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Abstract: This article examines Costanza Quatriglio's use of found footage in *Triangle* (2014). This documentary film deals with the collapse of a building in Barletta in Apulia in 2011, in which four female textile workers and the factory owner's daughter were killed. These deaths in the workplace are correlated with the notorious case of the victims of the fire at the Triangle Waist Company factory in New York in 1911. Quatriglio creatively uses found footage to persuade viewers of the similarities between the two accidents at work, and of the differences in their legacies. She also exploits the iconicity of found footage, and reflexively plays with the viewers' memory of early cinema. As argued in this essay, Quatriglio carefully crafts the "eloquence of found footage" to question viewers' perception of the consequences of situations in which workers are illegally exploited, especially in the garment industry, in today's Italy. Furthermore, Quatriglio uses found footage in her visual storytelling to convey to viewers her ethical responsibility towards the women represented in her documentary, and to offer a social and political critique.

Key words: documentary film, found footage, Triangle Fire, labor and workers' rights

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"Per me il documentario è relazione": The Eloquence of Found Footage and Garment Workers' Rights in Costanza Quatriglio's *Triangle*[1]

VALERIA G. CASTELLI

Introduction

In this article, I examine Costanza Quatriglio's use of found footage—that is, footage not shot by the filmmaker or for the purpose of the film project—in *Triangle* (2014).[2] This documentary film reflects upon the condition of illegal workers in today's Italy through the lens of the collapse of a building in Barletta in Apulia on October 3, 2011, when four female textile workers and the factory owner's daughter were killed. These workplace deaths are compared with the notorious case of the 146 people—123 of whom were young female immigrant workers—killed by a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory in New York on March 25, 1911. In my analysis of the documentary, I focus on how, through ethical, rhetorical, and aesthetic choices, Quatriglio exploits the capacity of found footage to encourage a polysemic reading of what is represented on screen. According to Catherine Russell, who draws on Walter Benjamin's theorization on memory, found footage filmmaking is "an aesthetic of ruins," whose intertextuality is "an allegory of history, a montage of memory traces, by which the filmmaker engages with the past through recall, retrieval, and recycling."[3] The intertextuality and engagement with issues related to historical representation and collective memory generated by the use of found footage are central features of *Triangle*.

Through my reading of *Triangle*, I argue that Quatriglio's visual storytelling is meant to convey to viewers the filmmaker's ethical relationship with, and ethical responsibility towards, the women represented on screen. This interconnection between ethics and rhetoric shapes the documentary narrative, as well as its political message. Quatriglio carefully crafts what I call the "eloquence of found footage," as she collects, selects, and edits this material to make it a persuasive tool in her documentary storytelling. Indeed, in *Triangle*, found footage serves the purpose of establishing a specific figure of speech—the analogy—in order to set up comparisons between stories of the past (around the 1911 Triangle Fire) and of the present (around the building collapse in Barletta in 2011). Through her selection, manipulation, and parallel editing of found footage, Quatriglio also uses Aristotelian *pathos* to appeal to the viewers' emotions—to move and disturb them. Further, by exploiting the iconicity of found footage, Quatriglio plays with the viewers' memory of early cinema to expose the failed promises of modern progress. As this article argues, the narrative in which found footage is inserted is designed not only to persuade viewers of the

[1] I wish to thank Mary Anne Trasciatti and Edvige Giunta for the knowledge they have shared with me about the Triangle Fire and its significance for the history of the US labor movement. I am especially grateful to Trasciatti for sharing with me the work of the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, of which she is the President. The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition is a nonprofit organization founded in 2008 that educates the public about the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire through artistic, educational, and memorial projects, and supports the annual remembrance activities on the fire's anniversary (http://rememberthetrianglefire.org/). It is thanks to the efforts and activism of the Coalition that a permanent memorial will be erected at the site of the Triangle Fire in New York. As a 2015-16 Public Humanities Fellow at Humanities New York and NYU's Center for the Humanities, I organized a public event in partnership with the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition that took place at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at New York University on March 24, 2017–the eve of the 106th anniversary of the Triangle Fire (http://publichumanitiesfellows.org/remember-the-triangle-fire/). This event, which featured a screening of Quatriglio's *Triangle*, explored how art can keep alive the memory and legacy of the Triangle Fire, and addressed contemporary workers' rights and labor exploitation, especially in the garment industry. I also wish to thank David Forgacs and Virginia Cox for their insightful comments on earlier versions of this article, as well as The Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility for their support while I was working on this article.

[2] *Triangle* was produced by Marco Visalberghi (Doclab), Nella Condorellu (Factory Film), and RAI Cinema, in partnership with Istituto Luce Cinecittà. In 2015, *Triangle* was awarded a Nastro d'Argento for best documentary film.

[3] Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, 238. As Walter Benjamin writes: "Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of things." Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 178.

similarities between these two tragedies, but also to highlight the differences in the reactions to them. Contrary to the fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory, the event in Barletta did not spark protests or strikes for better, legal working conditions. Rather, it quickly disappeared from the news and the public discourse. By presenting these similarities and differences, Quatriglio offers a social and political critique of the exploitation of workers' labor, especially in the garment industry, in today's Italy, and suggests the need for a deeper shared awareness and recognition of workers' rights.

The Ethics and Politics of Triangle

According to Bernadette Luciano and Susanna Scarparo, Quatriglio is part of a "new generation of women filmmakers," which includes Alina Marazzi, Susanna Nicchiarelli, and Alice Rohrwacher, to name a few, who have joined a larger group of Italian women directors, such as Antonietta De Lillo, Marina Spada, Francesca Archibugi, Roberta Torre, Wilma Labate, Cristina Comencini, and Francesca Comencini, with shared interests around "current social and cinematic preoccupations such as immigration, cultural identity, and the labor market," as well as gender issues, such as "the representation of the mother-daughter relationship and the function of film as a space for remembering women's (hi)stories."[4] In *Triangle*, Quatriglio engages with the Italian labor market, which is characterized by a precariousness and flexibility of labor that have significantly increased since the 2007-08 global financial crisis. These conditions have produced more temporary contracts, lower or intermittent wages, and contractual forms that have eroded workers' bargaining power.[5] "The right of all citizens to work"—the fourth article of Italy's Constitution—respect for workers' rights, and decent and safe working conditions have been undermined, while illegal labor and social inequalities have flourished.[6]

The current Covid-19 pandemic has worsened this already dire situation of high unemployment (especially among the youth), precarious employment, "involuntary" part-time employment, low wages, and deaths at work—the so-called *morti bianche*.[7] In May 2020, the rate of unemployment in Italy was 7.8%, with women more affected than men; in July 2020, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projected an unemployment rate of 12.4% by the end of the year, which would make Italy one of the hardest hit countries by the economic repercussions of the pandemic.[8] Between January and August 2020, 830 workers lost their lives in accidents at work—an average of three deaths a day.[9] Furthermore, Italy has a high percentage of illegal labor: in April 2020 approximately 3.7 million people had

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[4] Luciano and Scarparo, "Women in Italian Cinema: From the Age of Silent Cinema to the Third Millennium," 437–40.

[5] In their documentary films made in the late 2000s, Ascanio Celestini, Mimmo Calopresti, Daniele Segre, and Andrea Segre deal with workers' rights and the labor market in contemporary Italy. In his *Parole sante* (2007), Celestini explores the precarious employment of employees at a call center based in Rome. In Calopresti's *La fabbrica dei tedeschi* (2008), the filmmaker examines a fatal accident inside the ThyssenKrupp steel plant in Turin on December 6, 2007, when an explosion ignited a massive fire that killed seven factory workers. In *Morire di lavoro* (2008), Daniele Segre exposes the reasons behind the many fatalities in the construction industry and the employment of off-the-books workers. In his *Il sangue verde* (2010), Segre documents the lives of seven African migrants in the aftermath of the protest against racism, violence, and criminal exploitation that brought hundreds of workers in the streets of Rosarno in Calabria in 2010.

[6] "Articolo 4."

[7] Carlini, "Cosa resta del lavoro in Italia dopo dieci anni di crisi."

[8] "Occupati e disoccupati (dati provvisori)"; and Gora, "L'Ocse avverte Roma: 'Italia tra i più colpiti dal Covid. La disoccupazione può arrivare al 12.4%. Peggio in caso di seconda ondata."

[9] Bonini, Martinenghi, and Patucchi, "Morire di lavoro."

neither legal protection nor benefits; their work was worth €79 billion (equal to 4.5% of the country's GDP).[10] The majority of these illegal workers are women and migrants.[11]

According to a 2014 report by Campagna Abiti Puliti, the Italian chapter of Clean Clothes Campaign—a global network of labor and human rights organizations advocating for better working conditions in the garment industry—the 2007-08 global financial crisis had a particularly negative impact on Italy's fashion industry.[12] The industry includes the textile, clothing, footwear, leather, eyewear, and fashion accessories sectors, and it employs high numbers of women workers, "ranging from 75% in garment making to 60% in textiles and 50% in footwear, compared with an average in the manufacturing sector of 30%."[13] Even prior to 2007-08, the industry had been in a decade-long recession during which a large number of small-sized companies making their own products or working in the supply chain of big brands went out of business.[14] The Campagna Abiti Puliti report, which centers on the findings of a survey conducted between April 2013 and August 2014 on pay conditions in the textile, clothing, and footwear sectors, highlights the difficulty in defining "actual wage levels" given the widespread practice of paying workers off-the-books, employing workers under part-time contracts but having them working eight or more hours, and hiring specialized workers under a pay grade lower than that required by legislation.[15] This report also suggests that "the presence of strong trade unions, international standards ensuring the accountability of firms in the sector, and a high degree of transparency in supply chains" would be essential to establish living wages.[16] According to the latest 2020 report of Clean Clothes Campaign and Fashion Checker—a digital tool that provides real data from the supply chains of the world's biggest brands—in today's Italy, as well as in thirteen other developed countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States of America), the garment industry continues to use the low-cost labor of workers who do not receive a living wage, and to discriminate against women (migrant women, in particular) who represent approximately 80% of garment workers.[17]

Luciano and Scarparo write that "all of Costanza Quatriglio's films—her shorts, feature films and feature-length documentaries—are either journeys in search of marginalized and invisible subjects or psychological explorations of the invisible aspects of visible individuals."[18] In this context, *Triangle* represents a journey to today's Barletta in Apulia, and also, figuratively, to an early twentieth-century New York, in search of untold stories of female garment workers.[19] One such worker is Mariella Fasanella. Fasanella is the only survivor of the building collapse in Barletta, where she had been buried in debris for seven hours before being rescued. As Quatriglio explains in an interview, when the two first met, Fasanella did not want to talk with anybody about what

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[10] Melis, "Lavoro nero: 3,7 milioni senza tutela."

[11] Melis.

[12] Campagna Abiti Puliti, "Can you earn a living wage in fashion in Italy?," 11. See also the websites of Campagna Abiti Puliti, http://www.abitipuliti.org/, and Clean Clothes Campaign, https://cleanclothes.org/.

[13] Campagna Abiti Puliti, 11.

[14] Campagna Abiti Puliti, 11.

[15] Campagna Abiti Puliti, 33.

[16] Campagna Abiti Puliti, 3.

[17] Muller, "Out of the Shadows. A spotlight on exploitation in the fashion industry," 3, 11. Fashion Checker, which addresses gender inequality in the garment industry, defines gender pay gaps as "one of today's greatest social injustices": "The further down the supply chain you go, the more precarious the work; the lower the pay, the greater the share of women workers." Fashion Checker, "About Fashion Checker."

[18] Luciano and Scarparo, "Performing the Invisible Past: Costanza Quatriglio's *Terramatta*," 293.

[19] In a 2012 interview with Giovanna Summerfield, Quatriglio says: "I choose stories that allow me to challenge myself. To shoot a film, to me, amounts to taking a journey, to having an experience (in the true etymological sense) that has to do both with the urgency (thus the necessity) of telling that story, and with a more dynamic aspect that deals with my growth and my own amazement. It is trying to offer the audience a dramaturgy that is marked by dynamic elements that deal with unveiling and not with demonstrating." Summerfield, "Interview with Costanza Quatriglio (July 2012)," 266.

had happened to her; she had refused to grant interviews during the first year after the accident.[20] It took Quatriglio time to gain Fasanella's trust, after which she agreed to participate in the *Triangle* by being interviewed on camera.[21] As Quatriglio states:

> È stato un lavoro di avvicinamento progressivo costruito sull'ascolto, l'attenzione e la reciproca e progressiva acquisizione di fiducia, nonché di consapevolezza. Abbiamo ragionato non solo sulla morte e sul dolore ma anche sulla dignità della vita e del lavoro. Mariella ha preso la parola per dire a voce alta: io ci sono, sono viva. Io sono capace di lavorare con la macchina, con la quale ho un rapporto. Ha saputo riflettere sulle proprie potenzialità e sul valore del proprio lavoro, che è inestimabile.[22]

Quatriglio's description of the process that brought Fasanella and her closer together suggests that they were both influenced by their conversations. On the one hand, by consenting to be interviewed on camera, Fasanella bore witness to the accident that killed five people she knew well, and that had left her injured. She also bore witness to her own resilience, which had given her the strength to overcome the destruction brought on by the collapse, the value of her work as a textile worker, and her capacity to slowly rebuild a new life for herself. On the other hand, by getting to know the protagonist of her documentary over time, Quatriglio developed an acute awareness of Fasanella's condition as both a victim of an accident at work and an exploited worker. This allowed the filmmaker to better understand workers' conditions in today's Italy, where not only are their legal rights not guaranteed, but also where workers themselves are not widely acknowledged; as a consequence, workers do not share a collective awareness that would enable them unite to demand a recognition of their rights.[23] As Quatriglio reveals: "Non mi ero mai posta la questione del lavoro operaio, ma con *Triangle* ho fatto un'immersione in quella che è la condizione esistenziale e materiale dell'essere umano sfruttato. Dal 1911 al 2011 non è cambiato molto, per il semplice fatto che lo sfruttamento è ancora oggi una prassi accettata" (I have never asked myself about the issue of manual labor, but with *Triangle* I immersed myself in the existential and material condition of the exploited human being. From 1911 to 2011 not much has changed, for the simple reason that exploitation is still an accepted practice today).[24]

In *Triangle*, Quatriglio draws particular attention to contemporary Italy's garment industry and the unsafe working conditions of off-the-books women workers by exploring the memory of the Triangle Fire and its legacy for the history of the US labor movement. By centering the documentary narrative on an event that caused the death of young female immigrant workers, many of whom were Italian, Quatriglio simultaneously engages with Italy's history of emigration, which saw twenty-seven million Italians leave their home country between 1876 and 1976.[25] As I suggest, *Triangle* raises questions about the consequences of the disregard of female and migrant workers' rights by asking indirectly: Are exploited workers in Italy in the present so different from exploited workers who emigrated from Italy in the past?

Quatriglio's engagement in a reciprocal exchange and meaningful collaboration with Fasanella speaks to the filmmaker's poetics of documentary filmmaking, which is grounded precisely in the relational form it entails: "Per me il documentario è relazione. Quella relazione

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[20] Casella, "Costanza Quatriglio racconta un'operaia come 'dea del lavoro.'"

[21] Casella.

[22] "It was a gradual approach, built on listening, attention and a reciprocal, progressive acquisition of trust, and also awareness. We reflected not only on death and pain, but also on the dignity of life and work. Mariella began to speak, saying in a loud voice: here I am, I am alive. I am able to work with the sewing machine, with which I have a relationship. She was able to reflect upon her own potentialities and upon the value of her own work, which is invaluable." Casella. All translations from Italian into English are mine.

[23] Casella.

[24] Casella.

[25] Franzina, *Gli italiani al Nuovo mondo*, 45.

imprescindibile che ti impegna in un'esperienza di ascolto e di rielaborazione. Un procedimento di analisi e sintesi che ha a che fare con la produzione di senso e la restituzione del tempo" (Documentary is a relationship for me. It is that unavoidable relationship that engages you in an experience of listening and reworking. It is a method of analysis and synthesis, which has to do with the production of meaning and restoration of time).[26] In her review of Quatriglio's documentary *Sembra mio figlio* (2018), the filmmaker's way of conceiving and making documentaries reminds Stefania Rimini of Jean Rouch's documentary practice in the "centralità della relazione come incubatrice di visioni, l'importanza del contatto come *agency* della storia e del destino stesso delle persone-personaggi" (centrality of relationships in the development of artistic vision, the importance of contact as the agency of the story and the destiny itself of the people-characters).[27] Luciano and Scarparo also underscore the importance of "relazione" in her documentary practice: "Quatriglio strongly believes that the quality of a film actually depends on the quality of the relationship that the film-maker manages to establish with the subject under investigation."[28] Furthermore, Luciano and Scarparo write that, in describing herself as "a woman film-maker," Quatriglio "finds common ground with other women in the same position as her: the subjects of their films, their desire to push boundaries and to delve deeply into the reality they are trying to explore, and the relationships they form with their subjects."[29] For this reason, they characterize Quatriglio's films as "relational cinema," defined by them in Teresa de Lauretis' terms as "an alternative cinema of negotiated choices, representing a post-feminist feminized style of filmmaking" that aims to create "conditions of visibility for marginalized subjects."[30] In Quatriglio's attempt to achieve this goal in her politically-committed projects, Luciano and Scarparo see what Bill Nichols describes as core traits of documentary: "an ethics of responsibility, an aesthetics of film form and a politics of representation."[31]

Regarding another of Quatriglio's politically-committed projects, *Con il fiato sospeso* (2013)—a docufilm telling the story of a young researcher, Stella, who dies of lung cancer after being exposed to harmful chemicals used in the university lab where she worked—Anna Paparcone also views Quatriglio's "relational approach" as a distinctive characteristic of her filmmaking.[32] Parparcone argues that this film, together with Mariangela Barbanente and Cecilia Mangini's *In viaggio con Cecilia* (2013) and Anna Kauber's *In questo mondo* (2018), exemplify "features of ecofeminist cinema" because they focus on individual stories to illuminate gender, social, political, and environmental issues that relate to entire communities unjustly dominated and discriminated against by capitalism and patriarchy, and because they manifest their filmmakers' commitment to raising awareness about social, political, and environmental issues, and presenting new ways to respect all human and non-human beings.[33] As she writes:

> They clearly display a relational approach (*la pratica della relazione*). Animated by their reappraisal of their sexual difference and the practice of "caring," these women filmmakers approach their

[26] Berruti and Spagnoletti, "7 Domande a 10 autori (e produttori) di documentari," 115.
[27] Rimini, "Io sono un altro."
[28] Luciano and Scarparo, "Costanza Quatriglio: In search of the invisible," 117.
[29] Luciano and Scarparo, 117.
[30] Luciano and Scarparo, 117.
[31] Luciano and Scarparo, 117. See also Bill Nichols, "Foreword," 13.
[32] Paparcone, "Between Cities and Mountains: A Look at Contemporary Ecofeminist Cinema in Italy," 214, 220. On contemporary ecocinema in Italy, see also Laura Di Bianco, "Ecocinema Ars et Praxis: Alice Rohrwacher's *Lazzaro Felice*," 151–64.
[33] Parparcone, 214. Barbanente and Mangini's *In viaggio con Cecilia* chronicles the filmmakers' journey through Apulia, where the steel plant Ilva in Taranto, and petrochemical factories in Brindisi have severely polluted the environment. Kauber's *In questo mondo* deals with female shepherds, whom the filmmaker encountered throughout her two-year journey through Italy.

> subjects—as both individuals and collective bodies, humans and nonhumans—with deep empathy and respect in order to denounce the pitfalls of patriarchy and capitalism.[34]

As I suggest, in *Triangle*, through which Quatriglio also "denounce[s] the pitfalls of patriarchy and capitalism," this "relational approach" is translated by the filmmaker into aesthetic and rhetorical choices that situate Fasanella at the heart of the documentary narration. Quatriglio frames Fasanella's face only in close-ups (see Fig. 1). This technique works to convey the centrality of the character as the protagonist of the documentary. Close-ups also evoke a proximity that further exposes the bodies on screen to the viewers. As David MacDougall argues:

> In films the close-up creates a proximity to the faces and bodies of others that we experience much less commonly in daily life. The conventions of social distance normally restrict proximity except in moments of intimacy. The cinema thus combines the private view with the public spectacle, creating a sharp sense of intimate exposure of the film subject and a secondary sense in the film viewer of being personally exposed by witnessing the other's exposure. The face is for most of us the locus of another person's being, perhaps reflecting our own feelings of how we are constructed as a person in other people's eyes. The face thus serves as an emblem for the body, but also as its point of emergence from the clothed body. The revelatory power of human faces resembles the revelatory power of film itself, which successively reveals new surfaces.[35]

Through the stylistic choices that privilege close-up shots, Quatriglio attempts to reduce the distance between the viewers and Fasanella. Hence, the face-to-face physical communication between Quatriglio and Fasanella transfers into a face-to-face mediated communication between Fasanella and the viewers. Furthermore, in *Triangle*, the victims' relatives, who get together to support each other, and the young citizens of Barletta, who share their thoughts on the tragic event in a parish recreation center, are filmed in groups during these meetings, as if the filmmaker were seated among them (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). Fasanella, on the contrary, is the only individual interviewed, and the sole protagonist speaking alone in front of the camera. In this way, Quatriglio enhances the significance of Fasanella's physical presence on screen and also of her testimony.

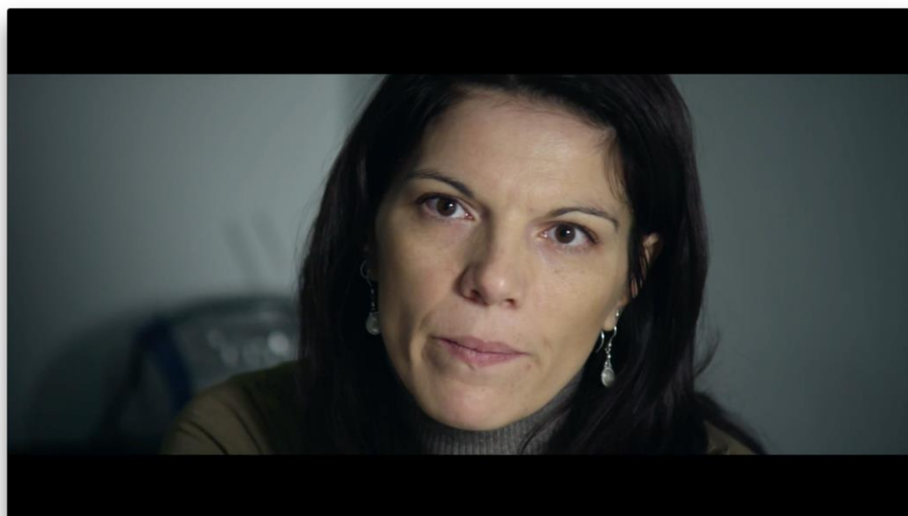

Fig. 1: *Triangle*. Still

[34] Parparcone, "Between Cities and Mountains: A Look at Contemporary Ecofeminist Cinema in Italy," 223.
[35] MacDougall, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, 21–22.

Fig. 2: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 3: *Triangle*. Still

Therefore, Quatriglio's camerawork, I argue, is the result of a specific rhetorical strategy that serves to emphasize the ways in which the ethics, aesthetics, and politics of the documentary are linked to one another. This reminds me of the "politics of intimacy" that film editor Ilaria Fraioli perceives in a scene of Alina Marazzi's *Vogliamo anche le rose*—that is, "a situation where an act of political denunciation is linked to the destiny of one woman and what is happening inside her."[36] By means of Quatriglio's authorial mediation, Fasanella's presence on screen in fact acquires a symbolic value: she stands for the other women who lost their lives in the collapse, which Fasanella survived, and for all workers who are exploited anywhere in the world and are required to work in unsafe conditions. For Quatriglio, Fasanella is not just a survivor; she is the "dea del lavoro" (goddess of work): "Quando ho conosciuto Mariella ho pensato scherzando che lei fosse la dea del lavoro. Perché è sopravvissuta, fisicamente estratta viva ma tutta rotta dalle macerie" (When I met Mariella I thought as a joke that she were the goddess of work. Because she survived,

[36] Dall'Asta, Grespi, Lischi, and Pravadelli, "A Politics of Intimacy: A Conversation with Alina Marazzi and Ilaria Fraioli," 137.

being physically extracted alive, but she was all broken because of the debris). [37] Hence, once Fasanella is shown on screen by Quatriglio, and once her story is inserted in the documentary's narrative, she is used by the filmmaker to stand in symbolically for a hundred years of labor history. The "epilogue" of this history, that is, the building collapse in Barletta, has again brought death and pain, and has revealed contemporary society's failings. "La sua sventura" (Her misfortune), Quatriglio says of Fasanella, "è privata e pubblica allo stesso tempo, dolore fisico che colpisce fino in fondo all'anima e decadenza sociale" (is private and public at the same time. It is physical pain, which hits you right to the bottom of your soul, and it is social decadence).[38]

At the same time, as I suggest, Quatriglio's documentary narrative and stylistic choices convey a universal meaning through the story of the tragic local event in which workers died in Barletta. In this way, Barletta is made into a metonym for a world that neither remembers its past nor learns from its tragedies, such as the Triangle Fire, and of those places where individuals or companies—operating legally, illegally, or "dentro la zona grigia" (inside a grey area) to use Rocco Sciarrone' expression—place profits above their responsibilities as an employer, and above social responsibilities.[39] Barletta is also made into a metonym for a world that does not project itself into the future in order to foresee and avoid losses of life in the workplace. "Why don't we learn from the survivors of the Rana Plaza disaster?," asks journalist Dana Thomas in an article published in *The New York Times* on April 24, 2018—the five-year anniversary of the eight-story building (called Rana Plaza) collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh, arguably the deadliest garment industry accident in modern history.[40] The collapse of this building, which housed retail stores and clothing factories producing garments for major European and American brands, killed 1,134 and injured 2,500 people, who were extracted alive from the debris.[41] Similar to the building collapse in Barletta, warning signs of the structural instability of Rana Plaza were disregarded. The day before the accident, for example, workers fled into the street because a crack opened in the wall of the third floor; while the managers of the building sent workers home, they ordered them to report back to work the following day.[42] In another suburb of Dhaka, only five months earlier, a clothing factory, Tazreen Fashions, had burned down, killing at least 117 people and injuring more than 200 people.[43] As Thomas writes:

> Bangladesh has long been among the cheapest places to produce clothes, along with Vietnam and India. More than 4.4 million people—mostly women—work in its 3,000 factories, where the minimum wage is currently 32 cents an hour, or $68 a month. Brands flock here to source $30 billion worth of "ready-made garments," or RMG, making Bangladesh the world's second largest apparel manufacturing center, after China. … But the Bangladesh apparel industry has also been rife with sweatshops—among the grimmest ever, anywhere—and with them come industrial accidents. Between 2006 and 2012, more than 500 Bangladeshi garment workers died in factory fires. The usual cause: faulty electrical wiring.[44]

In December 2013, in Prato, Italy, seven Chinese garment workers (two women and five men) died, and two were severely injured, in the fire that accidentally blazed in a Chinese clothing factory where they were illegally and unsafely working and living.[45] Prato is an area of Tuscany

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[37] Finos, "'Triangle,' le vittime (donne) del lavoro ricordate in un documentario."
[38] Quatriglio, "*Triangle*—Nota dell'autrice."
[39] Sciarrone, *Mafie vecchie, mafie nuove*, XIX.
[40] Thomas, "Why Won't We Learn from the Survivors of the Rana Plaza Disaster?."
[41] Thomas.
[42] Thomas.
[43] Thomas.
[44] Thomas.
[45] "Prato, sette cinesi morti in un incendio in fabbrica"; and Povoledo, "Deadly Factory Fire Bares Racial Tensions in Italy."

where, since the late 1980s, thousands of Chinese migrant workers have settled to work in textile and garment manufacturing businesses, of which some have relied heavily on poorly paid, illegal labor, ignored workplace safety measures to cut costs, and evaded taxes.[46] In her reportage about this accident in *The New York Times*, Elisabetta Povoledo writes that labor leaders had been trying in vain to convince Chinese factory workers to fight for better working conditions, as Manuele Marigolli, the current regional secretary of the labor union CGIL, did:

> "If you want to build consensus, you have to offer them opportunities, residence permits, new jobs, show them it's better to be legal …. Instead, when factories are raided, the workers are brought to the police station, fingerprinted and given a paper that tells them they have to leave Italy."[47]

Marco Paggi, a lawyer in Padua who at that time was working for an association defending migrants' rights, spoke with Povoledo about how Italian companies had been using Chinese-run factories in Prato, and commented: "We can't resolve everything by criminalizing the Chinese, because we end up criminalizing the victims, too."[48]

Marigolli's and Paggi's words, as well Thomas' rhetorical question about why we do not learn from what happened at Rana Plaza, resonate with Quatriglio's own account of what she learned from her conversations with the Barletta building collapse survivor: "Mariella è una donna che mi insegna che bisogna cambiare vocabolario e che il diritto è tale perché viene riconosciuto dagli altri" (Mariella is a woman who teaches me that we must change the vocabulary, and that rights are such because they are recognized by others). [49] To explain this point, the filmmaker refers to the "processo *Eternit*," that is, the trial that began in Turin in 2009 against Stephan Ernest Schmidheiny and Jean-Louis de Cartier de Marchienne, the owners of the multinational corporation *Eternit*.[50] They were accused of causing permanent environmental degradation by producing asbestos and omitting the precautionary medical measures in their factories in the 1970s and 80s, leading to almost 3,000 asbestos-related deaths among workers and local residents.[51] On November 19, 2014—a week before the release of *Triangle*—the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation overturned the lower court decision that acquitted Schmidheiny, and annulled his conviction because the statute of limitations had lapsed.[52] On February 13, 2012, this lower court found Schmidheiny and de Cartier de Marchienne, who died the following year, guilty of negligence, and sentenced them to eighteen years in prison.[53] According to Quatriglio, the *Eternit* trial exemplifies the "dicotomia pazzesca tra diritto e giustizia" (the incredible dichotomy between law and justice), and teaches us that—if there is no justice, and no self- and collective awareness of workers' rights—"la nozione di diritto è insufficiente" (the notion of law is insufficient).[54]

The Rhetoric and Aesthetic of Quatriglio's Use of Found Footage

In order to accomplish the transformation I discussed above from private (Fasanella's personal story) to public, and from local (Barletta) to universal, Quatriglio employs found footage as a rhetorical device to give the documentary narrative a specific structure that connects the tragic

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[46] Povoledo, "Deadly Factory Fire Bares Racial Tensions in Italy."
[47] Povoledo.
[48] Povoledo.
[49] Finos, "'Triangle,' le vittime (donne) del lavoro ricordate in un documentario."
[50] Finos.
[51] Reuters Staff, "Italy court annuls conviction for Swiss billionaire in asbestos scandal."
[52] Reuters Staff.
[53] Reuters Staff.
[54] Finos.

events of 1911 in New York and of 2011 in Barletta. As William Wees argues in his discussion of the characteristics of found footage compilation films, the meaning that found footage acquires in the new context in which it is placed is rhetorical, as it is used as a persuasive technique in the film narrative:

> when the filmed representations of events are taken from the archives and made to serve the purposes of a particular filmmaker, they enter the plane of discourse, in Benveniste's sense. They are used by an identifiable "speaker" (in my analogy: the filmmaker) with "the intention of influencing the other (in this case: the viewer) in some way."[55]

Prior to creating *Triangle,* Quatriglio had already experimented with found footage to examine the past in her documentary *Terramatta; Il Novecento italiano di Vincenzo Rabito analfabeta siciliano* (2012), in which she adapted Vincenzo Rabito's narrative about his life in the years between World War I and the economic miracle of post-war Italy.[56] As Luciano and Scarparo argue:

> In *Terramatta;* Quatriglio enriches her enquiries into invisible subjects, using the story of an "*invisibile*" (as she defines Rabito) to rewrite the history of Italy, not as a historian but as a filmmaker, reflexively drawing attention to the history and style of Italian cinema itself. She deliberately summons up the language of cinema, selectively evoking the style of silent cinema, questioning the propaganda films of the Fascist period, commenting on the emergence of television, and reflecting on the personal contributions to official history that home movies and super-8 films have made, in order to invite us to consider the role that cinema has played on our collective understanding of the past.[57]

Quatriglio thus selects and manipulates found footage that retraces Italy's history, as well as its cinema history, while assigning a new meaning to these images.[58] This is the case, for example, of the Fascist regime's black and white newsreels, which she tints with different colors, as if they were stains of blue, yellow, red, or green ink. As Quatriglio writes of this technique:

> così facendo ho voluto restituire un sapore pop e imporre alle visioni di regime un altro significato, un altro luogo narrativo. Rabito sapeva raccontare con ironia, sagacia e dolore. La stessa che ho voluto restituire attraverso questo lavoro di riappropriazione di senso di immagini solenni e talvolta arcinote come quelle di Mussolini. Così facendo la relazione con lo spettatore si basa sulla dialettica tra l'immaginario collettivo e una narrazione al singolare che diventa plurale perché riguarda ciascuno di noi. La memoria di ciò che siamo stati.[59]

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[55] Wees, *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films*, 43.

[56] Quatriglio, *Terramatta; Il Novecento italiano di Vincenzo Rabito analfabeta siciliano*. In 2000, Rabito's memoir, written between 1968 and 1975 on 1027 single-spaced pages, received an award from the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale in Pieve di Santo Stefano. In 2007, this memoir was published by Giulio Einaudi Editore with the title *Terra matta*. See Rabito, *Terra matta*.

[57] Luciano and Scarparo, "Performing the Invisible Past," 295.

[58] The found footage of *Terramatta;* was mostly provided by the Archivio Storico Cinecittà Luce, but also by the CRICD (Filmoteca Regionale Siciliana) and Tommaso Bordonaro's, Enrica Russo's, and Ugo Saitta's private archives. The Cineteca del Friuli also collaborated on the project. See Quatriglio, *Terramatta;*.

[59] "In this way, I wanted to give a pop feel to the regime's visions and superimpose another meaning over them, another narrative. Rabito was able to narrate with irony, sagacity, and pain, and I wanted to evoke the same things by re-appropriating the meanings of solemn and at time very familiar images, such as those of Mussolini. In this way, the relationship with the spectator is based on the dialectic between the collective imaginary and the singular narration, which becomes plural because it concerns each of us. The memory of what we have been." Quatriglio, "Note di regia. Progetto *Terra Matta*." On Quatriglio's insights into the making of *Terramatta,* see also Luciano and Scarparo, "Directing *Terramatta;*. An interview with Costanza Quatriglio," 284–92.

Not only in *Terramatta;*, but in *Triangle* as well, Quatriglio exploits the possibilities offered by the creative use of found footage to create this "dialectic" between the collective imagination, and the narration of personal stories to which a universal meaning is rhetorically assigned. Giovannella Rendi, who was responsible for the archival research at Istituto Luce for *Triangle*, also claims that the use of found footage in documentary filmmaking is not only "una riflessione sull'atto del guardare, ma anche e soprattutto un processo di storicizzazione del proprio vissuto, nella misura in cui il personale diviene universale" (a reflection on the act of looking, but also and above all a process of historicization of one's own lived experience, whereby the personal becomes universal).[60]

According to Desmond Bell, found footage documentary practices reveal the contrasting ways in which historians and filmmakers approach picture archives, still and moving: "the former seek to privilege the photographic image as evidential sources, while the latter seek to exploit the expressive and interrogative power of found and manipulated images."[61] Yet, precisely by means of this expressive and interrogative power of images, creative documentary filmmaking does "important historiographical work," which "both undermines objectivist historical accounts and encourages the viewer to actively engage with how we make sense of the past."[62] For this reason, Bell suggests that "experimental or creative documentary film is the leading exemplar of what might be called a 'postmodern history': that is a representation of the past that is reflexive, multivocal and partial (in both senses of that word)."[63] To critically reflect on the connection between documentary filmmakers' and historians' work, especially in relation to visual evidence, thus means, according to Bell, recognizing that they both employ specific narrative, discursive, and rhetorical strategies, while speaking from a subjective and ideological position.[64] For this reason, Bell defines the poetics of found footage film as the "poetics of history," an expression derived from Jacques Rancière, who, in *The Names of History*, discusses history's literary practices, and points out how history functions as a discourse with specific narrative strategies.[65]

Marco Bertozzi shares Bell's argument about found footage documentary film as a fecund experimental site, especially in dealing with the past.[66] This is shown in the works of a number of contemporary Italian documentary filmmakers, including Alina Marazzi, Piero Marcello, Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, as well as Bertozzi himself.[67] The "genre" to which found

[60] Rendi, "La 'verifica incerta': l'uso del materiale d'archivio nel documentario italiano contemporaneo," 81. Rendi also worked as Assistant Director and Archival Researcher for Quatriglio's *Terramatta*.

[61] Bell, "Documentary Film and the Poetics of History," 14. Bell himself is a documentary filmmaker (and film studies scholar) who developed a creative documentary practice based on archival footage to explore Ireland's post-Famine past and the Irish migrant experience.

[62] Bell, 23.

[63] Bell, 23.

[64] Bell, 23.

[65] Bell, 23. See also Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*.

[66] Bertozzi, "The Poetics of Reuse: Festivals, Archives and Cinematic Recycling in Italian Documentary," 91–92. Like Desmond Bell, Bertozzi is both a film scholar and a documentary filmmaker.

[67] Bertozzi, 91. In his essay, Bertozzi discusses at length the works of these filmmakers and himself, who have all engaged with found footage in innovative ways. In *Un'ora sola ti vorrei* (2002), Marazzi retraces her mother's life—dramatically interrupted by her suicide when the filmmaker was only seven years old—through her family's home movies (see Bertozzi, 92). In *Vogliamo anche le rose* (2007), she uses a variety of found footage to explore stories about three generations of women from the 1950s to the 1970s in Italy. This found footage includes Super8 films, archival material from the RAI Teche (RAI's radio and television archive), the AAMOD (Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico) and the Cineteca di Bologna Archive, as well as sequences from experimental and underground films (Bertozzi, 92–93). On found footage in Marazzi's *Vogliamo anche le rose*, see also Bonifazio, "Feminism, Postmodernism, Intertextuality: *We Want Roses Too* (2007)," 171–82. Piero Marcello's *La bocca del lupo* (2009) presents the viewers with neglected found footage of the city of Genoa to draw what Bertozzi describes as an "interior landscape of languid and marginalized biographies" (Bertozzi, 93). The most renowned of the filmmakers whose work he discusses are Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, who have shaped their long artistic career precisely around the re-discovery and manipulation of found footage. This is exemplified by *Dal Polo all'Equatore*

footage films belong, Bertozzi maintains, "is fundamental for the difficult process of rethinking national history."[68] Bertozzi considers found footage films as sources of original contributions in "a struggle over memory that then becomes a struggle over aesthetics: from television formats in the style of grand 'History' (in which a careful work of writing is 'demonstrated' by archival images), to silent films, to asynchronic music, to recuperations of home movies and scattered material."[69] For this reason, he defines documentary film as "a laboratory of gazes dedicated to the idea that it is possible to rework buried fragments, to fill the gap between distant acts of seeing and a more recent eagerness to know."[70]

Quatriglio's *Triangle*, as I suggest, is a "laboratory of gazes" that produces a specific type of temporality precisely by reworking "buried fragments" of found footage. By alternating found footage from the surge of protests in response to the Triangle Fire, early cinema, city symphony films, and other sources with her new footage shot in contemporary Barletta (including the interview with Fasanella), Quatriglio creates an associational narrative structure that engages and interrogates both the past and the present, as well as their visual representation. This structure emphasizes both similarities and differences between the tragic events of 1911 and 2011, and between the lives of workers in early twentieth-century New York and those in today's Barletta. As Russell writes, "the archival film brings past, present, and future into a new nonlinear temporality."[71]

While my analysis mainly focuses on found footage, the archival material that Quatriglio "reworks" in *Triangle* also encompasses photographs, such as the ones taken by a photographer of the Brown Brothers photo service on the day of the Triangle Fire and its aftermath, and an original audio featuring the stories of three survivors of the Triangle Fire—Dora Maisler, Paulina Pepe, and Max Hochfield.[72] All three survivors had been interviewed on tape by Leon Stein—editor of *Justice*, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union newspaper—for his book, *The Triangle Fire*, published in 1962.[73] The original audio that contains these interviews is preserved at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, in the Archives of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union at the Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives.[74] In their interviews with Stein, Maisler, Pepe, and Hochfield recount the tragic day of the fire and its aftermath, but they also describe their working conditions. Quatriglio complicates this original audio material by inserting carefully selected excerpts into her documentary: audio tracks are in fact superimposed over both archival photographs and found footage, as I discuss below. Though much of this archival material comes from the Kheel Center, Quatriglio also uses material housed at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC, and at Istituto Luce in Rome.[75]

From the beginning of *Triangle*, the viewer is presented with the associational narrative structure noted above. After the initial segment, which ends with the card title of the documentary,

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(1986), in which they use the archives of Luca Comerio (1878-1940), and through their use of military films shot during World War I in *Oh! Uomo* (2004) (Bertozzi 93–94). On Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi's artistic production, see also Lumley, *Entering the Frame*. In his own *Appunti romani* (2004), Bertozzi creates a visual journey in the city of Rome by means of found footage in order to represent the stratified memory of its history (Bertozzi, 100).

[68] Bertozzi, "Documentary Film and the Poetics of History," 91.

[69] Bertozzi, 91–92.

[70] Bertozzi, 99.

[71] Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, 240.

[72] On these archival photos see Wiley Todd, "Photojournalism, Visual Culture, and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," 9–27.

[73] Stein, *The Triangle Fire*.

[74] "International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU)."

[75] Cornell University hosts a web exhibit on the Triangle Fire with material from the Kheel Center and the Library's Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, including a partial transcript of the trial that followed and commemorations of the event. See "Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire."

Quatriglio inserts found footage showing a building on fire and capturing the dramatic moment in which a woman jumps out of a window. Archival photographs show what was left of the building of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory after the fire (see Fig. 4, Fig. 5, Fig. 6). An intertitle, which reads "1911 New York," follows. The voices of the three survivors of the Triangle Fire are dubbed on other archival images of the fire and its victims as discursive commentary. One of the two women interviewed by Stein says that the workers died because they choked from the smoke, or, as she witnessed, because they jumped out from the windows of the ninth floor. Hochfield says that he tried to go back to rescue his little sister, but he got stopped by a firefighter. She burned in the fire too. The following segment contains a specular "structure of information," in Carl Plantinga's term, whose order is meant to persuade viewers to recognize similarities between two temporally distant events.[76] It opens with still photographs of a collapsed building, on which firefighters are at work, followed by an intertitle that reads "2011 Barletta." Quatriglio's footage, which portrays everyday life in today's Barletta, is edited together with images of a group of relatives of the victims describing what happened on the day of the collapse.

Fig. 4: *Triangle*. Still

[76] Plantinga, *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film*, 89.

Fig. 5: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 6: *Triangle*. Still

This parallelism created by Quatriglio's narrative strategy is repeated throughout the documentary, as when the Triangle Fire survivors and Fasanella talk about their working conditions. Maisler, Pepe, and Hochfield say that the workers at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory were very poorly paid for working eight hours a day, seven days a week. They were kept under surveillance by the owners, who worried that their employees would steal fabrics, garments, or tools. For this reason, they checked every worker's bag at the end of each shift. Fasanella says that she worked long hours and was paid by the piece. She also says that she had to time all her movements in order to work faster, while being precise and focused in order to be productive and not to get injured by the sewing machine she was using. As an off-the-books worker, Fasanella states that she did not have any type of insurance or benefits.

In *Triangle*, this parallelism also emerges through how the segments are ordered. For example, Quatriglio's footage, in which the victims' relatives discuss who was responsible for the collapse in Barletta, is followed by testimonies of the Triangle Fire survivors, in which they lay the responsibility at the foot of the owners. The sister of one of the Barletta victims tells how signs of the instability of the building had been reported—and yet ignored—by workers at an adjacent construction site, leading to the building's eventual collapse. Another relative says that the factory owner's wife approached the workers at this construction site, telling them that the walls of the building were moving, and that cracks were being heard. Someone replied by saying: "Signora, voi che fate? Le magliette? Andate a fare le magliette, qui ce la vediamo noi" (Ma'am, what do you make? T-shirts? Go and make T-shirts. We'll see to that). Similarly, one of the Triangle Fire's survivors interviewed by Stein, Hochfield, says that the door of the room in which they were working on the ninth floor, where the fire broke out, was always kept locked until the end of their shift. "If that door would have been opened, I am positive there would be no casualties," he concludes.

Another example of this parallelism comes slightly later in the documentary, when Quatriglio juxtaposes a series of still images of firefighters and volunteers extracting the victims from the debris of the building that collapsed in Barletta (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). A relative describes the moment in which she had to identify her sister's body: "Per me non era morta. Dormiva" (She didn't look dead to me. [It was if as] she was sleeping), she says. A collage of archival photographs of the Triangle Fire victims' coffins comes just after, as well as images of

their funerals in New York and of their graves (see Fig. 9, Fig. 10, Fig. 11, and Fig. 12). Then, footage shot at the cemetery of Barletta follows (see Fig. 13 and Fig. 14).

Fig. 7: *Triangle*. Still

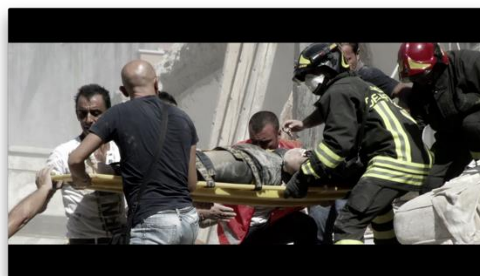

Fig. 8: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 9: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 10: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 11: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 12: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 13: *Triangle*. Still

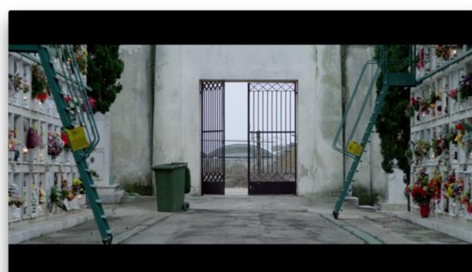

Fig. 14: *Triangle*. Still

In another one of these parallel sequences, the viewers hear the interviewer, Stein, asking one of the Triangle Fire victims what she felt when the fire started. Quite irritated, she replies: "How would you feel if you would be trapped in a cage?" Right after, Quatriglio inserts a segment of Fasanella's interview, in which she recounts that once a journalist asked her what she felt when she saw the collapsed building. "Dissi 'domanda stupida' nella mia mente" (I said to myself 'what a stupid question'), Fasanella responds.

Despite Quatriglio's efforts to underscore these and other similarities between the two tragedies, differences between what happened in 1911 and 2011 are also highlighted, particularly when the associational narrative of *Triangle* moves into a discourse about labor and workers' rights. As the archival photographs and found footage selected by Quatriglio show, the tragedy at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory triggered worker protests demanding better working conditions and labor protection. In the superimposed audio track, one of the two women interviewed by Stein (Maisler and Pepe) says that she had already protested against the owners of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory by participating for twenty-five weeks in the strike that took place there in 1909. She says that, at that time, factory owners would recruit gangsters to assault the demonstrators so that they would stop picketing. Together with her fellow female workers, she says that she kept getting arrested by the police and released at the end of the day, and that she once lost several teeth after being beaten up. Although the owners of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory were not convicted in the trial that took place in the aftermath of the 1911 fire, all three survivors point out how that tragic event changed the history of labor protection in the US. In particular, they note that new laws were passed such as legislation about fire-proofing buildings, providing fire escapes, and creating no-smoking working areas, as well as laws regulating factory work. Unions gained more bargaining power and became stronger. As Hochfield remarks: "While it was a horrible thing at the time, good did come out of it in the long run."

Quatriglio strategically contrasts the Triangle Fire survivors' awareness about their rights as workers, which shines through in their words, with Fasanella's lack of awareness of her rights as a worker. This discrepancy is most prominent in Fasanella's interview. She describes her working conditions before the accident in a way that makes it clear to viewers that she does not realize that her situation was problematic. Being paid under the table and not having any sort of job security or benefits do not strike her as unusual. Moreover, she does not hold the owner of the clothing factory accountable for the victims of the collapse of the building. Rather, Fasanella seems to sympathize with him when she says that he sat down to work together with his employees, tried to cheer them up, and felt sorry for them when there was no work, and he had to choose whom to ask to stay home for the day. As Fasanella claims in her interview: "Metti il caso che stavamo tutti in regola, il palazzo crollava, cioè, chi lo frenava a non crollare il palazzo? A stare in regola?" (Say that we all had a regular work contract, the building would have collapsed, I mean, what would have stopped the building from collapsing? The fact that we had a regular work contract?). Referring to differences between Fasanella's working conditions and those that existed for factory workers in the early twentieth century in New York, Quatriglio notes that, while these earlier workers learned how to unite and fight together for their rights, Fasanella "si ritrova con una filiera completamente frammentata e manca il conflitto. Il senso di schiavitù è talmente interiorizzato che non c'è conflitto. Anzi c'è devozione nei confronti di chi ti dà lavoro, che è povero tanto quanto te" (finds herself in a completely fragmented supply chain and with no conflict. The sense of slavery is so internalized that there is no conflict. Rather, there is devotion to the one who gives you a job, who is as poor as you are).[77]

After the accident, Fasanella states in her interview in *Triangle*, she kept working off-the-books and by the piece from home; she was unable to find somebody willing to give her a regular contract. Explaining how her earnings are calculated, she says that, for every 1000 T-shirts she sews, she is paid €20. In *Fabbriche invisibili: Storie di donne, lavoranti a domicilio* (2016), Tania Toffanin estimates that today, across the globe, there are approximately 300 million homeworkers engaged in piece-rate home-based manufacturing.[78] In Italy, there are between 2,000 and 4,000 irregular home workers in apparel production in Puglia alone.[79] Here, Elizabeth Paton and Milena Lazazzera

[77] Finos, "'Triangle,' le vittime (donne) del lavoro ricordate in un documentario."
[78] Toffanin, *Fabbriche invisibili: Storie di donne, lavoranti a domicilio*, 23.
[79] Paton and Lazazzera, "Inside Italy's Shadow Economy."

interviewed low-paid home workers creating luxury garments without contracts or insurance with similar stories as Fasanella: their findings were reported in their 2018 long-form article in *The New York Times*, "Inside Italy's Shadow Economy."[80] One of their interviewees says that, ten years earlier, she used to work off-the-books from home for local factories, for which she would embroider wedding dresses for €1.50 to €2 per hour, working sixteen to eighteen hours a day, and being paid only when a gown was complete.[81] Another woman says that, after working in a factory all day for €5 per hour, she would work an additional three hours off-the-books from home: she was paid about €50 for each piece of high-quality garments she was making.[82] As Paton and Lazazzera write:

> Home work—working from home or a small workshop as opposed to in a factory—is a cornerstone of the fast-fashion supply chain. It is particularly prevalent in countries such as India, Bangladesh, Vietnam and China, where millions of low-paid and predominantly female home workers are some of the most unprotected in the industry, because of their irregular employment status, isolation and lack of legal recourse. That similar conditions exist in Italy, however, and facilitate the production of some of the most expensive wardrobe items money can buy, may shock those who see the "Made in Italy" label as a byword for sophisticated craftsmanship.[83]

Though largely unaware of her rights as a worker, in *Triangle* Fasanella does recognize and discusses the value of her manual labor, particularly her sewing skills. She says that they are indispensable for carrying out a type of work that requires concentration and technical expertise in order to execute rapid and precise movements. Fasanella explains that her strategy to maintain focus involves talking to the sewing machine:

> La macchina mi deve conoscere. Io devo conoscere lei e lei deve conoscere me. Io dialogo con la macchina nella mente perché io le macchine le reputo come noi, come me, che sono umana … è come se tu fai una nuova conoscenza. Non so, sarò matta … però io ti dico che … in tanti anni di lavoro, io non ho mai sbagliato in vita mia.[84]

Although Fasanella does not use this word, Quatriglio seems to suggest to the audience that talking with the machine is her way of fighting the "alienation" that her repetitive job entails: by personifying the machine, she maintains a human connection while working.

To dramatize the repetitiveness of manual labor, Quatriglio superimposes Fasanella's voice over over found footage from the early-twentieth century showing female workers running a variety of machines. Extradiegetic original music composed for *Triangle* by musician and composer Teho Teardo is layered on top of the sound of sewing machines. As Fasanella's voice fades, the volume of the music starts rising along with the noise of the machinery. Simultaneously, found footage from the same period depicting the manual labor of female and male factory workers alternates with footage that Quatriglio shot in a clothing factory in Barletta: some of today's tools and machines resemble those of the past, as made clear by juxtaposing images (see Fig. 15 and Fig. 16). The music of this segment underscores this resemblance: layered over the shimmering rhythmic sounds of these machines, the music is characterized by a staccato articulation and repetitive structure whose rhythm increases progressively. To enhance the sense of repetition embodied in the work, Quatriglio mirrors the found footage, doubling the image so as to make it

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[80] Paton and Lazazzera.
[81] Paton and Lazazzera, "Inside Italy's Shadow Economy."
[82] Paton and Lazazzera.
[83] Paton and Lazazzera.
[84] "The machine must know me. I must know it, and it must know me. I talk with the machine in my head because I consider the machines to be like us, like me who am human. ... it is like meeting somebody new. I don't know, I might be crazy ... but let me tell you that ... in so many years of work, I have never made a mistake in my life."

specular, while the music is punctuated by rhythmic patterns and intermittent sounds (see Fig. 17 and Fig. 18). Observation segments shot in the clothing factory in Barletta have a similar effect. Quatriglio's camera documents female workers as they cut and sew together a pink fabric to make low-cost sweaters, while male workers package them and put them on a truck (see Fig. 19 and 20). Quatriglio's camera then follows these low-cost pink sweaters, from the hands of the factory workers to the stall of an open-air market, where they are sold for €6 a piece.

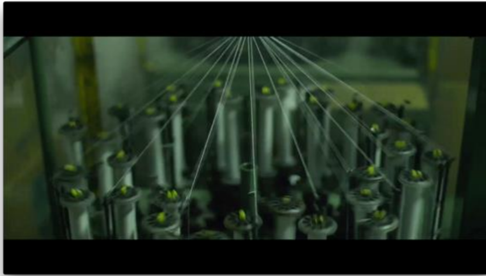

Fig. 15: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 16: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 17: *Triangle*. Still

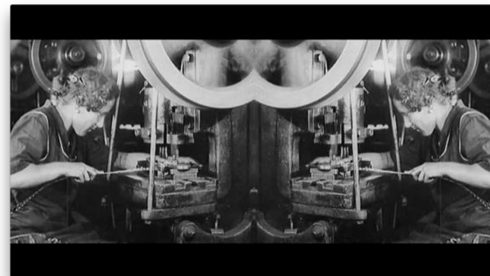

Fig. 18: *Triangle*. Still

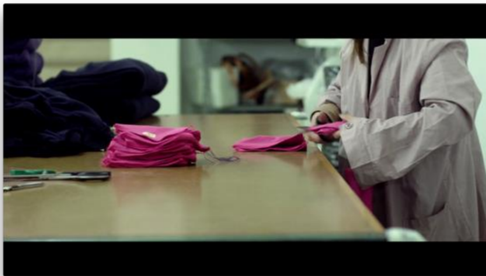

Fig. 19: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 20: *Triangle*. Still

As Quatriglio's documentary progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that one of her principal themes is the lack of awareness among contemporary garment workers of their legal rights. Her focus is also the illegal exploitation of labor, which is widespread in Italy. Given this, I would argue that her decision to include footage of a group of young people watching Francesco Rosi's *Le mani sulla città* (1963) in a parish recreation center in Barletta is significant (see Fig. 22 and Fig. 21). *Le mani sulla città*, which won the Golden Lion in Venice in 1963, provides a fictional documentation of real-estate speculation and the connivance between politicians and land-developers in Naples during the economic boom of the 1950s and early 1960s. At that time, property speculation affected the whole of Italy: it saw the unregulated construction of buildings, which were poorly designed and constructed. In many cases, these buildings disfigured the historic centers of cities and towns, as well as the natural environment. This building boom was made possible by corruption, criminal collusion, and political choices that gave great autonomy to real-estate developers. Quatriglio films the audience watching one of the initial scenes of Rosi's film,

in which a residential building in a working-class neighborhood collapses, killing two people and injuring a boy. The film follows the inquiry into this accident to expose the causes of the collapse, which was connected to unsafe, illegal work in an adjacent building. The son of Edoardo Nottala, the protagonist of Rosi's film—who is a powerful, corrupt real-estate developer and city council member of the right-wing political party—is allegedly responsible for the collapse.

Fig. 21: *Triangle*. Still

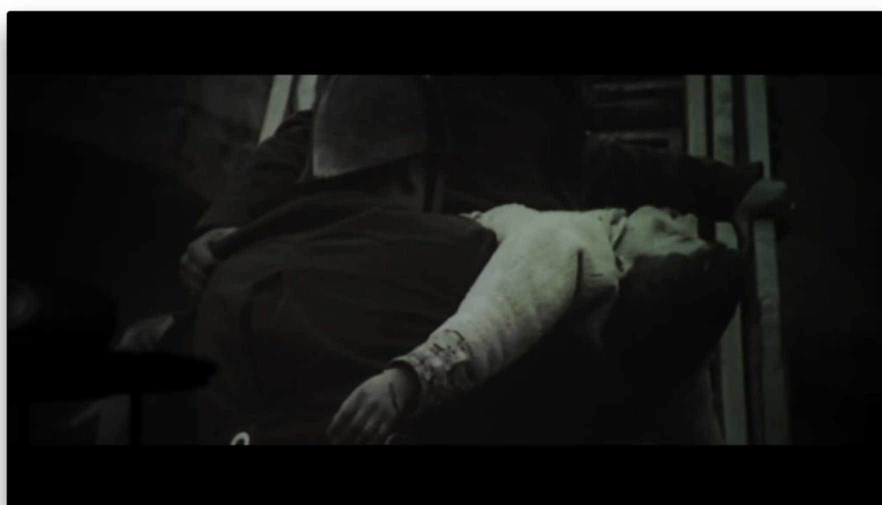

Fig. 22: *Triangle*. Still

In *Triangle*, the building collapse of *Le mani sulla città* not only evokes the one in Barletta, which is presented by means of still images of the rubble from which the rescue squads extracted the victims, it also stands in for it figuratively. I would argue that this scene suggests the importance of the audience as *polis* in Arendtian terms: "audience is a metaphor for the political community whose nature is to be a community of remembrance."[85] The audience on screen watching Rosi's political film duplicates the audience watching Quatriglio's political documentary film off screen. Although they work in different ways, both these filmmakers aim to provoke in their audiences a

[85] Wolin, "Hannah Arendt and the Ordinance of Time," 97.

critical reflection on systems of illegality and their social costs, which include but are not limited to human lives.

The way in which found footage and Quatriglio's new footage are structured into the documentary narrative, as well as the way in which they are edited together in the soundtrack, serve the purpose not only of advancing a conversation about labor, but also of engaging the viewers' emotions. Quatriglio uses, for example, images and voices to talk about the victims' daily lives before the accidents in both New York and Barletta, as well as the void that they left when they died. As the survivors interviewed by Stein say, the young women working at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory enjoyed each other's company, became friends, and had fun together, despite the hard manual labor. One of them says that she had emigrated to the United States in 1906 when she was sixteen years old. The superimposition of the audio-tracks with the Triangle Fire survivors' voices over the archival material augments the *pathos* produced by the telling of these stories. This is designed to stir the audience's emotions of sorrow and anger for all the lives that were prematurely interrupted. The same sorts of emotions are sparked by Fasanella's words, and by stories by the Barletta victims' relatives, as they share their memories of the victims' personalities, their plans for the future, and their love for their families. One of victims was about to become a grandmother.

The way in which Quatriglio uses found footage in *Triangle* reminds me of the way in which objects were used by Ciceronian orators: as Quatriglio displays footage that is not hers to advance her argument, so does the Ciceronian orator when displaying an object, such as a painting, during an oration. As Jacqueline Lichtenstein points out, in Cicero's writings there are multiple instances in which he offers examples of "a silent eloquence whose arguments are those of showing" by means of objects, paintings, or portraits that the orator would display to the audience.[86] By so doing, *demonstrare* would give way to *monstrare*, and "the art of saying" would give way to "the art of painting."[87] In the same way, Quatriglio allows the "display" produced by the use of found footage to speak eloquently, where the "telling" gives way to the "showing." Keith Beattie defines a type of documentary "in which the visual realm is maximized as the field of exhibitionistic, expressionistic and excessive attractions" as "documentary display."[88] If the expository mode "tells" the viewers the documentary's argument by means of direct address, "documentary display" by contrast relies on different strategies and serves different purposes:

> Beyond "telling" there is another way of seeing and knowing. Indeed, the image, released from a strict denotative literalism whereby it must serve as the vehicle or subject of evidence, is variously deployable as evocation, sensory affect, or "poetic allusion." Such effects pertain to documentary as "looking" (as opposed to "telling"), the scopic realm of documentary display. … Separated, or freed, from the immediate demands of knowledge production, documentary display entertains, startles and excites in ways which produce pleasure—the great repressed in analyses predicated on documentary as a sober discourse.[89]

According to Beattie, found footage films construct arguments about the socio-historical world and represent history with practices that pertain to documentary display:

> The core of such representations, and the foundation of the found-footage display, is located in collagist methods which release unrealised meanings and productive ambiguities inherent in source footage. Ambiguity—and its attendant "double seeing"—results in a critical historiography operative through documentary display.[90]

[86] Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age*, 91.
[87] Lichtenstein, 96.
[88] Beattie, *Documentary Display: Re-Viewing Nonfiction Film and Video*, 4.
[89] Beattie, 5.
[90] Beattie, 7.

Although she does not rely on "exhibitionistic, expressionistic and excessive attractions," Quatriglio exploits the "ambiguity" of the "found-footage display" in order to produce a metahistorical investigation meant to appeal to the viewers' emotions. Indeed, she engages the viewers' senses, and, at the same time, arouses their critical thinking by means of "a privileging of 'showing' over 'telling.'"[91] This "showing" suggests analogies, evokes metaphors, and encourages a symbolic reading. It also works like Aristotle's *pathos*, in that it aims to produce empathy in viewers.

Another way in which Quatriglio aims to engage the audience both intellectually and emotionally is by means of the self-conscious reflexivity of found footage. Indeed, found footage filmmaking is characterized not only by intertextuality, but also by reflexivity. As Wees argues:

> Whether they [found footage films] preserve the footage in its original form or present it in a new and different way, they invite us to recognize it *as* found footage, *as* recycled images, and due to that self-referentiality, they encourage a more analytical reading (which does not necessarily exclude a greater aesthetic appreciation) than the footage originally received.[92]

Consequently, makers of found footage films address viewers with this phenomenological awareness about spectatorship in mind, as Quadriglio does. Indeed, she selects found footage from early cinema and city symphony films, as if she were challenging the audience to recognize from which filmic texts the segments included in her narration were taken (see Fig. 23 and Fig. 24). As Quatriglio approaches documentary filmmaking as a "relazione," she also invites viewers to be in a "relazione" with the "recycled" found footage of her documentary. To this extent, she relies on and activates what Jaimie Baron calls "the archive effect," that is, "an experience of reception" that viewers have by perceiving "certain documents within that film as coming from another, previous—and primary—context of use or intended use."[93] According to Baron,

> the relationship produced between particular elements of a film and the film's viewer allows us to account not only for emergent types of archives and the diverse documents held within them but also for the ways in which certain documents from the past—whether found in an official archive, a family basement, or online—may be imbued by the viewer with various evidentiary values as they are appropriated and repurposed in new films.[94]

Quatriglio selects, for example, found footage from films made by the Edison Company and the American Mutoscope and Biograph Co., which changed its name to Biograph Co. in 1909. With her use of this footage from early cinema, Quatriglio aims to give a sense of the "wonder" that these films instilled in early audiences. As film archivist Jon Gartenberg writes:

> The first films exhibited in New York City at the beginning of the twentieth century (1895-1905) revealed a sense of wonder at capturing motion by showing busy street life and powerful machines at work. The films also showcased spectacular man-made constructions such as bridges, skyscrapers, and tunnels. There was an expression of optimism by the filmmakers about the limitless potential of man to control production and increase his leisure time in the machine age.[95]

Stylistically, "the cinema of attractions," as Tom Gunning defines early cinema pre-dating 1906-07, is in fact characterized by "its ability to *show* something," to exhibit, and to create a peculiar

[91] Beattie, 85.
[92] Wees, *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films*, 11.
[93] Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*, 7.
[94] Baron, 7.
[95] Gartenberg, "NY, NY: A Century of City Symphony Films," 248–49.

relationship with the spectator as the actors look into the camera.[96] Indeed, "the cinema of attractions" is, for Gunning, "a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator."[97]

Fig. 23: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 24: *Triangle*. Still

Moving images of skyscrapers are predominant in Quatriglio's documentary, including many of the iconic Empire State Building (see Fig. 25). By the early 1930s, skyscrapers came to characterize New York and became fixed into the modern urban imaginary. Christoph Lindner describes the phase between 1890 and 1940 as the one in which New York's "vertical architecture" reached its highest intensity:

> During this period of rapid urban growth and development, encompassing the consolidation of the five boroughs in 1898, New York's physical appearance and character were radically transformed by the widespread construction of skyscrapers. As late as 1883, the neo-Gothic spire of Trinity Church on Broadway and Wall Street in Lower Manhattan remained the tallest

[96] Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," 64.
[97] Gunning, 64.

> completed structure in the city …. The spire is 284 feet tall. By 1900, however, more than ten new buildings exceeded this height, including the prominent Park Row and St. Paul office buildings, which were both completed in 1899 at heights of 391 and 315 feet respectively. Within two more years, as many as fifty additional buildings towered above the spire of Trinity Church. And by the time the city's first great skyscraper boom tapered off in the 1930s—capped by the conspicuous speculative venture of the Empire State Building in 1931—New York had become home to literally thousands of skyscrapers.[98]

In *Triangle*, there are segments from city symphony films that were made in a later period than the time of the Triangle Fire. Quatriglio in fact aims to evoke a longer history of cinema and of New York. She includes, for example, footage from *Manhatta* (1921) by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, and *Twenty-Four-Dollar Island* (1927) by Robert Flaherty, both of which feature men at work in different constructions sites in the city, and accentuate the verticality and geometry of skyscrapers.

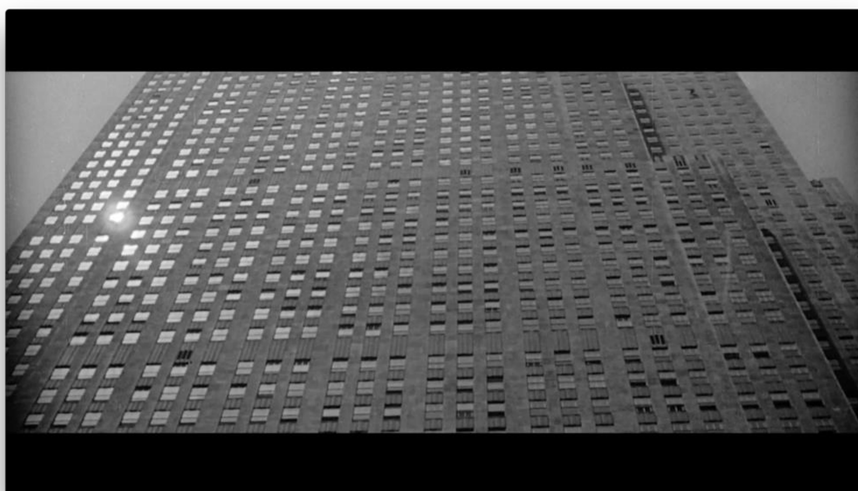

Fig. 25: *Triangle*. Still

In order to further enhance this sense of verticality and wonder, Quatriglio splits the screen and inserts two images, adopting the Cinemascope format with a 2.40:1 ratio (see Fig. 26 and Fig. 27). 20th Century-Fox studios introduced Cinemascope in the early 1950s in order to shoot widescreen movies: this format allowed for the image to be stretched (with an initial 2.55:1 ratio, and later 2.35:1), obtaining a wide-angle panoramic effect and raising audience expectations.[99] About this choice, Quatriglio states:

> Ho scelto il fotogramma di Sergio Leone, il cinemascope, e questo mi ha permesso di usare la verticalità dei fotogrammi originali, che sono più o meno quadrati. Usando un formato tradizionale di oggi, ad esempio un sedici noni, avrei mangiato l'immagine sopra e sotto. Invece volevo esasperare la verticalità. La fine di una civiltà si può raccontare esasperando la verticalità dei palazzi di New York: più è forte quella tensione, più la sconfitta che è dentro la città di Barletta diventa un buco insanabile.[100]

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[98] Lindner, *Imagining New York City: Literature, Urbanism, and the Visual Arts, 1890-1940*, 26–28.
[99] Root, "Stretching the Screen: Horizontality, the CinemaScope Film, and the Cold War," 456–57.
[100] "I chose Sergio Leone's frame ratio, Cinemascope, and this allowed me to use the verticality of the original frames, which are more or less square. By using today's traditional format, such as the 16:9, I would have cut out the image above and below. Instead, I wanted to emphasize the verticality. The end of a civilization can be told by emphasizing the verticality of the buildings of New York: the stronger that tension is, the more the defeat within the city of Barletta appears as an unfillable hole." Finos, "'Triangle,' le vittime (donne) del lavoro ricordate in un documentario."

Fig. 26: *Triangle*. Still

Fig. 27: *Triangle*. Still

Hence, with the use of this specific found footage, what Quatriglio aims to offer is a metacommentary about cinema and its relationship with the promises of modern progress, of which New York—as the icon of the modern metropolis—was a symbol at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, by contrasting the found footage with her new footage shot in the city of Barletta, Quatriglio creates this "tension" visually, juxtaposing the promises of industrialization and of modern progress at the beginning of the twentieth century with the emptiness and flatness of the city of Barletta today. Quatriglio captures everyday life scenes in Barletta, as if she were mirroring the found footage about New York: rather than a "city symphony," however, Quatriglio's is a "city litany," I maintain. The eloquence of these images precisely visualizes this dissonance between wonder and disenchantment, hope and distrust, dynamism and stillness. As Quatriglio says:

La chiave visiva del film è la relazione tra la magnificenza di New York e il depauperamento del

> paesaggio urbano. Per me Barletta è una città qualsiasi, una città vuota in cui lo sguardo va verso un azzeramento. Avrei voluto fare una ripresa dall'alto del buco rimasto dopo il crollo ma non è stato possibile per problemi produttivi.[101]

If the hole left by the collapse, although not visible in the documentary, is what symbolizes the emptiness of the city of Barletta and the gaze that rests upon it—which, instead of being elevated, is annulled—hopefulness is what characterizes Fasanella's words at end of the documentary. *Ricominciare* (Beginning Again) is the title of the diegetic song that fills the room in which she is being interviewed by Quatriglio. In the last frames, a close-up captures Fasanella's face as she sings this song, opens in a smile, and looks into the camera to then turn her gaze away. The audience keeps listening to the song as the credits roll. The lyrics, which speak about the promises of love that a new day brings with it, now resonate with Fasanella's story and become a celebration of her resilience, her smile, her courage to begin again. Yet, no catharsis is offered to the audience, which remains haunted by Fasanella's story as an exploited worker, and by the awareness that accidents in the garment industry keep happening in today's globalized world.

Conclusion

As I have argued, Quatriglio's use of found footage in *Triangle* is eloquent: it has the rhetorical function of visually establishing an analogy between past and present stories of labor and workers' rights. Rather than "telling" these stories through expository modes, Quatriglio "shows" her argument. This is achieved by means of the way in which found footage is selected, edited, and manipulated in the documentary narration. The way in which found footage is juxtaposed with Quatriglio's new footage shot in Barletta, which includes Fasanella's interview, and the way in which found footage is placed in relation with the soundtrack featuring, in particular, Fasanella's and the Triangle Fire survivors' voices, also enhance viewers' engagement. Indeed, Quatriglio aims to create a space where viewers can intellectually and emotionally engage with a recent event with deep cultural, social, and political meaning. "Con quel crollo è crollata una civiltà, è imploso un sistema" (With that collapse a civilization collapsed, a system imploded), Quatriglio claims.[102] By means of this engagement, as viewers together remember the past, critically think about the present, and feel empathy for the documentary's protagonist, they may recognize in one another a political community, and act together for change.

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[101] "The visual key of the film is the relation between the magnificence of New York and the depletion of the urban landscape. To me Barletta is any city, an empty city where one's gaze is annulled. I would have wanted to film from above the hole that remained after the collapse, but it was not possible because of production problems." Paternò, "Costanza Quatriglio: dalla Triangle a Barletta, morire di lavoro."

[102] Paternò.

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