Lucila Quieto's *Filiación* and the End[s] of Post-Dictatorship Art-Photography

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> ¿Qué desean estas imágenes, dispersas y recurrentes, de nuestro álbum de familia colectivo? ¿Qué nos piden?
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> —Leonor Arfuch 1996

> The photochemical image [wa]s an inscription, a writing of time and […] bore within it, and produced for its spectator, a respect for the resistances and there-ness of historicity, for that which leaks out and cannot be contained within the notion of semiosis. Its promise [wa]s that of touching the real.
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> —Mary Ann Doane 2007

On the eve of the 37th anniversary of the 1976 military coup (23rd March 2013), the Haroldo Conti Cultural Memory Centre in Buenos Aires inaugurated the tripartite exhibition *Filiación* by photo-artist and activist Lucila Quieto. More than a decade after the success of her first major essay *Arqueología de la ausencia* (1999-2001), Quieto offered a retrospective consideration of the two themes which had dominated the photographic memory art produced in Argentina since the turn of the millennium: the human cost of 1970s state terror and its legacy for subsequent generations. The title of the exhibition, somewhat ironically, underscored Quieto's own ruptured genealogy and inheritance as both daughter and niece of disappeared revolutionary militants.[1] This was especially apparent in one of the three sections

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[1] Lucila Quieto (1977-) was a (founding) member of the post-dictatorship human rights organization H.I.J.O.S. formed in late 1994, and is currently a member of Colectivo de hijos (Cdh), a self-designated group of post-dictatorship 'orphans' of the disappeared

of the exhibition, *Collages, Familia Quieto (2012-13)*, a collection of photographic and mixed-media collages devoted exclusively to her own history of a family blighted by political violence. At the same time, the other two sections of the exhibition with which these collages were juxtaposed, *Sitios de memoria (2008-12)*, a series of interior and exterior images of former detention camps, and a selection of images from the original *Arqueología de la ausencia* and hence, images of herself and her peers from H.I.J.O.S. in the late 1990s, underscored the historical re-contextualization of Quieto's own family history within a collective politics of memory.[2]

This reconsideration of her first essay could itself also be regarded as a figurative 'taking stock' of the post-dictatorship culture of memory as manifested in the visual politics of the previous fifteen years, and an invitation to ponder the present and future of that same culture. In fact, in retrospect, given that the future of the country's culture of memory remains uncertain after the general election victory of Mauricio Macri's centre right coalition *Cambiemos* in 2015, it is certainly tempting to now view *Filiación* as a celebratory visual ode to a whole body of photographic art produced during a specific period of memory politics.[3] The exhibition represents an emblematic example in this respect given that the tripartite content is predicated upon a dialectic encounter between each of the three experimental aesthetic techniques characterising a majority of the memory-art photo-essays which appeared between 1997 and 2013: firstly, those that offer an ethnographic re-framing of the personal archive or family photo-album in the *caja china* effect of a photograph within a photograph to evoke inter-generational memory; secondly, the evocation of absence through images of empty spaces or buildings, often former detention centres or burial sites, and decaying objects, usually personal belongings, found at the same sites; finally, using montage and collage, the visualization of an imaginary encounter between the dead or disappeared and their surviving relatives.[4] These techniques can be found in a range

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formed in 2010 and committed to artistic expression on political themes. Both Quieto's father, Carlos Alberto Quieto and her uncle, Roberto Jorge 'El Negro' Quieto, the former head of the FAR (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*) were disappeared before she was born. For an analysis of the evolution of Quieto's art-photography practice, see Blejmar (2013).

[2] In this respect, Quieto herself has stated that, while the exhibition appeared to represent a personal mourning ritual, the fact that her family history formed part of a collective history of disappearance, it could not but be considered a political act: "El momento, treinta años después, es un acto privado, íntimo, pero al tratarse de una historia colectiva, se transforma en un hecho político" (quoted in Esquivada, 2013).

[3] Given the radical nature of Macri's sweeping neoliberal reforms over the course of 2016, we might ponder the triumphant headline on Bloomberg.com in a March 8, 2016 article which proclaimed: "Wall Street is in charge in Argentina (again)" (quoted in Cibles [2016]). On the danger posed by Macri's government and its supporters to continued state support for the culture of memory and the ongoing trials of former *represores,* see, for example, Blejmar (2016) and Ginzberg (2016).

[4] For further elaboration on these three categories, see Fortuny (2013)(2014).

of works throughout the first decade of the millennium, most notably after the advent of the state-sanctioned culture of memory in 2003 under the Kirchners. Production was even more emphatic during and after the 30th anniversary of the coup in 2006 when a significant number of new photographic essays devoted to memory art and politics appeared, while those produced prior to 2003 attracted renewed interest (Fortuny 2014: 81-83).[5]

After being exhibited at a range of national galleries and cultural spaces (a selection of the images from) *Filiación* returned to the Haroldo Conti in 2016 for the 40th anniversary commemorations as part of *Memorias*, a collective photographic exhibition comprising salient examples of precisely those germane essays, which had been exhibited at the centre in recent years. If this 'return' paralleled the circularity of Quieto's own re-contextualization of *Arqueología de la ausencia*, a different kind of symbolic 'return' was attracting much more media attention on the same day at another iconic memorial space in Buenos Aires, and for strikingly different ideological reasons. For the controversial concurrent meeting between Mauricio Macri and Barack Obama at the *Parque de la Memoria*, also ostensibly to commemorate the 40th anniversary, was decried by demonstrators as nothing more than a cynical revival of Fukuyama's 'end of history' mantra from the late 1980s (Govansky 2016). Critics bemoaned the fact that although both leaders offered acknowledgement of past human rights violations, they also appealed to historical closure for the societal 'divisions' of the past and celebrated their (post-Kirchner) binational realignment as political, economic and, more ominously, as *military* partners within the globalized world of the present (Govansky 2016; Pertot 2016).

Turning the page on a history of violent intervention or even relegating it to apparently ancient archives (simply by acknowledging the past violence) appears to have also been Obama's motivation for his visit to Havana as part of the ongoing *rapprochement* with Cuba a few days before his arrival in Buenos Aires. Obama's claim that he "knew" the thorny history of post-1959 US-Cuban relations, but refused to be "trapped by it" (Van Auken 2016) during his speech in Havana's Teatro Nacional, underscored that that was indeed his motivation. Clearly, after alluding to

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[5] Examples of these memorial photo-essays which, in most cases, were circulated on-line and continue to be partially accessible as such, include the following: Fernando Gutiérrez *Treintamil* (1990-1995), *Secuela* (2001-2004), *Cosas del Río* (2008-2010); Marcelo Brodsky *Buena Memoria* (1997), *Nexo* (2001); Julio Pantoja *Los hijos: Tucumán 20 años después* (1997-2001); Lucila Quieto *Arqueología de la ausencia* (1999-2001); Gabriela Bettini *Recuerdos inventados* (2003); Helen Zout *Huellas de las desapariciones* (2000-2006); Paula Luttringer *El lamento de los muros* (2000-2010); Pedro Camilo Pérez del Cerro *El viaje de papá* (2005); Inés Ulanovsky *Fotos tuyas* (2006), *ESMA* (2011); Gustavo Germano *Ausencias* (2007); Maria Soledad Nivoli, *Como miran tus ojos* (2007); Verónica Maggi, *El rescate* (2007); Guadalupe Gaona, *Quieta* (2007), *Pozo de aire* (2009), Gerardo Dell'Oro, *Imágenes en la memoria* (2011).

the 'big stick' foreign policy of the past, now was the time to 'move on'; especially in this era of a suspiciously well-coordinated waning of the Latin American *marea rosada* in favour of Washington's 'interests' and the predictable re-assertion of overtly neoliberal policies of austerity across the region (most notably in Brazil and Argentina itself). In that sense, we might note that just as today's neoliberalism has been negatively associated with the veiling of economic *exploitation* by a relentless insistence on a 'progressive' identity politics of *inclusion* instead (Di Stefano and Sauri 2014), it remains equally identified with the "synchronous space" (Huyssen 2003) of the global consumer for whom historicity remains tantalisingly detached from everyday experience as recent events are mediated for mass consumption and then, almost simultaneously, for obsolescence.

The Obama-Macri commemorative honouring of Argentina's dead and disappeared and, moreover, of the human rights movements that continue the struggle for their memory in a 'post-historical' age may, justifiably, have struck some as an exercise in diplomatic hypocrisy. It was certainly not lacking in irony either: even though the meeting had been shunned by *Abuelas*, *Madres* and *H.I.J.O.S.*, it was nevertheless a renowned post-dictatorship activist-photographer and former exile, Marcelo Brodsky, who acted as guide for the two leaders in the memorial space (Pertot 2016).[6] The presence of a photographer at the meeting is ironic in the sense that, if the current realignment between the US and Argentina does indeed signal an official desire to return to the 'end of history' amnesia of the late 80s and early 90s, we might recall that that earlier period had also heralded a parallel 'end of photography'. In tandem with the growing sophistication and proliferation of digital and informational technologies, debates raged at the time over the possible advent of a *post*-photographic digital age in which any residual claims for photographic (and cinematic) indexicality would be discredited (Sutton 2009: 3). [7] The historical questioning of the denotative capacity of analogue photography thus appeared to have been vindicated, just as contemporary suspicions over any photograph's documentary status now appeared, with the advent of digital image-making, to be entirely justified. Consequently, at a time that the so-called 'grand

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[6] Brodsky, one of the founding members of the original committee which promoted and sought government support for the building of the park, and whose brother is one of the disappeared, took the opportunity to insist to both leaders that whichever government was in power in the capital or the nation, the memory park must represent an ongoing '[una] política de Estado' (Pertot 2016).

[7] Barthes (1982) is widely associated with the notion that the light which reflects off the photographed object is the same light captured on the camera film in pre-digital photography and therefore that, through the mediation of light, the image produced represents a material inscription of its referent. This defining characteristic of the photographic film image is now more commonly understood, after semiotician C.S. Peirce, as the *indexicality* or *causal contiguity* which guaranteed the veracity of its image.

narratives' of history were being unraveled, so were the means—whether in text or image—for transmitting history 'faithfully'.

However, the presence of a memory photographer to mediate the remembrance of state terror for both leaders might also symbolize the fact that neither photography nor history did actually 'end' in the 1990s, nor for that matter, did photography's capacity for transmitting "something of the real" from the past (Didi-Huberman 2003: 136). Indeed, in the specific case of the phenomenon of forced disappearance, from the 1970's onwards, the photograph, as iconic approximation of the referent and index of prior existence, continued, and to this day continues, to offer (protestors) a visual substitution for and simultaneously to reflect the absence of a body, which has not been mourned or buried. If this triple lack of a body, of the possibility of mourning and of burial became "the constitutive mark" of the struggle for memory in post-dictatorship Latin American and Iberian cultures, it was photography that became a symbol of that same tripartite lack and a political emblem of human rights organizations' demands for the vindication of those whose very existence had been denied by authoritarian states (Blejmar et al. 2013: 16; Fortuny 2014: 13). We might add that, rather than diminishing the visibility of such photography, the digital age has allowed for an unprecedented proliferation of visual documentation identified with human rights protest through social and mass media on the internet. These unparalleled levels of image reproduction and distribution have therefore contributed to the reconfiguration and enhancement of photography's traditional mediating role as a conduit for memory to previously unimaginable levels (Groys 2008; Steinmann 2011).

Curiously, however, despite this continued centrality of photography, whether analogue or digital, as a tool of political protest for human rights groups, the migration of this visual politics to memory art in post-dictatorship Argentina has largely been received by commentators as a reflection of the contemporary demise, once again, of any faith in the photographic index and hence of the photograph as a forensic 'trace' of the past (Amado 2004; García 2011; Blejmar, Fortuny y García 2013).[8] Indeed, the predominant argument, posited most cogently by Argentine thinkers such as García (2011), has been that memory artists, and particularly those who are surviving children of disappeared parents (or those identified with human rights groups such as H.I.J.O.S.), and hence, who no longer need to demonstrate the prior existence of the disappeared, have largely worked with photographic techniques that suggest a *performative poetics* of memory or an

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[8] "La fotografía digital y la posibilidad de producción sintética de imágenes arrojan por la borda toda mitología del registro puro y de la fotografía como 'escritura de los hechos' en bruto" (Blejmar, Fortuny, García 2013: 14).

appeal to the notion that second generation memory is an incomplete, dynamic process predicated upon construction and invention.[9] Clearly, there is no denying that Quieto's *Filiación* re-affirms this notion of the photograph as a metaphor for an incomplete memory, (identified most readily with Hirsch's renowned *postmemorial* photography (1997; 2012), and the notion of performative or gestural photography identified with contemporary social media photography on the part of the remembering subject, especially the selfie (Frosh 2015). Yet, Quieto also offers a more complex approach to photographic indexicality in the work and by extension, invites an equally complex spectatorial engagement. For, as well as appealing to the poetic potential of the photo-image, this, and many other instances of Argentine memory art photography, can be interpreted as actually inviting viewers to also contemplate the persistence of a more 'primitive' or 'magical' conception of the photograph: namely, as containing a trace of or as even being conflated *with* the bodily presence of the referent.

Quieto's *Filiación* in particular can be viewed as an emblematic example of this fetishization since several images actually betray an obsessive and yet, unfulfilled desire to recuperate the photographic index when understood in its purest form as an emanation of a past presence; in this case, the absent corporeal presence of the disappeared subject. More specifically, and taking into account her participation in other mourning rituals in which skeletal remains of disappeared parents were identified, in the second series of the exhibition, *Collages, Familia Quieto*, Quieto employs photography as a means for imagining the reconstitution of her own father's remains and hence the possibility for transcending the 'suspended' death of the disappeared.[10] Furthermore, in the same series, this symbolic recuperation of the remains through images and thus the possibility of imagining her father's physical presence and appearance dovetails with a more conventional conception of the family photograph: that of serving as forensic proof of family likeness and genetic inheritance across the generations. When considered in

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[9] "Pero un rasgo clave de estas fotos es precisamente la dislocación del estatuto documental de las fotografías de desaparecidos (…) sin dudas, estamos muy lejos del deíctico barthesiano: estamos casi en las antípodas del '*esto ha sido*'. En estas propuestas se lee, más bien, un provocativo *esto no ha sido*" (Garcia 2011:104).

[10] The exhibition also included the screening of a video relating artist Mariana Corral's symbolic mourning ritual for her disappeared militant father whose remains had still not been located and three other videos by children whose fathers' remains had actually been located and identified. With regard to one of these videos, film-maker Leopoldo Tiseira's documentary about his own experience, Quieto would comment that, "El video de Leopoldo Tiseira—registro que él hace cuando va a Antropólogos con su familia y filma el encuentro y el reconocimiento de los huesos del padre—fue el disparador para pensar en mi propia búsqueda, en mi propio duelo, en la posibilidad de encontrar algún día los huesos de mi padre. Se juntó todo eso con la posibilidad y la propuesta de realizar la muestra. Tenía registros, había participado de entierros y a la vez quería hacer algo que tuviera que ver con mi propio transitar por el duelo" ("Entrevista", 2013).

juxtaposition with the other two 'collective' series in the exhibition in which, either the decay of archival images is underscored (*Arqueología de la ausencia*) or empty spaces function as visual metaphors for a residual presence (*Sitios de memoria*), the ensemble evokes a longing for the photograph as material trace of past events and presences.

To clarify this point further, it is worth considering Mary Ann Doane's (2007) examination of what she identifies as a contemporary nostalgia for the photographic index in a supposedly 'post-photographic' and 'post-historical' digital age. Exemplifying the more complex discussion of the index in recent years, Doane (136) initially reminds us that C. S. Peirce's foundational conceptualization actually encompassed both the notion of the material trace—the emblematic "footprint in the sand"—identified with a past presence, and also the "deictic," or semiotic signposting associated most readily with locating an inscription "here and now."[11] Nevertheless, the deictic index presupposes its "own exhaustion as presence" in an irretrievable present moment (Doane 2007: 136) and hence, defies any notion of temporal endurance or materiality. The index understood as a material trace, meanwhile, resists a similar evaporation "in its moment of production, [and] remains as the witness of an anteriority"; unlike the deictic index, therefore, it is ineluctably "aligned with historicity" and, by extension, history *tout court* (ibid). Alluding to Bill Morrison's experimentation with a compilation of deteriorating and damaged silent film stock in his award-winning *Decasia* (2002) as a paradigmatic example, Doane then underscores the association of analogue media with historicity as manifested in the "physical condition of its objects" (2007: 144) and how, in contrast to the immateriality of the digital image, the vulnerability to decay and destruction of the analogue image signals that same historicity (146). Hence, in an age which refuses the claims of history and proffers only the "timelessness of information" (148), according to Doane, we retain a nostalgia for a "photochemical epistemology" which promised the "certitude of the imprint, the trace, the etching in a medium whose materiality [wa]s thinkable" and for a deictic index which "pointed to and verified [an] existence" (ibid.). In a similar vein, this notion of a

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[11] In the wake of the post-photography debate of the 1990s, discussions over photography's denotative capacity in the digital age now tend, *not* simply towards a *rejection* of the index-as-trace, but also more towards a re-assessment of how understandings of the index have shifted, and of how images are viewed as objects of social production and exchange in the formation of subjectivities (Lowry and Green 2003; Frosh 2015). Similarly, we should not overlook the spectator's agency in choosing to either scrutinize and distinguish between the signifying intentions underlying the messages offered by contemporary images since, whether the advent of digital image-making has made viewers more suspicious about the evidentiary potency of apparently documentary photography or not, there is little doubt that the 'post-photographic' age is one in which the attribution of iconicity and indexicality to images continues (Groys 2008; Steinmann 2011).

contemporary nostalgia for the era of material media and its concomitant association with historical trace, coincides with what art critic Boris Groys (2008) claims is a contemporary mediatic reversal of the postmodern challenge to the very possibility of representation and also a nostalgia for what he identifies as an "auratic image"—an *ideal* image—where art and life seek to merge (128).

Consequently, what is crucial for my purposes here is that, despite the corresponding 'theological' or 'relic-like' associations of the index-as-trace which worry critics, it is equally possible that dismissing their continued social relevance within our age of the digital dream of "dematerialization and the timelessness of information" (Doane 2007: 148), may actually allegorize and naturalize the 'end-of-history' mantra: the triumph of a rudderless present and unknowable past. In other words, discrediting the notion that the photograph might be received as an indexical trace by the beholder is inevitably also akin to 'throwing out' history with the indexical 'bathwater'. Ultimately, therefore, the parallel between material historicity and photographic trace offered here serves to propose that photographic memory art of this kind may not only inspire an 'ethics of the *look*', that is, a spectatorial empathy with personal histories of loss, but it might also interpellate the viewer as a 'detective' of those visual clues which allude—albeit obliquely—to a broader history of 1970's state terror. Indeed, this reading of *Filiación* presupposes a *politics* of spectatorship predicated upon the passage from an identification with family biographies to the scrutiny of wider histories of state-sanctioned violence.

Reviewing Arqueología de la ausencia

Buena Memoria (1997) was the pioneering photo-essay, which not only established Marcelo Brodsky as an internationally-renowned photographer, but which also drew global academic attention to the explosion of visual memory art in post-dictatorship Argentina in the late 1990s.[12] However, it was arguably Quieto's *Arqueología de la ausencia* (1999-2001), which became the emblematic illustration of the 'imagined encounter' between dead and living subjects category of photographic memory art in Argentina itself.[13] Essentially the essay comprised of a collection of somewhat crude projections of archival photographs from the 60s and 70s of dead and disappeared parents onto respective members of H.I.J.O.S. so as to create the effect of an impossible encounter which might be recorded by Quieto's camera.

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[12] *Buena memoria* was exhibited in 26 countries at more than 120 different exhibitions between 1997 and 2009 alone (http://www.marcelobrodsky.com/).

[13] Amongst the many studies in Spanish which offer allusions to Quieto's first essay, we might note Amado (2004), Battiti (2004), Genoud (2004), Durán (2006), Fortuny (2008), Blejmar (2008; 2013), Enríquez (2011) Longoni (2011[2009]), García (2011), Masotta (2011) Larralde Armas (2013). Studies in English, include Gaunt (2011) Ros (2012) Bell (2014) Sosa (2014) and Maguire (2015).

The posing of the children (including Quieto with her own disappeared militant father) in the projected archival image constituted 'un montaje *performance* de retratos de hijos y padres desaparecidos' (Blejmar 2013: 178). The essay thus appeared to offer a rudimentary aesthetic model for how surviving relatives of the disappeared might use personal photographic archives to both evoke a sense of absence and simultaneously assert their own subjectivity as remembering subjects demanding justice for that same absence.[14]

Arqueología de la ausencia received wide acclaim nationally with cultural commentators generally emphasizing the essay's playful nature, the apparent avoidance of the trauma associated with mourning and indeed, the focus on the 'performed' memory event as a metaphor for creative agency in a newly-constructed 'present' or imagined *tercer tiempo*, rather than a melancholic preoccupation with the past or a sense of victimhood.[15] It is also for this reason that, as recently as 2014, critics continued to associate Quieto's essay with the ironic and often darkly humorous traits characterizing H.I.J.O.S. activism in general, and the members' discursive construction of their personal histories of loss during the late 1990s in particular (Sosa 2014: 39). The fictional reunions of disappeared parent and grown child should then be celebrated as a visual assertion of "conviviality between the dead and the living" or especially in those cases where the archival images chosen by the surviving child are of family celebrations, a joyful "toast across time" (47).

Nevertheless, in retrospect, and especially when juxtaposed with the other two series in *Filiación*, the selection of images from *Arqueología de la ausencia* no longer strikes the viewer as particularly 'comedic.' In that respect, Mariana Eva Perez's response to the exhibition, which appears in the form of a prologue in the catalogue, is revealing. For, while once again acknowledging Quieto's apparently playful technique, in allusion specifically to the discomfiting series *Collages*, it is only in the sense that Quieto offers a misshapen and grotesque vision of the *familia armada* trope, "una familia monstruosa, desencajada, descoyunturada" (Perez 2013). If *Collages* thus underscores the paradox of a filiation or lineage characterized by rupture and absence, it is more than tempting to consider the re-contextualized

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[14] Not only would the technique be adopted and transformed by other national art-photographers, but it would re-appear in two of the most cited documentaries made by children of disappeared parents of the period, Natalia Bruchstein's *Encontrando a Víctor* (2004) and Nicolás Prividera's *M* (2007; Blejmar 2008). The essay would then actually be parodied in Mariana Eva Perez's satirical novel-blog, *Diario de una Princesa Montonera* (2012) with the inclusion of a grinning profile photograph of the blogger/author alongside an archival portrait of her disappeared father, entitled "Mi primera foto con mi papá."

[15] Amongst the studies which offer such a reading we might note: Amado (2004), Battiti (2004), Genoud (2004), Blejmar (2008), Enríquez (2011) Longoni (2011[2009]), García (2011), Ros (2012), Larralde Armas (2013).

Arqueología de la ausencia in similar terms: namely, as reflecting a longing for the possibility of mourning a body which, even after a decade of a state-sanctioned politics of memory, can still only be reconstituted in the imagination:

> ¿Qué muestran [las fotos] hoy, en este presente saturado de pasado? (...) Como capas arqueológicas, Lucila acumula sobre su primera obra estos renovados intentos de encontrar a su padre. La filiación incluiría aquel trabajo paradójico de escarbar en la ausencia (…) ¿cómo era mi padre y dónde está? Junto a la actualidad de estas preguntas, detecto un principio de hastío que quizás sea el mío. (Pérez 2013)

Bearing in mind Pérez's despondency, it is worth noting that amongst the encounters depicted in the posed photos making up *Arqueología de la ausencia*, the staging of the encounter is so rudimentary that the notion of a 'being with' the lost parent is merely symbolic or at best oblique, and in fact, only a limited number of the images purposefully evoke an imagined performance of a celebratory family gathering; instead, the performances purposefully refrain from any attempt to conceal the fact that they simply consist of 'a being with' a cherished photo or family album. Even more suggestively, the performances are predicated upon the use of the body as medium or support through the projection of a photo-image or the page of an album directly onto the present-day remembering subject.[16]

In this latter case, Guardia Calvo's (2015) recent comparative study of Quieto's essay and Verónica Maggi's *El rescate* (2007), which involves the projection of archival images onto Maggi´s own body, underscores the fact that both photo-essays appeal to 'materiality' (the body) as an expression of a desire for the restitution of the referent in the sense that the virtual 'becomes flesh': "queda expuesta la voluntad de volver al referente: el cuerpo. En la performatividad de la expresión el cuerpo real sobre la proyección del haz de luz que construye la imagen fotográfica, se inscribe la necesidad de lo material" (2015: 5*)*. What we might also add is that in such images, the child's body thereby functions, not only as a site of embodied memory, but also as a physical medium which invokes the symbolic 'return' of an absent corporeal presence in a play of simulated 'body-doubling.'[17]

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[16] In the light of Hans Belting's (2011) anthropological distinction between (funerary) images and the media conveying them, we might suggest that, specifically in the case of this corporeal projection, the body becomes a *medium* for the image in such a way that memorial art-photography serves to reconfigure an earlier generation's having attached photographs of disappeared relatives onto their clothing or having hung portraits around their necks at demonstrations under authoritarian rule. In the former cases, the protestor's body became a walking "billboard" (Taylor 2002: 155) for asserting prior existence or even a substitute support for the continued existence of the absent relative within a social space from which they had been officially erased (Bystrom 2009).

[17] Maggi's *El rescate* (2007) essay is available at https://itinerariofotografico.wordpress.com/veronica-maggi/. A comparable example in *Arqueología de la ausencia*, can be found on page 16 of the exhibition catalogue at http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2013/03/f-lucila-quieto.pdf

Crucially, it is the use of archival, analogue family photographs as both photo-images and photo-objects in each of the imagined encounters which reinforces the evocation of materiality and corporeality.

In fact, *all* of the encounters performed in the essay, and not simply the ones which involve direct corporeal projection, are predicated upon a 're-framing' of one or more archival (family) photographs. If the frame "demarcates an aesthetic space" which thereby imbues the index with a "symbolic" quality (Doane 2007: 140), it does so, in the particular case of these invented encounters, by directing the viewer to both focus on the archival image as material trace of past presence and also on the child as a remembering subject who, through their own deictic gesture, affirms a fetishistic memorial relationship with that same archival image. Similarly, the emphasis on the photograph as photo-object and thus on its materiality, is often underscored by the fact that Quieto made no effort (as has often been noted) to obscure the worn edges, the scratched surfaces or even the scotch tape used to repair damaged and torn images. Indeed, it is this decay and degradation of the archival image which reinforces its material presence as an object with a 'life' and by extension with its own history. In retrospect, therefore, the re-contextualized *Arqueología de la ausencia* could be viewed as an example of how the analogue archival photo, associated with materiality, history and proof of past existence, reinforces its symbolic role as visual and material body substitute and thus, paradoxically, belies its role as a virtual support for the simulation of an event (the encounter) that never actually happened. In contrast to the "immateriality and timelessness" associated with digital image-making, the decayed, frayed and damaged archival images of Quieto's peers in H.I.J.O.S. attested, not only to the passing of time, but to the status of the photograph as an emissary from the past which both continued to assert past experience, while offering symbolic resistance to the continued reality of *no aparición* in the present.

Collages, Familia Quieto (2012-13)

The use of re-framed archival photographs as artistic substitutions for an absent body and hence a more primitive conception of the photograph also characterizes Quieto's use of multiple cropped family photographs in *Collages*, the second series from *Filiación*. The genesis of this particular section can be attributed primarily to Quieto's participation in a symbolic burial organized by artist Mariana Corral for her own disappeared militant father ("Entrevista", 2013). In 2011, following a consultation with 'psycho-magician', Cristóbal Jorodowsky, the son of renowned Chilean film-director and mystic Alejandro Jorodowsky, Mariana Corral had found an abandoned grave in the Bajo Flores cemetery, Buenos Aires, where

she might perform a cathartic mourning ritual in which hand-written letters by and photographs of her father both played a prominent role. In fact, the testimonial-novel based on Corral's search for information about her disappeared father, *Cómo enterrar a un padre desaparecido*, describes the culminating burial of a framed portrait of Manuel Javier Corral as an inversion of Quieto's previous gesture in *Arqueología de la ausencia* more than ten years earlier: "Mariana hacía el movimiento inverso: enterraba fotos parecidas a las que ella [Lucila] había devuelto a la luz" (Hacher 2012: 122).

Whether Corral's ritual should actually be regarded as an inversion of Quieto's in her first essay (that is, 'burial' as opposed to 'excavation/archaeology') or not, we should note that it is also impossible to avoid the similarity between the two: in both cases, the photograph facilitated mourning by offering a visual and material substitute presence. True to Jodorowsky's psycho-magical conception of images, and bearing in mind Belting's (2011) distinction between image and medium, therefore, in both cases the photo-image was treated as an indexical emanation of a disappeared father's very personhood, while the actual (physical) photograph, understood as a photo-*object* or material *medium* for that same image, served as a substitute for his bodily presence.[18] While, therefore, it has been argued that what distinguishes the photographic work of these artist-children of the disappeared from the symbolic use of photographs by, for example, the *Madres* and *Abuelas* in the 1970s and 1980s, is their dispensing with the denotative quality of the photo-image (García 2011: 104), Corral's photographic burial attested, nevertheless, to the persistence of apparently traditional conceptions of images and of more ancient ritualized performances.[19] Indeed, in response to Corral's burial ritual, Quieto herself had commented that, "Es la historia de los griegos y las lápidas: cuando los soldados se iban a combatir, los familiares ponían una piedra en el sitio por donde los habían visto irse. No se reconstituían los cuerpos, era un entierro simbólico" ("Entrevista," 2013).

On the other hand, there were certainly differences between Corral´s symbolic burial and Quieto's photographic mourning rituals, especially as manifested in *Collages*, the second series from *Filiación*: on the one hand, Quieto employed photographic collages to invoke the symbolic 'return' of physical remains which might be mourned, rather than literally burying a portrait in the ground as Corral had done; moreover, Quieto strove to create a visual testimony to the whole

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[18]   On   Jodorowsky´s   conception   of   images,   see: http://www.cristobaljodorowsky.com/psicomagia.html

[19] On ancient funereal uses of images as body substitutes, see Belting (2011: 84-90).

paternal side of her family—from her disappeared father and uncle to her own son—as a means, she claimed, for registering trans-generational family traits and thereby imagining how her father might look today (Ciollaro 2013).[20] Lacking her father's actual remains, then, and hence, the possibility of DNA testing, her art photography would serve as a compensatory visual proof of those traits and family likenesses linking her father to everyone else in the family. In that sense, we might recall Taylor's having drawn a parallel between DNA as a "biological archive" (2002: 155) marking the specificity of the individual's existence and the standard ID photograph, a human-made visual archive, "identifying strangers in relation to the State" (159). Quieto's own visual archive would thus suggest, at least superficially, the assertion of a forensic power traditionally attributed to the photograph in order to afford a symbolic re-insertion of her father (and uncle) into the genealogical narrative from which they had been prematurely removed.

Bearing this premise in mind, the promotional image (from *Collages*) for the whole *Filiación* exhibition can be viewed as iconic and indexical 'proof' of physical likeness between family members, while once again serving as a visual substitution for a missing presence which might be mourned (Figure 1). The image in question is an archival black and white school portrait of Quieto's father as a youngster which, given the inclusion of other images in the collages of Quieto herself as a schoolgirl and of her own son, functions as a chronological link of reminiscent features shared by three generations of Quietos. [21] On the other hand, the image is strikingly adorned and partially concealed by pressed leaves and flowers which hint at its concomitant funereal purpose. These elaborate additions to the image evoked

Figure 1

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[20] In this respect, it is worth noting the complete title of the collages as it appears in the exhibition catalogue: *Collages, Familia Quieto (2012-13). Búsqueda de parecidos físicos y gestuales, entre descendientes de una rama familiar atravesada por la tragedia de la desaparición, la rotura de lazos familiares. Un duelo pensado en imágenes y la reconstrucción de la familia que queda.*
[21] The catalogue cover image is reproduced here with kind permission from the Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti and the artist, Lucila Quieto.

the nineteenth and early twentieth popular tradition of 'vernacular photography', analysed by visual historian Geoffrey Batchen (2004), whereby the memorial potency of the photo-image might be enhanced, not only as a visual, but also a tactile experience. While Batchen argues that these creative embellishments served to emphasize the materiality of the photograph, to embody memory and to thereby equate the embodied image further with the absent body of the actual referent (2004: 76), it is also clear in Quieto's case that the creative additions, in the form of leaves and flowers, also symbolise a ritualised 'burial' of her father akin to the ritual performed by Corral.

However, whether appealing to the archival photograph as visual proof of genealogical continuity or a visual substitute for a lost presence, the most conspicuous aspect of Quieto's second series is the evocation of a *ruptured* 'family frame;' an uncanny, discomfiting family album in which the continuity that is longed for can only ever be invented –that is, it can only ever be a *familia armada.* For, in the first place, images from the past and present are not presented in a coherent chronological order, but juxtaposed anachronistically within a montage that approximates the workings of actual memory whereby past and present co-exist; clumsily cropped archival shots of her father and uncle, as children, adolescents and adults prior to their disappearance appear in the form of crude superimpositions, roughly attached with paper clips;[22] at other times, the grotesque distortion and amplification of facial features of family members on her father's side, again suggest an obsessive search for an affirmation of genetic continuity just as they reveal her attempts to imagine how her father might have appeared had he lived, through comparison with her surviving relatives.[23] However, the distortions cannot but also highlight a family frame that will always lack the supposedly normative gaze afforded by the standard family snapshot.[24]

This paradox is further emphasized by the parallel use of the archival image as a forensic trace which might affirm a family genealogy, only for that same forensic potential to be disavowed by the appositional placing of other images within a single collage. In particular, one collage both seeks to affirm and then disrupts the conventional family gaze across generations by offering a counterpoint

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[22] This particular image appears on pages 14-15 of the exhibition catalogue, available at: http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2013/03/f-lucila-quieto.pdf

[23] I am thinking here of the 'family portrait' of Quieto herself with three male relatives with unnaturally 'enlarged' faces, which can be accessed at: http://www.infojusnoticias.gov.ar/especiales/lucila-quieto-la-fotografa-de-la-ausencia-58.html

[24] On the hegemonic family gaze which manifests itself in family photography and thereby naturalizes the social construction of the conventional nuclear family unit, see Bourdieu (1990) and Hirsch (1997).

between a seated family portrait from the 1970s with a faded and worn family gathering portrait from more recent times. [25] Appealing to the long association of photography with death and the spectral, ostensibly as a means for reflecting the parallel association of the medium with mourning and remembrance, the oneiric scene from the 1970's depicts a group (including Quieto's father and mother) who stare back enigmatically at the camera from armchairs and sofa, apparently suspended in mid-air against a verdant background. Their ghostly countenances resulting from an over-exposed black and white print are further highlighted with the subsequent addition of colour to their clothing. If Quieto's father's features are nevertheless recognisable in this scene from a visualized realm 'beyond', and thus, the photo-image, once again, appeals to its deictic potential for confirming prior existence—a 'this has been' or 'this was once the present', the features of the figures in the family gathering portrayed in the second, more recent image, are barely discernible, as if it (the later print) had faded prematurely. Hence, while this second print might offer an indexical trace of the more recent past and hence, the family members of the present, it is in no way iconic and thus, paradoxically, disturbs the search for genealogical likeness between a 'spectral' father in the past and the family of the present. Overall, therefore, the mixed-media approach in *Collages* expresses a longing for material presence with a view to affirming genealogical continuity, while also symbolically 'burying' a restituted 'body.' Yet, at the same time, it also speaks to the ontological suspension inherent to (continued) disappearance, which renders the grieving of actual *material* remains impossible, and thus restricts the sought after 'proof' of genealogical continuity to the imagination.

Sitios de Memoria (2008-2012)

Alongside these family collages, Quieto included the third and final section of the exhibition, *Sitios de Memoria (2008-2012)*, a series of colour photographs depicting deserted interiors and exteriors of former detentions centres, concentration camps and the River Plate itself.[26] This series was inspired by Quieto's access to photographs documenting the machinations of state terror and its consequences when working with the visual archives of the Fototeca de la ARGRA (*Asociación de Reporteros Gráficos*), and the EAAF (*Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense*) ("Entrevista" 2013; Maximo, 2014). Moreover, Quieto's duties

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[25] This image can be viewed as image 10 in the slideshow available at: https://plus.google.com/+H%C3%A9ctorTiernoUy/posts/Yg24vjuXebt

[26] The full title included in the exhibition catalogue is *Sitios de Memoria, 2008-2012. Registro fotográfico de sitios que funcionaron como campos de concentración durante la última dictadura cívico-militar en Argentina.*

as a photographer for the Archivo Nacional during the 2000's had included that of providing visual documents of the former camps for trials and *in situ* inspections, while she also collected a number of other images from commemorative activities open to the public in which she had participated, most notably in the case of former camps such as La Perla and La Ribera, and hence, she had built up a significant personal and professional visual archive which might be incorporated into *Filiación* ("Entrevista," 2013). Beyond the use of visual metaphor to evoke collective absence, Quieto has also stated that her aim in including these documentary images as exhibition pieces was to underscore the present state of these places today, after they had been abandoned as camps and became sites of memory (Máximo, 2014). It is as if she implies that her goal was not to simply document the horrors of the past or even how the buildings functioned in the past, but to register how these spaces might function as receptacles of memory of that same past today, as haunted spaces where traces of past presences might still be detectable in some way.

By opting to approach the question of disappearance with images devoid of any human figures and focusing instead on spaces associated with state terror as a social phenomenon, Quieto followed the precedent set by other Argentinean art essays such as Paula Luttringer's *El lamento de los muros* (2000-2006), Helen Zout's *Huellas de Desapariciones* (2000-2006) and Inés Ulanovsky's *ESMA* (2008-2010).[27] We might recall, for instance, that Luttringer's inter-medial testimonial photo-essay conveys the sense of metaphorical scripts inscribed by time beneath the decayed surfaces of chiaroscuro walls and staircases in former detention centres, and thereby, a series of evocative material traces of the past. Ulanovsky's technically accomplished colour vignettes of a deserted *Casino de Oficiales* in the ESMA, meanwhile, attest to the sinister evocations and yet uncanny juxtaposition of banal everyday activities (the swimming pool, a laundry, a dentist's chair, etc.) of the military personnel and the liminal experience of those detained within the camp. In contrast, a number of Zout's images (which have included military airplane interiors, police cars, burial sites and the River Plate itself) are characterized by their often stylized lack of focus and hence, offer an impressionistic, oneiric and simultaneously, kinetic quality to the prints; while, therefore, dispensing of technical sharpness and often of iconic resemblance in such images, Zout affirms—once again—the primordial understanding of the photo-chemical print as a residual trace (*huella*) of a past presence.

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[27] Ulanovsky and Quieto worked together on various projects and with various national visual archives in the 2000s; there is hence a certain thematic overlap between Ulanovsky's *ESMA* and Quieto's *Sitios de Memoria*.

To varying degrees, Quieto's *Sitios de Memoria* incorporates technical elements and thematic aspects similar to those found in all three of these works. For, even though Quieto's interior and exterior shots of former detention centres do not replicate Zout's blurry impressionism or Luttringer's meticulous attention to 'inscribed' stone surfaces, her use of natural light and obscuring, enveloping shadow nevertheless also signals the symbiotic relationship between historical decay and the evocation of hidden residual material traces from the past: whether upon the surface of a feeding hatch in a cell door; the broken glass remaining in bricked up windows; the darkened cell containing a solitary and yet robust makeshift table (which also appears in Ulanovsky's series *ESMA*) whose immediate association can only be with torture; or, most strikingly, the corridor in the ESMA where the decaying walls are themselves disfigured by missing tiles, and the decrepit, uneven stone slabs of the floor are illuminated dimly by an ominous shaft of misty light issuing from an open door.[28] In this respect, Quieto herself has confirmed that hers was in fact a search for traces in such spaces of memory: "Volviendo a lo de los campos, ahí es posible observar y registrar los lugares por donde pasaron mi padre o mi tío. Entrar a un lugar (un espacio físico) que tiene el peso de los cuerpos que estuvieron ahí y registrar los rastros de lo que quedó" ("Entrevista," 2013).

Hence, by avoiding a facile 'representation' of figures or an identifiable narration of events and instead, adopting the posture of 'photographer–detective' (Sekula 1986; Benjamin 1999[1931]) in the present, Quieto sought visual 'clues' from the 'scene of the crime' in the past. By the same token, the viewers of these images of empty spaces, confronted by the aporia of present absences contained within them, are themselves also interpellated as visual detectives. Their task may be that of discerning, after Didi-Huberman (2003: 125), a "haunting memory" of the apparently "unspeakable" acts of abduction and torture revealed by a montage of visual fragments. Ultimately, by evoking quasi-tactile traces of past experience, these haunted spaces present an oblique allusion to the very *human* cost of state terror contained within those same traces. In that sense, therefore, the viewer is once again implored to adopt a more conventional, understanding of the photograph: for Quieto reverses the trend towards a discrediting of the photographic index and actually invokes the possibility of a residual visible presence in the images; a "tiny spark of contingency" or residual auratic glow from the past (Benjamin 1999: 510) which is revealed by the camera for the viewer of the future.

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[28] This image appears on page 10 of the exhibition catalogue, available at: http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2013/03/f-lucila-quieto.pdf

From an Ethics to a Politics of the Look

If the viewer of *Sitios de memoria* was thus encouraged to adopt a critical consciousness of disappearance as a socially-destructive phenomenon, a question which remains is how that same viewer was to respond to the *whole* exhibition critically, and indeed, by extension, other similar post-dictatorship photo-essays of the previous decade. For, the appeal of those essays devoted specifically to the family idiom, and in this specific case, the first two sections of *Filiación*, surely derives from the fact that archival images from private collections invite an affective or even sentimental identification on the part of the viewing public. When confronted by photographic mourning rituals such as Quieto's, we might wonder if it is even possible to defuse the traditional suspicion that family photography cannot but simply encourage the "collapse of the political [into the familial]" (Sekula 1981: 21) or, on the other hand, the suspicion that the "soothing rhetoric of healing" inherent to rituals of remembrance cannot but result in the "steady substitution of political argument"? (Buruma quoted in Hughes 2003: 41). Certainly, in the case of the original *Arqueología de la ausencia*, it was an apparently seductive, depoliticized familial identification, which actually led scholars to conclude, quite categorically, that the "work succeeds in creating an equality and an analogy between victims and viewers" (Gaunt 2011: 3). While reiterating that Quieto herself had actually dismissed any association with melancholic victimhood in the original essay, and, on the contrary, had primarily sought to assert the agency of H.I.J.O.S. as socio-political actors (Longoni 2011 [2009]: 5), it has nevertheless often been argued that familial (mis-)identification, projection or incorporation (of the observed subject) on the part of the viewer is an unavoidable response to such images (Boltanski *apud* Van Alphen 1999: 48; Olin 2002: 114-115). The visual event would hence appear to be ineluctably predicated upon the agency of the beholder and, by extension, to be understood as a cyclical process of internalization and projection of images whereby "it is not the medium but the spectator who engenders the image within his or her self" (Belting 2011:20).

If, in the case of post-conflict photography, this would hint at the possibility of an ethically-dubious 'colonisation' of 'alterity', it has also been proposed that familial identification actually proffers the contrary possibility of an *ethical* sense of intercultural solidarity with post-conflict subjects and that "recognising ourselves" in such images prevents the memory of suffering from disappearing (Cadava 2010: 133). Similarly, in the specific case of Argentine human rights visual politics, Diana Taylor (2002) has contended that international viewers of "performance protests" by families directly affected by state terror have a "part to play" in "the global drama of human rights violations" (2002: 166); meanwhile,

Andrea Noble (2008) has stressed that that same visual protest consists largely of "made for camera events," which are designed for international media distribution and thus allow for the co-ordination of "patterns of identification" whose "affective force lies precisely in the *convergence* of the familial and political" and that it is ultimately the familial idiom which holds "the potential to appeal to viewers across cultures" (2008: 54-55).

Bearing this premise in mind, it is worth pondering the significant influence of Kaja Silverman's (1996) theory of "heteropathic" memory which presupposes an ethically "productive" (Lacanian) *look* (as opposed to a hegemonic societal *gaze*) on the part of the spectator during instances of experiential transfer from the visual text. The key to this empathetic *look* is the possibility of the observed visual subject "destabilizing" or "displacing" the observing self, to the extent that the self would relinquish the predisposition for incorporating 'the other' into the self ("idiopathic identification") with a "devouring" visual mastery from a privileged "geometral point" (185). Once the viewer permits the identifications upon which their own subjectivity is predicated to be displaced, and their own memory bank to be inhabited by the other's memories (heteropathic identification), they become equipped, according to Silverman, with the possibility of "participat[ing] in the desires, struggles, and sufferings of the other, and to do so in a way which redounds to his or her, rather than to our own, 'credit'" (1996: 189).

Silverman's heteropathic recollection would offer the foundation for Marianne Hirsch's now seminal theory of "postmemory" or the mediated and creative memorial experience of a generation who grow up in an environment dominated by narratives and, crucially, *visual images*—usually associated with collective traumatic experiences—which belong to the past life experience of their parents and thus precede their own birth (Hirsch 1997: 22).[29] If this inheriting generation might thus use visual images—especially photography—imaginatively as a means for (an illusory) suturing (of) themselves into the narratives of the previous experience of their family members, Hirsch extrapolated that *any* viewer might identify with the (post-conflict) narratives and subject positions offered by *other* people's family photographs from previous generations (1997: 267). As far as Hirsch was concerned, therefore, this imaginary and yet, always *incomplete* identification with those portrayed in such photographs, allows the expansion of a wider "postmemorial circle" predicated upon a shared, ethical imperative to remember and to mourn human rights abuses of the past and present (ibid.).

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[29] On her debt to Silverman, see Hirsch (2012: 85-86).

Germane to both Silverman and Hirsch's work is Alison Landsberg's (2009) theory of "prosthetic memory" or the adoption on the part of the viewing subject of a memory of non-lived experience afforded by a range of mass media visual texts (especially cinema, but also TV, photography, the web). For Landsberg, the resulting *empathy* between viewing self and observed other afforded by mass visual culture has potentially dramatic and radical political implications in the sense that an ethical identification with 'the other,' especially those from post-conflict societies where traumatic still memories circulate, "enables the larger political project of advancing egalitarian social goals through a more radical form of democracy" (2009: 222). However, no specific explanation of how this would be achieved is offered except in the sense that such empathy allows for an intercultural consciousness of a "shared humanity" (228). In effect, Landsberg struggles to answer her own crucial query: "The question remains, though, of why it might be important to take on these traumatic memories of the past, and toward what ends the empathy such practices foster might serve" (228). Ultimately, the theory of prosthetic memory would appear to serve as a means whereby an ethics of identification might be reduced solely to a "loyalty to one another" (ibid.). Indeed, more generally, transcultural empathy or the very possibility of 'remembering' someone else's memories or being "wounded by their [traumatic] wounds" (Silverman 1996: 192) leaves much to be desired as far as the *international* viewer is concerned; principally in the sense that the question of how simply *looking* at post-conflict photography can allow the viewer to transcend a potentially paternalistic transcultural solidarity with 'the observed other' and instead to assume a more politically-consequential subject position, remains unresolved. In other words, how does *our* part in the "global drama" as posited by Taylor and the "co-ordination of patterns of identification" detected by Noble, actually extend beyond anything more than a vicarious sense of moral outrage?

In the specific case of *Filiación*, the juxtaposition of the figureless *Sitios de memoria* with overtly familial collages and hence the re-contextualization of a personal mourning ritual clearly signals Quieto´s own encouragement of the viewer to search beyond the immediate family frame and to traverse precisely an affective, but nevertheless, *ahistorical* familial identification. In other words, the inclusion of *Sitios de memoria* in the exhibition reinforces the notion that the dissemination of (invented) family photographs in essays like Quieto's can be viewed in terms of a passage from the private to the public realm which subsequently affords the transformation of personal biographies into social and historical "trajectories" (Masotta 2011: 2). This transformation, in its turn, allows individual faces to become an allegory of social trauma as the personal archive intervenes in the public

sphere (ibid.). Consequently, while the viewer of *Filiación* is immediately a secondary witness to Quieto's visual strategy for overcoming the personal loss of her relatives and, as we have stressed, the ritualized mourning of that same loss, it is also evident that her images invoke the very fact and act of 'forced disappearance' as a state-sanctioned, socially-destructive phenomenon in a given historical period. In that sense, Quieto's overarching gesture might be that of inviting the viewer to figuratively *see* a phenomenon intended precisely to be an event *without* witnesses and without being visually recorded. [30]

Furthermore, while acknowledging that, in the specific case of the first two sections of *Filiación*, the fabrication of memories and the reconstruction of a ruptured paternal family-tree is predicated upon the inventive or poetic capacity of the photo-image to convey a memorial experience "shot through with holes" (Raczymow and Astor 1994), we might reiterate that the constant in *all* three sections of *Filiación* is, nevertheless, also a continued appeal to the photograph as a material trace of the past. Beyond the immediate association with the symbolic reconstitution of an absent body to mourn, that same appeal to materiality dovetails with the notion of a contemporary nostalgia for an archival image which remains inextricably linked to historicity and thus, unlike a traumatic memory beset by blind-spots, appears to promise, once again after Doane (2007: 148), the "certitude of the imprint" and the possibility of accessing an identifiable past, however partially. Hence, if we once again turn to the Macri-Obama meeting in March 2016, and their avowed desire to choose historical *closure* over historical *consciousness*, we might propose, by extension, that the fragmented visualization of personal biographies, which characterizes much memory art photography, refutes that same closure by functioning simultaneously as a metonymic expression of a social history of state terror.

In this respect, it is worth recalling that philosopher Walter Benjamin chose the language of photography to inform his own theory of history, precisely because the "dialectic image" of the past irrupting into the present afforded by the photo-image also served as a figure for the "put[ting of] the brakes on" Marx's "locomotive of World History," and thus, a figure for a revolutionary immobilization of linear temporality (Cadava 1997: xx). In other words, photography (and especially photo-montage) held the potential for stirring the

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[30] I acknowledge García and Longoni's (2013) argument that the photographs of tortured prisoners taken in the ESMA prior to their deaths belie the notion that the act of 'disappearing' dissidents was never visually recorded. However, for my purposes here, the fact remains that abduction, torture and assassination were *intended* to be 'invisible' acts, even if it remains possible that incriminating visual evidence may eventually become available in the future.

viewer with a "politically-educated eye" (Benjamin 1999: 519) to re-historicize the present and thereby resist a commodity-induced obsolescence. Similarly, Quieto's tripartite exhibition of past presences may stimulate this "Medusa effect" (Cadava 1997: xx) or disruptive 'shock' for the viewer in the sense that the juxtaposition of 'performative' montage, collage and documentary images comprising *Filiación* foments a shift in the conceptual focus of the visual event: from an evocation of private 'acts' of partially fabricated memory recall in the present to that of an ensemble of archival traces evoking past socio-historical events. By extension, this presupposes a spectatorial shift from an 'ethics' of affective identification to an intellectual and cognitive engagement with the work; and, after Baer (2002: 84), from the role of "secondary witness" before a personal mourning ritual to that of a "seeker of knowledge" beyond the immediate 'family frame' of reference. Certainly, in this case, I want to suggest that for the *international* viewer in particular, the 'knowledge' that might be 'sought' among these allegorical visual fragments is none other than the wider Cold War history of the emergence and sustenance of the Latin American neo-fascist dictatorships of the 1970s. For there is no question that individual family histories of disappearance are embedded within a broader constellation of fundamental historical events which can be scrutinised so as to politicize individual stories as collective phenomena.

On the other hand, there is no doubt either that the inter-generational transmission of such events is also mediated, manipulated and even suppressed by the custodians of the historical archive. In that respect, it is worth noting that when alluding to US-Argentine relations during the dictatorship in his commemorative speech, Obama was at great pains to emphasize the Carter administration's discomfort with the Junta's glaring human rights violations and to focus on US attempts to rein in the excesses of their terror tactics between 1977-81 (Pertot 2016). In effect, Obama chose to deflect attention away from the broader post-1945 policy of violent intervention and interference in Latin American affairs: as is now well-known, state support for paramilitary death squads, extra-judicial assassinations, rigged elections and military coups in the region on the part of successive US administrations characterizes foreign policy for more than half a century. Indeed, we might simply ponder the fact that the phenomenon of the 'disappearance' of political dissidents itself can be traced back to 'Operación Limpieza', which was supervised by US special 'advisers' in Guatemala in 1966 (Grandin 2006: 96) and hence, actually preceded US support for the implementation of the devastating Operación Cóndor throughout South America in subsequent years. Similarly, there was also a certain irony that, during the meeting with Macri, Obama agreed to release a new batch of declassified documents

pertaining to the covert relationship between US intelligence and the dictatorship between 1976-83, which Argentine human rights groups had been requesting for several years.[31] For, by doing so, Obama was offering to release a previously suppressed historical archive in exchange for a symbolic *closure* of the 'difficult' past between the two countries, - that is, the exchange of suppressed memory for further official 'amnesia.' [32] Predictably, after the prompt release of the first batch of these documents in August 2016, obliging mainstream media outlets interpreted them as singling out Henry Kissinger (a perennially controversial figure and widely-despised as a war-criminal, anyway) as the lone culprit, rather than stressing wider U.S. support and complicity in disappearing 'subversives' during the same period (Goñi 2016).[33]

Having said that, there is no denying that the mainstream (Western) media has on occasion also offered the public a certain insight into a more generalized duplicity (as regards foreign policy) towards the last Argentine dictatorship on the part of the imperial powers of the northern hemisphere. As an emblematic example, I am thinking here of reports covering another instance of archival declassification, but this time pertaining specifically to Anglo-Argentine relations. On the 30th anniversary of the Malvinas/Falklands War in 2012, documents from the UK National Archive were uncovered which revealed that the Argentine dictatorship became massively-indebted to both Labour and Conservative governments through loans for arms sales from Britain during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most astoundingly, it would later be revealed that the arms sales were not halted until three days before the outbreak of war over the islands, while the debts incurred by Argentina were of such a magnitude that they contributed to the economic collapse of the country at the turn of the millennium. A significant sum was still owed to Britain in 2013 (Dearden 2012; Livingstone 2013).

Even when bearing in mind the *unethical* nature of these foreign policy initiatives adopted by both the UK and the USA towards the last Argentine dictatorship, we may nevertheless continue to engage the post-dictatorship memory art photography discussed here through the affective bonds offered by transcultural familial identification and heteropathic memory; yet, we would be justified in also striving to traverse this initial affective identification and in regarding it primarily as

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[31] The US State Department declassified such documents for the first time in 2002 (Pertot 2016).

[32] On the deceptive nature of the 'declassification' of such archives, see Jarpa (2014) in regard to post-dictatorship Chile.

[33] Goñi´s reading of the documents for *The Guardian* (2016) in terms of individual personalities and proclivities to 'good' or 'evil' at the expense of a consideration of the wider context of US complicity, also leads him, quite astonishingly, to portray arch Cold War strategist, Zbigniew Brzezinski as an altruistic human rights advocate.

a conduit to critical inquiry. Indeed, we might subsequently *look at* these photo-images as the bearers of material traces from the past which, much like declassified archival documents, signal the return of a repressed Cold War history to the social body (Jarpa 2014: 15). In that sense, the images offer clues to a transnational history and not only the fragmented memory traces of a distant alterity. As a result, we might very well "recognize ourselves" in them.

By extension, we might also ponder the continuities between the wider geopolitical manoeuvres of the Cold War upon which the emergence of authoritarian Latin American regimes was predicated and today's geopolitical crises. In doing so, we might be even more convinced that neither history nor photography ended in the 1990s. Instead, as Quieto reminds us, we might then realize that one of the most acutely *political* 'ends' of post-conflict memory art-photography was and continues to be that of stirring the viewer to a critical and reflexive engagement with her/his own h/History.

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