

Material-Discursive Practices in Film. Diffractive Encounters with Memory, Matter, and Voice in Trinh T. Minh-ha and Natasa Urban

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Abstract: This article explores material-discursive practices in contemporary cinema through a diffractive reading of *The Eclipse*(2022) by Nataša Urban and the films of Trinh T. Minh-ha. Drawing on Karen Barad's agential realism, it examines film as a site of co-emergence for bodies, histories, and technologies. Rather than a passive medium, cinema is approached as an intra-active apparatus of world-making. Urban's analog techniques—expired Super 8 film, hand-developed footage—dialogue with Minh-ha's layered, reflexive aesthetics. Both disrupt representational norms through materiality, rhythm, and affective temporality. Mistakes, textures, and sensory traces are not flaws but agents of meaning. The analysis highlights how memory, sound, and image co-compose film's epistemological force. Film becomes a dispositif of thought, resisting binary logic and fixed subject positions. The article contributes to feminist film theory, new materialisms, and post-truth epistemologies.

Keywords: *material-discursive practices; diffraction; feminist film theory; new materialism; agential realism;*

Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of feminist theory, documentary cinema, and new materialism has offered renewed approaches to understanding how films do not merely *represent* reality but actively *participate* in its making. Central to this shift is Karen Barad's concept of *diffraction*, which challenges the traditional subject-object dichotomy by foregrounding the **material-discursive practices** through which meaning, matter, and boundaries emerge. In Barad's framework, phenomena are not pre-existing entities that interact; rather, they are co-constituted through *intra-actions*—dynamic entanglements of matter and meaning.

This article proposes a diffractive reading of two formally and politically distinct cinematic works: *The Eclipse* (2022), a personal and archival documentary by Nataša Urban, and the hybrid, experimental films of Trinh T. Minh-ha. Both bodies of work resist conventional narrative and representational strategies, instead activating cinema as a site of **material-discursive production**. In this context the apparatus of filmmaking (camera, framing, voice, sound, editing) is not a passive tool of observation, but a generative agent in shaping what becomes visible, audible, and thinkable. Drawing on Barad's theory of intra-action, Stacy Alaimo's trans-corporeal feminism, and Domitilla Olivieri's concept of the materiality of documentary, this article explores how these films function as **diffractive apparatuses** that *cut together-apart* subjectivity, memory, and history. Through careful attention to the formal strategies of each film, I examine how matter

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(bodies, archives, sounds) and discourse (voice-over, narrative structures, cultural codes) do not exist separately, but emerge through one another. By reading *The Eclipse* and Trinh Minh-ha's cinema alongside each other, I trace the ways in which they *materialize difference* not as fixed categories, but as relational effects of ongoing entanglement.

1. Theoretical Framework: Diffractive Methodologies and Material-Discursive Practices.

Karen Barad's theory of *diffraction* offers an alternative to representational approaches by foregrounding the **material-discursive practices** through which phenomena emerge. Diffraction, in Barad's terms, does not delineate the boundaries of subjects and objects as discrete entities. Instead, it "rather investigates the material-discursive boundary-making practices that produce "objects" and "subjects" and other differences out of, and in terms of, a changing relationality."² This perspective challenges representationalism by emphasizing *intra-action* over *inter-action*: entities do not preexist their relations but are co-constituted through relational entanglements.

In this view, apparatuses, meaning cameras, editing suites, and even conceptual frameworks, are not passive observational tools. Rather, they are **productive of phenomena** and become *part of* those phenomena. As Barad notes, apparatus are not mere observing instruments but boundary-drawing practices specific material (re)configurings of the world-which come to matter."³ They function as **worlds that world worlds**, a metaphor that becomes central when thinking about film as an active agent in shaping social reality.

I take inspiration from previous academic research like the work of Iris van der Tuin, who, building on Barad, performs a **diffractive reading** of Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* and Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, creating an affirmative dialogue across disparate traditions. Rather than comparing texts in terms of opposition or similarity, van der Tuin "passes through" metaphors and concepts from both authors, allowing them to transform one another. As she writes, diffractive reading becomes a **methodology of intra-action**, a methodology that does not leave either the researcher or the object of research unchanged. In this framework, the text itself becomes an agent, and the reading process a creative moment of becoming. Similarly, the film under analysis acquires agentiality, and the process of understanding transforms the researcher, generating new ways of seeing the world and opening up new creative pathways.

Van der Tuin's engagement with Bergson foregrounds a particular kind of **temporality** essential to understanding matter: duration as a process of differentiation. As she argues, "thus the universe is made up of (an aggregate of) images of matter or bodies, and when historicity, or better duration, is inserted into matter (as it always is already inserted into spirit), a new kind of materialism is put forth"⁴. This *Bergsonian duration*, described by Deleuze as "what differs from itself"⁵, is central to understanding agential matter. Not as fixed or inert, but as dynamic and temporally layered. Reading Barad through Bergson reveals a productive

² Karen Barad. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham–Londra: Duke University Press, p. 93.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 140

⁴ Iris van der Tuin. 2011. "New Feminist Materialisms". *Hypatia* 26 (1): 22–42. Published by Wiley on behalf of Hypatia, Inc. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23016677>, p. 30.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze. 1956/2002. "Bergson's Conception of Difference". In *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, p. 37.

convergence between philosophy and science, grounded in shared experiential and intuitive approaches. Bergson's *Matter and Memory* advocates for a return to experience that disrupts superficial habits of thought shaped by bodily needs, linking philosophy to mathematics and deeper forms of knowing. Barad complements this by rejecting fixed, representationalist understandings of objects, emphasizing instead their emergence through agential cuts—objects as "boundary projects." Both thinkers thus enable a feminist ethics grounded in relationality and intra-action. Contrary to critiques of Bergson's supposed phallocentrism, a diffractive reading shows how his concept of duration can support feminist theory by conceptualizing matter as entangled, temporal, and agential. This Bergsonian-Baradian onto-epistemology, rooted in the body as apparatus, invites fluid, dynamic ways of thinking life and materiality.

Diffractive reading thus emphasizes not just the *what* of representation, but the *how* of material-discursive becoming. This approach is especially useful in feminist and posthumanist cinema studies. As Orianna Calderon-Sandoval and Adelina Sánchez-Espinosa argue in their analysis of Spanish feminist documentaries⁶, diffraction offers a way to move beyond the binary between realist and counter-cinema. Documentary, they suggest, is not only a system of meaning but also part of the **material processes that co-create the real**. Framing, for example, is not neutral - it involves acts of **inclusion and exclusion**, much like the boundary-making of scientific apparatuses.

From this perspective, **documentary cinema becomes a diffraction apparatus**, capable of expressing and critiquing how social differences and inequalities are materially produced. As the authors note, "To conceive feminist documentary films as diffraction apparatuses that "enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering" (Barad 2007, p. 148) from a gender-aware perspective involves analysing how the films intra-act with different parts of the world, the differences they make, and where the effects of those differences appear."⁷ Crucially, this method allows for politically divergent feminist works to be read together productively, even when their ideological or stylistic positions differ.

Domitilla Olivieri introduces the concept of **documentary materiality**, defining it in two key ways. First, as a call to recognize the specificity of cinematic representation not just its narrative content, but its formal and technological construction: "how the film is constructed: its technologies, framing, editing, voice-over, use of realistic or fictional images and sounds, and use of different filmic strategies"⁸. Second, she emphasizes the **engagement of documentary film with bodies and the material world**, not as passive representations, but as active, relational sites of meaning-making.

This aligns with Rosi Braidotti's account of **posthuman embodiment**, in which the body is not a stable, bounded entity but a paradoxical space situated between animal and machine, though not in the dualistic sense that has shaped European philosophy since the 18th century. "*The intermingling of bodies and machines, of flesh and synthetic matter, has reached such a degree of intimacy that attempting to differentiate between them is simply no longer useful*"⁹.

⁶ Orianna Calderon-Sandoval and Adelina Sanchez-Espinosa. 2019. "Feminist Documentary Cinema as a Diffraction Apparatus: A Diffractive Reading of the Spanish Films, Cuidado, resbala and Yes, We Fuck!" *Social Sciences* 8, no.7: p.206. Retrieved April 18, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8070206>.

⁷ Domitilla Olivieri. 2012. *Haunted by Reality. Toward a Feminist Study of Documentary Film: Indexicality, Vision and the Artifice*. PhD diss., Universiteit Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands. Retrieved April 18, 2025, from: <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/221965>.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁹ Rosi Braidotti. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 90.

Stacy Alaimo's theory of **trans-corporeality** furthers this perspective by focusing on the **movements between bodies**: human, nonhuman, chemical, ecological. Rather than treating the body as a passive surface inscribed by culture, Alaimo insists on its active involvement in material processes, such as environmental exposure, hormonal disruption, or microbial exchange. She critiques paradigms that acknowledge materiality but subordinate it to discourse, arguing instead that agency emerges through complex, entangled relations. Alaimo proposes a view that centers on the "often unpredictable and unwanted actions"¹⁰ of human bodies, non-human creatures, and material systems. Trans-corporeality thus opens an epistemological space that recognizes agency as distributed, entangled, and emergent across multiple sites.

In sum, this theoretical framework positions film not as a window onto the world, but as a **material-discursive apparatus** that participates in the ongoing becoming of subjects, histories, and meanings. Through a diffractive methodology, the analysis that follows will examine how *The Eclipse* and the films of Trinh Minh-ha enact difference and does so not by reflecting a world already given, but by **cutting together-apart**¹¹ the aesthetic, political, and embodied dimensions of experience.

2. Analysis of *The Eclipse* (2022): Material-Discursive Approaches to Memory, Subjectivity, and the Analog-Digital Divide

Nataša Urban's *The Eclipse* is a deeply personal exploration of memory, subjectivity, and historical loss, enacted through an interplay between subjective and objective reality. The film is a deeply personal and formally inventive documentary that meditates on memory, complicity, and historical erasure. It is structured around two astronomical eclipses (one in 1961 and another in 1999) that metaphorically bookend a period marked by the rise and fall of Yugoslavia. These celestial events become anchoring motifs in a narrative that unfolds through the director's rediscovery of her father's meticulously kept journals, written during his mountaineering expeditions. These journals which are precise, observational, apolitical, are juxtaposed against the violence and silence surrounding the Yugoslav wars. Urban uses them not to indict her father, but to reflect on the forms of distance, blindness, and everyday participation in oppressive regimes. The film's materiality and visual choices serve as crucial components of its affective power, emphasizing how subjective experiences are intertwined with historical and familial legacies.

Urban's approach to filmmaking is intuitive, driven by impulses that she trusts, and then gives meaning to.¹² This process of intuitive creation aligns closely with Barad's notion of intra-action, where the filmmaker and the apparatus co-produce the resulting phenomena. Urban notes that she felt the freedom of working with analog film, trusting the effects of certain film stocks without fully knowing what they would reveal, creating a relationship of discovery between the medium and the artist. The film was shot on Super 8 and 16mm stocks, with Urban's use of Super 8 representing a return to her own memories and emotional landscape, creating what she calls a "subjective" aesthetic. In contrast, the 16mm film stock represents the *now*, capturing the present moment with greater clarity and definition. These two distinct film formats embody a complex

¹⁰ Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, eds. 2008. *Material Feminisms*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 238.

¹¹ "From 'breaking apart' to 'cutting together-apart,' from 'light within dark within light' to 'agential separability'." Karen Barad. 2014. "Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart". *Parallax* 20 (3): 168–187, p. 76

¹² The details of the filmmaking process were shared in a personal interview with Nataša Urban, conducted by the author in April 2025.

temporal relationship between memory and experience, with the Super 8 serving as a visual metaphor for fading memory, the affective dimension of remembering. As Urban describes, the fading of memory is something she intentionally captured through the subjective qualities of the medium, offering viewers a sense of how memory appears: fragmented and elusive.

The film's **material-discursive aspects** extend beyond the use of film stocks. Urban's engagement with analog film represents a deeper connection to the physical processes of filmmaking. She experimented with old, expired film stocks, purchasing them from eBay, and developed a close relationship with the analog process, trusting the tactile and unpredictable nature of these materials. Her exploration of this process echoes Barad's assertion that **apparatuses** (in this case, the film stocks, the development process, and the analog tools) are not passive tools but **active participants** in the co-creation of meaning and material phenomena. The tactile, physical properties of the analog process such as **vegetable soups, turmeric, and red beet soups** used for developing the film, become part of the visual language of the film, intertwining cooking and memory as central motifs.

In fact, food itself emerges as a central motif in *The Eclipse*, operating not just as a cultural symbol but as a **material-discursive practice**. The act of how cooking in the film mirrors her own process of creation, drawing parallels between her grandmother's preparation of meals and her own act of filmmaking. Just as the grandmother prepares soups, developing different flavors, Urban develops the film stock, experimenting with colors and textures to evoke affective memory. This thematic connection between food and film underlines the materiality of the filmmaking process. The ingredients of the film (both literal and metaphorical) shape its outcome in ways that extend beyond mere representation. They are creating an **embodied, sensory experience** for the viewer.

Urban also describes her minimalist crew and how the size of the camera played a role in the filmmaking process. To avoid the pressure that a big camera could create on the set, she seeks for the intimacy of working with a small crew. This allowed for more direct, personal interactions. These aspects speak to the material-discursive influence of the body and its interactions with the apparatus: who holds the camera, the size and weight of the camera, and the way these physical elements shape the performance and the intimate encounters captured on film.

Furthermore, the use of Super 8 versus 16mm cameras can be seen as a confrontation between two different technologies of memory. Urban herself mentions the visual counterpoints between the two formats, where the Super 8 offers a nostalgic, personal feel, while the 16mm offers the now: clear, objective, and present. This opposition between the two film formats can be understood as an epistemological divide that reflects different ways of knowing and experiencing the world. The Super 8 is aligned with **subjective memory**, whereas the **16mm** captures the **objective present**, accentuating the layered and complex **material-discursive** representation of temporality.

In terms of production, Urban notes that her role in filming with Super 8 was a highly personal one, associating this format with her memories, while the 16mm film was handled by a cinematographer. This distinction between personal and professional highlights the dual nature of the film: it is both a deeply intimate exploration of Urban's own memories (Natasa Urban is a alumni of the National University of Arts in Bucharest, where she studied photography) and an art piece with broader political and historical implications. This duality mirrors the larger **docu-fiction** framework, where reality and fiction are not separate but are mutually constituted, producing a narrative that emerges **through the material-discursive processes of filmmaking**.

Ultimately, *The Eclipse* is an exploration of how memory, identity, and history are materialized through film. The film's medium through its use of analog stock, its tactile nature, and the personal connection between filmmaker and apparatus produces a reflection on how we remember and how we make sense of the past. As Urban describes, the process was about finding meaning through impulses, a process of materializing thought in the very making of the film.

The Eclipse exemplifies how a **diffractive approach** to cinema can bring together the personal and political, the subjective and objective, through **material-discursive practices**. The interplay of analog and digital technologies, the use of **food** as a metaphor for memory and creation, and Urban's embodied filmmaking process all speak to a larger concern with how we **materialize** and **remember** our histories.

3. Trinh T. Minh-ha's Cinema as Material-Discursive Practice: Diffracting the Documentary Form

Trinh T. Minh-ha's body of work, especially films such as *Reassemblage* (1982), *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989), and *Forgetting Vietnam* (2016), exemplifies a radical reconfiguration of the documentary mode, refusing dominant representational conventions. Her films are not only cinematic texts but *apparatuses* that "they enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering"¹³ (Barad, 2007). This makes her work an ideal site for diffractive reading, where political, aesthetic, and ontological questions become entangled.

Minh-ha's cinema resists the notion of the camera as a neutral or passive observer. Instead, her editing choices, framing, voice-over techniques, and visual-textual juxtapositions perform what Barad calls **material-discursive intra-actions** - a becoming-together of subjects, objects, and technologies. In this framework, the documentary is not a window onto reality but a site of worlding: it produces the real as a partial, fractured, and situated phenomenon. Natasa Urban has described her work as "layered like an onion", and notes her admiration for "the mathematics of how she writes"- a phrase that acknowledges both the precise, recursive structure of Minh-ha's work and its poetic openness.

Trinh T. Minh-Ha's method resonates deeply with the concept of **diffractive reading**, especially as elaborated by van der Tuin and Barad. A diffractive approach, unlike reflective critique, does not attempt to mirror or correct a prior object; instead, it puts texts, sounds, images, and ideas into generative relation. Minh-ha's films are structured precisely through this principle: fragments of interviews, archival footage, and scripted voice-over are not used to represent a singular truth but to trouble the very idea of representation.

Her rejection of the **voice of God** narration style in favor of layered, multilingual, and self-reflexive voice-over enacts a diffractive critique of colonial epistemologies. Minh-ha explicitly challenges conventional documentary voiceovers that claim objective, authoritative truth. This is true especially in *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, where she avoids the omniscient narrator style, instead layering voices and languages to expose the politics of representation. For example, in *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, Minh-ha cuts between staged interviews and archival documents, refusing to establish a stable boundary between truth and fiction. This method is more

¹³ Karen Barad. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham-Londra: Duke University Press, p. 148.

than a postmodern game, it becomes a **material-discursive intervention** into how Vietnamese women's voices have been recorded, translated, and appropriated by state and scholarly apparatuses. In Barad's terms, Minh-ha's editing and voicing choices are **apparatuses** that both **produce and exclude forms of subjectivity**.

Stacy Alaimo's theory of **trans-corporeality** also provides a fruitful lens through which to read Minh-ha's work, particularly in the way bodies (human and more-than-human) are mediated through film. *Forgetting Vietnam* (2016), is a lyrical exploration of memory, history, and identity in Vietnam, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. It intertwines ancient myths with contemporary realities, using a blend of footage shot in 1995 and 2012 to delve into the country's complex relationship with land and water, as well as the processes of remembering and forgetting. These are **material bodies** in their own right, with agency and memory. The rivers and streets become "textured" with history, functioning as living archives of colonialism, war, migration, and cultural loss. The film resists centering a unified speaking subject. Instead, it diffuses the "I" through polyvocal narration, showing how subjectivity is embodied through time, space, memory, and political history.

Here, the human subject is not separate from the world but embedded in an **ecology of memory** "Time leaves traces in a multitude of layers and scales in the realm of life. Everything is time—stone, tree, mountain, ocean; thoughts, doubts, clouds—we are time"¹⁴.

This is not just a poetic metaphor. It becomes a **material ontology** where bodies are always **in relation**, always **becoming-with** their environments. The camera becomes a **trans-corporeal apparatus**, attuned not just to what is seen but to what moves, trembles, flickers, decays, making visible the invisible. Minh-ha's cinematography often lingers on textures, walls, fabrics, shadows, as if to **register time materially**, not narratively. Her films resist spatialized time, aligning with Bergsonian duration as discussed by van der Tuin: a time that "differs from itself," an **agential temporality** rather than a chronological sequence." "time does not come in one unifying form; not only it exists in a multiplicity of forms and rhythms (biological, physiological, geological, and so on) at any single moment, it is also not limited to what humans can perceive"¹⁵.

As Domitilla Olivieri suggests, the **materiality of film** must be understood on two levels: the *specificity of cinematic construction* (editing, framing, sound design), and the *engagement with the material world and bodies*. Trinh's films embrace both. Her attention to the construction of the film itself by cutting across narrative expectations, using black screens, intertitles, or sudden silences, thus foregrounds the **filmic apparatus** as a site of power and potential. Like a diffraction grating, the film's form **diffracts the real**, creating affective interference patterns rather than mimetic reproduction.

Her engagement with bodies (especially gendered, racialized, and colonized bodies) is not to display them for recognition, but to allow them to resist capture. In *Reassemblage*, Minh-ha, in her own spoken commentary in the film, describes her methodological approach: "I do not intend to speak about. Just speak nearby".¹⁶ This speaks directly to Barad's ethics of **response-ability**: the

¹⁴ Trinh T. Minh-ha. 2005. *The Digital Film Event*. New York: Routledge, p. 34.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁶ Trinh T. Minh-ha. 1992. "Speaking Nearby: A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha," interview by Nancy N. Chen. *Visual Anthropology Review* 8 (1): 82–91. "A speaking that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place. A speaking that reflects on itself and can come very close to a subject without, however, seizing or claiming it (...) such as *Reassemblage*, in which the speaking about and speaking nearby serve as a point of departure for a cultural and cinematic reflection".

responsibility not to represent, but to be accountable to the co-constitution of meaning and matter in any encounter.

Minh-ha's apparatuses are always **multiplicitous**: linguistic, visual, sonic, and embodied. They disrupt dominant epistemologies and propose alternative ways of sensing, knowing, and being. In doing so, her work exemplifies how **documentary cinema can function as a diffractive apparatus**, as Calderon-Sandoval and Sanchez-Espinosa argue. Minh-ha's films do not resolve contradiction between self and other, fiction and documentary, body and world they rather perform those contradictions as necessary sites of *knowledge production*.

Like Barad's **intra-action**, Minh-ha's filmmaking reveals how subject and object are not pre-existing entities, but emerge in and through their relations. Her practice performs an ongoing negotiation of boundaries and identities, always open to transformation.

Trinh T. Minh-ha's films are a sustained engagement with the political, aesthetic, and ethical stakes of **material-discursive practices**. Her cinema refuses the realism/anti-realism binary, sidesteps dominant narratives of documentary objectivity, and offers instead a **diffractive apparatus** through which differences are **performed**, not resolved. In her hands, the film is not a medium for capturing reality but a method for entangling with the world—for thinking, feeling, and becoming with memory, body, and history.

Her work stands as a radical testament to the potential of feminist materialist cinema, where apparatuses, bodies, languages, and images are entangled in the production of meaning. Just as Barad suggests, the world does not simply exist out there, waiting to be documented—it emerges through the intra-actions of bodies, technologies, and discourses. Minh-ha's films are thus not about the world. They world worlds.

4. Conclusions

Urban's use of **Super 8**, hand-developed, expired, distressed, is not a nostalgic gesture—it is a **corporeal one**. The soup of turmeric and beetroot, the fingerprints on the celluloid, the developer made with fennel and vitamin C—these are not aesthetic flourishes but **material utterances**, a haptic poetics of memory.

The Super 8 is Urban's voice. She holds it in both hands. She lets the little camera make mistakes. The mistakes become meaning. The grandmother cooks. The film cooks. Like Minh-ha, Urban collapses the line between making and being—between **apparatus and body**.

Minh-ha, too, shoots textures. She lets light fragment. She layers speech and silence. Her films feel like cloth, like rice paper soaked in ink. They **don't illustrate a point**—they **pulse with implication**.

Voice-over is written first, image later. This is Urban's method—intuition first, meaning after. Or perhaps: **intuition becomes meaning**, slowly, through doing. Minh-ha writes like a composer. Sentences loop, contradict, fall away. "The mathematics of how she writes," Urban says. Perhaps this is why her admiration runs so deep: both filmmakers approach form as a **living logic**, not a container but a metabolism.

In both, the **voice** does not explain the image—it folds against it, diverges, returns. There is a diffractive rhythm in the way speech and image brush past each other.

The body of the grandmother and the voice of the granddaughter.

The poem in Vietnamese and the grain of the archival footage.

Language is always more than words—it is cadence, hesitation, fracture.

Urban's apparatus is her family. Her analog tools. Her intuition. Her memory. Her gendered body.

Minh-ha's apparatus is the politics of representation. The colonial gaze. The failed promise of objectivity.

But both understand that **the apparatus is never neutral**. It decides what comes into view. It traces exclusions. And it is never outside the world it observes. It **produces** the world. The small camera makes space for intimacy. The big one imposes pressure. This is not metaphor. It is ontology.

Barad reminds us: the observer and observed emerge **together**. Urban and Minh-ha do not just film something, they **become-with** what they film. They let the world shape them as they shape it. They are not subjects with cameras. They are entangled **instruments of becoming**.

What passes between *The Eclipse* and Trinh Minh-ha's films is not a message, not even a theme but a frequency of ethical attention. Of **slowness**, of **listening**, of **refusing to resolve**. Not a plunge into darkness, but a modulation of light; partial, layered, refracted. Not absence, but an attunement to fragmentation, where truth is not singular but entangled, situated, and embodied.

In the age of post-truth, where facts dissolve into feelings and narratives outpace evidence, these films refuse binary thinking. They do not seek to reveal a stable real, but to perform reality as a process as an onto-epistemological event, in Barad's terms.

A cinema of diffraction: where memory and matter, image and sound, self and other, fiction and fact, do not oppose but intra-act. These elements co-emerge through apparatuses (technological, emotional, historical) that do not simply record the world but participate in its becoming.

Like Haraway's situated knowledges and Alaimo's trans-corporealities, the films acknowledge that perception is partial, embodied, and always mediated by material-discursive entanglements.

Here, the camera is not a passive observer but an agent among agents. Film becomes a mattering force. The cinema apparatus becomes a site where traces of past and present diffract, leaving behind echoes, textures, and affective residues. Meaning is not imposed but fermented, like the images in *The Eclipse* themselves: soaked in beetroot, turmeric, blood, developed in the chemistry of memory and care.

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