“Time is slower for an object in motion„, I read online and feels right as I stand in the middle of the room, rotating, scanning my horizon to show you what the *infinite* means. I look at the lines of the white textured plaster walls and notice how, from their edge, everything is in relation. Sun spots and shadows map the routes I navigate every day in between islands of perishable and immortal things, all braided in endless connections.

My archipelago as a *body without organs* is also traversed by forces and flows, *becomings* and desires, and it too needs to be dis*organi*zed. This time, however, the frustration carved deeper and lasted longer. I tried air currents, lights off, odd dances, cleaned, cleansed, had dinner on the floor, and moved every single piece of furniture around in a million different combinations searching for new possibilities, for new flows of action.

Me and my eight extraordinary meridians, twirled, electrified, warmed up and vibrating horizontally on Dr. Chen’s table. Catharsis is messy and powerful. When I get up, I stare at posters of tongues and channel networks, I feel energized but also annoyed that they’re all of male bodies.

The first images of myself are close-ups of forearms, wrists, ankles, lips and eyes. There was never a body. Only perhaps later in the water, swimming, would I perceive myself in one piece. Mirrors opened me up to conversations with these cut out images of body parts. In retrospect, it was very cinematic. And I would talk to them extensively.

I remember when the aches started. I'd pass out at the nurse's couch in a quiet low light room with blue walls.
I'd wake up at mother's bedroom floor, rolled up in a lambskin rug. I could only fall asleep with the touch of grandma's hand massaging my belly.

On warmer days I would cool off my skin against the cold pietra serena walls of catholic school. Cruising the corridors restricted to brothers only, climbing up staircase after staircase of shimmering light and soft breeze, mahogany smell and the sound of a piano coming from the ground floor.

The recurrent nightmare was to not make it on time from these explorations. A bird's-eye view of the great hall where I was to meet all children for a round singing and dancing performance like in a Busby Berkeley choreography. I would wake up anxious before giving my hand to someone.

My father died when I was six years old. I remember sitting outside in the stony staircase of my grandparents' house. Time had stopped already so it didn't really matter.
When mother told me I already knew from a neighbour kid. After that no one really wanted to talk about it, and perhaps I also didn't. Except I was constantly talking. To mirrors, fake phones and imaginary spectators.

I remember a boy who did want to talk. He wanted to share with me his secret, and his secret was his penis. I run away.
I also remember an old man talking me through how to touch him 'there' on my way home from school. I run away.
And I remember the summer afternoons at your parents listening to gothic music having the most hot consented sex ever. Why did you run away?

Jump cut to now. Six years after a long-term relationship. Five years into art school.
Trying to locate my amorphous body in works, in words, with allies.

During this time I searched for female authors. Through Sara Ahmed I fell for Audre Lorde's words and can't recommend enough for anyone to hear Lorde's reading *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* on Youtube. Hopefully the algorithm will treat you to bell hooks, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin and others with intersected open ways of thinking and feeling.

I found the work of Donna Haraway and Judith Butler and felt like returning to myself in spite of the trouble, not only of gender, but of understanding. Some of their writings, mainly those about other author's theories, are sometimes hard to follow. But they establish new thinking possibilities and for that I am grateful.

By now I have lived the most years by myself and in a country of non-origin. I am done with the patriarchy, don't miss hetero-normative relationships, and above all don't miss having to deal with (other) families' expectations and commentaries about what I should be doing with my body at my age or at any age.

Although not so radical or so nihilist—I am still hopeful of collective joint forces - I do consider Terre Thaemlitz words in *Deproduction Part II Admit That There Is An Up (And Go)* *Terre Thaemlitz, *Deproduction Part II, Admit That There Is An Up (And Go)*, Sound / Reading For Gay Porn, http://www.comatonse.com/writings/2017_deproduction_de.html (accessed 02 Apr. 2021).

where Thaemlitz proposes refusing to celebrate normality and yet another type of relationship to gender, one of collapse and unbecoming, interesting to reflect upon. Thaemlitz also writes "Minds are socially starved of non-patriarchal identifications through which to envision their own bodies.„

My mind is starved for non-patriarchal identifications but still, my flesh mourns its ghosts. It's hard to let go.

BECOMINGS
Change through the Cinematic

PATRÍCIA JANEIRO

BODY IN (CON)TEXT

The interest to think about bodies and cinema emerged from the contact with the work of Laura Mulvey, feminist, film theorist and filmmaker, best known for introducing the concept of the male gaze in her 1975 essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. A particular line from the book caught my attention back then, one in reaction to a cinema of women as spectacle where Mulvey states

"the alternative is the thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without rejecting it, transcending outworn or oppressive forms, or daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire.„[1]

1. Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*—first published by Oxford University Press in 1975, (Belgium: Afterall Book: Two Works, 2016) p.9.

The sentence resonated on multiple levels and also triggered new thoughts. Firstly, it still feels urgent. In cinema, we predominantly see one type of female body and a repeated story[2]

2. "To this end, I have always found it fascinating that popular films often choose to signify genius, or the quality of being exceptionally (or, dare one say, singularly or abnormally) intelligent, through a character's capacity to see patterns, or sameness, where others see nothing but disparity. In film after film, audiences are invited to peer through a protagonist's eyes as duplicate numbers or forms are magically illuminated, and streamlined constellations of meaning dramatically emerge from clouds of chaos. All the excessive information or noise dims, the code is forever broken, and the soundtrack inevitably swells to a crescendo. While I have little interest—or belief—in genius, I am nonetheless drawn to this cinematic trope and what it reveals about the ways certain contemporary cultures understand and evaluate the relationship between 'the one and the multitude,' 'the singular and the plural,' or 'the queer and the norm.' How else might the cinema, a quintessentially modern art form, handle the challenge of representing the aberrant than by making it the servant of normality via the pattern?„—in Edited by Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton. Trap Door, *Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility, Critical Anthologies in Art and Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England, The MIT Press, 2017, p.316).

line being told. Then, it incites us to be courageous in cancelling what doesn't serve and in creating alternatives. Thirdly, it gets me thinking about desire, about which bodies and which bodily relations have been typically represented on screens and how that must change.

In 2019 I started more focused readings on some of these themes. I was looking for what had been written after Mulvey and I became especially interested in the contributions of queer and trans film studies. Considering that one of the most powerful experiences in cinema is the feeling of recognition and of having been recognised while watching a film, mainstream film industry is certainly behind when it comes to bodies, gender and sexual diversity acknowledgment. If not for niche film programmes and the growth of the pornographic industry, where would we be?

My own need for transformation and change is a drive. It feels like I can no longer be caught up in between labels that rely on stabilizing roles, I can no longer not feel myself. Both, as viewer and as maker, I need to get closer to what truly makes me vibrate inside. I am seeking films or film moments that convey my experience in aesthetic terms and I am looking for texts that help me articulate those experiences. In fact, I am not only *looking for* texts, I am also reading and re-reading them, highlighting parts, copying quotes, taking notes, writing down a paragraph myself, revisiting it, revising it, letting it rest, letting myself rest, reading it out loud, discussing it with others, coming back to a thread of thoughts.

It was through Susan Stryker's *My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix* (1993) that I found the linkage between film analysis and trans studies. From Stryker, I'd save also the idea that transgender doesn't need to refer to one particular identity or way of being embodied, it rather

"offers an umbrella term for a wide variety of bodily effects,"[3]

3. Eliza Steinbock, *Shimmering Images, Trans Cinema, Embodiment, and The Aesthetics of Change*, (Duke University Press, 2019), p.2.

that disrupt a series of normative linkages. Trans has a

> "privileged relation to aesthetics of change, particularly in comparison to the often negative framework of change in relation to ageing or illness.„ [4]

I would later find the connection to cinema in *Shimmering Images Trans Cinema, Embodiment, and The Aesthetics of Change* (2019) by Eliza Steinbock and their hope that

> "readers invested in the discipline of cinema studies (...) find their own ampersand constructions in which affective shimmering and cinematic shimmers can be excavated to bring new conceptualizations to form-content relations.„ [5]

Steinbock explains that they find remarkable similarities within the aesthetic forms of cinema and transgender embodiment.

> "Like in the cinema, one's perception of seeing and speaking can become disrupted by the disjunction between what one thinks they see (on a body) and how that body speaks (its subjective identification).„ [6]

Also, I am interested in their conceptualization of *cinema's world-making power* as a tool to re-imagine and re-make the world.

4. Ibid, p. IX.

5. Ibid, p.3.

6. Ibid, pp.2-3.

It felt like entering the ocean, as if I could feel it all, yet only touch a very small, tiny part of it. As my feet entered the body of water, I thought of bodies of women in cinema, about bodies, bodies and images, I thought of the cinematic and the cinematic bodies. And as I walk further and the water travels my body, the thoughts move towards how these bodies carry change and how change happens in these cinematic bodies. This conceptual ocean presented so much; I had a lot to catch up with. I had to take a step back, come back to shore.

BODIES AND IMAGES

With variations per country, the 90s brought in some impactful media changes. Broader and faster access to the internet, the introduction of the mp3 format and an exponential propagation of images, to name a few. If the relation between images and bodies had long occupied feminist theoretical work, studies definitely increased in the new context.

In *The becoming of bodies: girls, images, experience* (2009), Rebecca Coleman points to research that chooses to focus on the relations between girls' and young women's bodies and images in the media, arguing that feminist theory on women's spectatorship of images disrupts a clear distinction between subject(ivity) and object(ivity).

Coleman instead introduces Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *molecular becoming*, defending an understanding of bodies and images outside a framework of cause/effect, subject/object, but as

"processes which are inextricably entwined and which become through each other."[7]

7. Rebecca Coleman, *The becoming of bodies: girls, images, experience* (Manchester University Press 2009), p.8.

Coleman's central thesis is that bodies become known understood and lived through their relations with images.

Deleuze and Guattari framework remains reference to articulate our contemporary entanglements. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), the idea of *becoming* is laid out as a philosophy that disrupts the binary oppositions Western philosophy has normalised. *Becomings* are processes or productions that challenge being one or the other and instead focus on the in-between,

"the only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between (...) never ceasing to become."[8]

8. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p.277.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the

“always variable body is only ever recomposed, only ever relations and never substance; only anonymous force that occupies a body as a set of affects and never a subject; only ‘motions and rests, with dynamic affective charges, never a thing in itself.’„[9]

9. Eugenie Brinkema, *Afterword: Bodies, changed to different bodies, changed to other forms*, Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies—Technologies—Power, Issue 8.1, Cinematic Bodies (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.130.

The understanding of a body as an assemblage is a critique of the body as a subject on which power is exercised. Bodies are capacities, transforming and transformational, bodies are *becomings*.

The Deleuzian take is to

“understand bodies not as a bounded subject that is separate from images but rather (...) see the connections between humans and images as constituting a body. Arguing that models which map fluid and dynamic becomings on to static and closed systems of being (subject/object for example) risk ignoring the ways in which bodies are constituted and, crucially, could

be constituted differently. This notion not of what a body is but of what a body becomes implies that bodies and images are not inherently distinctive nor in need of distinction. As such, (...) a body is not a subject and an image is not an object. Instead, bodies and images can assemble and become through each other.„[10]

10. Rebecca Coleman, *The Becoming of Bodies–Girls, Images, Experience* (Manchester University Press, 2009), p.49.

“BODIES, CHANGED TO DIFFERENT BODIES, CHANGED TO OTHER FORMS,”[11]

11.This title is from Eugenie Brinkema's *Afterword: Bodies, changed to different bodies, changed to other forms* in Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies–Technologies–Power, Issue 8.1, Cinematic Bodies (Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

Along with the idea that bodies and images are understood as constitutive presented above, Deleuze also describes its *affective capacity*. To Eugenie Brinkema

"Deleuze's work on the autonomy of affect began to influence film theory around the same time that cognitivist film theorists began seriously considering emotion, phenomenologists and feminists engaged in a rethinking of the role of hapticity and the body (from the film body to the specificity of different bodies), and cultural theorists advanced hegemony of the visual and sonic.„[12]

12. Eugenie Brinkema, *The Form of Affects*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), p.26.

In *The Forms of Affects* (2014), Brinkema takes inspiration in the ambiguous tear seen in the close-up shot from the shower scene of Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho to trace the trajectory of *the tear* in philosophical thought. Brinkema treats the tear not as an expression, nor a sensation, but as a form. By defending that one must read for formal affectivity, the author suggests

"(...) Reading for form involves a slow, deep attention both to the usual suspects of close analysis that are so often ignored or reduced to paraphrase in recent work on affect—montage, camera movement, mise-en-scène, color,

sound—and to more ephemeral problematics such as duration, rhythm, absences, elisions, ruptures, gaps, and points of contradiction (ideological, aesthetic, structural, and formal). Reading for formal affectivity involves interpreting form's waning and absence, and also attending to formlessness.„[13]

[13]. Ibid, p.37.

As Brinkema's critical eye turns to form the focus seems to be not bodies but cuts, not bodies but textures, not bodies but affects. Brinkema urges an attending to framing, light and other formal aspects with a stress on reading for affect and the encouragement for every other formal element, other curves, other theories of time and light, to also open up to being read for their relation to affect.

The work of yet another formalist comes to my attention - the French scholar Raymond Bellour, one of the first theorists to introduce a literary analysis to film, born from his desire to methodically (un)codify its mechanisms. At the same time, however, he also refers to film as *unattainable* text due to its capacity to escape a definitive interpretation.

Bellour is invested in paying close attention to shots, frame by frame, in order to identify the rhythms and the relations between images as played out through time.

To the author, the *body* of film is two-fold, its technology, but also the viewer with a mind as part

of its embodiment. This filmic body is also defined in time through its unfolding, and captured by the viewer

> "through a process whereby he or she becomes prey to somatic affects—emotions experienced as the viewer's own, but that are introduced from elsewhere, being registered through the body itself„.[14]

14. Hilary Radner and Alistair Fox, *Raymond Bellour—Cinema and the Moving Image. With Selections from an Interview with Raymond Bellour* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.55.

Bellour also relates the cinematic experience to the qualities of *animalness*, as a way to understand the nature of cinema's physical impact on the body. And, when the film reaches its finale, also its *body* comes to an end, from then on existing only in memory.

HAPTIC VISUALITY AND SENSUOUS BODIES

The idea that cinema appeals to embodied senses beyond sight and hearing, to animality, also evokes what Laura Marks described as *haptic visuality*. I find the *haptic*, commonly understood as relating to touch, to be the most evocative term to express

"the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies."[15]

15. Laura U. Marks, *Video Haptics and Erotics*, Screen—Academic Journal of Film and Television Studies, Vol. 39, no. 4, (University of Glasgow, 1998), p.332.

Thinking cinema as haptic is to acknowledge the multi-sensory relationship between viewer and image, but also to reinforce a *to be in contact* without mediation, without interference.

In the essay *Video Haptics and Erotics*, Laura U. Marks examines ways in which video can be haptic and explores the eroticism to which the haptic image appeals. Marks brings to light qualities of visual eroticism which also contribute to the overarching themes of perception and sexual representation. According to Marks, the qualities of visual eroticism are tightly related to the work done or the attention given to the surface of images which enable

"an embodied perception: the viewer responding to the video as to another body, and to the screen as another skin."[16]

16. Ibid, p.333.

Marks' book *The Skin of Film* emphasizes the way film, both on film and video, signifies through its materiality. And how the vision can be tactile, as the term *haptic visuality* suggests, but foremost the book centres on how intercultural cinema

"appeals to embodied knowledge and memory insofar as it aims to

represent configurations of sense perception different from those of modern Euro-American societies, where optical visuality has been accorded a unique supremacy.„[17]

17. Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of Film, Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment and the Senses*, (University of Glasgow, 1998), p.333.

Marks stresses a difference between intercultural cinema and other kinds of cinema, a *social* character to the embodied experience, the body being not just individual but of cultural memory.

I am thinking about this turn to sensory memory whenever representation is lacking, I easily imagine this is also a filmic resource to overcome absence(s) in other (film) communities and in filmic self-portraits. In fact not only thematically, but also explicitly through the material and editing choices.

Marks concludes graciously with an analogy between smell and film to illustrate films' transcendence. How *sensuous geographies* can be contained—the case of a first nation family who couldn't travel by train with their meal because of its smell—but cinema can cross borders sharing different senses, diffusing itself into the world.

BODILY SENSE-MAKING

Perhaps my interest in thinking about bodies and cinema is also explained by the passion for photochemical film and the affinity to its material properties, to

"film as a surface rather than a transparent window„„

18. "Materialist film has its roots in the 1960s and 1970s, with the establishment of the London Filmmakers Co-op and the emergence of a set of theorisations—notably through the filmmaker-critic Peter Gidal and his 'Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film' of 1975—in which interrogating the physical substrate and laying bare the means of production were framed as anti-representational political gestures in opposition to the illusionism of narrative cinema.(...) But although the 1960s and '70s might be considered the origin of the first systematic examinations of materialist filmmaking from a theoretical perspective, many earlier examples serve as precursors to the kinds of material reflection that have accompanied the recent 'renaissance' of photochemical film. Ever since Man Ray's first film *Le Retour à la raison* (1923), artists have sought out ways to activate and interrogate the material properties of film, directing attention towards film as a surface rather than a transparent window.„—Kim Knowles, *Experimental Film and Photochemical Practices*, (UK: Palgrave Macmilan, 2020), p.26.

to substance, to its *body*.

There are many aspects within the analogue film process—from handholding a camera, to film bathing during development, splicing or projecting—which reveal its physicality and bodily traits as weight, texture, temperature and movement.

When I am shooting on 16mm film, I always think about how the exact filming moment is captured in such a physical manner as light and other particles get imprinted onto the film emulsion. The truth is, even when working with digital, what interests me the most are the plastic qualities of images or of image compositions. Namely, the way images can be shaped in relation to other images, as well as how their elements such as light, colour, density and time *become* together. Additionally, there is a very strong appeal to combine different sources of footage—let's say analogue and digital, and in doing so, allowing for new *bodily* possibilities.
The expressive potential of the celluloid material, along with its vulnerability, makes it possible that

“watching film is literally a spectatorship of death.„[19. Ibid, Idem.]

It surely accentuates the desire to

“create embodied cinematic experiences and alternative forms of knowledge that rely on material entanglement and physical connection.„[20. Ibid, p.27.]

It is no wonder that experimental film history is full of

“examples of how questions of materiality, the body, death and mourning come together in a forceful appeal to the senses.„[21. Ibid, p.31.]

For a long time, I believed the senses were isolated and functional. They were located in the body, yet not felt in relation to the body. Historically, with the exception of a *looking fit* obsession, bodies were largely neglected. In fact, feminine, black, indigenous, people of colour, fat, queer, gay, trans and crip bodies have been the main site of oppression in capitalist societies. Focusing on inner attunements and consider energy flows were or are still not in many cases permeable practices.

A groundbreaking moment was realizing that it is not only with the eyes, rather with the entire body that we experience images. A finding that perhaps I could only *make sense* of in conjunction with my personal daily effort to tend to the body—readings about hormones and psychological trauma,[22. Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53RX2ESIqsM (accessed 28 Feb. 2021).]

how energy is stored in our brain and in bodies’ tissues, primarily muscles and fascia, and how emotions are vehicles the body finds to balance that energy.

Suddenly, Elisabeth Grosz' definition of sensations as vibratory differences capable of resonating bodily organs and the nervous system, along with their relationship with art, became palpable.

"(...) Art transmits vibratory force through its successful transformations from energy to sensation to stimulation. Art contracts, which is to say it synthesizes and compresses the materiality that composes it, transmitting the force of materiality, its vibratory resonance, from a work to a body."[23]

23. Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (Columbia University Press, 2008), p.62.

I can't help reflecting on the very tangible experiences when going to the cinema, mostly to independent or art film houses. I always enter a cinema room with reverence. At first perhaps with fear of falling or stepping on someone else's foot, but then with awe and surrender. Being in the darkness and in silence intensifies the sensation of an intimate relationship with what is happening. It is with surprise, and in the worst cases with annoyance, that we are remembered of others seated together in the same room.

Personally, I aim for a seat located on the left side of the screen and more towards the front, closer to the screen. I find my perception amplified from there. Obviously, there are days and days, films and films, yet often I find myself *in the scene*. Only my look, my gaze, situated in the room (well *in the scene*) completes it, makes it happen.

Aside from the mighty cinema room, I usually notice other building areas. Waiting halls charged up with

memories of significant encounters and the toilets—yes the toilets, their mirrors and directed lights perfect screens for after-movie reflections.

"What does the 'darkness' of the cinema mean? (Whenever I hear the word cinema, I can't help thinking hall, rather than film.) Not only is the dark the very substance of reverie (in the pre-hypnoid meaning of the term); it is also the 'color' of a diffused eroticism, by its human condensation, by its absence of worldliness (contrary to the cultural appearance that has to be put in at any 'legitimate theatre'), by the relaxation of postures (how many members of the cinema audience slide down into their seats as if into a bed, coats or feet thrown over the row in front!), the movie house (ordinary model) is a site of availability (even more than cruising), the inoccupation of bodies, which best defines modern eroticism—not that of advertising

or striptease, but that of the big city. It is in this urban dark that the body's freedom is generated; this invisible work of possible affects emerges from a veritable cinematographic cocoon; the movie spectator could easily appropriate the silkworm's motto: Inclusum labor illustrat; it is because I am enclosed that I work and glow with all my desire.„[24]

[24] Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p.346.

The pleasure of going to the cinema is surely not passé. Personally, it has been a regular practice up to early 2020 and one to which I look forward to returning to. Still, the cinema is surely not the only place where one can have cinematic experiences nowadays.

For the past two decades, the many technological changes—television, videotapes, DVD, computers, mobile phones—, made their impact, at all levels, on film production, distribution and reception. Along with these changes, there has also been a state of confusion between the art of cinema and the world of contemporary art with both filmmakers and visual artists producing works that cross fields. It has been difficult to distinguish between the nature and the status of the different types of works and different modes of reception. Terms such as *exhibition cinema*, *third cinema*, *digital cinema*, *expanded cinema* or *post-cinema* have been attempts to differentiate works that find their way through to art only spaces.

From the bodily point of view of the spectator, the experience of multiple screens surely alters the unique

combination of forgetfulness and memory linked to the development of film in time and on a scheduled time. They dissolve, fragment, shake the encounters with the cinematic object, and place us more in the role of *the one who looks*, less of a spectator, more of an intermittent spectator.

CHANGE THROUGH THE CINEMATIC

Disruption between Fiction and Documentary

The reflection on sensations, form, affect, materiality and touch in film deepens my understanding of the transformative and embodied qualities of images, seemingly the attributes contained in the word cinematic. Now, looking back, I see myself scanning each author's subjectivities while describing the cinematic.

From Robert Bresson's exclusive focus on what images and sound create through their position and relation, to Paula Albuquerque's first-person experience and her initial words to *The Webcam as an Emerging Cinematic Medium* (2018).

"From a very young age, I intuitively knew that I was living in a cinematic world."[25]

25. Paula Albuquerque, *The Webcam as an Emerging Cinematic Medium*, (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), p.9.

The acknowledgement of the cinematic as a mode of existence deeply reverberated as I often find myself observing and feeling *as if in a film*. Through the work of Paula Albuquerque, two other authors emerge as references to think about the cinematic: Pepita Hesselberth and Vivian Shochack.

In Carnal *Thoughts Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004) Vivian Sobchack discusses the thin boundaries between fiction and documentary. One of the given examples is *Forest Gump*, a 1994 fictional film that includes U.S. historical footage in its narrative. Back then upon the film release, the discussion was centred on how that *cinematic trickery* undermined the public's ability to differentiate fact from fiction.

Sobchack argues that while watching a fictional film one might be thinking about the actors' personal life, about the location where the action takes place, or even about their own bodies and immediate surroundings. To Sobchack if we acknowledge the viewer's *extracinematic* and *extratextual* knowledge, both social and personal, and the pressures they might bring to the viewer's

experience of a cinematic object, then one might argue that there is no distinction between documentary and fiction film.

As I go on looking for the qualities of the cinematic that carry change, I can't help thinking how Sobchack's contribution is greatly meaningful. Very often it's when the fictional space becomes the space of the real or vice-versa that the most memorable experiences emerge. I find the thought in Sobchack's reaction to a scene from a Jean Renoir's film *The Rules of the Game* (1939) which includes an onscreen death of a rabbit,

"the rabbit's death (...) transformed fictional into documentary space, symbolic into indexical representation, my affective investments in the irreal and fictional into a documentary consciousness charged with a sense of the world, existence, bodily mortification and mortality, and all the rest of the real that is in excess of fiction.„ 26. Vivian Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (University of California Press, 2004), p.269.

According to Sobchack, our viewing experiences contain both documentary and fictional moments

"co-constituted by a dynamic and labile spectatorial engagement with all film images. And although the nature of these moments may be cued, structured, and finally contained by

conventional cinematic practices, ultimately it is our own extracinematic, cultural, and embodied experience and knowledge that governs how we first take up the images we see on the screen and what we make of them. (...) And it is this embodied knowledge and ethical care, not some objective stylistic change in the image or in the film's narratological structure, that charge the image (and are charged by it) to momentarily rupture the autonomous coherence and unity of Renoir's fictional world.„[27] 27. Ibid, p.273.

A cut to when things first blurred up in the most vivid way brings me to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, a 1988 film where real actors and cartoon characters co-exist. And most recently a 2018 short, *The Eddies*, by Angelo Madsen Minax caused the same type of bewilderment. The director is himself a character in the film and as it unfolds we find him typing and retyping a Craigslist ad looking for men willing to masturbate with a weapon in front of his camera. From typing to finding and filming a man masturbating with a weapon the space of fiction changes to the space of the real and I'm caught up in a mix of repulse and excitement.

This physical confrontation with the film is how Pepita Hesselberth defines the cinematic, a

“category of experience, a performative that comes into being in the encounter between the human body and its environment, whether the latter be digital or analogue, projected or displayed on small or large screens, and experienced with or without the apparent intervention of the participating viewer.„ 28. Pepita Hesselberth, *Cinematic Chronotopes Here Now Me* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), p.5.

Transitional Bodies

In *Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies–Technologies–Power* dedicated to Cinematic Bodies, Eugenie Brinkema does a close reading of all authors' contributions in the *Afterword text Of bodies, changed to different bodies, changed to other forms*. A title I have reused in the current text, as it perfectly encompasses both thought and rhythm of the topic at hands.

Brinkema notices the figure of the *transitional* looming across all inputs, turning on the central charge to how to transition in-between the

"thinking of bodies, of fleshes, of techniques, of technology, of forms, of critical methods themselves.„[29]

29. Eugenie Brinkema, *Afterword: Of bodies, changed to different bodies, changed to other forms*, Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies–Technologies–Power, Issue 8.1, Cinematic Bodies, (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.128.

Something of a challenge but also a strength I sense in Brinkema's words. As one starts thinking about bodies, one rapidly finds the bodies changing to different bodies or, at times, even changed to other forms.

Throughout all essay contributions Brinkema identifies repeated overarching terms: *transitory*, *transitional*, *transplant/transplanted* and *translation*. These are terms that posit questions of time, the ephemeral, of disuse, archive, space, movement, displacement, loss, new arrivals, meaning, language, form, affects and feelings. Questions that corporealize material impulses or are materialized as theoretical gestures through a

"first-person narrative structure, strategic use of transitional locations including train stations and bus depots.„[30]

30. Ibid, p.131.

And also through editing techniques that leave

"images incomplete and undefined„,[31]

31. Ibid, Idem.

applying intermedial cuts, displaying different textures, in the

“movement of tracking shots, [a] layered ontology, extreme close-ups, framing and isolating edges of structures„,[32]

distorting and disrupting linear narratives.

32. Ibid, Idem.

Kneading the Body

It is also in Eugenie Brinkema's tex[33]

33. Eugenie Brinkema, *Afterword: Of bodies, changed to different bodies, changed to other forms*, Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies—Technologies—Power, Issue 8.1, Cinematic Bodies, (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p.127.

that I find Michel Foucault's words on Werner Schroeter's films.

Foucault writes about the camera relation to the body, one of

"discovery-exploration (...) an encounter at once calculated and aleatory (...), discovering something, breaking up an angle, a volume, a curve, following a trace, a line, possibly a ripple. And then suddenly the body derails itself, becomes a landscape, a caravan, a storm, a mountain of sand, and so on.„[34]

34. Ibid, Idem.

Concluding that

"what the camera does in Schroeter's films is not to detail the body for desire, but to knead the body like a dough out of which images are born.„[35]

35. Ibid, Idem.

I find the idea of the body worked through like dough out of which images are born, alluring. Plus, I relate to Foucault's passionate tone regarding Schroeter's work, but also question together with Brinkema

“whether this infinitely deconstructed body serves as an index to that second one,„[36]

the one of the camera, the one of the *looker*.

36. Ibid, Idem.

Changing the Narrative

Desire is inscribed in the movement of narrative, identifies Teresa de Lauretis. However problematic the position of the spectator—the *female* spectator in her argument—it is in the narrative that the possibility of reading or identification happens. Therefore, it is there that the shift in representation must happen.

Lauretis proposes not the destruction of pleasure in the text, rather working it to represent the contradictions of the female subject in it.

In the chapter dedicated to *Narrative Cinema, Feminist Poetics, and Yvonne Rainer*, Lauretis highlights how Rainer employs

"strategies of coherence but based on contradiction and 'poetic ambiguity',"[37]

37. Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory Film and Fiction* (Indiana University Press, 1987), p.122.

as means to change the *text*. Rainer herself writes about how if she is to make a film about desire, she will then play with the signifiers of desire.

To achieve this, Rainer applies

"formally complex strategies such as: have two actors play the male protagonist, represent the female protagonist not as narrative image but as the narrating voice; disrupt the glossy surface and homogeneous look of professional cinematography by means of optically degenerated shots,' refilming,

blown-up super 8 and video transfers; playoff and contrast different authorial voices; play on ‘incongruous juxtapositions of modes of address: recitation, reading, ‹real› or spontaneous speech, printed text, quoted texts, et ai., all in the same film.’„[38. Ibid, p.122.]

Identity self-portraits of a filmic gaze

In *Identity self-portraits of a filmic gaze* (2016) Lourdes Monterrubio Ibáñez analyses the filmic self-portraits of Marguerite Duras, Chantal Akerman and Agnès Varda. There, I find not only insights on these inspiring filmmakers' work of

"creating, looking into oneself and looking at the other as self-portraying gestures,"[39]

but also the singular qualities of a very personal filmic gaze and its potential to transform the cinematic object.

Deriving from the work of Raymond Bellour and Françoise Grange, Ibáñez defines the self-portrait by its difference from the autobiographical. The self-portrait is analogical, metaphorical and poetic, it is not strictly narrative; the self-portrait is not just self-representational, it is not just about presenting the actual image, it proposes a search for the image as

"an imperceptible, piercing presence of an absence that plagues us all."[40]

Moreover, the self-portrait

"condenses and presents a cinematic thinking, and this implies not only 'describing the self in cinema', but also 'describing cinema itself'."[41]

Ibáñez calls this filmic experience an

"identity self-portrait as it seeks the filmmaker's expression of identity through her filmic gaze,

39. Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory Film and Fiction* (Indiana University Press, 1987), p.71.

40. Ibid, p.64.

41. Ibid, Idem.

as the materialization of their cinematic thinking.„[42] Ibid, Idem.

A self-writing that according to Ibáñez carries the same imprecise outlines and heretical status as the essay film.

Temporal Density

While scrolling through my notes, I find impressions from a phone conversation with a friend shortly after they moved out of the country. It must have taken what, ten minutes? To me felt lengthening to another galaxy and back a lifetime later. I recall their voice telling me to breathe, as I gasped through the hurt. A round calm silence made me believe we were in the same room together, everything dark around us, only our faces glowing in front of each other. And losing the train of thought when noticing a shimmering light landing softly on my arm as I twirled in the room.

Time.

On the same topic, I also find a mention about my great-grandfather Jaime. How, when he would tell a story, his voice, his presence, carried me to a different time-space just as he would start: "Uma ocasião estava...„—a Portuguese variant of "Once upon a time...„

There is a temporal density, a thickness of time, which is tangible in our bodies. Primarily through its affective appeal, says Sobchack.

In *Cinematic Chronotopes Here Now Me* (2014), Hesselberth addresses three different spatio-temporal configurations: a multi-media exhibition, handheld aesthetics of European art-house films and a large-scale media installation in the public space. The author argues that even though the site of cinema is changing,

"the extent to which technologically mediated sounds and images continue to be experienced as cinematic today is largely dependent on the intensified sense of a 'here,' a 'now,' and a 'me' that they convey.„[43]

43. Pepita Hesselberth, *Cinematic Chronotopes Here Now Me* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), p.111.

The target in the *here*, *now* and *me* is instrumental for rethinking our contemporary encounter with the cinematic in terms of the intensified sense of space, time, and being. By anchoring in affects when locating, navigating, and situating the cinematic Hesselberth is also, in my view, highlighting the aspects of changeability within the cinematic itself, the cinematic as a

"lived environment that affords certain embodied interactions while prohibiting others.„[44]

44. Ibid, p.127.

Close-up and Slowing Down

Although the close-up had been identified in this text before, I find the contribution of Mary Ann Doane's on scale and detail worth a separate mention—I zoom in.

Doane explains that from the narrative viewpoint, the close-up look is forced into *decipherability*; whilst the close-up that *foregrounds details*, *contingencies*, and *idiosyncrasies* expands time at the expense of linear, narrative time,

"transforming the screen, momentarily, into a surface, a mere image.„[45]

45. Pepita Hesselberth, *Cinematic Chronotopes Here Now Me* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), p.34.

Slowdown works as the temporal equivalent of the close-up. On slowing down, cinema and change, I find also the author Graeme Gilloch comparing Walter Benjamin's essay writing to that of cinematic perception—

"the slowing down of the quotidian through the creation of an imaginary space that exposes perception simultaneously to scenes from the past, present and future.„[46]

46. Graeme Gilloch, 'Sunshine and Noir': *Benjamin, Kracauer and Roth Visit the 'White Cities'* in Edited by Anca M. Pusca *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Change* (Palmgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.4.

It is through this cinematic perception, he argues, that change becomes most visible.

Additionally, I imagine that thinking text as way to carry cinematic transformations would also be relevant to the conversation. Films such as *Blue* (1993) by Derek Jarman or *Branca de Neve* (2000) by João César Monteiro, with barely any images and where text is paramount, could be compelling starting points. Also, could the use of text to describe a visual work[47]

47. Ekphrasis: use of detailed description of a work of visual art as a literary device, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekphrasis (accessed 28 Feb. 2021).

be regarded as way to convey the ambiguous, the not yet stable? Perhaps language would be limiting in those circumstances, which leads me to think of *sound...*

Dear reader,

Thank you for getting this far.
The fragments above, related to Change through the Cinematic, are a selection of thoughts, authors and concrete editing strategies on how change occurs or is experienced in a cinematic encounter.

This is not The End.

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[voice] They said time is the thing a body moves through and we all paused. In stillness, dense topics penetrate the skin and sink into the body's deepest tissues. But then someone dug their fingers into the bag of crisps and so they continued their way through Rebecca Coleman's words: according to a philosophy of *becoming*, bodies are understood not by their forms but through their longitude, their relations of motion and rest; and their latitude, their set of affects at any given moment.

Writing in terms of the movement (the longitude and latitude) of a body, Deleuze and Guattari characterize an assemblage as "precisely this increase in the dimensions of a *multiplicity* that necessarily changes in nature as it *expands its connections*„.

The understanding of a body as an assemblage is a critique of the body as a subject on which power is exercised and made to work. *The Body without Organs (BwO)* is not opposed to the organs, but to that organization called the organism. It's an attempt to consider in what other way a body might be understood—how it might become—*other* than as an organized organism.

In my notes I wrote: "the geographies within the current social and economic structures are all within predetermined categories. It's actually the spaces in between them that prove that another possibility, another future exists. This is political." I can scan it all for you. Let's text later.

[voice] Hi, it's me. Hope you can hear me well, there's an engine noise coming from across the street. I wanted to read you a passage. It's from a Kathy Acker's text. Acker is describing the practice of bodybuilding, saying it reduces ordinary language to a bare minimum, instead of in meaning, the language of the body is focused on what it is, on breathing, counting, time, intensity, repetitions. She is also explaining how to grow muscle one has to break it first. Quote Intensity times movement of maximum weight equals muscular destruction (muscular growth). Is the equation between destruction and growth also a formula for art?**Kathy Acker, "Against Ordinary Language: The Language of the Body„, *Bodies of Work: Essays* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1997). p.23

End of quote. It reminded me of us breaking ideas apart. Let's talk about it next time.

[voice] Hi, it's me again.