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**Challenging Women's Vulnerability:
Feminist Representations of Rape in Sexto Sentido,
a Nicaraguan Soap Opera for Social Change**

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List of Acronyms

FSLN	Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional
GGV	Gendered Grammar of Violence
GGVA	Gendered Grammar of Violence Analysis
LGBT	Lesbian-Gay-Bisex-Trans
MAM	Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres
NA	Narrative Analysis
NWAV	Network of Women Against Violence
WEWD	We are Equal We are Different

Abstract

This paper considers explanations of rape related to perceptions of women's vulnerability and of men's violence and strength as problematic, because of the limitations they impose on women's agency. Under the framework of post-structuralist feminist politics of rape and politics of representation, it analyses how to bring about change, in relation to these beliefs, at the level of discourses. The principal justification to focus on the production of discourses rests on the argument that ideas of women's vulnerability and men's strength participate in constructing discourses that legitimise and normalise rape. These reflections are then used to look at the experience of "Sexto Sentido," a Nicaraguan feminist telenovela, produced to incite stimulating critical reflection and debate on different oppressive relations of power. More specifically, this study discursively analyses how this soap opera challenges dominant discourses on masculinity, femininity and rape in Nicaragua. Overall, the paper critically discusses the potentialities and challenges of fostering social change through discourses.

Keywords

Rape, discourses, power, feminist politics, politics of representation, femininity, masculinity, intersectionality.

1 Introduction

Two years ago, I spent some months as an activist in a youth feminist collective in Milan. I remember that when we started organising activities to prepare a demonstration for the international day for the elimination of violence against women, we met several times to discuss our understandings of rape. Contrary to my expectations, this dialogue made me feel uncomfortable; most of the activists were arguing that women, not possessing a penis and strong muscles, are always potential rape victims. Their assumption of an alleged vulnerability intrinsic to women that limits women's agency made me develop an increasing sense of impotence. Thus, I was wondering: is it feminism?

When I came to the Institute of Social Studies, I decided that this was a good opportunity to further reflect on rape. To initiate this reflection, I reviewed feminist politics of rape in order to understand which feminist perspective could better address the above considerations. During the research process I identified three main perspectives, which will be widely explained in Chapter 2. (1) The liberal view, which locates the cause of rape in men's anatomy and recommends law enforcement to prevent rape (Brownmiller, 1975). I think that this approach was most similar to the one adopted by the collective in Milan. (2) The revolutionary stream states that unequal relations of power, and not biology, are at the roots of rape, and so advocates for constructing alliances among different oppressed groups in an effort to construct an emancipatory revolution (Edwards, 1979). The role of power relations attracted me to this type of approach; however it does not satisfy my interest in contesting women's vulnerability. (3) The post-structuralist perspective theorises the existence of sexist discourses¹ which enable rape through the construction of models of femininity and masculinity². This represents women as inherently vulnerable and man as always strong, necessitating a call for increasing diversity in discourses (Marcus, 1992). Since this approach directly critiques ideas of women's vulnerability, I decided to adopt this position in my investigation.

The central point of the post-structuralist approach is that discourses which enable rape are constructed around a "gendered grammar of violence" (GGV), that see women as "subjects of fear" and "objects of violence" and men as "subjects of violence" and "objects of fear" (Marcus, 1992). In other words, it is stated that unequal relations of power are constructed by discourses. For example, the usage of the expression 'fair sex', to refer to women, and of 'strong sex', to refer to men, suggests that women are naturally weaker than men. From a post-structuralist perspective these usages of language structure unequal relations of power and construct women as vulnerable and therefore always rapeable. This latter feminist politics of rape

¹ I refer to discourses adopting Foucault's definition: "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault in Mills, 2004: 15). Later, I shall clarify this concept.

² In Chapter 2, I explain in detail these two concepts.

really intrigued me for its opposition to women's fixed vulnerability: the point which bothered me most when discussing rape in the collective in Milan.

While I was researching feminist theorizations of rape a friend acquainted me with a Nicaraguan feminist and pro-youth organization, Puntos de Encuentro (Puntos hereafter). I later realized that this organization is engaged in communicative activities which, in the words of some of Puntos' founders, aim to "transform power relations in daily life" (Hernandez and Campanile in Rodriguez, 2004: 115). These power relations that need to be transformed, according to the organization, are the same that enable rape (Rodriguez, 2004).

More in detail, Puntos structured a multi-media and multi-level communication strategy "to encourage critical reflection" on oppressive relations of power and "to take informed and responsible decisions" in order to live a life "without violence and discrimination" (Puntos' website)³. The "launching pad" of this strategy is the weekly *telenovela*, Sexto Sentido⁴ (Lacayo, 2006: 9). Combined with other activities, this *soap opera for social change mixes entertainment and educational features to address issues of gender, sexuality and power relations* (Lacayo, 2006). In its 80 episodes Sexto Sentido brings to the public debate different stories relating to domestic and sexual violence, pregnancy, abortion, HIV and AIDS, LGBT themes, migration, adultism, ableism, mother-daughter relations, drug abuse, etc.

After further researching Puntos' activities, I started to connect them to Marcus' theory of rape. Although in different ways, both advocate for approaching social change by operating at the level of discourses: Marcus identifies the source of rape in discourses and Puntos chooses to act in the communication field, under the assumption that mass media enables the circulation of discourses on a larger scale. Moreover, even if Puntos does not directly address the topic of women's vulnerability as Marcus, it does so indirectly, tackling issues of gender relationships that also include reflections on women's independency, autonomy and strength. These considerations contributed to my understanding of how to bring about change through discourses, in relation to perceptions of women's vulnerability.

1.1 Representing Rape

Due to my interest in discourses as a way to challenge beliefs of women's vulnerability to rape, I decided to focus this research on the analysis of Sexto Sentido. More specifically, I decided to discursively analyse this *telenovela*, using the concept of GGV, as I shall explain in more detail at a later time. Now I present some reflections on what it means to do a discourse analysis, in order to create a framework to introduce my research questions.

In relation to discourse analysis, Phillips warns that it "does not simply comprise a set of techniques for conducting structured, qualitative investigations of texts; [but] it also involves a set of assumptions concerning the *constructive* effects of language" (Phillips, 2002: 5; *italics*: S.D). Acknowledging this observation, now I would like to make clear my

³ http://www.puntos.org.ni/english/activity_det.php?acti=352

⁴ In English "Sixth Sense"

assumptions on the constructive effects of language, on how language produces meanings that influence our understanding of the world. To do so, I introduce different perspectives of the *relationship between language and meanings*, as outlined by Stuart Hall, a cultural theorist frequently quoted in studies relating to communication and power. I will further reflect on these perspectives, making reference to the meaning of the word rape.

First, Hall identifies the *reflective* approach, according to which language “reflect[s] a meaning which already exist[s] out there in the world of objects, people and events” (Hall, 1997: 15). This should lead me to state that the word “rape” has a fixed meaning that cannot change. However, as I will explain in Chapter 2, rape is a highly contested concept, the meaning of which feminists seek to widely expand. This consideration seems to prove that “meaning does not inhere *in* things” (Hall, 1997: 24).

Then, the *intentional* approach argues that “language express[es] only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, her or his personally intended meaning” (Hall, 1997: 15). However, it is impossible for anyone to pretend to escape from the social conventions that make meanings comprehensible to others. For example, even if some feminists talk about rape as including offenses where there is no actual penetration, they maybe be misunderstood because their intention differs from the more widely accepted meanings of rape according to social conventions.

Finally, Hall presents the *constructionist* approach⁵, for which he advocates. This perspective rejects that “things in themselves or the individual users of language can fix meanings”, and states that it is through concepts and signs that we “construct meaning to make the world meaningful and communicate about it” (Hall, 1997: 25). So, meanings are fluid and language can produce new meanings, as in the case of the expansion of the meanings of “rape.” However, because we stated that language is strongly tied to social conventions, the meanings produced have to be negotiated with social conventions. What follows is that any text works as “a semiotic side for the *production and negotiation* of meaning[s]” (Hall, 1997: 355. *Italics: S.D.*).

I appreciate this perspective as it shows how language produces the way in which we define, interpret and address events, processes and phenomena. I further explain in Chapter 2 how the relationships between meanings and language are mediated by power relations.

Understanding how Sexto Sentido produces, challenges or negotiates new or different meanings of women’s vulnerability are the central point of this investigation. In this context I will widely refer to politics of representation, understanding representation as construction of meanings and politics as a ‘struggle’ for negotiating these meanings. With the term ‘representational strategies’ I refer to different ways to represent or subvert understanding of objects, events, processes or phenomena. All these concepts are extensively explained in Chapter 2.

⁵ This approach consists of different streams. One of these streams –the Foucauldian one- is connected to post-structuralism, the perspective I adopt in looking at rape.

1.2 Research Objective, Questions and Argument

The principal objective of this investigation is to *discursively analyse how Sexto Sentido challenges the dominant gendered grammar of violence in Nicaragua in terms of the representational strategies it adopts*. Three core assumptions construct this objective: first, the dominant GGV in Nicaragua enables instances of rape to take place and so it is important to challenge it; second, Sexto Sentido, even if it does not explicitly talk about GGV, uses representational strategies that aim to challenge the dominant GGV in Nicaragua; and third, Sexto Sentido actually challenges this dominant GGV.

My leading question relates to my main objective and asks **“how does Sexto Sentido challenge the dominant gendered grammar of violence in Nicaragua, in terms of the representational strategies it adopts?”** My sub-questions are: (1) which is the dominant GGV in Nicaragua from Puntos’ perspective? (2) Which is the strategy for social change that Puntos states to adopt, especially at the representational level? (3) Which GGsV are represented in Sexto Sentido and through which representational strategies? All these sub-questions have helped justify the core assumptions of this research.

The preliminary argument, elaborated at the beginning of this research process, is based on the constructionist approach to language. Considering that this approach recognises the necessity of negotiations of meanings, I expect to discover that the challenges, brought up by Sexto Sentido to the dominant GGV in Nicaragua, do dismiss to a certain extent, but not completely, this dominant GGV.

1.3 Limitation and Scope

As a first specification, I want to clarify that this research exclusively aims to reflect on representations of rape in everyday life, without taking into considerations rape in conflicts. Moreover, this study does not want to measure impact nor to assert how change for women is occurring, but simply to analyse how the representational strategies, deployed in Sexto Sentido, challenge dominant understandings of women’s vulnerability in relation to its context of reference, Nicaragua.

1.4 Ethical Dimension

During the process of researching, I developed what I consider an important ethical concern based on the fact that I am not from Nicaragua, while I am researching a Nicaraguan experience. Fundamentally, I asked myself how can I pretend to produce knowledge around a reality I am not familiar with, especially recognising the differentials of power existing between the ‘West’ and the ‘Third World’?

Talpade Mohanty, an author interested in decolonising feminism, explains my point: “the works of Western feminism on Third World women should be considered in the context of the global hegemony of the Western academia”⁶.

⁶ All quotes from this author are translated by S.D.

Because Western scholars tend to “consider their subjectivities as a [...] measure to codify and represent the Other” and, in doing so, they exercise a discursive power that represents the Other as “politically immature, in need of being educated and trained in the distinctive character of Western feminism” (Talpade Mohanty, 2009: 124-129).

The way in which I tried to resolve my ethical concern is based, first, on the recognition that being occidental does not necessarily mean to be occidentalist. Secondly, and more importantly, I value the importance of appreciating the differences which I might find between my and Puntos’ points of view, without organising them in relationships of superiority and inferiority. Finally, I want to consider this work as a product of *situated knowledge*, “a knowledge that reflects the particular perspectives of the [knowing] subject” (Anderson, 2009). Thus, I would say that this research is not an attempt to judge another experience, but to dialogue with this experience while making clear the lens I use to look at it.

1.5 Relevance and Justification

First of all, the relevance of this research rests at a personal level, since it allows me to dedicate a moment of my life to reflect on a topic –rape and beliefs of women’s vulnerability- that has occupied my thoughts for a long time. Then, from an academic perspective, this study aims to contribute to the literature on feminist politics of rape and politics of representation, embracing the invitation to reflect on rape, made by Mardorossian, who states that recently it “has become an academia untheorised [...] issue” (Mardorossian, 2002: 743).

Then, the reasons which brought me to choose *Sexto Sentido* as the text to analyse in this work rest on the fact that this social telenovela represents a unique case, for the great variety of themes treated from a feminist perspective. Moreover its quality has been widely recognised at different levels: in terms of its audience success (*Sexto Sentido* is the most viewed Nicaraguan soap opera in the country), but also in term of its artistic and technical features, for which *Sexto Sentido* won different international awards (Bradshaw, 2001).

1.6 Methodology and Data

This research adopts a feminist post-structuralist methodology of discourse analysis compatible with the constructionist approach in cultural studies introduced earlier. This approach to discourse analysis “eschews any notion of an objectively knowable reality existing anterior to discourses and [is] concerned with an analysis of the ways in which discourses and discursive resources are constructive, rather than reflective, of their objects” (Malson, 1998: 44). This fundamentally means that, as already said, language constructs meanings.

As a starting point, it is important to recognise that talking about discourses entails references to contexts. In fact, discourses “do not occur in a vacuum”, instead they “are shared, social and emanating out of interactions between social groups and the complex societal structure in which discourses are embedded” (Phillips, 2002: 4).

The contexts I look at are multiple. Firstly, I consider the *broad socio-historical context* of Nicaragua (Chapter 3). I present it referring to feminist research on Nicaraguan history, written by authors directly or indirectly related to Puntos. I analyse these works through the concept of GGV. Secondly, I deal with the *immediate textual context* that surrounds the particular text selected: Puntos' gendered strategy of communication for social change, its application in Sexto Sentido, and the *genres* of mass media products to which Sexto Sentido belongs. I analyse these elements in terms of representational strategies (Chapter 4).

By genre I mean all of the distinct characters, a set of elements or conventions organised in relation to each other, that make a mass media product "recognisable by its *similarity* to other products of the same kinds". Recognising such similarities is important because they generate expectations in the public on the "different meanings and narrative possibilities" that a text may produce (Gledhill, 1997: 352-357). This can help me in offering useful insights for the discourse analysis I develop Chapter 5.

Subsequently (Chapter 5), I first select an episode from Sexto Sentido and I analyse its structure in order to understand the main messages it conveys⁷. Then I couple narrative analysis (NA) with gendered grammar of violence analysis (GGVA) to understand how events, characters and actions relate to each other in producing meanings of GGV. In the end, I reflect on the representational strategies adopted in the episode and identified by my analysis.

NA looks at how and why characters, actions and events relate to each other, assuming these depend on the underlying assumptions and values of the text, which participate to create certain meanings. Thus NA aims to uncover these assumptions and values and to clarify which meanings are produced in the text (Titscher, 2000: 127). Because I am not interested in all types of assumptions and arguments present in Sexto Sentido, but only in those related to the concept of GGV, I intend to look at the way in which the characters conceive women and men as subjects or objects of legitimate or illegitimate actions that relate to rape.

Through NA I aim to recognise what Greimas (1966) defines as actants: the different roles in a story, which once identified, help to grasp the "meaning-bearing" structure of the text. These actants, which are not necessarily personified in actors, interact across space and time and can be of six different types; (1) *destinator*, the source or initiator of the rules and values that inform the text; (2) *receiver*, the repository or carrier of the values that inform the text; (3) *subject*, the main figure in the narrative; (4) *object*, what the subject aspires to; (5) *adjuvant*, forces that support the subject's efforts; (6) *traitor or opponent*, the impeding forces. Generally, "the subject direct itself to the object and in this is supported by the adjuvant and impeded by the traitor. All of this takes place within the value structure of the destinator, which is imparted by the receiver" (Titscher, 2000: 125-134). The advantage of such methodology of discourse analysis is that it allows me to distinguish between the values held by the subject, opponents and adjuvants and those held by the destinator and receiver.

⁷ All the episodes of Sexto Sentido are available at www.youtube.com

In the end I reflect on the potentialities and challenges of the representational strategies employed in *Sexto Sentido* in relation to beliefs of women's intrinsic vulnerability to rape.

My data fundamentally consist of academic publications as well as written, audio and video material produced by Puntos. The weakest part of such methodology may be the lack of interviews with the producers and scriptwriters of *Sexto Sentido*. This happened because of the impossibility to do field work for this research. However, to minimize this weakness, I relayed on feedbacks provided to me from people working with Puntos. Moreover, I would invite the reader to consider the concept of "multi-interpretability" of texts theorised by Eco (Eco, 1962: 41). This concept leads to conceive texts' interpretations as potentially multiple, because inevitably influenced by the knowledge and the experiences of the same person who is interpreting or analysing the text. Thus, since interviews could guide my interpretation, their absence might make more evident my personal point of view. However, I argue that this does not undermine the validity of this paper; it only reconfigures it, as an attempt to do *situated* research.

1.7 Research Structure

In relation to the structure of this paper, Chapter 2 reviews and critically discusses the feminist perspectives on rape before introduced. It explains how the theoretical approach I adopt is linked to the concept of politics of representation and to my methodology. It also argues that ideas of women's vulnerability do not only limit women's agency, but also construct discourses to legitimise and normalise rape. Chapter 3 presents, from what I claim to be Puntos' perspective, the dominant GGV in Nicaragua and how the feminist movement relates to this. Here, I argue that this dominant GGV enables instance of rape to take place and I answer my first sub-question. In Chapter 4 I focus on Puntos' communications strategy, the main features of *Sexto Sentido* in terms of contents and representational choices, and stories of rape in *Sexto Sentido*. This section of the research seeks to justify my assumption regarding the possibility to link the concept of GGV to Puntos' work, and answers my second sub-question. Chapter 5 analyses *Sexto Sentido*'s representation of GGV, with attention to the representational strategies employed and how they challenge beliefs of women's vulnerability. In doing so and answering to my last sub-question, I substantiate the assumption that *Sexto Sentido* actually challenges the dominant GGV in Nicaragua and the argument that it does so only to a certain extent, due to the constructivist effects of language. Here, I also anticipate a preliminary answer to my leading research question. Finally, in Chapter 6, I reflect on the previous analysis with the aim to offer final considerations in relation to my leading research question.

2 Theorizing Feminist Politics of Rape and Politics of Representation

Rape has been widely theorized by feminist researchers, who have made of it a primary political issue on the feminist agenda. More specifically, rape as a political matter has been understood as caused by differentials of power, in line with the view described by Heywood of politics as power (Heywood, 2002). This Chapter deals with the politics of rape and critically discusses three feminist explanations of rape and the suggestions these postures advocate to contest rape. Attention is paid also to the epistemologies adopted by the perspectives analysed, since ideas about how knowledge of rape is produced is intrinsically connected to power and so to politics (Anderson, 2009 and Mills, 2003). The authors reviewed have been selected in order to offer a wide picture of feminist theorizations on rape, in terms of different conceptualizations of power and knowledge. This review suffers for being centred exclusively on US research, but I feel it responds to power relations within academics and to the specific history of the US.

In order to set the stage to reflect on rape, a useful premise might be to clarify how it has been defined. According to the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, rape has been usually understood as involving “sexual penetration of a person⁸ by force and/or without that person's consent” (Whisnant, 2009). However, there is not agreement on this general definition. For example, which standards should be established to define what constitutes ‘consent’? It is almost redundant to specify that there are many different answers to these questions. Therefore, I would encompass Reitan’s reflection on rape’s definition, which points out that “rape should be viewed as an essentially contested concept [...] determined by the debate or disagreement about the concept extension” (Reitan 2001: 63). In this way I want to avoid any search for the ‘right’ definition of rape and invite the reader to be as open as possible to enlarge her/his conception of rape.

2.1 Liberal Feminism and Individual Power

Susan Brownmiller’s book “Against our will: men, women and rape”, published in 1975, is widely considered the first work that has brought the issue of rape to the attention of a mainstream audience, at least in Northern America. At that time, Brownmiller was an active participant in the feminist movement in the U.S., which principally gathered white, heterosexual and middle-class women, and her book widely influenced the agenda of that movement.

In her research, Brownmiller brings up an argument on the source of rape and states that it is made possible by an “anatomical fact” or an “accident of

⁸ Even if this definition chooses to adopt a gender-neutral definition of the subjects involved in a rape, it is useful to remember that rape has been generally considered as committed by men against women, and sometimes against other men. However, sexual violence against men is a topic that has received little academic attention, as noted by Zarkov (Zarkov, 2007: 155). Studies on rapes with female perpetrators are almost absent from the literature.

biology: man's structural capacity to rape and woman's corresponding structural vulnerability". The author continues arguing that "when men discovered they could rape, they proceeded to do it" and "keep all women in a state of fear". Thus, rape is "probably the most important key of [women's] historic dependence" (Brownmiller, 1975: 13-15). Finally, to prevent rape, Brownmiller prescribes women's participation in the process of legislation and law enforcement as the "ultimate testing ground on which full equality for women will be won or lost" (Brownmiller, 1975: 388).

What is interesting to note here is that Brownmiller's explanation of rape rests on one element –biology- completely independent from any social precondition. This trait positions Brownmiller as a liberal feminist, who encompasses, as observed by Jaggar, "a conception of human nature that is radically individualistic" (Jaggar, 1983: 355). Because liberalism "conceives humans as essentially separated individuals, this epistemological tradition views the attainment of knowledge" [...] as "a solitary occupation that has no necessary social preconditions" (Jaggar, 1983: 388). Moreover, in relation to power, liberalism takes individuals as ultimate referents, while "social processes are understandable only as reconstruction or aggregation of individual action" (Barry, 1989: 14). Due to their conception of human nature and power, liberal feminists "*minimise* the importance of such accidentals as class, sex, colour and age" and do not question the social system itself, or their role as researcher, but tend to propose improvements to the existing social order (Jaggar, 1983: 388).

2.2 Black Feminism and Juridico-discursive Power

Because of her disregard of the social, Brownmiller's analysis has been widely contested by many, including the US black feminist movement. Alison Edwards, who was part of the black women's movement, replied to Brownmiller in a pamphlet titled "Rape, Racism and the White Women Movement", first published in 1976. In this work, the author describes "Against Our Will" as "representative of a majority tendency in the white women's movement, [...] which prevents" it from "possible alliances with other oppressed groups", disregarding "the shared oppression of Black and third world men and women" (Edwards, 1979: 2-5).

Edwards' proposal is to abandon a biological perspective on rape in favour of a reflection on social relations of power and their intersections. The "law and order" solution of Brownmiller is rejected by pointing out the racist and bourgeoisie character of the US judiciary: in fact, black women cannot hope to stop the occurrence of rape by appealing to a system that regularly discriminates Afro-American people (Edwards, 1979: 17). Consequently, the author delineates an agenda for an autonomous women's movement that constructs alliances with other oppressed groups in order to fight "male supremacy" as well as "racism" and "capitalist domination" (Edwards, 1979: 28-29). Edwards explains that capitalism and imperialism are directly linked "to oppression of non white people and women", since the power of the ruling class "rests on the competition among the workers" and this competition is maintained through different types of inequalities, such as sexism and racism (Edwards, 1979: 4).

The main assumption of Edwards spouses ‘standpoint epistemology’ and claims that reality is constituted by different systems of oppression that intersect themselves: sexism, racism, classism, heteronormativism etc. The central element of this posture is that different groups in society are differently touched by systems of oppression. Thus, knowledge about rape is influenced by the social location of the knowing subject. It does not mean that any knowledge around rape has to be considered at the same level. On the contrary, it is the knowledge of the oppressed that should be privileged, because they “have an interest in representing social phenomena in ways that reveal rather than mask” the truth of oppression (Anderson, 2009).

This theory, which advocates for a revolutionary approach, is based on what Sawicki, resting on Foucault, defines as a “juridico-discursive model of power”. This conceptualization of power is based on three main assumptions: (1) power is possessed, for example, by a hegemonic class; (2) power flows from a centralized source from top to bottom, like in the state; and (3) power is fundamentally repressive in its exercise, as it is in the judicial system (Sawicki, 1991: 20). Consequently, rape comes to be considered as determined by unequal relations of power, which are based on the *material* lack or ownership of the subject’s power.

2.3 Post-structuralist Feminism and Disciplinary Power

The critique of Brownmiller’s thesis is also carried out from a post-structuralist perspective by Sharon Marcus, a US academic researcher, in the article “Fighting bodies, fighting words: a theory and politics of rape prevention”. This author reflects many claims of black feminism, from the acceptance of women’s heterogeneity to the importance of integrating reflections on gender power inequalities with other types of oppression. However, Marcus contests the idea that rape is purely determined by lack/ownership of power of the subject, advancing a theory of rape based on the concept of disciplinary power elaborated by Foucault.

In her article, Marcus argues that considering rape as determined by human anatomy is to take “violence as a self-explanatory first cause”, accepting the “terrifying facticity which stymies our ability to challenge and demystify rape” (Marcus, 1992: 387). Also considering rape “as a fact to be accepted or opposed” should be rejected, since this position recognises man’s power to rape and fails in envisioning strategies “to take the ability to rape completely out of men’s hand”. On the contrary, rape should be conceptualized “as a process to be analysed and undermined as it occurs” (Marcus, 1992: 388). To do so, Marcus proposes to consider rape as a “linguistic fact” and questions “how the violence of rape is *enabled*⁹ by narratives¹⁰ [...] which derive their strength [...] from their power to structure our lives as imposing cultural scripts” (Marcus, 1992: 388-389; *italics*: S.D.).

⁹ It is important to note that the verb *enable* does not imply a strict relationship of cause-effect and so leaves a space for agency.

¹⁰ Here, narrative can be understood as synonymous with discourse.

To comprehend in which sense rape is considered a linguistic fact, it is useful to clarify the post-modernists' understanding of language¹¹. Anderson explains that post-modernists conceptualise language as a system of signs that “get their meanings not from their reference to external things but from their relations to all of the other signs in a system of discourse”. Signs, thus, do not have fixed meanings and “the selection of meanings is an exercise of power, to exclude certain possibilities from thought and to authorize others” (Anderson, 2009). How does this relate to rape? According to Marcus, rape is structured like a language, that is, as “a *scripted* interaction which takes place in language and can be understood in terms of conventional masculinity and femininity as well as other inequalities inscribed before an individual instance of rape” (Marcus, 1992: 390; *italics*: S.D.).

The concept of sexual script proposed by Marcus is not new in psychology and refers to the mental representation of how interpersonal sexual relationships should be, which an individual develops through the processes of socialization and culturalization, according to one's gender role and societal expectations of gender (Coon, 2005: 482). To clarify, according to Marcus, it is not a material reality which *enables* an act of rape, but certain dominant discourses, such as conventional models of masculinity and femininity, that condition the way an individual thinks about one's own sexuality and subjectivity. This allows us to state that discourses can also challenge instances of rape.

More specifically, Marcus theorises the existence of a “gendered grammar of violence” that encourages women to think of themselves as “objects of violence” and “subjects of fear”, thus preventing them from becoming active subjects (Marcus, 1992: 392). Marcus clearly states that this GGV that takes “male violence or female vulnerability as the first and last instances in any explanation of rape [makes] the identities of rapist and raped pre-exist the rape itself” (Marcus, 1992: 391). So that, “if we eschew this view and consider rape as a scripted interaction in which one person auditions for the role of rapist and strives to manoeuvre another person in the role of the victim, we can see rape as a *process* of sexist gendering that we can attempt to disrupt” (Marcus, 1992: 391). In more simple words, this *process of sexist gendering* is simply the reproduction of beliefs that women are the rapeable subjects, while men are the only ones who can rape and who do rape.

The author's proposal to prevent rape, in terms of representational strategies, is to “displace the emphasis on what the rape scripts promotes – male violence against women- and put into place what the rape script stultifies and excludes –women's will, agency and capacity for violence” (Marcus, 1992: 395). Briefly, according to Marcus, a feminist discourse on rape should allow women to position themselves as “subject of violence” and “object of fear” (Marcus, 1992: 398). This position is justified by the fact that Marcus argues that “the rape script pre-exists instances of rape, but neither the script nor the

¹¹ Even if post-modernism and post-structuralism present some differences, in this context they are considered to be synonymous.

rape act result from or creates immutable identities of rapist and raped” (Marcus, 1992: 391).

A reference to Foucault’s conceptualization of power would help our understanding of Marcus’ position. Sawicki explains that Foucault overcomes the juridico-discursive model of power, without denying it, but by considering “the myriad of power relations at the micro-level of society”. So, according to this French author: (1) power is exercised, rather than only possessed by a subject; (2) power is not primarily repressive, but productive; and (3) power is analysed as coming also from the bottom up (Sawicki, 1991: 20-21). Following this logic, the power to rape is not possessed by men, because of biology or any other material factor, but it is inscribed in the relationships between men and women, which are articulated according to dominant discourses, that construct and normalize a woman who is the “object of violence” and “subject of fear”. This normalization thus becomes a means of social control that exercises *disciplinary* action on people, making them more docile.

2.4 Embracing Post-structuralism

Since this investigation aims to analyse *how* Sexto Sentido undermines the dominant GGV in Nicaragua, I will explain the reasons that led me to embrace Marcus’ theorization on rape and how they link to the objective of this research.

Fundamentally, I appreciate Marcus’ theory of rape because of its denial of defining women “in relation to [their] vulnerability” that, in my opinion, opens a wide space for resistance and struggle to rape “as a fixed reality of women” (Marcus, 1992: 387). However, it is important to acknowledge criticisms of Marcus’ position. Precisely, I want to refer to Mardorossian, who contests the assumption that “rape is successful because of women’s passive compliance with a sexual and linguistic script”.

First, Mardorossian observes that Marcus’ theory “implies that women who get raped do not strategize prior to the rape and therefore” they are submitted “to the role of victim”. Second, Marcus’ focus on “women’s reaction or lack thereof during an attack, necessarily takes the focus off the rapist and places it—along with the “responsibility” for the outcome of this scripted interaction—on women and women alone” (Mardorossian, 2002: 753). The conclusion is that “focus on the evidence of rape victims’ personal agency ceases to extenuate the reality of violence in women’s lives” (Mardorossian, 2002: 748). In other words, Mardorossian accuses Marcus of reinforcing the existing gendered system of oppression.

I would like to argue that Marcus does not mitigate the ‘reality’ of violence against women, nor does she state that women fail to react to rape assaults or take responsibility away from rapist, as Mardorossian states. Marcus contests that “women can derive their power [simply] from proving that they have been made powerless and from identifying the perpetrator of their victimization” (Marcus, 1992: 386). In fact, Marcus argues that the powerless condition of women is not something fixed. What follows is *not* to deny that women happen to be in a disempowered situation, but to start imagining a different conceptualization of rape, which could dismantle the dominant GGV

that, according to Marcus, enables rape. *This reflection is important since I aim to understand how Sexto Sentido challenges, at the discursive level, the dominant GGV in Nicaragua.*

Second, Marcus does not aim to reinforce the victimization of women due to their lack of reaction, since she does not say that women have to react. She proposes that the relationships between rapist and raped should be re-elaborated; it should acknowledge that women are socially constructed as vulnerable, while men are socially constructed as violent. Talking about social constructions means embracing a Foucauldian conception of power as not possessed by a subject, but exercised in social relationships. In this way, responsibility does not rest on women's shoulders, but it is located in the act of production of knowledge about rape. Thus Marcus' appeal is not to invite women to change the way they react to rape –with a consequent blame when this does not happen–, but to look at the way in which subjects are produced by power relations. This leads to a form of resistance that is carried out at the level of discourses to the end of changing the constitution of individuals operated by power relation, assuming that knowledge –and so the knowledge about rape– is a primary form of power. *Again, Marcus provides me with useful insight for this research. In fact, seeing that Sexto Sentido is engaged in producing knowledge about rape, I find it extremely interesting to look at the ways in which it produces knowledge about rape.*

2.5 Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Femininity

As I have previously defined GGV in terms of femininity and masculinity, I will now expand on these two concepts. They are generally understood as referring “to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society”. Such “shared cultural conceptions of what it means to be male or female in society [...] are transmitted through institutions”, like the educational system or the media (Stets and Burke, 2000: 997-998)¹².

Connell notes that these two concepts exist only in relation to each other: for example, if women are represented as weak and emotional, consequently men are always strong and rational. Connell also recognises different types of masculinities and femininities that “stand against one another in relations of power” (Haywood, Mac and Ghail, 2003: 9). This author borrows from Gramsci the concept of hegemony in order to describe gender's social order. He argues that there is a hegemonic model of masculinity that has achieved social ascendancy “in a play of forces that extend beyond contexts of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes” (Connell, 2005: 184). This hegemonic form of masculinity is constructed “in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women” (Connell, 2005: 183). It is not possible to talk about hegemonic femininity since women are not hegemonic but share a condition of oppression in society. Among different types of femininity, “emphasised femininity” is the dominant type which is characterised for “compliance with this subordination and is oriented

¹² <http://wat2146.ucr.edu/Papers/00b.pdf>

to accommodating the interests and desires of man” in order to maintain “practices that institutionalise men’s dominance over women” (Connell, 2005: 183-185).

It is important to note that models of femininity and masculinity vary across space and time. Moreover, femininity and masculinity are also influenced by other social relations of power based on ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, etc. Marcus, for example, notes in relation to US society that rape scripts distinguish between men of different races, for instance, predicating “white men as subjects of legitimate¹³ violence against all women” and “men of colour as ever-threatening subjects of illegitimate violence against” white men and white women (Marcus, 1992: 392).

2.6 Politics of Representation and Counter-representational Strategies

As already stated, this research will consider how language produces meanings, representations and a sense of the world through signs and symbols (Hall, 1997: 1). Applying this thought to my reflection on GGV, I would argue that such a fixed and immutable thing as rape or understanding of femininity and masculinity does not exist. On the contrary, these meanings are constantly changing: for instance, in the last decade the meaning of date rape has been introduced and spread in US¹⁴.

Moreover, since meanings “give us sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we belong”, they are able to “regulate social practices, influence our conduct and have practical effects” (Hall, 1997: 3-4). This leads me to state that a certain conceptualization of gender identity based on hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity, may construct a dominant rape script and enable an instance of rape to take place. However, since meanings are fluid and people have reflexive awareness, discourses on GGV can be reworked: there is space for a politics of representation against beliefs of women’s vulnerability, a struggle over meanings that want women to be rapeable.

In order to attempt to maintain and/or challenge meanings, many representational strategies can be applied. Two examples follow. *Stereotyping*: taking a few exaggerated or simplified characteristics of a person/ group and then generalizing and fixing them as true representatives of the given person/ group (in Hall 1997). *Framing*: defining reality of the event; what is included and excluded and how; what is made visible and invisible and how (Papacharissi, 2008).

To deepen reflections on counter-representations, I mention some strategies, presented by Hall, to challenge dominant stereotypes. First, this author acknowledges the “reversing stereotype” technique that prescribes to substitute a negative stereotype with a more positive one; for instance representing women as rational, when the dominant belief sees women as emotional. However, Hall notes that “escaping the grip of one stereotypical

¹³ Legitimate, in the sense of normalized, and not legalised, violence.

¹⁴ For more information on date rape see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Date_rape

extreme [...], may simply mean being trapped in its stereotypical Other”, for example, a wicked and shrewd woman (Hall, 1997: 270-272). A second strategy to contest dominant representations is “the attempt to substitute a range of positive images [...] for the negative imagery which continues to dominate [mainstream] representations” (Hall, 1997: 272). An example might be the valorisation of being considered an “easy woman”. The problem that arises with this strategy is that, even if this operation “increases the diversity of representations, [it] does not necessarily displace the negative one” (Hall, 1997: 270-272). Another strategy identified attempts to “de-familiarize the object of a negative stereotype [e.g. the black man body] and make explicit what often is hidden [e.g. his erotic dimension]”. The attempt here is “to make the stereotypes work against themselves” (Hall, 1997: 274).

In Chapter 4 and 5 I make reference to these concepts for my analysis of representational strategies employed in *Sexto Sentido*.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

In this Chapter, I critically discussed the different feminist perspective identified, in order to clarify how my understanding of the politics of rape is linked to the concept of politics of representation and to my methodological choice of doing a discourse analysis to answer my leading research question. In doing so, I also argued that *beliefs of women’s vulnerability do not constitute only a limitation of their agency, but also construct discourses that legitimise and normalise rape.*

3 The Dominant Gendered Grammar of Violence in Nicaragua and the Feminist Movement¹⁵

As this research aims to understand how *Sexto Sentido* challenges the dominant¹⁶ GGV in Nicaragua, I found it essential to understand *what is this dominant GGV* about and how the feminist movement, of which Puntos states to be part, looks at this. Therefore, I have decided to consider *feminist discourses* on the dominant GGV in Nicaragua. Such an operation is justified by my belief that Puntos, as a feminist organization, *implicitly or explicitly refers to* feminist understandings of social reality in Nicaragua.

It is important to not forget that I am considering the concept of GGV because I argue that it may construct a rape script that enables instance of rape to take place. Thus, in the end of this Chapter, I explain how the dominant GGV identified may be perceived as an enabler of rape.

In order to limit contextualization, which could constitute an entire research question in itself, I opted to refer only to few researchers, who are activists or intellectuals organic to the feminist Nicaraguan movement. First, I

¹⁵ In this research I use the expressions “feminist movement” and “women’s movement” as interchangeable because the authors did. However I recognise this equation as problematic: not all women are feminist and not all feminists are women.

¹⁶ I refer here to a *dominant* GGV since I assume that in Nicaragua other non dominant GGsV exist, such as those advanced by the feminist movement.

chose the work of Sofia Montenegro, who elaborated two studies on sexual culture in the country (2000 and 2005) and is now a leading activist of the Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres (MAM). Additionally, I decided to rely on two other authors, Kampwirth (2001, 2006 and 2008) and Santamaría (2005), whose research is explicitly cited by Puntos in its feminist magazine *La Boletina* (2009), for a series of articles on the women's movement.

Before entering in the heart of the matter, I would premise that Nicaragua is a very diverse country in terms of ethnicity and culture, with high levels of exclusion, poverty, marginalization and vulnerability. Nicaraguan history is marked by military and civil dictatorships, supported by external interventions (USA) and by resistance and revolutionary movements. I consider such observations important because they are implicit in the work of the authors I will analyse.

3.1 Reflecting on the Colonial Period

Montenegro, in “La Cultura Sexual en Nicaragua”, reflects on the *gender models* concept, that I consider to be close to the one of GGV¹⁷. For that reason, this author is a valid starting point for this section of the research. She states that gender models, being historically and culturally constructed, change in relation to structural transformation in society. In doing so, the author claims to adopt a constructionist theoretical perspective, which recognises “sexuality as mediated by historical and cultural factors” (Montenegro, 2000: 10). Then, Montenegro identifies three main moments of gender models’ transformation in Nicaraguan history: colonization, the Sandinista revolution in 1979 and the neoliberal and conservative era of the last two decades (Montenegro, 2000: 30). Now, I proceed with a presentation of her historical analysis of dominant gender models, while considering the recognised moments of transformation Montenegro recognises.

First, Montenegro argues that *machista* behaviour of contemporary Nicaragua has its roots in the age of colonization as it reproduces “the arbitrary power of the conqueror, his indifference towards the engendered offspring and his contempt for women and resentment for the mother”. The key of this development of *machismo*, according to Montenegro, has been the constitution of the Mestizo group, born out of the massive violation of Indigenous women, from part of the Spanish colonisers. As Spanish enjoyed all sort of privileges and Indigenous were affected by sanctions, Mestizos sought to blend in with the Spanish in order to take advantage of their ‘in-between situation’. The hispanization of Mestizos resulted thus in a dis-identification with the mother that Montenegro describes as “the violent humiliation of the woman and the equally violent affirmation of the man” (Montenegro, 2000: 31-32).

¹⁷ Montenegro refers to dominant “gender models” as the “socially constructed forms of being men and women [that] includes ways the genders relate to each other, certain patterns of conduct and specific accepted values and expectations” (Montenegro, 2000: 29). I consider this concept close to ideas of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity and Marcus’ GGV. For this reason I will take the liberty to translate “dominant gender models” with expressions like emphasised femininity and hegemonic masculinity or GGV.

Montenegro follows by arguing that on the base of women's subordination and other values, such as the great importance accorded to honour, colonial domination has produced those models of femininity and masculinity that are still dominant in Nicaraguan society today. According to Spanish medieval laws, brought by the colonizers to the Americas, honour was considered a supreme social virtue and it meant, for men, the importance of demonstrating a hard will of struggle and the use of force to defend one's own reputation. On the other side, for women, honour was exclusively connected to the sexual conduct that required virginity before the matrimony and fidelity after, in line with the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Montenegro stresses that the result of these social norms has been the promotion of a large sexual freedom for men, "frequently connected to sexual violence, that coupled gender subordination with colonial domination". Moreover, the author explains that, in the Spanish and Mestizo family, these values assured that the "[elder] man's power was almost absolute and women fulfilled the role of reproducing the labour force, being in domestic services and selling their labour force in the *latifundos*". In this ways, "the patriarchal function of the family were adjusted to the needs of the colonial economic model": the labour force were increased through the use of sexual violence and men were valued for their fecundity and not for their dedication to the family (Montenegro, 2000: 34-38).

Applying the concept of GGV to Montenegro's account of the gender models in the colonial period, the following reflections emerge. Montenegro describes a type of hegemonic masculinity constructed around ideas of force and sexual freedom that perceives man as a subject of an uncontrolled sexual desire and thus subject of legitimate violence. Women are perceived as objects of legitimate sexual abuse and subjects of repression of their sexual desires and of legitimate care giving. These considerations highlight an over-sexualisation of women's bodies during colonization, in the sense that the body comes to be conceived only under the guise of (hetero)sexuality, as it is in Montenegro's analysis. Moreover, considering ethnicity as an element, the GGV results in the construction of a hierarchy that sees, on the top, the Spanish man and, on the bottom, the Indigenous woman, with the Mestizo man in the middle. No references to sexual orientation are present in Montenegro's work. However, many references to the role of Catholic Church in that period suggest that a strong heteronormativity was established.

3.2 The Sandinista Revolution and the Feminist Movement

As anticipated, Montenegro stresses that "the 1979 Revolution and other social transformations raised in that period provoked changes in the ideological spheres of gender models, while other phenomena such as the war, economic crisis, political changes and migrations, rearticulated the reproductive model that Nicaragua inherited from its colonisers" (Montenegro, 2005: 7). Both Kampwirth and Santamaría agree with Montenegro, recognising the

importance of the 1979 Revolution¹⁸ for the women's movement and, therefore, the role it played in influencing the dominant gender models.

More specifically, according to Kampwirth, the Sandinista revolution promoted a huge social mobilization, sustaining processes of organizing that were critical of traditional and anti-feminist values (Kampwirth 2006: 76). Santamaría explains that Nicaraguan women -coming from different social sectors- achieved organization around AMNLAE¹⁹, one of the most important associations before and after 1979. Santamaría tells that in the post-revolutionary period AMNLAE was a strong actor in different campaigns, such as alphabetisation and promotion of health. It also obtained new rights for women in the sphere of the family through laws that ratified equality within the family and made men responsible for all their children, including those born outside marriage. The researcher also stresses that the action of AMNLAE contributed to the widening of women's identity; women, in fact, were not only mothers and wives, but also Sandinistas, soldiers for the revolution and feminists (Santamaría, 2005: 75-76).

However, Montenegro identifies also moments of "rearticulation" of the gender model inherited from the colony. To understand this point, I refer to Santamaría and Kampwirth who make reference to the *contras-war*. Santamaría states that, with the worsening of the conflict from 1982, the defence of the Revolution became the first point on the Sandinista agenda and pro-women practices were put on the back burner (Santamaría, 2005: 78). Kampwirth notes that this event caused fractures and divisions within the movement, which allowed the feminist agenda to be put aside (Kampwirth 2006: 76-77).

According to the works of the authors cited, through Sandinista mobilization women's identity was widened and they began a recognised life outside the household. For example, women in the clothes of Sandinista soldiers became subjects of legitimate violence against the enemies of the revolution. However, issues around gender violence were not faced, at least according to the feminist works considered, and it brings me to argue that women remained stable objects of legitimate gendered violence. I would like to note that all the measures adopted to reach more gender equality, reported by the authors selected, were closely linked to legal initiatives, with a strategy that recalls liberal values and offers itself to criticisms similar to the ones that Black Feminists addressed to Brownmiller. It is worth mentioning that in Santamaría's account on the formation of a "feminist identity centred on gender", it is apparently untied to reflections on intersectionality (Santamaría, 2005: 61).

¹⁸ Even if the importance for the women's movement of the Sandinista Revolution it is widely recognised, it is important to understand that feminism does not start with the Revolution. For example, Santamaría identifies the beginning of the first feminist wave in Nicaragua at the end of the 19th century (Santamaría, 2005: 7).

¹⁹ This name was given to the organization after the victory of the Sandinistas in honour of Luisa Amanda Espinoza, the first woman who died while fighting.

3.3 The Neoliberal and Conservative Period

Besides the contras-war, Montenegro states that other elements, such as political changes, contributed to rearticulate traditional and conservative gender models. To understand this point it is useful to look again to Kampwirth and Santamaría. In fact, both refer to the end of the Revolution and the government of the conservative Violeta Chamorro in 1990 as an important political change that determined the predominance of anti-feminist values. However, even after the Chamorro government, Nicaragua continued living under right-wing presidents -first Alemán in 1996 and later Bolaños in 2001-, who continued the anti-feminist policies inaugurated by Doña Violeta

Some examples of the values sustained by Chamorro follow. Kampwirth reports that she organized her electoral campaign, promising to “drawn on her experience as wife, widow and mother” to govern the country, with a call to a conservative conceptualization of woman’s identity (Kampwirth, 2006: 78). Santamaría explains that once she took office, “Doña Violeta” followed up on her anti-feminist positions and promoted a neoliberal economic agenda coupled with conservative social policies, abolishing laws and social programs for gender equality, previously introduced by the Sandinistas. For example, the government adopted educational programmes, which promoted a heterosexual and legally married model of family, ratified laws against sodomy and penalised abortion, even in cases of rape (Santamaría, 2005: 94-97). These same values were supported also by Chamorro’s successors.

Kampwirth notes that these changes, as well as a sense of “political emptiness” determined by the end of the revolution, gave rise to an impressive number of autonomous feminist organizations (Kampwirth, 2006: 78-80). These NGOs, according to Santamaría, open themselves to international fora and transnational networks, experiencing dependency from international funding and witnessing the rise of “feminist experts” (Santamaría, 2005: 83). In this way, the women’s movement embraced autonomy from the government and its collective identity became focused on “the politicization of women’s body [...] and tied up to gender identity” (Santamaría, 2005: 99). Kampwirth notes also the emergence of many lesbian groups as an innovative character of the movement in the 90s (Kampwirth, 2006: 78).

Among the NGOs founded at the beginning of the 90s, there is the Women’s Network Against Violence (WNAV), to which Puntos adhered. Since its constitution, it has been involved in providing services and promoting change at the state as well as at the socio-cultural levels (Ellsberg 1997). Among the struggles supported by the WNAV, Santamaría remembers the creation of women’s departments within the national police’s structure, equipped with trained staff to deal with cases of violence against women. She also mentions that the WNAV promoted the approval of the 150 Law, which allows the State to intervene in cases of rape, even without the report of the survivor. Moreover, in 1996, it is mentioned that the network elaborated a draft bill to prevent, castigate and eradicate all forms of violence against

women. After negotiations, a lighter version of the bill draft was approved as 230 Law. (Santamaría, 2005: 102-103)²⁰.

Applying the lens of the GGV to the feminist discourses considered, it is clear that, after the end of the conflict Nicaragua faced a conservative backlash, which situated the women's movement in an antagonist position with the State. In fact, according to Chamorro's discourses, women should 'return' to be only wives and mothers, opting for self-abnegation in the name of family cares. On the opposite side, men are believed to behave as subjects of protection, reducing women to be the objects of this protection and, in doing so, assuming their intrinsic vulnerability. The relationships between the two genders are framed by Chamorro within the legal and heterosexual family, that is supposed to be a reign of peace and love, free of any illegitimate violence.

However, as stressed by Montenegro, in this period "women emerged as a social subject and acquired a new political pivotal role" (Montenegro, 2005: 7). Feminists demanded to be subjects of their body, their sexuality and their health. They also contested a peaceful conceptualization of the family, acknowledging and challenging to be objects of violence in this context. According to the accounts of Kampwirth and Santamaría, the feminist strategy seems to be mainly centred on the promotion of different bills, embracing liberal feminist strategies. Both the authors seem to treat women as an homogeneous category without a deep reflection on intersectionalities. Only Kampwirth cites the existence of lesbians groups in the movement but she does not further analyse heteronormativity or other systems of oppression based on ethnicity, class or age.

3.4 The New Sandinista Government

If during the neoliberal and conservative period, the confrontation between the government and the feminist movement became blatant, with the election of Ortega –former Sandinista leader- to the presidency in 2006 and his decision to abolish therapeutic abortion, this confrontation has been intensified with a strong repression of some feminist organizations.

According to Kampwirth, this corresponds to an "increasing sophistication of the antifeminist movement", determined by Ortega's alliance with exponents of the Catholic Church, cooperation among Catholic and Evangelical Churches and divisions internal to the women's movement (Kampwirth, 2008: 124-128).

Kampwirth warns about the fact that "for many anti-feminist activists or their supporters, abolishing therapeutic abortion is [...] part of a broader project of restoring or imposing a particular model of gender relations" (Kampwirth, 2008: 133). This model is the same that in a previous article she resumed under the labels of "anti-feminist worldviews". First, anti-feminists consider both sex and gender as natural traits as "the dominant gender division of labour" is understood as natural. They also believe that "females are in need of male protection" and that "males are in need of female responsibility" in the

²⁰ These legal achievements of the movement are repeatedly mentioned in Sexto Sentido.

sense that women are thought to be “more responsible and therefore better insurance against old age”. Moreover, they support Catholic values as condemnation of non-marital sex, encouraging abstinence outside of marriage and chastity within marriage to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (Kampwirth, 2006: 87-92).

Montenegro’s research sustains Kampwirth arguments. Through surveys, interviews and focus groups, Montenegro finds that it is widely believed that “women should not go to the streets”, “male children should not cry”, “men can do whatever they want, because men are men”, “the matrimony is to have children”, “male children do not kiss other men” and “female youth are to be virgin” (Montenegro, 2000: 67-69). All these beliefs show that women’s subjectivity continued to be linked to the sphere of the family, with a reduced mobility. When women step out of these social norms, for example by going alone to the street, they seem to become subjects of legitimate violence. This consideration is strengthened by the fact that men are thought to be constrained to models of hegemonic masculinity that reject their emotivity and emphasise force, heterosexuality and freedom of doing everything (to women) without social control.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

Now that I have delineated the understanding of the dominant GGV in Nicaragua from a feminist and Nicaraguan perspective, I come back to the implicit argument of this Chapter: the identified dominant GGV constructs a rape script that enables instances of rape to take place. To justify such a statement, it could be useful to remember that Marcus talks about processes of sexist gendering that reproduce beliefs of women as rapeable and men as potential rapists. This is important to mention, as I consider that the discourses identified on the dominant GGV do not do anything more than produce and reproduce this process of sexist gendering; as an example, it does so explicitly, conceptualising men as subjects of an uncontrolled sexual desire that can justify violence.

4 Puntos de Encuentro and Sexto Sentido

This Chapter wants to understand how Sexto Sentido relates to Puntos’ mission, in terms of contents; the representational strategies Puntos states to adopt in Sexto Sentido, considering it as belonging to the genre of soap opera and to the one of edutainment; and finally, which stories of rape are developed in Sexto Sentido. All these steps aim to provide hints for the discourse analysis of one episode from Sexto Sentido realised in the next Chapter. They also help me to argue that Puntos, even if not explicitly, reflects on issues related to the concept of GGV.

Attention to the feminist politics embraced by Puntos remains marginal, because the lack of field work prevented me from asking to Puntos more details on its perspective.

For this section of the paper, I principally refer to the studies of Virginia Lacayo (2006, 2008), Sexto Sentido’s co-creator, story and script editor, and

Sarah Bradshaw (2001), a scholar who collaborates with Puntos. The choice of employing authors internal to Puntos allows for a more loyal portrait of this organization, from its own creators. At the same times, I also refer to some studies on Puntos written by scholars external to the organization, Clemencia Rodriguez (2004) and Cymene Howe (2008), to deepen certain points.

4.1 Puntos' Vision of Change and its Communication Strategy

First, I consider how and why Puntos de Encuentro was created. According to Lacayo, it was founded in 1990 by a group of women who considered that “the progressive, egalitarian agendas of Sandinista ideology clashed with the oppressive, authoritarian everyday practices embodied by Sandinistas themselves in their interpersonal relations” (Rodriguez, in Lacayo, 2006: 13). The practices contested were “oppression, discrimination, and violence” based on the power relations presented in Table 1. And such oppressive practices were considered as “a consequence of an unequal distribution of power based on [beliefs of] superiority/inferiority, prejudice/bigotry [...] that gives some groups a ‘legitimate’ mandate to abuse those who are [thought to be] weaker or powerless” (Lacayo, 2006: 14-15).

Table 1
Dominant against discriminated groups in Nicaragua

Dominant Groups	Discriminated Groups
Men	Women
Adults	Children, adolescents, youth, elderly
Population of the Pacific Coast	Population of the Atlantic Coast
White people	Mestizo, Black and Indigenous people
Heterosexual people	LGBT people
Non-disabled people	Disabled people
Rich people	Poor people
People with more formal education	People with less formal education
People without HIV/AIDS	People with HIV/AIDS
Catholic population	Non-Catholic people
People living in cities	People living in rural areas

Source: Puntos' Website, http://www.puntos.org.ni/english/activity_det.php?acti=352

In other words, Lacayo states that Puntos believes that, a set of authoritarian discourses spread in society, legitimises and normalises oppressive practices and that this has to be changed. I would add that, from these few quotes, it seems reasonable to establish a link between the post-structuralist feminist perspective on rape and Puntos, considering that both share an interest in discourses. However, due to the lack of interviews with Puntos' members, this consideration remains a working hypotheses.

I consider it important to specify that in the context of power relations between men and women, Puntos states that the two genders “are taught to behave differently, to live, feel, develop unequally”. For example, “women learn that the most important thing in life is to be a good mother, a good wife and housewife, to obey and always be at the service of others”. On the other hand, “men learn that their role is to protect, give orders, have a paid job, take money home, and that their wives bear their children” (Puntos’ website)²¹. These statements related to what women and men are supposed to be subjects or objects of. Thus, it is logical to state that Puntos indirectly approaches the concept of GGV.

To clarify the type of change envisioned by Puntos, Bradshaw explains that “while societies have to change, they have to decide for themselves how to change. Rather than seeking to change individual behaviour, [Puntos’] work seeks to influence the social context in which individuals act and in which discussion about different aspects of daily life occurs” (Bradshaw in Lacayo, 2006: 9). More clearly, Puntos does not propose to adopt certain specific types of behaviour, but to nurture “capabilities such as the ability to identify and analyse the causes and manifestations of discrimination, social exclusion and violence” to the end of “promot[ing] and facilitate[ing] individual and collective action to change them”. In order to do so, Puntos has developed a communication strategy which sees mass media as a critical space to “facilitate changes in social norms and collective attitudes over time” (Bradshaw, 2001: 1).

According to Bradshaw and Lacayo, Puntos’ gendered communication strategy follows the following guidelines: (1) analysis of the status quo in order to coherently critique traditional discourses, revealing the ways they reinforce women and youth’s subordination, and promotion of alternative ways of thinking; (2) multi-thematic approach which highlights both complexity and intersectionality of the issues treated, recognizing that social change is complex and non-linear; (3) translation of complex analysis into simple and straightforward language to make it comprehensible to everyone; (4) production of attractive material in terms of design; (5) focus on controversial issues in order to locate them on mainstream agenda; (6) creation of alternative media outlets to ensure that the messages reach a wide public, without being blocked by commercial, religious or other interests (Bradshaw, 2001:1; Lacayo, 2008: 42).

These principles have originated the multi-activities and multi-year project entitled “We Are Different, We Are Equal” (WDWE) that I present in Table 2.

The target of this strategy is very broad, from youth groups to the general public and its main platform is the soap opera “Sexto Sentido”, written and produced entirely by Puntos with the financial support of international development agencies. This social *telenovela* is centred on the lives of young women and men in Managua and familiar localities around the capital and addresses the power relations identified before. The title of the soap, as it is clarified by the intro-song to the show, stresses the importance of taking

²¹ http://www.puntos.org.ni/english/activity_det.php?acti=352

control of one's life and relaying on one's sixth sense more than on the norms imposed by society.

Before moving ahead considering those characteristics that would allow me to consider Sexto Sentido as a text, let's examine how Puntos' strategy works on the ground according to Lacayo. The paragraph cited below offers a practical example of the circulation of discourses at multiple levels that Puntos seeks to achieve.

Table 2
'We're Different, We're Equal' strategy

TV programme	Sexto Sentido is a 'social soap' which tackles issues related to the relations of power before identified.
Radio programme	Sexto Sentido Radio allows for discussion on the themes raised in Sexto Sentido, promotes debate and more in-depth analysis, while not relying on the audience having seen the TV programme.
Magazine	La Boletina, Puntos' feminist magazine, includes a section that discusses the themes central to the WDWE strategy, from the perspective of young people. Thus parents will have a chance to better understand their children's point of view, while younger readers will have access to a further source of information.
Educational packages	To promote discussion and reflection on the WDWE themes within local organisations, educational packages - that include a VHS or DVD copies of special editions of Sexto Sentido, along with discussion guides, directories of services and other informational materials- are distributed.
Youth training programme	Puntos has published a manual that lays out both the conceptual framework and the methodological approach of their yearly youth leadership camp. Principal topics are discrimination by gender, age, race and sexual preference.
Promotional products	To reinforce the impact of some key messages and themes, printed materials, and other products such as T-shirts and caps, have been distributed to young people across the country.
Local media	Links with 70 local media outlets, allows Puntos to re-broadcast its radio and TV programmes. Also training workshops are imparted to further strengthen links and improve knowledge and coverage.
Building and strengthening local alliances	Puntos maintains active working relationships with over 200 local and national organisations and coalitions, as well as governmental and non-governmental service providers.

Source: Bradshaw, 2001: 4

"Consider a young woman living in northern Nicaragua who watches Sexto Sentido on the weekend on the national television station, then watches again the re-broadcast of the program on the local channel, and then listens to,

and calls in, Puntos' radio show during a weekday to express her opinions and feelings on issues that concern her. Through the radio show and the billboards in her locality, she finds out about organizations that address those social issues, participates in their activities, and seeks needed services within her community. She has an opportunity to talk more about social issues that concern her with her classmates, especially when the casts of Sexto Sentido radio and television programs visit her school. Finally, as a member of a youth organization, she participates in one or more of the workshops and/or camps lead by Puntos around the country. Here she will be involved in deeper discussions on the topic, and acquire skills and materials to address these issues back in her local community. The community, meanwhile, has more favourable public opinion on the social issues given the coverage on the national and local media, and the collaborative effort of partner organizations on the ground" (Lacayo, 2006: 18).

4.2 Sexto Sentido and the Soap Opera Genre

Being that Sexto Sentido is unanimously considered a telenovela, I will examine further this type of genre. Gledhill identifies those elements that, in relation to each other, constitute "the conventions which define soap opera as a genre" (Gledhill, 1997: 352). I list them in Table 3.

Table 3
The Soap Opera Genre

Format and medium	Radio or television continuous serial, broadcast once or more per week, usually in 30-minute slots.
Subject matter	Ups and downs of family or community life and personal relationships.
Settings and locations	Home interiors and public places where a lot of people can meet.
Narrative patterns	Multiple and interweaving story lines
Character types	Multiple and diverse characters across the social spectrum; many female roles, including elder women, widows and divorcees.
Plots	Falling out between family and community members; jealousy, infidelities, dirty dealings, hidden secrets and their exposure, social problems.

Source: Gledhill, 1997: 152

Sexto Sentido generally follows these lines, even if it relates more to the stream of Latin American *telenovelas* than to US soap operas²². It is composed of 80 episodes, first broadcast weekly from 2001 to 2005 in slots of 30 minutes on the main national private channel "Canal 2" during the afternoon timeslot,

²² I decided not to look in depth to this theme because it does not serve the purposes of this research.

just before primetime. They were then re-transmitted on different local networks and also shown in US, Costa Rica and Honduras. *Sexto Sentido* deals with personal relationships. The stories interwoven are set in home interiors and public spaces, such as a bar, school or university. A wide spectrum of characters, differentiated in relation to the social spectrum, are represented and a great variety of social problems are treated.

Looking at *Sexto Sentido* as a simple soap opera does not say much about it as a political tool of Puntos' agenda. For that reason, I also link *Sexto Sentido* to another genre, edutainment.

4.3 *Sexto Sentido* and the Edutainment Genre

Sexto Sentido is characterised by its producers (Lacayo and others) for mixing entertainment and educational features which are the reasons why it is recognised as a form of edutainment²³ (E-E). More than a genre, edutainment is usually considered "a communicative practice crafted to strategically communicate about development issues in a manner and with a purpose that can range from the more narrowly defined social marketing of individual behaviour to the liberating and citizen-driven articulation of social change" (Tufte in Lacayo, 2008: 9). However, the ways in which E-E programs are constructed and organised presents certain constants, which lead me to consider edutainment as a genre.

Before going into details, it is interesting to look at the reasons why these mass media products are widely considered in the development field. Lacayo recognises that they provide different advantages to promote social change: their distribution through mass media assures audience popularity; emotional identification of the public with the stories told stimulates behavioural changes through role modelling; their length allows "complex and layered treatment of multiple themes through intertwined and on-going storylines"; and "long-term repeated exposure to different aspects of the same theme" reinforces the action of a message (Lacayo, 2008: 10).

However, there is no agreement on how E-E should foster social change, or better there are different positions on the topic. I would now consider the one that informed the production of *Sexto Sentido*.

According to Lacayo, the E-E strategy elaborated by Puntos seeks "to articulate and promote the dialectic process of debate and collective action centred on social issues, conflicts, inequalities and power imbalances in society" (Tufte in Lacayo, 2008: 41). In relation to this point, Howe explains that Puntos actually "hopes to create a dialogic [...] between themselves and the audience". This would mean actively involving the public in a process of reflection on *Sexto Sentido* and constructing its contents in relation to messages central to the youth and women's movement discourse (Howe, 2008: 59).

In Lacayo's words, this approach to edutainment locates the root of development problems in "structural inequalities, power imbalances and deep societal problems" (Lacayo, 2008: 40). At the representational level, references

²³ Edutainment stands for entertainment-education

to social problems are constructed assigning to each character a central topic of the WDWE strategy (Puntos' website). Then, the character is shown facing different personal troubles caused by dominant discourses. In this way, the characters' suffering works as a strategy to denounce the oppressive side of these discourses and reflects the technique identified by Hall of de-familiarising stereotypes.

Lacayo describes this E-E approach as in line with liberating pedagogy (Lacayo, 2008: 40). In an interview –reported by Howe- with one of Sexto Sentido's co-directors, it is stated that, in order to “transform social values, [...] the TV characters themselves must undergo a process of self-discovery [...] of identities, the changing role of men and women, romantic and sexual relationships, and self-esteem”. These self-discoveries “share a kinship with *concientización* practices associated with Paulo Freire, [...] but here they are married to a multiculturalist discourse of identity, self-fulfilment and subjectivity” (Howe, 2008: 58-59). At the representational level, showing the changing of characters' view on different events or phenomena works to increase the type of representations of the events or phenomena considered.

Another interesting point raised by Lacayo is that Sexto Sentido does not follow Sabino's methodology. Sabino's methodology is a type of E-E strategy in which the character who emulates a socially desirable behaviour is rewarded, otherwise s/he is punished. In Sabino's format there are three main models of character that follows the award/punishment mechanism: the 'positive', the 'negative' and the 'transitional' one, who tends to change from a negative to positive behaviour and who are then rewarded (Lacayo, 2008: 34-35).

On the contrary, narrative structures in Puntos' *telenovela* do not see “characters [as] punished or rewarded for their behaviour, but [...] as taking responsibility for their conduct”. This choice responds to Puntos' belief that “appropriate behaviour may vary from person-to-person, is complex, and should be decided upon by the people affected by the situation and after all alternatives are analyzed, so they can take responsibility for the decisions made” (Lacayo, 2006: 29). At a representational level, moving attention from the source of the problem –e.g. contraction of HIV through non-protected sex– to the ways in which this problem can be tackled –e.g. periodical medical checks– responds to a change of frame to analyse a social issue.

4.4 Rape in Sexto Sentido

In order to set the stage for the following Chapter, I would say that one of the ways in which Sexto Sentido addresses oppressive relation of power between men and women is through telling different stories of gender violence²⁴. More specifically, two main stories of rape are developed in the *telenovela*. I present them in Table 4 in order to contextualise the episode I selected for the analysis in the next section of the research.

²⁴ Just to remember, Puntos is widely committed to this issue, as it is testified by its adhesion to the WNAV.

Table 4
Stories of rape in Sexto Sentido

Franky's story (from the 19th to the 34th episode)	Franky is a kind and supportative university student and radio speaker. One night, she is assaulted on her way to a party in a dark alley by a stranger. Despite her attempts to fight the aggressor off, she is raped. In the meantime her boyfriend, Eddy, and other friends are waiting her at the party. At a certain point Eddy goes out to find her and arrives on the rape scene at the end of the assault, while the rapist is running away. Throughout the story Franky faces different difficult situations: processes of victimization, an unwanted pregnancy, the decision to have an illegal abortion, problems in reporting to the police and in receiving attention for her file. The soap opera shows Franky 's suffering as well as Franky's agency to deal with the problems she faces.
Vicky's story (from the 19 th to the 64 th episode)	Vicky, a sociable and optimistic young woman, shares with other Sexto Sentido characters the memories of her experience of sexual abuse. Episode by episode, the audience finds out that Vicky is lesbian, recovered alcoholic and rape survivor. The girl, in her teenage years, had been discovered by her mother in a lesbian relationship. The mother decided to send Vicky to her uncle's house hoping to change the lesbian orientation of the daughter by distancing her from her girlfriend. Once in her new residence, Vicky is raped by her uncle. When she tries to confide in her mother, the mother is unable to help her. Thus Vicky decides to escape from the family and she becomes an alcoholic. It is after her recovery that Vicky enters the show. Throughout the telenovela, Vicky is represented as dealing with the trauma of her rape and preparing to face her abuser. The issue of rape intersects here with different topics, such as homophobia or domestic violence.

Source: Puntos' website <http://www.puntos.org.ni/sstv/sesto-sentido.php>

An interesting observation in relation to Puntos' decision to develop these stories of rape, it is that they construct two different understanding of what is rape. In the first case, it is represented by a rape committed by a stranger, while in the second one, the rape is committed by a relative of the survivor. This choice allows challenging the idea that the family is a site of peace and love, as the conservative and anti-feminist discourse identified by Kampwirth.

4.5 Concluding Remarks

Exposing Puntos' vision of and strategy for social change and how it applies to Sexto Sentido, in terms of contents and representational choices, I wanted to prepare the ground for the following discourse analysis on an episode of Sexto Sentido on Franky's rape. Moreover, this Chapter has allowed me to claim that,

even if Puntos does not refer to any GGV, Sexto Sentido deals with related concepts.

5 Which Gendered Grammar of Violence in Sexto Sentido?

The present Chapter constitutes the core of my analysis and aims to answer to my last sub-question: “which GGsV are represented in Sexto Sentido and through which representational strategies?”. In order to do so, I present the structure of the episode analysed and proceed in doing NA and GGVA. Finally, I reflect on these representational strategies and their implications in terms of the challenges they raise to beliefs of women’s vulnerability to rape, anticipating a conclusion to my leading research question. The methodology chosen does not aim to reveal all the peculiarities of the text analysed, but only to fulfil the purposes of this research.

My decision to analyse only one episode is justified by the fact that I consider an episode as a unit that contains enough scenes to claim it as representative of trends present in the whole *telenovela*; and second, because its length is not so long so as to negate me from reflecting in depth on all the different issues raised. The reasons for which my choice has fallen on the twentieth episode, “You are not alone”, are the following: (1) it is mainly centred on a rape story; (2) it repeatedly contrasts dominant and counter discourses on GGV; and (3) it shows different elements of agency²⁵.

5.1 Analysis of the Episode’s Structure

Firstly, I present the structure of the episode selected for the analysis and look at the way in which the different elements of the text are tied together. In doing so I also summarise the episode. The structure of the episode is clearly the one of soap operas, with multiple and interweaving story lines. Moreover, there are no clearly defined starting and ending points, because the storylines are developed in a broad number of episodes.

The episode, as it is suggested by the title “You are not alone”, is mainly centred on Franky’s difficulties after her rape and on the role played by other characters in supporting her. The interactions of the characters²⁶ in this context

²⁵ The episode is available in YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=sexto+sentido+capitulo+20&search_type=&q=f

²⁶ The main characters in the episode are: Eddy, Franky’s boyfriend, radio speaker and recovered alcoholic; Sofia, a university student and young single mother; Angel, a gay university student; Johnson, a black university student and native of the Caribbean Coast; Gabriel, a high school student and Gema’s boyfriend; Gema, a high school student engaged in the politics of the institute where she studies; Vicky, in the process of enrolling in university, a lesbian, recovered alcoholic and rape survivor; Alejandra, a young girl who aspires to independence from her family; and Elena, a high school student who lives in a situation of domestic violence and economic difficulties.

bring up different topics that I present later in detail, doing NA and GGVA. In the mean time I classified the characters' interactions in 5 storylines, which are not independent, but interlinked..

- *Eddy's difficulties in relating to Franky after the rape:* Eddy does not know how to manage the situation of Franky's rape. He feels badly for not have been able to protect the girl in the moment of the rape and cannot tolerate that another man has touched her. He considers Franky as a damaged product and thinks that the rapist had to be a black person, because blacks are like that, all criminals. In place of facing his fears and supporting Franky, Eddy avoids the young woman and falls back into alcoholism.
- *Johnson as target of negative stereotypes on black men as rape assailants:* Johnson, who accidentally listened Eddy's comment on black people, unburdens himself with Sofia, explaining to her all the prejudices he has to face because of his colour.
- *Friends' efforts to support Franky:*
 - o Sofia shares with Franky all the information needed to report the rape to the police, but Franky is afraid that people and her parents might find out what happened to her and blame her for the rape. However, Sofia shows her the importance of reporting to police and the need to seek on psychological support.
 - o In a chat with Eddy, Angel faces Eddy's sexist prejudices, showing him the detrimental effects of his behaviour.
 - o Sofia, who is really bothered by Eddy's behaviour, points out to him how bad his attitude has been towards Franky and Johnson.
- *Franky's female friends in dealing with the fear of rape:* the young women reflect on the insecurity women's have to face in the streets and their home. In another scene, on the way back home after a night spent together, the young women accompany each other to overcome their sense of insecurity and defend themselves from a young harasser.
- *Gabriel and Gema's discussions about women's risk to be raped:* does not want Gema to go alone in the streets because he fears that she could be raped like Franky. Gabriel expresses his preoccupation with impositions over Gema, who is bothered by Gabriel's sexist and controlling attitude. She suggests to him other ways to prevent rape, like political organising.

As the analysis of the structure reveals, the multiple storylines developed throughout the episode selected mainly relate to the process of victimization Franky faces after the rape and the way she and her friends deal with it. By victimization I refer to different social dynamics that, after the rape, reproduce her sense of being victim, such as loss of confidence, blame for having invited her perpetrator and diffidence towards men, etc. But, why choose an episode centred on victimization to analyse the GGV represented in Sexto Sentido? First, as Marcus suggests, because the rape script pre-exist the rape itself; and

second, because I argue that the rape script is also reproduced by instances of rape and processes of victimization, which configure women as victims, strengthening beliefs on women's vulnerability.

5.2 Narrative Analysis

As already explained, narratives produce meanings on what are considered problems and values, putting in relation events, characters and actions. Now I will explain how these relations are constructed.

In the context of the whole telenovela, Puntos is the invisible narrating voice, the *destinator*, which produces the whole soap opera with the intent of spreading messages in society. However, as is suggested by the constructionist approach, since language is the production and negotiation of meanings, the meanings produced by Puntos may not correspond to Puntos' stated intentions. I will go deeper into this point at the end of the Chapter.

In the episode considered, Franky is the *subject* of the narrative and her *object* is overcoming the process of victimization. Franky's object fits in the narrative structure elaborated by Puntos and presented in the previous Chapter. In fact, this narrative structure constructs Sexto Sentido's characters in the process of understanding the oppressive relations of power existing in society and the possibilities for change available. Then, once all the alternatives accessible to them are considered, the characters decide what to do and take charge of their responsibilities. In this case, I argue that Franky is in the process of becoming conscious of the oppressive power relations that trigger the process of victimization and of taking some decisions. I would state that, in this episode, Franky has not been intended as *receiver*. In fact, considering that Puntos wants to promote each person's right to take informed and conscious decisions and not to promote specific types of behaviour, Franky's actions are to be intended as one of many other possibilities. For this reason, I decided to not analyse the GGV embodied by Franky.

Then, the subject is surrounded by *adjuvants* and *opponents*, who support or impede Franky from reaching her object. Adjuvants and opponents find themselves in opposition on certain decisions to take or behaviours to adopt. This narrative choice to construct oppositions in the text allows Puntos to present dominant and counter discourses in contrast to each other. This is a precise representational strategy that I analyse further. More specifically, those characters who carry Puntos' messages, the *receivers*, are principally adjuvants, who develop counter-discourses. However, because some of the opponents go through a process of change, becoming adjuvants, they are receiver of both dominant and Puntos' counter discourses. The engine which produces this change in the opponents is constituted by the interaction between opponents and adjuvants as well as by the realization of part of the opponents of their suffering in embracing dominant discourses. This type of dynamic shows characters making decisions and taking responsibility. However, I am not going to analyse it in details, since once the change is realised the GGV proposed is the one of adjuvants.

5.3 Narrative and Gendered Grammar of Violence Analysis

Now I will analyse an episode coupling NA and GGVA. In fact, as already mentioned in the introduction, NA helps to clarify the picture of the type of interaction between characters, while GGVA allows me to understand in which way the characters look at women and men as subject/object of violence. Since I have identified opponents and adjuvants as those characters bearing the dominant and counter discourses on the GGVA, I will further analyse only these two categories.

Opponents' GGVA

The GGVA proposed by the opponents in the episode analysed is articulated as follows. First, men are seen as subjects of women's protection, strength and competition among men. Eddy, for example, reproaches himself for not having been able to prevent the rape and feels impotent about it, taking for granted that he should have protected Franky: "I was only thinking that, while I was waiting you at a party, you were... I couldn't.. I couldn't do anything to protect you..." (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 9)²⁷. He also assumes that sex and rape equal each other, and for this he becomes subject of blaming towards Franky, who is conceived as culpable for not having protected her sexual honour. Eddy states: "Although it sounds bad, brother, my food has been spoiled [...] I can't stand the idea that she had sex with this man" (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 4). In doing so Eddy puts himself on the same level of the rapist, in a competition between men based on strength and sexuality. This echoes the GGVA, recognised as dominant in Nicaragua by Montenegro and Kampwirth, which prescribes to men to be subject of force and will for hard struggle and subjects of women's protection.

Moreover, men are conceived by the opponents as subjects of freedom and legitimate control over women. For instance, this occurs when Gabriel wants to limit the freedom of his girlfriend Gema to avoid rape, without questioning the legitimacy men have to rape. Gabriel says: "I was thinking that with what occurred to Franky, I don't want you to go out alone"; and later: "I'm your boyfriend, I'm supposed to do this... [to control you]" (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 1). His attitude recalls those beliefs, highlighted by Kampwirth and Montenegro, which position women in need of male protection, with the imperative of not going into the streets alone, and that men are free of doing whatever they want.

Further, men are also thought by opponents as subject of legitimate violence and legitimate heterosexual desire. These ideas of GGVA are conveyed by a young boy, harassing some Sexto Sentido's female characters. He addresses the girls as "alone", conveying the message that a woman is alone when she is not accompanied by a man. For that, he feels free to make some sexual proposals to the girls: "there's no problem, I have enough for all of you". When they refuse, the guy reacts by defining the young women as

²⁷ All the quotes related to the script of the episodes are from Puntos de Encuentro (2000). Sexto Sentido, Guión Capítulo 20, Versión Lectura de Mesa.

lesbians, with a pejorative word: “Oh, I knew that you are all dykes” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 5). This re-collocates him as subject of sexual desire and legitimate verbal violence, but clarified – his sexual desire is strictly heterosexual. It is easy to reconnect this type of GGV to the ones proposed by Montenegro: men as subject of an uncontrolled sexual desire and, thus subject of legitimate violence, in a context of normalised heteronormativity and homophobia.

Considering intersectionality leads me to notice how the opponents’ GGV changes if the rapist is a black men. In fact, when Eddy describes the behaviour of the rapist, he refers to the perpetrator as a black person, with a derogatory term: “damned black” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 4). This specification leads to the conception of white and mestizo men as subject of legitimate violence and black men as subject of illegitimate violence, reproducing the ethicised hierarchy of the colonial period presented by Montenegro.

Finally, the fact that the same opponents suffer for not fitting in the GGV they support leaves space for a change. For example, this is the case of Eddy who falls back into alcoholism to forget his sense of inadequacy towards the models of hegemonic masculinity he embraces. Later, this suffering will be a reason for change that leads him to apologise to Franky: “Franky, I want to apologise for have taken a distance from you”, “[...] my first reaction was foolish” and “[...] I have fallen back in drinking”; finally “I promise you that I won’t fall back [...]”(Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 9).

Considering that models of femininity and masculinity are always relational, what follows is that women are represented as: object of legitimate man’s protection, competition, control, heterosexual desire and violence; subject of self-limitation, dependence on men, heterosexual desire and fear towards black men. On the other hand, men are thought by opponents to be only object of women’s gratitude and women’s heterosexual desire, with the only exception of the black men, who can be subject of legitimate diffidence.

GGV of the adjuvants

The GGV proposed by the adjuvants in the episode considered is structured along two lines. First, adjuvants contest the dominant GGV sustained by the opponents and second they propose alternatives.

Generally, adjuvants conceive men as subjects of illegitimate violence, rape and harassment. Many quotes supports this statement. For example, Sofia’s remark on the rapist, during a conversation with Franky on the importance of reporting to police, is worth mentioning. She states: “[...] I’m afraid that he would come back assaulting me...or another girl”; and then, controlling tears: “Franky, he will pay for what he did” (Ep. 20, Act 1, Sc. 6). Sofia, here, conceives men as illegitimate subjects of rape for two reasons: because of empathy towards the survivor and because of legal rules. In a certain way, the second statement recalls the principles of liberal feminism.

The same dominant discourse that wants men as subject of legitimate violence is also challenged by the girls who face the harasser later in the story. They clearly reject his sexual invitation and, as the script says: “Elena goes directly toward him [...] the women, except Franky, come next to Elena as threatening bodyguards. The young man leaves. They laugh and go back to

Franky, clapping hands”. Here, women in group become subjects of defence and even of attack. They exercise agency, establishing women’s autonomy and freedom from violence. However, at the end of the scene Franky says: “And what if he had a knife?” and all the girls realise the risk they had run. It might be possible to deduct that, in this context, the knife has not necessarily to be intended as a gendered danger: in fact, it could be a threat even for a man attacked by a thief – that a man would not have had more possibilities to defend himself than a woman in this situation. So, the GGV seems changed to a GV where violence is not determined by biological difference. The consequence might be to reframe the concept of vulnerability, as I will explain later. However this remains a speculation, because I do not have information on what Puntos think about this.

Finally, another remark connected to this scene is that adjuvants contest the heteronormativity of the young harasser, and do so by connecting his homophobic insult to a critique of hegemonic masculinity. In fact, Elena states: “What do you know about this [the girls being dykes]? Do you believe to be a macho?” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 5).

Then adjuvants also contest opponents’ beliefs of men as subjects of competition over women reduced to object of sexual desire. For instance, Angel clearly affirms: “This was not sex, Eddy. This was a rape. And if she felt something, this was pain, anger, disgust, whatever, but surely nothing of pleasure” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 4). In this way Angel does not only establish women as illegitimate objects of men’s competition and legitimate subjects of suffering and anger linked to rape. He also reframes women as subject of legitimate sexual pleasure in consensual relationships. Assuming that when there is no rape women can feel pleasure, Angel directly contests the dominant belief identified by Montenegro of women as subject of repression of their sexual desire.

In response to conceptualizations of men as subject of freedom and legitimate control over women, adjuvants propose ideas of women as subjects of legitimate freedom and men as subjects of legitimate control over themselves and respect toward women. Gema, in fact, makes Gabriel notice that “[...] if someone has to be locked up, they are rapists, not me”; later: “Gabriel, I don’t need your permission to do whatever I want”; and: “[As my boyfriend] you are supposed to respect me [not to control me]”. In this way, Gema advances ideas of women’s autonomy in relationships and men’s respect of that autonomy. At the same time the girl also proposes men as subjects committed to fight against violence and sexism, offering a possibility for agency to both genders: “If you are so worried about violence, why don’t you do something in the school? Something like Karate for women or a campaign against machismo?” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 1). Later, in the final scene, both Gema and Gabriel are represented as subjects of political organising against violence, when the young woman states: “[...] we are going to discuss how to reduce violence in the school” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Tag).

It is interesting to note that the only occasion in which women are represented as illegitimate subject of something is in Johnson speech about racism, when he says: “Do you know that more than one time it happened that I was walking on the street and a white woman crossed the street because of

fear?” (Ep. 20, Act 2, Sc. 7). Here mestizo and white women are conceived as illegitimate subjects of fear towards black men.

5.4 Reflecting on Representational Strategies

Going back to the leading sub-question of this Chapter, I now want to present some reflections on the representational choices made in the episode selected and on how they challenge beliefs of women’s vulnerability, anticipating some conclusions related to the main question of this research.

First, I should highlight that the episode considered does not construct only one GGV, but two different GGVs against one another. This representational choice allows Puntos to visibilise negative traits of the dominant GGV that are usually obscured. In this way, *Sexto Sentido* works to de-familiarise dominant discourses and contest them.

On one side, there is the opponents’ GGV which represents the dominant rape script in two ways. First, it frames as legitimate the dominant GGV in Nicaragua that I have already defined as a process of sexist gendering. Second, when interpreted by the opponents, this GGV victimises the subject and consequently produces women as vulnerable: victims are indeed vulnerable by definition.

On the other side, there is the adjuvants’ GGV. It directly critiques the opponents’ GGV, condemning the illegitimate character of processes of sexist gendering, and proposes alternatives. In doing so, the adjuvants’ GGV increases the diversity of femininity and masculinity’s representations. For instance, the episode considered shows women as able to defend themselves, when organised in group, or as subjects of political organising against violence and sexism: these are clear examples of women’s agency. This should lead me to conclude that this episode follows Marcus’ agenda, to value what the rape script excludes or ridicules. However, it happens only to a certain extent; in fact, even if the episode shows women’s will and agency, it constructs women as subjects of violence only to a limited degree, in the sense that they are never subject of offence over men.

Representing women as violent only to a limited extent might not actually display that their condition of vulnerability is overcome. If women never attack or rape men maybe they are designated to remain only the objects of violence. In this way, beliefs of women’s biological vulnerability seemed not to be undermined. However, I argue that representing women as those who rape would obscure the disciplinary power that creates the rape script, because it would ignore that women’s rape is actually a big problem. Second, it is unlikely that representing women as subjects of violence in some episodes of a soap opera could actually change discourses which have been stratified over centuries. Third, I suppose that representing men as objects of women’s violence would not lead to de-normalized discourses that portray women as rapeable and man as potential rapists. On the contrary, I consider it more likely the consequence of this would be a femininisation of the raped men: this is the same dynamic identified by Zarkov in representations of man over man rape during the Balkans war (Zarkov, 2007). Thus, my conclusion is that, in order to challenge the rape script, it is necessary to negotiate the construction of

femininity and masculinity with those discourses already existing in society. This observation is in line with the recognition of the constructivist effects of language.

Do these considerations undermine the possibility for resistance to a GGV that normalises women's rape? My answer is no. In fact, the point is not to construct women as violent in every sense, but to enlarge the possibilities for thinking about women as subjects able to counter-act violence. This perspective is actually envisioned in *Sexto Sentido*: a brief example of this is Gema's proposal to Gabriel to organise a course of karate for women. However, it is important to remember that the episode analysed does not only increase the diversity of femininity's representations. In fact, it would not lead to eliminate negative representations. But it also contests what are considered negative representations, putting the opponents and adjuvants' GGVs against each other.

Finally, it is worth of mention that *Puntos* also challenges beliefs of women's vulnerability through reframing the meanings of this concept. Even if women remain the only category vulnerable to rape throughout the whole *telenovela*, men are constructed as vulnerable to *machismo* in other ways: for example, Eddy suffers for following a hegemonic model of masculinity to the point of falling back in alcoholism. I argue that this reframing goes toward a reversing of beliefs that conceive men as always strong, and make them weak in front of the dominant GGV contested. Moreover, I sustain that some forms of violence, like the one represented by the knife, are de-gendered with a consequent de-gendering of the concept of vulnerability, at least in the specific situation considered.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

In this Chapter I discursively analysed one episode selected from *Sexto Sentido* and I identified the representational strategies there employed: de-familiarisation of dominant representations, increase of the diversity of representations, reversing representation technique and change of framing. I argued that these representational choices actually works as counter-strategies against beliefs of women's vulnerability, even if the constructivist aspects of language necessarily poses limits to the extent dominant discourses can be re-worked. I now move to the final conclusions of this research.

Conclusion

In this paper, I started from considering explanations of rape, in terms of beliefs of biological women's vulnerability and men's strength, as a social problem. This is important because of the limitations it entails to women's agency: if women are thought as naturally vulnerable, the space available to challenge rape is strongly limited by the 'difficulty' of changing nature. Then, embracing a feminist post-structuralist perspective on rape, I elaborate my research problem on the need to understand how to bring about change in beliefs of women's vulnerability at the level of discourses. The construction of this research question has been made possible further through familiarizing

myself with *Sexto Sentido*, a feminist *telenovela* for social change that, among other things, depicts stories of rape with the intent of contesting dominant discourses in Nicaraguan society and advancing alternatives. In fact, this experience has reinforced my curiosity towards the possibility of fostering change through discourses. Hence, I solidified this interest by reflecting on the politics of representation employed in *Sexto Sentido*.

Throughout the paper, I argued the following points: that beliefs of women's vulnerability do not only limit women's agency, but also produce discourses that normalise rape (Chapter 2); dominant discourses on GGV in Nicaragua enable processes of rape to occur and they therefore should be questioned (Chapter 3); *Sexto Sentido* uses specific representational strategies to challenge these dominant discourses (Chapter 4); and these representational strategies actually work to undermine dominant discourses (Chapter 5). Now, I present my conclusive reflections in relation to my initial question "how does *Sexto Sentido* challenge the dominant GGV in Nicaragua, in terms of the representational strategies it adopts?". I will articulate my considerations on *Sexto Sentido* and its potentiality in promoting change on four different levels: politics of representation, feminist politics of rape, socio-historical context and personal reflection.

First, my initial argument on the necessity of negotiations over the production of meanings brought me to expect that changes to the dominant GGV would be limited in *Sexto Sentido*'s representations. In the end, I have found out that it actually occurred, but without undermining the resisting value of *Sexto Sentido*'s counter-representations. More specifically, I have argued that a careful use of counter-representational strategies can challenge dominant discourses and construct counter-discourses, as *Sexto Sentido* does. However, I consider it unproductive to expect that these counter-discourses could disregard all dominant discourses and construct something completely new or different. In fact, it is impossible to not trigger into action all the meanings already in use in language when we construct alternatives.

Then, to reason more on *Sexto Sentido*'s role in undermining the rape script, I would remember a quote from Marcus where the author invites to "take the ability to rape completely out of men's hands" (Marcus: 1992: 388). I would say that *Sexto Sentido* may be close to this objective, at least to the extent it invites people to exercise a different or alternative type of agency in its effort to change what is considered commonsense in society. However, talking in absolute terms as Marcus does (e.g. completely out of men's hand) fails in acknowledging the contradictions and paradoxes the process of countering dominant representations raises.

Third, because this paper deals with the experience of Puntos, it is impossible for me to not comment further on this matter. I would say that I have widely appreciated the work of this organization. However, it has required me to answer why I have such enthusiasm considering that the feminist movement in Nicaragua is now strongly repressed by the Government and anti-feminism is growing. My answer is that the change Puntos wants to foster should not be evaluated in terms of the achievements of the feminist movement. In fact, *Sexto Sentido*'s mission to promote critical capabilities to analyse and find ways out from oppression refers to a different understanding

of social change. A change that is –in Lacayo’s words– a “non-linear, contradictory, messy and long term process” that individual and collectives experience in a complex way (Lacayo, 2006: 15). So, the difficulties the Nicaraguan feminist movement faces now cannot constitute a standard to evaluate Puntos’ potentiality for change.

Finally, because this research responds to personal concerns, I want to acknowledge how it contributed to changing my way of looking at social change. If, when I started this investigation, I was concerned with finding a feminist perspective on rape that could value women’s agency and challenge beliefs of vulnerability, I would consider this goal satisfied. Not only because my appreciation of post-structuralist feminism and of the work of Puntos; but also because, thanks to them, I learnt to strengthen my self-reflexivity in relation to how dominant discourses produce the same understanding of the world as I had, and how myself and others may reproduce it even without realising. Moreover, I learnt to not be scared by the paradoxes that the will to change and construct a non-oppressive world may raise. In fact, if the power of dominant discourses can construct even ourselves, then we, as human beings, cannot pretend that change is within our complete control. But change does not cease to be possible.

The revolution will not be simple, clean or easy.

It will help you to find meaning in difficult things, to be courageous in facing complexities and contradictions, to get your hands dirty and like it.

The revolution is not going to happen tomorrow

It’s never going to happen

...it is taking place right now

It is an alternative universe

That runs parallel to this one,

Waiting for you to switch sides.

Worker’s Collective (2008) Expect Resistance

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Gendered Grammar of Violence Analysis

The analysis is based on the script of the episode. I consider only those scenes related to Franky's story.

Twentieth Episode, Teaser

Midday, living room.

Gabriel, Sofia, Eddy, Elena, Angel, Alejandra.

Alejandra goes out of the bathroom with an blue beauty mask. During the dialogue Gabriel mocks Alejandra for the beauty mask.

Twentieth Episode, First Act, Second Scene

Night, living room.

Eddy has a dream (ideal vision of reality of an opponent). Set of the dream is the time and place of the rape.

	Eddy's dream	Text
W-O of	Man's protection Man's love	"In an imaginative recap of Franky's attack, Eddy manages to defend Franky and chases away the offender. She hugs him desperately and trembles. He strokes her head, feeling better. He closes his eyes with her in his arms" (Script).
W-S of	Fear	-
M-O of	Women's gratitude	-
M-S of	Women' protection Strength	-

Twentieth Episode, First Act, Third Scene

Early morning, living room.

Eddy wakes up (opponent)

Eddy after the dream		Text
W-O		“Eddy opens his eyes. He is lying on the sofa. He remembers reality, sits down, takes his trousers and stands up. He looks himself in the mirror. He makes a gesture of impotent anger with his fist against the wall. He leans on the wall and slides until he seats on the floor with his head in the hands. He raises his head and, with his disillusioned gaze lost in space, Eddy sighs. Remembering his situation, his depression moves to anger. He takes a decision, takes his shirt, puts it on and goes out” (Script).
of		
W-S		
of		
M-O		“Eddy opens his eyes. He is lying on the sofa. He remembers reality, sits down, takes his trousers and stands up. He looks himself in the mirror. He makes a gesture of impotent anger with his fist against the wall. He leans on the wall and slides until he seats on the floor with his head in the hands. He raises his head and, with his disillusioned gaze lost in space, Eddy sighs. Remembering his situation, his depression moves to anger. He takes a decision, takes his shirt, puts it on and goes out” (Script).
of		
M-S	Sadness	
of	Disillusionment Anger	

Twentieth Episode, First Act, Sixth Scene

Sofia (adjuvant) is sitting with Franky (subject) on the bed with a folder.

	Sofia's view	Franky's view	Text
W-O of	Women's support Therapeutic support	Blaming	S: "Here you have everything you have to do in case you want to report to the police"
W-S of	Women's support Reports to the police Legitimate indecision One's privacy protection Not easy decisions Anger Fear to be raped	Sadness Indecision One's privacy protection Anger Lack of strength Fear of living again the memories of the rape Fear of being blamed Self-control (of tears, anger...) Fear of being 'pathologised'.	(F. looks at the papers in the folder). F (sad, sighing, hesitant): "I don't know yet. I have to think about it". [...] F: "[...] I don't want to keep on trial. I don't want my parents know what happened. [...] S: "I know that is not easy with that system of (IN)justice we have... but..." F: "It would get me mad if I wouldn't denounce it, but I don't know if I am strong enough. I don't want to live the details again, and if someone would dare to say that I provoked him.." (controlling anger) S (comprehensive and empathic): "I almost can see his face laughing. I'm afraid that he would come back assaulting me...or another girl". (controlling tears). S. (affectionate, firm): "Franky, he will pay for what he did. It's only a matter of time. [...] Why don't you take the opportunity to talk with a psychologist? F (frightened): "Do you think I'm crazy?" S: "Not at all. But everyone who goes through this needs help". F: "I feel good already. It passed. Thanks" (F. stands up with the folder, S. looks at her worried) (Script)
M-O of	Women's Anger Fear	Women's anger	
M-S of	Violence Responsibility	Women's blame Violence	

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, First Scene

Gabriel (opponent) and Gema (adjuvant)

	Gabriel's view	Gema's view	Text
W-O of	Man's protection Man's control	Man's respect Man's support	Ga: "I was thinking that with what occurred to Franky, I don't want you to go out alone".
W-S of	Legitimate self-limitation Illegitimate autonomy Illegitimate self-limitation	Autonomy Freedom from violence	Ge (laughing): "It's dangerous, but if someone has to be locked up, they are rapists, not me. Thanks."
M-O of	Women's gratitude	Women' disapproval	Ga: "Even so, I will not allow you to take a risk"
M- S of	Freedom Women's protection Women's control	Self-control Support Political organising against violence	Ge: Who are you to 'allow' me to do something or not? It's a good thing you are worried for me, but..." Ga: "It's for your own good" Ge: "If you are so worried about violence, why don't you do something in the school? Something like Karate for women or a campaign against machismo?" Ga: "Look, I don't want to save the world, Gema. Simply, I will not allow you..." Ge (disappointed): "Gabriel, I don't need your permission to do whatever I want. Surely, I don't want something bad happening to me, but you want to control me as ..." Ga: " I'm your boyfriend, I'm supposed to do this..." Ge: "You are supposed to respect me. But, if you insist so much, take note of the taxi number plate and I will call you when I will arrive at my house" (Script).

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Second Scene

Alejandra, Elena, Sofia and Vicky (Adjuvant)

	Al. El. And Sofia's view	Vicky's view	Text
W-O of	Rape and men's violence	Rape and men's violence	[...] S: "It's just normal that after a rape you want to forget everything occurred to you"
W-S of	Fear Diffidence towards men	Rape trauma Strategies to manage the rape trauma	[...]
M-O of	Fear	Fear	S: "[...] An uncle did the same to me long time ago. Therapy helped me, but it's hard. Still I have nightmares"
M-S of	Violence and rape	Violence and rape	E: "Hay, with what occurred to Franky now I'm scared of walking in the streets". Al: "Oh yes, yesterday night I was really scared, going back to home. I feel mistrust towards men" (Script)

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Fourth Scene

Eddy (opponent), Angel (adjuvant) and Johnson (adjuvant, but not speaking in this scene)

	Eddy's view	Angel's view	Text
W-O of	Rape as Sex	Rape as unequal relationship of power	A: "Do you want to talk?" E: "It's nothing crazy" A: "Nothing? You just started drinking after a month of being sober" [...] E: "I went to look for the damned who did this to Franky, but I don't even know how he looks like, so I ended up in a bar with my dad ²⁸ " A: "Well, keep on drinking is not really useful for you, and even less for Franky" E: "But already it is not the same with her..." (feeling sorry

²⁸ Eddy's father is alcoholic.

for himself) “We just started. I thought this was the right time...” (shaking his head)

[...]

A: “What do you mean men? You don’t want to stay with her, is it?”

E: “After what this damned black did to her?”

[...]

E: “Although it sounds bad, brother, my food has been spoiled”

A: “You know that it’s not like that”

E: “Brother, I can’t stand the idea that she had sex with this man”

A: “This was not sex, Eddy. This was a rape. And if she felt something, this was pain, anger, disgust, whatever, but surely nothing of pleasure”

E: “But he kissed her, he possessed her, he touched her. When I see her, I can’t stand the idea that this damned²⁹ is mocking me, man, in my face”.

A: “If, for just a moment, you stop being worried about what this man did to you and start being worried about what he did to Franky, in place of competing with a rapist, you would be a man able to love a woman you feel bad for what she had to live through”

(Eddy, surprised, look at Angel and then at the sky)

(Script)

W-S	Rape, because it is	Suffering	-
of	sex	Anger	
M-O		Suffering	-
of		Anger	

²⁹ The Nicaraguan word is ‘hijuepuchica’. According to the Costa Rican dictionary “this is quite nearly ‘hijo de puta’, or son of a bitch, but not as insulting”. It is possible to say *hijuepuchica* “without much objection from even the most proper, upright Costa Rican citizens. If you do say ‘hijo de puta’, though, expect to insult those around you”.

M-S of	Rape Sex Anger Alcoholism The rapist is a “damned black” Competition among men based on force and sexual strength	Help towards women Legitimate distinction between sex and rape Illegitimate equation of sex and rape Self-control Empathy towards women Love towards women	-
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Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Fifth Scene

An harasser (opponent) and Alejandra, Elena, Sofia, Vicky (adjuvant) and Franky (subject)

	Harasser's view	Girls' view	Franky's view	Text
W-O of	Legitimate heterosexual desire Legitimate verbal violence Non-legitimate homosexual desire	Illegitimate harassment Friendship Friends' protection	Illegitimate harassment Friends' protection Friendship	V: "Thanks a lot for getting me at home" Al: "That's what friends are for" El: "Who says that the night is only for men?" V: "Who talked about fear?"
W-S of	Heterosexual desire. Illegitimate homosexual desire Dependence from men	Friendship Friends' protection Defence Attack Freedom Autonomy Legitimate (but not declared) homosexual desire	Consciousness of illegitimate dangers Friendship	H: "Sssss, are you alone?" S: "No, we are together, why? Any problem?" (V and S clap their hands and follow walking. The guy follows them) H: "There's no problem, I have enough for everyone" Al: "So, put what you have in your head"
M-O of	Women's heterosexual desire	Women's defence Women's attack	Friends' defence Friends' attack	H: "Oh, I knew that you are all dikes" (El goes directly toward him)
M-S of	Legitimate heterosexual desire Illegitimate homosexual desire Legitimate verbal violence	Illegitimate harassment	Illegitimate harassment and danger	El: "What do you know about this? Do you think you are macho?" V: "Any problem?" (The guy looks at them as he would like to threat the girls. The women, except F, come next to El. as threatening bodyguards. The young man leaves. They laugh and go back to F, clap hands) F: "And what if he had a knife?" (All the girls look at each others as to say that they haven't thought about it and they had run a risk together. They hug each others). (Script)

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Seventh Scene

Johnson (adjuvant/subject) and Sofia (adjuvant). I don't mention here Sofia perspective because she is the listener that gives Johnson the possibility to talk about Eddy. Johnson is here a subject, because this character brings up the topic of racism.

	Johnson's analysis of Eddy's phrase: "that damned black rapist"	Johnson's reaction to that phrase	Text
W-O of	White women: illegitimate violence from part of black men	White women: illegitimate threatening black men	J: "The man who raped F, was he black? S: "F didn't mention anything about it, why?"
W-S of	White women: legitimate fear towards black men	White women: illegitimate fear	J: "E said something about a damned black" [...]
M-O of	Black men: legitimate diffidence	Black men: illegitimate diffidence Black men: illegitimate discrimination	J: "Most of non-black people think that we only think about sex and that we are delinquent, violent" [...]
M-S of	Black man: illegitimate violence White man: legitimate violence Black man: violence and crimes	Black men: sadness White men: illegitimate discrimination	J: "Do you know that more than one time it happened that I was walking on the street and a white woman crossed the street because of fear?" [...] J: " You don't know how one feels when others look at you with mistrust only for your colour" (Script)

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Eighth Scene

Sofia (adjuvant) and Eddy (opponent) are alone in the kitchen. Sofia starts washing the plates silently. There is tension.

	Sofia's view	Eddy's view	Text
W-O of	Illegitimate sexual objects Legitimate support	Support by other women	E (humble): "S, I want to thanks you for all the support you gave to F"
W-S of	Legitimate expectation of support	Support to other women and maybe to men also	S: "I believe that she needs more your support"
M-O of	Legitimate reproach	Illegitimate reproach	E (defensive): "It has not been easy for me, did you know?"
M-S- of	Legitimate support towards women Illegitimate reduction of women to sexual objects of contention White men: illegitimate discrimination of black men	Gratitude towards women for supporting other women Reflection (possibility for change)	S: "But she expected a different behaviour. She thinks that you see her as a damaged product. How do you think she feels?" (E remains thoughtful. He wash dishes silently) S: "By the way, why did you said that the rapist is black? Did you see him? Did F say anything to you?" E: "She said that was <i>moreno</i> ³⁰ , or something like that, why?" S: "Because J listened what you said and he felt badly. Look E, all we are more or less <i>morenos</i> . What did you think to say that he is black? And even if he is. If so, well, have you ever said damned white?" (Eddy remains reflexive) (Script)

³⁰ Moreno can be translated in English as dark skin. This term is usually used to refer to mestizo people.

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Ninth Scene

Franky (subject) and Eddy (opponent becoming adjuvant). Eddy is in front of the radio controls

	Franky's view	Eddy's view	Text
W-O of	Illegitimate non-supportative attitude from part of men Illegitimate blaming from part of men Love and tenderness	Apologies Illegitimate rape Illegitimate sense of protection by men Illegitimate sense of competition among men Legitimate support by men Love and tenderness	E: "Well, the next song is for J and it goes on air with the promise to not more screw up. [...]" E puts the music and F enters in the radio room F (relaxed, distant): "Hi E" E (nervous): "Hi F" [...] E (thoughtful): "F, I want to apologise for being distant from you" F: "You know that in all this situation (eyes with tears), your behaviour is one of the things that hurt me more. (resentment) but, well..." (F look at E with dignity) E: "Forgive me, I don't know what happened to me... I was only thinking that, while I was waiting you at a party, you were... I couldn't.. I couldn't do anything to protect you.. F: "But you avoided me as I was guilty, or something like that, I don't know..." E: "Yes, it was my first reaction, it was foolish, but I couldn't stop thinking. I couldn't see you thinking in what this damned did to you" (E hugs her. Initially she is cautious, tense. He caresses her a little bit, she is more relaxed, but then she stops all of a sudden. F looks at him, thinking.) E: "And you, how are you?" (E hugs her)

F (under her breathes, with tears): “It makes me angry. It is a horrible sensation, as impotence, I end up crying and crying. And I’m tired. I have nightmares every night”

(E sighs and doesn’t forgive himself)

E: “And I.. that I have fallen back in drinking”

(F reacts incredulous and angry, she moves away. He tries to get over)

F: “How do you think that I can trust you again if you are drinking? E, forget. In this way, there’s nothing”

E: “Well, it was only once and already Angel scolded³¹ me”

F: “E, but this is really serious. Or you are good and healthy or nothing, I can’t...”

E (boy scouts sign): “F, I promise you that I won’t fall back in alcoholism”

(They smile and strongly hug. F smiles relived)

E (tender): “And you, promise me that you go back to the psychologist”

(F cleans her tears and look at his eyes)

F: “I promise”

(E carefully raises her head)

E: “I love you”

(E give her a really tender kiss and she replays)

(Script)

W-S of	Suffering	Emotions
	Anger and resentment towards men	Trauma
	Sense of impotence	Decisions
	Resentment	Love and tenderness

³¹ In the original text a typical Nicaraguan and colloquial expression is used.

	Trust		
	Commitment to find ways to recover the trauma		
	Love and tenderness.		
M-O of	Women's anger and resentment	Women's resentment	-
	Trust	Trust	
	Love and tenderness	Love and tenderness	
M-S of	Illegitimate non-supportative attitude	Apologies	-
	Illegitimate blaming of women	Illegitimate women's protection	
	Love and tenderness	Illegitimate competition among men	
		Interest towards women's emotional situation and trauma	
		Recognition of errors (alcoholism).	
		Commitment to not repeat errors.	
		Love and tenderness	

Twentieth Episode, Second Act, Tag

Alejandra and Elena are ending their breakfast. Gabriel goes out of the toilet with a blue beauty mask. Alejandra remains surprised and Elena does a gesture to say “what’s going on”. Gema (adjuvant) leaves a message for Gabriel (opponent becoming adjuvant)

	Gabriel’s view	Gema’s view	Text
W-O of	Men’s respect	Man’s respect	Ga (speaking with some difficulties): “I need to raise my self-esteem ³² ”
W-S of	Anger	Political organising against violence	(Someone knocks at the door. Al opens: it is Ge. Ga shouts and hides himself, but Ge saw him already)
M-O of	Mocks from part of women	Mocks on men	[...]
M-S of	Regret Beauty cares	Political organising against violence	Ge (surprised and laughing): “Hi. Could you please say to the monster of the blue lagoon that he has a meeting in the afternoon with the Students’ Representative, and to not miss it” [...] Ge (with an evil smile and ironic): “If he is not too busy with beauty issues, we are going to discuss how to reduce violence in the school” (Ge waves and goes out. Ga goes out from his hideout) El: “It seems that she is still angry ³³ with you” (Script)

³² Gabriel refers here to the discussion he had with Gema, his girlfriend.

³³ The original text uses a typical Nicaraguan and colloquial word.