
Bodies, *Gestus*, Becoming: Cinema as a Technology of Gender and (Post)memory

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Abstract

The first issue this essay examines is the articulation of the cinema of the body, the feminine *gestus*, and the ‘political cinema’, which begins with the philosophical shout, ‘Give me a body, then!’ and ends with the ‘Third World Cinema’ as a cinema of memory. How is this Deleuzian concept in tension with the one proposed here of ‘missing body’? The second issue concerns the importance of the body for theory and practice within feminist film theory and queer theory. The question of the body is introduced in-between these two lines in the context of a series of Latin American documentaries. The final problem is then how to see and show a body that is missing, like an outside of the body image, and of a certain regime of the visible and the audible that tends to be fixed in topics by the production of technologies of (post)memory.

Keywords: Cinema Studies, postmemory, feminism, body, gender, Third World Cinema

I. Introduction

Different concepts of body persist in philosophical and film theory essays, which coincide with some of the questions raised by Deleuze concerning the filmed body, the filming body, the body of the spectator. These concerns are often raised in relation to documentary (Comolli 2002), the digital body (Badiou 2004), and the hypnotised body

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of the cinema (Bellour 2009). These film theories and philosophical essays present a hypothesis of the fascination of the 'cinematic body' that goes further than the semiotic/psychoanalytic model which was proposed initially by Christian Metz and given a feminist dimension by Laura Mulvey (Shaviro 1993). However, most of these theories and perspectives mentioned ponder a neutral body, not a gendered, sexuated, racialised or 'otherised' body, like the bodies in what Deleuze calls 'minor cinemas'. Thus, they do not include the question of the 'missing people', or the 'becoming people', indicative of Third World Cinemas (Deleuze 2000: 216–17). Moreover, they do not adequately address what is called here the 'missing body' which arises through the continuities and discontinuities of 'political cinema' and which, in *Cinema 2*, ends with the idea of the 'minor cinema' as a cinema of memory not linked with the past but with the future.

After studying the significance of these omissions, I consider the traditions of feminist film theory and queer theory, whereby the body (and embodiment) is one of the most important elements for theory and practice (see Mulvey 1975; de Lauretis 1987; Preciado 2009; Braidotti 2000). Some of these last theories present a different perspective than Deleuze's about women's cinema, and women in cinema, and some of them propose a critique of the Deleuzian concepts of woman and becoming woman (de Lauretis 1987). Similarly, some cinema scholars suggest a critique of the concept of minor cinema (Aguilar 2015).

In this context, one of the concepts that is in tension with becoming woman is 'technologies of gender', which offers even other dimensions when it is thought as 'technologies of memory', as I propose here. Teresa de Lauretis, one of the first authors to introduce the term *queer theory*,¹ argued that gender consists not of a sexual difference *per se*, but of a representation, and 'all of Western Art and high culture (and, of course, films and popular culture, too, we can say) is the engraving of the history of that construction' (de Lauretis 1987: 3). In this sense, women are unrepresentable except as representation. The concept of 'technologies of gender' allows us to think the question of the body in cinema not only in terms of the deconstruction or the undoing of gender or as a resistance to becoming woman, but in relation to the problem of what could be called 'technologies of memory'. This is a concept that follows one of the lines opened by Michel Foucault, which he defined as 'a complex political technology' (Foucault, qtd in de Lauretis 1987: 3) which is also linked with the concept of postmemory. This problem does not only concern the legitimacy and the (im)possibility of representing horror with images (see Didi-Huberman 2004); it also concerns other

questions: how to do things with images, which implies performativity, and what gender, what body, what memory, and what 'people' are performed through images. In this context some of the film theories focused on Latin American cinemas that retake the concept of the 'becoming people', Third World Cinema or 'minor cinema' present some questions in common with the feminist critique of becoming woman (see Aguilar 2015).

It is necessary to think these questions, as well as the limits of Deleuzian concepts, in light of non-Western European societies such as Latin American and Indian,² not only because they both have strong cultural industries expanded in the field of cinema and television, but because, in the case of Latin America, some countries like Argentina and Guatemala have been involved in the search for justice concerning acts of genocide.³ Meanwhile, the disappearance of forty-three students on 26 September 2014 from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in Mexico, and the silence over migrants who have been lost crossing frontiers or at sea, shows that the 'disappearing power' referred to by Pilar Calveiro as a biopolitical tool used to erase subversion or quell unrest (Calveiro 1998) still functions in the present. The way this power functions is not unconnected with the way those events are shown in mass media.

Significantly, there has been a rebirth of the cinema in Argentina and in other Latin American countries in the past few years. In particular, those focused on the practice of documentary represent important lines of discontinuity with the previous militant and political cinema. A part of this production is focused on the recent past and is considered to produce what has been called postmemory, which is a kind of creative elaboration of the past in order to deal with trauma or reclaim a past that has been lost, co-opted, prosecuted or institutionalised, by political, juridical or social forces.⁴ This essay tries to think how one of the most important questions in these recent films is not only the relation between generations or the (im)possibility of representing the past, but how to see and show a body that is missing – missing, like an outside of the body image of a certain regime of the visible and the audible, in the production of 'technologies of memory'. Moreover, these films, and other practices, like postporn,⁵ become a new way of thinking the philosophical shout, 'Give me a body, then!' Thus, this work addresses how the question of the body and Deleuze's contention that the body 'forces to think' in a mutation of thought related to yet separated from the brain shares some assumptions with problematic concepts and experiences such as gender and memory. Both of them not only present an explicit social

and political dimension but, going beyond Deleuzian cinema studies, deal with the problem of representation.

II. Body Cinema

‘Give me a body, then!’ sounds at first like another form of a legal petition historically linked to the demands of justice and memory, the ‘habeas corpus’. But, according to Deleuze, the sentence states the formula of a philosophical reversal, or mutation, of a force that is not the one of thought but the one that thrusts thought into the categories of life and belief (not anchored in this or another world, or even in language, but in the body)—in this case, through cinema. The filmed body is claimed, at first and paradoxically, as a lost link with the world—a loss that especially concerns occidental philosophers.⁶ This shout expresses a dualism that runs all through the history of philosophy and where the soul, the spirit, thought, and even the brain were denied to women, children, indigenous, non-occidentals—all of them considered just bodies. Now the philosopher shouts for a body, needs a body and a belief in it. This reversal of the relations between thought and body, expressed in the shout, ‘Donnez-moi donc un corps!’, is one of three mutations of the image of thought Deleuze identifies in his work on cinema.⁷

I consider that the chapter beginning with this formula (Deleuze 2000: ch. 8) is an intensely important one for several reasons: (1) the idea of a body cinema and a brain cinema—suggesting in some parts a dualism, even when the attitudes of the body that become the *gestus* are finally understood by Deleuze as the true categories of the spirit; (2) the introduction of the idea of a ‘feminine *gestus*’ in some films by and about women; (3) the question of a political cinema, in a trance,⁸ and, with it, the idea of a missing people in European political post-war cinema and becoming in Third World Cinema; and finally (4) the move beyond classification of the movement-image and the time-image and also beyond a Bergsonian concept of memory.

When Deleuze refers to the body cinema, he goes beyond the sensorimotor schema that articulates the narration. He proposes the concept of Brechtian *gestus*, but not with the epic dimension that it has for Brecht, seeing the body attitudes for example in the *nouvelle vague* and the post-*nouvelle vague*. In a Nietzschean and Spinozist way, the body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself. On the contrary, it ‘is that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life’ (Deleuze 2000: 189). With this

statement, Deleuze reminds us of Artaud's first belief in the body and the flesh and, from there, of the relationship between cinema and theatre. He describes the attitudes concerning the everyday and ceremonial body in the films of Antonioni, Bene, and Cassavetes and in the experimental films of Warhol, as well as the passage of attitudes or postures to the *gestus*, a formal chain of attitudes, in the fiction films of Godard. Finally, Deleuze ends by expressing a certain weariness of the 'cinema of the bodies', and its repeated exaltation ceremonies, its cult of gratuitous violence, and what he calls 'the installation of a culture of catatonic and hysterical attitudes' (195).⁹ In this part of his studies, Deleuze refers to the cinema of Chantal Akerman, Agnes Varda, and Michele Rosier with a perspective that differs from feminist film theory. He mentions a *feminine gestus*,¹⁰ where bodies show a chain of states that remains open-ended: 'descending from the mother or going back to the mother, it serves as a revelation to men, who now talk about themselves' (196). Meanwhile, the woman's body achieves a strange nomadism, which makes it traverse ages, situations, and places. Nomadism is compared to a literature that is present in the last works of Deleuze, where he speaks of Virginia Woolf as displaying a female *gestus* that captures the history of mankind and the world crisis:

Female authors, female directors, do not owe their importance to a militant feminism. What is more important is the way they have produced innovation in cinema of bodies, as if women had to conquer the source of their own attitudes and the temporality which corresponds to them as individuals or common *gestus*. (Deleuze 2000: 197)

Deleuze does not mention that this 'descending from the mother' or 'going back to the mother' supposes a way of creating distance from the way that femininity was embodied and placed generally, thinking not only in the way that feminine places like the kitchen in *Saute ma ville* (1968) are seen by Akerman but also in experimental video like *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (Martha Rosler, 1975). The *gestus* here were not the ones that were socially expected for women in a kitchen, a difference from *Jeanne Dielman* (Chantal Akerman, 1975). In other words, though Deleuze emphasises some elements of femininity here, the question of the becoming woman is not particularly present in these cinema studies. It starts to appear as a becoming when Deleuze talks about a minor cinema of a people to come (which is why memory has to do with the future) but following now Kafka and Klee. Moreover, Deleuze does not talk specifically in filmic terms but returns to the 'impossibility' of writing: 'the minority film-maker

[like Pierre Perrault] finds himself in the impasse described by Kafka: the impossibility of not “writing”, the impossibility of writing in the dominant language, the impossibility of writing differently’ (Deleuze 2000: 217). So, a specifically feminist reading is difficult to derive from Deleuze’s treatment of film alone, and when the issue of becoming is broached it seems that Deleuze has moved away from women authors/artists. Therefore, the potential of Deleuze’s concepts for some feminist appropriation is curtailed and there is a lacuna, which feminist and gender theorists such as de Lauretis and Braidotti will note, and contest, specifically with regard to what concerns becoming woman.

III. Technologies of Gender and Memory

During the same years that Deleuze writes his cinema studies, some events having to do with issues of memory and gender align with the problems proposed in *Cinema 2*, which redefine not only the field of film theory but also the philosophical aesthetic of collective memory in the Southern Cone and of feminism. On the one hand, there was the premiere of the documentary by Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah* (1985), which, in the words of Simon Schrebnik: ‘This ... this ... no one can describe it. No one can recreate what happened here. Impossible’ (my translation), introduces the problem of the witness and the unrepresentable (see Didi-Huberman 2004). The problem of representation and recollection is the representation of the ‘this’ (*Das*) and its impossibility (*Unmöglich*). In this film there are no piles of bodies like in *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, 1955) – a cinema of brain, for Deleuze – to show the genocide, just the voices of the witnesses, the bystanders, the experts, and the Nazis themselves. At the same time in the Southern Cone, the return to democracy will produce a cinema that intends to show the horror of the preceding years.¹¹ The inclusion of the Argentinian experience through these filmic narratives may show that the ‘memory cinema’ of that moment was not the same as in the Third Cinema.

On the other hand, from the field of feminism, de Lauretis begins to resume the work of feminist film criticism of narrative cinema. De Lauretis, like Deleuze, departs from the semiotic debates and from authors like Christian Metz, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Charles Peirce, but she introduces, through Foucault and Althusser, the concept of ‘technology of gender’. De Lauretis reviews the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of becoming woman and retakes the critique of cinema defined as an apparatus in which ‘cinematic codes create a gaze, a world and

an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire' (Mulvey, qtd in de Lauretis 1984: 59). This is a desire identified as (and reduced to) male desire. Thus, Mulvey proposes the destruction of narrative and visual pleasure as the foremost objective of women's cinema. For de Lauretis (1985), the question is, 'What formal, stylistic or thematic markers point to a female presence behind the camera?' This cannot be answered with a generalisation or universalisation, because to ask whether there is a feminine or female aesthetic is for de Lauretis, following Audre Lorde, to 'remain caught in the master's house' or to 'legitimate the hidden agenda of a culture' (Lorde, qtd in de Lauretis 1985: 158). Instead, in the kind of cinema such as Akerman's, there would be no feminine *gestus*, or not just a feminine *gestus* but two different logics: the one of the character and the other of the camera and the director, usually considered as the male point of view, a perspective that in the last few years, with a lot of women working in the field of cinema and audio-visual, should have changed, just as the concept of woman itself is changing. Cinema, in this perspective, has to do not only with women or with 'Woman'¹² but also with the construction of gender, as a social and political technology. There would be no female *gestus per se*, before any representation or performativity.¹³ Instead, it would arise in its construction between the character, the camera/director, and the spectator. This is a difference with Deleuze's idea of the 'feminine *gestus*' and also with a dramatic Brechtian *gestus* that de Lauretis's intervention allows us to see.

Some years later, in *Technologies of Gender* (1987), de Lauretis will continue this reflection by regarding gender not only as sexual difference but also as a representation and as a construction. This has implications for the material life of individuals. This process occurs in a specific historical moment, not only through what is traditionally considered 'ideological state apparatuses', but also through the practices that resist them, such as feminism. Likewise, the construction of gender is also affected by its deconstruction: 'For gender, like the real, is not only the effect of representation but also its excess, what remains outside discourse as a potential trauma which can rupture or destabilize, if not contained: any representation' (de Lauretis 1987: 3). Through this idea of the outside as excess, de Lauretis implies that the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation.

In the same text, de Lauretis follows Braidotti's first analysis in which she discusses the forms that femininity assumes in the work of Deleuze, Foucault, Lyotard, and Derrida, and critiques the refusal by each philosopher to identify femininity with real women:

On the contrary, it is only by giving up the insistence on sexual specificity (gender) that women, in their eyes, would be the social group best qualified (because they are oppressed by sexuality) to foster a radically 'other' subject, de-centred and de-sexualized. (de Lauretis 1987: 24)

By displacing not only the ideology but also what she considers the reality and the historicity of gender into a diffuse, decentred, or deconstructed subject, these theories make an appeal to women, naming the process of such displacing with the term 'becoming woman'. For de Lauretis, this process denies sexual difference (and gender) as components of subjectivity in 'real women'. By denying the history of women's political oppression and resistance and the epistemological contribution of feminism to the redefinition of subjectivity and sociality, these philosophers see in women the privileged repository of 'the future of mankind'. This supposes the old mental habit of philosophers of 'thinking the masculine as synonymous with universal, the mental habit of translating women into metaphor' (Braidotti, qtd in de Lauretis 1987: 24). The point is that, like sexuality, gender is not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, it is 'the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations' (de Lauretis 1987: 3), as the deployment of what Foucault called 'a complex political technology' (Foucault, qtd in de Lauretis 1987: 3). This set of effects is not abstract. They produce the 'real woman' that did not exist before, remembering de Beauvoir's motto: 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (de Beauvoir 1949: 13). This paradox is similar to some that emerge when memory is thought as a technology, because of the supposition that memory is not just a natural, psychological, or spiritual faculty, but also a product of a social and cultural mediation, a set of effects.

Understanding gender in this way eliminates the worry of metaphorising 'woman' because it is the real conditions (effects) that are being considered in order to reach a conclusion about the description of gender. These attempts to address the significance of Deleuze's work for and about women suggest that it is always problematic and depends on other concepts such as becoming, molar, molecular, and minor and how they are understood (or resisted). For example, the first one is not exactly understood by de Lauretis, but she sees other problems related to gender as concepts that are invisible for Deleuze; so, rather than referring to a medical or historical use of concepts, she is reinventing them, linking this with the radical feminist movement to produce a critical concept of gender, as she will do with 'queer'.¹⁴

But, some years after this critique, Braidotti affirms that Deleuze is a great help to feminists because he de-essentialises the body, sexuality, and sexed identities. Deleuze and Guattari provide different ways of understanding the body in its connections with other bodies (human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate), linking organs and biological processes to material objects and social practices. Yet, Braidotti also affirms that the Deleuzian body is ultimately an ‘embodied memory’: ‘Neither a sacralised inner sanctum, nor a pure socially shaped entity, the enfleshed Deleuzian subject is rather an “in-between”: it is a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects’ (2000: 159). Unlike her first critique of becoming woman (cited by de Lauretis), Braidotti thinks here the importance of the becoming as an active process but is also wary of the limits of the idea of the body as a pure representation, remembering a materiality but also its transformations in the contemporary figurations of the body, understood as ‘abstract technological constructs fully immersed in advanced psycho-pharmacological industry, bio-science and the new media’ (161). As a feminist of sexual difference whose work diverges from constructivist theories of gender and from essentialism, Braidotti thinks that in the middle of these apparently unlimited prosthetic promises of perfectibility and technoscience, Deleuze’s philosophy lends precious help to those who remain ‘proud to be flesh!’ (161). But, beside this affirmation of Braidotti, it is necessary to remember that, even when Deleuze’s concept of image is Bergsonian and the body as image is understood materially, bodies are always in a process of technological devices, and flesh is normalised in the mainstream industrial culture. In other words, the body is an object of standardisation and an idealisation that differs from the ‘real woman’, or from migrants who are considered *mere* bodies, thus ‘not human’, an experience that reflects the opposite of the philosophers who shout, ‘Give me a body, then!’

In these contexts, audio-visual practices like postporn expect to produce a desubjugation, a new way of thinking the ‘body cinema’, the feminine *gestus*, and the technologies of gender. Not only because most of the producers of these works that often ‘undo’ the codes of the mainstream pornography are women, but because many times they put in crisis the effects of representation. This problematisation of the body and the subject/object of representation in postpornography,¹⁵ which goes beyond Deleuze or departs from other conceptual universes and practices, has some points in common with postmemory. Therefore, both Braidotti and Preciado have introduced the question of the

pharmacological and technological modifications of the body and affirm a link with Deleuze.

What I have tried to show here is the difference between the feminine *gestus* in Deleuze, and the concept of technologies of gender, as well as the changes in the position of Braidotti and that she was one of the first to introduce the question of the pharmaco-woman (attributed generally to Preciado). Finally, I introduce Preciado, because her idea of the *corpus pornograficus* provides an idea of all the opposite of the philosophical shout that demands a body. Though there is no room here to do a complete analysis of Preciado's hypothesis about the 'pharmaco-woman' produced with oestrogen, the idea of a 'biotechnological reality' where bodies are deprived of all civic context (migrants, deported, sex workers, laboratory animals) is important. These bodies become *corpora pornographica* whose lives lack any right to citizenship, authorship, and to work, composed by and subject to self-surveillance and global mediatisation (see Preciado 2013).

IV. Techno-membranes of Memory and Postmemory: The Becoming People, the Missing People, and the Missing Body

According to Deleuze, a people in the process of becoming could only appear in the film production of the Third World in which the people are present but shown in constant becoming. This way of addressing Third World Cinema, as a cinema of memory, implies a positive assessment of the 'state of permanent crisis' of collective identities in the periphery. A moment of crisis, or trance, is a moment of actualisation of memory because the circuit of perception diverges from the regular functioning of a sensorimotor schema, in which an action is followed by its corresponding reaction.

In the course of his writings, Deleuze's concept of memory shows a mutation. At first, it is identified with the Bergsonian idea of duration—contrasting human time with the time of Physics; the actual/virtual pair is understood in opposition to the real/possible pair. He asks not what memory is, whether real or fictional, but how it works: How is a virtual memory actualised in an experience here and now? Then, in his studies of film, Deleuze gives an almost spatial, biological, and social meaning to memory, casting it as a surface or membrane (following Simondon), a permeable boundary between the inside and outside, the collective and individual, and the private and

public. Memory, in its social meaning, is a matter of minorities; here the private immediately becomes political. Minorities are identifiable because they do not seek to become the majority or to be hegemonic: instead, in their process of becoming each *self* names a people in terms of what that people lacks and what it could be (Deleuze 2000: 220–2).

For Deleuze, the Third World is always a cinema of memory. Because of this, it becomes a space for utopian projections and the promotion of collective statements. In *Cinema 2*, utopia finds a place in Third World Cinema, as the tension between the (im)possible and the virtual that goes beyond mere representation, allowing him to propose a future (of a people to come) that seems to have no past. This cinema is a kind of fabulation, the invention of a minor people.¹⁶ In proposing fabulation, Deleuze goes beyond concepts of movement-image and time-image, giving it a futural and political dimension. It is possible, though, to question some of his assumptions. On the one hand, he does not take into account all of the dimensions of political film; in particular, he overlooks one of the most highly developed film practices at the time of his writing, the documentary of what is often called the Third Cinema. On the other hand, because he does not allude to the context of the Cold War or to the violent interruptions of Latin American filmmaking during the dictatorships, his analysis is incomplete, or produces the same projection with the Third World as did becoming woman (women as the privileged repository of the future of mankind). Finally, while labelling Third World Cinema as political film and a cinema of memory, a certain regionalisation of these questions is assumed: ‘It is as if the whole memory of the world is set down on each oppressed people, and the whole memory of the I comes into play in an organic crisis. The arteries of the people to which I belong, or the people of my arteries’ (Deleuze 1989: 221).

However, Deleuze’s thoughts concerning the political possibilities related to minoritisation coincide with the perspectives of many filmmakers, especially documentary filmmakers, at the time. For example, from the perspective of liberation cinema, in films such as *The Hour of the Furnaces* (Octavio Getino and Fernando E. Solanas, 1966–8), filmmakers distinguished between the liberating concept of memory and the dominating concept of history (Getino 1984). The people in Glauber Rocha’s *Entranced Earth* (1967) were in the streets during the most intense moments of the film, the same as the character who questions the political power, the poet and journalist Paulo Martins. *The Hour* ... begins with images of street protest and with the titles: ‘our first gesture, our first word: LIBERATION’.¹⁷

Nevertheless, by the time Deleuze writes his studies, the trance film, which concerns the body in trance and becoming people, is not the same in Latin America. For instance, at the end of the 1960s, Rocha was preparing an 'epic-didactic' film, *América nuestra*, that he never completed which had a different narrative than *Entranced Land* (1967), which expected to return to a dialectic logic. In Brazil, for example, they were producing some of the most important documentaries about the recent past, like *João Goulart: Jango* (Silvio Tendler, 1984) and *Twenty Years Later* (Eduardo Coutinho, 1984). In Argentina, during the trial, sometimes called the Argentine Nuremberg, films such as *The Official Story* (Luis Puenzo, 1985), *The Night of the Pencils* (Hector Olivera, 1986), and *South* (Fernando Solanas, 1988) were produced, as were documentaries like *The Lost Republic I–II* (Miguel Perez, 1983) and *Juan, as if Nothing Had Happened* (Carlos Echeverría, 1987), or the experimental film *Habeas Corpus* (Jorge Acha, 1986). There was also, during the 1980s, the work of one of the most important feminist filmmakers, María Luisa Bemberg, with movies like *Camila* (1984), which was seen as an allegory of the dictatorship.

With different resources, such as the melodramatic elements in fiction, documentary research, or experimentation, some of these film and documentary-makers attempt to put the disappeared body or the act of disappearance 'in the scene'. They recall a missing body, not only in a collective sense or with an epic gesture, as in the first ending of the *The Hour ...* in which the most shocking image is the face of Che at the end, like a dead Jesus, but appealing for a revolution. 'They' refers to films like *Juan, as if Nothing Had Happened*, *Habeas Corpus*, *The Lost Republic*, and *The Night of the Pencils*. These reflect a different way of showing the people and the missing people. In the 1980s we see mostly the consequences of the repression, while in the Third Cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, the struggle. These films of the 1980s showed on the screen something that could not circulate in a speech or in the public sphere: disappearance (see Kriger 1994). The best known among those films appeared in educational spaces with a pedagogical purpose, until now. This is why it is possible to consider that moment and those films as the beginning of the construction of a 'technology of memory'.¹⁸ In the 1970s, films like *The Hour ...*, and others of the Third Cinema, did not have a massive circulation, but one reserved to militants or political organisations as well as a certain masculine gaze. Meanwhile, films like *The Official Story* were considered films for women, and documentaries like *The Lost Republic* were shown in schools.

On the other hand, some of the documentaries of critical memory, produced in the last few decades – like *M* (Nicolas Prividera, 2007), *The Blondes* (Albertina Carri, 2003) *Papá Ivan* (María Inés Roqué, 2004), and *Finding Victor* (Natalia Bruchstein, 2004) – are embodied memories that expect to break with the flux of repeated topics, because they do not begin from ‘general fact’ or from ‘collective memory’ but from the difficulties of narrating the labyrinths of a singular memory with images and sounds. The first three evoke a missing body, at the same time as searching for a first-person statement. Those singular memories can also be called techno-membranes of memories, considering two dimensions: (1) a technology of memory and (2) a surface contact with its outside. They participate in a double becoming that involves, in some cases, becoming child. This idea of techno-membranes opposes a bifurcated idea of memory (something completely constructed or something essential or biological), showing rather the imbrication of materiality and socio-technological mediation.

One may ask then, which should be the *gestus* off/for the (re)presentation of a missing body? In order to answer this question, we must examine the particularities of these films. In *The Blondes*, there are no pictures of Roberto Carri and Ana María Caruso, Albertina’s missing parents, and the limits of the representation are performed with Playmobil toys, while in Prividera’s *M* there are lots of images of Marta Sierra, the missing mother. Yet the moment of the recollection about her kidnapping, during a testimony, is portrayed from a detuned TV, not the typical footage or archive photos that are usually seen in historical documentaries. Prividera, like in *Finding Victor*, also uses similar resources to *Archeology of Absence* (Lucila Quieto, 2002), which is a photographic exhibition that produces a *gestus* in which images have been pieced together through montages of old and new photos, even of the now adult children standing before images of their young parents, which creates an imagined or impossible present, anachronistically, given the content of the images. For example, there is an image of Marta Sierra and her son Nicolás; Nicolás was not present in the original picture, yet he is same age as Marta in this version of the photo. This is considered an impossible photo because it seems as if it is a ‘real’ photo with the mother, but it is impossible temporally because of the ages. Thus, with different narrative resources, those images evoke virtual bodies that are disappeared, by producing a *gestus*, not only with the photographic resource but also by bringing on stage the body of the author, a body in the act of searching (*M*) or a body performed by an actress (*The Blondes*), to produce more distancing effects.

Because of this use of photography or because of the affection and emotions that they involve, these films have been considered to be dealing with the construction of postmemories. But one of the principal problems of this interpretation is that it supposes a generation of descendants that were not there. These filmmakers, like other people of this generation whose testimonies appear in their documentaries, are themselves survivors. They grew up during the last dictatorship, except a few who were in exile, not after it.¹⁹ Ultimately, postmemory supposes a cultural industry of memory that was not expanded in the Southern Cone until recent years, rather than the juridical dimension of the testimony that is present in a documentary like *M*. One could say that these works are not postmemories of the authors, but that they produce postmemories in a global spectator who can have access to these works through the web, in the sense of Hirsch's concept of 'connective memory' (Hirsch 2012). Finally, what these images have in common with postporn is that they put in question the usual representation or narratives about the last dictatorship. They have to do with the paradox of becoming subject of the narration, not the object and not just the victims, but the filmmakers, and, as such, they can be critiqued.

The production of technologies of memory on a global level continues today, mostly with new devices, social networks, and new museological, cultural, and academic productions. It is indispensable, then, especially for the construction of gender and memories, to find those images of the 'other side', of the 'out of the shot', or even the 'disappeared' of official discourses on memory and postmemory. Those images and *gestus* are more necessary when, recalling the opening phrase of George Steiner in *The Last Bolshevik* (Chris Marker, 1992), 'It is not the past that dominates us, but the images of the past.'

Notes

1. Paul B. Preciado has developed some of the questions raised by de Lauretis in a short history about the word 'queer' (2009).
2. A first version of this work was presented at the Third International Deleuze Studies in Asia Conference 2015. I do not pretend in this text to introduce a perspective about Hindi cinema, popular Indian cinema or about Bollywood. There are a lot of significant works in India and in the field of international film studies about this, with terms like 'masala-image' (see Martin-Jones 2011).
3. For instance, the trials in different Argentinian cities since 2005, and the trial against Efraim Rios Montt in Guatemala in 2013.
4. 'Postmemorial work ... strives to reactivate and reembody more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic

expression' (Hirsch 2012: 33). My point is not to advocate 'for' postmemory (Amado, Aguilar) or 'against' it (Sarlo), but rather to show its operation and limits, in this case situated in Argentina (see Ciancio 2015). Some other related concepts are affiliative postmemories and connectives postmemories. These last two do not concern familiar or blood ties, but are produced by other ways: social networks, for example.

5. The first use of 'postporn' is attributed to Wink van Kempen (photographer) and then to Annie Sprinkle (ex-porn star). Today it refers to the becoming subject of the abject objects of pornographic representation: women, sexual minorities, non-white people, transsexuals, travesties, intersex, transgender. The works of Nadia Granados (Colombia), Diana Torres (Spain), Leo Silvestri (Argentina) and Maria Llopis (Barcelona) are considered postporn.
6. 'It's quite curious that a thinker (Kierkegaard) utters this shout—this is a philosophical shout: "Give me a body, then!" Because for long periods thinkers, they rather pretended that . . . they do not have too much body' (Deleuze 1984: 189; my translation).
7. The first one is the substitution of belief for knowledge; the second, the substitution of a *Dehors* (Outside) for an 'inside'.
8. The concept of trance is from the film *Entranced Earth* (Glauber Rocha, 1967), and the interpretation of tropicalism is from the Brazilian intellectual Roberto Schwarz.
9. The relationship between hysteria, cinema and visual arts is not only a question of the *nouvelle vague*. It is present in the hypothesis of the 'invention' of a visual device, the device 'hysteria' in *La Salpêtrière* (see Didi-Huberman 2014).
10. This concept comes from Brecht and the interpretation of it by Barthes in *Mother Courage* (1941), considering the *gestus* not as a ceremony, but rather a ceremonialising of the most current, banal attitudes (see Deleuze 2000). The difference from the first Brechtian theory is that this *gestus* is not immersed in an epic drama.
11. Meanwhile, in Buenos Aires the *Trial of the Juntas* (1985) was produced, and for the first time an Argentinian film, *The Official Story* (Luis Puenzo, 1985), won an Oscar. These events are not present in Deleuzian cinema studies; his idea of a cinema of memory is focused on the films of the 'Third World', specifically on the films of Rocha.
12. For de Lauretis, *Born in Flames* (Lizzie Borden, 1983) showed that this concept of Woman produces an invisibility about representations of class, race, language and social relations. See de Lauretis 1985: 168.
13. De Lauretis does not use the Butlerian concept of performativity, but her concept of 'technologies of gender' has points in common with Butler. For a reading of performativity and technologies of gender as a subjectification in decolonial feminism, see Espinosa-Miñoso 2003.
14. This question is also problematic in the way that Deleuze understands homosexuality, transsexuality, and intersexuality, because it is not the conventional meaning, it is a philosophical question. For Preciado, 'becoming woman' and 'molecular homosexuality' are related; the latter concept makes a series of demands on Deleuze, similar to the critiques of de Lauretis and Braidotti (see Preciado 2002).
15. The relation between certain pornography and the representation of horror, the shot of sexual humiliation, is also present in the theory of postmemory (see Hirsch 2012) and in the written work of Nicolás Prividera (see Prividera 2014).
16. Some authors critique this idea of minoritisation because of its ethnocentrism (Aguilar 2015).
17. The capitalisation is in the original, repeated seven times.

18. This would be a different social function from the Third Cinema of the 1960s and 70s, which produced a memory that went back to the Spanish conquest to show the colonial condition.
19. Some of them were born in concentrations camps. See the testimonies in other documentaries considered postmemories: *(h) Stories of Everyday Life* (Andrés Habegger, 2001) and in *Grandchildren (Identity and Memory)* (Benjamín Ávila, 2004).

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