Dis/Re/Orienting Cinematic Language: Barbara Zecchi's Feminist Mechanisms
Feminist Citational Practice Exercises

" Al mantener intencionadamente al público alerta y desorientado, el extrañamiento en el cine feminista pretende exponer y desafiar los mecanismos naturalizados que a menudo oculta el lenguaje cinematográfico dominante (es decir, patriarcal)."

"By intentionally keeping audiences alert and disoriented, estrangement in feminist cinema aims to expose and challenge the naturalized mechanisms often concealed by dominant (i.e., patriarchal) cinematic language."
—Barbara Zecchi (2023)
"[Ser muñecas (o no): Madres e hijas girando en las adaptaciones de Elena Ferrante](#)"

Part of an exploratory series, this exercise is designed to encourage feminist citational practices in which the process is envisioned as a means of public thinking through a media object without the pressure of polish or publishing. In other words, we encourage you to embrace the mess of discovering through doing to see where it can take you on the timeline.

Prompt: Inspired by Barbara Zecchi and her works *Being Dolls* (2023), *The Accented Sound of Camp* (2023), and *169 Seconds: Improbable Dialogism or the Art of Flying* (2022), this videographic exercise encourages us to think about our personal orientations to cinematic language in the media texts we study. Drawing on some of the stylistic choices Zecchi uses in her videographic scholarship, this exercise explores formal use of the maker's visual or audio cameo, visible grid lines, text on screen as captions and/or subtitles to think about the role of language that contributes to and makes up "cinematic language."

The intent of this exercise is to think about how we might examine our own orientation to media through a process of disorientation and/or reorientation by engaging with media texts in disruptive ways. These formal interruptions can, as Zecchi argues, reveal mechanisms that create and reinforce dominant norms. At the heart of this exercise is understanding how language plays a role in concealing hegemonic patterns of meaning making.

Consider:
How is language used in your media object of study? How might it reinforce dominant norms and structures, both socially and in the formal construction of the media object itself? What can disrupting language do to expose or challenge these norms? What happens to your awareness of language and "cinematic language" with additional parameters? How do they shape your investigation? What additional choices will you make in your deconstruction of the media object?

Guidelines
- focus on language/accent
- insert yourself, however briefly, but the choice must be related to the content
- use visible grid lines
- include captions and/or subtitles
- limit yourself to one media object
- 1-3 minutes max length
- Cite Barbara Zecchi as a source of inspiration in your credits

This exercise was devised by Lucy Fife Donaldson, Colleen Laird, Dayna McLeod, and Alison Peirse as part of [Ways of Doing](#) (2023).