

The End of Silence

Thereza Jessouroun

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Carlos Alberto Mattos

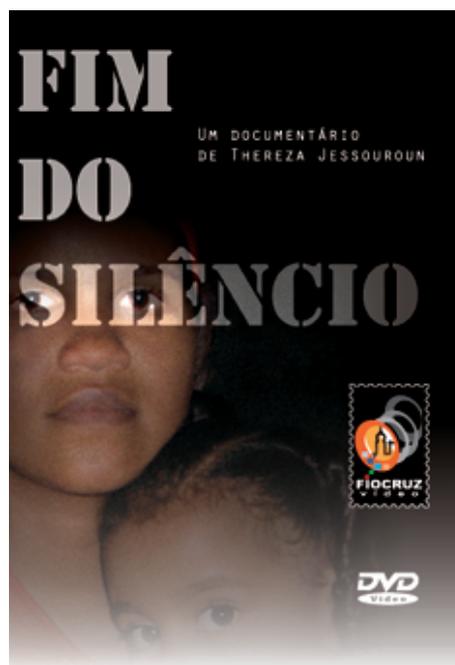
Film critics from O Globo also responsible for DOCBLOG at Globo Online, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Carmattos@terra.com.br

This documentary could also be called “The End of Hypocrisy”, the “End of Guilt”, or “The End of Sensationalism” since it opposes a large scope of approaches that have dealt with abortion in the movies. Habitually, the topic is inclined to melodramas or documentaries which, masked by accusation, reinforce the stigma of being “forbidden” or “clandestine”. Sometimes, the need to protect the identity of the main characters occasions artificial tricks that only emphasize fear and finally, the specter of criminalization.

Contrary to all this, Thereza Jessouroun chose the simplicity of a sharp camera before the uncovered faces and peaceful minds. The women who agreed to expose their reasons for interrupting their pregnancy joined the creator’s courage to speak openly about a taboo that still dominates a great part of the Brazilian society.

The End of Silence is not an agenda in favor of decriminalizing abortion, but a serene accusation against fundamentalism that insists in opposing nature and science. These women’s stories and arguments, collected in the states of Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, are marked by pieces of information on public health and legal obstacles. That’s all there is to it. Spoken or written words that unveil a terrifying picture of disrespect and violence against feminine individuality.

The evolution of Thereza’s project is an eloquent example of the production dynamics of documentaries. Initially, she intended to weave a web of opinions to approach the debate on the subject, involving women who had practiced abortion, scientists and politicians. During the composition, however, this format was thought



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to weaken the movie. The women's testimony was so strong that she chose to keep them exclusively. And it is the sharpness and completeness of these speeches that give this movie an irrefutable feature, its accomplished effectiveness.

The discussion, therefore, is extra-movie, following the issues mentioned by the main characters. There, the non-gestation option is justified by reasons ranging from affective, economic, family power or simply lifestyle. Thus, the movie fulfills its purpose to provoke debate on the choice women have about what to do with their body and their social responsibility. It is not an apologia for abortion, but rather the defense of the right to choose, beyond religious dogmas and obscurant convictions.

The first times it was run - and even before that - *The End of Silence* displayed its ability to stir things up, both for and against. The fact that it was made possible by a public contest generated protests among

those who see the State as a shapeless entity that should keep away from society's greatest quests. Fortunately, this is no longer the country in which we live. The understanding of abortion as a matter of public health is a progress unrelated to passions and doctrines. This documentary, even though created by an authorial will, ends up being one of the most visible products of this new conception.

For Thereza Jessouroun, it is a confirmation of talent, sensibility and adequacy between ideas and audiovisual formulation. In some of her works, the creator has approached the world of travesties (*Alma de Mulher*), of the starving (*Vida Severina*, still not released), the quilombola descendants (*Os Arturos*) and the Alzheimer carriers (*Clarita*). With *The End of Silence* she goes a step further - and also ahead of a polemic issue that needs to be experienced as follows: open, direct and with all the words. 