22. Cinema and Memory

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> It is possible that even when working from memory, I saw the world in
> movie terms, as who did not, or, indeed, who does not?
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> Gore Vidal[1]

The recent film *The Butterfly Effect* (Eric Bress and J. Mackye Gruber,
2004) tells the story of a young man, Evan, whose capacity to recover lost
memories goes further than most, for once his memories return, he learns
how to "jump into" the scenes of his past, traveling back in time to divert
fate and put right the wrongs of the past. But this "memory travel" turns
out to be doomed from the start. Only by killing himself at birth, Evan
discovers, can he change the past and save the girl he loves. In an early
scene, Evan is undergoing memory recovery therapy for blackouts and
memory loss. Under hypnosis, his psychiatrist encourages him to think
of his memory "like a movie. You can pause, rewind or slow down any
details you wish. Remember," his psychiatrist continues, "it's only a
movie. You're completely safe." This scene—and the film to which it
belongs—exemplify the cinema's current fascination with memory and,
in foregrounding the close ties between cinema and memory, draw on
themes that recur, both in films concerned with memory and in writings
on the cinema and memory. In counterposing the safety of cinema spec-
tatorship with memory's potential to disturb, and the relative permanence
of the photographic and cinematic image with the mind's tendency to
forget, this scene demonstrates cinema's simultaneous promise both to
enhance and to tame memory. In gesturing also to the cinema's capacity
to manipulate memory's often involuntary divergences from linear tem-
porality—a capacity now devolved down to spectators by the pause, re-
wind, and slow motion of video or DVD—*The Butterfly Effect* instantiates
the hope expressed in cinema/memory metaphors for some respite from

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memory's profound unbiddability. But if Evan's "memory travel" tropes the cinema's resemblance to and surpassing of "natural" memory, expressing a wish to change the past and overcome memory's caprices, then *The Butterfly Effect*'s dystopian conclusion suggests that this is a hope that may not be fulfillable by the cinema or its heirs. Nevertheless, the ties between cinema and memory run deep and continue to fascinate.

The cinema's long-standing and intimate relationship with memory is revealed in cinema language's adoption of terms associated with memory—the "flashback"[2] and the "fade," for instance—to describe cinematic dissolves between a film narrative's present and its past. The routinized deployment of these terms has rendered them unremarkable, suggesting an apparently automatic, involuntary, and mechanical relationship between cinema and memory. Theories of cinema's relation to memory have hinged, too, on metapsychological accounts of the cinema as a mechanical, technical, and ideological apparatus geared to the production of particular spectator positions[3] as well as on the involuntary and automatic aspects of both cinema spectatorship and memory. But the question of cinema's relation to memory remains open and has been theorized within three distinct paradigms. Memory has been conceived of by analogy with cinema, and in a reverse move, the cinema—and specific types of film—have been understood to be analogous with or even to *be* modes of memory. Third, and more recently, in theories of cinema/memory, the relations between cinema, film, and memory emerge as more porous and more deeply interpenetrating than is allowed for by the two preceding formulations.

Models of memory as cinema, cinema as memory and cinema/memory all elaborate differently nuanced understandings of cinema and of memory. The history of these metaphors does not illustrate a straightforward narrative of progress in the understanding of memory or of the cinema. Instead, they reveal both more and less than "the reflections of an age, a culture, an ambience" or "an intellectual climate."[4] For—particularly since the nineteenth century—at moments, the figuring of memory by media, including the cinema, and of the cinema by memory have become key sites within which to explore, map, and radically critique the changing relationship between the "inside" and the "outside," the personal and the social. Always at stake in discussions of the cinema's relation to memory is the question of memory's "transindividuality": the social and cultural, as well as the individual and personal aspects of memory, for cinema—along with television and digital and print media—has been central to the development of the concepts of cultural, social, and public memory. At stake, too, is the question of memory's relation to the history of media forms and technologies.

Memory as Cinema

Cinema was by no means the first medium to have informed understandings of memory, and neither has the metaphorical troping of memory confined itself to the media.

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Memory has been figured as wine cellar and dovecote, treasure chest and labyrinth.[5] However, the classical association of memory with the wax tablet in Plato's *Theaetetus* founded an enduring pattern of associations between memory and imprinting, memory and writing and, more recently, memory and the visual media, that continues to this day. Through such metaphors, philosophers and, more recently, psychologists have striven to understand the workings of memory.

The strength of memory's association with the visual media derives in part from broader para-optical models of thought, consciousness, and the mind[6] and in part from the often-noted visuality of memory. Though the association of memory with visual media has a longer history, it reached its zenith in associations between memory and nineteenth-century inventions such as the daguerreotype and then photography. As Douwe Draaisma explains, "photography's revolutionary new technique for preserving images" led to a plethora of photographic metaphors in papers on visual memory.[7] These associations between memory and the visual media extended beyond visual memory to encompass memory in general, their view of memory revealing a mechanist philosophy typical of the nineteenth century and expressed, too, in Freud's famous analogy between memory and the mystic writing pad.[8] In this essay, Freud drew on and developed the classical association between memory and writing on the wax tablet, while using the writing pad's "mystical" ability to retain *and* erase in order to figure the mind's mechanisms of perception, remembrance, and forgetting. Freud's emphasis, in this essay, on forgetting and remembering, inscription and erasure provides one example of an early "mediated" modeling of memory prefigurative of deconstructivist theories of subjectivity and writing.[9]

The invention of photography eclipsed the camera obscura's capacity to reflect moving images, encouraging the analogy between memory and still images. But the invention of the cinema opened the way once again for understandings of memory by analogy with the moving image.[10] Interestingly, however, such analogies have continued to emphasize the stillness of the images constitutive of film stock over the illusion of movement granted by the apparatus of projection. For instance, Henri Bergson's unfavorable comparison of the intellect with intuition compared intellectual thought to the cinema's mechanical animation of fragmented and isolated extractions of reality,[11] using cinema as what Amy Herzog has termed "a model for the forces of rationality that immobilize and fragment time."[12] In Bergson's formulation, the cinema may be mobilized to demonstrate how the intellect differs from memory, rather than as a metaphor for memory. Only with Deleuze's rereading of Bergson does the cinema become not a metaphor for either memory or the intellect but what Herzog describes as a practice with "the potential to create its own fluid movements and temporalities."[13]

Bergson's alignment of the cinema with rationality, rather than with intuition, foregrounds the apparatus of projection and the mechanical movement of film stock through the projector's lens. But when we turn to the cinema and to films that model themselves

on the workings of memory, then it is film's capacity to express memory's intuitive associ-ational links that emerges as one of multiple associations between cinema, film, and memory.

Cinema as Memory

Memory's metaphorical alignment with the still, as opposed to the moving, image is sustained even by films that model themselves on the workings of memory. In films such as Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959), art and avant-garde cinema's abiding fascination with memory expresses itself through relatively immobile camerawork, lengthy, photograph-like shots, and brief flashback sequences evocative of involuntary memory. Similarly, in Terence Davies's beautiful memory films[14] *Distant Voices Still Lives* (1988) and *The Long Day Closes* (1992), shots often resemble still photographs from a family album, the "logic" governing relations between such shots and scenes being closer to memory's poetic associations than to narrative cause and effect. These films' relations to memory complicate the distinction between form and style, flashbacks providing the formal means for the connection of the diegetic present with its remembered past while evoking the "feel" of memory's movements. So too, memory films such as Davies's com-plicate the relations between personal and social memory, underlining the fact that mem-ories are not simply "ours" by drawing from and mediating a cultural memory bank of cinematic images and sounds. Davies's memory films remember the past, in part, by means of aural cinematic quotation, alluding not just to a history the films purport to share with their spectators, but to a commonly-held memory-store constituted by the films of the past.

The permeability of the boundary between personal and social memory extends be-yond memory films intended for public exhibition to the domain of the home movie. Like images from the family album, home movies supplement, enhance or even supplant intimate memories of the personal and familial past, while drawing on film language learned as much at the cinema as at home. The transmission of memories stored in home movies depends, too, upon the capacity of their spectators to recognize those archived memories. With the loss of that social community of remembering,[15] home movies cease to provide documentary evidence for, or commemoration of, a remembered past, their protagonists becoming something like the anonymous ghosts of an unremembered past.[16]

Though avant-garde and art cinema and memory films constitute privileged locations for investigating cinema's relation to memory, those relations extend to almost every genre and every period of film history—shadowing, if not coinciding exactly with the history of the flashback.[17] Memory permeates the cinema's narratives, plots, and modes of narration, from mainstream entertainment cinema's subordination of the memory

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flashback to the exigencies of economical and coherent linear narration, to the fore-grounding of memory and its vicissitudes in recent mainstream U.S. entertainment films, including *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Michael Gondry, 2004), *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2001), and the Bourne trilogy: *The Bourne Identity* (Doug Liman, 2002), *The Bourne Supremacy* (Paul Greengrass, 2004), *The Bourne Ultimatum* (Paul Greengrass, 2007). The impossible memories of a murdered man motivate one of the most famous film-long flashbacks, in Billy Wilder's film noir *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), and the symptoms of traumatic memory, particularly as they had been discussed by psychoanalysis, provided the alibi for surrealist incursions within Alfred Hitchcock's *Marnie* (1964), as well as his earlier *Spellbound* (1945). Meanwhile, the very possibility of the cinematic "illusion" depends upon optical memory, as the fast flowing frames leave their imprints on the spectator's retina, masking each image's stillness and separation from the next—an aspect of cinema memory much exploited by experimental and avant-garde cinema.

If the extensiveness and complexity of cinema's relation to memory and of understandings of cinema as memory exceed the bounds of any short summary, it has been the cinema's capacity to discipline, enhance, supplement, or substitute for memory that has provoked deepest debate. Already in the 1930s, the perception of a "memory crisis"[18] had prompted the critical theorists Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin to consider photography's and cinema's relation to modernity's assault on the inner world of memory.[19] Unsurpassed in his grasp of cinema as both opportunity and loss, and facing head-on the erosion of memory's inner world by the shocks of modernity, Benjamin imagined the cinema's role in producing new modes of modern subjectivity capable of thinking—and thinking critically—under modern conditions. In an essay on Baudelaire, Benjamin described modernity's erosion of involuntary memory, and its supplanting of experience (once passed on through intimate modes of contact and storytelling) by modern modes of mediated information. But Benjamin did not reject the innovations introduced by cinema. Instead, he argued that:

> the techniques based on the use of the camera and of subsequent analogous mechanical devices extend the range of the *mémoire voluntaire*; by means of these devices they make it possible for an event at any time to be permanently recorded in terms of sound and sight. Thus they represent important achievements of a society in which practice is in decline.[20]

As well as providing a technological support for memory, Benjamin suggested, habituated exposure to the startling rush of cinematic images might enable spectators to withstand better the shocks of modern city life: "Technology," he wrote,

> has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle.[21]

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If, in this appraisal of cinema, Benjamin seems to align its technology with modernity's attack on memory, he had already seized on the potential of cinema's technological enhancement of vision to aid in the perception of "the necessities which rule our lives." Through devices such as slow motion and close-ups, the cinema projects images unavailable to consciousness, cinema becomes an optical unconscious with the potential to produce liberatory visions of modernity's spaces: "Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go travelling."[22] For Benjamin, the cinema becomes a technology for the advancement of (political) consciousness in the modern era of "post-memory." Impelled by his particular relationship with Marxism to find revolutionary potential in the present, Benjamin grasped technology's role in eroding tradition and memory, but he grasped, too, the cinema's potential to proffer alternative modes of consciousness in an age of ravished memory. As much contemporary feminist film criticism has shown, the full resonance of Benjamin's writings on cinema's relation to memory, time, and spectatorship remains to be revealed.[23]

Recent criticism—even where it acknowledges debts to Marxism, to Benjamin, and to the critical theory of the 1930s—fails to match either the subtlety of Benjamin's dialectical vision or its embrace of cinematic images, technologies, and temporalities. Instead, contemporary criticism, focusing, in the main on filmic representations of the past, has tended to adopt unadulteratedly positive or negative views of the cinema's relation to memory in modern and postmodern times. Much of this criticism is informed by a pervasive view that sees the contemporary moment—with its purportedly relentless focus on the present, its detachment from the past and from traditional modes of knowledge, and its information and media overload—as one in which the past can no longer be adequately grasped. On such accounts, older modes of memory, under the pressure of the contemporary "storm" of representations, live transmissions, and instant replay,[24] have given way to their mediated substitutes or supplements. For criticism inflected by a Marxist belief in the revolutionary necessity of grasping the dialectical relation between past and present, it is the lack of any truly historical consciousness that is seen to be (poorly) substituted for by the cinema's nostalgic "memories" of the past.

Though indebted to Benjamin, Fredric Jameson finds little progressive potential in the dubious pleasures of the nostalgia film. Jameson identifies two types of nostalgia film: those that recreate the look and feel of past times, for instance, *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974) or *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973), with their evocations of the 1930s and 1950s; and films that return to a past period by evoking the feel and shape of older media series or genres, for instance, in *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977), which reawakens a sense of the past by pastiching the style and look of the Saturday afternoon serial.[25] For Jameson, the nostalgia film's recycling of the look and feel of the past substitutes the pleasures of nostalgic memory for historical consciousness, or the capacity to know and understand the true relationship between the past and the present. Jameson's critique of the nostalgia

film disparages the pleasures of cinematic nostalgic memory—and of the cinema's role in constructing and transmitting "cultural memories" of, for instance, the look and feel of past decades, of the pleasures of Saturday afternoon serials. For Jameson, these pleasurable "memories" constitute poor or even debased substitutes for historical consciousness.

A similarly derogatory stance has inflected recent criticism of the "heritage film"—another category of film that has been constituted by film criticism as a mode of cinematic cultural memory. The heritage film, often adapted from well-known literary works—for instance, *Howards End* (James Ivory, 1992) and *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1985), both adapted from novels by E. M. Forster—and characterized by high production values and lavish, lovingly dwelt-on period detail (including location shooting at stately homes), has been criticized for its "artful and spectacular projection of an elite, conservative vision of the national past"[26] and for its pleasurable spectacle associated with nostalgia for a fantasized vision of a lost Englishness. In an argument reminiscent of Jameson's critique of the nostalgia film, Andrew Higson has suggested that even where the heritage film's narrative may offer an ironic, critical commentary on the national past—as with the adaptations of Forster—the power of its commentary is diminished by the film's fetishistic spectacle that commodifies its version of that past, turning it into a glossy surface to be pleasurably consumed.[27]

That what the heritage film articulates is cultural *memory* might be confirmed by noting its similarities with other modes of memory film—heritage films are "typically slow moving and episodic, avoiding the efficient and economic causal development of the classical film. The concern for character, place, atmosphere and milieu tends to be more pronounced than dramatic, goal-directed action."[28] But the politics of heritage cinema's versions of cultural memory remain in question. If the identification of "alternative heritage films," such as Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* (1999) or Terence Davies' trilogy (1976–83), set outside metropolitan centers and evoking working-class and regional cultural memories, leaves in place critiques of the mainstream heritage film as conservative spectacle, Raphael Samuel's defense of heritage offers a more nuanced approach to these mainstream films, suggesting that denigratory criticism of heritage may be at best misguided and at worst blinkered and elitist.[29] Critics of heritage accuse it, argues Samuel, of sanitizing the record of the past, while making it harmless and unthreatening in the present. "Heritage," says Samuel, "has had a very bad press, and it is widely accused of wanting to commodify the past, and turn it into tourist kitsch."[30] But, he goes on to suggest—in terms that might serve, also, as correctives to the absolutism of Jameson's critique of the nostalgia film—that historians too attempt to hold their readers' attention by drawing on "vivid detail and thick description to offer images far clearer than any reality could be."[31] Yet while history still claims to tell the "unvarnished truth," historians accuse heritage of passing off fabrication as the true picture of the past. Samuel emphasizes too, the "social condescension"[32] embedded in critiques of heritage, suggesting, for instance, that "literary snobbery comes into play: the belief that only books are serious."[33] Critiques of heritage

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may be influenced too, he goes on to suggest, by "a suspicion of the visual" that assumes that "artefacts, whether they appear as images on the television screen, or as 'living history' displays in the museums . . . are not only inferior to the written word but, being by their nature concerned with surface appearance only, irredeemably shallow."[34] To Samuel, the implication that such pleasures are almost by definition mindless, ought not to go unchallenged: "People don't simply 'consume' images," he concludes, "in the way, in which, say, they buy a bar of chocolate. As in any reading, they assimilate them as best they can to pre-existing images and narratives."[35] Here I want to stress the democratizing drive fuelling Samuel's proposals concerning the cultural and political elitism embedded in critiques of heritage culture and its pleasures, since this is a theme that has been taken up in discussions concerning the politics and pleasures of the contemporary history film.

A group of films released in the waning years of the last century, and taking as their subject events of recent U.S. history, for instance, Oliver Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *Platoon* (1986), *Nixon* (1995), and *JFK* (1991), and Robert Zemeckis's *Forrest Gump* (1994), have all been characterized by elliptical, fragmented narratives, a mix of fact and fiction, and an emphasis on the lives of ordinary people. These films have more frequently been discussed in the context of history than of memory, and it is within this context that they have been associated with processes of democratization. Vivian Sobchack has argued that, far from signaling the "end of history," today's highly mediated world, in which events and their representation come to occupy almost simultaneous moments, produces a new awareness of "one's comportment as an historical actor . . . a very real and consequential 'readiness' for history."[36] For Sobchack, this readiness for and democratization of history can be seen too in the contemporary history film's focus on ordinary people and its address to a media-savvy audience that well understands TV, film, and digital media's relations to "the happened." For Sobchack, the new historical consciousness, of which the contemporary history film forms a part, promises "a vibrant connection of present to past and a sense of agency in the shaping of human events" as well as "a more active and reflective historical subject."[37] But if films such as *JFK* and *Forrest Gump* have been treated as contemporary history films, their elliptical narratives and their mixing of fact and fiction have been associated also with traumatic memory, producing rather different understandings of these films' relation to memory, history, and audiences.

The idea of trauma cinema bears some relation to Benjamin's writings on cinema and modern experience—an experience that Benjamin associated with the overwhelming shocks to the human sensorium meted out by the noise, speed, and inhumanity of mass production and city life. Drawing on Freud, Benjamin argues that the warding off of these shocks by consciousness had the effect of protecting against their traumatic effect while diminishing memory, since, on Freud's account, "becoming conscious and leaving behind a memory trace are processes incompatible with each other within one and the same system."[38] As we have seen, for Benjamin, the cinema offered the potential to train human

consciousness in its attempts to ward off higher and higher levels of shock. More recently, Hayden White's seminal essay ''The Modernist Event'' described contemporary experience in terms that exceed those of Benjaminian shock. Laying stress on the impact of what he controversially terms ''holocaustal'' events, including the Holocaust itself, two world wars, and the great depression, White argued that the scale and complexity of these events confound humanity's sense-making capacities, functioning ''in the consciousness . . . exactly as infantile traumas are conceived to function in the psyche of neurotic individuals. . . . They cannot be simply forgotten . . . but neither can they be adequately remembered.''[39] In the case of relatively recent events—White cites, for example, the explosion of NASA's Challenger space shuttle in 1986—the sheer extent of, and manipulability of, their visual representations compounded these effects: ''All that the 'morphing' technology used to re-present the event provided was a sense of its evanescence. It appeared impossible to tell any single authoritative story about what really happened—which meant that one could tell any number of possible stories about it.''[40] White concludes that only the adequate representation of these events will loosen their traumatic hold, allowing them to be mourned and forgotten. Having cited Oliver Stone's controversial film *JFK*—a work that blurs the distinction between fact and fiction[41] and in which a catastrophic event ''intrude[s] on linear narrative and disturb[s] realist representation''[42]—White concludes that strategies such as these, indebted as they are to their modernist literary forebears, offer precisely this potential. On White's account, the incomprehensibility and ''unbelievability'' of traumatic events confound their integration into preexisting images and stories; hence trauma cannot be integrated into memory. But modernist trauma cinema, while refusing the fetishistic illusion of mastery of the event, ushers in the possibility of representing that which had hitherto confounded representation, allowing mourning, remembrance, and even, perhaps, forgetting.

Contemporary theories of trauma cinema continue that modern tradition within which the media—and cinema in particular—come to be understood as a substitute, supplement, or support for modern memory's atrophy, failure, or vicissitudes. In this new area of film theory, much remains to be thought through. White, joined by much of the writing that has informed theories of trauma and film to date,[43] proposes that it is the shocking nature of events that renders them inassimilable and that causes the symptoms associated with trauma's disturbance of normal memory. However, other psychoanalytic understandings of trauma focus on the interface between events and the preexisting psychical ''landscapes'' through which those events are mediated.[44] The latter approach would call on film theory to develop modes of analysis better able to engage with questions of the spectatorship of trauma films, including the range of spectator positions they make available and the diverse ways in which trauma films have been, or might be, read by different audiences. Though writings on heritage, nostalgia, and trauma films all approach cinema as a mode of memory, it is also noticeable that in discussions of trauma and film, and under the influence of a broader ethical turn within humanities scholarship, the

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question of how cinema might prove adequate to the remembrance and mourning of traumatic experiences has supplanted that focus on the politics of memory that drives much of the criticism of nostalgia and heritage films. That these approaches need not be regarded as incommensurate may have been demonstrated for us already in Benjamin's prefigurative writings.

Commentaries on trauma and film propose that trauma films have the potential to provide a cultural ''working through'' of traumatic memories—that they might enable some remembrance of events that, due to their shocking nature, have left only scars rather than memories. Though trauma theory—much of it produced in the U.S.—has yet to make this explicit, its focus falls, in the main, on events—the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam war, 9/11—that have occurred during the lifetimes of recent generations of U.S. film audiences. The theorization of cinema as substitute or supplement to memory reaches its zenith, however, with the introduction of the concept of prosthetic memory. Alison Landsberg has mobilized the concept of prosthetic memory to argue that the cinema has the capacity to implant memories of events unexperienced by audiences and previously unknown to them.[45] Theorists of cinema as prosthetic memory take as their starting point theories of early cinema as a cinema of attractions[46] and theories of cinema as an embodied experience,[47] work that posits cinema not as representation, but as an experience that fully and directly engages the body and its feelings or affects. Theories of cinema as prosthetic memory build too on cybertheory's accounts of technology's dissolving of the borders between humans and their electronic, digital, and media ''enhancements.''[48] Theories of cinema as prosthetic memory propose that the experience of spectating certain kinds of films is indistinguishable from lived experience and has the potential to create long-lasting ''memories'' with the capacity to remould identity.

That theories of ''prosthetic'' memory need not be related only to mass-mediated experiences has been demonstrated by the philosopher Bernard Stiegler, whose writings on technics ought not to be confused with theories only of film and prosthetic memory, since, as Ben Roberts explains, for Stiegler, human history in its entirety has occurred ''in the realm of . . . technical evolution . . . in which it is impossible to separate the living being from its external prosthetic technical support.''[49] Though Stiegler views the emergence of cinema as marking ''a distinctive shift in the history''[50] of memory's exteriorization, on Stiegler's account, ''cinema simply partakes in the history of mnemotechnics or the 'exteriorization of memory' from primitive tools through writing to analogue and digital recording.''[51] For Stiegler, then, the industrialization of memory consequent upon the invention of cinema and other mass media ''is not a transformation in the relationship between technology and culture or between technology and the individual imagination but a transformation in the technology of memory itself.''[52] For theorists of film and prosthetic memory, on the other hand, the cinema's capacity to transmit memories comes to be understood precisely in relation to a potentially revolutionary transformation of

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culture and of the individual imagination. Once posited, this transformation has been welcomed and greeted with trepidation. While acknowledging that memories may always have been "prosthetic," Landsberg's somewhat utopian vision builds on the ways in which cinema audiences may feel emotionally "possessed" by a character long after a film has ended, proposing that this might enable a new, enduring, and politically progressive capacity to identify across social differences, including those of ethnicity and class. In problematizing oppositions between authentic and false memories, and between real and virtual experience, theories of cinema and prosthetic memory usher in a world in which prosthetic memories can enhance understanding of others, building empathic alliances across difference. But the implantation of memory by cinema is a scenario that may lend itself to darker interpretation. Writing uncharacteristically polemically of the impact of certain films upon popular memory, Michel Foucault proposed that cinema constituted one of "a whole number of apparatuses . . . set up . . . to obstruct the flow of this popular memory." "Today," he continued,

> cheap books aren't enough. There are much more effective means like television and the cinema. And I believe that this was one way of reprogramming popular memory, which existed but had no way of expressing itself. So people are shown not what they were, but what they must remember having been.[53]

In terms reminiscent of the Frankfurt School's warnings concerning the mass media, Foucault proposes here that the cinema as agent of the ruling powers might overlay popular memories with false ones. In Robert Burgoyne's similarly dystopian vision, the film *Forrest Gump* is understood to reprogram memory "in such a way that the political and social ruptures of the sixties can be reclaimed as sites of national identification."[54] Whether viewed with optimism or fear, theories of cinematic prosthetic memory promulgate the view that cinema can implant memories of the unexperienced, or reprogram existing memories. These theories imbue the cinema with remarkable powers without offering full explanations of the processes by which cinematic prosthetic memories come to be integrated into the memories of spectators. Prosthetic memory models the cinema–memory relation as one in which cinema implants memories into passive spectators, but this takes no account of the spectator's negotiation of images. The assumption by theories of cinematic prosthetic memory of an equivalence between spectating a cinematic experience and living through an experience dissolves the distinction between representation and event. By adopting this perspective and by imbuing the cinema with immense powers to transform identity by transforming memory, theories of prosthetic memory forget film theory's earlier theorizations of cinema spectatorship and of the complex interplay between text and spectator. In short, by proposing that memories originating in film make their way seamlessly into the minds of spectators, theories of cinematic prosthetic memory offer a one-way account of prosthetic memory.

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But there is an approach to the cinema and memory that weds a complex understanding of the spectatorship of films, and of the *inner* worlds into which films become integrated, to a full analysis of films and their complex webs of meaning, allusion, and affect. Analyses of cinema/memory demonstrate that what we take to be personal memories are informed by cinema images. But the ways that these images are remembered and become woven into the texture of identity/memory is as much a question of the history of individual subjects as it is a question of films themselves. In theories of cinema/memory, one-way theorizations that conceive of cinema as that which programs, substitutes for, or supplements memory become transformed into a fully two-way exchange.

Cinema/Memory

So far we have seen that memory has been conceived of by recourse to the cinema and that the cinema has been conceived of as a mode of memory. But more recently, film theorists have begun to conceive of the cinema/memory relation in new ways. Theorists such as Annette Kuhn and Victor Burgin have explored the transitional or hybrid world of what I'm calling "cinema/memory." This is a world constituted of images, sequences, and their associated affects. Situated within the mind, yet positioned between the personal and the cultural, cinema/memory melds images remembered from the cinema with the inner world's constitutive "scenes" or scenarios. Such recent accounts of the cinema–memory relation do not merely mobilize conceptions of memory and its processes in order to deepen our understanding of the cinema, nor do they simply illuminate memory by recourse to understandings of the cinema. In place of formulations that give primacy to the cinema or to memory, what emerges is a liminal conception of cinema/memory, where the boundaries between memory and cinema are dissolved in favor of a view of their mutuality and inseparability. By exploring the world of cinema/memory, this strand of film theory dissolves conceptual boundaries between the inside and the outside, the personal and the social, the individual and the cultural, and the true and the false. Burgin's and Kuhn's explorations both take the form of what Kuhn has elsewhere called "memory work"—a practice that uses critical analysis of one's own memories to produce deeper understandings of identity's complex relation to culture and the media.[55]

Investigations of cinema/memory seek answers to the question, "What binds together images and sounds in personal memory with images and sounds in collective memory?"[56] The explorations advanced by Burgin and Kuhn of cinema/memory are differently nuanced and follow different paths. Though their investigations move in opposite directions—remembered film images forming a prompt for Burgin's journey and an ending of sorts to Kuhn's voyage through her own reveries—both suggest that the process that binds together the personal and the collective constitutes the inner world's psychical mediation of cinema.

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Burgin's quest to understand the compelling nature of certain remembered film images uses psychoanalysis to explore a chain of associations that lead from the affects aroused by those remembered images back to his earliest psychical fantasies. For Burgin, then, these remembered film images constitute "screen memories" (as Freud had called them)[57]—memories "that come . . . to mind in place of, and in order to conceal, an associated but repressed memory."[58] Noting that sociologists have found "an almost universal tendency for personal history to be mixed with recollections of scenes from films and other media productions,"[59] and drawing on the psychoanalytic ideas of D. W. Winnicott[60] and his own self-analysis, Burgin concludes that the inner landscape within which fantasies are bound together with scenes and images spectated at the cinema constitutes the "*location of cultural experience.*"[61] Explorations of cinema/memory such as Burgin's reveal the processes binding inner and outer worlds, "experience" and "culture." But in place of the overtly public-political perspectives that have driven critiques of nostalgia films or heritage films, for example, explorations of cinema/memory offer "micro" portraits of culture's most intimate locations. Burgin himself expresses some unease about his own shift from film theory's "study of the ways in which films . . . contribute to the formation, perpetuation and dissemination of dominant systems of commonly held beliefs and values" to the study of "whatever irreducibly subjective meanings an image might have for this or that individual."[62] Responding to his own unease, Burgin concludes by proposing that what he finds at the end of his own analysis has a universal resonance: "the *mise-en-scène* of a riddle we must all answer at one point or another . . . : the enigma of sexual difference."[63]

But perhaps analyses of cinema/memory can and do move beyond the apparent universalism and ahistoricism of Burgin's conclusion, for in her analyses of her own daytime reveries and their associations with certain film images, Kuhn reveals cinema/memory's binding of individuals with a national imaginary and with place. This binding turns out to be very much a two-way affair. Beginning with her own daytime reveries while walking through London streets, Kuhn traces certain of her reverie-images back to two films—Humphrey Jennings and Stuart McAllister's moving wartime documentary *Listen to Britain* (1942), and Derek Jarman's powerful and angry attack on the ravages wrought by Thatcherite politics upon Britain, *The Last of England* (1988). Kuhn notes that both these films make "shorthand allusion to the mythopoesis of a particular national imaginary."[64] The attunement of these films' aesthetics and sensibility to those of memory's inner worlds suggests, perhaps, that their evocations of memory may render them particularly assimilable with reverie's inner landscapes. Kuhn's central exploration, or "memory work" demonstrates how her own daydream images or "reveries" allude to yet transform images from remembered films. Kuhn reveals how, by means of psychical processes of condensation and displacement, images from these two films become integrated, in modified form, with those "scenes" that constitute our inner worlds. Kuhn demonstrates, for instance, how, under the sway of fantasies including Freud's "family romance"[65] and

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"primal scene fantasy,"[66] she produces reveries that are intimately associated with these remembered films:

> What my two stories have in common above all is that in both I am placing myself firmly in the centre of the frame. . . . It is not difficult to grasp the desire behind the *Listen to Britain* reverie, which is very much a primal scene fantasy. Part of its intense pleasure must surely lie in its affirmation that I belong in this place where I am standing, that this place belongs to me and, above all, that my attachment to it reaches back to a time before I was born. . . . In my fantasy, I cast myself as a witness of, and participant in, a moment when the most ordinary of activities . . . become imbued with an aura of transcendence. . . . My reverie then combines a primal fantasy with a host of other fascinations (with the recent past, with recent war, with a family romance); and sets these into imaginings in which a sense of place, a sense of belonging to a place, are central.[67]

This exploration of cinema/memory as "cultural experience" illuminates the intimate and "micro" processes through which subjectivity binds itself with culture, place, and nation, while noting also how these processes may be prompted or facilitated by films that share in the aesthetics, languages, and textures of memory.

Future Directions

Explorations of cinema/memory such as Kuhn's[68] produce intimate and forensic accounts of certain common yet unique processes by which cinema images become bound with, and are remembered through, scenes already constitutive of the inner world. Research in the area of what I've called cinema/memory unpicks a particular set of relations between cinema, memory, and spectatorship, revealing both the usefulness and the limitations of terms such as "personal" and "public" memory. Though Burgin expressed concern that his research on cinema/memory focused only on "irreducibly subjective meanings,"[69] cinema/memories prove to be composites and condensations, belonging wholly neither to the public world of the cinema nor to the personal and interior realm of fantasy. In this sense, cinema/memory, with its binding together of images assimilated from cinema with the psyche's currency of "scenes," serves to highlight the fact that memory is *never* straightforwardly or irreducibly subjective. At the same time, cinema/memory research reveals the limitations of studies of memory cinema, including heritage, nostalgia, and trauma films, for such largely text-based analyses tell only part of the story, lacking the capacity to reveal fully how such films might mesh with and be assimilated with the intricacies of psychical scenes and preexisting images. But telling part of the story is not without value, particularly where we can hold in mind that the story we are telling *is* only

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part of a more complex picture in need of further exploration. In that spirit, I want to end this chapter by returning from cinema/memory's micro-focus on exchanges between the psychical and the public to questions more easily recognizable, perhaps, as those of the politics of memory and the cinema.

As we have seen, Kuhn's journey through cinema/memory led her to two films—Jennings and McAllister's *Listen to Britain* and Jarman's *The Last of England*—both of which allude, Kuhn notes, to "the mythopoesis of a particular national imaginary."[70] These two films evoke, however, very differently nuanced versions of nation. *Listen to Britain* constructs national life—evoked through soundscapes, in particular—as enduring under enemy fire, while *The Last of England* comprises a welter of scenes of terrible devastation and violence wrought by the nation—and one government in particular—on parts of itself. In their essay on cognition and memory in this volume, John Sutton, Celia Harris and Amanda Barnier argue that the interpersonal dimensions of memory's emergence support social practices, including promising and forgiving, and complex emotions, including grief, love, and regret. I'd like to take up that insight, extending its reach from the developmental and the familial to the field of culture and cinema, in order to suggest some areas for future research. Taking its lead from the directions followed by memory research in the humanities more generally, much of the research on cinema as memory that has emerged since the 1990s has focused particularly on cinema's relation to national catastrophe, victimhood and trauma, leaving unexplored cinema's relation to a fuller range of memory's interpersonal and public dimensions and the social practices that these might facilitate, support, or inhibit. If *Listen to Britain* might lend itself to analysis in the context of national suffering and trauma, *The Last of England*, while associated also with the devastation of aspects of England, evokes national memory to quite different effect, for this is a film that mourns losses associated with *self-inflicted* violence, in the form of the damage wreaked by Thatcherism upon its own nation. Staying with this theme of intra-national violence, I want to conclude this chapter with some thoughts about the role of cinema in the public remembrance of such violence. How exactly *does* the cinema "remember" such a past?

These are questions that can be answered only in the specific and in the local. *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (Philip Noyce, 2002) evoked the great disturbances and sorrows caused by the forced removal of thousands of Aboriginal children from their families by the Australian authorities between 1900 and 1970. Told through the true story of three sisters who escaped from the state home in which they had been placed, traveling over two thousand miles along the titular fence back to their own country, the film brought "this epic journey to public attention."[71] "Prompted by and respond[ing] to *Bringing Them Home* (1997), the controversial national inquiry"[72] into what became known as the "stolen generations," *Rabbit-Proof Fence*'s mainstream popularity made it a huge success at the Australian box office.[73] The success of this film elicits all manner of questions—about how, exactly, films can be said to "recover" such memories, about their address to spectators, about how

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such films are viewed by specific audiences, and about the role of such films in the broader public and political negotiation of the past and construction of the future.

As Felicity Collins and Therese Davis explain, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*'s generic hybridity—its complex melding of familiar Hollywood and Australian cultural and cinematic genres, plots, and narratives—arguably contributed greatly to the film's resonance for, and its capacity to move, its Australian audience. Collins and Davis identify *Rabbit-Proof Fence*'s mixing of elements of Hollywood genres, including the maternal melodrama, the adventure and the chase film, the romance-quest, and the political-historical drama. These elements, they go on to show, are orchestrated with the Australian theme of the "lost child"—"a recurrent theme in the Australian cultural tradition."[74] This is a theme, Collins and Davis explain, that has traditionally spoken to European settler anxieties associated with life in an unknown land far from home. But, Collins and Davis propose, the settler "lost child" theme may also have allowed for some recognition—though only on settler culture's terms—of the history of child separation, so that "at some level of the Australian social imaginary, 'the Aborigine' may still be seen as *the* 'lost child.'"[75] Yet in *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, Collins and Davis conclude, the "lost child" theme is made to speak otherwise than of an infantilized, landless people: it is embodied in "the image of Molly emerging from the desert, both as a child and later as a grown woman . . . demanding recognition of Aboriginal people as being *at home* in their country."[76]

Collins and Davis's analysis of *Rabbit-Proof Fence* suggests that it would not be quite accurate to propose simply that the separation of Aboriginal children from their mothers constituted an aspect of the past that, until the release of the *Bringing Them Home* report, settler Australia had preferred, on the whole, to forget—a history whose telling was "long overdue."[77] Instead, what emerges is that the motif of the lost child had already provided one problematic way of remembering that past—a way of remembering that was arguably revised by *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. What is at stake here, then, is how images become articulated with preexisting images and narratives, the resonances of which—as we have seen above—remain to some degree open. The terms upon which the renegotiation of elements of the social imaginary—the revising of memory—takes place are, however, immensely complex. I have drawn on Collins and Davis's analysis of *Rabbit-Proof Fence* in order to demonstrate how film theory has explored the cinema's specific role in the rearticulation of cultural memory in the public sphere. As we have seen, this rearticulation is orchestrated through form, genre, narrative, address, and plot. Of import too are the relations *between* the institutions and authorities of the public sphere—which extend, in the case of the renegotiation of these Australian memories, as Collins and Davis show, to the spheres of the state and to the institutions of public opinion, as well as to the cinema.

But also important is the historico-political moment, which provides the germinating soil, so to speak, from which films, and other cultural forms grow. *Rabbit-Proof Fence* emerged after the Australian High Court's 1992 *Mabo* decision, which recognized the property rights of Australia's Indigenous peoples, and in the wake of the *Bringing Them*

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Home report, but before the new Australian Labor Party Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, delivered a historic speech, ''Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples,'' at Parliament House, Canberra, on February 13, 2008.[78] While the report, the *Mabo* decision, the film, and the speech have all played their part in the renegotiation of national memory in the public sphere, the precise articulations between these very different sites remain to be explored. Earlier, I made reference to Sutton, Harris, and Barnier's proposal in this volume that complex emotions and social practices are supported by memory's interpersonal dimensions. This proposal might be extended to embrace memory's national, political, and cultural dimensions, including, for our present purposes, the cinema and specific films. Films such as *Rabbit-Proof Fence may* play a part in supporting revisions of interpersonal memory linked to grief and regret and producing specific social practices—in this case, new recognitions of the rights of Indigenous people, an apology speech, and changes in government policy. But this suggestion remains highly speculative, for research on cinema and memory has yet to—and would perhaps be hard pressed to—develop methodologies and projects that might fully test that hypothesis.

I have chosen to end this discussion of cinema and memory by shifting perspective from the intimate terrain of cinema/memory toward larger questions of the cinema's role in the revision of a nation's cultural memory. But in making this shift I have spoken in the singular, of a political and historical moment, of a national cultural imaginary, and of cultural memory. Yet, as my discussion of cinema/memory has already shown, those singular terms screen as much as they reveal. Though films and their constituent scenes may articulate with commonly recurring psychical fantasies including the family romance and the primal scene, as well as with more culturally and nationally nuanced themes such as that of the ''lost child,'' those articulations take place on terrain differentiated by individual and cultural histories. But as I hope I've also indicated, I don't think this should lead film or cultural theory to abandon its quests to map the relations between politics, culture, and memory—though it should encourage us to temper our findings with an awareness of the diversity of the terrain we attempt to map and the need to research as closely to the ground as possible.

This chapter has surveyed the field of cinema and memory research to date, but there is much ground still to cover, from the field of global media relations to the intimate terrain of spectators and their psychical and affective relations to the cinema as memory. The cinema is but one aspect of an ''intermedial'' field of cultural memory that extends to literature, photography, television, digital media, and beyond, articulating with public discourses and domains of many kinds, as well as becoming assimilated within the hybrid scenes of our inner worlds. Research has yet to focus fully on the articulation of memory *across* media—on how memory ''travels,'' as it were, between different media, as well as across and between diverse public institutions and sites. Future research might focus too on the ways in which cinema memory travels across and between nations, asking how the

consuming national memories evoked, revised, and negotiated by films such as *Rabbit-Proof Fence* or *The Last of England* might be consumed differently across national divides, as well as by different audiences within any single nation. Questions of cinema memory's journeys across spatial and national borders connect too with issues of time—with the question, that is, of how cinema memories travel across time and between one historical moment and the next. Meanwhile, studies of cinema/memory such as those discussed in this chapter have transformed understandings of the relations between our inner worlds and our media experiences, so that spaces once imagined as separated—albeit by a porous membrane—now emerge as transitional space. But how these insights might be brought to bear on broader questions of the politics of cinema memory in the public, cultural, and national spheres and vice versa? These are the questions that remain very much open to future study.