

PROLEGOMENON: ANGER, AESTHETICS, AND AFFECTIVE WITNESS IN CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST CINEMA

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Anger that is feminist, race based, and intersectional—fueled by the Women’s March(es) of January 2017 and after, the global #MeToo and Black Lives Matter (BLM) movements, and now by fears for democracy itself—infuses the contemporary zeitgeist, sensibilities, imagination, and thought.¹ Over the past several years, numerous publications have explored women of color’s and white women’s anger, emphasizing its power, utility, and truth.²

That very same union of anger with power, utility, and truth animates the creative work and aesthetic circuits—culture, text, audience, reviewer—of contemporary feminist filmmakers from Mati Diop (France/Nigeria) to Ana Lily Amirpour (UK/Iran).³ Anger variously motivates and/or operates within and outside their films “as both subject and method,” as “spotlight” and “clarification,” and as an interpretation “that something is wrong.”⁴ It engages both with and against the pathos of melodrama, giving rise to narratives that offer audiences and reviewers affectively powerful experiential identifications, inflected by gender, that resonate with issues in the public discourse today. A merely formalist approach would not be sufficient to grasp anger’s contemporary aesthetic force and dimensions. Before engaging its dimensions in contemporary women’s filmmaking, it is necessary to explore anger’s import historically in scholarship on feminine/feminist film aesthetics and in key feminist films. This exploration begins in the 1970s, a moment notably marked by feminist- and race-based rage that anticipates its prevalence and intensity today.

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I. Stigma and Creative Force

Given anger’s fundamental significance within both feminist discourse and lived experience, I expected to find an extensive literature when I began to review feminist film theory that took up questions of aesthetics. However, the lens of anger revealed a surprising divide: on the one hand, feminist theorists and filmmakers who, however motivated by anger, did not or would not speak its name; and on the other hand, a fundamentally intersectional group who explicitly addressed it in their thought and creative works, albeit often because of finding it absent entirely. Psychoanalytic feminist film theorists, all of whom were white, made little, if any, mention of anger—an absence deriving in part from the theory itself.⁵ Kathleen Woodward noted that Freud “placed much more emphasis on . . . the drives than he did on . . . emotions” and that in those few passages where he did discuss anger, he theorized it as male.⁶

Notably, the early literature on women’s cinema and film aesthetics either explicitly censured emotion, not to mention anger, or saw it as impossible. Claire Johnston dismissed “emotionality” as an aesthetic strategy for women’s cinema because it “invite[d] the invasion of ideology.”⁷ Laura Mulvey’s manifesto, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” argued in 1975 for films that compelled audiences to a “passionate detachment.”⁸ Tellingly, two years later, Sylvia Bovenschen theorized in her essay “Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?” that a feminine aesthetic was impossible due to patriarchal suppression and mediation of women’s feelings, creation, and speech: “How do we speak? Or to put it even more heretically, *how do we feel?*”⁹

Feelings constituted a heretical boundary for this strand of feminist film theory. In some European feminist filmmakers’ contemporaneous imaginings of women’s oppression and experience, canonical films certainly featured the causes and dramatic effects of women’s anger, but largely avoided its expression. For example, women violently murder men in Chantal Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du*



Delphine Seyrig as the dispassionate protagonist of *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*.

Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975) and in Marleen Gorris's *A Question of Silence* (1982), but do so without expressing anger.¹⁰ Their dispassionate protagonists avoid stereotyped and stigmatized representations of “angry women” even as their actions nonetheless enraged some male critics and audience members who seemed to suffer no such fear of being stigmatized for it.¹¹

While these feminist theorists and filmmakers registered the perils of emotion and anger for feminine aesthetics either explicitly or by omission, others, who identified as or were considered to be feminist materialist, lesbian, or women-of-color scholars, critics, and filmmakers, explicitly engaged with anger—even if, initially, to underscore its absence. In a *New German Critique* roundtable of the era, Julia Lesage asserted that “what women should get in touch with is anger, and what their reactions to that anger are going to be.”¹² Writing seven years later, Lesage amplified her message: “It is a task open to all our creativity and skill—to tap our anger as a source of energy and to focus it aesthetically and politically.”¹³

While Lesage identified anger’s absence and the task of accessing it, B. Ruby Rich, another of the roundtable’s participants, went on to diagnose that absence in a review of *A Question of Silence* (originally published in the *Village Voice* in 1984). She commended the film’s address to “women’s subterranean rage” and remarked on “the sheer power available to us if we can only acknowledge—and accept—its existence.” Rich noted that while anger had fueled feminism in the late sixties and early seventies, “in the eighties, in the age of professionalism, women’s anger has become illegitimate. . . the red-flag word that lesbianism was a dozen years ago.”¹⁴

The analogous delegitimation of “lesbianism” and “anger” signals the interrelated professional, political, and theoretical problems that difference posed to white feminism. On the one hand, lesbian and race differences

demand to be seen as just as determinant as gender difference; on the other, affect and anger marked, differentiated, and stigmatized the analytic objectivity and presumed neutrality of the professional, usually white and heterosexual, feminist theorist.

The alternate genealogy of feminist film aesthetics illuminated by anger finds a foundational figure in Audre Lorde. Though she was not a film critic, her transformative essay “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism,” first published in 1981, profoundly influenced these feminist film theorists and critics as well as laying the groundwork for contemporary affect theory and its thinking about anger.¹⁵ Embracing and theorizing anger’s power, rather than bowing to the force of its stigma, Lorde’s essay prioritized anger over identity to found an antiracist politics and aesthetics, theorized through her lived experience with racism. As a Black feminist lesbian essayist, poet, and activist, her priorities lay in practice, poetry, antiracist and feminist social vision, and dialogue. Lorde asserted that anger “is loaded with information and energy.”¹⁶

If anger is caused by injustice and pain in the past and present, that anger, in turn, “births change” and offers the power to “envision and to reconstruct” a future.¹⁷ Lorde does not consider anger adjectivally, as a feature of any woman’s (particularly any Black woman’s) identity, but as a vital intersectional and interactive utility available to access creativity and initiate dialogue across difference.

Drawing from Lorde’s thought and inspired by Lizzie Borden’s contemporaneous documentary *Born in Flames* (1983), Teresa de Lauretis explores, in her essay “Aesthetic and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women’s Cinema,” the challenge that intersectional differences posed to aesthetic theory.¹⁸ Significantly, *Born in Flames* presents an unprecedented and sustained engagement with lesbians’, women of color’s, and white women’s “fury.”¹⁹ De Lauretis derives from the film the necessary but incommensurate feminist positions that confounded previous theorizations of



Women’s “fury” on display in *Born in Flames* (1983).

feminine/feminist aesthetics. She defines these positions as lying between “theory and [lived] practice,” “formalism and activism,” and feminine/female aesthetics and “women’s cinema as feminist social vision.”²⁰ *Born in Flames* also dramatizes another binary that de Lauretis notes: films that address their spectator as a woman and those that acknowledge “*differences among women*,” the latter a key analytic derived from Lorde.²¹ Anger, previously inarticulate through theory or form, becomes the engine driving activism, practice, and engagement with difference.

Race emerges as a key issue for de Lauretis as she seeks more syncretic and inclusive modes for rethinking women’s cinema. Citing Lorde’s observation that “assimilation to a solely western-european herstory is not acceptable,” she observes that the struggle in *Born in Flames* against patriarchy involves “[B]lack women, Latinas, lesbians, intellectuals, punk performers and a Women’s Army,” bringing these diverse women gradually together even as it differentiates them; consequently, the film’s address holds its spectators across a “distance . . . of difference” providing both a bridge and a mode of differentiation that “inscribes the differences among women as *differences within women*.”²²

Through her dual engagements with Audre Lorde’s texts and Lizzie Borden’s film, de Lauretis produces a key insight concerning feminism and aesthetics: that a search for common ground can only and indeed must find uncommon ground in differences among women. While de Lauretis considers feminist aesthetics and difference through the lens of identity, Lorde’s generative embrace of anger as creative and political force can today suggest a need for reconsideration of a feminist aesthetic practice in terms of affect and anger specific to racial or sexual difference. If white materialist, lesbian, and feminist thinkers and critics rued the absence of women’s anger and saw accessing its subterranean power as a task to be undertaken, Audre Lorde outlined how to use this power to generate dialogue and to imagine different futures through countering racism in everyday life.

A key film implements Lorde’s ideas of Black women’s anger confronting racism: Julie Dash’s *Illusions* (1982), which she wrote and directed while a graduate student at UCLA’s film school.²³ In the coincident synergy between Lorde’s thought and Dash’s film, an incipient aesthetics of anger and its power can be discerned at the levels of subject, method, and agency. The film, set in 1942, contrasts what was seen on-screen at that time—US wartime newsreels and Hollywood escapist entertainment—with what existed historically but was not seen: the contributions, labor, and talents of people of color in both the war effort

and the film industry. *Illusions* focuses on a senior studio executive, Mignon Dupree (Lonette McKee), who passes for white and on whom the white male studio head absolutely depends. Dupree employs Esther (Rosanne Katon), a Black singer, to voice a white female actor (Sandy Brooke, on-screen) while she assertively fends off the advances of a white coworker, Lieutenant Bedford (Ned Bellamy), from the Office of War Information.

Bedford discovers that Dupree is racially passing and tries to blackmail her for sex. But Dupree, instead of cowering, gets angry: “Your scissors and your paste methods have eliminated my participation in the history of this country and the influence of that screen cannot be overestimated.”²⁴ Though Bedford assumes that his knowledge gives him sexual power over her, she counters with anger and a political knowledge of systemic racism in the film industry and nation. Judylyn Ryan has noted that the film structurally aligns two Black feminist filmmakers: Dupree and Dash. Set in 1942 and made in 1982, *Illusions* expresses Dash’s goals in a final monologue voiced by Dupree: “I am going to ‘stay here and fight’ because there are ‘many stories to be told and battles to begin.’”²⁵

Dash dares to imagine that a Black woman’s anger at sexual harassment and racist historical erasure is capable of envisioning and constructing a different future, one in which the United States’ and Hollywood’s appropriations of African Americans’ military and cultural contributions will no longer pass as authentic history. The considerable aesthetic power of the film derives from Dash’s self-reflexive engagement with cinematic technologies of voice, music, and song that together give voice to the arrival of Julie Dash, Black feminist filmmaker.²⁶ Dash’s imaginings are also



Lonette McKee as studio executive Mignon Dupree in *Illusions* (1982).

prophetically reparative at the level of narrative, where they envision Dupree's anger effectively confronting racist sexual harassment in the film industry decades before the #MeToo movement.²⁷ Notably, for Lesage, Rich, Borden, and Dash, anger is neither inarticulable nor a stigma, but rather, in Lorde's own words, "energy and information" fashioned from and directed to apprehending "the living contexts of other women," be they political, creative, or economic.²⁸

Tania Modleski linked feminist film theory's avoidance of any engagement with anger to stigma, pointing out that "anger . . . for women continues to be, as it has been historically, the . . . most unacceptable of all emotions."²⁹ She wrote at a moment in 1988 when feminist media scholarship turned decisively to popular culture, genre, auteurism, and television, focusing on body genres, sensations, and emotions to gauge the cultural impact of popular gendered representation.³⁰ Not long after, Kathleen Rowe argued that comedy, laughter, and the joke were key feminist tools for otherwise culturally repressed expressions of women's anger.³¹ Feminist scholarly attention to the horror genre, especially to rape/revenge films, tracked bisexual modes of identification, exploitation, and accountability, noting but not analyzing their anger.³²

In the wake of today's scholarly interest in emotion, anger has become a topic of critical interest, but research suggests that its absence persisted in feminist media scholarship until very recently.³³ In 2019, Jilly Boyce Kay observed:

A search for "anger" or "angry" in titles of articles published in the entire archive of *Feminist Media Studies* [since 2001] returns only 4 results. Interestingly, "anger" seems never to have been used as a keyword for an article in the entire history of the journal.³⁴

Turning to contemporary women's cinema from this divided legacy of anger as stigma and creative force, what might anger contribute to an understanding of an aesthetics now?

II. An Aesthetics of Anger

Anger is creative; it works to create a language with which to respond to that which one is against, whereby the "what" is renamed, and brought into a feminist world.³⁵

—Sara Ahmed

The attention to affect and emotion in cultural studies has come to be known as "the affective turn." Rising from

feminist and queer work on emotion, trauma studies, and affect-based approaches to popular genres, it also entailed a methodological turn.³⁶ Returning to Eve Sedgwick's idea of "reparative" reading, affect theorists advocate new ways of conducting ideological critiques that engage "the complexities of lived experience and cultural expression."³⁷ Encouraging description rather than interpretation, reading rather than analysis, these theorists seek out stories attuned to possibility rather than evaluation. Dina Georgis calls this "the better story," suggesting a need to "read stories not for what they say but for what they psychically perform."³⁸

Georgis uses "better" not as an evaluation but in the sense of what is possible in any particular moment, due to the ways that people, filmmakers, and whole cultures use stories as protection, to ward off threat, to imagine community and "ego ideals." People read cultural stories—films, novels, dreams, poetry—"not only [to] give us insight into social constructs but help us understand why we give our 'selves' over to collective imaginaries, histories and identities."³⁹ Scholars need to read and understand the "best possible story" while knowing that "we can always do better than our better story."⁴⁰ Georgis thereby suggests that stories can creatively supersede each other in treating what is painful, what might protect or be reparative at different cultural, historical moments.

Anger is an aesthetic modality of the "better story" that a feminist filmmaker can tell. Sara Ahmed's theorization prompts an examination of what anger does or can do to imagine, tell, read, or review visualized stories, to evoke the best possible story in its cultural/aesthetic context. Anger can fuel an artist's imagination and commitment to a story and can shape narratives to evoke viewer responses. It affords a filmmaker rich possibilities for character and community relationships, reversals, and complexities. As an affect of relation, anger frequently threatens relation, both between individuals and in social community.⁴¹ It is also profoundly confusing and ambiguous. Through anger, an individual experiences emboldened control and self-expression or can feel beside themselves, can be righteous in the cause of justice or blinded by vengeful rage or both. Audre Lorde argued that, if used properly, anger clarifies,⁴² but Silvan Tomkins observed that it also often confuses: who is really angry, why, and how much?⁴³

One key feature of anger that is helpful in evoking "collective imaginaries" is that its affective dimension encompasses both the psychological and the sociological.⁴⁴ Silvan Tomkins observed that, of all the negative affects, anger

is the least likely to remain under the skin of the one who feels it, and so it is just that affect all societies try hardest to contain . . . or to deflect toward deviants within the society and toward barbarians without.⁴⁵

Tomkins's observations explain the social motivations for anger's stigma. His thoughts also suggest how people who have been socially excluded become carriers of the "deflected" anger of the more entitled, only then to be demonized or reviled in turn for its expression. Mobilized discursively, anger can fuel moral storytelling from a victimized perspective, recast as a communal concern.⁴⁶ It can also generate stories, creating victims and villains out of its confusions.⁴⁷

Sara Ahmed theorized in 2006 that "feminism is shaped by what it is against," leading to the idea that "anger is a form of against-ness."⁴⁸ Feminist anger has responded to pain and historical injury by reading and renaming it. Advancing Lorde's idea of anger as generative, Ahmed stressed its power to create languages, stories, and images that reconstrue anger's source in the context of a "feminist world," as I would argue Dash does in *Illusions*.⁴⁹ While Lorde insists on the futurity and sociality of anger—it is between, not within; it can precipitate dialogue and change—Ahmed extends her argument to theorize its creative, aesthetic power.

Several contemporary directors have created films that exemplify anger's creative force in shaping narratives, diegetic character relations, and meanings that have generated audience, reviewer, and social reactions. Taking Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993) as a precedent, the focus on more-recent films by Jennifer Kent, Rungano Nyoni, and Gina Kim that follows indicates how global feminist filmmakers are engaging the aesthetics of anger. This essay is intended as a prolegomenon, an initial speculation on a topic that encompasses prevalent aspects of feminist/diasporic/Black/women-of-color media production on multiple platforms today.⁵⁰

Jane Campion is an auteur of anger.⁵¹ Entangling female rage with familial and sexual relations, identification, and justice, her plots set up, confound, and reframe (with Hitchcockian precision and sadism) spectatorial expectations and responses. In *The Piano*, Flora (Anna Paquin), the daughter of Ada (Holly Hunter), is so enraged at being turned away from her mother's piano lessons with Baines (Harvey Keitel) that she initially cannot physically contain herself. As her physiological reaction shifts into cognitive judgment (as anger does), she helps Stewart (Sam Neill), whom she has previously loathed, imprison her mother. When



Flora (Anna Paquin) and Ada (Holly Hunter) in *The Piano* (1993).

she misdelivers to Stewart her mother's loving message to Baines, he is enraged and chops off Ada's finger, splattering Flora's face with her mother's blood.

This sequence elucidates how Campion deploys anger to dynamically rearrange characters' emotional affiliations—who they are for and against—into tragic combustion. In her films, anger is contagious and spills over onto her audiences. Because of her anger, Ada isn't a conventional melodramatic victim: her character refuses vulnerability. This film often angers audiences, especially students, who complain that they don't know how to feel about Ada, whether she is a "good" or "bad" character. Campion uses anger to generate confusion, build connection, and respond to pain; it is both subject and method; she uses it to skew and thwart the moral dynamics of melodrama with a feminist perspective. However obliquely, she uses it to critique colonialism.

In Campion's hands, *The Piano* relocates Bluebeard's tale of white male rage to the colonies and savagely ironizes the civilizing pretenses of colonialism, though it does so through the violation of a white female body (and not the brown bodies that paid the price of colonization). By foregrounding the family romance and restoring its central characters to white Europeaness, *The Piano* may encourage its audience to gendered anger on Ada's and Flora's behalf, but misses the chance for a fuller intersectional engagement with its themes of violation.

III. Cinematic Circuits of Anger

Australian director Jennifer Kent is a successor to Campion in many ways. Kent takes the intersectional relationship between gender, colonialism, and rage and makes it historical, communal, and explicit; in so doing, she unleashed a tidal wave of rage.⁵² Her film *The Nightingale* (2018) had

reviewers universally referencing the “rage” and “outrage” depicted on-screen, sometimes expressing their own rage in response: it was widely reported that some spectators and critics at the Venice and Sydney film-festival screenings were furious at the film and that, in Sydney, a spectator angrily departed the theater, yelling.⁵³ Beyond citing the film’s ability to “enrage” its spectators, reviewers noted “the throughline” of Kent’s work as the “inciting power of female rage.”⁵⁴ A.O. Scott treated that rage positively. He noted Kent’s “clear-eyed fury” and “mastery of the cinematic canons she subjects to thorough critical scourging” and ended his review: “You might say it’s too angry. Or too honest.”⁵⁵

Anger structures *The Nightingale*’s aesthetic circuit of text, audience, critic, and writer/director. It animates irrational mimetic effects (epithets that equated director and protagonist) and affects (outrage) among multiple bodies (characters, director, reviewers, audience). In fact, the outrage to and of the protagonist, Clare (Aisling Franciosi)—what was done to her, what she felt, how it compelled her to act—provoked such mimetic outrage in audiences that one

(male) reviewer shouted “whore” at Kent at the Venice festival screening—a slur repeatedly addressed to the heroine within the film. (He later apologized).⁵⁶

The Nightingale recounts the story of Clare, an Irish convict sent to indentured servitude in the British penal colony now known as Tasmania. When the film opens, she is married with an infant, but is subjected to repeated rape by British military officers, culminating in one heinous group assault that results in her family’s destruction and her being left for dead. Clare sets out to avenge this attack with Billy (Baykali Ganambarr), an Aboriginal guide. Kent graphically depicts Clare’s subsequent murder of Jago (Harry Greenwood), the British soldier who killed her infant—a lengthy act that converts her rage to anguish. While the first part of the narrative details Clare’s gendered injuries, suffering, and fury, Kent’s focus widens over the course of her journey with Billy to include both their traumas, as his people are seen being savagely raped, murdered, and threatened with genocide by the colonists and colonial military. In so doing, the film revises the causal and affective dynamics of rape/revenge films, situating rape, usually portrayed as



Clare (Aisling Franciosi) and Billy (Baykali Ganambarr), the protagonists of *The Nightingale*’s (2018) intersectional narrative.

an individuated, personal gender violation, within large-scale colonial and carceral systems of violence and racialized genocide. Because the perpetrator in this case is the colonial structure of power, no revenge is possible.⁵⁷

While *The Nightingale* contains homages to *The Piano* and *Campion*, Kent tells a “better story” of the colonial encounter, evoking more collective imaginaries, histories, and identities on-screen than her predecessor did and inviting audiences, however resistant, to partake as well.⁵⁸ While *Campion*’s oeuvre has generally focused on white women’s personal injury and rage, Kent locates her protagonist’s family and anger as both victim to and complicit in the depredations of colonial institutions and affects. The audience, forced witness to the depicted atrocities and barbarity of the British colonial government, is positioned to experience anger and revulsion. Additionally, Clare and Billy’s journey, shaped by colonial and carceral realities, is initially animated by their anger toward each other but then becomes an exploration of their differences. The film’s ending evokes an apocalypse: for the Aboriginal peoples, that is an accurate description of the period. Reaching the ocean, Billy performs a death ritual with Clare as witness: she takes a breath and the film ends. There is no more story for either of them.

Sara Ahmed writes that “feminism also involves a reading of the response of anger: it moves from anger into an interpretation of that which one is against, whereby associations or connections are made between the object of anger and broader patterns or structures.”⁵⁹ What begins as Clare’s rape and revenge narrative expands into a horrific tableau of the colonial state and its brutalities against women and Indigenous people that systematically pit them against each other. Similarly, enraged reactions and reviews of the film, which reveal a sympathy with the victimized character but fulminate against the feminist storyteller, illustrate anger’s potential to confuse its objects and its ability to position audiences “against” the world, the actions, and/or the characters on-screen.⁶⁰ A. O. Scott notes Kent’s adept redeployment of the tropes of the Gothic and the American Western. Her evocation of these generic tropes may have invited certain expectations of tone, direction, and outcome, only to thwart them in her critical deployment. For Kent, history is the scourge to which she subjects Antipodean colonialism.

Responding to the controversies in the wake of her screenings, Kent cited her historical research to argue that, if she had depicted the violence that was actually practiced against convict and Aboriginal women, and the Aboriginal population in general, the film would have been unwatchable.⁶¹ One critic observed that the film’s historically

accurate representation of Indigenous genocide combined with Kent’s visiting its effects upon her protagonists make it a horror film.⁶² *The Nightingale*’s intersectional narrative historicizes and recasts British colonialism through the rage of a white woman and an Indigenous man. Kent’s script situates the story not within the mythic worlds of the Gothic or Western genres she’s adapting but through the lens of a contemporary feminist world. Her rendering of Billy’s and Clare’s anger and their relationship animates, with force and nuance, how the most prevalent and destructive structural danger for white women is any emulation of those whose boot is on their neck.⁶³

Zambian Welsh writer-director Rungano Nyoni’s award-winning feature debut, *I Am Not a Witch* (2017), is a satiric film whose conception and story were motivated by anger. However, the protagonist of Nyoni’s film is not angry, and her film did not elicit a furious reception—because she uses humor to convey anger, a strategy that is entirely deliberate on her part. The central character is a young, orphaned eight-year-old African girl (Maggie Mulubwa) who suddenly appears outside a village, startling a woman who drops the water bucket she is carrying. Consequently, the girl is accused of being a witch and put into a witch camp (a slave labor camp) populated by a few dozen middle-aged and elderly women (also accused as witches) who are tethered with long white ribbons to large spools that keep them in the camp. The women name the girl Shula (“Uprooted”) as her ribbon is attached.

Mr. Banda, a ludicrous government official who oversees the camp, exploits her for his own gain, turning her into a star attraction for tourists of the witch camp. Shula must also preside at trials and appear on a TV talk show, where people ask “What if she is actually just a child” and “Why isn’t she in school?” Called out thus on television, Banda puts her in a school for blind, albino, and other outcast children who meet on benches under the trees. But soon the village chieftess insists that Shula be returned to earn her keep—by enacting a ritual spell to bring rain and relieve drought. This sequence leads to a devastating if enigmatic conclusion that evokes the uncanny nature of belief.

Nyoni was “inspired by real-life reports of witchcraft accusations in Zambia” while writing the screenplay for *I Am Not a Witch* and even spent time in an actual witch camp in Ghana.⁶⁴ She reported: “Women held there had to work three times a week for the chief for free. They are slaves.” She invented the seemingly ridiculous choice that Shula must make when she is captured—between being a witch or a goat—to make the point that in Ghana goats are



Long white ribbons tether the women to the camp in *I Am Not a Witch* (2017)

freer than women. Nyoni discusses anger as the source of her film's frequently humorous tone:

The film comes from a place of anger and when I am angry, sometimes I just joke about it. I think that is sort of a Zambian thing. . . . Sometimes it takes the exaggeration of a dark satire or a horror story—to illuminate something we are all complicit in.⁶⁵

In multiple interviews, Nyoni has voiced anger's association with both humor and horror (qualities shared by several of the other films I've included here). "But it's the humour that I wanted to put across without apologizing. I am quite an angry person so I have to rein it in and find a different way of expressing it." She explained to Beth Webb that her particular concern was to use comedy to critique the practices, some traditionally spiritual, used to control women and their movements, that are "painful and horrible."⁶⁶

Nyoni articulates Shula's story through "the tensions between traditional rural law . . . and the law of the land"—that is, the modern state and media inflected by the West.⁶⁷ The situation of witches crystallizes tensions between tradition and modernity in terms of the status of women, compelling the film's deft tonal negotiation of satirical comedy and tragic realism. Reviews all note Nyoni's light and ambiguous touch. She avoids both enunciating the exclamatory

denial of the film's title and making any overt judgment on witchcraft and traditional beliefs within the film itself. Rather, she utilizes camera and narrative to observe.

Critic Katherine Luongo notes that, beyond a focus on Shula, the film teaches its audience that witches are "a category of persons who are dangerously powerful and deeply vulnerable, women who have no friends, no relations, no *one*, and thus no social standing or protection."⁶⁸ Odie Henderson observes that the witches' "convictions stem more from the fear, jealousy or wrath of their accusers than from any evidence of black magic."⁶⁹ Apart from the film's satirical ethos, which Nyoni worried might confuse Western viewers, its cultivation of audience identification with Shula is compelling and sustained. She *is* only a child. The fellow witches with whom she lives embody her possible destiny as a mature woman, should she live that long.

It is in a scene in the outdoor school that Shula smiles radiantly for the first and only time in the film. Her brief happiness sets up a wrenching reversal: her ribbon is quickly and summarily retracted, and Shula is dragged along the ground to the witch labor truck in an extended shot. This sequence condenses the "something wrong" against which Nyoni articulates her film: neocolonial systems of exploitation that capture certain women's and girls' bodies. If the film's satirical humor derives from Nyoni's deft juxtapositions of traditional rural beliefs with modern law, media,

and governance, this temporal/cultural clash also opens up a “place of rage,” of affective witness for the film’s spectators.⁷⁰

Shula’s body and very identity (as witch, tourist attraction, and child) are caught, suspended between traditional and contemporary culture; in that suspension, Shula perishes. Her temporal liminality, over which she has no agency or control, forecloses any futurity or coming of age for her.⁷¹

In recent years, then, women filmmakers have created works that depict culturally and/or historically specific female experiences of sex/gender-based or intersectional violence, harassment, and vulnerability, thereby articulating a space for audience recognition of—and anger against—its source. Gender inflects a provisional spectatorial engagement, not as structural (psychoanalytic) identification, but as an embodied and empowered set of relationships forged in anger.

IV. Anger and Affective Witness

If anger could change the world, a lot would have changed.

—Soyoung Kim

Filmmaker Gina Kim was born in Korea, was educated in the United States, and is now based in both countries, having made films including *Never Forever* (2007), coproduced by South Korea and the United States, and *Final Recipe* (2014), coproduced between South Korea and China.

Years ago, she related an incident that left her “angry beyond words” and led her, finally, to the making of *Bloodless* (2017). In 1992, when Kim was a student in Seoul, a sex worker, twenty-six-year-old Yoon Keum Yi, was brutally murdered and mutilated by an American GI, Kenneth Markle. The murder rallied multiple groups—Korean feminist, human rights, and nationalist protesters—in a call for Markle’s prosecution in Korea. Ignoring the vehement objections of the feminist and human rights groups in this alliance, however, the South Korean nationalists circulated protest flyers that graphically depicted Yoon Keum Yi’s mutilated body.

At the time, Kim was outraged that the violence of Yi’s traumatic death was being compounded by its representation through the flyer’s visual violation of her image and dignity. She decided to create a work to give Yi a voice and presence. Initially, she worked on the script for a feature film, but could not find a way of telling Yi’s story cinematically without exploiting her violent death yet again.⁷² Twenty-seven years after the murder, Kim taught herself VR, aesthetically transforming her ambition from evoking

Yi’s voice and trauma through a visual narrative to enabling an affective feminist witnessing of her death through an embodied spatial/temporal experience.

Kim made *Bloodless*, her first VR production, to memorialize the place where Yi was killed. The word *bloodless* means here “a revolution or conflict without violence or killing”; she chose the title specifically to honor Yi without further violating her. Within the piece’s VR environment, the participant walks the streets of the military camp town that Yi walked and stands in the small, empty room where she was murdered. *Bloodless* ushers the bodies and affects of participants back to the scene of the crime, alluding to without resensationalizing the violence done. Kim thereby guides the VR user into bearing affective witness to a historical atrocity.

Bloodless was awarded the prestigious “Best Virtual Reality Short Story” prize at the Venice Film Festival, where one festival juror wrote that “Gina Kim is doing things with VR that no one else has done.”⁷³ In Kim’s case, anger fueled a deliberative and evolutionary creative



Gina Kim uses VR to bear affective witness in *Bloodless* (2017).

process, devising an aesthetics enabled by technology, to give witness to a violated woman that did not entail visual exploitation. Her process in making *Bloodless* can be seen as a contemporary iteration of Lorde's conceptualization of anger in relation to its ethics and agency.

Interviewed recently about anger in Korean feminist films, Kim answered that, in South Korea, if she or other female filmmakers propose film projects that feature angry women, they "don't get made." Angry women in Korean cinema are dead women, she observed—the ghosts in horror films who come back to express the anger they could not when they were living. She noted that, despite the proliferation of articles about feminist films and filmmaking in Korea, none of them mention anger, even though it is the main motivating factor. She laughed: "Because we are angry, Korean feminist filmmakers make films. It goes without saying."⁷⁴ Kim believes that feminist filmmakers and critics are frequently drawn to horror for that reason.⁷⁵

Insofar as anger in cinema can provide an affective spectatorial and socially discursive space where toxic female experiences "are renamed and brought into a feminist world," that space could be hypothetically experienced and assumed or resisted (by spectator or reviewer) as one of shared affective witness. Affective witness as a potential way of seeing, listening, and hearing through feminist anger captures these filmmakers' creative aspirations, related as feminist anger is to both justice (testimony, fact, evidence, and verification) and trauma (active empathy and recognition).

Female anger is at once deeply stigmatized and utterly essential to feminist politics and awareness, applicable to intersectional conflicts across multiple types of diversity; it is both a creative force for alliance and one that can be destructive, as demonstrated recently by the sight of white women participating in the January 6, 2021, insurrection, QAnon, and racist "Karen" reactions to the BLM movement, and other such examples. Yet it has been central, if sometimes silenced, to thinking about the aesthetic strategies of feminist cinema and media. As Borden, Dash, Campion, Kent, Nyoni, and Kim have explicitly articulated and imagined on-screen, the relationship between female/feminist anger and creativity is fundamental yet has often, in numerous contexts, gone without saying. In the aesthetics of anger and affective witnessing, a different history of feminist film and theory emerges—one that registers the better story of intersectional difference and trauma as felt, filmed, and shared by groundbreaking and fearless feminist filmmakers emergent around the globe.

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Notes

1. These movements—which originated in the United States before Donald Trump's election, the Weinstein scandal, and the state-sanctioned murder of George Floyd generated waves of sustained, massive global outrage—are international, diverse, and intersectional. In Latin America, women have performed their rage in the streets, as exemplified by the Chilean feminist performance piece *Un violador en tu camino* (*A Rapist in Your Path*) and its offshoots. Meighan Stone and Rachel Vogelstein, "Celebrating #MeToo's Global Impact," *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/07/metooglobalimpactinternationalwomens-day/>.
2. Several books were published in 2018–19 about white women's and women of color's anger. See Soraya Chemaly, *Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2018); Brittany Cooper, *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower* (New York: Picador, 2018); Lilly Dancyger, ed., *Burn It Down: Women Writing about Anger* (New York: Seal Press, 2019); and Rebecca Traister, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018).
3. Feminist filmmakers from Africa, the Americas, the Antipodes, Asia, Australia, and Europe making "angry" films include Lucrecia Martel (Argentina); Jane Campion, Jennifer Kent, and Tracey Moffatt (Australia/New Zealand); Mati Diop (France/Senegal); Céline Sciamma (France); Deepa Mehta and Mira Nair (India/US); Alice Rohrwacher (Italy); Lynne Ramsay (Scotland); Gina Kim (South Korea/US); Lisa Langseth (Sweden); Ana Lily Amirpour (UK/Iran); Gina Prince-Bythewood, Ava DuVernay, Patty Jenkins, Kasi Lemmons, and Kelly Reichardt (US); and Rungano Nyoni (Zambia/UK), to name just a few. Two films that have inspired rage in their audiences, however misplaced, are Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale* (2018) and Maïmouna Doucouré's *Mignottes* (*Cuties*, 2020).
4. See, respectively, Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 5; Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," *Sister Outsider* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 117–18; and Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London: Routledge, 2004), 175.
5. These foundational psychoanalytic film theorists and their contributions include Janet Bergstrom, "Rereading the Work of Claire Johnston" and "Enunciation and Sexual

- Difference,” *Camera Obscura*, nos. 3–4 (Summer 1979); Mary Anne Doane, “Caught and Rebecca: The Inscription of Femininity as Absence,” *enclitic* 5, no. 2 (Fall 1981), “Women’s Stake: Filming the Female Body,” *October*, no. 17 (Summer 1981), and *The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Claire Johnston, “Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema” (first published 1973), in *Feminism and Film*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 22–33; Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (first published 1975), in *Feminism and Film*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Constance Penley, ed., *Feminism and Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
6. Kathleen Woodward, “Anger . . . and Anger: From Freud to Feminism,” in *Freud and the Passions*, ed. John O’Neill (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 86. Woodward notes that there is “no entry for anger” in the index to *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (75). Herman Westerink also observes Freud’s problematic relegation of anger and rage to expressions of aggressivity. See Westerink, “The Problematic Position of Rage and Anger in Freud’s Thoughts on Aggressivity,” *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 77, no. 4 (January 2015). In Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis’s reference text *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2019), “anger” does not appear in the psychoanalytic keywords that they cull from all the major scholarly sources.
 7. Johnston, “Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema,” 29.
 8. Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 47.
 9. Sylvia Bovenschen, “Is There a Feminine Aesthetic?,” *New German Critique*, no. 10 (Winter 1977): 119 (italics in the original).
 10. See Janet Bergstrom, “Keeping a Distance: Chantal Akerman’s *Jeanne Dielman*,” interview with Chantal Akerman, *BFI*, October 15, 2015, www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/features/keeping-distance-chantal-akerman-s-jeanne-dielman; Akerman explicitly identified her protagonist’s affect as “resigned.” Gorris has her protagonists laugh—as does Sally Potter in her film *Thriller* (1979). For a brilliant exposition of the relationship between women’s anger and laughter, both in Gorris’s *A Question of Silence* and in feminist theory, see Kathleen Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 7. Rowe begins to fill in the theoretical lacuna around laughter and anger, noting that the relationship between feminist rage and humor goes back at least to Hélène Cixous’s 1976 essay “The Laugh of the Medusa.” Another of feminist anger’s compatriots is horror, which, along with humor, I discuss below.
 11. *A Question of Silence* tends to divide its audiences, making women laugh and men angry. See B. Ruby Rich, *Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 324.
 12. Michelle Citron, Julia Lesage, Judith Mayne, B. Ruby Rich, and Anna Marie Taylor, “Women and Film: A Discussion of Feminist Aesthetics,” *New German Critique*, no. 13 (Winter 1978): 95.
 13. Julia Lesage, “Women’s Rage,” *Jump Cut*, no. 31 (1985).
 14. Rich, *Chick Flicks*, 323.
 15. Audre Lorde, “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism,” her keynote address delivered at the National Women’s Studies Association, in 1981, was published first in *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 7–10, and then in Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press Feminist Series, 1984). Note that the works on anger by Ahmed, Chemaly, Cooper, and Traister mentioned above all begin from Lorde’s thought.
 16. Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 127.
 17. Lorde, 131, 133.
 18. Teresa de Lauretis, “Rethinking Women’s Cinema: Aesthetic and Feminist Theory,” in *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 127–48.
 19. Melissa Anderson observed the incendiary power of fury decades later in “Fire Starter: Lizzie Borden’s First Films Still Light Up (and Burn Down) the Left,” *Village Voice*, February 16, 2016, www.villagevoice.com/2016/02/16/fire-starter-lizzie-bordens-first-films-still-light-up-and-burn-down-the-left/.
 20. de Lauretis, “Rethinking Women’s Cinema,” 134–36.
 21. de Lauretis, 135–36 (italics in the original).
 22. de Lauretis, 137 (italics in the original).
 23. Julie Dash, *Illusions* (1982; New York: Black Filmmaker Foundation, 1982), DVD.
 24. Dash.
 25. Judylyn S. Ryan, “Outing the Black Feminist Filmmaker in Julie Dash’s *Illusions*,” in “Beyond the Gaze: Recent Approaches to Film Feminisms,” ed. Kathleen McHugh and Vivian Sobchack, special issue, *Signs* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 2004): 1322.
 26. Ryan, 1322.
 27. In a recent interview in *Vulture*, Thandie Newton described the racist sexual harassment she endured. See E. Alex Jung, “In Conversation: Thandie Newton,” *Vulture*, July 7, 2020, www.vulture.com/article/thandie-newton-in-conversation.html.
 28. Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 117–18.

29. Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 27.
30. The examples are much too numerous to list. Linda Williams brought scholarly attention to the dynamics of fear, pathos, and arousal underwriting these genres in her "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 2–15; she went on to contribute important scholarship on pornography and melodrama. Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) and Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 1993) address horror.
31. Kathleen Rowe, *The Unruly Woman: Gender and the Genres of Laughter* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 7–8.
32. Carol Clover, "Getting Even," in *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 114–65; Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine*, 122–38.
33. Literary theorist Kathleen Woodward, lamenting the "anaesthetization of emotions in academic life," devotes two chapters of her *Statistical Panic: Cultural Politics and Poetics of the Emotions* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009) to anger and its containment in Freud and its relation to aging (33–78).
34. Jilly Boyce Kay, "Introduction: Anger, Media, and Feminism: The Gender Politics of Mediated Rage," *Feminist Media Studies* 19, no. 4 (2019): 591–615.
35. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 176.
36. Ann Cvetkovich, "Everyday Feelings and Its Genres," in the introduction to *Political Emotions: New Agendas in Communication*, ed. Janet Staiger, Ann Cvetkovich, and Ann Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2010), 5. The publisher's description of the anthology asks "why some sentiments are valued in public communication while others are judged irrelevant, and consider how sentiments mobilize political trajectories."
37. Cvetkovich, 6.
38. Dina Georgis, *The Better Story: Queer Affects from the Middle East* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013), 1–2. Many theorists of affect and emotion stress the methodological importance of stories. See Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 34–37; Woodward, "Anger . . . and Anger," 9, 19–20; Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–15; and Georgis, *The Better Story*, vii–xi.
39. Georgis, *The Better Story*, 2.
40. Georgis, 2.
41. Silvan Tomkins, "Anger," in *Shame and Its Sisters*, ed. Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 197.
42. Lorde, 118.
43. Tomkins writes: "[T]here is always some ambiguity in the experience of anger, both of what one is angry about and why one is angry." Tomkins, "Anger," 200–201.
44. Woodward sees anger as a psychological and social emotion that binds and connects, for good or ill. See Woodward, "Anger . . . and Anger," 21. Jack Katz also finds that anger connects the psychological and sociological. See Katz, *How Emotions Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 43.
45. Tomkins, "Anger," 197.
46. Katz, *How Emotions Work*, 43–44.
47. Katz, 48.
48. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 174.
49. Ahmed, 176.
50. Brilliant female showrunners on TV who create worlds generated by or featuring women's anger include Rachel Bloom and Aline Brosh McKenna with *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, Michaela Coel with *I May Destroy You*, Liz Flahive with *Nurse Jackie*, Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch with *Glow*, Jenji Kohan with *Orange Is the New Black*, and multiple series by Shonda Rhimes, Melissa Rosenberg, Sally Wainwright, and Phoebe Waller-Bridge.
51. Throughout her work, from student films to her series *Top of the Lake* (BBC/Sundance, 2013/2017), Campion creates angry white female protagonists whose fury is motivated by sexual trauma or harassment, who are "not nice," and who frequently repel the audience's moral sympathy and identification.
52. Her earlier domestic horror film, *The Babadook* (2014), an exploration of maternal loss and rage, had set off no such outrage.
53. Steph Harmon, "The Nightingale Director Jennifer Kent Defends 'Honest' Depiction of Rape and Violence," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2019, www.theguardian.com/film/2019/jun/11/nightingale-director-jennifer-kent-defends-honest-depiction-of-and-violence; Zack Sharf, "Jennifer Kent: Moviegoers Have 'Every Right' to Walk Out of 'Nightingale' over Rape Scenes," *Yahoo!news*, June 10, 2019, <https://news.yahoo.com/jennifer-kent-moviegoers-every-walk-213038091.html>.
54. K. Austin Collins, "Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale* Doesn't Feel Good, but That's Not the Point," *Vanity Fair*, August 2, 2019, www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/08/the-nightingale-movie-review; Rachel Handler, "Jennifer Kent Doesn't Think *The Nightingale* Is a Rape-Revenge Story," *Vulture*, August 1, 2019, www.vulture.com/2019/08/the-babadooks-jennifer-kent-on-the-nightingale.html.
55. A.O. Scott, "'The Nightingale' Review: A Song of Violence and Vengeance," *New York Times*, August 1, 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/08/01/movies/nightingale-review.html.

56. Elsa Keslassy, “‘The Nightingale’s’ Jennifer Kent, Venice Film Festival React to Insult at Press Screening,” *Variety*, September 6, 2018, <https://variety.com/2018/film/markets-festivals/the-nightingales-jennifer-kent-reacts-to-insult-at-press-screening-1202929461/>.
57. Emerald Fennell’s *Promising Young Woman* (2020), a recent entry in feminist cinema of anger, uses humor and genre pastiche to revise the tone and outcome of the rape/revenge film, but avoids substantive intersectional engagement.
58. These homages include the setup of a European woman who is sent to Australian colonies; images of Clare floating, like Ada, and almost drowning in the water; the description of both as mothers whose maternity is imperiled by the colonial situation.
59. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 176.
60. Tomkins notes anger’s tendency to be “excessively stimulating in a toxic way.” See Tomkins, “Anger,” 199.
61. Kent’s “angry” oeuvre has moved from domestic anger and horror in *The Babadook* to historically based films on women’s anger and catastrophe. Her next project, “Alice + Freda Forever,” renders a nineteenth-century lesbian love/sex murder in Memphis, Tennessee. See Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
62. Madeleine Seidel, “How The Nightingale Subverts the Rape-Revenge Genre,” *Little White Lies*, August 13, 2019, <https://lwlies.com/articles/the-nightingale-jennifer-kent-sexual-violence-against-women>. See also Caetlin Benson-Allott’s “Learning from Horror,” *Film Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 58–62, for her revisioning of horror in relation to the witnessing of racialized trauma in the news. Kent’s film is a fiction, but her reference to an accurate historical portrayal as “unwatchable” resonates with Benson-Allott’s thoughts on horror and helps explain the rage that dominated the reception of her film.
63. Kelly Reichardt’s *Meeġ’s Cutoff* (2016) and *First Cow* (2019) similarly demythologize the Western and its history through a feminist lens, as do, in a more contemporary framework, Chloé Zhao’s *The Rider* (2017) and *Nomadland* (2020).
64. Mark Kermode, “I Am Not a Witch Review—Magical Surrealism,” *The Guardian*, October 22, 2017, www.theguardian.com/film/2017/oct/22/i-am-not-a-witch-review-magical-surrealism-margaret-mulubwa-rungano-nyoni. See the documentary *The Witches of Gambaga* (Yaba Badoe, 2011), about the Ghanaian witch camps. See also “About the Witches of Gambaga, a Documentary Film by Yaba Badoe,” www.witchesofgambaga.com/about.
65. Residence 11, “Rungano Nyomi [sic] & ‘I Am Not a Witch,’” *Residence 11*, <https://residence11.com/articles/directors-on-the-rise/rungano-nyomi-director-of-the-week-for-i-am-not-a-witch>.
66. Beth Webb, “Rungano Nyomi: ‘I Wanted to Show Zambian Humour and How We Deal with Tragic Events,’” interview with Rungano Nyomi, *Little White Lies*, October 17, 2017, <https://lwlies.com/interviews/rungano-nyomi-i-am-not-a-witch/>. Mark Kermode observed, “As for Nyomi, her ability to blend cruel humour, pointed satire and empathetic anger . . . is astonishing.” Kermode, “I Am Not a Witch Review.”
67. Residence 11, “Rungano Nyomi [sic] & ‘I Am Not a Witch.’”
68. Katherine Luongo, “I Am Not a Witch,” film review, *African Studies Review* 63, no. 1 (March 2020): E38.
69. Odie Henderson, “I Am Not a Witch,” film review, *RogerEbert.com*. September 8, 2018, www.rogerebert.com/reviews/i-am-not-a-witch-2018.
70. See Pratibha Parmar’s documentary *A Place of Rage* (1991), which explores historical homophobia and racism in the context of rage.
71. This Zambian story, written and directed by a British national and filmed in Zambia with an all-Zambian cast, gestures to another potent cycle of angry films by feminist film directors: international coproductions that focus on the limitations, aspirations, and rage of African-French girls coming of age in the *banlieue*. Inaugurated by Céline Sciamma’s *Bande de filles* (*Girlhood*, 2014) and followed by Houda Benyamina’s award-winning *Divines* (2016) and Maïmouna Doucouré’s *Mignonnes* (*Cuties*, 2020), these films singly and collectively tell the “better story” of girls growing up with racialized, classed, and diasporic rage.
72. P.J. Raval’s documentary *Call Her Ganda* (2018) was similarly motivated by outrage at the brutal murder of Jennifer Laude, a Filipina trans woman, by a US Marine.
73. Rummy Doo, “Gina Kim, Eugene YK Chung Nab Top VR Awards at Venice Film Fest,” *Korea Herald*, September 10, 2017, www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170910000109.
74. Gina Kim, personal communication, September 17, 2019.
75. Feminist filmmakers’ associations of anger with horror and humor run all through this essay and beyond. In addition to Kent’s and Nyomi’s observations on horror, other recent feminist examples include Julia Ducournau’s debut, *Raw* (2016), and Ana Lily Amirpour’s *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* (2014), but such depictions go back to Amy Jones’s *The Slumber Party Massacre* (1982), which had a screenplay by Rita Mae Brown. Clover’s *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* opened up a field of feminist interpretations of horror, especially in terms of her conception of “the final girl.”