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**Suzanne Santoro's *Towards new expression*:  
An Interference in Carla Lonzi's Theory of Sexuality and Aesthetics**

In 1974, the Brooklyn-born artist Suzanne Santoro published, in Rome, a small volume of photography titled *Per una espressione nuova / Towards new expression*<sup>1</sup> with the feminist publishing company *Scritti di Rivolta Femminile*, founded by Carla Lonzi and the women of the radical feminist group Rivolta Femminile in 1970. The artist's book was animated by the question of how the representation of women's bodies – especially the erasure of women's genitals in the history of art – had conditioned women's self-determination and their knowledge of their own sexuality. The artist's aim was to begin to work toward an expression (a syntax) that could belong to women as they begun to own their own sexuality thanks to feminist practices such as *autocoscienza*. What I aim to explore in this essay is not Santoro's work in itself, but the way in which this artwork interfered with and intervened within the feminist discourse that Carla Lonzi was developing in the early 1970s, especially two 1971 essays published in *Sputiamo su Hegel: La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti* (*We spit on Hegel: The clitoridean woman and the vaginal woman and other writings*, 1974) and the coeval notes included in her *Taci, anzi parla: diario di una femminista* (*Shut up. Or rather, speak: Diary of a feminist*, 1978). Santoro published *Towards new expression* after a period of time spent with Carla Lonzi, Carla Accardi and the women of Rivolta Femminile, doing *autocoscienza* (consciousness raising), reading, and discussing Lonzi's writings.

*Towards new expression* was in dialogue with Lonzi's ideas about women's sexuality and especially with her *La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale* (*The clitoridean woman and the vaginal woman*, 1971) but nonetheless, as soon as it was printed and started to circulate, Lonzi expressed her disappointment and discomfort with it.<sup>2</sup> In the January 23, 1974 note of her diary, *Taci, anzi parla*, she recorded her reactions to the publication of Santoro's book by the Rivolta Femminile publishing company:

I am bewildered, I have lost my temper: Diana [Suzanne Santoro] seemed to me all over the place, her booklet out of our series, but always under the signature of Rivolta Femminile, is rambling. [...] I told her: "This booklet is backward with respect to where I am, it is impersonal and generic."<sup>3</sup>

This reaction, and the accusations it contains, are for me the starting point for a reflection on the relationship already investigated by many scholars between art and feminism in Lonzi's thought. The role of art and culture in Lonzi's work is all but straightforward and demands ample reflection. Her "radical refusal to participate in those systems of culture that have been shaped by the historical exclusion of women"<sup>4</sup> is apparently in striking contrast with her long career as a professional art critic, and many scholars have proposed to consider her feminist persona as separate from her art critical one. More recently, researchers such as Giovanna Zapperi, Laura Iamurri, and Francesco Ventrella have demonstrated that, instead of considering these two elements as opposed, recognizing Lonzi's feminist practice together with her work as an art critic can be exceptionally productive, and can "transform her seeming contradictions into a possibility for rethinking the very terms of the relationship between art and feminism".<sup>5</sup> For Giovanna Zapperi, who writes extensively on the Santoro case in her book *Carla Lonzi: Un'arte della vita*, Lonzi's reaction to *Towards new expression* should be read as the expression of the anxiety of being relegated to the role of spectator and art critic: "Towards new expression thus represents a risk, that Carla Lonzi does not want to take, of being relegated in a role she chose to abandon, that of the spectator".<sup>6</sup>

In further developing this hint my intervention centers on the nexus between Lonzi's aesthetic theory and her theorization of sexuality and attempts to read these two lines of thought against one another. I believe that what troubled Carla Lonzi and made *Towards new expression* impersonal, generic and backward ("indietro") for her is not only the feminist implication of the artistic project, but more precisely the coexistence of two categories she theorized as opposed to one another: sexuality and creativity. I thus focus on the connections, tensions and discrepancies in her theorization of sexuality and in her critique of creativity, as they are revealed by Lonzi's reaction to the publication of Suzanne Santoro's book in 1974. With this contribution I do not intend to be exhaustive, but only to add my voice to a much wider field of inquiry, which is the relationship between feminism and art, in particular women's art and art criticism, in postwar Italy.

For sake of length and clarity, I will not consider here other examples of what we could call Italian feminist art that were coeval to Santoro's *Towards new expression* and shared with this work both connections with feminist activism and expressive paradigms. Just to name a few: Verita Monselles's photographs, Tomaso Binga's performances, Ketty La Rocca's *Riduzioni* and the work of artists such as Lauci Marcucci, Anna Oberto, Mirella Bentivoglio,

and many others.<sup>7</sup> For the same reasons, I will not consider here the work of many women art critics such as Lea Vergine, Romana Loda, and Mirella Bentivoglio, whose relationship with feminism and creativity is radically different from Lonzi's. The recent work of Raffaella Perna that culminated in two exhibitions, one in 2016 and one, vaster and more articulate, in 2020, stands as a point of no return in the scholarship on feminist art in Italy and affirms the mutually enriching relationship between feminism and art in the 1970s and beyond.<sup>8</sup> Within such a complex constellation, Carla Lonzi and her absolute rejection of the possibility of feminist art is in a way a thorn in the side of Italian feminism itself, and this is why her stance is so fascinating for scholars today.

With a focus on Suzanne Santoro and her work in the early years of Rivolta Femminile (1970-1974), the first section dives into an interpretation of *Towards new expression / Verso una espressione nuova* and establishes the key features of the artwork against which Lonzi expresses her disappointment. The second section retraces Lonzi's aesthetic theory and its evolution from a critique of art criticism (in *Autoritratto*, 1969) to a complete rejection of creativity (in *Taci, anzi parla. Diario di una femminista*, 1978). In section three Lonzi's theorization of sexuality is discussed along with its implications for her broader understanding of feminism as prescriptive and exclusive: a feminist (clitoridean) woman is a woman who actively modifies her sexuality (her sexual desire) in order to be authentically feminist. The fourth and conclusive section introduces an alternative way of theorizing sexuality discussed during the same years by Luce Irigaray, and suggests that a structured critique of Lonzi's theorization of creativity and sexuality can lead to a better understanding of the limits and biases of later developments of Italian feminism.

### **Towards a Feminist Expression: Recognition, Representation and Celebration**

Suzanne Santoro landed in Rome amid the 1968 upheavals, after fleeing from New York where she was studying at the School of Visual Arts with Salvatore Scarpitta, whom she describes in a recent interview as serially abusive.<sup>9</sup> In Rome, she sought out Carla Lonzi, whom she had met in New York a few years before, and started to join meetings organized by the feminist group Rivolta Femminile. As the artist herself states: "they were already doing *autocoscienza*, which for me was an explosion, or an illumination".<sup>10</sup> Strongly influenced by North American consciousness raising and self-help groups, *autocoscienza* became, in the early 1970s, the signature practice of Rivolta

Femminile, playing a crucial role in the development of Lonzi's thought. This feminist practice's goal was to explore the woman's self through a continuous dialogue and debate between women, focusing first on the relationship with the other sex, and then on the multiple aspects of a subjectivity that has been crushed, erased and forgotten. Women's own sexuality and their relationship to their own sex was one of the most important topics discussed during meetings: as we will see, the reappropriation of one's own sexuality was for Lonzi the first and fundamental step for the development of a subjectivity outside of patriarchy.

Santoro's *Mount of Venus* and *Mount of Venus and beyond* (1971) are emblematic of the first discussions around the body and sexuality that were so central for the *autocoscienza* meetings. The artworks consist in reproductions of the artist's shaved sex in real scale in a polished, rose-gold, shiny cast resin. *Mount of Venus* appears as a concave object with a triangular surface reproducing the *mons pubis* and the upper part of a stylized vulva; *Mount of Venus and beyond* has instead a more stone-like appearance and replicates more clearly different elements of the vulva such as clitoris, labia minora and labia majora. These two works are a prelude to *Towards new expression*. If *Mount of Venus* is an epistemological affirmation of the existence and importance of the artist's own sex in its morphologically precise uniqueness, *Towards new expression* establishes a relationship between the woman's sex and the possibility of women's self-expression, by challenging centuries-old practices of structural concealment and subjection. In the same way, the shift from sculpture to juxtapositions of photographs and text is telling of the influence that Lonzi has on the artist, as if the moving away from a material, visual, tactile medium could draw Santoro's work closer to the exclusively verbal world proposed by Lonzi. Moreover, in the 1974 edition of the book the images are interposed with brief text written by the artist that comment on the lack of representation of women's bodies in art and on the reduction and concealment of their sex. These written parts disappear in the second edition, privately printed in Rome in 1979: an emblematic change that adds another layer of complexity to the history of this artwork and its relationship with Carla Lonzi, for whom writing is the privileged, and, perhaps, unique medium of expression.

In *Towards new expression* the sex ceases to be the artist's and becomes the sex of all women. Deprived of its singularity, it is deployed in all its complexity and beauty, celebrated, universalized. The choice to juxtapose images of the female sex to images of Roman statues that Santoro was obsessively visiting at the Musei Capitolini in Rome speaks precisely to such a universalizing project: the sex of *all* women, in all times and places, has *always* been hidden,

canceled and concealed. The structure of oppression in which the concealment of the sex corresponds to a silencing of women's voices repeats itself throughout the centuries. In a short, crucial text placed at the beginning of the 1974 edition of the book, Santoro describes how a *graffito* she found on a wall of a Roman ruin made her realize the extent of the structural oppression she was discussing every day with the women of Rivolta Femminile. The *graffito* shows a penis, a vulva and drops of semen which are collected in a cup:

I found a picture drawn with chalk on a wall in Rome. What stuck me was its size, about 3'x3'. At first it seemed common enough, just like many of the graffiti that you see all over the world. Then I realized that I was getting curious about the drawing and it required a little more attention. In fact, the elements in it were quite clear if you were prepared to recognize them. The penis and the semen were drawn with force and the cup for the care and preservation of the semen was given great importance. On the other hand, there was the subordinate and mystified presence of the female genitals, the usual crack-hole, hole-crack. If the image of the male sex is presented in all its arrogance, the image of the female sex in western culture has been removed. You can see it in paintings and female sculptures where the sex disappears, reduced to a slight graphic sign.<sup>11</sup>

To the arrogant presence of the male sex, the artist compares the removal of the female sex, reduced to an oblique symbol in paintings and sculptures. Such structural subordination and mystification of the female sex is visible only for those who are predisposed to recognize it, or, to say it with Lonzi, for the clitoridean woman. The work of *autocoscienza* is thus set as a prerequisite for the development of a consciousness that allows the aesthetic experiments of juxtaposition between the materiality of the sex and its erasure into reductive, symbolic shapes. Moreover, in proposing the *graffito* as the archetypal graphic sign of the power dynamics of gender that govern our patriarchal, phallogocentric society Santoro states the overwhelming presence of an (artistic) male gaze that cannot help but to express the lacking of the phallus in the artist's representation of women. The second page of the book shows a number of drawings of vulvas, labia, and clitorises, and mixed with them handwritten notes, hardly decipherable. In opposition to the fundamental lack of the "crack-hole," the artist affirms the woman's sex explosive fullness and its variety of shapes, and through this affirmation she states the necessity of a specific kind of "new expression," where "the substance of expression is unlimited and has no established form".<sup>12</sup> Starting from the bare representation of the vulva as a "crack-hole," *Towards new expression* develops a progressive de-symbolization of the female sex

through several steps, page after page. The first few pages show a series of one-page, black and white cropped photographs of Classical sculptures representing women, zoomed in on the womb. The sculptures, flattened into two dimensions and stylized through a skillful alteration of light and shadows, display a pronounced Y shape where the line of the two legs meets the womb: “the sex disappears, reduced to a slight graphic sign”.<sup>13</sup> Between the two upper lines of the Y is a void that becomes evident when, on page 6, we are confronted with another, more simplified Y shape formed by the meeting of legs and womb, but this time filled with a realistic (even if shaved) sketch of a vulva, with labia and clitoris. The filling of the triangle with the vertical shape of the female sex is an affirmation of existence, as if to say: here it is, here is where it belongs and from now on it will be impossible not to see, not to perceive the void, the erasure, the concealment. After page 6, the rhythm of the book changes as we enter the constructive part of the project. The female sex is now put in relation to the word, both to the men-made word of classical sculptures and to the natural word of shells and flowers. Next to details of folds of garments carved in the marble of Roman and Greek statues, the author places images of vulva, labia and clitoris which resemble the marble’s creases; in the same way, shells, leaves and orchid-like flowers come to determine a novel iconology of female genitalia mirrored in the natural world. *Towards new expression* is a feminist work of art where the issues of sexuality, creativity, and self-representation merge into one another, allowing for the possibility of a possession of one’s own identity through the re-appropriation of the representation of one’s own sexual organ. The working definition of feminist art I adopt in my own work is developed by Griselda Pollock in her book *Framing Feminism* and it is especially interesting in this discussion because it brings out Lonzi’s refusal of the very terms of which the definition is constructed. A work of art is feminist, argues Griselda Pollock, when:

[...] it is conceived within the framework of a structural, economic, political and ideological critique of the power relations of society and with a commitment to collective action for their radical transformation [...] It is feminist because of the way it works as a text within a specific social space in relation to dominant codes and conventions of art and to dominant ideologies of femininity. It is feminist when it subverts the normal ways in which we view art and are usually seduced into a complicity with the meanings of the dominant and oppressive culture.<sup>14</sup>

In this perspective, feminist art mirrors and represents the subversion of social norms that feminism generates, and by this virtue, it subverts values and theories of art. The specific social space in which the work of art creates a

subversion thus becomes an alternate public and private space. The artistic practice realizes a twofold action of shifting dominant codes, both within society and within theories of art (a revolutionary move) and creating an alternate arena, a space for the other (a realization of and success in such a move).

This active and generative force inherent to the artistic practice is precisely what Carla Lonzi rejected and refused to acknowledge because, for her, *autocoscienza* was the only means to women's liberation. Lonzi's radically separatist feminism openly rejected creativity and artistic expression just as much as political involvement and public exposure.<sup>15</sup> Lonzi's rejection of *Towards new expression* is thus to be read through her theoretical stances on creativity as an exceptionally male prerogative, a risky business that can easily bring women back into dangerous patriarchal structures. The figure of the spectator in this critique of creativity is key. As Santoro herself reminds us: "Carla Lonzi did not want to be the Lucy Lippard of the situation,"<sup>16</sup> meaning that she refused to consider the possibility of feminist art criticism. As we are about to see in the next section, such stances were crucially determined by her history as an art critic. Her formation did not only shape the principles and theories on which *Rivolta Femminile* was based, but also the history of the Italian feminism of sexual difference, especially in its late developments.

### **From a Critique of Art Criticism to a Critique of Creativity**

Throughout the 1960s, Lonzi worked tirelessly as an art critic, publishing articles in the most important journals of art criticism in Italy, focusing on *Arte Povera* and abstract art. It is with the book *Autoritratto (Self-Portrait, 1969)* that she gives her farewell to the profession of art criticism and moves toward a feminist militancy. The book is made of recorded interviews with fourteen significant artists of her time, presented in a scrambled order in which the question does not always correspond to the answers, and the answers themselves create a web of voices that does not follow the original structure of the one-to-one interview. Lonzi presents, out of order, a series of interviews with fourteen significant artists of her time: Carla Accardi, Lucio Fontana, Jannis Kounellis, Mimmo Rotella, Pietro Consagra, Salvatore Scarpitta and others. In the preface Lonzi expresses her concerns about the role of the art critic - in other words, she expresses concerns about her role: "Our society gave birth to an absurdity when it institutionalized the moment of criticism, distinguishing it from the creative moment and giving it the cultural and practical power on the arts and on the artists".<sup>17</sup> It is an extraordinary attempt to minimize the role of the critic: the rhythm of

questions and answers is uninterrupted; no space is given to explanation or interpretation of the artists' words, which are reported exactly as they were spoken. Art is treated as a practice, rather than an object of consumption. By questioning the value of her own profession, and thus displacing herself from a stable, preordered set of social roles, Lonzi sets the terms for the feminist critique of culture developed just a few months later in the early texts of *Rivolta Femminile*. "La critica è potere" ("Criticism is power"), published in the December 1970 issue of the art journal *NAC*, constitutes another crucial step in the analysis of the power structures that jeopardize the role of the art critic and includes accusations of both Marxist art criticism and psychoanalysis, in clear connection with the vaster critique of culture developed in the same year (1970) in *Sputiamo su Hegel: la donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti*.<sup>18</sup>

The group *Rivolta Femminile* was born from the encounter of (at least) three women: Carla Lonzi, Carla Accardi, and Elvira Banotti.<sup>19</sup> After the publication of the *Manifesto di Rivolta Femminile* in 1970, Lonzi, Accardi and Banotti started working on a series of essays collected in the volume *Sputiamo su Hegel*. The militancy they foresaw was not directly political or institutionalized, but rather intimate and active on the level of individual consciousness, gained through the practice of *autocoscienza*. The urgency for autonomy and difference, rather than equality, was Lonzi's priority, and for her, autonomy was accomplished, at first, on the level of expression. The association of *autocoscienza* (a practice based on oral communication) and writing as the privileged form of expression was a peculiarity of *Rivolta Femminile*, becoming, later on, the signature of the feminist group associated with the *Libreria delle Donne di Milano*, *Diotima*, composed by, among others, Luisa Muraro and Adriana Cavarero.

The role and weight of Carla Accardi in *Rivolta Femminile* are, for our purpose, critical. Her long-standing friendship with Lonzi already emerges in *Autoritratto* (1969) and constituted, according to Giovanna Zapperi, one of the central knots in the reflection on creativity and feminism.<sup>20</sup> The relationship between Lonzi and Santoro, and Lonzi's reaction to the publication of *Towards new expression* in 1974, were deeply affected by the oscillations and disagreements that were scattered throughout the friendship between Carla Lonzi and Carla Accardi. This complicated friendship fueled not only Lonzi's reflections on art, art criticism and creativity, but it was in a way the core of *Rivolta*. The end of their friendship corresponded in fact with the end of *Rivolta Femminile*, and it is not by chance that Santoro has an important role in the final stages of the feminist collective. In 1976, Santoro, Carla Accardi, and a team of feminist artists and art critics founded in Rome the *Cooperativa*



Beato Angelico, an art center and gallery that would develop a militant program of exposing art made by women and feminist art, in clear opposition to Lonzi's coeval theorization of art as incompatible with feminism.<sup>21</sup>

Right before and during her feminist years, Accardi created some three-dimensional works such as *Tenda* (1965-66) and *Triplice Tenda* (1969), which feature sheets of plastic assembled into a tent and covered with brightly colored brushstroke patterns. According to Leslie Cozzi, "these makeshift habitations bore a concrete social significance [...] that was inextricably tied to the artist's growing investment in feminist politics".<sup>22</sup> As Teresa Kittler suggests, Accardi's domestic structures provide her analogue of female difference, her personal interpretation of the tension between the personal and the political, intimacy and public spectacle by rethinking concepts of domesticity and home.<sup>23</sup> These artworks are discussed in *Autoritratto*, when the possibility of a creativity that operates outside and against patriarchy is still contemplated by Lonzi. Accardi, who had come from years of formal experimentation embedded in theoretical engagement against a conception of art as political activism, affirms the necessity of "making art" ("fare arte") as a revolutionary process that comes out of her gendered subjectivity, and lays claim to the making of something useless. In a conversation about her *Tenda*, Accardi affirms: "Faced with what I make now, the spectator can feel a sort of poverty [...] this is the pleasure of making something useless: no activity of mine comes out [...] [the pleasure is in] making that gesture, finding the time to do it".<sup>24</sup> For Accardi, making art on her own terms is the only way of critiquing a patriarchal system that celebrates a kind of creativity grounded in toxic power dynamics.

As Zapperi acutely observes, "the main reason of the end of the friendship [and therefore of Rivolta Femminile] can be traced back to the fact that Carla Accardi is not willing to renounce her art in the name of feminism".<sup>25</sup> For Lonzi, Accardi's identity as an artist cannot coincide with her identity as a feminist (nor, as we will see, as a clitoridean woman). In a 1972 note of *Taci, anzi parla*, Lonzi clarifies the nexus between the expectation of spectatorship inherent in the artistic practice and the impossibility of feminist creativity:

The fact that the artist expects a more and more suitable spectator reveals the impasse of a conscience confined in a role. For this reason, either speaking of creativity within feminism is not exact, or one needs to understand that we are not speaking about a creativity that is patriarchal: the *autocoscienza* gained by one of us is incomplete and it is blocked unless it meets the *autocoscienza* of another of us [...] in Rome, a breakdown is stabilized between Ester [Carla Accardi, ed.] and the others as spectators, and that was the effect of Ester's identification in creativity.<sup>26</sup>

In this key passage of *Taci, anzi parla* Lonzi accuses Accardi (Ester) of bringing to *autocoscienza* a strong power imbalance in which the other women look at her as spectators in front of a work of art: she thus jeopardizes the goal of *autocoscienza* itself, which is the reshaping and redistributing of roles outside of patriarchal structures. However, such a utopic goal seems to fall through first and foremost because of power imbalances brought to the relationships by Lonzi herself. Elena Dalla Torre notices that

Lonzi writes in the diary that she was made to feel guilty by other women who saw in her both a mother and an older sister, both perceived as domineering roles [...] Trapped in a perpetual dialectic between herself and other women, Lonzi comes to a different understanding of feminism [...] concludes that women's relationships are not exempt from the logic of power and domination, to which she somehow contributes<sup>27</sup>

*Assenza della donna dai momenti celebrativi della creatività maschile* (Absence of women from the celebratory moments of male creativity), a very short essay dated 1971, is a crucial testimony of the development of Lonzi's critique of creativity, constituting an intermediate stage between the dialogues of *Autoritratto* (1969) and the 1972 notes of *Taci, anzi parla* quoted above. In this essay creativity is still defined as a liberating practice, but one that has been used by only men (as artists) for men only (as enjoyers, and consumers):

We of Rivolta Femminile refuse to participate in the celebratory moments of male creativity because we have become conscious [*preso coscienza*] that, in the patriarchal world [...] even creativity, a liberating practice, is realized by men and for men. [...] By taking consciousness of her condition in relation to male creativity, the woman finds herself with two possibilities: one, the one used until now, of reaching equality on the creative level historically defined by the male, alienating for her and granted to her by man with indulgence; the other, the one that the feminist movement is seeking, of the autonomous liberation of woman who restores her own creativity nurtured in the repression imposed by the models of the dominant sex.<sup>28</sup>

For Lonzi, in participating in the celebration of men's creativity, women are unconsciously perpetrators of the myth of the artistic genius, in the double role of passive spectators and objects of artistic expression. Therefore, the women of Rivolta advocate for a complete refusal of any participation or celebration of art made by male artists, so that "without the woman, the cult of male supremacy becomes an emotional clash among men".<sup>29</sup>

The critique of creativity outlined here resonates with the conversation

between Lonzi and Accardi recorded in the pages of *Autoritratto*. In the following passage from *Autoritratto* Accardi elaborates on the relationship between creativity and gender, challenging the notion of “creativity as a male prerogative”:

[...] we as women we must return again to our nature because [...] we really don't have a lesser quality of intelligence as white men have always thought [...] I have this parallel I can make with creativity...that is something anyone can have, because who doesn't have in their life parts of creativity? [...] we must transform ourselves. It is like you said: 'let's transform women'.<sup>30</sup>

In “Assenza delle donne,” signed collectively by Rivolta Femminile, Accardi's voice is still strong, and the possibility of creativity is still stated. The authors do not go so far as to accuse the totality of women artists of participating in patriarchal institutions, whether they participate in exhibitions in international galleries or publish a small book of photography with a feminist publishing company. Creativity is neither contested, nor given an ideological judgment. It is simply challenged in its own “celebratory” structures. The acknowledgment of the necessity of exiting from a binary structure of artist/spectator is, in theoretical terms, an outstanding move. It gives women the possibility of an alternative, of exiting the patriarchal structures of art making, without prescribing the rejection of an authentic creativity. Rather, creativity is the outcome of a process of liberation and consciousness raising (“presa di coscienza”).

The reaction Lonzi had to the publication *Towards new expression* in January 1974 marked the final stage of her critique, shifting the grounds from a refusal of art criticism to a disapproval of creativity in its entirety. When *Towards new expression* came out the relationship between Accardi and Lonzi was in its final stage. The book by Suzanne Santoro thus became a scapegoat for Lonzi's discomfort and anger towards the interferences that women artists brought in the carefully planned feminist agenda she was crafting. Santoro, as much as Accardi, saw in the meetings organized by Rivolta an opportunity to explore the nexus between feminism and creativity, which, at the time, stood for her as the theoretical basis for her artistic practice. In describing the impact of *autocoscienza* on her work, Santoro states:

*Autocoscienza* prompted a new understanding of the words expression and creativity. For us feminism was the new creativity, which also means that you didn't have to be an artist to express yourself creatively. So the main point was this idea of expressing oneself in a way that transgressed patriarchal representations of women's sexuality, and therefore cannot be understood simply as art.<sup>31</sup>

In *Towards new expression*, Santoro further developed the mutual relationship between expression and creativity by situating them in an explicitly feminist agenda. The work of the artist became in a way a substitute of the work of *autocoscienza*: a path of recognition, representation and celebration of the female sex (and thus of women's subjectivity).

In the 1974 note on Santoro's book, Lonzi describes the volume as "campato per aria," which is to say random and without depth. However, *Towards new expression* is constructed on a deep engagement with feminist critique of patriarchy and it expresses a need to re-establish a female canon: first, it challenges patriarchal structures of the artistic canon and of art history, by critically considering the exclusively male-centered iconology of classical art, and thus the very origin of Western artistic practices and norms. Second, it celebrates the symbol of women's otherness and replaces the signs of inferiority with signs of dignity, thus stating the necessity of an *other* language, an *other* syntax.<sup>32</sup> What Santoro does is to decode and deactivate traditional structures of representation that see women as models or objects of artistic inspiration through the imposition of her own disorienting photographic gaze. Moreover, this gaze not only inverts the subject/object position that preoccupies Lonzi, but it also focuses precisely on what is missing in that tradition: the woman's sex in its multifaceted complexity. In Lonzi's late critique of art, women's creativity must be modified and repressed in order to escape dependency on the word of men. The same prescriptive, exclusionary structure is then repeated in her theorization of sexuality.

### **Compulsory Sexuality and the Institutionalization of the Clitoris**

In "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" (1971), published in the collection *Sputiamo su Hegel* but signed exclusively by Lonzi, the prescriptive, dichotomizing tendency of Lonzi's feminism comes to a full circle in which culture corresponds to sexuality: "The clitoridean woman who becomes aspiring vaginal gets neutralized in her creativity and repropose on the cultural level that dependency on the male world that her sexual autonomy had challenged on the erotic level".<sup>33</sup> "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" is one of the most theoretically articulate pieces of the collection. The essay is also the only one, besides "Sputiamo su Hegel," signed by Carla Lonzi exclusively, and it is the longest essay among the ones included in the volume. Together with "Sessualità femminile e aborto" ("Female sexuality and abortion") it constitutes a complete and clear theorization of sexuality.

The latter takes a radical stance on the ongoing debate on abortion rights that was shaking Italy, arguing in favor of a full redefinition of women's sexuality over a legalization of abortion.<sup>34</sup> Its indispensable companion is the essay on the clitoridean woman, where this sexual organ is celebrated and the implications of its absence in iconography and history of sexuality are explored in many directions. It is precisely this text, and the discussions that foregrounded it, that Suzanne Santoro had in mind when she started working on *Towards new expression*.

Its structure and pace are similar to the other essays in the volume: brief, assertive paragraphs follow one another in a non-linear narrative, where a few key concepts are continually retrieved and repeated in different forms and looked at from different angles. "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale" foregrounds the correspondence between sexual, social and cultural autonomy and establishes once and for all the separatist and essentialist framework of Lonzi's feminism. Lonzi's goal is to critique the heteronormative, phallogentric sexuality in which women are trapped, and to propose a theorization of sexuality that allows for women's liberation and autonomy, based on the clitoris as the one and only female sex: "The female sex is the clitoris, the male sex is the penis".<sup>35</sup> The critique of heteronormative, phallogentric sexuality is constructed upon the refusal of accepting the vagina as the female sex: the female sex is the clitoris, whereas the vagina is the official female sex of patriarchal culture, and the site of reproduction, rather than of pleasure. The vaginal woman is passive, integrated in a culture that assimilates sex with procreation. The clitoridean woman, on the other hand, is autonomous and authentic, and through *autocoscienza* she has conquered authenticity and freedom. As Elena Dalla Torre suggests in a 2014 essay, one of the crucial and rather problematic elements of the theorization of the clitoridean woman is precisely her authenticity: "The word authenticity and the attribute authentic appear frequently in Lonzi's diary to designate a newly discovered way of embodying womanhood within the group and in relation to culture".<sup>36</sup>

The vaginal/clitoridean dichotomy constitutes the central knot of the essay. While Lonzi aims at creating an escape from patriarchal models of sexuality, page after page the opposition begins to acquire a hierarchical structure that reproduces the man/woman binarism. For Lonzi, if a woman does not become clitoridean, she is to blame and she is excluded from the emancipated women who took the time and energy to become clitoridean:

The clitoridean woman has registered with rage, impotence, and with the total resolution to save at least her own self, the moment in which her comrades were swallowed by the male world, and disappeared with no trace, and she could not make sense of all

those lost lives, of the fatalism with which at the end they accepted that someone else would inspire thoughts and gestures, and she could foresee a historic machination against her sex.<sup>37</sup>

The relationship between the two groups of women is here depicted as structurally unbalanced. The clitoridean woman looks at her vaginal comrades with sadness and does not comprehend why they can accept their submission without reacting. She is superior to the vaginal woman insofar as she has a more just and complete understanding of the patriarchal world in which we live. Such an understanding is, Lonzi writes, neither ideological nor given, but it is derived from experience. Whereas all women are subjected to the myth of vaginal sex imposed by patriarchy, the clitoridean woman is the one who has faced and challenged this myth throughout her life.

What emerges from “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale” is thus an essentially political understanding of sexuality, as it is often the case in second wave Marxist feminism.<sup>38</sup> Lonzi’s clitoridean woman is a woman who, following a path of awareness and critique of patriarchal structures, actively modifies her sexuality (her sexual desire). Her sexuality becomes a tool, an instrument that liberates her and defines her, both as a woman and as a feminist. Once again, by attempting to challenge the very structural core of oppression, Lonzi falls into a prescriptive, essentializing and exclusionary pattern. At the same time, she insists on the exceptionality of the path that the clitoridean woman must follow, affirming that only through experience and the sharing of such experience in the space of *autocoscienza* can a woman free herself from patriarchal culture.

With the publication of *Towards new expression* in 1974, Suzanne Santoro was instead proposing another way, another possible path. In crafting photographs of the female sex and juxtaposing them to those of Roman statues, the work of the artist became a substitute for the work of *autocoscienza* that a vaginal woman must do in order to become clitoridean, and this, for Lonzi, was not acceptable. At the same time, the volume highlighted the problem of an essentializing perspective of the female sex, challenging the idea of authenticity that stands as a cornerstone of the *autocoscienza* practice (and therefore of much of Italian feminism). The kind of sexuality celebrated in the artist’s book is in fact radically different from the one described in “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale”. In the January 1974 note of her diary, Lonzi describes *Towards new expression* as “backward with respect to where I am, impersonal and generic”.<sup>39</sup> In light of her theorization of sexuality, what she might be suggesting is her disapproval of Santoro being inclusive and universal in her affirmation of the multiple shades of the woman’s sex, as opposed to her exclusionary, hierarchical theorization of the

clitoridean woman.

Lonzi's difficulty of articulating a diverse and inclusive sexuality is thus related to the incapability of welcoming a work of art such as Santoro's, engaged in the process of representing, rethinking and rediscussing sexuality and the sex of women in its entirety. What shocked Carla Lonzi and made *Towards new expression* impersonal, generic and behind ("indietro") for her is then not only the feminist implication of the artistic project, but more the coexistence of two categories she theorized in opposition to one another: sexuality and creativity. Lonzi's reasons for rejecting Santoro's work go beyond her refusal of a possible female creativity: they are grounded in the rejection of conceptualizing sexuality in terms of desire (in psychoanalytic terms) rather than as a political issue which results in a dichotomic opposition (vaginal/clitoridean). In *Sputiamo su Hegel*, sexuality must be determined by a conscious and rational political choice, rather than one based on one's own sexual desire or, more precisely, impulses (whatever they might be). In Lonzi's theorization of sexuality, the body must serve the cause of feminism. Even if Lonzi appears to recuperate some of Freud's fundamental ideas on sexuality, such as the correspondence between clitoris and penis, he is considered an enemy just as much as Marx or Hegel, in a vast, all-encompassing critique of patriarchal culture that is common to many early 1970s feminist theorists. However, as Lonzi herself admits in the problematic text that is the book-length *Taci, anzi parla: diario di una femminista* (1978), the tendency to fall into a fundamentally dichotomic division of the world would constantly influence her thought. Just a few days after the note on Santoro's book, Lonzi reflects precisely on the Marxist structure she cannot help but see in her own thought: "After so much effort in attempting to unhook myself from Marxism, I have preserved it fully: the idea of identifying value with a category of the oppressed is Marxist".<sup>40</sup>

### **Conclusion: Multiplicity, Inclusivity, and Desire as a Way Out**

The exceptionalism of the clitoridean woman within the subsequent developments of Lonzi's theorization of feminism has a number of consequences that range from an ever more rigid separatism, the erasure of differences within the essentialized category of Woman, and the reiteration of power dynamics that structure heteronormative relations and intercourses. In the end, what is lost in Lonzi's concept of sexuality is precisely the possibility of choice. Choice is not only impossible because of the Marxist gesture of dividing women into categories on the basis of their refusal of a specific kind of sexuality, but also because in Lonzi's theorization of sexuality the idea of

individual sexual impulses, or sexual drive, is absent. The concept is formulated by Freud and then brought into the feminist discourse by, first and foremost, French feminists such as Luce Irigaray. In Santoro's *Toward New Expression*, the contrast between the representation of the female genitals as subordinate, annulled, smoothed, idealized and, in turn, the celebration of its beautiful variety resonates with Luce Irigaray's theorization of "the multiplicity of female desire and female language"<sup>41</sup> and clashes with Lonzi's individualistic and essentialist theoretical framework. In the second chapter of *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Irigaray famously establishes that female sexuality "is plural. [...] Indeed, woman's pleasure does not have to choose between clitoral activity and vaginal passivity, for example. The pleasure of the vaginal caress does not have to be substituted for that of the clitoral caress. They each contribute, irreplaceably, to woman's pleasure".<sup>42</sup> In Lonzi, such interdependence could not be more unequivocally refused, and the question of pleasure, or desire, is often, as we have seen, hierarchized.

In her book *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray*, Hillary Robinson discusses the case of Suzanne Santoro's artist's book and its removal from an exhibition by the Arts Council of Great Britain after accusations of obscenity.<sup>43</sup> Robinson comments on Rozsika Parker's defense of Santoro, based on a feminist critique of the concept of obscenity:

[...] we can expand Parker's understanding of the censorship as resulting from phallogocentric man's need to remove women's genitals from his sight. [...] Drawing from Irigaray's insights about hysteroscopy on the one hand, and the need to develop sexuate subjective identity (as the subjects, women) and the necessary concomitant, a Symbolic syntax appropriate to women on the other, we can see Santoro's work as being part of that broader, cultural and ontological threat to phallogocentric man which Irigaray identifies.<sup>44</sup>

In underlining the symbolic element in the artwork, Robinson allows for a reading that goes beyond the assertion that the female sex is absent from the history of women's representation and the consequent celebration of the sex itself, which is what Lonzi focuses on in her disapproval. Even if Santoro most likely did not know Irigaray's work when she published her 1974 artist's book (*Speculum of the Other Woman* is published in the same year) we can see how some concepts overlap, especially in the proposal of such "symbolic syntax" necessary to develop a full "sexuate" subjectivity. This subjectivity does not, as Lonzi alleges, complicitly perpetrate patriarchal structures, but rather a "cultural and ontological threat to phallogocentric man".<sup>45</sup>

The French wave of psychoanalytical feminism arrived in Italy in the late 1970s,



but it did so deprived of a fundamental element: its focus on sexuality and desire as understood in Freudian terms. Rather than embracing the possibilities of a combined approach of psychoanalytical and post-structuralist methodologies and opening up a serious rethinking of feminist ontological categories (sex, gender), Carla Lonzi and, later, many other Italian feminists remain focused on language and on the uprooting of patriarchal traditions (literary and philosophical). While Lonzi's relationship to psychoanalysis is still under scrutiny, what the analysis of the Santoro case shows is that Lonzi's theorization of sexuality with its institutionalization of the clitoridean woman and its prescriptive tone has much in common with her aesthetic theory. As much as choice is not possible when talking about sexuality, creativity is for Lonzi allowed only in (literary) writing. The consequences of Lonzi's aesthetic theory in later development of Italian feminism resonate with those deriving from her theory of sexuality and should be taken in consideration as a totality and read against one another in the effort to reconsider a rather complex and challenging feminist legacy.

- <sup>1</sup> The title of the book changes between the first and the second edition: it is *Verso una espressione nuova / Towards new expression* in the 1974 edition published in Rome. In the second revised edition published in 1979 the title becomes instead *Per una espressione nuova / Towards new expression*. To minimize confusion I will use the English title *Towards new expression* throughout this essay.
- <sup>2</sup> The essay *La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale* was first published in 1971 as a standalone book (Milano: Scritti di rivolta femminile, 1971), and then in 1974 it was included in the collection of essays *Sputiamo su Hegel* (“La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale” in *Sputiamo su Hegel* (Milan: Rivolta Femminile, 1970). I will refer to the 1974 version throughout this essay.
- <sup>3</sup> Carla Lonzi, *Taci, anzi parla: Diario di una femminista* (Roma: Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, 1978), 539. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Sono sconcertata, ho perso la bussola: Diana mi è sembrata nel pallone, il suo libretto fuori della nostra collana, ma sempre sotto la sigla di Rivolta Femminile, è campato per aria. [...] Le ho precisato: ‘Questo libretto è indietro rispetto a dove sono io, è impersonale e generico.’”
- <sup>4</sup> Francesco Ventrella and Giovanna Zapperi, “Against Culture: Feminism and Art in Postwar Italy,” in *Feminism and Art In Postwar Italy: The Legacy of Carla Lonzi*, edited by Francesco Ventrella and Giovanna Zapperi (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2021), 1.
- <sup>5</sup> See also Laura Iamurri, *Un margine che sfugge: Carla Lonzi e l'arte in Italia, 1955-1970* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2016).
- <sup>6</sup> Giovanna Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi: un'arte della vita* (Rome: DeriveApprodi, 2017), 206. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Per una espressione nuova rappresenta dunque un rischio, che Carla Lonzi non vuole correre, di essere ricacciata in un ruolo che aveva scelto di abbandonare, quello della spettatrice”
- <sup>7</sup> For an overview of feminist artists active in the 1970s in Italy see: Raffaella Perna, *Arte, Fotografia e Femminismo in Italia negli Anni Settanta* (Milan: Postmedia books, 2013).
- <sup>8</sup> *Altra misura: arte e femminismo negli anni '70*, curated by Raffaella Perna (Florence: Galleria Frittelli Arte Contemporanea, 2015-2016), exh. cat. (Poggibonsi: Carlo Cambi, 2016); *The Unexpected Subject. 1978 Art and Feminism in Italy*, curated by Raffaella Perna and Marco Scotini (Milan: Frigoriferi Milanesi, 2019), exh. cat. (Milan: Flash Art, 2019). Another crucial example was on exhibit at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in March-June 2021, *Io dico io - I say I*, curated by Cecilia Canziani, Lara Conte and Paola Ugolini (Rome: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2021), exh. cat. (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2021).
- <sup>9</sup> Suzanne Santoro, “‘I Thought art was for women’,” interview by Francesco Ventrella and Giovanna Zapperi, in Ventrella and Zapperi, *Feminism and Art In Postwar Italy*, 138.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.
- <sup>11</sup> Suzanne Santoro, *Verso una espressione nuova/Towards new expression* (Rome: Rivolta Femminile, 1974), the book does not have page numbers. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Ho trovato questa immagine di segnata con gesso su un muro a Roma: mi ha colpito per la sua dimensione, circa 1 x 1. A prima vista mi è sembrata abbastanza comune come tanti graffiti che si trovano sui muri. Poi mi sono accorta che il disegno mi incuriosiva e che questo richiedeva attenzione, infatti conteneva degli elementi chiari per chi era già predisposto a riconoscerli: la forma con cui era raffigurato il pene e il seme, e l'importanza attribuita alla tazzina per la

cura e la conservazione del seme: al contrario la presenza subordinata e mistificata del sesso femminile da sempre pensato come fessura-buco. Se l'immagine del sesso maschile ci si presenta con tutta la sua tracotanza, l'immagine del sesso femminile nella cultura occidentale è stata rimossa. Si vedano le pitture e le sculture di corpi femminili dove il sesso è scomparso ridotto ad un esile segno grafico”.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Framing Feminism. Art and the Women's Movement 1970-85* (London; New York: Pandora, 1987), 93.

<sup>15</sup> Lonzi always refused to bring her theoretical reflection in public. For her, the feminist discourse had to remain exclusive to women. See Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi*, 40-42.

<sup>16</sup> Santoro, “‘I Thought art was for women,’” 147.

<sup>17</sup> Carla Lonzi, *Autoritratto: Accardi, Alviani, Castellani, Consagra, Fabro, Fontana, Kounellis, Nigro, Paolini, Pascali, Rotella, Scarpitta, Turcato, Twombly*, 3rd ed. (1969; Milan: Abscondita, 2017), 11. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “la nostra società ha partorito un’assurdità quando ha reso istituzionale il momento critico distinguendolo da quello creativo e attribuendogli il potere culturale e pratico sull’arte e sugli artisti”.

<sup>18</sup> See Carla Lonzi, “La critica è potere,” *NAC - Notiziario Arte Contemporanea*, December 1970, 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed report on the birth of Rivolta Femminile, see Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi*, 39-48. Other critical sources include: Maria Luisa Boccia, *L’io in rivolta: Vissuto e pensiero di Carla Lonzi* (Milan: La Tartaruga 1990); Lara Conte, Vinzia Fiorino and Vanessa Martini, *Carla Lonzi: la duplice radicalità: Dalla critica militante al femminismo di Rivolta* (Pisa: ETS, 2011); Iamurri, *Un margine che sfugge*.

<sup>20</sup> Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi*, 159.

<sup>21</sup> On the history of the *Cooperativa Beato Angelico* see, among others, Katia Almerini, “The Cooperativa Beato Angelico: A Feminist Art Space in Rome,” in *Art and Feminism in Postwar Italy*, edited by Ventrella and Zapperi, 209-232; and Marta Serravalli, *Arte e Femminismo a Roma negli anni Settanta* (Rome: Biblink, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Leslie Cozzi, “Spaces of self-consciousness: Carla Accardi’s environments and the rise of Italian feminism,” *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 21, no. 1 (2011): 67.

<sup>23</sup> Teresa Kittler, “Living Differently, Seeing Differently: Carla Accardi’s Temporary Structures (1965–1972),” *Oxford Art Journal* 40, no. 1 (March 2017): 85–107.

<sup>24</sup> Lonzi, *Autoritratto*, 218. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Davanti a quello che faccio adesso, lo spettatore può sentire una specie di povertà [...] è questo piacere di fare un prodotto inutile: non viene fuori una mia attività [...] è solo fare questo gesto, trovare il tempo di farlo, ecco”.

<sup>25</sup> Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi*, 179. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “[...] il motivo principale della fine dell’amicizia è riconducibile al fatto che Carla Accardi non è disposta a rinunciare alla propria arte in nome del femminismo”.

<sup>26</sup> Lonzi, *Autoritratto*, 49. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Il fatto che l’artista si aspetti uno spettatore sempre più adeguato rivela l’impasse di una coscienza confinata in un ruolo. Per questo non è esatto parlare di creatività nel femminismo oppure bisogna intendersi che non si tratta di una creatività di tipo patriarcale: l’autocoscienza di una è incompleta e si blocca se non ha riscontro nell’autocoscienza di un’altra [...] a Roma si è stabilizzato uno stallo tra autocoscienza di Ester e le altre come spettatrici, e quello è stato l’effetto dell’identificazione di Ester nella creatività”.

- <sup>27</sup> Elena Dalla Torre, “The clitoris diaries: *La donna clitoridea*, feminine authenticity, and the phallic allegory of Carla Lonzi’s radical feminism,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21, no. 3 (2014): 227.
- <sup>28</sup> Carla Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel, la donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti* (Roma: Scritti di Rivolta Femminile, 1974), 64-66. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Noi di Rivolta Femminile abbiamo preso coscienza che nel mondo patriarcale [...] anche la creatività, che è una pratica liberatoria, viene attuata dagli uomini per gli uomini. [...] Partecipare alla celebrazione della creatività dell’uomo significa cedere all’adescamento storico della nostra colonizzazione [...]. Prendendo coscienza della sua condizione in rapporto alla creatività maschile, la donna si scopre con due possibilità: una, quella usata fino ad ora, di raggiungere la parità sul piano creativo definito storicamente dal maschio, per lei alienante e riconosciute dall’uomo con indulgenza; l’altra, quella che il movimento femminista sta cercando, della liberazione autonoma della donna che recupera una sua creatività alimentata nella repressione imposta dai modelli del sesso dominante”.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 66. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Privo della donna il culto della supremazia maschile diventa uno scontro caratteriale fra uomini.”
- <sup>30</sup> Lonzi, *Autoritratto*, 117-18; 236-7. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “[...] noi donne, dobbiamo di nuovo riattaccarci alla natura perché, [...] mica che noi abbiamo una qualità dell’intelligenza minore come gli uomini bianchi hanno sempre pensato [...]”; “[...] ho anche questo parallelo da potere fare con la creatività... che tutti potrebbero avere, perché chi non ha nella sua vita parti di creatività? [...] bisogna trasformarsi. Come tu dicevi ‘trasformiamo le donne’”.
- <sup>31</sup> Santoro, “I Thought art was for women’,” 146.
- <sup>32</sup> See Hilary Robinson, *Reading art, reading Irigaray: The politics of art by women* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006) for more on the reference to Luce Irigaray’s theorization of the “otherness,” discussed in her *Speculum of the Other Woman*, published in the same year, 1974.
- <sup>33</sup> Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*, 86. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “La donna clitoridea che diventa aspirante vaginale viene neutralizzata nella sua creatività e ripropone, sul piano culturale, quella dipendenza dal mondo maschile che la sua autonomia sessuale aveva messo in dubbio sul piano erotico.”
- <sup>34</sup> Abortion was a crime in Italy until 1978. See Elena Caruso, “Abortion in Italy: Forty Years On,” *Fem Leg Stud* 28, no. 1 (2020): 87–96, and Maud Anne Bracke, “Feminism, the state, and the centrality of reproduction: abortion struggles in 1970s Italy,” *Social History* 42, no. 4 (2017): 524-546.
- <sup>35</sup> Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*, 77. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Il sesso femminile è la clitoride, il sesso maschile è il pene”.
- <sup>36</sup> Dalla Torre, “The clitoris diaries,” 225.
- <sup>37</sup> Lonzi, *Sputiamo su Hegel*, 114. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “La donna clitoridea ha registrato con rabbia, impotenza e deliberazione totale di salvare almeno sé stessa, il momento in cui le proprie compagne venivano inghiottite dal mondo maschile e sparivano senza lasciare traccia di sé e non ha potuto darsi ragione di tutte quelle vite perdute, del fatalismo con cui alla fine accettavano che un altro ispirasse i pensieri e i gesti, e ha intuito una macchinazione storica contro il suo sesso”.
- <sup>38</sup> See, for example, Anne Koedt’s *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (1970).
- <sup>39</sup> Lonzi, *Taci, anzi parla*, 425. English translation by author. Original Italian text: “Sono sconcertata, ho perso la bussola:

Diana (Suzanne Santoro) mi è sembrata nel pallone, il suo libretto fuori dalla nostra collana, ma sempre sotto la sigla di Rivolta Femminile, è campato per aria. [...] Le ho precisato: 'Questo libretto è indietro rispetto a dove sono io, è impersonale e generico' [...]'".

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 549. English translation by author. Original Italian text: "Dopo avere tanto tentato di sganciarmi il marxismo di dosso, l'ho mantenuto in pieno: l'idea di identificare il valore con una categoria di oppressi è marxista".

<sup>41</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (New York: Cornell UP, 1985), 30.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>43</sup> See Zapperi, *Carla Lonzi*, 202 for further discussion of the London exhibition.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, *Reading art*, 164.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.