocaust Survivor as Writer and Witness." The former chapter examines *In Italia sono tutti maschi*, a graphic novel by writer Luca de Santis and illustrator Sara Colaone and published in 2008. The two found an interview conducted by queer historian Giovanni Dall'Orto. Dall'Orto had spoken with Giuseppe B. about his island imprisonment as a queer man under fascism. I argue in this chapter that the graphic novel has many community overlaps because de Santis rewrites the original interview and because the graphic novel format promotes an engagement with the reader. The reader is therefore indirectly linked to Giuseppe B. in a constant retelling of a tragic story. These conditions allow for a community beyond the following relationships: between Dall'Orto and Giuseppe B., between de Santis and Colaone during the interview, and the reader with de Santis and Colaone. This condition permits e reorganization of belonging and community that links a matrix of togetherness of the aforementioned relationships.

The second chapter investigates Holocaust memoirs *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* and the relationship the two survivors have with their co-writers and co-creators, Gabriella Romano, a lesbian filmmaker and academic, and Jean Le Bitoux, a gay rights activist. The texts' creation is similar to many other queer prison testimonies in that they are mediated and shaped by a queer co-creator. The co-creator helped assemble the testimonies through an interview format that is traceable within their texts through the narrative strategies and voice that is developed. In this chapter I examine how queer prison testimonies complicate the witnessing process: it is no longer a singular "I" that the titles purport but rather a "we" through this identity negotiation. While this does share some similarity with Chapter 1, the distinction is that the reader is able to directly identify the grappling with creating the narrative voice in Chapter 2, whereas de Santis presents only his reading of the interview. Seel and Lucy become the arbiters of their truth through this creation, and their creativity permits the reader to see how they negotiate that identity. The two texts promote a community on their own terms and engage in what I call a 'mode of disregard' as they intentionally refuse to reveal certain information. Queer prison testimonies do not have the intention to be completely transparent about their stories and decide on their own terms what and how to share. This crucial element is articulated in all the testimonies in this project.

The second half of this dissertation focuses not only on community making and the witnessing mode but it also reveals how queer prison testimony can be a way to engage with the world in new and unexpected ways. The two chapters are titled "Rewriting Prison Time: Queer Film Testimonial Yearning" and "*Princesa*: The Testimonial Body as Archive." These two chapters examine two films and a testimony that does not directly engage with imprisonment. The third chapter analyzes two films, *La bocca del lupo* and *Un chant d'amour*, and how prison has affected the subjects' relationship to time. While *La bocca del lupo* is biographical in nature as it explores Enzo and Mary's relationship, *Un chant d'amour* is an outlier. The film does not position itself as an autobiographical in the way the other texts or films do. The film utilizes characters and scenes that manifest a feeling that director Jean Genet felt due to his own imprisonment. The two films' visual aspects add another layer to queer prison testimonies as the images are another strategy to try to bring their queer feeling to life and to share it with another.

Chapter 3 explores the kind of visual metaphors the films deploy in order to manifest the feeling of another time. *La bocca del lupo* is director Pietro Marcello's reassembling Enzo and Mary's relationship, which had developed in prison. The film follows Enzo's character through the city while Mary permeates the edges of the film. and the film culminates with an interview revealing the two together. This prison testimonial film gestures to another time for which the two had hoped for in the past and it offers physical manifestations of these temporal elements. This chapter pays particular attention to a utopic future in which the two protagonists could be reunited beyond the tyranny of a time affected by prison. Similarly, *Un chant d'amour* imbues images and items in the film (e.g., cigarette smoke or flowers) that are suggestive of another time. Both films ache for another time that is borderless and unmarked by chronological time. The courage to even begin to desire for another time is as radical as it is to share the queer subjects' stories. The films are queer prison testimonies because, while they construct a certain perspective of imprisonment, they show how the experience of this other time in a pedagogical, reaching out to the spectator to understand and access what they also felt.

The final chapter looks at only one text, *Princesa*, which complicates the authorial issue from its inception (there are three people involved in its in-prison journal writing). *Princesa* takes an extra step as it also challenges the concept that a queer prison testimony must focus on the experience of prison, rather than understand its impact on life the writing. In fact, the narrative ends with Fernanda's refusal to tell the reader about her prison experience. *Princesa*, as in the other texts in my corpus, foregrounds the body in the testimonial experience. *Princesa* redeploys the body in a creative and recuperative manner: Fernanda's body is a witness to her experience and the text highlights its role as a personal archive of memories that only Fernanda is able to access. She comes to terms with the fact that the impossible idealized self is stored within the body's memory and that the body itself is then a kind of witness, in particular to trauma. McCormack writes that:

> Bearing witness to trauma is an embodied event. Testimony is not only a speech act that renders a traumatic event 'real,' it is also a sensorial expression of the unspeakable of the unarticulated. Flesh – the viscera comprising body and mind – stores memories. Indeed, memory is not simply a cognitive capacity, but also a visceral, affective, chemical, hormonal, electrical, and sensorial activity. (27)

This suggests then that the shame, violence, trauma, memory, release, and creation are founded within the body or originate from the body. All of the testimonies in this dissertation do pay particular attention to the body in one way or another. While the state may punish the queer subjects and it may take their time or life away, their body is their own, it is where they have agency. This is why the body is so significant in queer bearing witness: as the queer subjects retell their past, they can reexperience the somatic as they share a story of a scar or a painful memory. The other who is listening or reacting to the story reacts to the story, which therein stitches and binds together the primary witness and the listener.

Queer prison testimonies are unique interventions with heartbreaking stories that engage in similar discourses: the texts presuppose a community, they are unyielding calls to explain themselves, and they function as a model to whom others may look. A queer prison testimony is just as centered around the subject's experience as it is communal; queer prison testimony is just as recuperative as it is creative; queer prison testimony is just as cooperative as it is unique. Queer prison testimony teaches a lesson that continues to be ignored: there is a deeper queer bond that brings the original witness and the reader/viewer together since there is the need to look between the pages or behind the screen to see the other to understand their pain and experience.

CHAPTER I:

THE QUEER PRISON VOICE AS COMMUNITY MAKER

In Italia sono tutti maschi[2] (2008) [*There Are Only Men in Italy*] is a graphic novel that explores part of the homosexual experience during Mussolini's *ventennio*. Gender criminals and political dissidents were sent to a group of islands off the Apulian coast, the Tremiti islands, and a police force guarded them. The prison islands were not traditional prisons and those who were exiled were not placed in cells; nevertheless, the place functioned as a prison.[3] Through this utilizing an island to practice a place in which to punish bodies, a new kind of voice emerges: a queer imprisoned testimonial that attempts to repair its sense of identity and community.[4] In concluding their foreword, writers and researchers Tommaso Giartosio and Gianfranco Goretti explain that illustrator Sara Colaone and author Luca de Santis use the graphic novel medium to question the implications of their work: "…Sara e Luca non hanno voluto solo raccontarci una storia, una storia importante, ma anche farci riflettere su cosa significa e cosa comporta raccontare storie: quali possibilità, quali responsabilità, quali pericoli. Questo è il dono più grande che un artista possa fare al suo pubblico" (7). ["Sara and Luca did not want just to tell us a story, an important story, but also to make us reflect on what it means to tell a story and what that entails: what are the possibilities, what are the responsibilities, what are the dangers. This is the biggest gift that an artist may do for its audience"].[5] Giartosio and Goretti identify a crucial element to the graphic novel: this text opens up unexpected possibilities that implicate all those involved in engaging with *In Italia*. Therefore, the graphic novel explores the boundaries of testimony as it navigates through how prison upends assumptions of space and place. By reconfiguring the definition of imprisonment, community building is therefore, by extension, opened to redefining who is testifying and how as the graphic novel implicates the reader as a testifier.

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[2] For the sake of brevity and convention, I will refer to the text as *In Italia* from now on.

[3] As I quote from *Internal Exile in Fascist Italy* later, the fascist policy was to confine political dissidents or homosexuals in remote islands or villages (Garofalo et. al 1).

[5] My translation.

The chapter shows how an island, can become a prison and how this condition then promotes the ability to create a community within the island and beyond. To do so, I first consider how the queer body is forced to feel othered, and I do so by considering Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and the mechanisms at play that restrict the queer community. I then contemplate how prison as a space creates the opportunity of creating a queer voice by considering Ellen Nerenberg's *Prison Terms: Representing Confinement During and After Italian Fascism* (2001) as she reflects upon Italy and other forms of punishment outside traditional imprisonment. Fascism shaped the island into a prison, and as a byproduct, a queer community develops, which then encourages a queer voice to emerge. In *In Italia*, an island is forced to become a queer prison, allowing a queer community to develop. Then, this community echoes through intergenerational queer discussion as testifying commences about that experience. The choice of the graphic novel as genre is integral to tracing the queer discourse facilitated by de Santis and Colaone. The images help visualize the unspoken or the unsayable: de Santis' frustration due to the lack of queer Italian elder visibility, Ninella's trauma seen in his eyes, or queer information wordlessly shared via cruising (e.g., Ninella cruises a forest).[6] The graphic novel's structure creates a more extensive community between testifier, reader, and writer. The opening for this queer voice points to how *In Italia* supplements the intergenerational gap between silenced queers after fascism and queer writers like de Santis. I later argue that de Santis inserts himself into the comic and is, therefore, a representative of a contemporary queer searching for a community as much as the silenced queer. I look at this aspect through Scott McCloud's discussion of comics in his foundational text, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993), in which he urges audiences to consider how creating comic books, and by extension the graphic novel, can be a collaborative process. In this process the reader is not only reading "with the writer" but also consistently supplying their own knowledge between frames in order to make sense of the narrative. This investigation ultimately reveals how queer prison testimonies, in their search for a community (and sometimes through counterintuitive means), create a pedagogy and genre that warn, advise, and guide future queer readers. At the same time, I suggest that the same testimonies are autodidactic in that they show a process of learning what and how to testify about lived experience.

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[6] The queer *confinato*, or those who were exiled as punishment during fascism, has not been a part of the general Italian collective memory.

Before beginning a textual analysis, it is necessary to consider the publishing politics of *In Italia*, as its inception is integral to the content. *In Italia*'s appendix includes a transcribed interview between academic and researcher Giovanni Dall'Orto and a man named Giuseppe B., also known as "Peppinella." Dall'Orto conducted the interview in Salerno, published it, and later uploaded it to his website on June 26th, 2006.[7] [8] On September 6th, 2017, Dall'Orto confessed that Colaone and de Santis did not obtain permission to use the interview to produce the graphic novel.[9] The graphic then is built upon two ambiguities: Dall'Orto's interview are reproduced notes that he attempted to transcribe faithfully and then the graphic novel is inspired by these notes without Dall'Orto's consultation. This ambiguity is vital to consider as queer prison testimonies, which *Unbreaking Bonds* contends through all its chapters, complicate and blur the lines between authorship and who is testifying. Regardless, *In Italia* is loosely based on the interview as it directly cites it. It also borrows from other testimonies and information from Giartosio and Goretti's publication, *La città e l'isola. Omossessuali al confino nell'Italia fascista* (2006) [*The City and the Island. Homosexuals in Confinement in Fascist Italy*]. The protagonist in *In Italia*, Ninella, is inspired by Giuseppe B. and is also from Salerno. The frame narrative is based on two filmmakers, Rocco and Nico, who are interviewing Ninella as they take him back to the island prison for the first time in forty years. Ninella reluctantly recounts his story as evasively as possible and confronts his trauma primarily through disputing with Rocco.

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[7] Dall'Orto, Giovanni. "Ci furono femminelle che piangevano quando venimmo via dalle Tremiti!" *Babilonia*, no. 50, 1987, 26-28.

[8] Giovanni Dall'Orto: http://www.giovannidallorto.com/saggistoria/fascismo/peppinella.html.

Corporeal Delimitation: The Queer Line Between Community and Prison

This graphic novel reveals the forced island exile of homosexuals and political dissidents during the fascist regime, specifically the homosexual *invertiti* [abnormal]. As Mussolini's government was reworking their penal code in 1930, the *Codice Rocco*, there was a discussion to include a law against pederasty similar to Nazi Germany's Paragraph

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[9] Thanks to the James T. Wetzel Scholarship from the Romance Languages department at the University of Oregon, I was able to go to Dall'Orto's home to examine his personal archive of police records from the era. I was also able to interview the illustrator and writer of the graphic novel. When I spoke with the artist and writer, they both refused to rebut or explain this claim.

175.[10] The graphic novel's title derives from Mussolini's (or another politician's) apocryphal objection to the law: "in Italia sono tutti maschi" [there are only (masculine) men in Italy]. Homosexuals were sanctioned as political prisoners, and many political prisoners were punished through *confino* (confinement) in which they were not placed in actual prisons. Instead, they were sequestered from Italian society (genuine political prisoners in San Nicola, which is visible from the homosexual prison in San Domino). In *Internal Exile in Fascist Italy: History and Representations of Confino* (2019), Garofalo, Leake, and Renga describe the practice as:

> Confined to prisons without walls (remote islands and villages) …thousands of men and women suffered this punitive practice, which the Regime had adopted as a political means to discipline dissidents. To pre-empt public criticism of the measure, Mussolini spun these detention sites as more akin to island getaways than to isolated penitentiaries. (1)

Homosexuals were arrested and isolated onto island prisons, thus mimicking imprisonment, without a specific law detailing their same-sex crimes. Even more so counterintuitively, *Internal Exile* explains that "the Fascist mandate was to isolate homosexuals and deny the existence of its practice(s) even as it poured money and manpower into suppressing them" (103). Although most homosexual *confinati* on San Domino were Southern Italian male homosexuals, the sequestered ranged from priests, the illiterate, lesbians, crossdressers, and some Northern Italians. [11] Crucial in understanding the importance of recent considerations of the *confinati* is that homosexuality did not fall under the media spotlight until the *balletti verdi* [little green dances], during which men would encounter one another in intimate parties.[12] The men's names were published in newspapers in the early 1960s, therefore causing public outrage.

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[10] The proposed article 528 explicitly outlawed homosexual acts whose punishment ranged from one to five years in prison. See Dall'Orto, Giovanni. "La 'tolleranza repressiva' dell'omosessualità. Quando un atteggiamento legale diviene tradizione." *Omosessuali e stato*, edited by Arcigay Nazionale, Cassero, 1988. (44)

[11] I will now use the Italian term to imply those who were sent to the islands as a quasi-prison punishment.

The Italian homosexual *confinato* to which *Internal Exile* points responds to a lack of general awareness of homosexual exile both in Italian collective memory and globally. Although there have been films and documentaries (e.g., Ettore Scola's *Una giornata particolare*, 1977 and Gabriella Romano's *Ricordare*, 2004), novels (Giorgio Bassani's *Gli occhiali d'oro*, 1958), and many academic investigations into the phenomenon nonetheless remains relatively absent from considerations of fascism. *Internal Exile* reflects that "the documentaries and graphic novel, however, are explicit in treating the exile experience of gay men, and evince a clear memorialising tendency surrounding gay *confino*" (178). The memorialization is key to *In Italia* as it attempts to be an accessible and visible cultural product to which many may turn to bring more light to this phenomenon. The texts and films are part of an attempt to penetrate collective consciousness and to have a specific experience recognized as part of Italian national history:

> The queer affect that is rife in the documentaries and graphic novel…engage in a process of 'queering the public archive', which has a double effect: for the first time, the men who are the focus of the documentaries and graphic novel are positioned within national memory….queer responses to cultural trauma are not linear and as such might push back against cultural tendencies to heal and to get over the past. (*Internal Exile* 178)

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[12] According to participants, green was a reference to famous Irish homosexual poet, Oscar Wilde.

One of this chapter's main goals is to consider the queer response to this trauma and how it ‘queers the public archive.’ An example of this process is the retelling of Giuseppe B.’s interview into the graphic novel. It highlights a collaborative effort to connect a survivor to a listening audience and a community that has long been denied.

In Italia explores Ninella’s life as a gay man under fascism, his arrest, his island imprisonment, his return, and the ensuing decades' long silence. The graphic novel also explores his struggle in testifying as it pays particular attention also to how the body reflects the queer affect of non-community and isolation. The graphic novel first considers how Ninella was forced to societal margins through body policing, how his body is juridically and politically regarded as queer, and how his body reacts to the internalized conflict of wanting to be out but being silenced. By examining how the body has been excluded from a community before Ninella’s seclusion will help illustrate how the graphic novel itself attempts to remedy his lack of identity in a community that is either Italian or queer. Ninella’s homosexual practices, such as visiting various queer locales or frequenting forests known for cruising, are not unnoticed by his brother, Michele, who cautions him about his risky behavior in the current political climate:

> Finché ti ostinerai col tuo comportamento pericoloso…Mi hanno detto che hai ripreso a frequentare la sala da ballo sotto la piazzetta…Se l’ho saputo io, quanto tempo credi che ci metteranno a saperlo loro, e a fare una retata lì dove vi riunite? […] Ma qui si parla dell’OVRA![13] Anto’, la polizia politica! Dicono che ormai stai dappertutto! (15) [14]

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[13] The OVRA, whose most likely name was Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell’Antifascismo (Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism), is the Nazi’s Gestapo predecessor. The OVRA was Mussolini’s secret police that never appeared in any official document.

> [As long as you keep up with your risky behavior…They told me that you started going back to the dance hall down beyond the city square…If I found out about it, how long do you think it will take for them to find out and then they'll round you guys up where you meet? [...] Everyone here's talking about the OVRA. The political police! They say that they're everywhere now!]

Michele, and ostensibly the political police, automatically associate queerness with where a body occupies space. In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault considers this warning as "a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power of knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge" (28). The homosexual body, at least in the case of *In Italia*, complicates corporeal assumptions. The understanding of the dance hall guiltily queers Ninella as a homosexual meeting place. The conclusion we can draw from this parallel is that architecture allows institutions to read bodies according to the places they frequent. Then, societal mechanisms punish humans who are not where and how they should be. The set of mechanisms to administer punishment can be defined, as Foucault writes, as a whole series of "walls, space, institutions, rules, discourses" (307); thus, fascist statecraft utilizes space-making as a method to shame and exclude them from specific areas.

Ninella is conditioned to avoid queerness by association as he is made aware that the ever-watchful public eye would read him as queer by the places he frequents. During their conversation about the secret polices, the graphic novel points to Michele's preoccupation and anxiety through his sweating and worried face (see fig. 2).

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[14] All translations of *In Italia* are my own and I pair the original with my translation in each figure.

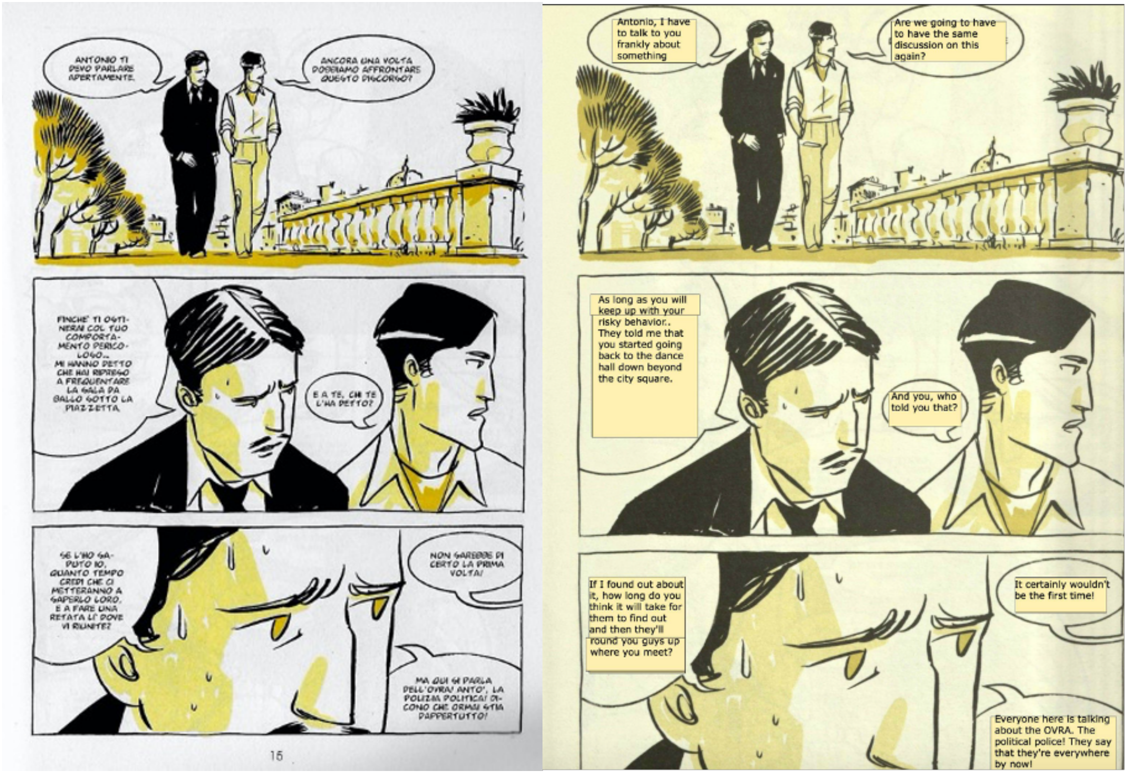
ANTONIO TI DEVO PARLARE APERTAMENTE.
ANCORA UNA VOLTA DOBBIAMO AFFRONTARE QUESTO DISCORSO?
FINCHE' TI OSTINERAI COL TUO COMPORTAMENTO PERICOLOSO... MI HANNO DETTO CHE HAI RIPRESO A FREQUENTARE LA SALA DA BALLO SOTTO LA PIAZZETTA.
E A TE, CHI TE L'HA DETTO?
SE L'HO SAPUTO IO, QUANTO TEMPO CREDI CHE CI METTERANNO A SAPERLO LORO, E A FARE UNA RETATA LI' DOVE VI RIUNITE?
NON SAREBBE DI CERTO LA PRIMA VOLTA!
MA QUI SI PARLA DELL'OVRA' ANTO', LA POLIZIA POLITICA! DICONO CHE ORMAI STIA DAPPERTUTTO!
15
Antonio, I have to talk to you frankly about something
Are we going to have to have the same discussion on this again?
As long as you will keep up with your risky behavior.. They told me that you started going back to the dance hall down beyond the city square.
And you, who told you that?
If I found out about it, how long do you think it will take for them to find out and then they'll round you guys up where you meet?
It certainly wouldn't be the first time!
Everyone here is talking about the OVRA. The political police! They say that they're everywhere by now!

Fig. 2. Ninella and Michele on a walk. The second and third panels show Michele sweating.

His worry, made clear visually in the graphic novel, underlines a societal understanding of how signs of legibility play into power and its manifestation. Foucault calls this a “play of signs,” which he describes as a process which “defines the anchorages of power; it is not that beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies” (217). In this way, it is not Ninella’s individual experience included in this power, the *polizia politica*; instead, his particular body challenges the societal fabrication into which he is folded. The political police's ever-watchful panopticon is *dappertutto* (everywhere), and Ninella’s queer intelligibility is marked and noticed. Michele’s warning should function as a way to chastise Ninella, to force his body back into the “technique of forces and bodies” Ninella responds, “Non posso mica smettere di essere quello che sono per paura di quelli là! Qui tutti hanno paura: Tu, mamma, la signora Colasurdo" (17). ["It's not like I can stop being who I am out of fear of those people. Everyone's afraid here! You, Mom, Mrs. Colasurdo."]

Later, in a following scene, Ninella's dramatic capture reveals how spaces subsume the role of both queer expression and queer delineation, for where Ninella could experience homosexual desire is also where he is beaten and arrested. The place, a forest, functions as a queer cruising space in which Ninella could experience sexual encounters and, ostensibly, sexual freedom. Simultaneously, however, the same forest place as queer space also functions as the damning proof of his queerness to the State (see fig. 3). An undercover police officer and Ninella cruise one another and feel each other out, and the police officer ambushes him with other police officers and arrests him (20-1).

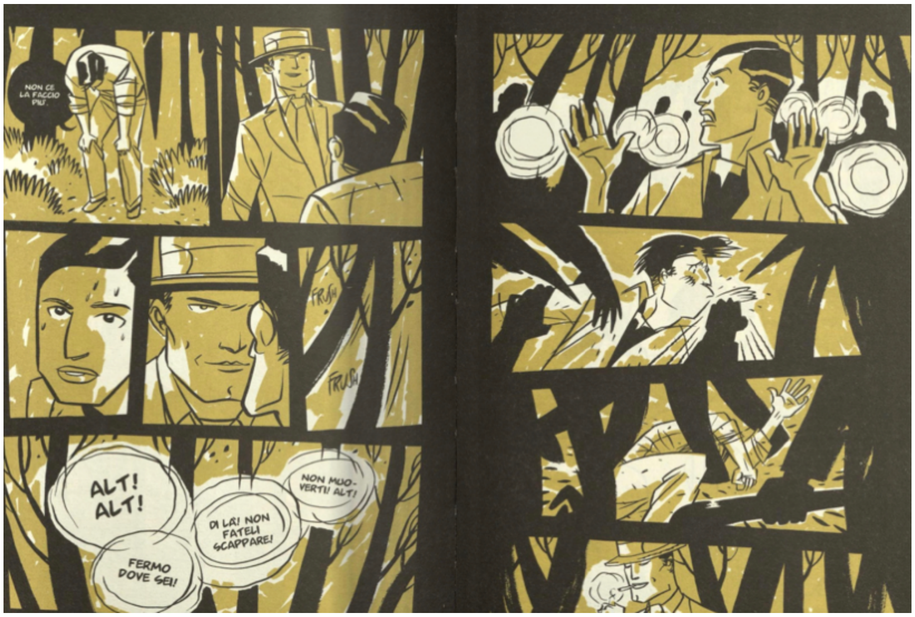
NON CE LA FACCIO PIÙ.
FRUSH
FRUSH
ALT! ALT!
FERMO DOVE SEI!
DI LÀ! NON FATELI SCAPPARE!
NON MUO-VERTI! ALT!

Fig. 3. Ninella follows a man through the forest.

The forest presents a contradiction because the police force must become a part of the queer space in order to punish queerness. The forest is a cruising site of queer pleasure and the police officer moves in a queer space invisibly. The police officer, a sign of traditional power, is performing unmarked by his police status in the forest. This is a distinction that D.A. Miller describes as that between disciplinary and traditional power:

> Disciplinary power constitutively mobilizes a tactic of tact: it is the policing power that never passes for such, but is either invisible or visible only under cover of other, nobler or simply blander intentionalities (to educate, to cure, to produce, to defend). Traditional power founded its authority in the spectacle of its force, and those on whom this power was exercised could, conversely, remain in the shade. By contrast, disciplinary power tends to remain invisible (*The Novel and the Police* 17-8).

The forest then is a space that utilizes both the 'spectacle' of traditional power while also maintaining the invisibility of disciplinary power. *In*

Furthermore, *In Italia* highlights, as I will consider later, the sense of tolerating the undesirable, up to a point, and then repressing it quickly and quietly. In addition to understanding the forest as a space of queer desire and the mechanisms of Ninella's punishment for cruising the police officer, we also need to consider then the juridical handling after the arrest. On the level of visual representation, once Antonio officially enters the judicial system, the illustrations become darker, with a stark yellow outline of Ninella's body against a black background (see fig. 4). The lines mirror how Ninella's bodily practices have marked him and placed him on the border. The outline of his body in yellow contrasts with the plain black page as the eye is drawn to his nudity and his anger. In the captions, the lieutenant describes not only Ninella's queerness and how it must be removed from society, but also his punishment. The lieutenant reads Ninella's body as queer and enters it into the official police record as someone types out his dictation.

Foucault considers the prison as an apparatus of knowledge in which there is a deliberate attempt to document individuals based on classifications, observations, and their punishment (127). These classifications reveal social and cultural anxieties about how to reform and demarcate bodies and how these anxieties lead to the creation of new techniques of intimidation. In the graphic novel, Foucault's notion of knowledge comes into play as the officer dictates aloud "Non sono presenti segni di sifilide e sifiloma all'ano, ma dalla conformazione di quest'ultimo posso asserire che Angelicola Antonio è dedito alla pederastia passiva*"* (24). ["There are no present signs of syphilis nor syphilitic sores on the anus, however, due to its conformation I can state that Antonio Angelicola partakes in passive pederasty"].[15]

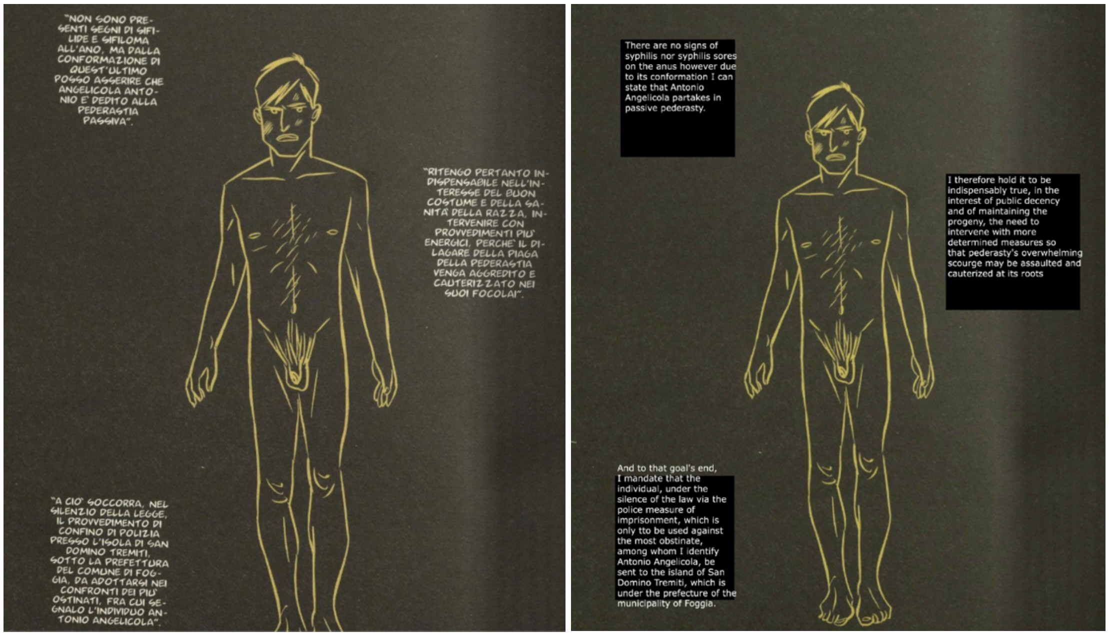
"NON SONO PRESENTI SEGNI DI SIFILIDE E SIFILOMA ALL'ANO, MA DALLA CONFORMAZIONE DI QUEST'ULTIMO POSSO ASSERIRE CHE ANGELICOLA ANTONIO E' DEDITO ALLA PEDERASTIA PASSIVA".
"RITENGO PERTANTO INDISPENSABILE NELL'INTERESSE DEL BUON COSTUME E DELLA SANITÀ DELLA RAZZA, INTERVENIRE CON PROVVEDIMENTI PIU' ENERGICI, PERCHE' IL DILAGARE DELLA PIAGA DELLA PEDERASTIA VENGA AGGREDITO E CAUTERIZZATO NEI SUOI FOCOLAI".
"A CIO' SOCCORRA, NEL SILENZIO DELLA LEGGE, IL PROVVEDIMENTO DI CONFINO DI POLIZIA PRESSO L'ISOLA DI SAN DOMINO TREMITI, SOTTO LA PREFETTURA DEL COMUNE DI FOGGIA, DA ADOTTARSI NEI CONFRONTI DEI PIU' OSTINATI, FRA CUI SEGNALO L'INDIVIDUO ANTONIO ANGELICOLA".
There are no signs of syphilis nor syphilis sores on the anus however due to its conformation I can state that Antonio Angelicola partakes in passive pederasty.
I therefore hold it to be indispensably true, in the interest of public decency and of maintaining the progeny, the need to intervene with more determined measures so that pederasty's overwhelming scourge may be assaulted and cauterized at its roots
And to that goal's end, I mandate that the individual, under the silence of the law via the police measure of imprisonment, which is only tto be used against the most obstinate, among whom I identify Antonio Angelicola, be sent to the island of San Domino Tremiti, which is under the prefecture of the municipality of Foggia.

Fig. 4. A black background with a yellow outline of Ninella's body.

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[15] Archival research through Giovanni Dall'Orto's collection of police reports from the time revealed the fascist practice included digital insertion into a man's anus to determine if there had been sexual penetration.

While what the sergeant considered to be the stereotypical sign of homosexual knowledge, syphilis, is not present, nevertheless signs of “pederasty” are still announced as discernable on Ninella’s body. The careful reading of his body, entered into the juridical process through a high and formal linguistic register, relegates Ninella’s body's use to queer expressions. The police officer’s denunciation indicts Antonio’s body in the name of community health, “Ritengo pertanto indispensabile nell’interesse del buon costume e della sanità della razza, intervenire con provvedimenti più energici, perché il dilagare della piaga della pederastia venga aggredito e cauterizzato nei suoi focolai” (24). [“I, therefore, hold it the need to intervene to be unquestionably necessary, in the interest of public decency and of maintaining the progeny, with more determined measures so that pederasty’s overwhelming scourge must be confronted and cauterized as its roots”]. Ninella’s trial-less indictment mirrors the fascist paradox in identifying and punishing the body. Fascism deploys queer bodily practices, like cruising or examining the body for queer manifestations, in order to demarcate the homosexual. Fascism does so invisibly to maintain the silence in which the queer operates.

As I have shown, the graphic novel delineates how, as forewarned by Ninella’s brother, society confines Ninella to the outside, how queer cruising leads to the condemnation of his body, and how Ninella’s body is used as proof that he belongs in the margins. In addition, Ninella is pushed to the literal, material borders that allow for the enactment of further punishment, even if not within an official institution like a prison. In *Prison Terms*, Ellen Nerenberg argues that any numbers of spaces can function as prisons, such as military barracks, convents, brothers, and even the home. As with the mechanisms identified in *Internal Exile*, Nerenberg underscores the fascist practice of removal and eradication to ensure normativity: “The Fascist State promoted a set of exclusionary tactics concerning social space; in order to secure and preserve the homogeneity of its citizens, the State eradicated heterodox elements by removing them” (11). In Ninella and Giuseppe B’s case, they were removed from Salerno, just south of Naples, to the eastern side of the peninsula, on the island of San Domino, which constituted a prison-like space for the *confinati*.

While on the island of San Domino, the *confinati* were allowed to walk around the island and were expected to work for their miserly government allowance. The police force on the island would follow the *confinati* and lock them away for misbehavior (such as fighting one another). They would sleep in shared spaces similar to barracks, but could move relatively freely between and among the space. Both the ostensible freedom of movement and police oversight are part of the transformation of an “island getaway” into a place of punishment, suffering, and isolation. This prison creation process reflects the Italian homosexual experience: both are not named for what they are but are practiced regardless. *In Italia* Fascism goes to great lengths to not openly arrest and convict Ninella for his homosexual just as must as the government attempts to avoid calling their exile a prison.

The island does in fact become a prison space, albeit one where the mechanisms of punishment are not the explicit ones of a state prison. As Nerenberg explains, “imprisonment and prisons are more phenomenological in nature, and non-carceral space is no guarantee that freedom of a body and mind will not be abridged in ways consonant with prison” (9). This phenomenological nature of prison becomes evident in the graphic novel as one of Ninella’s fellow *confinati*, an effeminate Sicilian man named Sabino

Paternò, experiences a mental break when the commissary's prices are raised and explicitly calls the island a prison (see fig. 5).[16] Until this point, and also afterwards, the word prison is not used at all. "Un carcere questo è. Non un esilio! Neppure più le passeggiate ci fate fare. Sempre nei cameroni. Ma lo capite o no che…" (88) ["This is a prison, this is, not exile! You won't even let us take a walk, always in our rooms, but do you get it that…"].

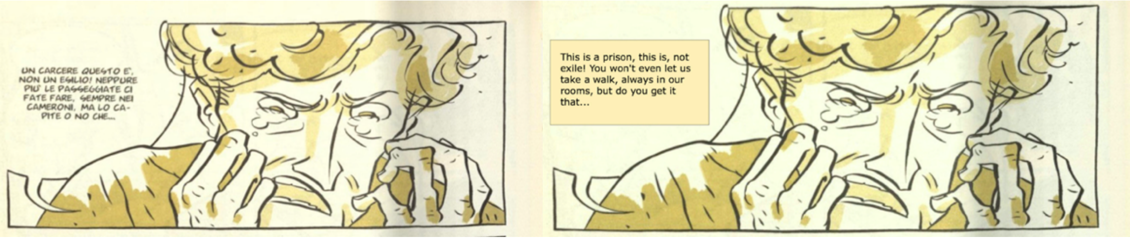
UN CARCERE QUESTO E', NON UN ESILIO! NEPPURE PIU' LE PASSEGGIATE CI FATE FARE. SEMPRE NEI CAMERONI. MA LO CAPITE O NO CHE...
This is a prison, this is, not exile! You won't even let us take a walk, always in our rooms, but do you get it that...

Fig. 5. A close-up drawing of Sabino as he breaks down.

Until this breaking point, Sabino had considered his societal exclusion as exile, not actual imprisonment. His crisis and coming to terms with his invisible punishment highlight the amorphous shape that fascist body policing and punishment takes. The punishing practice fills the space of the island without explicitly naming itself, leaving room for ambiguity and plausible deniability. Sabino's difficulty in naming the condition as a prison produces a sense of complacency. Nerenberg reflects on the distress that this so-called exile causes: "The prisoner of the carceral analog experiences incarceration but cannot verify it. This lack of recognition renders impossible or moot the contemplation of why or how one is confined" (19). The *confinati* are in a double bind as they did not speak to their sexuality openly before (e.g. Michele's veiled admonishment) and they cannot speak of their exile as imprisonment because their incarceration is not made explicit as such and is rooted in oppressive silence. They have already been socially and internally exiled, and are for the most part unable to define their experience on the island as incarceration.

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[16] *In Italia* communicates Sabino's effeminacy through many hand gestures associated with homosexual men: hands on his hips, limp wrists, blowing kisses. He is also bawdy and flirtatious with many characters.

Due to its ambiguous nature, then, the fascist exile-as-punishment creates space for interpretation and movement, which is the space through which *In Italia* and the *confinati* intervene as, until this point, the threat of punishment for Ninella has pervaded the narrative. Giovanni Dall'Orto considers this phenomenon as *tolleranza repressiva* ("repressive tolerance") as it "potrebbe apparire [come] la mancanza di un intervento delle autorità nel campo della devianza sessuale, ma al contrario una strategia generale compiuta con il minimo sforzo, il minimo disagio sociale, ed il massimo di rendimento" (46). ["it could appear as a lack of authorities' intervention in the area of sexual deviation, but on the contrary as it is a general strategy accomplished with minimum force, minimum social inconvenience, and yet with a maximized yield"]. Repressive tolerance is suggested and practiced throughout *In Italia*. Ninella was arrested and ushered away secretly, without an official declaration of arrest, and without proper due process. This secrecy perpetuates the silence around the entire phenomenon as repressive tolerance seeks to eliminate social transgression without calling attention to it.

In the case of Italy and *In Italia*, repressive tolerance incorporates both the traditional and disciplinary power that D.A. Miller notes, given that it includes the use of state power to move the *confinati* to the Tremiti Islands. However, it is invisible as it is kept under silence and hidden for the public's good. Due to repressive tolerance's ambiguity and operating through silence, however, it also paradoxically permits a circumscribed place of freedom and community. The state's intention to isolate and punish queer men also creates the conditions of possibility for a community to emerge. The space intended to punish becomes a place to practice queerness openly.

In fact, some *confinati* find themselves regretting this sense of community once they leave the island. The title of Dall'Orto's interview with Giuseppe B. is entitled, "Ci furono *femmenelle* che piangevano quando venimmo via dalle Trémiti" ["There were ladyboys who were crying when we left the Tremiti islands!"].[17] The title is derived from one of Giuseppe B's comments, and it speaks to the anguish many experienced in their return home given they forcefully left the accepting queer community they had unexpectedly found on the island prison. Giuseppe B. bluntly explains that, "In fondo…si stava meglio là che qua: ai tempi miei se eri *femmenella* non potevi manco uscire fuori di casa: non ti potevi far notare, sennò la questura ti arrestava…Facevamo pure teatro, e lì naturalmente potevamo vestirci da donna senza che nessuno dicesse niente" (171). ["At the end of it all…you were better off there than here: during that time, if you were a ladyboy, it's not like you could really go out of your house: you couldn't be noticed, otherwise the police would arrest you…We would do theater, and naturally there we could dress as women without anyone saying anything"]. The silence that oppressed them before became an accepting silence on the island that permitted them to participate in and create a community that their policed bodies had not been able to experience before. Their removal from societal boundaries to an island place practiced as a penitentiary space, paradoxically, allowed them to access unexpected freedom to express their identities.

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[17] Dall'Orto's interview was originally published in *Babilonia*, as indicated in footnote 3, however when citing the interview directly I will be referring to the page numbers in the graphic novel.

It is important to consider this prison space also as a space for queen men to practice community, and also a space where men, who may not have previously had access to or participate in same-sex encounters, find the conditions to do so. Regina Kunzel, in *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality* (2010), argues that prison as a practiced place creates a space in which heterosexuality is exposed as friable and inconsistent:

> But as observers came to acknowledge, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, the essence of the problem of prison sex was less the practice of homosexuality among prisoners than its implications for the nature of heterosexuality. Indeed, much of what was at stake in the anxiety over homosexuality in prison concerned its potential to reveal heterosexual identity as fragile, unstable, and itself, situational. (8)

This notion of heterosexuality as fragile parallels Dall'Orto's idea that repressive tolerance denies the reality of homosexuality. Repressive tolerance's discreet handling exposes how situational heterosexuality is: what is considered non-normative is ushered away from public view with little explicit reaction. Prison is often a very violent, homophobic, racist, and transphobic place; this is important to acknowledge and persistently remember and challenge. That being said, however, in the case of utilizing an island into a prison in which a community of men who have sex with men (MSM) may develop, that space provides conditions through which queer men may express their sexuality openly.

Kunzel's assertion that prison produces anxiety about the unstable nature of heterosexuality becomes evident in both Giuseppe B's testimony and in *In Italia*.

Giuseppe B. describes how the island prison created the conditions for the guards and political prisoners (exiled in the neighboring island, San Nicola) to practice homosexuality. Dall'Orto inquires about the dynamic between the prisoners and guards, to which Giuseppe responds, "Eh…pure i fascisti e i carabinieri si volevano togliere lo sfizio di venire con noi, in un modo o nell'altro" ["Well…Even the fascists and police officers wanted to fancy their whims with us, in one way or another…"] and Dall'Orto incredulously responds "E non correvano rischi, così facendo?" ["And they weren't running any risks in doing that?"]. Furthermore, Giuseppe answers, "Rischiare? Ma tutti si rischiava, perché non era certo permesso che noi andassimo a fare marchette con loro!" ["Risks? Everyone was already risking everything, because it certainly wasn't allowed for us to sell ourselves to them!"] (172).[18] An island of MSM excluded from society allows the guards to experiment sexually. There are no brothers like Michele to warn them or lieutenants to condemn them to an even further remote island. Even more so remarkable is that Giuseppe B., and by extension, we may suppose it was similar for other *confinati*, did not feel obligated to prostitute himself with the guards. The guards represented the fascist state, and yet as they were all members of, to use Nerenberg's term, the island 'carceral analog' (19), it was not *explicitly* illegal for them to engage in same-sex acts; but it was illegal for them to engage in sex work. Due to the repressive tolerance, it is possible they may not have participated in same-sex acts. However, given the Giuseppe B.'s allusions, and the fact that the island guards are also ostensibly sequestered away from public view along with the *confinati*, heterosexuality reveals itself to be just as situational as homosexuality.

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[18] Giuseppe B. does disclose (172), as do Giartosio and Goretti in *La città e l'isola* (67), that in order to supplement their paltry government allowance, some of the *confinati* would engage in sex work with the political prisoners from San Nicola when they would come to visit San Domino.

In Italia also engages with the sense of community that the *confinati* find in the paradoxical state of being removed from society and its repressive tolerance and forced into collective isolation on an island. This sense of community also comes to the fore as they must face the consequences of returning home. After Mussolini declared war against Great Britain and France on June 10th, 1940, resources were diverted, and consequentially the *confinati* were returned home, where they could have their sentences commuted. In the graphic novel, the different temporal moments are represented with flashback panels, with a voice-over, that depict the *confinati* saying goodbye, followed by a panel with Ninella, in the narrative's present, being recorded. He muses:

> Si torna, sì, ma dove? Si torna a quella che fu la mia casa, ma mi fu tolta, si torna a quella che fu la mia famiglia, ma fu squarciata dal dolore. E l'esilio dal mio paese, è l'esilio anche dagli sguardi, dai malanni, dai livori. Si torna che tutto è cambiato. Si torna che niente è come prima. Oggi il mio regno è quella terra di nessuno dove casa è una parola che non so più pronunciare. Si torna, sì, ma dove? C'erano femminelli che piangevano quel giorno…Piangevano perché andavano via…piangevano perché tornavano a casa…chi lo sa? (146-7)
>
> [We're going back, but to what? You go back to a house that used to be mine, but was taken from me, you go back to a family that used to be mine, but it was ripped apart by pain. And an exile from my town, it's an exile from the looks, from the ill will, from the rancor. You go back to everything that's changed. We're going back to nothing as to how it used to be. Today my kingdom is that no

> man's land where home is a word that I no longer know how to pronounce. We're going back, yes, but to what? Some ladyboys were crying that day…They were crying because they were leaving…They were crying because they were going home…Who knows why?].

Ninella indicates that his "kingdom" was an unspeakable place under a repressive tolerance, but where he truly felt at home. Moreover, as *In Italia* cites directly from Dall'Orto and Giuseppe B.'s interview, Ninella highlights that some of the *confinati* were disheartened at having to leave the first open community to which they had belonged and go back to a life of silence and discretion. *In Italia* is innovative in its consideration of how prison creates a queering of testimony since the graphic novel engages in this silenced grief in a pedagogical and, as I will discuss below, also a reparative way. Teaching and recuperation are only possible due to the fact that fascist spatial practices render an island more than just an island: it becomes a possibility for creating a queer community and home. Counterintuitively, the fascist queer policing had the opposite effect of creating community and the graphic novel form, as I will show, also provides an unexpected form of community building that leads to a new form of queer testimony.

The *Confinato* Graphic Novel: Establishing a Queer Voice

As mentioned earlier, before his exile, Ninella had access to a queer community only through cruising and fleeting encounters, since societal and legislative mechanisms prevented a community from developing in public. After his arrest, he is placed into a community of fellow queer *confinati* who create a community out of necessity and out of understanding. The war's beginning tore their community apart, however, thereby forcing them back into isolation. Ninella’s loss and grief are visible when returns to the island decades later (see fig. 6). The graphic novel portrays the eye of the camera while he looks off-camera and comments, “Degli altri non ho più sentito nessuno. Dopo la guerra è stato difficile mantenere le amicizie... E poi un po’ si voleva dimenticare. Ma mica si dimentica o si vive sereni... Ci si convive con questa pena…” (156). [“I haven’t heard anything from the others, after the war it was hard to keep up the friendships…And a bit of it was that we wanted to forget. But it’s not like you can forgive or live happily ever after…You live with this suffering…”].

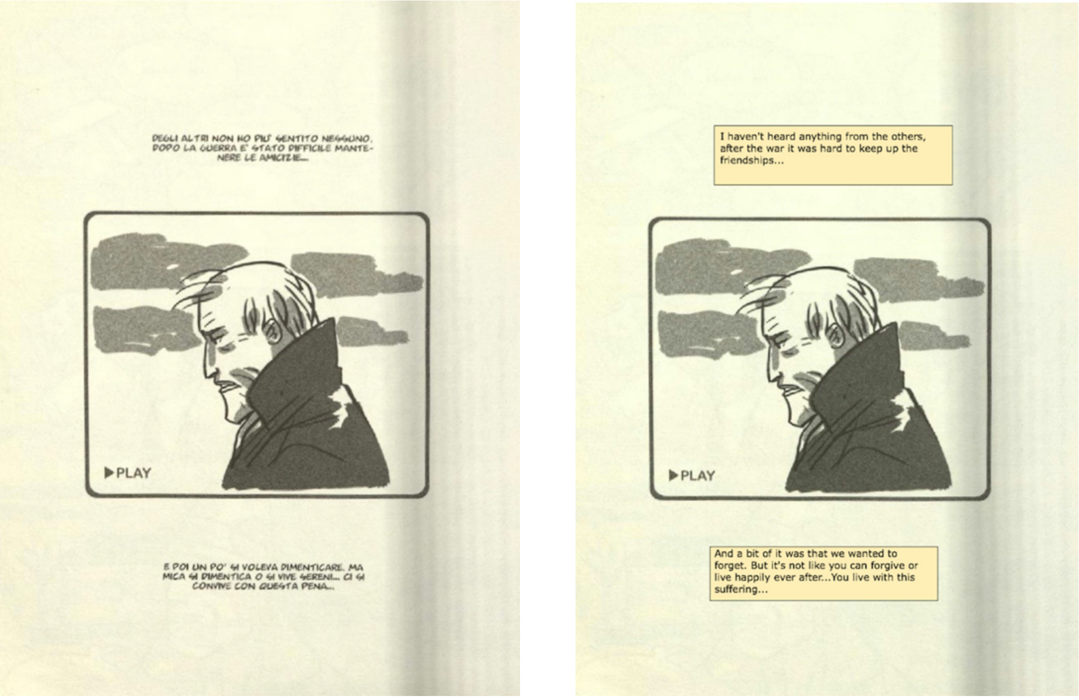
DEGLI ALTRI NON HO PIU' SENTITO NESSUNO. DOPO LA GUERRA E' STATO DIFFICILE MANTENERE LE AMICIZIE...
▶PLAY
E POI UN PO' SI VOLEVA DIMENTICARE. MA MICA SI DIMENTICA O SI VIVE SERENI... CI SI CONVIVE CON QUESTA PENA...
I haven't heard anything from the others, after the war it was hard to keep up the friendships...
▶PLAY
And a bit of it was that we wanted to forget. But it's not like you can forgive or live happily ever after...You live with this suffering...

Fig. 6. An illustration mimicking a point of view through the camera focused on Ninella.

As *In Italia* insightfully highlights, the memory of exile is imbued with queer mourning for that community and the community that would not emerge in the Italian consciousness for several decades.

A key point here is that it was precisely the fascist state’s practices of space-making and island isolation that allowed for the creation of an open, queer *confinati* community in Italy. Furthermore, it was this fascist policy that brought the possibility of creating a collective queer voice, one that extended through queer generations. The notion of queer community is inevitably tied to a painful history of not having access to such a community. As Michael Warner points out, "the notion of community has remained problematic if only because nearly every lesbian or gay remembers being such before entering a collectively identified space, because much of lesbian and gay history has to do with non-community, and because dispersal rather than localization continues to be definitive of queer self-understanding" ("Fear of a Queer Planet"). This is deeply relevant to the representation of Ninella's experience, and the graphic novel underscores the prevalence of non-community in Ninella's life: he is warned from frequenting queer spaces, arrested in a cruising ground, and returned to silence after his island imprisonment. Even when Ninella does find a community on the island, it once again becomes *uncommunitized,* and he lives in silence about his experience for decades, a common occurrence in queer prison testimony.

Through its modes of representation specific to the graphic novel, however, *In Italia* recuperates this lack of community as the media mode promotes and insists upon creating a collaborative rapport between the reader and the comic creator. In fact, I argue the medium of the graphic novel is central to establishing a discourse of connecting and healing. The island prison is a space that is practiced to punish but that also creates a queer space, and the graphic novel expands this queer space. The graphic novel *itself* becomes a community space as it pushes the reader to involve themselves actively in the story's development. The graphic novel is different from a traditional written testimony as testimony is usually consists of written words that lead the leader through a clearly delineated series of events and reflections. A graphic novel diverges from that tradition as it is “a medium where the audience is a willing, and conscious collaborator and closure is the agent of change, time and motion” (McCloud 65). The graphic novel engages in a variety of modes of narration and expression, such as onomatopoeia, depiction of facial expressions, and even the gaps between the panels. Therefore, the graphic novel is a hybrid space that incites the reader to engage actively and self-consciously with the text and story. Unlike film or television, the graphic novel allows agency for the reader as it is the reader who must continue to read and participate in the story’s progression.

Scott McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* explains the comic book gaps between panels mimic how we perceive the world:

> All of us perceive the world as a whole through the experience of our senses. Yet our senses can only reveal a world that is fragmented and incomplete. Even the most widely travelled mind can only see so much of the world in the course of a life. Our perception of ‘reality’ is an act on faith, based on mere fragments. As infants, we’re unable to commit that act of faith. If we can’t see it, hear it, smell it, taste it or touch it, it isn’t there. The game peek-a-boo plays on this idea. Gradually, we all learn the sight of mommy comes and goes, mommy remains. (62)

McCloud goes on to call this phenomenon “closure” as it is “observing the parts but perceiving the whole” (62). He goes on to explain that:

> In our daily lives, we often commit closure, mentally completing that which is incomplete based on past experience. Some forms of closure are deliberate inventions of storytellers to produce suspense or to challenge audiences. Others

> happen automatically without much effort. Part of business as usual. In recognizing and relating to other people, we all depend heavily on our learned ability of closure. In an incomplete world, we must depend on closure for our very survival. (63)

Closure is essential to *In Italia* because the graphic novel, a juxtaposition of the written word and images to be interpreted sequentially, does not reveal every aspect of the story, and it quite explicitly relies on the reader to fill in the blanks and make sense of the story. To illustrate the concept of closure, McCloud uses the example of a panel in which a man is wielding an axe shouts "Now you die!," followed by a panel showing a cityscape at night over which an onomatopoeic shout "Eeyaa!!" is scrawled (see fig. 7).[19] The panel progression leads the reader to interpret that, in the in-between space the other person has indeed been felled by the axe.

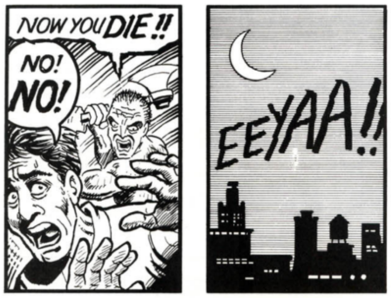
NOW YOU DIE!!
NO! NO!
EEYAA!!

Fig. 7. Two men shouting in one panel and a shout on another

The intersection between the written text, image, reader, and writer creates the conditions through which a community can potentially be formed. Community creation is crucial work for queer communities as it proposes a locus in which community is not expected or forced into creation. Instead, the writer and reader actively decide to reach out to one another in an ethics of understanding and collaboration. McCloud's understanding of closure is crucial in bridging the gap between a community and a non-community because "closure in comics fosters an intimacy" that is a "silent, secret contract between creator and audience" (69). While the written word may be just as intimate in what it reveals, the graphic novel offers a more dynamic intimacy crucial in building an active contributing community as comics allow the reader to become a participant in the world making. The reader becomes aware of the role of interpreting, equally as important to community building.

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[19] See McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: [The Invisible Arts]*. Paw Prints, 2008, p. 66.

The reader is able to pay attention to the interpreting role in the act of closure, which is found in the gutter between comic panels. In shifting between an axe swinging down on someone and the gutter leading the reader to the conclusion that the person died, the reader notices the reliance on the guided interpretation. The blank space, in which the reader must interpret, McCloud, explains that the "human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea. Nothing is seen between the two panels, but experience tells you something must be there" (McCloud 66-7). This mechanism in which the human imagination engages, I argue, is precisely that through which a queer prison testimony graphic novel can *queer* testimony: within the gutter, one must self-consciously rely on one's experience in order to understand and engage with the graphic novel. The space between the panels are access points to knowledge, empathy, and a shared desire for understanding that are paramount for queer prison testimonies.

The graphic novel as a testifying medium queers the testimonial process. As I discuss in the next chapter of this dissertation, testimony is a process that explicitly implicates both the speaker and the listener or reader. The graphic novel, in particular, queers testimony in the sense that it permits an interweaving between the panels and the gutter that relies on trust and faith in the reader and the writer for the story to emerge in a coherent fashion. The reader trusts that the empty space gutter will help the narration progress in a coherent fashion, and the writer relies on the reader to interpret the gutter through a reflexive desire for meaning and closure. This queering testimony relies on Warner's non-community assertion that many queers remember when they were first queer before a community, and that awareness is developed without a community. In the case of *In Italia*, Giuseppe B.'s story is retold within the text, thus community-less; the text itself cannot exist without the writer producing it, hoping for a community to notice this mostly unrecognized phenomenon of the *confinati*. The reader only becomes a part of the community as they read the graphic novel and their interpretation between panels bridges the gap between the reader, writer, and testifier.

Queering testimony, however, does not rely solely on readers who are queer or who only possess queer knowledge, but it does implicate the reader into both this knowledge and this community. An example of queering testimony is that, even without the written word, we can immediately understand that sexual and amorous relationships on the island prison developed. As soon as Ninella arrives on the island and sits down for a meal, other *confinati* explain to him the different groups in the mess hall, their explanation is interrupted by a three-panel sequence that is similar to a film's shot-reverse-shot from a medium close-up of a prison guard to a close-up of Ninella and then a reverse shot to the guard (see fig. 8).[20]

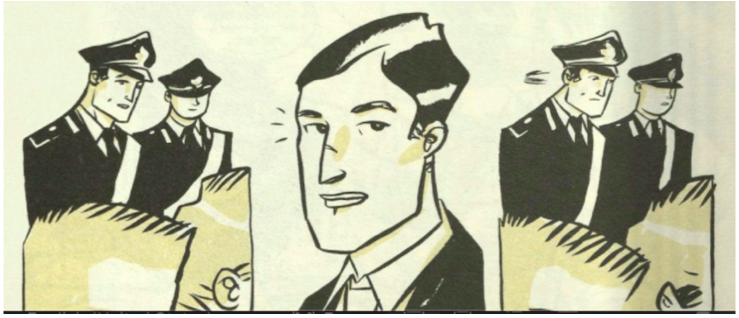

Fig. 8. A shot-reverse-shot between Ninella and a guard exchanging glances.

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[20] See *In Italia sono tutti maschi*. By Luca de Santis, illustrated by Sara Colaone, Kappa edizioni, 2008, p. 43.

In Ninella's panel, three action lines around his right eye and his left arched eyebrow suggest his interest in the guard, and in the final panel, action lines moving from the left to the right and the guard looking away suggest embarrassment. The gutters in this sequence may be interpreted in two ways: the first is that Ninella is cruising the guard, and the guard notices it and is embarrassed by being noticed by a homosexual prisoner, and the other is that Ninella and the guard are cruising one another at the same time and the guard looks away in shame of being caught looking at Ninella in the same moment. A queer and/or insightful reader familiar with cruising may interpret the latter (it is revealed later that the guard is indeed attracted to Ninella) or assume the former.[21] Nonetheless, the graphic novel draws the reader into making either assumption using queer experience and queer knowledge due to the graphic novel's ability to create a complicit creator of knowledge, which is the reader. Queer or not, the reader understands Ninella to be cruising the guard and intuits that the guard is embarrassed. This sequence and its interpretive ambiguities are an invitation to the reader to play with their knowledge and assumptions create a community because of its ambiguity. The gutter is the space through which a community can be formed as the writer uses the reader to understand certain scenes, movements, and progression a certain way, sometimes leaving the interpretation open to multiple readings. McCloud appropriately considers this queering testimony phenomenon as he writes that, "every act committed to paper by the comic artist is aided and abetted by a silent accomplice. An equal partner in crime known as the reader" (68). Actively implicating and involving the reader is the power of graphic novels. It actively attempts to recuperate a non-community by offering an amorphous community that consists of both the reader, writer, and the event.

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[21] Sergio Rigoletto, in his article "Sexual Dissidence and the Mainstream: The Queer Triangle in Ferzan Ozpetek's *Le fate ignoranti*", also examines considers the phenomenon as Ozpetek plays with his audience and is "queering the heteronormative assumptions" (206).

The queer voice to which I refer when I engage with queer prison testimonies is not only literal. It is not just a written, literary voice. It is a voice that searches for a community, even if they have been denied a voice and a community. The graphic novel permits a non-community community. There is no need for the reader to be queer, as graphic novel medium permits an opening in the experience of time and space through McCloud's gutter. We can think of the gutter as a space and time in which the reader, characters, author, and illustrator mingle and coexist on the same plane. The queer voice wants to establish a genealogy through which older queer generations are not only remembered but are also able to share their stories. There has been a lack of an intergenerational queer discussion, and it is through queer prison testimonies we may also begin to consider how this queer voice attempts to manifest itself. These testimonies are didactic as they teach future generations about past experiences, and they are warnings to be vigilant relentless of queerphobic governments, regimes, and historical moments. Most importantly, these testimonies speak for the first time to anyone, someone, about what they have experienced, thereby establishing their *own* voice.

Until now, I have considered how the graphic novel provides the means for a community to emerge within a queer testimony. I now examine how a community also emerges within the text via the writer himself. This text concerns not only Giuseppe B.'s reluctant testimony and his lack of community. This graphic novel is also Luca de Santis' search to bring light to the *confinati*'s injustice and the injustice done to the queer community through the repression of the entire phenomenon. To establish how de Santis inserts himself into the graphic novel, I turn first to Christine Hong's article, "Illustrating the Postwar Peace: Miné Okubo, the 'Citizen-Subject' of Japan, and *Fortune* Magazine" (2015). Hong examines Miné Okubo's illustration of life in an American concentration camp during World War II, which also considers Okubo's role in memorializing America's victory and recovering Japanese and Japanese-American social image. One of Hong's reflections is how Okubo also draws herself in the concentration camp, and she illustrates herself doing what she was tasked to do: draw. In many images, she is in the background with a sketchbook in hand, as she was not allowed to photograph the scene. Hong describes this appearance as: "Okubo's stylized self-figuration as a viewer within the frame serves as a testimonial conceit, verifying her presence as a historic witness for the intended outside viewer" (116). Hong points out how the illustrator or writer inserts themselves and their own experience within the picture/text in order to signal their participation in witnessing the event or phenomenon.

The same logic applies to *In Italia*, as there are parallels between the graphic novel and de Santis discovering Giuseppe B.'s testimony. De Santis utilizes the graphic novel not only to bring attention to the *confinato* experience but also to deploy the graphic novel as a stand-in for his own experience in grappling with learning about the *confinato* experience.[22] At the beginning of the graphic novel, two characters, Rocco and Nico, are traveling to record Ninella for their documentary. Throughout the graphic novel's present-day, about 2008, Rocco needles Ninella to share his story. Rocco, ostensibly a stand-in for de Santis, is a young queer man from the Molise region (de

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[22] I finesse this point in detail in Chapter 2 in considering who is actually testifying. The distinction here is not who is speaking, but rather investigating how the graphic novel medium, and thereby extension queer prison testimonies, creates the possibility of a community voice before considering the specifics of the testimonial voice.

Santis was born in the region's capital, Campobasso) and insists on bringing attention to the *confinato* experience. While trying to convince the older, now crotchety Ninella to share his story, Rocco states that, "È importante che la gente sappia queste cose, altrimenti come fa uno a…" (81). ["It's important for people to know these things, otherwise how can someone…"]. De Santis' call to action exposes not only his own invested need to share the *confinato*'s story. The graphic novel draws attention to this phenomenon, and Rocco expresses indignation for the writer. Rocco is de Santis' graphic representation as Rocco insists on bringing attention to the *confinato* experience, as until now, it has been mostly ignored or excluded from national historical memory.

In an emotional scene in which Rocco and Ninella come to verbal blows, de Santis again reveals his disappointment. Ninella, up until this point, has resisted every provocation into sharing his story, by either changing the subject or trying to abandon the two filmmakers at a gas station to return home to Salerno. Ninella repeats that he participates in the interview as a favor, and Rocco explodes. The two begin an intense exchange over the lack of both information and community for Italian queers as Rocco says, "Voi non capite che a fare come voi finisce che la gente non sa neppure che c'è stato un esilio degli omosessuali in Italia!" (82).[23] ["You don't know that by acting like you are, it'll end up that people will never even know that there was a homosexual exile in Italy!"]. As previously mentioned, very little work and discussion have been done to bring forth this issue, and de Santis arguably speaks through Rocco as he discovers the *confinato* phenomenon. Therefore, Rocco functions as de Santis' proxy that testifies to his outrage in discovering the phenomenon and revealing ignorance about it as a younger queer Italian. Hong describes this mechanism as such: “A representational quandary specific to visual autobiography, the first-person subject whose viewpoint structures that of the reader must be exteriorized: in essence, a first person made third” (115). While *In Italia* is loosely autobiographical given that it is based on Giuseppe B.’s testimony, it is also de Santis’ opportunity to mourn the lack of a community and open queer history in Italy – therefore, Rocco is also de Santis’ perspective imbedded in the novel.

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[23] Italian language note: Rocco is using the second-person plural *voi* that is common in southern Italian dialect and speech to speak formally to Ninella instead of using the standard formal third-person singular *Lei* or the informal second-person singular *tu*.

The question of who speaks is fundamental to this study, as every chapter considers a queer voice that has some collaborator or proxy speaking for them. *In Italia* complicates this concept, however, as the original testimony between Giuseppe B. and Dall’Orto was a brief encounter in which Dall’Orto was not allowed to record and could only write notes. De Santis and Colaone adapted the testimony into a graphic novel while also including additional historical elements. It is essential to pause and consider this queer collaborative effort as that of all four participants seeking, in one way or another, to recuperate the physical, social, emotional, and psychological violence inflicted upon both the *confinati* and the queer community as the silence and repressive tolerance continues to affect both to this day. The visual medium relies on the reader’s closure interpretation and harnesses the gutter mechanism to create community through the act of reading and making sense of text and image. The graphic novel as testimonial apparatus is an effort to extend beyond the boundaries forced upon the *confinato* body whose legacy still affects deeply contemporary queer Italians.

De Santis’ invests his outrage, indignation, and call to recognize the *confinato* experience into Rocco’s character, but it is, as mentioned, a way to express de Santis’ frustration of the *confinato*’s exclusion from the collective historical memory. De Santis utilizes the graphic novel to create a bridge between himself and Giuseppe B. to establish a community. *In Italia* engages with bitter mourning for the community Ninella lost after being sent back: Rocco/de Santis also regret that contemporary queers have not learned from their ancestors. Kathryn Bond Stockton's *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (2009) explains that this mourning derives from a queer child that was not allowed to be queer, because the queer child is de-sexualized and is not allowed to be a gay child: "The child is precisely who we are not and, in fact, never were. It is the act of adults looking back. It is a ghostly, unreachable fancy" (5). De Santis looks backward to the community that Ninella had, and that could have continued to exist. He looks back at the knowledge that could have been available to him and contemporary queers but is lost in the past. *In Italia* also reveals the clash between looking backward after the fact and mourning what could have been all while facing the realities of an immutable history. During the emotional confrontation between Ninella and Rocco, Ninella questions Rocco's insistence on recounting the past (see fig. 9):

> NINELLA: Ma perché ricordarle? Queste son cose che hanno causato tanto dolore. E poi le persone dimenticano tutto…Avete visto che sta succedendo di questi tempi?
>
> ROCCO: Scusate ma se uno conosce le ingiustizie che ci sono state…se uno sa che la storia ha già giudicato…
>
> NINELLA: Voi non sapete di cosa parlate! Dopo quarant'anni uno non ha più voglia di raccontare. Cosa volete…Ci sono stati scandali, processi, dolori…le famiglie hanno avuto un disonore grandissimo! Ma poi, che ne vuoi capi' tu? (82)

[NINELLA: Why should we remember these things? These kinds of things caused a lot of pain. And then people forget about everything…Have you seen what's happening today?

ROCCO: I'm but if someone already knows about what injustices have come to be…if someone already knows history's judgements…

NINELLA: You don't know what you're talking about! After forty years you don't really want to talk about it. What do you want…there were scandals, trials, pain…Families that were greatly dishonored! But what do you want to know about that?]

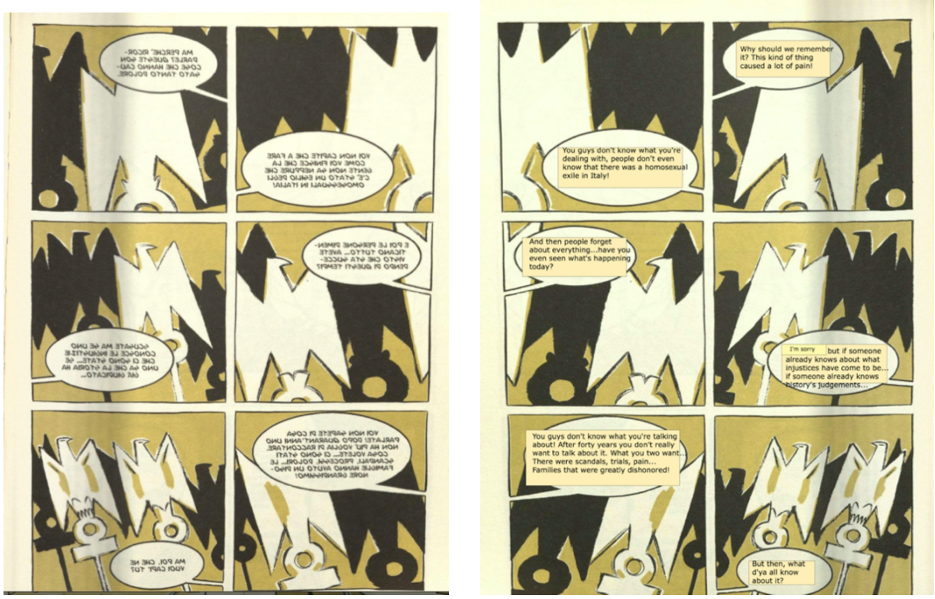
You guys don't know what you're dealing with, people don't even know that there was a homosexual exile in Italy!
Why should we remember it? This kind of thing caused a lot of pain!
And then people forget about everything...have you even seen what's happening today?
I'm sorry but if someone already knows about what injustices have come to be... if someone already knows history's judgements...
You guys don't know what you're talking about! After forty years you don't really want to talk about it. What you two want... There were scandals, trials, pain... Families that were greatly dishonored!
But then, what d'ya all know about it?

Fig. 9. Multiple panels of eagle shapes with dialogue over them.

Ninella and Rocco's debate weaves together the gay community that they could not have had if we consider Stockton's gay child as the gay community that embraces and listens to the *confinati*; Ninella and Rocco (therefore ostensibly de Santis and Giuseppe B.) had no access to one another nor a sense of who they could have been. *In Italia* remedies this by offering a new way to grow a community, to offer access to a pseudo-community. A pseudo-community, in this sense, is the one in which the reader, the writer, and Giuseppe B. work face to face and it is not a literal one literal in the sense that the graphic novel itself is part invention. It is a pseudo-community in the sense that it is a separated group of readers, writer, and the original testimony which are only brought together around and within the graphic novel. This pseudo-community may be summed up by the phrase, "There are ways of growing that are not growing up" (Stockton 11). In this sense, growing is a kind of learning and discovering that does not entail growing *up* via age. Stockton reiterates this as she writes, "the 'gay' child is History's future act of looking back (even if the concept of this child doesn't last). In this way, History grows itself from the side, from what is to the side of it—often in fictions—before it takes this sideways growth in some form, to itself" (9). Ninella and Rocco, while they are both adults and grown, are able to grow sideways; or that is, to mature in an unexpected way. They mature as queer figures in their understanding one another through their exchange. By consequence, they must look together at the past in order to look at one another in better understanding. They are both grown adults, as are most queers when they come to terms with their non-community, and this is an opportunity for all to grow together, albeit from the sides.

The background of the emotional scene found on the previous page is crucial to the foundation of *In Italia* and this dissertation. The characters' vulnerability and anguish point to a shared, communal pain imbued with suffering, silence, and separation that Ninella experiences, and the dialogue also exposes Rocco's bitter regret in being deprived of the knowledge and understanding of Ninella's experiences. The background of these panels includes images of black and white eagles, images that evoke both the fascist and Nazi regimes. Through these visual cues, Ninella exposes the decades of silence and suffering to Rocco, and Rocco reveals his distress as having been kept ignorant of the phenomenon. After their emotional exchange, Ninella is able to reach out to Rocco and share his story while it is also Rocco's moment to share his own pain of being silenced – they recognize each other's pain in this scene. The graphic novel opens up this intergenerational encounter of pain to an international Italian-speaking public, attempting to establish a community that goes beyond the confines into which Ninella and Rocco have been forced. We can read in *In Italia* the impetus to recuperate lost lineage and dismantle the historical and social conditions that created the current silence.

De Santis and Rocco are not antagonistic instigators and *In Italia* is sincere in the work it does to create a queer voice; one that speaks and that attempts to undo the silence forced onto the *confinati* and many other queers. The queer prison testimony, then, can produce a queer hope for a community. As a medium that bring together the reader, writer, and text itself, the graphic novel form can respond to that which queer hope requires. Sara Ahmed defines this kind of hope:

> the hope of queer politics is that bringing us closer to others, from whom we have been barred, might also bring us to different ways of living with others…A queer hope is not, then, sentimental. It is affective precisely in the face of the persistence of forms of life that endure in the negative attachment of 'the not'. Queer maintains its hope for 'non-repetition' only insofar as it announces the persistence of the norms and values that make queer feelings queer in the first place. (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 165)

Queer prison testimonies perform in earnest hope, including *In Italia*. They want to speak, share their story, and form a voice to which other queers may turn in order to understand the world. This work represents queer community making and establishing a genre through which many queers are able to see how quickly social mechanisms may force them into similar feelings and the same carceral analogs. It is an opportunity to teach, to learn, to listen, and to grow sideways together.

Queer Testimony Across the Ages: Intergenerational Pedagogy

In Italia is, to borrow again from Nerenberg, a practiced place that functions as a collaborative space. The place is the graphic novel, but it appeals to the reader to become a part of the process; therefore, it is continuously a practiced place. The paper and ink become materially a collaborative space which on one level involves not only de Santis and Colaone working together to produce the text, and on another Giuseppe B. and Dall'Orto informing and shaping the graphic novel. Importantly, de Santis and Colaone intend that their graphic novel place be a collaborative space for the reader as well. *In Italia's* innovation and its interstices of experience, knowledge, and willingness to learn can potentially promote collaboration. The graphic novel functions as an intermediary for everyone involved. De Santis can voice his outrage through Rocco and Dall'Orto's interview is broadcasted to a larger audience. The reader participates in a community of learners and most significantly, Giuseppe B., can establish a dialogue with which many may interact for generations beyond.

I do not mean to suggest that the graphic novel or the interview openly and readily accept the testimonial conditions. As I discuss in further detail in Chapter 2, queer prison testimonies often do not engage entirely with the testimonial "tell-all" confessional mode. It is necessary to reflect also at this stage on Giuseppe B. and Ninella's resistance to the testimonial process. Their reluctance to give testimony is buried deep in the queer affect of shame and mourning, which is then passed onto future queer members as they learn from them. Ahmed writes that, "Queer lives remain shaped by that which they fail to reproduce. To turn this around, queer lives shape what gets reproduced: in the very failure to reproduce the norms through how they inhabit them, queer lives produce different effects" (152). Given that Ninella was unable to reproduce the fascist sense of *maschio* [masculine man], he was sent to an island that is not a real prison and forced into silence, perpetuating his inability to be that *maschio*. This repressive tolerance also involves Rocco because he has not learned from Ninella and inherits the burden of shame that queer Italian men have been forced to assume through repressive tolerance. Therefore, the two produce a queer resistance effect to bearing testimony rooted in shame, silence, and also trauma. What queer prison testimonies produce is a reluctance born from the societal conditions they were forced to live through and continue to live through, which is most likely not the case for many who bear witness to a traumatic experience.

Giuseppe B. and Ninella's reluctance to put their past into words becomes pivotal and is a pedagogical tool which extends beyond their experience and potentially serves to unite queer generations. Dall'Orto describes the setting under which he interviews Giuseppe B. and writes, "Giuseppe B…m'accoglie…un po' sorpreso che dopo tanti anni qualcuno voglia parlare delle sue disavventure di omosessuale perseguitato dal fascismo" ["Giuseppe B…welcomes me...a little surprised that after all these years that someone wants to talk to him about his misfortunes as a homosexual persecuted by fascism"] and that "in questa piccola oasi di tranquillità familiare l'arrivo d'‘*o jornalista*’ a parlare di vecchi scandali non sembra essere benvenuto" ["in this small oasis of domestic calmness, the journalist's arrival in order to talk about old scandals does not seem welcomed"]. Dall'Orto quotes Giuseppe B. as he searches through Dall'Orto's belongings for any recording devices: "tenete ‘a maghineta? Fatemi vedere dint' e ccarte" ["do you have a camera/machine? Let me look through those papers" (169).[24] Giuseppe B. has internalized the idea that one *wants* to hear his story and he bristles at the thought of his identity, let alone his story, including the burden of shame, being broadcast to the world.

In Italia also explores the previously imprisoned queer reluctance to share their story. Ninella goes to such extreme attempts to avoid bearing witness to his trauma that he attempts to flee the two filmmakers while they are at a gas station. Similar to Giuseppe B., Ninella is concerned for his identity as he asks, "Me li coprite gli occhi, vero? Non è per me, è per le persone che conosco, hanno sofferto già tanto per ‘sta storia che…" (31). ["You're going to cover my eyes, right? It's not for me, it's for the people I know, they've already suffered enough about this whole affair that…"]. The same concern is repeated and the reason given by Ninella and Giuseppe B. for insisting on anonymity is to protect their families from further scandal. Ninella is more explicit in his resistance to engaging with his past when he says, "Sono quarant'anni che non ci torno…Sono quarant'anni che non ci torno a San Domino" (109). [It's been forty years that I haven't been back…it's been forty years since I haven't been back to San Domino"]. At this moment, Ninella's eyes are full of tears, which suggests that it has not only been forty years since he has not physically returned, but it has also been four decades since he has engaged with the trauma of being imprisoned for his sexuality. Unlike Giuseppe B., however, Ninella eventually consents to revealing his face and identity in the documentary, ending the text by claiming his name in front of the camera.

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[24] Italian language note: Dall'Orto is mimicking Giuseppe B,'s Salernitan accent and dialect but I do not in my translation.

The goal in examining how the actual survivor and the graphic novel engage with reluctance in sharing their story is not to compare or contrast. The objective is instead to present the motives and manifestations of their trauma because, as we will see further on, these tools are inherited and utilized by other queer generations due to the repressive tolerance to which the Italian queer community is subjected. In the act of revealing their anxieties and difficulties, Giuseppe B. and Ninella are also teaching the community they will be speaking to for generations after. We may see how Giuseppe B. and Ninella both find their footing as witnesses as they struggle from not wanting to share their stories to eventually acknowledging that they are creating a community. Kelly Oliver's *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (2001) considers how this act is as much self-reparative as it in community making:

> Through the process of bearing witness to oppression and subordination, those othered can begin to repair damaged subjectivity by taking up a position as speaking subjects. What we can learn from beginning with the subject position of those othered is that the speaking subject is a subject by virtue of address-ability and response-ability. Address-ability and response-ability are the roots of subjectivity, which are damaged by the objectifying operations of oppression and subordination. (7)

Giuseppe B. is genuinely surprised that Dall'Orto wants to hear about his experience on the island prison and Ninella anxiously attempts to protect the people in his life from scandal as he first insists upon anonymity. Their affect is indicative of their subconscious recognition that they are taking on the role as witness as they prepare themselves to speak and share their stories. They implicitly understand that the dialogue they will create will have broader implications beyond just the act of speaking. Their courage creates ripples that continue beyond that moment of pain of reliving their trauma. They begin to address those who are listening and who may listen, and they are also assigning responsibility to those they address to both respond and be responsible with what they learn. Oliver considers that subjectivity is "founded on the ability to respond to, and address others—what I am calling witnessing" (15). Both Giuseppe B. and Ninella are doing the former by addressing the listener and reader while Rocco, and by extension, the readers, respond.

In Italia's pedagogical methodology is made explicit visually as de Santis and Colaone depict Ninella and Rocco naked during their emotional confrontation. This image conveys how Ninella attempts to express his subjectivity and evokes the experience of silence and secrecy. The panel immediately following the voice-over argument against the eagle background depicts Ninella and Rocco naked, facing each other as they finish their argument. In the foreground, the other filmmaker Nico, fully clothed, changes the subject (see fig. 10).

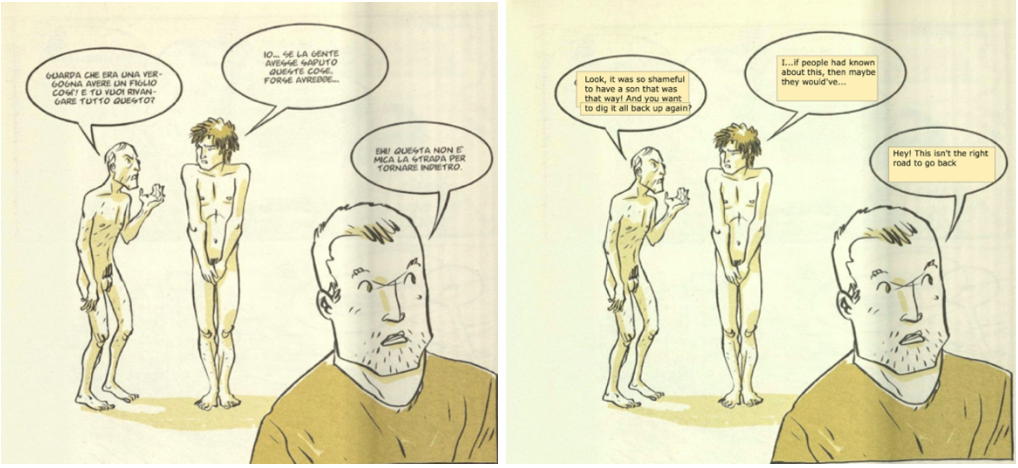
GUARDA CHE ERA UNA VERGOGNA AVERE UN FIGLIO COSÌ! E TU VUOI RIVANGARE TUTTO QUESTO?
IO... SE LA GENTE AVESSE SAPUTO QUESTE COSE, FORSE AVREBBE...
EH! QUESTA NON È MICA LA STRADA PER TORNARE INDIETRO.
Look, it was so shameful to have a son that was that way! And you want to dig it all back up again?
I...if people had known about this, then maybe they would've...
Hey! This isn't the right road to go back

Fig. 10. Naked Ninella and Rocco in the background and Nico in the foreground.

Ninella concludes their argument by stating, "Guarda che era una vergogna avere un figlio così! E tu vuoi rivangare tutto questo?" ["Look, it was shameful to have a child that was that way! And you want to dig it all up again?"] to which Rocco responds, "Io…se la gente avesse saputo queste cose, forse avrebbe…" (83). ["I…if people had known about this, then maybe they would've…"]. At the height of their emotional debate, they are metaphorically and literally stripped down without any defense, like newborns. Because they have developed their queer sense of being community-less, it is a novel experience for them to speak so openly, and it is Ninella's first time bearing witness to his trauma. As D.A. Miller writes of secrecy and subjectivity:

> More precisely, secrecy would seem to be a mode whose ultimate meaning lies in the subject's formal insistence that he is radically inaccessible to the culture that would otherwise entirely determine him. I cannot, therefore, resolve the double bind of a secrecy that must always be rigorously maintained in the face of a secret that everybody already knows, since this is the very condition that entitles me to my subjectivity in the first place. But the double bind is not at all the same thing as a dead end, and if I cannot speak of myself without losing myself in the

> process, I can keep myself secret and—'so to speak'—change the subject: convinced of my indeterminability in the safety of silence, as I speak of—and seek to determine—somebody or something else. (195)

Ninella, until now, has understood his sexuality and imprisonment to be inextricably linked to this repressive silence. Since he was not supposed to be homosexual, he had to be silent. If Ninella had stayed silent and done what Miller's notion of disciplinary power called for, he would never have been found in the intersection of disciplinary and traditional power. Ninella, trapped in this intersection, explains his reluctance to open up as he turned inward to the uncomfortable comfort of silence, and at this moment, with all defenses stripped, he takes a step forward to Rocco. Stockton's idea of growing sideways appears here as the two can begin together, from the beginning: a symbolic rebirth for the two of them as they are creating a queer community of witnessing. They are stripped down to nothing and they speak openly and honestly to each other, metaphorically revealing themselves.

The kind of instruction created in this scene establishes a kind of Italian queer heritage. Italian queer history has been rooted in shame and secrecy (e.g., repressive tolerance), and activist queer communities did not begin to appear in Italy until the 1990s, with the development of queer political movements modeled after those of the United States and other countries.[25] Ninella spent forty years in silence; almost two generations have passed between his experience and his bearing witness to his imprisonment. The instructional model presented *In Italia* attempts to recuperate the lost voices of the

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[25] This in no way devalues the necessary and vital work done in Italy by queer activists (e.g., Aldo Mieli, Bernardino Del Boca, Mario Mieli) or activist groups (Fuori!, Il collettivo Narciso, ArciGay). There was queer Italian queer activism but not on the scale it reached when the first pride parade took place in Rome in 1994.

ventennio and the experiences of queer Italian ancestors who can teach from their experience. While it may be historically accurate that it was shameful to have a queer family member during fascism, *In Italia* also suggests that it is still shameful for contemporary queers, which is why Rocco attempts to remedy the silence. This shame is visible in Rocco not only because when he is naked, he seeks to cover himself, but also that he is looking down at Ninella in concern. While, in theory, Rocco should have embraced queer pride as a contemporary homosexual man, how he understands his sexuality is also rooted in his trauma and shame.

In Italia, therefore, comprises a unique example of two different generations with a large age gap in dialogue, demonstrating that they both need to understand and learn from one another. The need for each other disrupts the assumption that only the older generation can be the teacher. *In Italia* insists upon a reciprocal intergenerational dialogue of care and interest. Ninella impresses upon Rocco that repressive tolerance is alive and well in Italy and he models an alternate response to the tell-all confessional mode. Rocco, however, guides Ninella through a process of bearing witness that is painful and not simple. Rocco also demonstrates to Ninella that appropriate and sensitive listeners are ready to respond to what Ninella has to address while simultaneously underlining that things cannot change without creating a queer voice and a queer history (e.g., “if people had only known, if injustices are known”). Rocco and the medium of the graphic novel offer a collaborative space for the reader, the writer, the text, and different generations to inhabit.

Another moment of conflict that serves pedagogical purpose is after Rocco pushes Ninella to describe a scene in which he beat a man with a rock. Ninella explodes in anger:

> NINELLA: E pure io avevo ventisei anni quando mi hanno mandato in esilio, ventisei anni quando ho spaccato 'a capa a chillu strunz'! Ma tu, hai mai spaccato la testa a 'nu strunz?...Voi credete che questa è una favoletta. Ma guardate che è la mia vita! Mica sono barzellette, raccontini…La storia mica è fatta di questo. È fatta di dolore!
>
> ROCCO: Io…io cercavo solo del materiale…
>
> NINELLA: Il 'materiale'! Il 'materiale'! E mo' i miei settantaquattro anni sono diventati il 'materiale' (129-30).
>
> [NINELLA: Well, I was twenty-six too when they sent me into exile, at twenty-six, I cracked that damn bastard's head open! And you, have you ever cracked a bastard's head open before? You think that this is some little fairytale. But look, this is my life. It's not a little joke, it's not a fun little story…History isn't made out of that. It's made out of pain!
>
> ROCCO: I…I was just looking for material…
>
> NINELLA: "Material!" "Material!" Well, now my sixty-four years of life have become "material."]

Ninella teaches Rocco that queer life is fragile and precarious by comparing Rocco's age to Ninella's when he was first sent to the prison island. Ninella also demonstrates the danger of fetishizing someone's trauma and life experience by translating it into a cultural product to be consumed, because severity and life experience run the risk of being lost in the reproduction. Rocco stumbles and mentions that he is looking for material, presumably for his documentary. However, following that, Rocco wants to show Ninella that he is desperately looking for a queer ancestor while also bringing attention to the queer *confinato*'s experience; Rocco is also looking for material and experience to which he may turn and from which he may learn. It is not only an opportunistic and invasive interview; it is also Rocco's method for attempting to create a relationship of intimacy with an older queer figure. Rocco's emotional labor is particularly significant, given that they both grew into their sexualities in a non-community, as it is a new kind of labor that queers must enact if they want to create an intergenerational reciprocal pedagogy.

By provoking Ninella and pushing him to do the interview, even though his co-director had wanted to quit making the documentary after Rocco lost his patience, Rocco demonstrates that it is a recuperative process not only for Ninella but also for himself. Ninella engages with his trauma, silence, and internalized reluctance to bear witness while Rocco deals with similar issues but in a different manner. He explains that he experienced sexual abuse as a minor from a teacher, and he processes this with Ninella, someone who could understand him better than most. [26] [27] Oliver considers this co-constructive process of process: "Working-through requires interpretation born out of self-critical reflection and dialogue that works as an antidote to leveling comparisons and unacknowledged transference. In a sense, we could say that working-through is the process of acknowledging that our subjectivity is not our own but the result of dialogic and transferential relations with others" (81). What Oliver points to is indicative of the pains of growing sideways that Stockton highlights: Rocco and Ninella undo themselves during their exchange and it is their mutual unraveling that they are able to understand each other, and by extension themselves. Without Rocco's explicit awareness, he is looking to build a relationship with a gay ancestor with who may understand him. By engaging in Oliver's witnessing process, Rocco is just as transformed as Ninella is, and they produce a dialogue between one another based on their traumas, addressing and responding to one another.

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[26] Rocco frames it that he was infatuated with the teacher and after they had sex, the teacher left and abandoned him thereby breaking his heart and leaving him lost and confused with unresolved trauma.

[27] Nico, Rocco's fellow filmmaker and friend, is vaguely aware of this past event but only refers to it as "è quel tipo… il tuo professore, giusto?" (85). ["it's that guy…your teacher, right?"].

In fact, *In Italia* enacts a notion of reciprocal pedagogy that engages a co-directional address-ability and response-ability. After Ninella has finished sharing his story and openly named himself in front of the camera, signaling the first healing step, he comes to Rocco's hotel room and questions Rocco about the teacher, "Ho parlato sempre io, ho raccontato quasi tutta la mia vita a te e al tuo amico…E tu ti sei arrabbiato per quella storia del professore? …Me la vuoi raccontare 'sta storia del tuo professore?" (150). ["I was the only one who has spoken, I told almost everything about my life to you and your friend…And you got mad about that story with your teacher…Do you want to tell me about this story with your teacher?"]. In this pedagogical model, the person who has shared an experience then invites the interviewer to respond addressing their own trauma. In this, *In Italia* offers a paradigm of collective reparation of subjectivity. Rocco and Ninella grant one another permission to work through their trauma and past and, by consequence, are creating a new community and a new space for healing and growing. Through this model *In Italia*'s shows how Ninella's bearing witness can help a new identity emerge for Ninella as a queer *confinato*. This new identity is not just for Ninella but also for future queer generations, that, empowered by this collaborative space, will react to and also learn to address their own traumas.

Conclusion

Queer prison testimonies focus primarily on life experience determined by being forced into a place that practices punishment. Queer prison testimonies like *In Italia* reach out to the reader in order for them to participate in community creation and respond to the lack of a community that most queers have felt. Prison creates isolation, violence, fear, anxiety, and much of what queer communities experience. Queer prison testimonies are a project of love: they express compassion and sensitivity to the one who has experienced imprisonment and trauma, but also a tenderness toward the reader that signals that they together are creating a community of witnesses. This is particularly evident in the graphic novel form as it relies upon and assumes that the reader will be an active participant in learning about and engaging with a specific traumatic story. Queer prison testimonies, like *In Italia*, create a queer voice that actively encourages all to recognize how to voice their trauma and move towards the possibility of healing.

CHAPTER II:

THE QUEER HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR AS WRITER AND WITNESS

This chapter examines two queer Holocaust testimonies in which the trauma of the narrative self is intimately linked to their gender and sexual identity. These two testimonies, *Il mio nome è Lucy: l'Italia del XX secolo nei ricordi di una transessuale* (*My Name is Lucy: 20th Century Italy According to a Trans Woman's Memories*) and *Moi, Pierre Seel, déporté homosexuel* (*I, Pierre Seel, Deported Homosexual*), utilize rhetorical interventions that highlight powerful, transformative, and painful episodes of Lucy's and Seel's lives before and after their internment.[28] Their narration suggests that these episodes have produced the witnessing and writing self that we read in their testimonies; it is a self that attempts to reconstruct, on their own terms, a sense of belonging and identity that is a queer survivor. *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* would seem to privilege the logical cause and effect that their queerness caused their suffering and the eventual effect many decades later in their testimonies. This chapter recognizes this causal sequence but through close analysis I will reveal that there is another discursive force within the texts that adds to and reorganizes the presupposed sequential order: only due to their experiences they are able to craft a narrative voice. *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* succeed in undoing the expectation that the major event of imprisonment is the spark to their creative voice. Their testimonies present a narrative self that is unique, impactful, creative, and one that fosters community and self-construction as they reflect on their life: a community which they had been ostensibly searching to find their entire lives. Therefore, *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* do not only convey how their past experiences are the driving force behind their witnessing; they also provide a voice that assumes their agency. Lucy's and Seel's agency is important for understanding how a queer Holocaust survivor is able to invent narrative selves that are conscious of how their testimony depends on their discursive choices. These choices draw attention to a unique narrative sequencing because *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* cause, create, and decide how their own story is to be told. Their testimony is not only driven by their bearing witness to their experiences but it is also a documentation of their establishing and refining their narrative voices.[29]

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[28] All English translations of *Moi, Pierre Seel* are from Joachim Neugroschel's 1995 translation. All translations of *Il mio nome è Lucy* are my own.

Almost all of the testimonies considered in *Unbreaking Bonds* are produced in a co-productive and co-constructive manner; *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* are no different.[30] Both texts are based on the oral testimony given to another person (*Il mio nome è Lucy* highlights this collaborative endeavor and attempts to maintain a strict anthropological relationship and *Moi, Pierre Seel* does not openly acknowledge the writing process). First, I provide a biographical context for Lucy and Seel, and then I examine the texts' co-authorship. The co-constructed narrative voices inevitably produce a particular, implied author of the text that intentionally relies on community. This co-creative aspect, as explored in Chapter 1, is a crucial element to every queer voice examined in this dissertation. Every text has had other co-creators, co-facilitators, or reproducers of their testimonies. However, *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* merit a specific close analysis in this chapter as they make this relationship the most explicit and take space and time to remind the reader of the co-constructed narrative voice. The term co-creator or co-facilitator is a pivotal description as it indicates that another person is heavily involved in creating the text, even though it is not their own story, and they become a part of the narrative process. Lucy's and Seel's testimonies signal to a reader who is able to identify with some aspect of a queer Holocaust testimony either prior to or through the reading of these testimonies. The reader's sensibilities are important because these testimonies' novel expression of narrative subjectivity encourages this reader to participate in and perpetuate a new sense of the self, one that is affective and charged with certain responsibilities after reading, and one that builds upon the text's narrative voice.

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[29] I understand and deploy the following terms: *witnessing* is the act of being present at the moment of the event, a *witness* is a person present at the event, *bearing witness* is the act of sharing the event (either as the original witness or a secondary witness), and *testimony* is the final product that is may be accessible to the public after the act of *bearing witness*.

[30] When speaking of Holocaust testimonies, I consider Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (1947) and Charlotte Delbo's *Auschwitz, et après* (1965) to be the prime examples of written Holocaust testimonies in which survivors reflect on their life before the Shoah but emphasize their experience in concentration camps.

After these considerations, I demonstrate how *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* deploy this constructed and comingled narrative voice within the gaps of their texts. As mentioned above, the testimonies do engage with a chronological order: one event precedes another in Lucy's and Seel's lives and leads them to where they are in that moment in time of sharing their stories. However, Lucy and Seel also convey a particular awareness into their texts that is engendered by the texts' oral beginning. Their awareness produces a novel, and in some ways surprising, narrative voice that plays with and refuses to participate in a 'tell-all' confessional testimonial that is unflinching and adamant in its resistance to revealing everything. The two narratives intentionally obfuscate details and reject the voyeuristic expectation of knowing every intimate detail of their lives. Nicholas de Villiers' text, *Opacity and the Closet: Queer Tactics in Foucault, Barthes, and Warhol*, is useful in for understanding how these survivors' defiance and avoidance should not be misinterpreted as silence. Instead, these strategies "should be considered less for their reactive or proactive abilities, but rather more for what they might enable, creatively and politically" (6). Lucy and Seel use their, what I call a "mode of disregard" to protect themselves from the reader and reconstruct themselves around their testimonies. I will show how these testimonies are indeed political in the sense that they begin to consider a new public, one ready to listen, and that they want this public to participate in their project of self-creation, one that is *defined* by Lucy and Seel. They negotiate the terms of who they are, what they experienced, and how to recount this during the creation process. They assert their narrative control and invite those who are willing to listen to what and how they have decided to bear witness.

Historical Contextualization: Lucy's and Seel's Lives and Texts

It is important to grapple with the events of Lucy's and Seel's lives in order to analyze the authorial layering of their testimonies. I utilize a combination of symptomatic and intentional reading of the two testimonies, readings defined by H. Porter Abbott as "oriented toward a meaning that is presumed to lie behind the narrative. It lies either in the implied author or in the real author [...] [S]ymptomatic readings tend to place a greater weight on *paratextual* material for the reason they are bypassing the internal organizing principle of the implied author" (*The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 106). Some paratextual material, according to Abbott, includes practical and material knowledge about the historical authors themselves, whereas intentional reading examines only the text to understand the implied author. This chapter's task is to investigate the implied author, or the narrative voice that is produced within the text, and this analysis is only possible by considering biographical information as it reflects upon Lucy's and Seel's testimonies.

Born on August 12th, 1924, Lucy recalls a childhood in which she feels different from everyone else and alienated from her community. She and her family moved to Bologna, where the testimony describes her sexual awakening as she explores her sexuality and has her first queer relationships. In August of 1943, Lucy was called to obligatory military service and sent to Italy's border with Yugoslavia.[31] A month later, on September 8th, Italy signed the Armistice of Cassibile. The Italian army was dissolved as the country split into the Italian Social Republic, the German puppet government in the north, and areas that supported the Allied forces. Under the German-run Italian Social Republic, the *bando Graziani* (the Graziani decree) recalled to service all those who were in the original Italian army before the armistice was signed; now they were to serve the Italian Social Republic. Lucy returned to Bologna and heard rumors that the penalty for not returning to the army was execution by shooting, including for family members of deserters.[32] She presented herself to the barracks and she was given a choice to join either the fascist or Nazi armed forces. After choosing the latter, she eventually deserted. One evening, while in bed with a male German official, they were both discovered by the police.

The police sent the German official away and arrested Lucy. They discovered Lucy's desertion, and instead of detaining her for homosexuality, they deported her for desertion. The testimony describes how she was arrested multiple times and how she escaped from custody. Her final escape attempt led her to hide under a train holding onto the rail. When she was discovered there, she was sent to Dachau, where she remained from November 1944 to May 1945. Her testimony recalls daily trips to Munich in a truck in which she was forced to install railroad ties until the Allied forces liberated the camp. Her family finds out why she was arrested initially and almost disowns her. She then moves from city to city in Europe (e.g., Paris, Venice, Montreux) until she settles in Turin to transition into being Lucy. After spending time in Turin, falling in love, and maturing, she eventually settles back in Bologna, where she meets Gabriella Romano.

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[31] Italy had compulsory male military service until December 31, 2004.

[32] Here Romano corrects Lucy as Lucy says it was a law and that it was a decree. Those who dodged the draft may have been shot in single cases, but it was not nationally enforced and no families were involved (see pp. 29-30).

Romano, a lesbian academic and filmmaker, constructed this text, published in 2009, after many interviews with Lucy, born Luciano (whose surname is never revealed). Romano transcribed and elaborated upon their conversations to produce the book. Romano also made a documentary film based on Lucy's testimony, *Essere Lucy* (*Being Lucy*), released in 2011, which includes Lucy's first return to Dachau after her liberation. While Lucy is speaking to the camera, another Dachau visitor interrupts Lucy after overhearing Lucy recount where buildings used to be in the camp. The other visitor asks Lucy in Italian if she is a survivor or if she has been imprisoned there. Twice Lucy rebuffs the questions and walks away. This moment in the documentary exemplifies Lucy's relationship to sharing her story as she re-enacts how her storytelling must be on her terms. Lucy's refusal to answer these questions, as well as her walking away from a possible interlocutor, has parallels in the texts, in which the narrative voice is extremely guarded on certain topics and unyielding in her lack of regret.

Like Lucy's text, *Moi, Pierre Seel* was not developed and published for many decades after the experience of internment.[33] The circumstances leading to the writing of Seel's text are similar to Lucy's, since Seel bears witness to his experience to a second party, French activist and journalist Jean Le Bitoux, and the two co-authored Seel's memoir. Born on August 16th, 1923, Seel lived a comfortable life Mulhouse, a small Alsatian city where his family ran a small shop, between the French and German border. As he matured Seel began to frequent gay cruising sites like Le Square Steinbach. Seel pinpoints the seemingly harmless act of reporting his watch being stolen in Le Square Steinbach as the event that would ultimately lead to his arrest, "J'ignorais que cet incident banal allait faire basculer ma vie et l'anéantir" (11). ["How could I know that this trivial incident would shake up my life and destroy it?" (1)]. When Seel reported the crime, the police associated Seel's presence in the queer space with homosexuality and added his name to a list of possible transgressors. Seel was arrested due to this list, and he was identified as homosexual in the concentration camp, Schirmeck-Vorbrüch, where he was sent in May 1941.

Seel experienced many terrors during his time at Schirmeck-Vorbrüch and after his conscription into the German army. During his time in the camp he was forced to work until he developed sores and pains. Seel also watched as the camp guard dogs were unleashed on and killed his lover, Jo. Unexpectedly, Seel was released and then returned home on November 6th, 1941 and shortly after his return he was deployed in various areas of Western and Eastern Europe to fight for the German army. After fighting on the Russian front in Smolensk in 1944, he deserted and would not return home until August of 1945. Seel found himself in a new silence since he was not allowed to speak about his imprisonment, let alone why he was deported. His father would not permit anyone in the family to speak about his deportation. Seel eventually did share his story with his mother before she died. He married a Spanish woman in 1950. Over time, Seel fell into despondency and turned to drinking and abusing tranquilizers before separating from his wife. Seel then met Jean Le Bitoux, gay male and gay rights activist, at a discussion of Heinz Heger's *The Men with the Pink Triangle* and decided to share his story.[34] His testimony was published in 1994, and he finally received official recognition as a victim of the Holocaust by the International Organization of Migration in 2003. He passed away in November of 2005.

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[33] In 1994.

The Implied Author: The Authoriality Question in Queer Holocaust Testimonies

As collaboratively produced texts, *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* complicate the notion that a testimony should be only written by or produced by one speaker, unmediated, and represent an actual 'truth'.[35] These testimonies do the opposite and draw attention instead to what narratologists sustain: "The story is always mediated" (Abbott 20). Lucy's and Seel's are mediated in many ways, and these texts represent their own personal understandings of truth and self. Their queer prison testimonies utilize the narrative voice that appears to be written only from their perspective. With these texts, I suggest that the implied author is a combination of the co-facilitator and the witness. The implied is a collaborative construction by the co-facilitator and the primary witness. The co-facilitator makes a great effort to establish a distinction between themselves and the primary witness. Romano clearly inserts herself through footnotes and explains her intended role in producing the text as an anthropologist and she claims that she did not manipulate the text (a claim I will return to later). Jean Le Bitoux is almost impossible to "find" within the text and is explicitly present only in the note section in the back. I contend, however, that the implied author does away with these boundaries between co-facilitator and witness and creates a communal and collaborative voice. The task is to examine the narrative voice that *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* present while also keeping in mind how their lives and original encounters with their co-producers are mediated through their texts.

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[34] *Die Männer mit dem rosa Winkel* (1972), one of the first and few (and arguably more renowned), queer Holocaust testimonies. I will refer to this text according to its translated title.

[35] There are many examples we may consider. In the case of Rigoberta Menchú's text, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (1983), details the trauma suffered by the indigenous population at the hands of the Guatemalan military dictatorship. David Stoll, an American anthropologist, investigates many of Menchú's claims disputing how she and others remember their history in his text, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* (1999), therefore attempting to dismiss Menchú's testimony as it not completely objective and factual.

Donna McCormack, author of *Queer Postcolonial Narratives*, offers a framework to consider the productive possibilities of moving from a spoken exchange to a co-creation, "The structure of testimony is performative insofar as the speech act bears witness to and makes possible the very process of narrative production, where such a creation has been previously unimaginable" (20). Lucy's original encounters with Romano, which were conversations and interviews, are the beginning of this narrative process. *Il mio nome è Lucy* explores Lucy's difficulties in performing this speech act and finally sharing her story: "Lucy non sembrava parlare volentieri di molti episodi della sua vita, della deportazione, a Dachau in particolare, e io non avevo insistito, ma il suo silenzio costituiva un altro elemento di sorpresa per me" (8). ["It seemed like Lucy didn't want to really talk about many episodes in her life, about her deportation to Dachau specifically, and I didn't insist, but her silence contained another surprise for me"]. While Romano makes great effort to use an anthropological approach in helping create *Il mio nome è Lucy*, we can see the narrative production process: Romano is surprised that Lucy speaks openly about her sexuality, unlike other queer imprisoned subjects she has interviewed, all the while being reluctant to share other elements of her story. However, *Il mio nome è Lucy* does include an entire chapter on her time at Dachau. This chapter is one manifestation of the negotiation of meaning and narrative between the two co-creators.

Lucy's and Romano's relationship is more evident and easier to trace in *Il mio nome è Lucy* thanks to Romano's anxiety over fidelity to Lucy's original spoken stories. Romano explains in her introduction to the text how she wanted to mimic Lucy's speech and tried to not manipulate anything she said, even agreement endings. In comparison, Jean Le Bitoux's hand is not as visible and yet the argument for his presence can be made. Seel originally shared his testimony with magazine editor Jean-Pierre Joecker (who later introduced Seel to Le Bitoux), and it was published anonymously. Seel eventually published *Moi, Pierre Seel* with Le Bitoux's aid.[36] Both Le Bitoux and Romano decided to include additional material related to Seel and Lucy's experience. For example, Romano includes photos of Lucy and historical information in footnotes, while Le Bitoux includes detailed research notes paired with each chapter. The translation into English contains copies of official documents related to Seel's arrest and liberation, as well as maps of his movements.[37] On the title page of the testimony, there is another subtitle to the text's published title: *Moi, Pierre Seel, déporté homosexuel. Récit écrit en collaboration avec Jean Le Bitoux*. [*I, Pierre Seel, deported homosexual. Story written in collaboration with Jean Le Bitoux*]. Unlike Lucy, whose text is published under Romano's name, Seel's text immediately informs the reader that this text is a *collaboration* between Seel and Le Bitoux. Rather than inserting footnotes underneath the text, like Romano, either in correction or explanation, Le Bitoux offers additional sociohistorical contextualization in the notes section of the publication. For example, the testimony recalls an open letter that Seel wrote to bishop who had declared homosexuals sick.[38] Le Bitoux supplies not only Seel's original letter, which was published in Le Bitoux's magazine *Gai pied*, and also includes the bishop's private response sent to Seel.[39] Le Bitoux's meticulous research and writing suggest an awareness that some may try to deny or challenge the validity of Seel's testimony. Le Bitoux's exhaustive contextualizations also point to his presence in co-producing this text. His notes are included after the testimony in a section entitled: "NOTES établies par Jean Le Bitoux" (171), ["Notes By Jean Le Bitoux" (145)], which acknowledges Le Bitoux's effort and *production* in the text. The French verb, *établir*, has different translations, ranging from established, set up, created, compiled, and introduced; this illustrates that Le Bitoux was aware of the synergy between his notes and Seel's testimony within the co-produced text.

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[36] This original testimony is included in the French translation in 1981 of Martin Sherman's play, *Bent* (1979).

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[37] The English translation of *The Men with the Pink Triangles* also includes footnotes, but they are the translator's.

[38] See *Moi, Pierre Seel* (156).

[39] See notes 61 and 63 in *Moi, Pierre Seel* (194-5).

Romano and Le Bitoux, therefore, participate explicitly or implicitly in creating the text. Abbott's definition of the implied author remains fundamental in considering texts like *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel*. He describes that an implied author emerges when there are two or more people involved in the creation and that "an implied author is one of the things that, consciously or unconsciously, these collaborators share, and they have it in mind when they edit things out of the narrative or bring things in. It is a device that allows the work to hang together" (102). Romano's anxiety in attempting to maintain a clear distinction between herself and Lucy's story is admirable and understandable but regardless, as I have already briefly shown, she mediates the story and the narrative voice. Her notetaking abilities, her decisions made with Lucy as to what include in the published text, and her questions, drive the narrative we read. Their collaboration is the foundation of a queer testimonial text as it openly embraces the ambiguity of who is speaking. McCormack notes how a text like this can exhibit, "a particular anxiety about how to narrate tales, how to deal with truths (or more precisely with the impossibility of final truths), and how to challenge narrative form in order to build a space for one's self and one's (queer) family" (187). Lucy and Romano and Seel and Le Bitoux form their own queer family as they endeavor to create what might have never seemed possible.

Romano's intended role as co-producer becomes apparent in a revelatory note before the first page of the text—a disclaimer for the reader. Romano refers to an unexpected aspect of Lucy's storytelling, "Allo scopo di rispettare nello stile l'andamento della narrazione di Lucy, ho scelto di tenermi il più possibile vicina al suo «parlato», alternando anche il maschile e il femminile, come fa lei quando si riferisce a se stessa"

(14). [“Intending to respect the tendency in Lucy’s narration style to alternate between referring to herself as masculine or feminine, I have decided to keep my reproduction as close as possible to her ‘speech patterns’ by also alternating when she does”]. Romano’s presence as co-producer manifests itself here as in concern about the text as a faithful reproduction of their transcribed. She recognizes that she cannot wholly and dutifully reproduce a Lucy’s original testimony. Romano’s hand is ultimately the one that produces and publishes Lucy’s story.

Romano approaches the act of bearing witness as a balance between slowly removing traumatic layers and practicing patience in facilitating Lucy’s process. However, in her role as a co-producer, Romano is not just a mediator for publishing Lucy’s story. In her preface, Romano admits that Lucy’s testimony, and her silence up to a certain point, destabilizes Romano’s assumptions about how a survivor may internalize their life and trauma. Romano had expected Lucy to have at least some sort of practiced story or manner for sharing her experiences. Instead, Lucy battles with sharing her story, which is often confusing or incoherent. Romano describes her surprise at witnessing Lucy establish her testimonial voice in real-time:

> Ho sempre dato per scontato che la storia della deportazione sia ormai entrata a fare parte dei sopravvissuti, sia stata in qualche modo rielaborata, rimasticata attraverso numerose narrazioni e invece mi trovavo di fronte a un’ottantenne il cui trauma era vivo e intonso, un nervo scoperto, brace ancora ardente sotto la cenere. (9)
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> [I have always taken for granted that deportation stories have, by now, become a part of the survivors’ present, as it may somehow have been elaborated over,

> mulled over time and again through endless retellings. But I had instead found an eighty-year-old woman right in front of me whose trauma was very alive and untouched, an exposed nerve, embers that are still burning under the ashes.]

Romano hints to the reader that this was probably the first time that Lucy had ever spoken at length about her life. She also suggests that Lucy could begin to let her exposed wound close and heal through the witnessing act. What is clear here is also Romano's role as witness and writer. She is the only person present for this first-time testimony, she is directing the conversation with her questions, and she is the one to support Lucy during such a difficult moment. Romano's interview process nonetheless indicates her as a co-producer of this text: this is one reason why the text is published under her name.

Il mio nome è Lucy and *Moi, Pierre Seel* exhibit the effort to come to terms with shaping a narrative voice. This is due in part to the oral origin of the text but it is also because Lucy and Seel are self-crafting as they share their stories. The two had been denied an actual voice or recognition after their experiences and with that in mind, the reader follows their shaky footsteps as the narration begins to get its footing and embraces the revolutionary act of speaking. Michael Hames-García, in *Fugitive Thought*, offers a distinction that helps to understand the dialectic between Lucy/Pierre Seel as people and Lucy and Seel in their testimonies. Hames-García examines a similar articulation in Assata Shakur's eponymous autobiography published in 1987 and he explains that there is a difference between the historical figure/author Assata Shakur and the character of Assata in her autobiography, "I contend that it is crucial to distinguish, when possible, between the person crafting and shaping a narrative and making a theoretical argument through her use of words, on the one hand, and the crafted and shaped product of that rhetorical undertaking, on the other hand" (102). These testimonies' titles point to this dialectic. All three claim their names: *Assata Shakur, My Name is Lucy, I, Pierre Seel*. Their names do more than point to the narrating voice; they intentionally announce themselves and stake the person we will read in the text. This enunciation is the first interaction readers have with the text, and therefore the reader is already unconsciously prepared to encounter a narrative voice connected to the person claiming that literary space. In the case of Lucy and Seel, their texts are not the product of an individual narrator, but stories mediated through another person. It is through this mediation that *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* offer a rhetorically assembled voice, given that it relies on pieces from their conversations and interviews with their co-producers.

The implied authorial voice, which again is a conglomeration of voices and is the voice we read, inserts itself in pivotal moments by interrupting the testimonial and autobiographical narrative flow. The structure of *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* is loosely based on a frame narrative in which we are introduced to Lucy and Seel through Romano and Le Bitoux. Both texts utilize a primary voice that relies mainly on what Abbott calls constituent events that "are necessary for the story, driving it forward" and the interruptions I consider seem to be constructed upon supplementary events that "do not drive the story forward and without which the story would still remain intact" (*The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* 24). We may see this relationship, or a mechanism analogous to Abbott's distinction between a constituent and supplementary event, when Lucy describes that she moved to Turin after the war:

> E comunque io, in cuor mio, avevo già deciso, era una mia vecchia idea: volevo lasciare Bologna e trasferirmi a Torino. E perché Torino? Perché ho scelto proprio Torino? Be', non so perché, è stato come un istinto, un'intuizione, un destino. Ho lasciato a Torino l'ultima chance per me […] Invece Torino l'ho sempre lasciata da parte, mi sono sempre detto: quella città la devo lasciare intonsa, non la devo sporcare, rovinare, perché finirò lì e lì ricomincerò da capo, lì inizierà la mia nuova vita. Ed è stato proprio così. (55)
>
> [And anyway, in my heart, I had already decided, it was an old idea of mine: I wanted to leave Bologna and move to Turin. And why Turin? Why did I pick specifically Turin? Well, I don't know why, it was like an instinct, an intuition, a destiny. I left Turin as a last chance for myself [...] And I had actually always left Turin for last, I always told myself: I have to leave that city untouched, I can't mess it up, ruin it, because I'm going to end up there and I'll start all over again there, that's where my new life will begin. And that's how it went.]

The constituent event is Lucy moving to Turin but her justification for keeping Turin as a last option for herself points to the crafted narrative voice *Il mio nome è Lucy* presents. The rhetorical questions can be read precisely as rhetorical, but given the text's origin we can almost hear Lucy saying this. The argument may be made that Romano self-censored and removed her questioning of Lucy because the narration's rhythm sounds like a question had been asked ["and why Turin? Why did I pick specifically Turin?"]. With the text that we are given and the knowledge we have, however, the narrative voice we read is one that is assertive and unrepentant. This narrative voice is also pithy, as indicated by Lucy's ending to the chapter "and that's how it went."

In *Moi, Pierre Seel*, in a similar way to Romano, Seel utilizes commentary about situations he remembers to interrupt the narrative flow. The commentary sounds like the narrator is directly addressing the reader. For example, when Seel describes his first attempt to be recognized as a deported individual by the French government around 1985 and his request being met with disapproving silence:

> Je décidai alors de me lancer dans une série de démarches pour faire reconnaître ma déportation et, à travers elle, la déportation des homosexuels par les nazis […] Il me fallait vaincre une ignorance, pire: une incrédulité, dont je pris alors seulement la mesure. Je me souviens de cette jeune femme, derrière un bureau, qui avait cessé de noter mon argumentation lorsque j'avais ajouté à « déporté », « homosexuel », et qui me regardait ébahie […] Mon dossier de déporté n'existait plus : le mot « homosexualité » avait été prononcé et il frappait de nullité la déportation elle-même. Ce qu'elle ignorait, dans sa naïveté, c'est que c'était bien cela que j'avais vécu. (158)
>
> [I now decided to begin a series of steps to have the government recognize my deportation and thereby the Nazi deportation of other homosexuals […] I have had to overcome ignorance—worse, incredulity, the full scope of which I've experienced only now I remember the young woman who, sitting behind her desk, stopped recording my information when I added the word *homosexual* to *deportee*: she gaped at me, flabbergasted […] My deportation file no longer existed: the word *homosexual* had been pronounced, nullifying the deportation itself. What she failed to understand in her naïveté was that this was exactly what I had experienced.] (129-30)

The affect in *Moi, Pierre Seel* is almost palpable as we can sense justified anger, bitterness, and indignation toward yet another violence that Seel must confront. His commentary on the situation and his description of the young woman lend themselves to a conversational style. The pauses and punctuation also could mimic his conversation with Le Bitoux. This momentary aside interrupts the purely chronological flow of events, and this is how Seel's narrative voice makes itself known. He invites the reader to share in his outrage and to notice with him another silencing in a long list of many. In so doing Seel is able to recuperate the pain and resentment as he rewrites the event for the reader: he is no longer the person that the French government wanted to ignore as the reader is actively participating in his outrage with him. In *Moi, Pierre Seel*, he is the author of his own story and he is able to position himself as a person worthy of compassion and empathy.

These moments in which *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* pause the narration perform two different and crucial functions. The first, as highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, is that the narration it challenges the supposed cause and effect relationship surrounding their testimonies: because the two underwent traumatic experiences (the cause) they are then able to share their stories (the effect). Both texts remind the reader that Lucy and Seel are responsible for their self-creation; they are the arbiters of their story, and in this way they consistently remind the reader that it is only thanks to a collaborative effort and four individuals' courage that Lucy and Seel can decide when and how to tell their story.

The Creation Act: Witness and Community

I have pointed out that the implied author in Lucy's and Seel's text is distinct from the biographical person. The implied author is created through the interaction with a co-facilitator and becomes more than just the biographical character. The implied author is a narrative voice that is multiple and that applies its own discursivity to recuperate a sense of identity. Indeed, it is almost as important to consider the role of the narration in the act of bearing witness and in testimony. A common factor in all the queer prison testimonies analyzed in *Unbreaking Bonds* is the push for community creating. *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* attempt to establish a sense of community that Lucy and Seel had never had before their internment and one they were denied after their release. By sharing their story with another person that is then reproduced into a text and communal voice, they foster a space that is not only for Lucy and Pierre Seel to create a new sense of identity but also a space for creation itself, one in which readers may identify and evolve with them.

While narrator Lucy reflects on her time in Dachau, she mentions that she had considered suicide and then responds forcefully with a rhetorical question directed at herself, "Mi dicevo: vivo finché la natura mi dà vita, finché il mondo mi dà la vita. Perché non penso che Dio ti dia la vita, quale Dio? Dio sono io" (37-8); ["I would tell myself: I'm going to live as long as nature gives me life, for as long as the world gives me life. Because I don't think that God gives you life, what God? I am God"]. She emphasizes that she is the creator of the narration, she is the gatekeeper to all things Lucy and she is the catalyst through which change and creation are possible. In such a vulnerable and fragile moment, as describes the horrors in Dachau, Lucy takes pause to muse over her deity-role in crafting her narrative self: she has given life to herself and her narrative. Lucy's interlude is directed to Romano/the reader/herself/the community/her past as she stakes her claim: I am the creator, no one else gives life to this story without me. However, in extending her metaphor, a deity cannot be recognized without a worshipper, and she therefore unconsciously includes Romano in this creation of self. Pivotal to her self-understanding, narrative Lucy forces the acknowledgment that her survival and her memory are the result of both her determination and her reader-disciples.

Similarly, Seel recognizes a kind of otherworldly connection to creation that is rooted in his identity. For example, when Seel describes upon returning home, before being sent to fight for the German army, he explains, "Fantôme je revins, fantôme : je ne devais pas avoir encore pris conscience que j'étais toujours vivant. Des cauchemars me visitaient la nuit et le jour, je pratiquais le silence. Je voulais oublier tous les détails et toutes les frayeurs de ces quatre années que je venais de vivre" (113). ["I returned as a ghost; I remained a ghost: it probably didn't fully hit me that I was still alive. Nightmares haunted me day and night; I practiced silence. I wanted to forget all the details and all the terrors of those four years that I had lived through" (91)]. Seel inserts his phantom-self into the narration as someone who could not verbalize what he was feeling at that time. Indeed, even when narrating so many years after the war, he can only articulate his feelings by using a spectral metaphor and evoking a sense of being between worlds and hardly visible.

Both his ghostly self and Lucy's godliness are inextricable from their queer identity: both these other senses of self emerge as they reflect on their concentration camp experiences and the reader is brought into a dynamic of reading as an act of creation. This is promoted by Lucy and Seel's act of creation through sharing their stories. Donna McCormack writes that participating in queer testimony entails “taking responsibility for histories that are not one’s own but in which one is implicated in the beginning of reaching out, a touching of an other that shatters the existing frame of reference” (37). I have already considered to some extent how *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* reflect an innovative testimonial form in that they create a particular implied author and realize a narrative self that recuperates and validates a voice that had been denied for decades. The two texts also destabilize their relationship with testimony on two levels: they first involve their co-producer to perform certain testimonial roles and at the same time they charge those who read their texts to become a part of their history and to be responsible for caring for Lucy’s and Seel’s created selves within their testimonies.

To examine properly the different kinds of witnesses that emerge in Lucy’s and Seel’s encounters through a variety of rhetorical strategies, it is necessary to define witness within a queer Holocaust testimony. In tracing the etymology and concept of “witness” in Indo-European languages, Émile Benveniste traces the usage of the word “superstition” and arrives at the distinction between the terms *superstes* and *superstitio*. He defines *superstes* as “the witness as the one ‘who has his being beyond,’ a witness in virtue of his surviving, or as ‘the one who stands over the matter’ (*Indo-European Language and Society* 526), who was present at it; therefore, the *superstes* is the position of the *witness* who experiences the trauma of the event and is thus *bearing witness*. Benveniste describes the *superstitio* as, “the seer who speaks of past events as if he has actually been present” (527); that is, the position of *bearing witness* by sharing a mediated experience that is a supplement to the experience as if one had been at the event. In order to simplify and to reinforce this distinction, I turn to Dominick LaCapra's definition of the secondary witness: "a secondary witness is bearing witness both to the witness and to the object of testimony conveyed by the witness. This status implies an affective bond with the witness" (220). This is the exact relationship that Lucy and Romano and Seel and Le Bitoux share. At first glance Lucy would be the witness and Romano would be the secondary witness but those lines are blurred in the text because, much like the issue of authoriality, as there is more than one hand involved and implicated in the texts' production and the narrative voice we read. Queer Holocaust testimonies do more than create a community that involves the reader, the co-producer (Romano and Le Bitoux) and the original witness (Lucy and Seel). *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* must speak for themselves, for those who cannot speak, and also for those may who belong to their community. Their testimonies go beyond literature; the testimonies become a dynamic and ever evolving process that continues to live and breathe well beyond the text's inception or reception.

In order to attempt to untangle the role of witnessing in these two texts, let us consider one of the most influential Holocaust testimonies: Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (1947).[40] Levi performs two roles as he is both the primary witness and the secondary witness: he testifies to his own experience during the Shoah, but he also bears witness for the *Muselmann* (a concentration camp term denoting someone on the brink of death). He bears witness for them as he includes them in his testimony and reflects on them. The *Muselmann* died and did not return from the Lager and are unable to testify for themselves. The mixing of who is speaking occurs if we look at Levi's example, as he is both testifying to his own experience and bearing witness for those who did not survive. He performs the emotional labor of testifying to his inhuman experience in the camp, but he also bears the burden of speaking for those who may no longer speak.

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[40] *If This Is a Man*, or it has also been translated into English, *Surviving Auschwitz*.

The parallel between Levi and queer Holocaust testimonies is that all of those involved in the testimony's production take on the double role of witness and secondary witness. If we look to *Il mio nome è Lucy*, we see how Romano understands how she helps Lucy share her story. Romano admits that she is testifying to Lucy’s testimony as she attempts to reproduce Lucy’s speech patterns (e.g., when she takes time to explain she tries to mimic Lucy’s *parlato*). We may see Romano’s role as primary witness to the experience of her exchanges and encounters with Lucy through her footnotes or interjections. An example of this is when Lucy explains why she presented herself for armed duty, mistakenly thinking that family members of deserters could be executed. In a footnote Romano inserts herself as a dispassionate scholar who attempts only to provide factual information: “Luca Alessandrini, direttore dell’Istituto Storico Parri Emilia Romagna chiarisce così questo punto: ‘Non esiste la legge evocata da Lucy…’” (29). [“Luca Alessandrini, director of the Parri Historical Institute in Emilia Romagna clarifies this point: ‘The law that Lucy recalls does not exist...’”]. This footnote reminds the reader of Romano’s presence and of her hand in constructing the actual text as she positions herself as factchecker and arbiter of cultural, political, and historical knowledge. The text itself is Romano’s own method of witnessing her experience of Lucy sharing her story. Romano takes on the role of secondary witness as Lucy testifies to her life, her imprisonment, and her experiences, and the experience of others in the camp (which I examine below). Therefore, their roles as witness become enmeshed. Romano bears witness for Lucy by mediating Lucy's story into the text medium: she reproduces Lucy's speech patterns and their narrative into the text. Romano is bearing witness for Lucy by composing the text and conducting the interviews (secondary witness) but Romano *also* testifies to her experience of Lucy testifying to her (primary witness) – as seen clearly in the reproduced speech patterns, the rhetorical questions, the self-editing, and the footnotes.

Unlike other Holocaust testimonies, *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* negotiate multiple roles as witness in one text (e.g., Levi explores his double role whereas Lucy is a primary and secondary witness as well as Romano), which is a defining aspect of queer prison testimonies. Lucy and Seel also bear witness for those who passed or do not speak. Lucy, for example, explains her relationship to the queer deportees in Dachau:

> I triangoli rosa erano tanti, per la maggior parte polacchi e francesi. Li vedevamo da lontano, si attaccavano alle reti di divisione, si sforzavano di parlare, di sentire, ma non ci riuscivano, erano troppo lontani, cercavano di comunicare perché erano i più isolati di tutti ed erano trattati peggio di tutti, gli facevano delle angherie peggiori che a noi. Ogni tanto lo pensavo, mi dicevo: mi è andata bene, confronto a loro, se si fosse saputa tutta la mia storia al momento della mia cattura al confine, il triangolo rosa sarebbe toccata anche a me (39).
>
> [There were a lot of them with pink triangles, most of them Polish or French. We would see them from far away, they would latch onto the fences that divided us. They struggled to speak, to hear, but they couldn't do it, they were too far away. They tried to communicate because they were the most isolated out of all of us and they were treated the worst out of everyone, they [the camp guards] subjected

> them to the worst injustices than they did to us. Every now and again, I would think, I'd say to myself: it worked out for me, in comparison to them, if they had found out my entire story when they captured me on the border, the pink triangle would've been waiting for me too.]

Lucy presents a parallel to Levi's *Muselmann*: the *triangoli rosa* who could not speak as they were divided from the rest of the camp, and they cannot speak now.[41] She is the one who must speak for them; she is the one for whom *è andata bene*. Again, Lucy takes time to remind the reader of her role as someone who commands the story and involves the reader. Her side comment underlines her awareness that if she had been arrested as a homosexual then she would have had a similar fate. This interjection in a tense and vulnerable moment is a gesture to the reader that displays Lucy's creative power, a power that not only tells but comments. It is also a warning to herself and to others: if it worked out for me then it could have not worked out for you, reader, like it did not work out for those I am recalling now.

In *Moi, Pierre Seel*, Seel is the primary witness of his own experience in the camps and war. Much like Levi and Lucy in their texts, Seel undertakes the tragic role of secondary witness for his lover, Jo, who died horrifically in Schirmeck-Vorbrüch. He does so by inciting the reader to look at and recognize the depth of the horrors he is sharing. He bears witness for Jo at the end of his life when he details the tragic moment when the SS deploy their attack dogs who tear apart Jo. He then angrily wonders why he is the only person to testify for this genuinely terrifying moment:

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[41] Lucy was deported for her desertion, although she was arrested for her sexuality, therefore she was not placed in the homosexual section of the camp.

> Je n'oublierai jamais cet assassinat barbare de mon amour. Sous mes yeux, sous nos yeux. Car nous fûmes des centaines à être témoins. Pourquoi tous se taisent-ils encore aujourd'hui ? Sont-ils donc tous morts ? Il est vrai que nous étions parmi les plus jeunes du camp, et que beaucoup de temps a passé. Mais je pense que certains préfèrent se taire pour toujours, redoutant de réveiller d'atroces souvenirs, comme celui-ci parmi d'autres. Quant à moi, après des dizaines d'années de silence, j'ai décidé de parler, de témoigner, d'accuser. (60)
>
> [I will never forget that barbaric murder of my love—before my very eyes, before *our* eyes, for there were hundreds of witnesses. Why are they still silent today? Have they all died? It's true that we were among the youngest in the camp and that a lot of time has gone by. But I suspect that some people prefer to remain silent forever, afraid to stir up hideous memories, like that one among so many others. As for myself, after decades of silence I have made up my mind to speak, to accuse, to bear witness.] (44)

Seel is rightly calling out for *nos yeux*: this places the burden not only on those who decided to ignore or to keep silent about Jo's murder, but it also places responsibility on the reader's eyes that are on the page. *We* are accountable for perpetuating this cycle of silent violence if we do not take up, like Seel has, the mantle of bearing witness for Jo and the others who have been lost. Seel's wondering why no one is speaking is also his way of drawing the reader in rhetorically; he demands that his ghostly apparition be seen and noticed, much like how Jo has been remembered by Seel. "Our eyes" are not the just the eyes of the people at the camp but also the eyes that read what he has to say, that engage with the moments in which the narrative voice reminds the reader that Seel is more than just his story. Seel's story is not only linked to his identity and his trauma but it is also the place in which he speaks for himself and for others like Jo. Thus, he demands that the reader bear witness for himself and Jo and for the others that choose to remain silent.

After considering the collaborative nature of the two testimonies, it becomes evident that this is one of queer prison testimonies' radical potentialities as it creates a space through which the creative and witnessing onus is neither singular and nor is it purely binary (i.e., Romano cannot be the detached recorder who publishes Lucy's original testimony: she becomes a secondary witness and *Il mio nome è Lucy* functions as Romano's primary witnessing). The autobiographical persona shares their story to recuperate and heal their wounds while also creating a new voice for themselves that implicates their co-producer. In so doing they shift the space and site from which they speak from an "I" to a "we", as Seel asserts when saying *nos yeux*, our eyes. The titles, *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel*, have a double function as they signal to the reader that there is an intentionally crafted narrative voice within their text. The other function, however, is that we as readers are also called to consider ourselves as no longer a "we" but an "I" as we read their texts. We are implicated in the "my name is" in Lucy's title and are the "I" and "I, Pierre Seel".

Similar to *In Italia*, as discussed in Chapter 1, there is an imagined community to which the narration speaks that would be receptive to undertaking this task. Ernesto Martínez defines this narrative phenomenon as "shifting the site of queer enunciation" which "astutely decenters queer speaking subjects, doing so in a manner that not only equitably distributes narrative responsibility for queer experience and identity, but that also enables a deeper understanding of the intersubjective and social contexts in which queer subjects come into being" ("Shifting the Site of Queer Enunciation" 227). While the overall story in their testimonies focuses on Lucy's and Seel's autobiography, the texts' origins and the narrative voices point to how these testimonies' foundation is grounded in community and community making. What we read within the texts is a new intersubjective voice that encourages participation and belonging; it self-propagates as another person reads these words and then others continue reading. These voices, therefore, are a survival mechanism that Lucy and Seel, consciously or unconsciously, utilized when they decided to share their stories.

The two survive, even after their passing, through this shared memory and the collective site of queer enunciation. Their names, their words, their memories are no longer their own, despite the specific and unique horrors, silence, and isolation they faced. Martínez' comments are relevant when he writes of "the very real ways that queer experience is a social and shared experience, even as oppressive ideologies work at making it seem less real and shared, and even if the queer subject often seems isolated in the process" (24). While Lucy may have been in a different camp section from her fellow *triangoli rosa* (pink triangles) and Seel was put back in the closet, the entire time they were developing a voice and response to their conditions that would eventually be shared with the world. It is not that because the two underwent these horrors (the cause) that a narrative voice was produced (the effect). They had this voice inside them this entire time (the cause), albeit silenced or unaware, that accompanied them through their lives and only on their own terms did they decide to share and craft it with another (the effect). The causes and effects inform one another since the discursive logics work (e.g. cause and effect or effect and cause) in a rhetorical dialectic (i.e. as the voice creates the narrative and the story shapes what may be said). This internal and silent voice had been touched by many during their lives (e.g., Seel's lover, Jo) and their voice continues to be touched by receptive readers. Therefore, the witness is mediated through this voice that involves everyone who is willing to listen to what it has to say.

Il mio nome è Lucy and *Moi, Pierre Seel* engage in a community creation through their creative and testimonial production which elucidates one of several reasons as to why they decided to share their story: in order to ensure their survival (other motives could be repairing their silence, emotional catharsis, etc.). Since the "I" in their text actually implicates a "we" and the "us" that is also the reader, Lucy and Seel succeed in persevering, much as they have done their entire lives. Martínez writes that, "the critical task of survival becomes, not so much the need for voice, not so much the need to speak one's name, but the need to remind oneself that one has a name in the streets—that someone, somewhere, knows our name" (245). Martínez's assertion that survival is privileged and necessitated by people knowing our name adds to the argument I have made thus far about *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel*: if Lucy and Seel ask us to take their name, to become an us with them, then we do have their voice and we carry it with us and they continue to survive. Only by establishing their voice were they able to create a queer family with their co-producers and in so doing Lucy and Seel ensured that others have the honor and responsibility to repeat their name and share their story.

In Italia aligns with *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* in many ways by showing how their origins promote a community and they include the reader in creating a community. However, Lucy's and Seel's narration calls to the reader to respond and to react. I argue that de Santis, in *In Italia*, utilized some of the characters in the graphic novel to process his experience with generational silencing and distance within his personal Italian queer understanding. *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* function differently as they are a collaboration through which both the primary witnesses (Lucy and Seel) and the original secondary witnesses (Romano and Le Bitoux) grapple with creating the narrative voice that functions as the implied author. These texts demonstrate to the reader the active process they have undergone and directly call to the reader to pay attention to their stories and narrative selves and enmesh the reader within this collaborative process.

Seel meditates on the conditions that forced him to share his story after facing his government's lack of recognition of the violence against homosexuals during the Shoah, even decades after the war. He writes of his outrage and forces the reader to acknowledge his justified resentment:

> Quand la rage me visite, je prends mon chapeau et mon manteau, et je m'en vais, de dépit, marcher dans les rues. Je m'imagine me promenant dans des cimetières qui n'existent pas, les cimetières des tous ces disparus qui dérangent si peu la conscience des gens. Et j'ai envie de hurler. Quand pourrai-je faire reconnaître ma déportation ? Quand pourrai-je faire reconnaître la déportation des homosexuels par les nazis ? (170)
>
> [When I am overcome with rage, I take my hat and coat and defiantly walk the streets. I picture myself strolling through cemeteries that do not exist, the resting places of all the dead who barely ruffle the consciences of the living. And I feel like screaming. When will I succeed in having my deportation recognized? When

> will I succeed in having the overall Nazi deportation of homosexuals recognized?] (182)

Seel's description in the present day effectively stops the narrative flow and the narrative voice seems to be speaking directly to the reader as he exhibits his affect. Bringing attention to his time spent in cemeteries is not only a clear connection for Seel to remember those who have died but it is a reminder to himself that he too will die. By speaking to the reader and repeating again that there are the dead that the living can barely remember, the narrative voice suggests that he does not want to just barely *déranger* (upset, ruffle, bother, disturb) the living, he wants to be recognized. This recognition should come from the government, his family, his country, but also the reader. Seel's deployment of rhetorical questions is not directly for the reader in the sense that he expects an answer, but it is rather a mobilizing call to the collective. He knows that if he were to scream, he would be doing so into a void, but, by producing these words in a form that allows global access to his story and voice, some readers may identify with his affective call and respond to his rhetoric. Those who may respond are the ones who will remember for and with him and will carry the inaudible echo of his unreleased screams. This is one responsibility with which *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* charge their readers: to continue a collaborative creation, to input into a collective memory, and to share a queer speaking subjectivity that is multiple instead of singular.

I have demonstrated the ways in which *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* utilize certain rhetorical strategies to catch the reader's attention and to establish Lucy's and Seel's narrative voice. This voice is collaborative and not a direct author but rather promotes one that is implied. Lucy and Seel did not have a community waiting to listen to their stories – even when Seel tried to access reparations and recognition decades later he was ignored. Even other Holocaust testimonials were ignored or unpublishable immediately after World War II (Levi also struggled to publish *Se questo è un uomo*).[42] However, some Holocaust testimonies *demanded* a reaction from listeners: Levi's titular rhetorical question encourages the reader to consider how he attempts to answer while also provoking the reader to answer the question themselves. Seel and Lucy waited decades to bear witness and did so through a mediator that encouraged them and helped (consciously or unconsciously) shape a narrative voice. This self-creation, in all reality, begets an 'us-creation' as Lucy and Seel gesture to the reader to become the community they had imagined decades before. What is even more radical, and also supports my claim about Lucy's and Seel's narrative voices reminding themselves and us of their existence, is that the narration refuses to provide or glides over sharing every piece of information. In so doing, I argue, Lucy and Seel continue to establish themselves by clearly reminding the reader that, even though the two have opened up a discursive door through which we may see their lives and participate in their witnessing, they are nevertheless the original gatekeepers (i.e., gods or ghosts) of their creation.

A Disregard to Confess All: Opaque Strategies

We could have safely assumed, much like Romano did before knowing Lucy, that most who have survived a tragedy or been interned to a concentration camp would have some narrative they have shared or constructed internally. However, Lucy and Seel demonstrate this is not the case as they are hesitant to share their stories and wait decades and have attempted to flee from themselves. A significant element to this is repression as it has a significant impact on making sense of one's story about a traumatic event. In addition to that, I suggest that Lucy and Seel unexpectedly push testimonial boundaries by evading the full disclosure of their lives and experiences and how their rhetorical deployment of disregard, a kind of resistance, is a unique aspect of *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel*. They do not completely give their stories or themselves over to the tell-all confessional style mode. The narration dodges what might be the reader's expectation and in so doing reminds the reader of Lucy's and Seel's agency and creativity. As mentioned in the introduction, de Villiers' *Opacity and the Closet: Queer Tactics in Foucault, Barthes, and Warhol* is a useful reference for apprehending the queer disregard that Lucy and Seel deploy in their texts. The regard is a resistance to sharing the truth and, much like how Lucy avoided the Dachau visitor questions, an intentional avoidance for the complete truth. De Villiers discusses *queer tactics* to evoke "a certain relation to particular 'games of truth' and to indicate the simultaneously ludic and regulated nature of language" (6). What de Villiers highlights are tactics of never completely "coming out," or constructing a truth for oneself that serves only the purpose one wants.

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[42] His text was first rejected from a major Italian publishing house, Einaudi, in 1947, because it was thought to be too soon after the war for the text to be appreciated by a traumatized Italy. A few thousand copies were published by a smaller company, and his testimonial would not be published on a large scale with Einaudi until 1958.

One example of such tactics is Lucy's refusal to define strictly her gender identity. She tells Romano that she wants to be buried in men's clothes and becomes indignant when asked her why she never changed her legal name, thereby challenging some expectation that she should change her name:

> ...voglio tornare alla terra come lei mi ha fatta, è una forma di rispetto nei suoi confronti, lei mi ha accettato o almeno ha fatto un grande sforzo per accettarmi e io, alla fine della mia vita, ritornerò da lei come mi avrebbe voluto. Così come non ho mai cambiato il nome all'anagrafe, perché avrei dovuto cambiarlo? […] non do spiegazioni, non devo delle spiegazioni a nessuno, io sono chi sono a prescindere dal nome che mi è stato dato alla nascita […] Sto bene così e perciò questa faccenda del nome non è un problema mio, è un problema degli altri. Che se lo risolvano loro! (70-1)
>
> [...I want to return to the earth how she made me, it's out of a form of respect for her, she accepted me or at least she made a huge effort to accept me and I, at the end of my life, will go back to her how she would've wanted me. So how is it that I never legally changed my name, why should I have changed it? [...] I don't give out explanations, I don't owe explanations to anyone, I am who I am regardless of the name that was given to me at birth [...] I'm perfectly fine this way and that's why this whole name matter isn't my problem, it's everyone else's. So, they should handle it themselves!]

While Lucy does deploy rhetorical questions that seem to speak to Romano/the reader this moment also appears to be opportune for her to set her trans record straight, since many people have may have asked her about this, possibly even Romano. Lucy's response is indicative of her attitude towards narrating her story (which is also exemplified in the documentary in which Lucy refuses to respond to the stranger's questions): she does not owe anyone anything and she will not explain herself. Her indignance is antagonistic in the sense that it is arguable that she is tired of iterating that she will not explain her choices on the *faccenda del nome* (this whole name matter). Lucy's overall claim, however, which is that she is who she is and the voice and information we read in the book is all that we have, is a cornerstone to what *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* perform.

Lucy refuses to reveal how she understands her gender and declines to produce a linear and clear distinction of who she has been and was. This might provoke a reader to wonder how she has always known she was a woman and yet identifies herself before her imprisonment as a gay man. This disengagement in offering a fixed truth rooted in her gender identity and sexuality is precisely what De Villiers points to about the anxiety over the closet and of knowing and not knowing: "it might include a fear of *not* knowing everything about a person's sexuality" (2-3). This is how the narration functions as a reparative stopgap between the reader and the autobiographical person: Lucy and Seel create their narrative selves in the way they want, on their own terms, unapologetically, as they are the gods, the creators, the deciders. De Villiers' contention of the importance of this kind of disengagement with complete truth is particularly applicable to these testimonies, and he specifies that "the strategy of a writer is the work of transforming the self" (15). Thus, Seel and Lucy embrace their creative selves and their witnessing identity through the mode of sharing and reserving information for themselves. Therefore, the narrative force in their texts draws discernable borders between the person involved in crafting the testimonies and the person crafted within their narrative. Their denial and evasion are the reader's constant bumps against discursive borders that protect Lucy and Seel. These uncomfortable moments for the reader create a unique engagement with their testimony, and also signal to the reader that this is a collaborative endeavor and therefore Lucy and Seel cannot and will not give everything.

Opacity of the Closet lends itself well to this kind of narrative (dis)engagement as the text examines strategies, modes, and efforts of a queer subject to either not answer or supply a non-answer (e.g., Warhol encouraging his interviewer to tell him what the interviewer wants to hear so Warhol will say it). Basing his argument around the closet and the issue of queer knowledge being both illegal (i.e., criminalized homosexuality) and necessary to knowing the other's sexual identity, de Villiers affirms that queer opacity is about refusing to engage in that discourse: "From being fed up with confessional discourse, with the epistemological games of the closet in which coming out is a disclosure at once compulsory and forbidden, we discover the possibility of 'baffling' and 'outplaying' the power of inquisition that is built into the interview" (162). The idea of confusing or perplexing the listener, interviewer, or in this case, the reader is the base of this mode of inquiry. *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre* See'sl focus is to instruct, share, to build a community. It is up to the reader and the created communities to meet the testimonies' narrative effort half-way. The testimonies utilize an opaque self-revelation, a mode of disregard, to work through and develop themselves as witnesses on their terms instead of on the public's expectations.

Lucy's and Seel's text differ from Primo Levi's testimony because Levi insists upon rendering himself legible to society and offering complete transparency. In his introductory poem to *If This is a Man*, "Shema." Levi insists that, "I commend these words to you. / Carve them in your hearts" (xi). The command is not only to bring attention to what Levi shares but also for the reader to pay attention to everything he shares openly. The words carved onto the heart are sincere, direct, and without feigning. Lucy's and Seel's texts take great time and effort to highlight the shame and affective dimension under which they found themselves. The two queer voices present a traumatized voice located in a condition of shame created by society and their families. For example, Lucy describes how some of her family becomes hostile toward her when she returns home from Dachau, "Ma dopo l'euforia del primo momento, tutto è tornato più o meno come prima. I miei genitori magari mi avrebbero anche accettato per quello che ero, anche mio padre aveva leggermente abbassato la guarda, ma i miei fratelli no. Dicevano che ero lo scandalo della famiglia" (46). ["After the euphoria of the first moment back, everything went back to more or less what it was before. My parents might have accepted me for what I was, my father had even let his guard down a little, but not my brothers. They said I was the family's great shame"]. Seel expresses a similar experience, "Le pacte de silence imposé par mon père au retour du Schirmeck, concernant mon homosexualité, continuait à faire loi dans la famille: pas de confidence de ma part, pas de question de la leur […] Mais mon étiquette d'homosexuel avait faire le tour de ma famille" (116). ["Upon my return from the Schirmeck camp, my father had imposed a pact of silence about my homosexuality, and that law persisted in our home: no revelations from me, no questions from them [...] But my homosexual label was known to the entire family" (93-4)]. Therefore, it is important to kept this experience of shame and embarrassment in mind when considering the difference between Levi's impulse to share all and Lucy's and Seel's reluctance to be transparent.

Lucy's reluctance to share every detail as a Holocaust survivor (e.g., Romano's surprise) is most noticeable in the chapter on her time in Dachau. As she is recounting her experiences, she interrupts the narrative flow with her thoughts on why she has never shared her story until now:

> Non ho mai letto libri su campi di concentramento, né visto film sull'olocausto, non voglio, io ho cercato di scordare tutto, cioè, non ho dimenticato perché è impossibile queste cose sono indelebili, non si cancellano mai più completamente, però, non voglio ricordare, farlo apposta, sforzarmi, no, anzi, cerco di evitare questa cosa, perché se no mi opprime, mi renderebbe la vita impossibile. L'unico modo per continuare a vivere è guardare avanti, sempre avanti. (36)
>
> [I have never read any books on concentration camps, I haven't seen any films on the Holocaust, I don't want to. I attempted to disremember, or rather, I didn't forget because that's impossible to do. These kinds of things are everlasting, you can't ever completely erase them. However, I don't want to remember, to do it on purpose, to force myself, no, I instead try to avoid this entirely. Because otherwise it oppresses me, it would make my life impossible. The only way to keep on living is to look ahead, always ahead.]

In this selection, Lucy does two things: the first is that she asserts that she has resisted learning about the Holocaust and the second is that she openly admits that she is actively attempting to reject her role as secondary witness. Romano's presence is visible in one of Lucy's rhetorical interruptions here. As I considered earlier, Lucy claims that she owes no explanation to anyone and yet in this moment we see a crack in her rhetorical armor. When Lucy declares that she tries to actively forget everything, she says *cioè* ("or rather") and later *però* ("however"). These linguistic pivots are Lucy's way of explaining why she wants to disremember and how it is impossible. She could have been responding to a question from Romano, she could have expected Romano to have that question, or she is actively explaining herself. In a tense and vulnerable moment, Lucy reveals the testimonial weight and cost of recounting her experience. She declares that she avoids reflecting on the issue and that she does not want to consider it *apposta* (on purpose). Lucy withholds her reflections on her role as testifier from the reader's curiosity, and she does not entertain the idea of doing so.

Lucy then goes on to recount her daily routine in the camp. The testimony details how all prisoners needed to recall their assigned number or they would be beaten, and she begins the aside:

> Facevano l'appello alla mattina e alla sera, quando rientravi. Il mio numero cominciava con *fünf*, *neunzen*, un affare del genere, ma non me lo ricordo bene perché non voglio ricordare tutto, queste cose mi sono andate via dalla testa, non desidero tornare col pensiero a quei momenti perché è stata una cosa troppo, troppo triste, terribile, schifosa…neppure gli animali si trattano come hanno trattato noi. (36)
>
> [They would do the roll call in the morning and at night, when you would come back. My number began with *fünf*, *neunzen*, something like that, but I don't remember it well because I don't want to remember it all, all of those things that have gone out of my head. I don't desire going back to the thought of those moments because it was something too sad, so very sad, so terrible, disgusting…we don't even treat animals how they treated us.]

Internally silencing oneself after something as traumatic as the Holocaust is not unusual, as Cathy Caruth suggests that this is, "a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival" (*Unclaimed Experience* 7). Lucy operates in this ambiguous space of dealing with death and life, and by extension, she decides which details stay with her and which are exposed. She oscillates between obfuscation and revelation. However, the moment she segues from barely recalling her number to explaining why she does not want to remember, and thus placing the justified blame on the horror of the concentration camps, she acknowledges that she intentionally withholds the number. What I suggest here is that, in these two moments which I have indicated, Lucy is so accustomed to no one being interested in her story that she is not devoted to sharing that information. Lucy keeps painful knowledge from the reader in both protection *and* detachment from the event. Lucy asserts herself as the gatekeeper to knowing her here since one may expect or want her to tell us her assigned number. She recalls other details from her time in Dachau (e.g., specific dialogue from her time there or the specific details of a piece of chocolate that she says saved her from dying of hunger), and yet she does not remember the entire number, and she does not remember it *with purpose*.[43] [44] As soon as she starts to read off her prison number, she says she does not remember and she does not want to remember. I highlight this to accuse Lucy of not remembering, but instead, I want to focus on the fact that she explicitly tells the reader and Romano that; "non voglio ricordare tutto." She keeps the information from us, and she does not owe it to us: she disregards sharing the most intimate details a testimonial reader may expect.

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[43] p. 37.

[44] p. 39.

In terms of explaining his motives for bearing witness, in comparison to Lucy, Seel is quite open and invites the reader to examine his legitimate anger and life.[45] Like Lucy, Seel at times leaves out crucial information that a tell-all confessional style mode would convey. Seel, after having been forcibly conscripted to the German army and sent to an island on the Vistula river in Poland, is trapped next to a dead comrade for three days, and he meditates on remembering him, "Cette proximité de la mort, ces trois jours à côté de ce cadavre, avaient créé en moi un attachement inexprimable. J'ai aujourd'hui oublié le nom de cet ami assassin à mes côtés, mais je me souviens de ses traits comme si c'était hier" (88). ["That proximity of death, those three days next to the corpse, left me with an inexpressible attachment. By now, I have forgotten the name of that friend who was killed at by my side, but I recall his features as if I had seen them just yesterday" (69)]. Seel says that he cannot remember the man's name, even though he took his papers and visited the dead man's family to share the man's last moments with them, but Seel can vividly recall the man's features. He does not pause to share these physical qualities. Here, Seel oscillates between remembering, not remembering, and not divulging the information, because he does not remember, does not want to remember, or does not want to share. The moment may be so traumatizing that he prefers to withhold the information, but most importantly, it is because Seel is under no obligation to share that information. Choosing to keep essential or curiosity piquing information is key to queer disregard. As Seel insists throughout the entirety of his text, no one wanted to listen to his experience: his family, his friends, the French government all expected his silence. Now he shares his story, something he asserts he remembers so intensely that "*comme si c'était hier*," and yet he does so without uncovering every detail to the reader. His strategy is to keep the interview, interviewer, and reader at arm's distance because he is uninterested in the "tell-all" confessional mode.

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[45] The testimony itself never reveals why Lucy decided to share her story. Romano's preface only explains that a mutual friend had introduced them after their mutual friend found out that Romano had interviewed and done work with gay men who were deported to fascist island prisons and this friend knew Lucy had been in Dachau. Romano then describes Lucy's warming up to sharing her story but never the motive.

Having established that Seel and Lucy both engage in opaque strategies rooted in intentional disengagement, now I would like to consider why this is significant and how this aids Lucy and Seel in recreating themselves through their texts by their withholding of information. De Villiers' comment, mentioned earlier, that "the strategy of a writer is the work of transforming the self" (15) helps to understand how and why Lucy and Seel's disregard is creative and transformative for them. By not sharing information, provoked by governmental and societal disinterest, Lucy and Seel reserve distinct aspects of themselves from the act of witnessing and therefore they let go of these pieces of themselves that are incorporated into their narrations. I return a previous quote upon which I reflected earlier, in which Seel considers how his identity is closely linked to his sexual identity, "Fantôme je revins, fantôme: je ne devais pas avoir encore pris conscience que j'étais toujours vivant. Des cauchemars me visitaient la nuit et le jour, je pratiquais le silence. Je voulais oublier tous les détails et toutes les frayeurs de ces quatre années que je venais de vivre" (113). ["I returned as a ghost; I remained a ghost: it probably didn't full hit me that I was still alive. Nightmares haunted me day and night; I practiced silence. I wanted to forget all the details and all the terrors of those four years that I had lived through" (91)]. He lived in silence before being arrested and was forced back into silence when he returned. He did not speak about his sexuality or about the horrors he experienced for decades. He participated in silence and thus held onto details to himself because no one had seen him, and he did not want to be seen.

By reflecting on his life through his witnessing and slipping between what he does and does not share, Seel can reconstruct whom he imagines himself to be. His bearing witness and testifying function as a possibility to reaffirm himself as someone who is *not* a ghost, someone who does speak, someone who does remember and no longer lives in silence. The last two sentences of *Moi, Pierre Seel* illustrate his queer disregard, “Alors, je rallume la bougie qui brûle en permanence dans ma cuisine quand je suis seul. Cette flamme fragile est mon souvenir de Jo” (170). [“Then I light the candle that permanently burns in my kitchen when I am alone. That frail flame is my memory of Jo” (140)]. Seel keeps this flame alive, thus immortalizing his experience through this written text, and he does it to commemorate others who died, including Jo. This flame, through his memory, is how he practices his silence and remembrance. He does not share any intimate details of his relationship and history with Jo, as he is indifferent to doing so, and by keeping this to himself, Seel can retain one piece of his identity that is for Pierre Seel alone. We may only look at the figurative flame and remember Jo’s name with Seel.

Il mio nome è Lucy’s and *Moi, Pierre Seel*’s rhetorical strategies perform many functions, and it is perhaps the mode of disregard that is the most powerful. Abbott’s reflection on not giving readers and audience answers to specific questions and expectations is particularly insightful as he explains, “by not closing [...], powerful narratives don’t tell us what to think but cause us to think” (63). This is the final and most important step; *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel* model reading the possibilities of what testimony can do. It creates the self, it offers reparation, it offers community, and it offers opportunities to touch another and then continue to remember and think about them. The reader is left with many questions and expectations from these two testimonies and these lacunae are a critical and fundamental aspect of the mode of disregard in queer Holocaust testimony: the "'autobiographical' truth" is the "truth about the writer as she or he writes" (Abbott 142). That is the definitive and most valuable truth that readers can take away from *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel.* These texts offer nuanced ideas about who speaks, who belongs, and who can have access to all of this. The reader is left with the responsibility to remember Lucy's and Seel's stories according to their testimony, but the reader is also left with an unanswerable question: who really were Lucy and Pierre Seel?

Conclusion

It is difficult to conclude an analysis on such encompassing and powerful texts like *Il mio nome è Lucy* and *Moi, Pierre Seel*, since they demand to be handled with precision and care. We as readers think have an idea of who Lucy and Pierre are as we pick up the book and see their names but by the end, we realize we have only met their narrative voices. The entire goal of this chapter has been to show how, by saving themselves and surviving, Lucy and Seel are able to craft a voice as a model to readers. These texts spend much time and effort to recuperate the pain and suffering Lucy and Seel experienced and in so doing these narrative selves arrive at the conclusion that their story is a meaningful choice. It was not until they decided to bear witness that they were able come to terms with their identity as queer, as a Holocaust survivor, and as a witness.

In so doing, they shift the burden from the singular subject, and much like their texts' production, they begin to share it with others. There is no foregone conclusion as to what they will say or how they will say it, and the narration follows their discursive closures and openings. Their processing permits another kind of processing on the part of their co-producer and then supplies the conditions for community creation. The texts do not leave their monumental work there but continue as they charge the reader to remember them while also demonstrating how it is that autobiographical self can protect itself from being subsumed into the entire process. These texts are not only stories about how Lucy and Seel survived their experiences but also, they are narrative manuals on how to be a witness as a queer subject in a way that can ensure perpetuity for both the self and community.

CHAPTER III:

REWRITING PRISON TIME: QUEER FILM TESTIMONIAL YEARNING

This chapter's objective is to explore how two films, *La bocca del lupo* (*The Wolf's Mouth*, 2009), and *Un chant d'amour* (*A Song of Love*, Jean Genet, 1950) engage with the temporal experience of being imprisoned. *La bocca del lupo* reconstructs the love story of Enzo and Mary, who met in prison and fell in love. The documentary film follows Enzo for the majority of the film as voiceovers or recordings play. *Un chant d'amour* is Genet's reimagining of his prison experience through three characters: the warder, Tunisian, and murderer. The film observes the three characters' interactions, imaginations, and desires located in prison. These two films are film testimonials because, even if they are not in the first person, they manifest the desires and experience of the primary witnesses and their relationship with time. The films can be considered queer testimonies because they are the mediated representation and reworking of a new experience with time that was provoked by prison. For example, *La bocca del lupo* utilizes recordings Mary and Enzo sent each other when she was released before him. The film also includes a recording of the two speaking together to the camera in a kind of witnessing about their relationship and lives. *Un chant d'amour* is a film testimonial, despite it being a fictional recreation and not a direct representation of Genet's life. Genet utilizes the characters, their bodies, and objects in the film to manifest his relationship to time as they all ache for a parallel time.

The films gesture to another parallel time that contrasts to the Western idea of time being rational, linear, and logical. Carolyn Dinshaw defines this rational relationship to time as a "metrical clocking" which understands "time that measures a succession of moments one after another" (*How Soon is Now?* 9). The two films reach toward an alternative time that does not entertain measuring "metrical clocking" but rather experience. This alternative time, what I call a *recuperative time*, is immeasurable, utopic, and reparative that takes into account the tyranny of time, and flouts it conventions. The films, by consequence of an imprisoned experience, are able to investigate a new kind of desire that extends beyond the here-and-now and goes into a time that is not shackled by their imprisonment. The films' creativity and reimagining contest a chronological temporality by opening up a new dimension that, while not clear nor plausible, rewrites elements from the past and present. These films create an alternative, recuperative time through artistic representation. The expressed reality does not accept the punitive and coercive reality that the prison system imposes on prisoners through suspension of (re)productivity and chrononormativity. Chrononormativity, as defined by Elizabeth Freeman in *Time Binds*, is "the use of time to organize individual human bodies towards maximum productivity" (3). Chrononormativity therefore promotes and insists upon time being metrical, measurable, and all time be used for production. Prisoners "do time" by doing nothing, locked in a cell and removed from society.[46] Through this mandatory productive unproductivity, in the sense that by being forced to do nothing that is not mandated by the state in prison is an active way to pay back a debt to society, these two queer prison testimonies continue to investigate the imprisoned subjects' temporal experience through rewriting and reestablishing what their relationship is to time.

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[46] Some U.S. prisons allow prisoners "productive time" to work, generally for a few cents an hour, for private companies (e.g., telecommunication). But most prisoners exist in a framework that emphasizes them paying back their 'temporal' debt to society. See Silva, Shannon M., and Ceema Samimi. "Social Work and Prison Labor: a Restorative Model." *Social Work*, vol. 63, no. 2, 2018, pp. 153-60.

In order to establish how these queer prison testimonial films engage in practices of temporal rewriting and recounting, I consider how the films depiction of imprisonment produces a blended temporality that includes the lived past, filmic present, and imagined future. In this way, the two films gesture towards a new utopia, or least a recuperative time that is beyond the one they experience in the filmic present, one that is always out of reach but ever so desired. It is important that this recuperative time is utopic because utopia is inherently a place that cannot ever exist. The films intervene in this impossibility and become radical projects as they attempt to realize this recuperative time, that is by consequence utopic because it located in a utopic non-place. I argue that these films actively queer temporality in the attempt to manifest their recuperative time. Notions of queer temporality developed by Jack Halberstam and José Muñoz, allow me to address how these two testimonial films confound normative logics of time by reassembling pieces of time in the film's present-time (e.g., utilizing the image of flowers from the film's beginning and conclusion to signal desire for and within another time). The films also take the extra step to imbue objects and figures found throughout the film with the films' understandings of a utopic, recuperative time – cigarette smoke, flowers, a present-absence – to highlight the film's awareness of the construction of this alternative time. By bearing witness to the effects of incarceration on the prisoner's relationship with time (e.g., removed years of freedom or choice), these films are able to explore what other temporalities may exist due in part to the prison experience (e.g., imagining a temporally demarcated homoerotic chiaroscuro sequence).

Despite the implausibility of living this constructed, alternate time, the films express a yearning and insisting for it to bring attention to the subjects' imprisoned experience and the instinctive search to redress the violence brought by being removed from a normative temporal experience. Even if this time is only noticeable on the shadow's edge or a delicate petal, it suggests metaphorically that daring to create an alternate existence is already the first step to realizing the impossible. The films use certain devices to connect the present with this other recuperative time, like flowers or smoke or voiceovers. I argue that these devices are physical manifestations of an imagined, elusive existence; they are imbued with what I call a *tangible intangibility*: these common devices carry the weight of a desired time that cannot be reached but whose objects may be touched. I then look at how objects in the films suggest the possibility of accessing a time beyond what is presented in the film's chronological time. I do this by considering Laura U. Marks *The Skin of Film*, which asserts that films do more than activate the audiovisual. Films also activate the multisensorial, thus creating room for the mise-en-scène to access something else beyond what is chronologically logical.

In order to understand these ideas, it is important to consider one of the most important symbols in *Un chant d'amour*: flowers. The film's establishing scene presents someone attempting to swing a bouquet of flowers from one cell window to the next on a piece of string; the flowers are a crucial and reoccurring image to which I refer often as they are emblematic of a desired utopia beyond prison (see fig. 11).

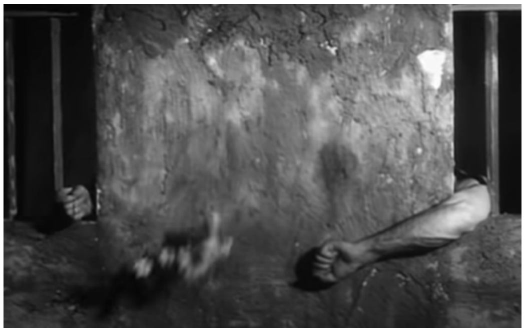

Fig. 11. Prison exterior with hands reaching out windows and swinging flowers.

This shot's composition is indicative of the recuperative time *Un chant* constructs throughout the film: two disembodied arms grasp for each other around a dilapidated wall.[47] The film's opening sequence composes the arms this way to highlight the conditions that prison forces upon the incarcerated: solitude, separation, inhumanity, bleakness. One hand swings the flowers multiple times toward the other which fails to grasp them. The hands' blind attempts to reach for the other, and by extension for the desired beyond prison time, emblematized by the flowers, reveals the film's intent: through the reconstruction of his imprisonment through the film, director Jean Genet manifests the sensation of another time beyond the now; the film is his own creative bearing witness of the recuperative time he felt in prison.

Defining Time by Doing Time: Queer Prison Temporality and Testimony

In analyzing these two films, I underscore how these creative products should be considered queer prison testimonies and analyze them in terms of temporalities. The lived experience of incarceration essentially stalls the prisoner's sense of and rapport with time. Ian O'Donnell, in *Prisoners, Solitude, and Time*, writes that, "much of the richness of human life, which involves re-narrating one's past and re-imagining one's future, is negated by imprisonment" (179). The films are a way for the subjects to work through their temporal predicament of feeling this stalled time – a time that forced them to wait out their imprisonment by doing nothing. The subjects can never make up the time they lost in prison but through these film testimonies they are able to take part in helping remake their past and future into something else. Prison time becomes crucial to these films because the temporal violence Enzo, Mary, and Genet experienced is inextricably linked to their retelling. Prison time can be considered to perform a temporal violence because prisoners are removed from access to chrononormativity and are forced to spend their time doing nothing but wait for their sentence to end. O'Donnell writes that "to make sense of how time is lived and felt requires the incorporation of a subjective dimension" (181). The films help not only Mary, Enzo, and Genet work through their own experience with time, but they assist the spectator in understanding how a new articulation of time is produced under these circumstances.

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[47] I will now refer to *Un chant d'amour* as *Un chant*.

Prison time itself is not inherently queer; it only provides the means through which an individual may conceptualize a new relationship to time. I suggest that the prisoner's experience with time is queered. To make sense of this queering, Jack Halberstam's observations are helpful in *In a Queer Time and Place*. Halberstam writes that "'queer time' is a term for those specific models of temporality that emerge within postmodernism once one leaves the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance" (6). Queer time makes itself in the prison testimonies that I consider in this chapter because the temporal flux of the prisoners' life is fractured as prisoners are refracted into prison time and then, ostensibly, are refracted again into a normative temporal flow after release. The normative flow, according to Halberstam, is challenged by "queer performers who destabilize the normative values that make everyone else feel safe and secure; but also [by] those people who live without financial safety nets, without homes, without steady jobs, outside the organization of time and space that have been established" (10). During their imprisonment, detainees find themselves in a state-of-time exception as they are removed from the normative temporal flow. This means they cannot participate in normalized activities while in prison.

The queer prison testimonies I analyze in this chapter open up a temporal understanding that goes beyond the prison experience. For example, in a study of Canadian filmmaker Xavier Dolan's use of musical parentheses, Sergio Rigoletto writes that Dolan's flair for the parenthetical "constitutes an unruly mode of cinematic queerness that unleashes playful, non-linear temporalities, pushing them well beyond their expected textual boundaries, and opening up for the spectator expansive horizons of queer possibility" ("On Xavier Dolan's Musical Parentheses 3). Much like Dolan's work, these two films I analyze reach for another time: a borderless, immeasurable, illogical, and impossible *other* time. In so doing the films considered in this chapter are even able to *begin* to reimagine and recuperate the time the characters were forced to spend in prison. Just taking the first step toward reimagining and recuperating time is a radical gesture. The imagining for something else beyond "nowness" is the central queer prison testimonial strategy of making sense of the experience of incarceration. Referring to Dolan's musical parentheses, Rigoletto writes that "articulating a distinctive desire for 'something else', these parentheses unleash the exhilarating feeling of what may happen when certain normative expectations around realistic plausibility, efficiency, and restraint, as projected onto the cinematic image, are put aside" and that "within the parenthetical mode [...] we may find not just an unruly aesthetic practice but also a way of viewing the world, and trying to re-imagine it" (3). The extra step that *La bocca del lupo* and *Un chant* make is that they articulate this 'other' time also as a mode of recuperating the experience of time that has been lost in prison.[48] Since this recuperative, utopian time is rooted in implausibility, these films utilize what Rigoletto calls a 'parenthetical mode'. In this perspective the films invite the spectator to reimagine, along with Mary, Enzo, and Genet, another possible time through the film's exploration of a new temporal relationship.

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[48] I will now refer to *La bocca del lupo* as *La bocca.*

The film's editing and mise-en-scène highlight the ways in which *Un chant* and *La bocca* attempt to make sense of this temporal re-imagining. This re-imagining should be understood through the relation that *La bocca* and *Un chant* have with the category of art cinema. This medium permits the exploration of the imprisoned subjects' experience with time as it "facilitates an open-ended approach to causality in general" (Bordwell 206). The chiaroscuro sequence and the forest sequence in *Un chant*, which I examine below, challenge the viewer to understand if it is actual reality, a dream, or something else, since there is no direct link between the sequence and the story. The voiceovers, devices, and Mary's ghostly figure in *La bocca* provoke a certain mystification. The art film mode promotes a certain ambiguity in story building that allows for a freedom to investigate a kind of new utopic temporality. This temporality, allowed through the art form mode, is not logical, and it is deeply personal. Bordwell writes that this kind of "narration can make such great demands on memory that it may be necessary to see the film more than once" (213). I will show that in the case of *Un chant* the spectator must pay close attention to the use of certain devices or objects, like the flowers, and that *La bocca* requires several viewings to notice both Mary and to fully understand which voiceovers are from the past and which are from interviews with the director.

The films are not just a testimony to the imprisoned subjects' experiences with prison time but also a testimony to the process of grappling with their understanding of time. While Genet may not have been in the same prison as the Tunisian character and the murderer in *Un chant*, the way the film understands and presents time is what is of essence to the prison testimony. Given his biographical experience (which I explain later in detail) it is possible to draw parallels between the film and his creative decisions in piecing together this film. As the characters strive for another time that is beyond where and when they are. O'Donnell asserts that prison time is "marked by the metronome of experience, which beats differently for each person. It differs from chronological time with its fixed intervals, and from social time with its emphasis on events and other people. It is time without obvious anchors" (198). *Un chant* consistently concerns itself with time: not its passage, not its metrical ticking, but rather the intense subjective desire for another time beyond the linear counting down of punitive days and hours. *La bocca* performs a similar investigation as it jumps forward and backward through the story of Enzo and Mary's relationship. *La bocca* offers a mixed and reconfigured time that does not begin with how they were imprisoned and met and fell in love; it avoids causality. In its narrative, the film insists on the importance of experience rather than chronology

Donna McCormack, in *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing*, contends that testimony and witnessing necessitate a new methodological mode of inquiry. In her conclusion, she insists on the ethical responsibility to listen to stories that might seem unlikely or illogical. In a similar way, this chapter asserts that, while these films are dramatizations and not faithful reflections of the subject's prison experience, these films should not be considered only as art films. They are derived from the experienced of imprisonment and produce an unexpected mode of being in and knowing the world. McCormack writes that "if we are to hear something different from the ordinary, then we have to start listening to what may sound fictional or what may easily be discounted as impossible. These are not simple willful acts, although we must begin with an openness to listening, hearing that which moves us and undoes us" (193-4). It is necessary to redefine our expectation of what testimonies can do and what a testimony should be. The queer prison testimonies analyzed in this chapter produce the conditions to interrogate another temporal experience (one that is not metrical, not definable, and not related to normative understandings of time) marked by desire, shame, and queerness.

La bocca del lupo and Utopic Yearning: Haunting Until the End

Vincenzo (Enzo) Motta's first voiceover, at the beginning of the documentary, *La bocca,* plays over a shot that is composed of a silhouette (we find out later this is his lover, Mary) sitting with her back against a wall while looking out to the ocean, visible through a doorframe (see fig. 12). As mentioned before, voiceovers in the film come from either the recordings Mary and Enzo sent one another or from the film's interview with the two.

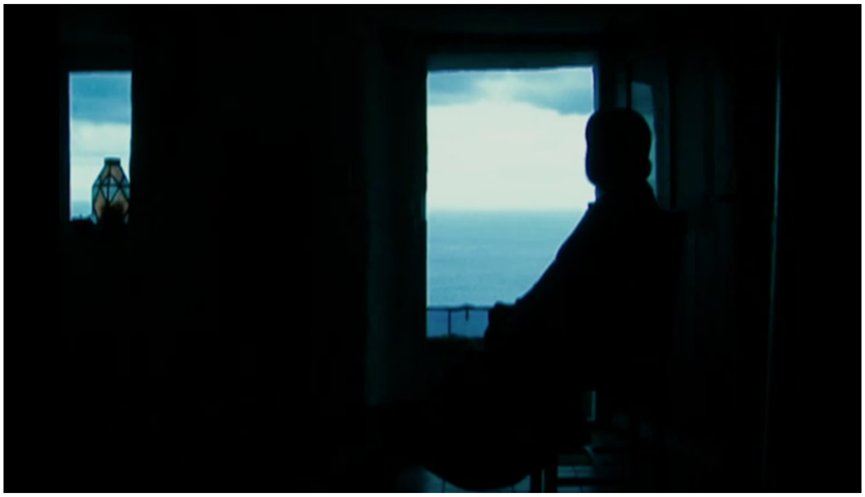

Fig. 12. A shadowed figure in the background looks through a door toward the ocean deeper in the background.

This voiceover in particular is one Enzo recorded while he was imprisoned. He wonders aloud what an imagined future he could have with Mary:

> Amore, facciamo una cosa. Tu mi hai aspettato tanti anni e siamo quasi arrivati alla fine. Sai il mio sogno qual è? Te lo ricordi? Una casa in campagna, i cagnolini, le paperelle, il laghetto, faccio l'ortaggio, queste cose. Nel nostro piccolo viviamo in quel modo. Il mio desiderio è sempre quello. Penso che è anche il tuo sogno, vero?
>
> [Sweetheart, let's do something. You waited many years for me and now we've almost reached the end. Do you remember my dream? A home in the country with puppies and ducks, a pond, an orchard to tend, and such. We'll live like this, in our own way. That is still my desire. It's your dream too, isn't it?][49]

The film juxtaposes the imagined light, sun, and freedom in Enzo's prison dreaming with the harsh reality of his lover, Mary, as she is alone in the dark with an unforgiving and cold ocean as her only companion. The contrast is clear between a disembodied hope that was recorded in the past but played in the film's chronological present over the shot of a silhouette that looks to the sea. This announces the bleak future that the film investigates from its beginning: a temporal disruption caused by the two meeting in prison and Enzo's continued sentence after Mary's release. The film reckons with the harsh reality of the present and the difficulties of the past, and the voiceover emphasizes an imaginary time that Mary and Enzo are unable to realize.

The documentary is interspersed with thirteen voiceovers that are either cassette recordings from Mary's and Enzo's time in prison. They are either voice messages they would send one another through the mail or interviews with the director, Pietro Marcello (thirteen in total; seven are Enzo's and six are Mary's). The voiceovers point to how Mary and Enzo's lives were 'put on pause' when imprisoned, how their love life started in prison, and how this life was put on pause again when Mary was released before Enzo. The physical tape recordings the two sent each other, then, carry the burden of representing time elements (Enzo's past imprisonment and his hope for a future countryside home together). They are also objects that assist in reconstituting an experience scarred by prison. Prison time intertwines itself into Mary and Enzo's life not only because of their imprisonment but also by marking the beginning of their relationship, one that is defined by a temporal parenthesis as the two fall in love while in prison and Mary is released first. *La bocca* recuperates their time lost by their utilizing physical objects or stylistic elements (like their audio recordings from the past or certain angles to produce specific sensations) in the retelling of their story in the film.

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[49] This and all other subsequent translations come from the film's official subtitles.

La bocca is a film imbued with temporal and affective hauntings due to a series of mis-timings, but it is also full of hope, as evidenced in several of the voiceovers. Enzo and Mary's life together is rooted in coincidence and the trappings of prison time. We learn that these two characters fell in love in prison and began to exchange notes, letters, packages, and voice recordings between their cells. Released first, Mary waited a decade for Enzo's prison sentence's commutation. This already displaces what their relationship could become – its potentiality – into a temporal parenthesis as Mary returns to a normative time and must find lodging by herself while waiting for Enzo's release. A voice over segment, a recording sent by Mary to Enzo, reveals their hope of reuniting. After a particularly violent episode in which Enzo has turned his cell upside down, Mary sends him a voice recording in which she says, "Voglio che i nostri sogni si realizzano. Ti ricordi i nostri sogni, i nostri progetti? Cerca di stare più calmo che puoi. Ora amore interrompo qui che ho alcune cose da fare. Ricordati che ci sono io, che ti amo, che ti adoro e ti aspetto" ["I want our dreams to become a reality. Do you remember our dreams, our plans? Try to stay as calm as you can. I have to pause now because I have some things to do. Remember, I am here, I love you, and I'm waiting for you"]. The recording gives us a sense of how the film attempts to reconstruct their relationship through the dreams and aspirations of Mary and Enzo regarding life after prison.

The film reprises the earlier voiceover about the house in the countryside later on in the film, but reframes it by considering Enzo's perspective. This perspective comes from the interview with Mary and Enzo, as Mary considers their dream in their present day, "Noi avevamo un sogno, quello di avere una casetta in campagna con un orticello, magari anche una veranda con una bella panca dove poterci sedere, guardare abbracciati l'orizzonte con i nostri cagnolini che ci girano attorno. E lì aspettare la vecchiaia e stare un po' in pace, in tranquillità. Ed è solo quello che volevamo." ["We had a dream: to have a house in the countryside with a small orchard, perhaps even a veranda with a nice bench where we could sit and hug, watching the horizon with our dogs seated around us. We'd await old age there and enjoy some peace and quiet. That was all we wanted"]. This voiceover speaks over a close-up shot of Enzo with a similar dark blue background from the beginning of the film. The intimacy is striking as the lighting reveals Enzo's wrinkled face and the contrast sharpens his facial features (see fig. 13).

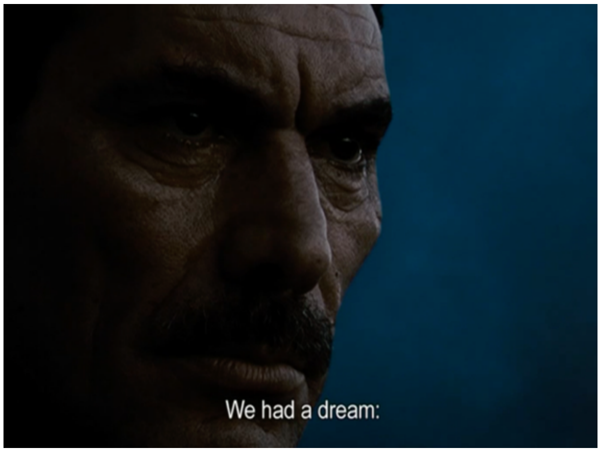

Fig. 13. A close-up of Enzo taking up half the frame in a dark blue background.

The film shifts between two narrative

voices. First it was Enzo's voice, speaking in a voiceover from prison to a distant Mary in the shadow and then it is present-time Mary's voiceover of a close-up of Enzo. Another difference is that Mary does not confirm if they achieved their dream. It begs the question of if they still have the dream or if the dream is now impossible. *La bocca* articulates the weaving of time and who speaks in an effort to give voice to this other time. The voiceovers make explicit to the spectator the constructed-ness of the film during the film's screening time.

Next I will explore how *La bocca* builds a queer prison temporality via Mary and Enzo's story together. *La bocca* revolves around the anticipated but uncertain reuniting of Enzo and Mary finally being able to reach each other (as dramatized in beginning of the interview when Mary is revealed and the two are seen together) and the temporal distance that prison time created for them. The film invests much time into showing the two apart, and the lovers never speak together in the voiceovers, but separately. In the film, the two protagonists are not seen for the first forty-seven minutes of the film's entire screening time (including credits) of sixty-eight minutes. Before the interview, the camera mostly follows Enzo through the city alone in a way that evokes their separation during his imprisonment. In a response to this separation, the film is invested in articulating a future time for the two, which is manifested in the moments before we finally see the two together. The camera reenacts the two reuniting after prison in the film as Enzo walks into their building. The film pieces together anxious shots of a stairwell and cuts from different empty stairwells as we hear footsteps in the stairway, ostensibly imitating Enzo climbing the stairs. The next scene is the interview of the two finally depicted together. The film parallels their imprisoned experience because Enzo and Mary have been separated for the majority of the film similar to how they were separated by prison. This mirroring strategy is the film's way of reconstructing Enzo and Mary's temporal experience, recuperating their lost time, as it resolves their separation within the span of the film's screen time and it gives the spectator that resolution.

José Muñoz, in *Cruising Utopia*, writes that "Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present. The here and now is a prison house. We must strive, in the fact of the here and now's totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a *then and there*" (1). It is through a queer utopia that reaches *beyond* the possible, that new experiences may be imagined. Muñoz further argues that queer time is "a stepping out of the linearity of time. Straight time is a self-naturalizing temporality. Straight time's 'presentness' needs to be phenomenologically questioned, and this is a fundamental value of queer utopian hermeneutics. Queerness' ecstatic and horizontal temporality is a path and a movement to a greater openness to the world" (25). *Un chant* and *La bocca* take great strides to highlight moments that help the viewer feel with the characters the longing that they have. Because they were removed from chrononormative time they understand something is missing. Rigoletto takes this logic a step further and writes that "while at an individual level such an affective transport may be thought of as a stepping out of oneself, at a collective level it suggests a shared dissident experience of queer exuberance, one that provides some relief from oppressive linearity of heteronormative time and its rigid social protocols" ("On Xavier Dolan's Musical Parentheses" 15). The openings that *La bocca* and *Un chant* offer then are moments through which the viewer is not only able to understand the need and desire for another time but is also able to access the testimonies on a queer level, beyond the tyrannical ticking of chrononormativity. Much like Muñoz writes, it is not only Mary and Enzo that feel this but also the spectator who does.

One important missing figure throughout the first two-thirds of *La bocca* is Mary. One could say that she haunts the film with her presence-absence for much of its duration.[50] Mary hovers between the lines of the film through allusions or previous recordings. The spectator may catch her on the periphery of the film after several viewings, as I show below. Mary is not actively shown in the film until the interview at the end with Enzo. Since the film only shows elusive glimpses of Mary, she takes on a spectral presence. Mary's spectrality is the link between the impossible recuperative time and the film itself. Both Mary and this other time are a "trace that is a calling, a demand, a messianic wish or hope, that takes the troubled form of a ghost – neither together present nor quite absent – conjured by the moment of writing" (Freccero 85). In the act of creating the film and by inserting Mary's character as a ghost that haunts the borders of the film, she is therefore the ghost of an impossible time, of an impossible time that simultaneously serves to recuperate the time lost in prison of the two protagonists.

The most significant expression of this haunting is an early scene in which Enzo returns to their home and Mary is absent. The camera, tucked into a corner in a medium straight-on angle, does not move as Enzo walks into the kitchen (see fig. 14). He pulls out a bottle of wine from the squeaky refrigerator, and a covered dish and an empty glass await him. Enzo seems to speak to an empty household with affection, "Ciao amore sono a casa, sono stanco" ["Hello love, I'm home. I'm tired"]. The film then cuts to a pan from right to left of multiple mannequin heads wearing a wig, ostensibly suggesting that Enzo is speaking to Mary. Then it jumps back to a low angle medium close-up shot of Enzo as he still speaks to the quiet household, “Amore, ti sono mancato?” [“Did you miss me, love?”]. He hesitates, as if waiting for a response, then goes on to eating.

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[50] A booklet paired with the film explains that Mary is too timid to be filmed. Mary's absence evokes a doubly ghostly reading because of her absence and her death in 2010. It would be remiss to mention that, unfortunately, Enzo Motta also died in 2016.

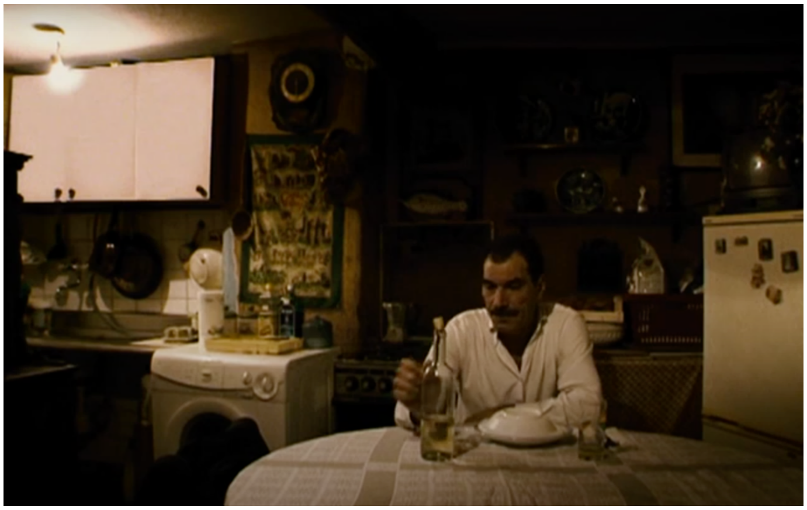

Fig. 14. Enzo sitting at a kitchen table.

This moment may not seem as significant as when the two are finally reunited in their interview. However, this scene establishes the language of missing one another. The two reach out for each other but are not able to sync up when they can find the other. Mary left the dish out for Enzo, hoping to see him. Enzo finds the dish, an affectionate gesture by Mary, and he speaks to an empty household. He asks out loud, much like what he would do when he would record his messages to send her, if she missed him. This moment embodies the lack they felt in due to their separation after Mary’s release and their temporal parenthesis is only closed when they are presented together in the interview.

The film then follows Enzo in the house and he unwraps the papered object to reveal a drawing of Mary. The picture that Enzo leaves on the table is a representation of a time passed and is a ghostly foreshadowing of Mary’s death (see fig. 15).

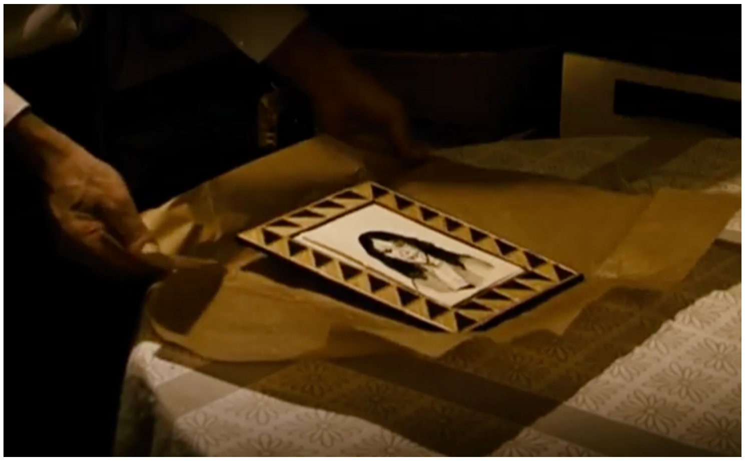

Fig. 15. A hand-drawn picture of Mary on a table.

The drawing has locked Mary into a stasis, a state of time exception. The picture finds itself in an intersecting position between the past that has Mary firmly emblematized as youthful Mary. Looking at the past through this picture, in its position under the light, suggests this is the past to the future they wished to have, away from the city. The picture is Mary's proxy, a representation of what Enzo had during their imprisonment. The picture is also a desire for another place, one out in the country where Enzo may garden and Mary and Enzo can have their herd of dogs, a queer spatiotemporality that is as inaccessible as it is desired.

I have established that Mary's absence is intentional but I contend that the few moments in which she appears unannounced are just as intentional. An attentive spectator may notice Mary as she flits between shots throughout the majority of the film. Around the twenty-four-minute mark, Mary appears again in the same dress. Silent and fleeting. This time, she is looking onto a group of transgender women eating and talking together with a man. Suddenly, the film cuts to a medium close-up shot of Mary's face, looking towards the group (see fig. 16). Mary is still leaning with her back against the right-side of the doorway but looking at the camera.

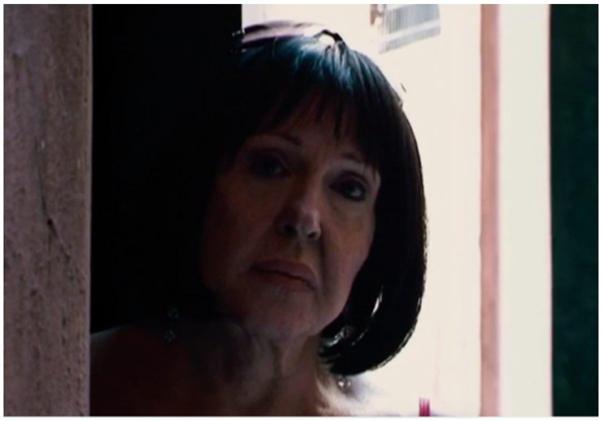

Fig. 16. A medium close-up of Mary looking at the camera.

The curvature of the left-side of the doorway functions as a frame inside the shot, covering one corner of the left-side of the screen. The film's interior framing suggests that Mary is removed from participating in this group; Mary is haunting not only the alleyway but also Enzo's footsteps. A quiet intra-diegetic spectator, she is at first removed from participating in the film's story. She is voiceless as a present-time protagonist as the film proceeds; only through past recordings of her voice is she actively able to interact with the film's story. Her silent figure in the film also functions doubly as a ghost in another sense, as it foreshadows her unexpected death right after the film's release. Her spectral footsteps, following in the echoes of Enzo's voice and city exploration, preemptively embody her passing and her inability to be an active presence in the film. This embodiment is not and would not be possible without this extra knowledge from the booklet or precursory research before viewing the film. Once the spectator knows Mary or once the spectator understands Mary and Enzo's story, the viewer is able to understand how the film and the couple's impossible time are haunted by Mary.

Muñoz writes that "to see these ghosts we must certainly read the 'specific dealings, specific rhythms' that bring to life a lost experience, a temporally situated picture of social experience, that needs to be read in photo images, gaps, auras, residues, and negations" (42). This other time, much like Mary, is personal. The spectator must be capable of feeling and understanding why Mary and their other time are so elusive: the unclear time origin of the voiceovers, who Mary is, why the interview interrupts Enzo's city wandering. In the case of Enzo and Mary, their temporality is defined by continuously reaching out and missing each other, missing what they had always desired but will unfortunately never have: a temporally synced experience together that is untethered from prison time.

After the interview *La bocca* presents idyllic shots of the Genovese panorama, Mary and Enzo cuddling by the fire with their dogs, and many pastoral images (see fig. 17).

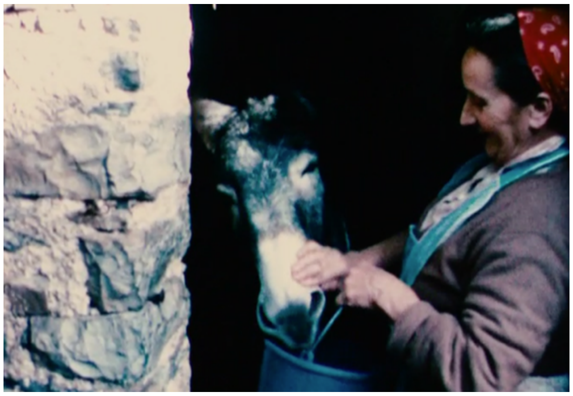

Fig. 17. A medium close-up of a woman caressing a donkey.

These pastoral scenes intentionally harken back to Enzo's first voiceover musing over what kind of future he imagined for the two of them (and Mary's retelling of it), and then the film cuts back to the previous shot of Mary and the sea. This bookend suggests that it may be possible for the two of them to construct some approximation of Enzo's impossible hopes (hopes that had been signaled by the voiceovers).

The temporality that the film pieces together offers a possibility, an opening through which they can think about building a new time and space together. This comes out of the film's insistence that their desire to be together free of prison time can only be fulfilled in another time and place. The film therefore makes two conscious steps in recreating their testimony in a documentary form. The first step is that of dramatizing their relationship and history while also purposefully engaging the viewer to recognize and participate in this recreation. The last step is the film offering of a possibility to compromise in order to bring to life their past dreams. By queering time and not participating in normalized narratives of life, *La bocca* is able to consider new logics of "mismatched" times. Since they met in prison and Mary had to wait for Enzo and now they are waiting for their impossible future, *La bocca* is able to reprise their past and incorporate their future by weaving together a new temporal narrative for them.

After showing the pastoral clips, the film cuts to Enzo on a cliffside with their dogs, actualizing the couple's desire for a house in the countryside full of animals and a garden. In the background, though, the Genovese cityscape is visible, haunting his hope (see fig. 18). Then the film cuts to Mary walking onto an outdoor stairway and serenely looking at their idyllic setting (see fig. 19). The film recognizes that the two have been separated and left to hope for one another and for a time to be together. Because the scenes occur one after the other, they create the impression that Mary is looking at Enzo from afar.

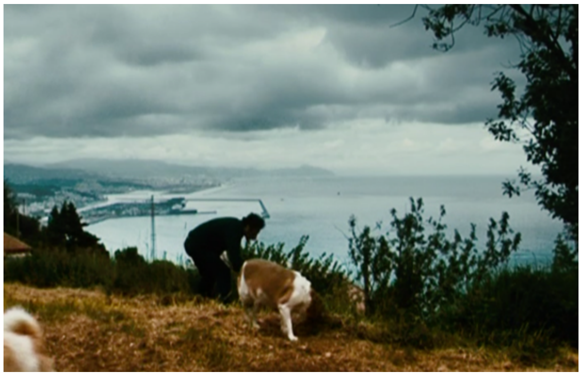

Fig. 18. Enzo overlooking the panorama.

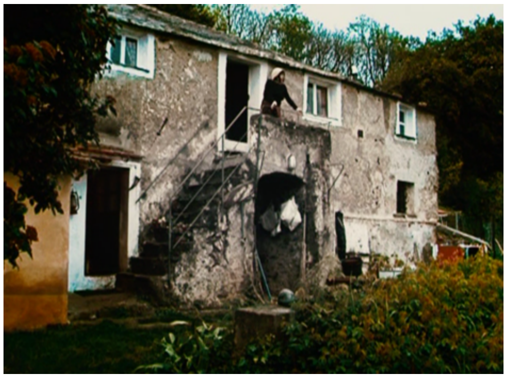

Fig. 19. Mary looking out from a stairwell.

La bocca offers a project, an answer, a response that relies on accepting the impossible and handling it in such a way that continuously questions and opens up an unexpected relationship to time. This time is pieced together using elements from the past (voice recordings), the film's present-time (their interview), and reorganizing scenes to suggest a possible future together. Mary and Enzo's utopic time is not fully articulated but we are able to see how the film gestures towards a time that is unburdened by prison time. Halberstam writes that:

> A 'queer' adjustment in the way in which we think about time, in fact, requires and produces new conceptions of space. And in fact, much of the contemporary theory seeking to disconnect queerness from an essential definition of homosexual embodiment has focused on queer space and queer practices. By articulating and elaborating a concept of queer time, I suggest new ways of understanding the nonnormative behaviors that have clear but not essential relations to gay and lesbian subjects. For the purpose of this book, 'queer' refers to nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time. (6)

La bocca expands upon a queer adjustment of time as it considers a time in which Mary's contradictory interview ("what he said isn't true") and Enzo's wanderings and hopefulness may coexist in harmony. It is a harmony that *La bocca* tenderly pieces together for the two as it recognizes, by the divided shots of Mary on the stairwell and Enzo on the cliffside, the trauma and difficulties they are forced to face. The film insists on honoring and appreciating Enzo and Mary's hopes for a future together. In these pastoral shots, the film points to a lived space to emphasize that even by being together, the couple is even closer to realizing impossible dream that they always had.

The final shot of Mary and Enzo together offers a color palette not previously used in the film. It is a medium close-up with black and warm yellow and the two are slightly off-center in the shot. Mary is on the right, with her back against the wall, her right wrist and hand dangling over Enzo's left shoulder. Her head is turned away from the fire toward another light source, and her eyes closed (see fig. 20). Enzo is looking toward the camera, leaning slightly forward. Their bodies seem to be perfectly composed and positioned for the camera to reproduce a chiaroscuro effect. This shot rewrites Mary's original placement in the first shot of her by the sea during Enzo's first voiceover. Instead of looking away from him, in this shot she is looking in his direction, toward the light, toward hope, in a tender lover's gesture of leaning on Enzo. Enzo, ever steadfast, now looks comfortably at the camera, unlike in the interview, while Mary's face is more visible and more vulnerable. They have settled their temporal mismatchings and are now in sync. They have adjusted their temporal expectations and have settled into a rhythm and routine that recognizes their new life together in the present tense while carrying the hope and memory of another time that has not been fully realized.

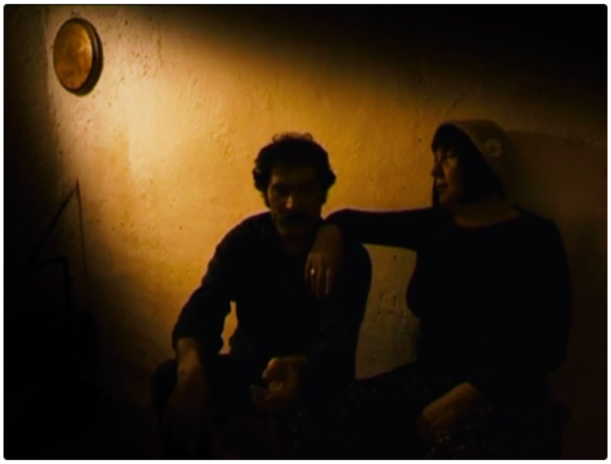

Fig. 20. Mary resting her arm on Enzo who looks into the camera and both are bathed in light.

La bocca is a film that uses figures and objects to consider other times, unattainable or impossible. The tape recordings help the film turn to the past in order to look for the future for which they hoped. I argue that *La bocca* utilizes this last section of shots of Mary and Enzo to perform its last and most important step: it uses their figures together as a way to rewrite their present in their own future terms: the film is their chance to piece together elements from their past, present, and future but within the film's present.

Instead of waiting for their future to happen, the film proposes a present that attempts to become, and fails at becoming, their new future. *La bocca* ostensibly places this short concluding utopic segment after their interview. The harsh reality and reweaving of their story up to the truth of their interview is only followed up by a pastoral dream in the film. *La bocca* intentionally does not explain this ending but leaves the concluding scenes open to interpretation. This final shot of Mary and Enzo together, as lovers, friends, and people who have experienced trauma together, capitulates *La bocca*'s goal: to queer an experience with time is to live it queerly, to accept queer time as impossible but nonetheless attempt to create a queer space that attempts to embody a queer future in practical and real terms.

To Make the Impossible Tangible: Objects in Another Time in *Un chant d'amour*

The two films I consider in this chapter leave room for the creation of 'something more' while simultaneously encouraging the spectator to notice the significance of this very act of creation. This new time is shaped by the experience of imprisonment. These films acknowledge that imprisonment led to the conditions of the desire for another time. I do not intend to disregard the trials and difficulties under imprisonment but rather recognize that it is out of this experience that these films are able to articulate an unrecognizable time. That is to say, for example, if Genet had not been imprisoned, *Un chant* may not have insisted so much on the fantasy sequences that go beyond the prison walls. That is why I argue that the two films give a certain weight to objects and mysterious or brief figures in the mise-en-scène: they embody this other time (e.g., Mary's presence-absence in the film).

Jean Genet's *Un chant d'amour* is his first and only film, and has been heralded as one of the first films to depict homosexual desire. Genet, a French writer and political activist who lived from 1910 to 1986, was a prolific author inspired by his life and various imprisonments. He spent much of his adolescence in and out of prison for many reasons including vagrancy, theft, lewd acts, to forged papers. He joined the Foreign Legion at age eighteen but was dishonorably discharged due to homosexual conduct.[51] Although *Un chant*'s plot may not be strictly biographical, nonetheless Genet relied on his prison experiences to inform not only his writing but also his filmmaking. By extension, then, *Un chant* is another expression of his incarceration experience.

Un chant is a black and white silent film shot on 35mm film that is twenty-six minutes long; it explores three main character interactions in a prison. The film is more musical than narrative in nature. Richard Dyer writes that "A [...] way of approaching the film is suggested by its title: a song of love. Its organisation is much like a melody, with repetitions and refrains, as it is like a narrative" (*Now You See It* 49). The overarching narrative, which is interspersed and interwoven through the representation of desire, follows the various interactions (and non-interaction) between the warder (also known as the guard), an older inmate (commonly called the Tunisian), and the murderer (a young tattooed man whose cell door bears the name of his crime, *meurtre*, or murderer). The murderer's and Tunisian's cells are next to each other, and, the warder peeks into their cells and those of others. The film investigates the warder's homosexual desires in a spliced chiaroscuro sequence. It also presents a well-lit sequence of the Tunisian and murderer cavorting together in a forest. Its opening and closing shots are of flowers being passed between prison windows on a string.

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[51] It is important to contextualize historically is France's laws against homosexuality in order to situate Genet and his writing: in 1942, French law declared homosexuality illegal (it had, however, been legal since 1791) and this would not be overturned until 1982.

The flowers are a repeated symbol that appears in every fantasy sequence. The connection becomes clear as the spectator is introduced to this image through the warder's point of view in the here and now of the film's chronological storytelling and then recognizes the flowers in the abstract and fantastical sequences beyond the normative and chronological. The first fantasy sequence is from the warder's point of view. The film presents a close-up of the warder's back while he looks into the peephole. The camera tilts up as the warder stands up and away from the peephole; it then tracks to the right while the warder turns around and looks beyond the camera, leading to a fade out. The film fades in to a medium shot of a stretched out right hand centered in the frame in a dark background. A garland of flowers swings into the grasping hand that belatedly attempts, and fails five times to grab the flowers.

The following take is a back-lit medium close-up with a chiaroscuro effect in which the warder is facing a man on the left side of the frame, who has flowers in his mouth. The two men are bathed in light. The warder comes forward to kiss the flowers out of the man's mouth, and in so doing, shadows the other man's face (see fig. 21).

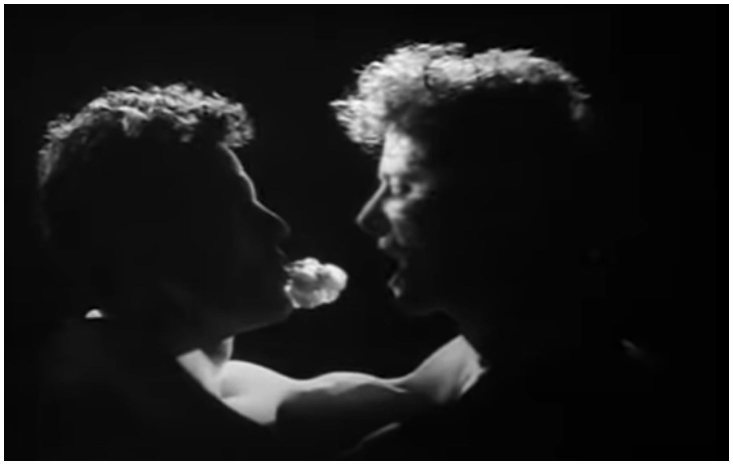

Fig. 21. The warder moves forward to kiss the unnamed and shadowed man with flowers in his mouth.

The film's narrative structure can be summed up in this way: an object, an idea, or a person within the mise-en-scène provokes this other time. The flowers, for example, are the tether between the now-ness of the film's chronology within the prison. The flowers as a symbol create the opening through the chiaroscuro sequence, which dramatizes the warder and the unnamed man's desire in another place and time via their fantasies. The flowers' concrete presence in the beginning and conclusion contrasts to their fragility in the fantasies' mise-en-scène: the flowers are passionately smothered in the warder's kiss.

In *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000), Laura Marks investigates how film allows the viewer to access a multisensory manifestation in cinema that is not limited to the visual and the aural. Marks writes that the skin of film "offers a metaphor to emphasize the way film signifies through its materiality, through a contact between perceiver and object represented. It also suggests a way in which vision itself can be tactile, as though one were touching a film with one's eyes: I term this haptic visuality" (xi). She utilizes the metaphor that film has not only sound and audio but also a kind of skin. The spectator is able to touch the screen through a shared repertoire of physical experience in the world (e.g., if a character picks up and orange the spectator is able to access a similar bumpy sensation from the orange rind). By accessing Marks' haptic visuality, *Un chant* and *La bocca* films construct another temporality that engages the other senses. They invite the viewer to access, in part, this other time through a shared multisensorial experience.

Images, sensations, and objects in the mise-en-scène possess an 'immaterial materiality,' as they are the physical manifestation of the other time and place to which they are connected by how they are deployed in the films. In other words, these elements are given significance by the films because they are traceable in both the film's present and the other time (the flowers, the audio cassettes). As the films' characters interact with these objects, the spectators' own personal archive of sensations is activated. These sensations, therefore, "complexly exceed the present" (Freeman 120) because they extend beyond the film's fabula, the viewer sitting down to watch the film; these sensations are consistently evoked to go access another time.[52] An example of this is the smoke exchange between the Tunisian and the murderer (see fig. 22).

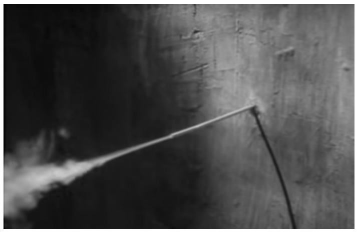

Fig. 22. A piece of straw sticks through a small hole in the wall from which smoke escapes.

The smoke's ethereal nature and its impermanence seem to represent the Tunisian's profound longing for the murderer. The Tunisian signals his desire via the smoke, and his smoke conveys the task of sharing the Tunisian's wish to be in another time and in another place with the murderer. It is an embodiment of all that he wants but cannot have due to their imprisonment. In her preface, Marks notes that cinema is not merely a transmitter of signs; it bears witness to an object and transfers the presence of that object to viewers" (xvii). While smoke is not an object but a collection of gases and particles, the film has not only succeeded in recording the presence of the smoke onto a strip of film but also in bringing with it the smell, the sound of exhaled smoky air that is blown through the small hole, all of which activate an entire range of the viewer's sensations. This physical activation shows the smoke's presence; the smoke points to that the Tunisian's desire for another time and place. Thus, the smoke, material and present, embodies the immateriality of his desire – the murderer may only attempt to breathe in the smoke but never completely accesses the Tunisian's passion. This smoke, imbued with all of the Tunisian's desire, is ungraspable. It extends beyond the smoke's brief existence as the two men share the smoke and remember its taste and smell – while the spectator is unconsciously engaged in evoking a personal memory or relationship to smoke.

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[52] David Bordwell understands the distinction between the fabula as chronological recounting of all the events that might be relevant to the story, the syuzhet is a creation of the author of film who picks and rearranges what is presented on the screen, and the style is how this is presented (80). In order to illustrate this difference, specifically in regard to time, Bordwell writes that "fabula duration is the time that the viewer presumes the story action to take—a decade or a day, hours or days, or weeks or centuries. Syuzhet duration consists of the stretches of time which the film dramatizes" (80) and that there is a third time which we can call "'screen duration' or 'projection time.' The story action may take ten years, the syuzhet may run from March to May of the final year, but the film may present these durations in the running time of two hours" (*Narration in the Fiction Film* 81).

The Tunisian and murderer's smoky exchange may indicate the fragility and impermanence of their desire. Curling smoke wisps in the mise-en-scène are impossible to grab, and yet the murderer eventually decides to inhale and breathe in this smoke. The murderer, after originally rebuking the offered smoke, forces a straw into a hole between his and the Tunisian's cell wall, and the Tunisian blows smoke from a cigarette through the straw into the murderer's waiting and receptive mouth. While this exchange has been read as sexually charged, the straw as a penis and the smoke as semen, I that the smoke is charged sexually *as well as* affectively.[53] The smoke possesses not only the Tunisian's sexual arousal and desire for the murderer, it also imbued with his hope for another time and place in order to be with the murderer. This other time is no longer only in the Tunisian's mind but in the act of transference between himself and the murderer via the smoke. As the two inhale the same smoke, they are both participating in this new time, a time that is never completely reachable.

This exchange, however, also reveals the film's investment in constructing the Tunisian and murderer's sexual and affective bond that goes beyond the wall that separates them. The straw's insertion breaches their imprisonment: the straw penetrates the cell wall separating the two so as to connect the characters. The film is heavily invested in the Tunisian's arousal and frustration as it spends time watching him pace through his cell and knock on the wall. It seems that the murderer is indifferent. Sara Ahmed writes, "It is through such painful encounters between [a] body and other objects, including other bodies, that 'surfaces' are felt 'as being there' in the first place. To be more precise the impressions of a surface is an effect of such intensifications of feeling" (*The Cultural Politics of Emotions* 24). It is the characters' interaction or reaction that inspires an intense longing for another time.

The film's basic structure is the narrative of warder's work day from when he arrives at the prison and to when he leaves. However, the film presents the warder watching the prisoners, beating and threatening the Tunisian, the murderer and Tunisian's exchange in the prison, the warder's chiaroscuro imagining, and the forest sequence. The representation of the smoke goes beyond the chronometric and into another time. The smoke is a physical embodiment of a time removed. The film suggests with a close-up shot of both men fellating one straw as they simultaneously breathe the smoke (see fig. 23 and 24). The low camera angle alludes to a curiosity in understanding the Tunisian's intense need to share this moment with the murderer. The shot is intimate, very close, and the lighting reveals his every musculature. The murderer is presented in a close-up as well as from a straight-on angle, which allows the spectator to see how he unhinges his jaw, takes in the smoke and exhales it through his nose. The film connects the two through the shot-reverse-shot exchange of sharing the smoke.

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[53] Dyer, Richard. *Now You See It: Studies on Lesbian and Gay Film*. Routledge, 1990. pp. 55.

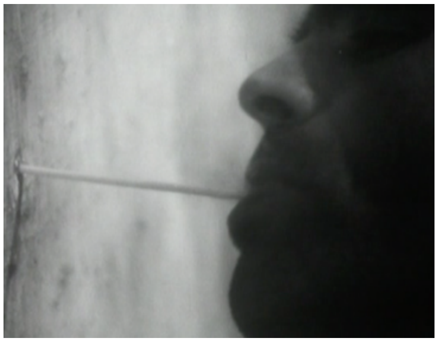

Fig. 23. A close up of the Tunisian blowing smoke.

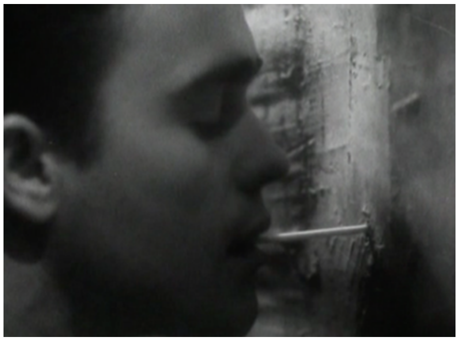

Fig. 24. A close up of the murderer blowing smoke.

Marks writes that "the fabric of every day experience that tends to elude verbal or visual records is encoded in these senses [e.g., touch, smell, and taste]. Senses that are closer to the body, like the sense of touch, are capable of storing powerful memories that are lost to the visual. Senses whose images cannot be recorded are repositories of private memory" (130). *Un chant* has recorded the sight of the smoke but only the Tunisian can access his own desire for another time, in this case cavorting in a forest with the murderer. He charges the smoke with his own sexual desire and imagination of another time, a fantastical hope. The smell and taste of the smoke, shared by the two, is a representation to his fantasy that he attempts to share with the murderer. As the

Tunisian's stares down the barrel of the warder's gun, he thinks of himself and the murder frolicking in a forest together.

The warder enters the Tunisian's cell after having witnessed his smoke exchange with the murderer, takes off his belt and begins to beat the Tunisian. The following dissolve leads to a high angle close-up shot of the Tunisian and tilts down as he gets down on his knees with sweat on his forehead and a crazed smile. Then the film fades out and shifts to the forest sequence between the murderer and the Tunisian. The murderer carries a garland of roses between his legs and the Tunisian has some flowers in his mouth (see fig. 25). This is a point of view shot so the spectator will understand what the Tunisian is imagining as he is being beaten.

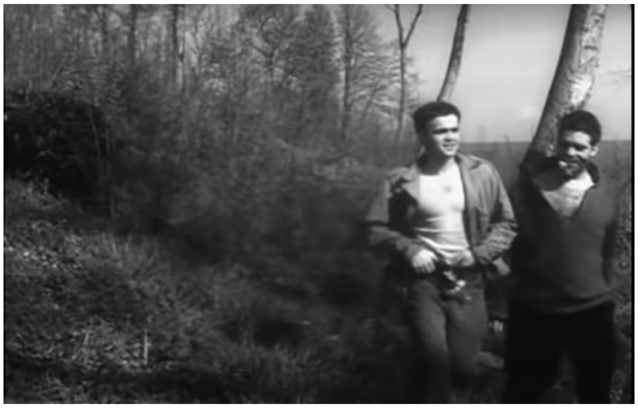

Fig. 25. The Tunisian and murderer walk through a forest.

The Tunisian lies down on the murderer, and then the two chase each other through the forest while the Tunisian looks after him contently and longingly. After the Tunisian catches up to the murderer, the murderer then pulls flowers out of his left pocket and hands them to the Tunisian who smells them. As soon as he does, the film cuts to a straight on close-up of the Tunisian on his knees, back in the prison, as he rests against his bed in pain.

The flowers, much like in the chiaroscuro sequence, connect prison time and the experience of incarceration to a fantasy that is only sensorially accessible through mise-en-scène elements. The smoke *is* this time and moment that the Tunisian fantasizes: it embodies the entire scene and manifests its intangibility as smoke is ungraspable. Marks writes that she wants “to suggest how film and video, which are audiovisual media, can represent non audiovisual sense experience” (2). *Un chant* takes great strides to present the physicality of the smoke exchange between the two men, revealing almost every breath and cigarette puff the two make. The spectator is able to access an array of linked sensations from the sound of the cigarette paper burning with each inhale, the possible scratch the straw makes when it is pushed and pulled through, to the sound of their inhalation and exhalation. The film’s focus helps the spectator understand this intensity and also to be drawn into this process through their own world experience.

The embodiment of the Tunisian’s imagined future, a now-ness that is removed from the fabula’s chronological order, is the film’s self-conscious construction. The narration presents an intersection of time, bodies, object, impossible timings, and ethereal nature. By offering the spectator access to this other time through fragile (the flowers) or intangible (the smoke) manifestations, the narration makes it clear that it is through the experience of prison and prison time that such fantastical and impossible other times are even possible to imagine. These elements’ fragility in the mise-en-scène is highlighted through their impermanence (picked flowers are already dead, smoke dissipates), which adds to their constructed qualities. The film pieces together these futures with real-life elements in order to accentuate that the characters’ alternative times are pieced together. Noticing the flowers in the fantasy scene or the care the camera takes in documenting the characters’ interactions are signals to the spectator that these futures are ideals that, as easily as they are built, can be as quickly destroyed. With regard to *Un chant*, Richard Dyer writes that “the prison merely shows the appearance of actual existence; the chiaroscuro represents the reality of poetry, the consciously chosen and constructed realm of the transcendent and the beautiful, not the unconsciously imposed constructions and restrictions of normality" (66). In essence, the ability to demand and seek another time and place that is constructed by desires and is juxtaposed with the harsh light of an imprisoned reality. These desires are only noticeable by spectators who imbue the mise-en-scène with the characters' affect to which the spectator is privy. The film encourages the spectators, along with the characters to build these desired other times together.

Conclusion

Un chant d'amour and *La bocca del lupo* do not necessarily challenge time logics, but rather manipulate them narratively in order to come to terms with their new understanding of time. The Tunisian and the murderer are separated by a wall and yet they share smoke in order to dream together. The warder cannot follow through on his desires because of internalized homophobia, and yet he imagines sharing a flowery kiss. Enzo hopes for another time and life with Mary in which they live an idyllic life, and Mary shares she has her own hopes and dreams. Both of the films take elements from the past and present and piece them together in order to offer a new time, one that is inaccessible, but that already exists within the creative possibilities the films offer. This chapter has focused primarily on how, in the face of and in response to the trauma and violence of incarceration, a film may be a queer prison testimony and these films can offer new and unexpected ways of being in the world, in relation to time and space. Through these films, the spectator can imagine new horizons beyond prison, create something out of damage and pain, even by attempting to bring about an impossible utopia.

CHAPTER IV:

PRINCESA: THE TESTIMONIAL BODY AS ARCHIVE

Princesa (1994), explores Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque's life as a Brazilian transgender migrant sex worker in Italy and concludes with her arrest.[54] *Princesa* follows chronologically Fernanda's life that weaves together an autobiographical voice and a wry and pithy meta-commentator. Her bodily experience is central to the narration of her first sexual encounters, her physical transition, her work, and her spiral into alcohol and drug dependency. Thus, her body functions as a map that reflects her journey: her somatic experience is emphasized as she goes through trauma, abuse, oppression, and bodily modification in order to achieve her ideal self. Fernanda's articulation of her desired perfect self is a woman in love, flawless, and immortal. Her body is her own personal archive whose scars, bumps, breaks, flushes, wounds, and transformations are all the guide to read Fernanda's fleshy map and its experiences with others. Her body is the impetus through which the reader is able to recognize her and others' experience and to understand her endless attempts to become her desired self.

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[54] Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque, born on May 25th, 1963, was from northeastern Brazil in Alagoa Grande. She was raised in a small farming town in which she endured physical and emotional abuse from her classmates, due to her queerness. She had her first sexual experiences as a young child. She started to date men and dress in women's clothing and, when her brother-in-law discovered this, she fled her hometown. She then began to live a nomadic life moving from one major Brazilian city to the next, while beginning her transition and working as a sex worker. Due to Brazil's intense and violent police repression of transgender sex work at the time, Fernanda decided to flee to Europe. After working in Spain and finding similar repression, she eventually migrated to Milan, where she became addicted to alcohol and heroin. She worked up and down the peninsula and in a drug-induced rage in Rome during April of 1990, she attacked the landlord of her residence and was arrested and sent to the Roman prison, Rebibbia. There she was diagnosed as HIV positive and sentenced to six years in prison, four of them being in isolation. After her sentence, she was released on parole and even worked as a secretary for *Princesa*'s publishing house. She started to participate in sex work after her release and was deported back to Brazil. She then returned back to Italy where she died in May 2000, she died. The circumstances of her death have provoked controversy and confusion as many sources conflict about where and how she died, but the official cause of death is suicide.

This chapter will establish how the queer body is able to witness and be a witness in prison testimony. The focal point of this chapter is the body, which is Fernanda's continual source of obsessive desire and endless frustration as she battles with herself, her bodily image, society, and her marginalization. The body in *Princesa* is deployed as an unexpected method of witnessing as the body carries the scars and memories of Fernanda's life. I will therefore argue that it is possible to consider the body as being its own speaker, while intimately and endlessly inseparable from Fernanda's life. The narration becomes key to understanding how the body is utilized as more than just a physical body: when the narrator turns to the body, how the narration looks at the body, and what the body provokes in the story. In Fernanda's narration, the body *does* possess a kind of agency in negotiating between forced identities, desired experience, and lived realities. Establishing a bodily agency then leads to investigating how the body is a witness to its experiences (e.g., scarification, trauma buried in the body) and other people. The speaking body confronts the presumed link to proving something with fact through presence and documentation, also known as the archival drive. The body does so by bringing light to the experiential and phenomenological as it is related to a personal bodily memory. Ultimately, this chapter shows how the body in *Princesa* is a political and radical project that speaks individually with and for Fernanda and demonstrates the agency a body may have.

***Princesa*: Establishing a New Kind of Queer Prison Testimony**

Given that *Princesa* is a novel that recounts Fernanda's experience in the past while she is in prison, the text creates a storytelling mode that utilizes different temporalities. Fernanda describes her future idealized self that is always out of reach, a future temporality to which she has no access due to her imprisonment. Through this storytelling mode via the act of remembrance, *Princesa* succeeds in bringing together seemingly contradictory temporalities, with an idea of the future locked in the past. The narration oscillates between a focus on either pith and fantasy or autobiography. This oscillation is indicative of *Princesa*'s storytelling mode, which grapples with a future desire (therefore the voice is fanciful) and her imprisonment (which explains her life story and bitterness).[55] *Princesa* then locates the site of emphasizing this storytelling mode onto the body as a method of testimony which sews together the future within the past.

The foundational moment for storytelling on a body that remembers with and for her is Fernanda's escape from home. Her family had come to discover that she, at the time known to them as Fernando, was seeing a man. To avoid the consequences of this discovery, Fernanda absconds from her hometown to João Pessoa, a city on the most eastern point of Brazil. Upon arrival, a taxi driver picks her up and Fernanda looks at her reflection in the window. She then ruminates on the conflict between her bodily experience and the Fernanda she wants to become:

> Io sono lì, scisso, inoffensivo, mentre Fernanda scintilla e si racconta, puttana e studentessa. La guardo, mi guardo […] Fernando, sono spettatore di me stessa. Fernanda mi sorprende, inaspettata, liberata…Abita il mio corpo, inghiotte la mia

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[55] The novel's creation itself reflects the multitudes of temporalities, which is explained in detail later, as Fernanda shares her story in prison and, after her release, her story is elaborated into a book.

> coda, la biscia. Eccomi qui, maschioefemmina con un José-con-me e la voglia che ci riempie… (36).[56]
>
> [I am there, split, inoffensive, while Fernanda shimmers and she shares her story, whore and student. I look at her, I look at myself. Fernando, I'm a spectator of myself. Fernanda surprises me for she is unexpected and liberated […] She lives in my body, she swallows my tail, that water snake. Here I am, manandwoman with a José-with-me and a desire that fills us both"].[57]

This is the first occasion in which Fernanda reveals to the reader that she possesses an idealized self. The narration emphasizes the distance between Fernanda in the car seat and the one in the window: the window-Fernanda is an extravaganza that surprises real Fernanda and holds immense sway over her psyche.[58] At the same time, Fernanda reminds the reader of her body since it is the window-Fernanda that takes command and consumes her. Narrator Fernanda becomes a spectator of the entire situation, and leaves the reader to imagine the kind of desire that entrances her and her José. This window-Fernanda reveals herself through blushed skin, heavy breathing, and desirous glances that fill them both.

The text's creation is multi-layered and ambiguous since there is at least one other official co-producer of this text. The official co-author of the book, who is listed as an official author, is Maurizio Iannelli, and the unofficial author is Giovanni Tamponi. Tamponi became the first person to hear Fernanda's story and he visited Fernanda, who was sectioned off in prison with other transgender women. Iannelli, while also in prison, met Fernanda in Rebibbia through Tamponi, and Tamponi transcribed her story.[59] Iannelli would write questions in a notebook, which Tamponi would then deliver back and forth between the two. After their release on parole, Fernanda and Iannelli published her testimony based off their notebook exchanges.[60]

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[56] Fernanda refers to all of her clients as José, a nameless man similar to a "John" in English sex worker lexicon
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[57] All translations are my own.

[58] For convention I will use "window-Fernanda" or some similar hyphenated formula to reference to this scene and Fernanda's idealized self.

The second aspect of the text's ambiguity is its function as a queer prison testimony. In previous chapters, queer prison testimony concerned itself primarily with incarceration or testifying to incarceration. That is not the case for *Princesa*. After Fernanda is arrested, the narration concludes with a short paragraph in which *Princesa* compares the violent and loud deaths experienced by transgender women in Brazil to the quiet, insidious deaths she notices in Europe, "Qui si sparisce zitti zitti in sottovoce. Silenziosamente. Sole e disperate. Di aids o di eroina. Oppure dentro una cella, impiccate a un lavandino. Come Celma, che vorrei ricordare. Dormiva nella cella a fianco, dentro quest'altro inferno dove ora vivo e che ho deciso di non raccontare" (103). ["Here you disappear quietly and slowly, under your breath. Silently. Alone and desperate. From AIDS or from heroin. Or rather, in a cell, strung up from a sink. Like Celma, who I'd like to remember. She used to sleep in the cell next to mine, inside this other hell I now live in and that I've decided not to share"]. The last line is important because it is another part of her story that a reader may her to share and yet she defies those expectations and addresses the reader directly by stating that she will not tell us about her prison experience.[61] By doing so, she reaffirms her agency over what she has decided to reveal to the reader, denying the reader's curiosity about one of the darker "hells." *Princesa* does divulge some information about prison, like that Celma that died by suicide, but once again *Princesa* does not divulge any details about Celma

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[59] Maurizio Iannelli was imprisoned for his involvement with the Red Brigades, which was a left-wing terrorist group in Italy during the 1970s. Giovanni Tamponi was imprisoned for armed robbery.

[60] The original documents may be found on the website Princesa 20: http://www.princesa20.it/farias-de-albuquerque/. The website is the product of the meticulous archival work by Dr. Ugo Fracassa and Dr. Anna Proto Pisani.

At this point, then, it is useful to reconsider what may constitute a prison testimony. The corpus in this dissertation includes a graphic novel rewriting of an original transcribed testimony, two Holocaust testimonies written decades after their camp experience, a French film rooted in the director's prison experience, and an Italian documentary film that helps retell a love story established in prison. Already the idea of testimony may be complicated when considering the following: Who is it that is testifying, the original testifier? What is the medium? How based in fact is the testimony? Is it based solely on their prison experience? *Princesa*, then, we may add a further question: does the text directly engage with their imprisonment? *Princesa* does not focus on the experience of incarceration. Instead, the text is a queer prison testimony because it was developed during her incarceration. In other words, the text is inextricably linked to her experience in prison and functions as a productive relic from that time. As seen in previous chapters, the passing of time after incarceration provides the chance to reflect, and this is a necessary element in a queer prison testimony. *Princesa*, and indeed this dissertation project, demonstrate the possibility of constructing a more comprehensive and inclusive definition of a queer prison testimony: an elaboration, reworking, or direct engagement, often co-produced (that may come in any form from graphic novel to a film). The testimony considers events that led to a gender or sexual nonnormative subject's arrest (whose arrest does not need to be based on their identity). The testimony may explore their incarceration, and it may consider the aftermath of their imprisonment.

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[61] There is a question and answer section after the end of the text and before the glossary in which Iannelli seems to supplement this information gap with some of the questions he asks her about her experience in Rebibbia. However, this section is not a part of the narration.

The Testimonial Body: Vessel and Voice

Until now, I have suggested that *Princesa* regards the body as a map whose lines are scars and physical memories manifested through her body while she endeavors to embody her idealized self. *Princesa* does not only tell Fernanda's story but it also utilizes overtly authorial practices to make the body a significant literary presence and turns to Fernanda's somatic experiences.

To understand how *Princesa* utilizes a kind of personal voice, Susan Lanser's description of the personal voice is useful as she explains the voice of "narrators who are self-consciously telling their own histories" (*Fictions of Authority* 17). This personal voice is important to underline since Fernanda, while answering Iannelli's questions, decides what elements to include, exclude, or emphasize. *Princesa* continuously focuses on the body's real time reaction to the world around her in the narration (e.g., her pupils lighting up when she sees her ideal self in the car mirror). Inserting her bodily reaction to the world, and how it carries those interactions, promote the possibility of considering the body not as silent and passive with Fernanda but rather as something that experiences, lives, and shares its own story. Trans memoir studies have examined how trans creators "creatively exploit [...] platforms [...] in order to author and affirm their bodies and selves, in the process generating far-flung communities of support" (Horak 573). This is precisely what *Princesa* does. The narration takes advantage of both the meta-awareness that imprisoned Fernanda has as she recounts her story and of the ability to bring attention to whatever it is Fernanda desires the reader to understand. In other words, Fernanda is able to utilize the self-conscious aspect of her personal voice to insert, assert, author, and affirm her body within her story. As she reflects on her past during her narration, she is able to intervene and offer a new bodily agency she did not fully appreciate until she engaged in the act of utilizing her personal voice. In the ambiguity of the creative space, as a trans creator, Fernanda pays great attention to her body in authoring its agency and considering what her body experienced.

Princesa's writing complicates the implied author within the text. The narrator relies on the first-person singular to tell the story, much like Lucy and Seel in Chapter 2. The narrative voice has a point of view that is mostly Fernanda's. The narration is omniscient as a narrative voice intervenes in the text in meta-commentaries about certain emotions or feelings that character-Fernanda experiences. The implied narrator, however, is a combination of Fernanda, Tamponi, and Iannelli. It is impossible to determine where their voices coincide, since the original written product is based on their shared prison journal notes. Lanser writes that this is a "practice in which narrative authority is invested in a definable community and textually inscribed either through multiple, mutually authorizing voices or through a voice of a single individual who is manifestly authorized by a community" (*Fictions of Authority* 21). Therefore, Fernanda's narrative voice carries with it the hope to say the unsayable for multiple voices beyond Fernanda's: her body's, Iannelli's, and Tamponi's. Her body, within the narration, carries *her* memory and it is *her* reality. The reader can only see the scar that she had and has narrated. Fernanda is the one who can decide how to tell us how to read the scar on her skin. We must rely on her description of her scar or physical bodily language and give credibility to her narration.

Her archive is her body, it is her memory, and it is one of the voices for which *Princesa*'s narration speaks.

The omniscient narrator in the text is aware of Fernanda's transformation over time and makes sense of what happens to her. For example, the omniscient meta-commentary often appears as flippant or pithy and utilizes metaphoric language. When Fernanda decides to visit Brazil after spending time in Europe, the narration explains:

> Duemilacinquecento chilometri mi separavano da Cícera, Álvaro e Adelaide. Un sospiro lungo, una malinconia. Ricominciai a sognare il gran ritorno: Fernanda, femmina e fortunata. Nel corpo mi sentivo bene, rinata. Ma la fortuna era lontana: in Europa, ormai era chiaro. La via più lunga era la più breve. Per costruire il mio piccolo tesoro, per ritornare a casa. (71)
>
> [Two thousand five hundred kilometers separated me from Cícera, Álvaro, and Adelaide. A heavy sigh, a melancholy. I started dreaming about the great return again: Fernanda, female, and fortunate. I felt good in my body, reborn. But fortune was far away: by now it's clear it was in Europe. The longest road is the shortest. To build my small treasure, to go back home.]

The pointed narrative voice emerges at times like these of great emotion or upset, as Fernanda was very anxious about returning home. The narration turns to the idealized Fernanda, out of grasp. The metaphor of her small treasure is juxtaposed to her melancholy and reveals her invested hope. Often the narration is direct and informative about her autobiographical experiences. The omniscient voice tells us here how Fernanda felt and what she was imagining at that time.

It is through the act of establishing her story that Fernanda is able to determine her body's role as protagonist, partner, and witness. When Fernanda's lover, Heronaldo, is unfaithful and betrays her, the narration narrows in on her physical reaction, "Furono notti insonni, il mio cervello liquefatto. Mi tradisce, mi ha lasciata! Albeggiava appena e mi bruciai la gola, viscere e polmoni con una mistura di veleno per topi, varecchia e olio diesel. Vomitai schiuma bianca e sangue pesto, dal naso e dalla bocca […] Mi svegliai dopo due giorni, con i tubi nella gola e dentro le narici. Fernanda teneva il palcoscenico, ma lui non tornò" (45). [They were sleepless nights, my liquefied brain. He's cheating on me, he's left me! The dawn was just starting to show and my throat, guts, and lungs burned with a mixture of rat poison, algae, and diesel oil. I threw up white foam and dark blood out of my nose and mouth [...]. I woke up two days later with tubes in my throat and in my nose. Fernanda had the stage, but he didn't come back"]. Fernanda's rage manifests itself physically in this moment and she focuses on not only her rage but also how her body reacts with her. *Princesa*'s narration therefore authors the body and affirms it as a protagonist since it also experiences her rage. This approach affirms the body as a partner it establishes the body as a witness. The narration's ambiguous conclusion to Fernanda's love story with Heronaldo, given that it is not clear as to what "lui/he" refers to (*lui non tornò* [*he didn't come back*]), is significant because it harkens back to a moment in which she describes her imagined future. As Fernanda takes up the stage as her current self, Fernando is replaced. Therefore, "lui/he" might refer to Heronaldo, but ostensibly it refers to Fernando never coming back. The narration positions her body as the link between her emotional anguish and her future self. When she remembers her anger and rage, she includes its effect on her body. This kind of bodily connection and reflection is only possible after there has been time for Fernanda to reflect on her life and experience.

Trans bodies are sites that produce the questioning of the body as an absolute or foregone conclusion in its physical materiality. Trans subjects are able to modify their bodies or sense there is difference between how their body is and how they wish their body to be. In *Assuming a Body*, Gaylye Salamon contests "the notion that the materiality of the body is something to which we have unmediated access, something of which we can have epistemological certainty" (1). *Princesa* grapples. with this notion. In the text, Fernanda's body something more than just the material body that accompanies her. The narration complicates the body's function as it deploys the body in three ways (protagonist, partner, and secondary witness). Salamon writes that:

> The body is available to a subject only through a complex set of mental representations, of psychic images, designated alternately as the bodily ego or the bodily schema. This concept can be of use to genderqueer communities because it shows that the body of which one supposedly has a "felt sense" is not necessarily contiguous with the physical body as it is perceived from the outside, thus complicating the notion of the subject's relationship to the materiality of her own body. (4)

Princesa is Fernanda's attempt to bridge together her desired (felt) self, her material body, and the body that can do more than accompany Fernanda through life and be modified in the pursuit of her idealized self. Through her remembrance of her future hope, the narration comes to terms with the fact that her body actually has had more agency than Fernanda had realized; she recognizes the value in her body helping her remember and being a witness for herself and others.

Trans bodies have been historically pathologized, and it is crucial that the trans body must be recognized for what it may do beyond its imposed limitations and articulations. Therefore, I turn to crip theory, as considered in Robert McRuer's *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (2006) is useful, but not because it looks at material bodies or the physical limitations placed onto bodies. McRuer writes that "…in contrast to an able-bodied culture that holds out the promise of a substantive ideal, crip theory would resist delimiting the kinds of bodies and abilities that are acceptable or that will bring about change" (31). Crip theory examines the way we look at the body as an either/or; that it is either disabled or able. By deconstructing that binary connects with Salamon's advocacy for the trans body: the body does not need to be either felt/imagined or material; it can be both or more (e.g., a scar from body modification to realize the ideal self). Crip theory dismantles narratives built around and upon a "complete" and "healthy" body in order to open up possibilities of what the body itself may do:

> Critical queerness and severe disability are about collectively transforming—about cripping—the substantive, material uses to which queer/disabled existence has been put by a system of compulsory able-bodiedness, about insisting that such a system is never as good as it gets, and about imagining bodies and desires otherwise. (McRuer 32)

While queer theory, as McRuer acknowledges, also disrupts ideologies and sexualities, crip theory is useful as it picks apart narratives about how the body should work and what shape it takes, and it focuses on the possibilities that emerge when the body is not how it *seems* it should be. That is what I intend to investigate: how the body may do what is unexpected, such as being a body that tries to share its memories.

It may be potentially problematic to think of the trans body, given its long history of forced pathologization, in connection to a theory on disability that also itself has a history of pathologization. Crip theory, however, studies how body configurations may disrupt normalized gender identity, body functions and shapes, and assigned biological sex. At the same time crip theory demonstrates the possibilities of the body, and how the body crips the idea of the body's limit. That is, the trans body upturns the gender duality and fixity while also exploring how the body may be changed beyond the shape to which it has been assigned. *Princesa* exemplifies Fernanda's understanding of her body as disrupting gender pushing beyond previously imposed limitations. This reckoning emerges in a moving scene in which she appreciates her burgeoning physical developments after several operations and years of hormones:

> Una felicità addomesticata da infinita attesa. Come se nello specchio, per ventidue anni, non avessi visto altro che quelle line, quelle forme. Due mezze noci di cocco furono i miei primi seni, le prime rotondità che addolcirono il mio corpicino […]. Sono passati quindici anni ed ora, finalmente, eccomi qui che indosso fianchi esagerati, ampi e lenti come le anse del San Francisco. Mi danno passi al femminile, quelle curve. Mi stringono dolcemente in vita per arrivare senza fretta ai seni: due mele di stagione profumate. Un tocco finale, manca solo un tocco per finire. Sarà un amore certo che mi deciderà. Intanto così sto bene. Mi sentivo bene

> davanti a Dio e davanti agli uomini. Nella testa e nello specchio: Fernanda e transessuale. (59)
>
> [I felt a domesticated bliss after an eternal wait. It was as if for twenty-two years I had never seen anything else in the mirror besides these curves, these shapes. Two coconut halves were my first breasts, the first round shapes to sweeten up my tiny little body […]. Fifteen years have since passed and now, finally, here I am with outrageous hips, full and slow like the coves in San Francisco. Those curves, they give me a feminine walk. They surround me sweetly as they, slowly, without any rush, reach all the way to my breasts: two fragrant, seasonal apples. Just one final touch, I am only missing the final touch. It'll be an indisputable love that will be the deciding factor. But for now, I am doing so well. I feel great in front of God and in front of men, in my head, and in the mirror: Fernanda and trans].

Fernanda's explanation, rooted in her body, reveals the intersection between the body in its carnal limitations and its possibilities. She describes her juvenile attempts to modify her body by wearing coconut halves and that she is able to see her body in this shape (in this first noticing that her body has the possibility to change). She has therefore extended her body's shape from what she was told it should be, and what she thought it could not be. Fernanda instead reflects on how it is possible to make into reality the idealized self she imagines. Fernanda also recognizes here, however, that she does not feel complete and that she is fine for now; she understands that there are limits to her body. The ambiguity of her love expectations is crucial as well. Is it a love from a man? Or rather, is it a love for herself after she has finally embodied the self for which she has yearned? Fernanda's excitement and contentment illustrate that her body has been a part of her development, going through the same changes with her as she leaves behind coconuts for saline injections. Even just physically, we may understand that her body has developed and changed more than she had expected. Her body was assigned male at birth and yet she reshaped it to better reflect the idealized self.

As her body is constantly located in the in-between space of possibility and experience, she observes how she is able to push the limits of her body's boundaries. Logically, then, the body may be regarded as more than a reflexive and controllable object, since it is possible push the boundaries of the body. For example, while looking in the mirror, she recalls the emotional pain and longing she felt as a child, when she was limited to only coconuts to alter her body. As she considers herself in the mirror in that moment, she feels how she has grown and changed but she also admits that she still feels incomplete. In order to feel more complete, she senses that her body needs to go beyond what it is. With regard to extending the body's role, McRuer states that, "positioned to critique the finished products heteronormativity demands, queer/crip perspectives can help to keep our attention on disruptive, inappropriate, composing bodies—bodies that invoke the future horizon beyond straight composition" (155). *Princesa* considers that a queer body is one that also crips the idea of a body that is static and immutable. The body is dynamic as it stretches, retracts, remembers, and experiences changes along with the body's owner. In Fernanda's case, it internalizes the sensation of coconut hair against her skin and it bears the marks of hormonal injection sites and breast implant scars. As *Princesa*'s narration pauses and brings the reader along with Fernanda to notice her body, Fernanda recognizes herself and her body as shifting from object to subject. Laura Horak writes about trans Youtube vloggers that, "Youtube [...] brings trans individuals close to the viewer, both in seeming physical proximity and feelings of intimacy. Trans vloggers become subjects, rather than mere objects, of representation" ("Trans on Youtube" 576). So too does *Princesa* bring the reader in closer to her body, helping us follow the scars and sensations it feels with her. This becomes a powerful moment for Fernanda as she recognizes that her body, much like her, is not only an object but a subject. This is what the body is able to do on its own: its own experience is paired with Fernanda's while it expresses itself either wordlessly or through Fernanda's voice.

The narration gestures to the reader in moments when the pithy narrative voice emerges. The narration takes time to draw the reader's attention to the significance of that moment as it goes into great detail and explanation. These moments of high emotion are marked by metaphors and literary devices as the narration slows down and links the body to these scenes. For example, when seven-year-old Fernanda "seduces" an older man, as she describes it, and the man comes to her house and sexually abuses her, the text reads:

> Sudava, strattonava come un cavallo al tiro. Sfigurò in volto dall'eccitazione. Io, terrorizzato. Avrei voluto cacciarlo via, l'animale. Provai a tirare fuori un grido, uscirono solo lacrime. Mi immobilizzò sul letto grande. Tra le sue ginocchia divenni più piccolo di un uccello […] Non riesco a dimenticare: io che piango e lui che s'agita e s'affanna. Poi, sulle mie spalle, uno sputo caldo e appiccicoso. Ha finito, io atterrito. Bestiolina impaurita. (18-9)
>
> [He was sweating, yanking like a horse against the reins. His face was disformed from his excitement. I was terrorized. I would've liked to kick him out, that animal. I tried to let out a shout, only tears came out. He held me down on the big bed. I became nothing more than a small bird between his knees [...] I can't forget

> it: I was crying and he was thrusting and puffing. Then, on my back, a hot and sticky glob. He was done, I was terrified. A frightened little beast.]

The narration, especially in considering her youth, utilizes many animal-related metaphors. Here we can see and sense Fernanda's bodily experience and she relates it to feeling like a small bird in comparison to the man's powerful stature. Her bodily response is stitched to this experience. The omniscient narrator also emerges as the description switches from the past to the historical present. The narrator directly speaks to either Iannelli, Tamponi, or the reader, and says "I can't forget" and then once again relates the hot and sticky sensation to the body.

How *Princesa* understands the body is that it is more than the vessel for Fernanda's consciousness; the body attempts to express either what she cannot or its own version of events (e.g., a scar shrinking in size in comparison to Fernanda's memory of the wound). In this next scene Fernanda struggles with the difficulties of being queer in Brazil at the height of the AIDS crisis. This exemplifies how the body is associated with being accepted or rejected and manifests this discomfort:

> Un mal di testa, ora basta un mal di pancia e intorno a me s'alza una fortezza d'occhi storti. L'aids, la Maledetta, prende il gesso e segna i suoi confini – io fuori, loro dentro. Anche al ristorante. Lei tocca tutto, è presente dappertutto: un colpo di tosse in cucina e lei appare con cento sussurri alle mie spalle. Princesa non è più principessa al Roda Viva, è frutto avvelenato. (57)
>
> [A headache, all you need now is a stomachache and I can feel an increase in the side-eye glances. AIDS, that Bitch, she takes some chalk and outlines her borders – I'm outside and they're inside. Even in the restaurant. She touches everything,

> she's everywhere to be found: a burst of coughs in the kitchen and She shows up in a hundred whispers behind my back. Princesa is no longer the princess of Roda Viva, she's poisoned fruit.]

Fearing even a simple cough, Fernanda understands the judgement she would face as a sick or infected member of the population due to the grossly oversimplified equation of queer = AIDS = death. The disease that ravaged the world, not only the queer community, immediately delineates a refusal to permit her to join *loro*, or "them", the unmarginalized. She feels the whispers behind her back, without actually hearing them. Here she engages with her memory and the reader multisensorially: one is able to access similar moments in which one may have heard, some gossip about oneself. She also accesses the aural sensation of hearing these kinds of whispers. This memory of the moment she recognizes that she is on the *outside* derives from a bodily sensation: a stomachache, a headache, or a simple cough could betray her. Evoking this corporeal memory in particular, one that is linked to simple ailments but to a bigger societal fear, indicates the body's presence in this memory. The threat of AIDS will follow her body through her entire life. The body sees itself in relation to this insider/outsider relationship. Fernanda can feel the inside and outside on her body, and her body becomes a protagonist as a cough would cause her to retract in fear. Fernanda feels the chalk define the space in which she may live; it is a chalk that also defines the discourse around the shape of her body and identity. Sandhal, looking at queer and crip performances, suggests that, "they [queer and crip performance artists] ask audiences to consider the implicit lines of demarcation that both divide and unite communities. Like these artists, disability studies and queer theory can inhabit the same theoretical body, a crip-queer body that retains all of its contradictions" ("Queering the Crip or Cripping the Queer?" 51). The body is caught in between contradictions as it experiences without choice, and archives its experiences onto and within itself.

Fernanda's first sexual experience helps shed light on how the narration looks at how the body speaks in the text:

> [Paulo] Si avvicinò, sapevo cosa stava per accadere. Non scappai. Tirai fuori un po' di voce, una vocina: Lasciami, non voglio! Per me era ancora un gioco, io la vacca. Ma lui spinse forte e mi penetrò. Era la prima volta. Pancia e testa rivoltarono in supplizio. Lui indiavolò nel mio dolore. Brevissimamente, vidi l'acqua tingersi di rosso. Sbiancai dalla paura. Vomitai e piansi per il male, per il rimorso […] La febbre salì improvvisa, s'impossessò di me. Tremavo di paura, di vergogna […] Mi faceva male, ma lo desideravo. Semplice e inaccettabile, è questo il mio ricordo. (20)
>
> [He [Paulo] got closer, I knew what was about to happen. I didn't run off. I made a little bit of noise in a tiny voice: Let me go! I don't want to! It was still a game for me, me playing the heifer. But he pushed hard and he penetrated me. It was the first time. My stomach and head turned inside out begging it to stop. He got confused and angry by my pain. For a split-second I saw the water turn red and I turned pale from fear. I threw up and cried from the pain, from the remorse […] My temperature suddenly rose into a fever and it took me over. I was shaking out of fear, out of shame […] It hurt me but I craved it. This is my memory, simple and unacceptable.]

The memory of her first sexual encounter is fused with her body graphically and sensorially. She describes in detail the pain, the color, and the physically overpowering emotions. She carries this memory through her body and her body speaks in the language of blood loss and violence in this scene. Having surpassed her pain threshold during the penetration, and also having crossed an internalized line of a self-imposed prohibited sexual experience, the body breaks down and begins to try to manifest her confusion, her fear, her remorse, and her shame in participating in this sexual act. The body attempts to share all of these emotions in its own sensorial language through her bleeding, her vomiting, her shaking, and her fever as she eventually suffers from an internal hemorrhage. The body expresses the trauma in extreme measures in order to exhibit to Paulo Fernanda's internal crisis and her physical suffering. The memory is rooted in these physical sensations but it cannot supersede the threshold of not being able to speak. Narratively, then, Fernanda utilizes the body to help her remember the event and to also speak for the intensity of her pain and crisis that she cannot articulate in the narration.

In considering the perception of the body and bodily awareness, Merleau-Ponty writes that the "experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other, and which gives only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea, and not the experience of the body in reality" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 231). Fernanda described herself in the car window scene as sitting there, "scisso, inoffensivo", or "split, inoffensive", which is what Merleau-Ponty explains: the actual experience of the body is taken for granted in that moment and instead think of the body as just a material tool. Fernanda directs the reader to reflect on her body in this in-between of her body as an idea and as a tool. She roots her body idea, of Fernanda who is shimmering in the window, through the experienced body that is touched and that experiences physical reality. The body is the catalyst through which to recognize her experience and also come to terms with her intangible imagined self in the window.

In order to examine the bodily textual strategies that *Princesa* deploys, it is important to consider how the body is a witness for Fernanda and for itself. Here Donna McCormack's *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing* (2014) is also useful. Her text is the theoretical bridge between the body and witnessing, and recognizing the body's participation in the act of witnessing. Donna McCormack highlights this tension between the unsayable and the recounted experience that may be relayed to another person, "communication is not about expecting transparency; it is about working with what cannot be articulated in the form of words and what may be translated into narrative" (35). It is the body that carries the burden of the unarticulated and it is up to the reader or listener to recognize the ideas or experiences that are not completely expressible. The body, then, attempts to express that impossibility and this is legitimate and crucial in exploring the boundaries and gaps of communicating the incommunicable. McCormack states that her methodology "takes seriously the role of the body and its ability and desire to communicate what has not been or cannot be articulated in words" (3). McCormack emphasizes that there is an uncommunicable element to the body that the text attempts to manifest but either does not or is unable to do so. The narration's use of sensorial language emerges when Fernanda tries to make sense of her life, her dreams, her abuse, and her pleasure in the name of finally embodying the car-window-Fernanda.

Fernanda cannot completely articulate this pain of existing within a society that rejects her and that eventually imprisons her. The body is a witness for her, as is evident in the scene in which she takes hormones for the first time. She takes too much and, after suffering from an overdose, she recalls when her mother explained to her where children come from (i.e., her mother told Fernanda that babies are brought to parents on midnight planes) and she also remembers the scene in which a man she spent the night with who rejected her in the morning. Most importantly though, we see the emotional and physical toll of her past and her struggle to embody her future and idealized self:

> Anaciclin, ventotto pasticche a confezione. Non so aspettare e le bevo tutte insieme frammiste a un frullato di carote. Dentro il letto, occhi al soffitto, aspetto che ad albeggiare siano due seni di magia. Aspetto, come aspettavo l'aereo di mezzanotte. Josefa inviperiva: Ma tu sei maschio, l'aereo non ti porterà il figlioletto! Vomitai una macchia rossa, mi contorsi dal dolore. Fernando mi resisteva, si rivoltava. Durezza del suo corpo. Petto liscio e natiche quadrate. Un uomo. 'Era l'alcool, veadinho, io non bacio in bocca i froci!".[62] Io ti piegherò, Fernando. I miei José non baceranno un maschio. (42)
>
> [Anacyclin twenty-eight pills in a box. I don't know how to wait and I take all of them together with a carrot smoothie. In bed, eyes on the ceiling, I expect there to magically be two breasts by dawn. I wait, like I used to wait for the midnight plane. Josefa flung at me: But you're a boy, airplanes won't bring you a little baby! I threw up a red mess and contorted in pain. Fernando fought against me, he revolted: the hardness of his body, his smooth chest, and squared ass cheeks. A

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[62] The suffix -inho/a in Portuguese is a diminutive of either affection or insult and this case it carries the latter, meaning "little faggot".

> man. "It was the alcohol, veadinho, I don't kiss faggots on the mouth!" I will break you, Fernando. My Josés will not kiss a man].

While considering her future, she remembers the trauma of being denied her wish to have a child, and she recalls the passionate encounter with a man who reduces her to a *veadinho*. We see her contortions of pain as she struggles against Fernando. The physicality described in this passage identifies the body as a witness, and the vomiting and the pain are the physical toll it carries due to the overdose. It also bears witness for Fernanda by indicating just how much she has suffered while she contemplates painful moments: the contortions and physical sickness are embodiments of her internalized suffering. Paradoxically, Fernanda is attempting to create a physical and emotional space for herself through self-destruction: she vows to destroy all of Fernando's physical manifestations in order to be the Fernanda she desires.

The Body as Turn from the Archive

In this section, I examine how the body represents a queer turn from the archival drive. The archival drive, in through Derridean terms, is the need to document and leave a trace that can prove what has been done or said.[63] I suggest, though, that *Princesa* challenges this drive by utilizing the body as a personal archive. This personal archive does not need to be proven and it does not need to explain itself, therefore it destabilizes the necessity of access and perpetual presence.

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[63] "Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or secret which could separate (secernere), or partition, in an absolute manner. The archontic principle of the archive is also a principle of consignation, that is, of gathering together" (Derrida 2).

After having gone to Spain for work, Fernanda tracks down another transgender sex worker after whom she models her body. She claims that everyone confuses her with this other worker, Perla, and Fernanda eventually finds Perla in the hospital dying from AIDS:

> Perla di Rio, fu lei la mia modella, la definitiva. Princesa & Perla, le gemelle […] Io, la copia in cerca dell'originale. Tutte la conoscevano, mi riconoscevano […] L'ebbi davanti, mi guardò, non ci guardammo. La copia con l'originale. Era sdraiata su un lettino, dentro una stanzetta d'ospedale. Aids conclamato era la sentenza. Nei suoi occhi, fresca com'ero, non fui altro che una nostalgia. Una fotografia ingiallita, un tempo andato. Perla, lei moriva. Brillava, riflessa nei miei occhi, tutta la crudeltà del mio destino. Insopportabilmente. No, io non sono la copia, lei non è l'originale! Appiccicosa, solo a vederla, - guardandola che mi guardava – mi incollò addosso quella schifezza di futuro. La Malattia. Io no, la sua rovina non è la mia. Io mi strapperò via da questo destino, dalla profezia. (82)
> [Perla of Rio, she was my model, decidedly so. Princesa & Perla, the twins […] A copy of the original. Everyone knows her and they recognized me […] I had her in front of me, she looked at me and we looked at each other. The copy and the original. She was laid out on a cot in a tiny hospital room. Full-blown AIDS was her sentence. In her eyes, she was as fresh as I was, but I was just there for her nostalgia. A yellowed photograph, a time gone by. Perla, she was dying. She shone in the reflection of my eyes, all of my destiny's cruelty. Intolerable. No, I'm not the copy and she's not the original! Clinging, just seeing her – looking at her while she was looking at me – glued all of the awfulness of my future to me.

> The Sickness. Not me, her ruin is not mine. I'll tear myself away from this destiny, from this prophecy.]

Here, Fernanda is a secondary witness for Perla, and the next day Perla overdoses from heroin to avoid her prolonged suffering; Fernanda speaks for Perla as a proxy. The body itself is its own witness. Fernanda's body bears witness for Perla because it was modified to be a copy of Perla (i.e., they are twins, as Fernanda believed Perla to be a close approximation of window-Fernanda). Fernanda's body carries the shape of Perla and her memory (through Fernanda).

Princesa considers the body like a book: it attempts to explain via the skin her personal history. How she presents these stories muddles the need for proof of what she says or experiences.[64] By not offering fact, but instead her own truth and experience, *Princesa* performs what I call a queer turn from the archive. In order to define this and to understand better its possible ramifications of queerly turning from the archive, I will first discuss what is the archival drive, then consider what is a queer archive, and then examine how it is that *Princesa*'s body as a witness challenges the archival drive overall. The archival turn is the inquiry into the urge to build traditional archives and how they are collected by historians, colonizers, libraries, museums, and other purported bastions of knowledge collection agencies. One of the most referenced texts that investigate the archival drive is Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995), which connects the need to archive to the three Freudian drives of death, aggression, and destruction. Derrida connects the archival drive to the death drive as it encourages perpetuity after death and so it “always operates in silence, it never leaves any archives of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were truth in the very motivation of its most proper moment. It works to *destroy the archive: on the condition of effacing* but also *with a view to effacing* its own ‘proper’ traces—which consequently cannot properly be called ‘proper’” (10). Derrida explains that when an archive is built, that is when a collection or something is put together, it automatically has to exclude what cannot or is not included in the archive.

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[64] "This is another way of saying that the archive, as printing, writing, prosthesis, or hypomnesic technique in general is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content of the past which would exist in any case, such as, without the archive, one still believes it was or will have been. No, the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event" (Derrida 17).

I contend that *Princesa* turns away from the archival drive by emphasizing the untraceable or unprovable through its focus on the sensorial bodily language, which is inherently unarchivable. Generally speaking, a queer archive has been conceived as either an attempt to create space within archives for queer material (e.g., protest pamphlets, glitter from a gay pride rally), a challenging practical task since the material is often ephemeral in nature. A queer archive has also been conceptualized as a practice, immaterial, or as a physical mode of archive, “ both material and immaterial, at once incorporating objects that might not be considered archival, and at the same time, resisting documentation because sex and feelings are too personal or ephemeral to leave records” (Cvetkovich 244). The latter aspect of the queer archive has been studied and considered intensely by queer theorists, who demonstrate that the resistance to established and defined modes of archiving allows for a destabilizing of these very notions. Cvetkovich, in her foundational text *An Archive of Feelings* (2003), argues for reflecting on what is and is not allowed into the archive: is it necessary for there to be a record for it to be considered “archivable”? Cvetkovich has offered a line of inquiry which emphasizes on that which has not been, or may not be allowed into an archive; this mode is known as the archival turn, confronting the archival drive and how archives are created.

While many theorists understand the queer archive as fleeting and difficult to collect materials for, *Princesa* offers instead a body that has been touched and affected that is also a literal register of memories and modifications. The body is the witness for Fernanda, just as much as it witnesses its own pain. When Fernanda is in a relationship with a jobless man named Edson, she discovers that he is unfaithful to her with a man and she remembers that:

> Lo vidi coi miei occhi. Edson stava con un frocio sulla spiaggia. Prendevano il sole, i carini. Gli stronzi. Avevo dato il cuore e i soldi ad un finocchio. Lo aspettai a casa, lui arrivò che mi faceva schifo. Ubriaca di whisky litigai d'urla e unghie in faccia. Ruppi la bottiglia per sfregiarlo ma mi mancò il coraggio. Affondai il vetro nel mio braccio. Una cicatrice per sempre. Un taglio nella carne per una persona che poteva anche vedermi spaccata in due in mezzo a una strada e non avrebbe fatto nulla per salvarmi. (55)
>
> [I saw it with my own eyes. Edson was with a faggot on the beach. They were soaking in some son, the little cuties. Those assholes. I had given my heart and money to a homo. I waited for him at home and when he got there, I was disgusted by him. I was drunk off of whiskey and I fought him with shouts and fingernails in his face. I broke a bottle to carve up his face but I didn't have the courage to do it. I plunged my arm into the window, a scar forever. It is a cut in

> my flesh. A cut that was for a person who could have seen me torn in two in the middle of the street and would have done nothing to save me.]

Fernanda, in her heightened state of emotion, wounds herself as she cannot contain her anger and disgust. The wounds left on her body demonstrate this experience, much like how a pen stroke leaves behind a letter or mark. Her body is her own personal archive and that wound, for her, is a memory of this moment.

The body is able to attempt to archive the ephemeral as Fernanda shares her story. The ephemeral is the shape and feel of her scar, the full sense of her wound, what it was like in that moment. The crux of the crisis, then, is how far the reader is able to approximate Fernanda's somatic experience through her narration. Lanser points at this crisis and points out that the personal voice's "status is dependent on a reader's response not only to the narrator's acts but to the character's actions, just as the authority of the representation is dependent in turn on the successful construction of a credible voice" (*Fictions of Authority* 19). We must rely on Fernanda and assign *Princesa* a level of credibility despite the fact that she has attempted to archive the unarchivable. The personal voice, then, is not how Fernanda is able to take advantage of the freedom of establishing her personal story and to grasp the ungraspable.

The point of contention that many queer archive theorists have indicated is the ephemerality of a queer archive. Queer archivist theorists have considered personal collections as a queer archive, which can include piles of miscellaneous objects. For example, Martin Manalansan IV studied a household of six queer immigrants and he suggests that "mess, clutter and muddled entanglements are the 'stuff' of queerness, historical memory, aberrant desires and the archive. Archives, therefore, are constituted by these atmosphere states of material and affective disarray and the narratives spun from them." ("The 'Stuff' of Archives 94-5). Manalansan finds that the subjects hoard items like paper and plates that have affective value only to the subjects. This is an ephemeral connection as it lasts only for as long as the subjects keeps the objects. Ephemerality is a productive point of entry in considering how Fernanda's personal body archive disrupts any assumption that there must have been a specific object, document, or some tangible link to an actual archive. An ephemeron could be considered Fernanda shoving her arm through glass and her archive is the scar: we must rely on her account that the scar comes from this incident. José Muñoz, one of the first academics to use concept of ephemeron in this manner, argues for creating and promoting space in academic discourse for the unprovable, "Central to performance scholarship is a queer impulse that intends to discuss an object whose ontology, in its ability to 'count' as proper 'proof' is profoundly queer" ("Ephemera as Evidence" 6). Ephemera function as a foil to the archival drive as they are elusive and have not been as included in academic discourse. In *Cruising Utopia*, Muñoz gives examples of a wide range of ephemera, including a sexual encounter, a gay liberation rally, an emotion, a moment, a touch, a sensation:

> Ephemeral evidence is rarely obvious because it is needed to stand against the harsh lights of mainstream visibility and the potential tyranny of the fact. Ephemera are the remains that are often embedded in queer acts, in both stories we tell one another and communicative physical gestures such as the cool look of a street cruise, a lingering handshake between recent acquaintances, or the mannish strut of a particularly confident woman (65).

What this means, then, is how ephemera may represent what was but is not, what could have been, what could be, and what is but remains unproven. It is this activation of corporeal, imaginary, sensorial, and emotive reaching out to the other that causes me to circle around the idea of ephemera. How is it, when someone recounts a caress, that another may approximate that sensation? And yet that specific caress can never be accessed. The act of attempting to share how the body interacts in the world is the narrator's approximation of repeating the event.

Returning to the first scene of the taxi driver, Fernanda describes the beginning of her encounter:

> Dio solo sa quanto lo desideravo. Sì lo voglio – confermai. Entrai nell'auto senza esitazione, senza un indirizzo dove andare […] Lasciai le mie paure sul marciapiede, fuori. Dentro, nell'abitacolo, soltanto io e lui. Denti bianchi e odore di benzina. Le sue mani stringono il volante […] Pupille chiare, fiori alle finestre: eccoli qui i suoi occhi. Un palcoscenico. Fernanda, la mia nuova libertà, come una prima attrice occupa la scena […] Vuota il sacco, piange, racconta tutto. Anche il piacer d'esser presa, non avevo compiuto dieci anni; penetrata… (36)
> [Only God knows how much I wanted it. Yes, I do – I confirmed. I got into the car without a single hesitation, without any address to go to […] I left my fears on the sidewalk, outside. Inside the passenger seat, just me and him. White teeth and the smell of gas. His hands tighten on the steering wheel […] Light pupils, flowers on the windows: here are her eyes. A stage. Fernanda, my new freedom, just like a leading lady taking up the scene […] She lets it all out, she cries, she

> tells the taxi driver everything. Even the pleasure of being taken, I wasn't even ten; penetrated…]

Fernanda's body is fused to her memory of finally visualizing the Fernanda she desires to be: she is almost possessed by her desire to be this Fernanda, to bring her to life. She spectates her body and the physical intoxication the car-window-Fernanda provokes in the taxi driver and in herself. She invokes her body by citing her eyes, the visual consumption of her own body by her and by the José. Her body is full of excitement as she knows she will be taken by him, like she was taken at a young age. Fernanda uses her body to attempt to share with the reader her emotional state of being, but the reader may only guess as to what she is feeling and use her description of her bodily reaction as our "proof". This kind of bodily memory is the counterreaction to what Muñoz calls the "tyranny of the fact": it cannot and does not rely on materials that may be studied but it is nestled in the personal bodily archive. Muñoz describes his consideration of proof-lacking-of-fact as a methodology that, "is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things" (*Ephemera as Evidence* 10). This resistance to proof is where queer theorists have engaged with the difference between queer archive and the archival drive, but Muñoz creates the possibility of turning *away* from the archive in a act of resistance to supplying truth.

Fernanda's credited co-writer for *Princesa*, Maurizio Iannelli, also admits in the preface that the text is not completely reliable and not completely based in truth or fidelity to the original exchanges between Fernanda and Tamponi in prison. In speaking on how he communicated in prison. Iannelli acknowledges that they created a new language that was inaccessible to anyone else besides the three of them:

> Per comunicare con Fernanda partecipai e contribuii al farsi della “nuova lingua”. Alla variazione, scritta e orale, che risultò dalla chimica delle nostre lingue materne […] Nata solo per noi, la scrittura originale è state successivamente manipolata per renderla accessibile ad un pubblico più ampio. Ciononndimeno, mani e provenienze culturali diverse sono forse rintracciabili anche nella sua stesura ultima. (2)
>
> [In order to communicate with Fernanda, I participated in and contributed to creating a “new language” that resulted in an oral and written version between the chemistry of our mother tongues [...] Born just for us, the original writing was later manipulated to render it accessible to a wider audience. Nevertheless, different hands and origins are perhaps retraceable even in the final draft.]

Iannelli recognizes the political origins of their first writings. Their written exchanges were realized from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to reach out to one another in a compassionate and human way that is often absent in prison. After recognizing the value and worth of their shared journals, Iannelli had to modify their writing into a text that would be legible to others. By doing so Iannelli also complicates the connection between experience and author, since it is not possible to read the personal voice in the text as unmediated. This does not challenge verisimilitude of the text but brings awareness of the text’s radical approach.

Iannelli’s reflection on the political project of *Princesa* is also the foundation for what else the text attempts to realize through challenging the archive. Fernanda’s narration is not only personal but it is collective. The narration is collective as it focuses not only on Fernanda’s experience but it also makes the effort to include her body’s response. Another intentional communal aspect of *Princesa* is what Lanser considers a singular communal narrative voice, “one narrator speaks for a collective” which is a “phenomenon of marginal or suppressed communities” (21). *Princesa* not only speaks for the body and her three-way prison exchange, but it also subsumes the political role of speaking for her fellow trans sex workers. In one example, Fernanda, after having been beaten in the street, laments the pain and body disfigurement she experiences:

> Dovetti aspettare il lunedì per sentire il dott. Vinicius constatare che la ferita, nel frattempo, si era infettata. Asportò la protesi e il mio petto divenne un sorriso senza denti. Guardarmi nello specchio divenne una fatica, quella cicatrice contorceva i miei pensieri […] Ma fu Severina che mi rialzò il morale. Mi riportò a galla con una seconda applicazione di silicone ai fianchi: Pagherai quando sarai guarita, Princesa. Ripresi fiato. Due belle natiche appaiate al fondo schiena mi consolarono dello sparigliamento al seno. Io lo sapevo, quel solco morbido che le unisce e le divide attira i miei José più dei due rigonfiamenti al petto. (63)
>
> [I had to wait until Monday to hear from Dr. Vinicius declare that the wound, in the meantime has gotten infected. He took out the implant and my chest turned into a smile without teeth. Looking at myself in the mirror became a struggle, that scar distorted my thoughts […] Severina was the one who raised my morale. She helped me keep my head above water with a second silicone injection in my hips: You can pay for this after you’re all healed, Princesa. I got my footing back. I was consoled from my broken tit by two beautiful ass cheeks that appeared on my lower back. I knew it – that soft crack that unites my cheeks would attract my

> Josés more than two overfilled tits on my chest. The ass cheeks are the real temptation!]

In this moment of difficulty, Fernanda recalls her fellow trans sex workers who were also wounded and affected negatively by interpersonal and institutional violence. *Princesa* uses her two visits to Dr. Vinicius as a parenthesis (the first a consultation and the second a procedure) and inserts Fernanda's remembering nine trans women who died. The narration reflects that, "Non era poco, a Rio ci ammazzavano come se fossimo galline. Tre o quattro alla settimana" (65). ["It wasn't little, they killed us in Rio like we were chickens. Three or four a week"]. She recalls how trans sex workers died from AIDS or violence in that time period, for example: "Brenda, la bella Brenda. Un'artista. Tutta plastica e silicone, una bellezza molto femminile [...] Il figlio di un giudice, un minorenne, le rifilò due coltellate al collo. Per gelosia, disse al processo [...] Due mesi dopo il ragazzino, l'assassino, girava libero per rua Augusto Severo. Nessuno protestò..." (64). ["Brenda, the beautiful Brenda. An artist. All plastic and silicone, a very feminine beauty [...] The son of a judge, a minor, stabbed her twice in the neck. Out of jealousy, he said at the trial [...] Two months later the guy, the murderer, was out and about on Rua Augusto Severo. No one protested..."]. This memory, and others of the trans workers, are tied together with her own violence she experienced; the scar on her body is a personal and tangible memory of this time. Her chest and her body modifications, provided by Dr. Vinicius, are what help her to testify to her experiences: her breast reconstruction is temporally sutured to this experience.

Fernanda utilizing her scars in memory of her trans friends and fellow sex workers challenges the archival drive. Since the reader cannot see her scar, does not know these people; her body is the only proof. The project is therefore ephemeral in nature but political in practice as she links her body to memories of others (like Perla). In one moment of the narration she pauses to reflect and remember all of the violence that trans sex workers experienced or died to while she was in Brazil. She interrupts her account of a man she was sleeping with and suddenly lists several trans sex workers in informal obituaries as she explains what they did in life and how they died (84-5). She begins talking about them after she remembers one died and who had slept with Fernanda's client. This memorial aside carries the memory of those who died violently at the hands of the police, jealous lovers, or sickness.[65] This moment is political and communal insomuch that it turns from the archive. This aside interrupts Fernanda discussing her sexual relationship with a man who is obsessed with her and their physical relationship. Here, in remembering the bodily encounter with the man, the narration positions the body as the catalyst for provoking the memories of those who died. As she recalls her sexual relationship with her client, her body activates her memories of their violent deaths. The reader cannot access nor easily prove these people's existence or know how they died and therefore her body is our only connection to them. *Princesa* turns away from the archival drive since the only way we can access these people is through Fernanda's memory.

Fernanda's narration, then, becomes a communal narrative carried by a trans body that remembers trans women. When she reflects on her body modification or bodily encounters, often her memories of other events or traumas are often tied to them. In so doing her body is placed into the role of witnessing her modifications. It also witnesses for those who have died or that she remembers through the body's keloidal lines and the physical sensations that provoke her memory. Fernanda's narration is communal and, in the process of sharing her own story, "the text becomes a narrative by, for, and about (wronged)" trans "women that generates a movement from experience to theory to political acts. Communal understanding, emerging from the recognition of mutual oppression as a basis for analysis and change, reveals the insufficiency of individual solutions" (Lanser 233). In moments when her bodily memory causes her to interrupt her narration and remember her trans community, Fernanda's own body becomes a communal witness for them.

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[65] The text does also remember other trans women who died, like Fernanda's cellmate.

Fernanda suffers alongside her community as a marginalized person and her body is another example of oppression that is manifesting itself in an individual being but that is collectively shared. She alleviates her oppression through substance abuse, "Mi striscio gli occhi coi colori, impasto le labbra di rossetto. Non è più il bel rituale, profumo il corpo, lo porto alla svendita finale. Sputo sperma, mi ungo il culo. Sniffo eroina, non ho più futuro. L'Europa è spenta, io brancolo nel buio. Non so più che voglio, perché lo faccio. Non fa più giorno, non so più chi sono. Perla, Dio mio che destino, non me la stacco più di dosso" (101). ["I line my eyes with colors and I slap lipstick on my lips. It is no longer that nice ritual, I put perfume on my body and I bring it to the clearance sale. I spit out semen, I lube up my ass. I snort heroin, I no longer have a future. Europe is closed off to me, I fumble along its borders. I no longer know what I want, why I am doing it. I have lost track of the days, I no longer know who I am. Perla, my God what a destiny, I cannot get rid of it"]. How she treats her body is emblematic of the trans community that Fernanda has experienced first-hand. This recognition is activated in her narration of her body's interaction with the world: as she applies make-up, ingests alcohol and drugs, participates in sex work, she is reminded of Perla. Perla is a part of her community memory and links Fernanda's body to the community. Fernanda is reminded of Perla by her own body and the memory of Perla does not allow Fernanda to forget their eventual shared experience: they both are HIV positive and both die by suicide.

Fernanda's optimism is lost as she comes to terms with the impossibility of becoming that Fernanda-in-the-window. That is why she numbs herself, throws herself into her work, and attempts to disassociate from her destiny. The narration uses her body to show the weight of straddling this in-between space of being pre-assigned a tragic death and the impossibility of ever fully realizing that desired Fernanda. Fernanda, in her attempt to realize the archival drive to bring forth her imagined self, is unwittingly forced to turn from the archive, queerly, as she will never succeed in completely articulating that idealized, untouchable, elusive self. And thus, the body is as a reminder to the plurality of voices while also bearing the weight of Fernanda's past hope for the future.

Conclusion

The body, then, is not only a protagonist (a material being that can be manipulated), the partner (the vessel that accompanies the self), and the witness (the tool used to carry inaccessible memories of the self), but it is also the singular tool used to voice the many. *Princesa* creates the narrative space in which the body undertakes the role of speaking the unspeakable. The narration turns to the body as a confluence of many operations given that with its sensorial language it is able to attempt to manifest all of its burdens. The body is then a radical project in *Princesa* because it is the vessel that allows Fernando to become Fernanda and yearn for the car-window-Fernanda. The body reminds Fernanda of what she forgets or attempts to ignore. It is the body that links Fernanda to her community, although she resents it or is afraid of it. Fernanda's body carries with it her hopes, her pains, her community, a different voice, and only she is able to access all of this as her body, and by extension her archive, is intangible on the pages of the text. Without the body we would not be able to access Fernanda's personal archive, without the body we would not be able to respond to the queer body's need to demonstrate its own agency in remembering what has been done, what is lost, what could be, and what could have been.

CONCLUSION

To conclude *Unbreaking Bonds*, I would like to turn to *C'è un soffio di vita soltanto* (2021) [*There's Only One Breath of Life*], a recent documentary about Lucy, whose testimony I analyze in Chapter 2. The title is inspired by a poem that Lucy wrote before she was sent to Dachau. There are many differences between this documentary, directed by Matteo Botrugno and Daniele Coluccini, and Gabriella Romano's *Essere Lucy*: the production quality, the attention garnered, and most importantly, the openness with which Lucy bears witness in the documentary. For example, in the documentary, Lucy reveals her last name, something she refused to do in both the documentary and the memoir she co-wrote with Romano. She even goes into great detail about the treatment of homosexuals at Dachau. Despite the differences, one commonality remains: her story is once again mediated through multiple voices. Lucy, at age ninety-six, once again reveals her story, this time to the two directors, and the two re-present her story.[66] This signals something crucial about queer prison testimonies that I have highlighted in my dissertation: they are a perpetual act of undoing the self to understand the other; and that the Event to which they bear witness is not imprisonment but rather imprisonment is the catalyst that allows them to bear witness to the Event of being queer.

Queer prison testimonies are a self-constitutive act in which these texts attempt to recuperate what the imprisoned subject lost when arrested: their agency, their coming out, and time on the outside. Agency emerges in the testimonial power of sharing the queer prisoner's story, the means to come out on the witness' own terms, and the potentiality to create something the witness did not have before. While most of the testimonies of this dissertation shares many of the conventions of testimony (e.g., the urge to bear witness, the anxiety about being able to bear complete witness, speaking for those who may not speak), with non-queer testimonies, nonetheless, a queer voice presents another little-studied layer to witnessing: how the texts' queerness destabilizes traditional testimonial narratives.

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[66] The story focuses on her daily life and then her return to Dachau for the 75th anniversary of its liberation. The film has reached much success and attention in Italy. It has been screened at many film festivals, broadcasted on Italian television, the directors and Lucy have been interviewed on television programs, and received many positive reviews.

The primary witnesses of these queer prison testimonies are able to re-claim a sense of their self. The subjects succeed in doing so as they create and mediate a constructed self that is interpreted on the page or screen. All the testimonies in this dissertation reflect an understanding that, from the inception of the imprisoned subjects' testimony, the subjects' lives, thoughts, and experiences are mediated: an interview that inspired a graphic novel, a conversation elaborated into a book, a book co-constructed with an activist, a dramatization of a couple's romantic history, a filmic representation rooted in one's prison experience, and a book that began as a written conversation passed through bar cells (and even a documentary about a whistleblower). The books and films I have considered in this dissertation all convey an awareness that the testimony is filtered through another voice in some way. The awareness of this filtering is part of what allows the queer prison subjects to recreate themselves on their own terms, avoiding full transparency and yet promoting a kind of openness that works for them and that they control.

This project has considered the kind of unexpected and unusual shapes and strategies that queer prison testimonies take. As Donna McCormack writes in *Queer Postcolonial Narratives and the Ethics of Witnessing*, "because traumatic events cannot be fully or easily assimilated in the experiential moment, then memory – the persistent act of remembering – cannot be reduced to linear, coherent narrative structures" (10). The act of queer witnessing, then, ends up taking a divergent path that is unexpected in witnessing, such as insisting on or allowing a mediation that obfuscates. Furthermore, McCormack notes that that queer testimony is inherently embodied: "instead of binding the trauma survivor's act of witnessing to language and narrative, I suggest that embodied forms of witnessing are prevalent in many queer postcolonial narratives and that these witnessing events open up new understandings of how people may live with traumatic experiences, pasts, and awakenings" (21). In this light, my project has also explored the ways in which witnesses and those who listen to and create with them have given birth to unusual forms and expanded the horizons of how one can bear witness.

In addition, queer prison testimonies demonstrate that the queer subject is implicitly aware of the need to have a community in order to speak. Having been silenced and having experienced trauma and violence at the hands of the state, the queer prison subject refuses the alienation that prison has forced on them. The queer prison testimony insists on community building response to the silence and silencing the queer subject has undergone. Community building through witnessing is a necessary element of queer prison testimony. McCormack recognizes that queer witnessing is a communal event, and she focuses on the body, "Bearing witness is a communally queer event that involves a repeated undoing of selves with others. No one stays intact as the stories unfold and yet the capacity to hear the body makes such painful undoings potentially bearable" (35). In addition, one could add that the one who receives the testimony (i.e. a secondary witness like Gabriella Romano with Lucy) is a willing listener who takes on the responsibility for translating the encounter with the primary witness; this also implicates the viewer or reader.

What I suggest, however, is that re-elaborating the encounter between the primary and secondary witness is not a passive gesture that memorializes the experience. The queer prison testimony creates a map that allows the public to trace this encounter and to relive this experience in a communal sense. The responsibility that the secondary witness takes on is shared with and placed onto the public that reads or views these queer prison testimonies. This action is a perpetuating cycle of encountering the queer ex-con's body and their relationship to the world and also the relationship the queer subject has with their secondary witness. As readers or viewers, one takes on a role of a tertiary witness that is just as potentially powerful in this process as the first encounter.

In addition to its contribution to Queer Studies, this dissertation provides additional contexts for studying the testimonial traditions elaborated in the wake of the European Holocaust and the Latin American *testimonio*. John Beverly notes that "*testimonio*-like texts have existed for a long time at the margin of literature, representing in particular those subjects—the child, the 'native', the woman, the insane, the criminal, the proletarian—excluded from authorized representation when it was a question of speaking and writing for themselves ("The Margin at the Center" 25). While the Latin American genre of *testimonio*, often foregrounds the marginalized, as John Beverly points out, the queer voice is not often included. This is also true for the testimonies produced after the European-Holocaust context. There needs to be a new ethics of understanding and including how queerness witnesses, all, forms, and manipulations of testimony. While the queer voice may fall into the category of testimonial literature in general, it can be considered particularly close to the *testimonio* genre due to its exclusion "from authorized representation" and its insistence on its ability to speak back to hegemonic forces. The definition of *testimonio*, in John Beverly's words, is a chance to give voice to those who have been denied the possibility of telling their story. Beverly writes that:

> In a related way, *testimonio* implies a challenge to the loss of authority of orality in the context of processes of cultural modernization that privilege literacy and literature as norms of expression. Or, alternatively, it represents the entry into literature of persons who would normally, in those societies where literature is a form of class privilege, be excluded from direct literary expression. (29)

This "entry into literature" from the margins has implications for the queer voices that emerge in the prison testimonies that I have examined. Nonetheless, the queer voice is often not considered as part of the *testimonio* corpus in Latin America, in the same way that queer voices are very rarely included in the corpus of Holocaust witnessing in Europe.

Finally, my dissertation makes the case for the necessity of non-national consideration of queer prison testimony. In examining texts from a variety of geographical and historical contexts in Europe and the Americas. I have demonstrated the striking commonalities in disparate forms of queer witnessing. My project participates in the endeavor to contextualize queerness within national (un)belonging, to enter a global conversation on queerness, and to develop a productive and ethical approach to queer witnessing.

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