

“HOW DOES ONE REMEMBER THIRST?”: PHALLIC AND MATRIXIAL
MEMORY IN CHRIS MARKER’S *LA JETÉE* AND *SANS SOLEIL*

by

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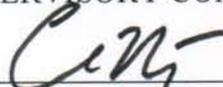
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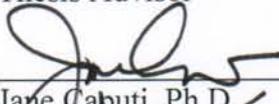
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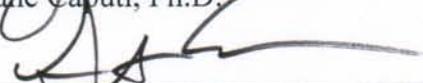
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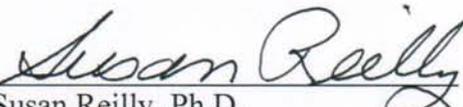
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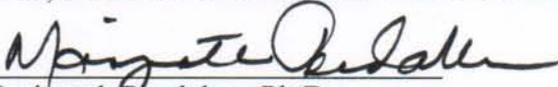
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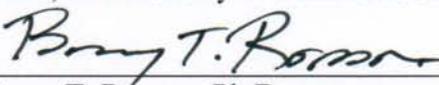
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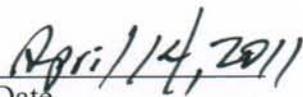
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ABSTRACT

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This thesis problematizes the notion of memory as a non-gendered mechanism by examining the construction of memory and subjectivity in Chris Marker’s *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*. Using the theoretical frameworks of Jacques Lacan, Bracha Ettinger, and André Bazin, the paper argues that *La jetée* presents a model of phallic memory corresponding to a Lacan’s understanding of desire and subjectivity, while *Sans soleil* offers a model of matrixial memory based on Ettinger’s theorization of the gaze. Bazin’s work is used to address aesthetic issues, as well as providing a method for exploring how the phallic and matrixial frameworks impact the formal construction of the films. Ultimately, *La jetée*’s model of phallic memory is shown to sever past from present in a manner corresponding to Lacanian notions of desire, castration, and loss, whereas *Sans soleil* demonstrates the potential of matrixial memory to establish a liminal relationship between past and present.

DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to the events unremembered but not forgotten, the spaces between words, and those things that cannot be named.

“HOW DOES ONE REMEMBER THIRST?”: PHALLIC AND MATRIXIAL
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I: CHRIS MARKER, JACQUES LACAN, AND BRACHA ETTINGER

Introduction

Some years ago, I found myself at a party discussing memory with a colleague, and at some point he asked if I was familiar with a filmmaker named Chris Marker. I responded in the negative, and took out a pen to jot down the name of two films: *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*. This work is a result of that encounter, and yet, in attempting to reconstruct the path that led me to my present understanding of the films and the memories they present, I find myself sorely unable to recollect precisely how I got here. The other details of that night's conversation have long since slipped from memory, and the scrap of paper upon which these names were written has likewise been consigned to the oblivion of the past. This story illustrates the central paradox of memory: the undeniable insufficiency of its functioning juxtaposed with the subject's unavoidable dependence upon the act of remembering. Memory is thus forever connecting us to the past, providing a sense of stability derived from the perceived consistency of self, but only at the expense of separation, a severing of time into past and present, and a persistent reminder that maintaining a consistency of self requires facing the impossibility of a constant self. The present moment is therefore experienced both as an island stranded in the ocean of time, and as a peninsula tethered back to the continent of moments that came before.

These contradictions lay at the heart of *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*, which serve meditations on memory and provide useful points of entry into the evolution of Marker's thought regarding the purpose and meaning of remembering. The goal of this endeavor is to present a clearer understanding of the contrary, yet complementary models of memory presented in each, through an interrogation of the films' formal elements and narrative structures. I will examine how the texts posit alternative subject positions, and, in doing so, construct divergent models of memory that correspond to two different theories of the gaze: the phallic as articulated by Jacques Lacan, and the matrixial as theorized by Bracha Ettinger, who builds upon the notion of originary feminine difference and prenatal experience rather than the Lacanian model of loss and castration.¹

Through my analyses of the films, I will extend existing scholarship that, while recognizing both gaze and memory as central elements of Marker's work, fails to articulate the relationship between them. Furthermore, although memory is treated as unproblematic with regard to sexual difference in these accounts, one of the primary insights of feminist film theory has been to uncover the facile assumptions beneath the 'apparent' gender neutrality of basic cognitive processes. Memory is one such area, dependent not on the gender of the individual who remembers, but rather upon how one models the functioning of the gaze. My ultimate goal is therefore to undermine the notion of memory as a non-gendered mechanism and offer complementary models that arise from, and correspond to, the phallic and matrixial gazes. I will show how phallic memory relies upon an unbridgeable schism between past and present, resulting in a traumatized subject who is alienated from the historical circumstances from which he arose. Conversely, matrixial memory will demonstrate the interdependence of past and

present, and envision a subject who responds to the trauma of time by recognizing the liminality of self and its inextricability from history. I argue that, by adopting memory as both the topic and form of discourse, *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* reveal that the functioning of memory can be understood as an explicitly gendered process, corresponding to the castrative logic of the phallic gaze in the case of the former, and the metamorphic logic of the matrixial gaze in the case of the latter. A recent and under-utilized contribution to film studies, the matrixial gaze provides a theoretical framework for approaching films such as *Sans soleil*, which are concerned with liminality and problematize the notion of an uncrossable gap between self and other. Through the following discussions of these ideas, this paper will not only help to address the dearth of matrixial analyses in film studies, but also lay the groundwork for future research by positing the narratives of *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* as models of phallic and matrixial remembering.

In this chapter, I will first examine the phallic and matrixial gazes as articulated by Lacan and Ettinger, followed by a review of English language scholarship on *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*. The second chapter will begin with a discussion of André Bazin and Philip Rosen, which will provide a theoretical understanding of the relationship between the image and the pro-filmic reality as well as emphasize the interrelated relationship between form, aesthetics and subjectivity. This area is inadequately addressed by either Lacan's or Ettinger's theory of the gaze, and will be essential to clarifying how phallic and matrixial memory affect the subject's understanding of history and his or her relationship to it. The rest of the second chapter will be devoted to a relatively brief analysis of *La jetée*, which has been admirably and exhaustively theorized by previous scholars. The third chapter will provide a reading of *Sans soleil* and argue that matrixial

memory holds the potential to become a creative force, allowing for a meaningful encounter with the Other and conceiving of history as an open-ended process rather than simply a method of inscribing the past. In both analyses, attention will be drawn to the films' social and historical contexts, but given that three book-length examinations of Chris Marker have been released in the past six years, my focus will be to work through theoretical questions regarding how the films' representations of memory elucidate its underlying gender.² By offering close readings of the texts, I will illustrate how the respective gazes of Lacan and Ettinger give rise to complementary understandings of phallic and matrixial memory.

Theoretical Background

Jacques Lacan's most notable contributions, as they relate to film theory, are found in his essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," which puts forth a theory of ego formation, and his *Seminar XI*, which builds upon this work to provide a theory of subjectivity and gaze. Within these works one finds explanations, albeit not always unambiguous, of numerous ideas that have become central to psychoanalytic film theory. Given the familiarity of these terms to film scholars, it is not my intention to provide a complete treatise on Lacanian thought, but to provide an overview of key concepts that preface my discussion of Bracha Ettinger.

In his early writing, Lacan conceives of the mirror stage as a biologically determined developmental stage, occurring between the ages of six and eighteen months, in which the child is "still trapped in [its] motor impotence and nursling dependence," but is nonetheless able to perceive its image in the mirror as being its own.³ Seeing this

image, the child undergoes a constitutive split in which “the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, prior to being objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it... its function as a subject.”⁴ The emergence of the “primordial” ego thus functions as division within the individual that predates an encounter with the other (i.e. the child has not yet perceived its mother as ‘other’). Lacan sees this moment as the origin of subjectivity, whereby the individual is brought into a subject/object relationship not with a separate entity, but with its own image. The mirror stage is thus an identification, or more precisely a misidentification (*méconnaissance*), defined by “the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes... an image.”⁵ Although described as a “stage,” this entrance into subjectivity is punctuated rather than gradual, and one must understand this process, like all fractures, as fundamentally traumatic. As Lacan describes it, “this development is experienced as a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the individual’s formation into history,” resulting in the donning of an “armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure.”⁶ These alienating structures of identification are central to Lacanian thought, which is unable to conceive of a subjectivity prior to the mirror stage. Moreover, the centrality of the image and the subject’s *méconnaissance* with it provide a framework for understanding cinematic identification as explored by scholars such as Jean-Louis Baudry, Laura Mulvey and others. For these purposes, however, the mirror stage is most important because it lays the groundwork for Lacan’s later work regarding the gaze, lack and desire.

The mirror stage brings the subject into a dialectical exchange with the surrounding world, an inescapable divide between self and Other that replicates the

alienation of that initial split and produces the relational world of subject/object. Crucial to understanding this relationship is the gaze, which exists as “something prior to the eye” and confronts the subject with the fact that although s/he “[sees] from one point,” s/he is “looked at from all sides.”⁷ He goes on to write, “the gaze is presented to us only in the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we find on the horizon, as... the lack that constitutes castration anxiety.”⁸ This insufficiency echoes the split of the mirror stage by confronting the subject with the recognition that others’ views of him are more complete than his own. In other words, one’s own vision is *always* lacking in comparison to that of the Other, and this split between the subject’s eye and the Other’s gaze results in a drive “manifested at the level of the scopic field.”⁹ As Lacan explains:

From the moment that this gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it, he becomes that punctiform object, that point of vanishing being with which the subject confuses his own failure. Furthermore, of all the objects in which the subject may recognize his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible.¹⁰

Put more simply, the subject can never see himself as he is seen by the imaginary Other, and yet cannot help desiring do so. Most importantly, the subject can never “apprehend” the cause of this desire because it “has emerged from some primal separation, from some self-mutilation induced by the very approach of the real, whose name... is the *objet a*.”¹¹ He goes on to explain that “the *objet a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself as organ.”¹² Herein lies the crux of Lacan’s thought: the *objet a* is constitutive not just of the subject’s desire, but of the subject himself. The *objet a* is the defining lack that forever cordons off the subject from the object of desire. In other words, desire and subjectivity are inseparable, arising from the approach of the Real.

At this point one must clarify that in Lacanian terms the “real” has nothing to do with the phenomenological, objective, or exterior world. Existing as the source of desire, the Lacanian Real precedes the mirror stage and is wholly internal, ineffable, and utterly inaccessible to consciousness. Like the gaze, it is unapprehensible, but Lacan argues that it can be approached through the act of dreaming. Drawing upon Freud, he sees the dream as “an act of homage to a missed reality—the reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening.”¹³ Slavoj Žižek elaborates on this, saying “the Lacanian Real... is more terrifying than the so-called external reality itself, and that is why [the dreamer] awakes to escape the Real of his desire, which announces itself in the terrifying dream.”¹⁴ It is essential, then, that the subject never encounter the terrifying Real, never encounter the cause of his desire, because the effect of an encounter with the real is “that of trauma.”¹⁵ As Lacan writes, “the subject in himself... goes only to a certain limit, which is known as the real.”¹⁶ The function of the *objet a* is therefore to shield the subject from the encounter with the Real. Created by the subject’s self-mutilation, the *objet a* has no positive constitution and exists solely as a signifier of *something that does not exist for the subject*. Desire can thus be understood as the longing for something extant in a pre-mirror state, but that, at least for the subject, was never there at all.

Lacan thus weaves a certain kind of narrative regarding the emergence and nature of the subject. First, the subject’s *méconnaissance* upon encountering the mirror creates an irreversible schism that structures all subsequent experience, forcing the subject to recognize the split between the eye and the gaze and threatening him with castration. As such, the Lacanian subject is not only defined, but constituted by lack; and, to shield

himself from the approach of this reality, the subject engages in a self-mutilation that gives rise to the *objet a*, the unattainable object of desire which, at least in the realm of the visible, corresponds to the gaze itself. Within this framework, the subject's fate can be nothing other than alienation, both from the Other and from his desire, which can be understood only in terms of lack and castration. This purely negatively conception of desire has led to thinkers to question the validity and limits of Lacan's argument.

While Lacan's theory of the gaze has been the dominant mode of psychoanalytic film theory for a generation of scholars, the matrixial gaze of Bracha Ettinger offers an alternative model for understanding the gaze, subjectivity, and desire. As she points out:

Even though the comprehension of the gaze is based on an unconscious phallic structure, it is displayed as sexually neutral, under the assumption that male sexual difference is the only sexual difference accessible to human knowledge, and that its mechanism of loss: 'castration', is the only possible source of human desire.¹⁷

Using this as a starting point, I will provide an overview of her theory of the matrixial gaze and how it diverges from the phallic gaze of Lacan. It is important to note that neither I, nor Ettinger, see the matrixial gaze as a simple refutation of Lacan's theorization of the subject. Rather, this gaze is "a parallel psychic activity, not of drives as internal and autonomous, but of the erotic antennae of the psychic which engender a trans-subjective psychic sphere... uncleft yet not fused with the subject or with the Other."¹⁸ Ettinger therefore provides a framework for talking about a relationship that is not premised on the primal schism of the mirror and the castration anxiety that results from the separation of eye and gaze.

Ettinger's central critique of the phallic gaze is that it rests upon "a primary, irrevocable signifier" which is "the origin of the gaze."¹⁹ Before this point there is no

subject, only the Real, which is foreclosed as a source of knowledge by the Lacanian framework. This pre-mirror reality eludes the consciousness of the subject (who did not exist to experience it) and is able to manifest itself only through the repression of the Thing (*das Ding*). The Thing is the nameless, inexpressible embodiment of the Real, an entity that escapes incorporation into the Symbolic order of language, or, as described by Žižek, “the impossible-real object of desire,”²⁰ which exists as “the real-traumatic kernel in the midst of the symbolic order.”²¹ In other words, the Thing is how the Real intersects historical reality, causing the subject to behave and think in a manner that attempts to keep the Thing at bay.

The Lacanian subject, emergent with the gaze, is thus defined on the one hand by the inaccessibility of the Real and by the constant repression of the Thing on the other. But, as Ettinger points out, this is true only if one accepts “the assumption of a primordial cut at the origin.”²² She writes:

If the gaze is founded by a mechanism of castration, then, however unmeasurable, this absence is not just any universal and neutral absence as Lacan pretended it to be, but an absence under certain conditions, with certain constitution and specific qualifications – an absence equivalent to a phallic separation that replicates, as ‘castration’, the universal Oedipal model at every phase of mental separation.²³

In other words, Lacan’s conception of subjectivity, defined by loss and castration, requires that one takes for granted an unbridgeable gap between the pre-mirror, pre-subjective reality and the post-mirror, subjective world of the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary orders. Ettinger, however, argues that this same split makes it impossible to know anything about the “primitive scene,” and therefore Lacan’s insistence on an originary cut is merely “a ‘myth’ of origin, animated only by our imagination.”²⁴ If this

primordial scene, which gives rise to the subject, is mythic in nature, then “the only gaze we... find in the tableau is the fruit of our imagination.”²⁵ Ettinger’s contribution is to offer a different ‘imagining’ by reconceptualizing Lacanian terminology from the point of “an originary feminine difference” and providing a new vocabulary that maintains “a special kind of link... to this world where desire meets reality.”²⁶

By maintaining that the intersection of desire and reality is a possibility, Ettinger’s work is reminiscent of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, which argues that desire must be understood in terms of social production. For them, desire “does not lack anything”; it is “the set of passive syntheses that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production.”²⁷ Inverting the Freudian relationship, they see psychoanalysis as the cause of castration rather than its treatment, and characterize it as “a practical operation on the unconscious... achieved when the thousand break-flows of desiring-machines—all positive, all productive—are projected into the same mythical space, the unary stroke of the signifier.”²⁸ Lacan’s reliance on this signifier to explain the origin of desire, the *objet a*, is thus “a kind of projection of the signifying chains onto a despotic signifier, lacking unto itself and reintroducing lack into the series of desire.”²⁹ In other words, lack exists only on the level of the abstract, ephemeral, and wholly idealized, whereas the actual living process of being human is necessarily shaped and informed by material existence. In this way their stance is similar to Ettinger’s, who locates the source of desire not as an imagined encounter with the mirror, but rather as stemming from the actual pre-birth experience of the subject. In both accounts, lack must therefore be introduced into the system as an ideal object rather than one that is given to any actual or material positivity.

As Griselda Pollock points out, the matrixial framework “challenges [the] adamant positing of a postnatal beginning of subjectivity, because it tends to cast what lies beneath the object—what Lacan named the Thing, as synonymous with Other-Woman—as beyond all sense-making.”³⁰ Starting from a point of female sexual differentiation reveals the underlying phallic dogmatism of the Lacanian model and allows Ettinger to go beyond the mirror stage’s castrative split between the gaze and eye. She writes:

The matrixial is modeled upon a certain conception of feminine/prebirth psychic intimate sharing, where the womb is conceived of not as origin but as shared psychic borderspace in which differentiation-in-co-emergence, separation-in-jointness, and distance-in-proximity are continuously reattuned by metamorphosis created by, and further creating... relations-without-relating on the borders of presence and absence, subject and object among subjects and partial objects, transitional objects or relational objects.³¹

As the multitude of hyphens suggests, the matrixial is best understood as a liminal space, where sharp distinctions between binaries (as construed by the phallic logic of language) are revealed not to be essential, but rather an effect of “the price for signification and intelligibility.”³² In other words, these apparent clefts exist only because they reinforce a subjectivity defined by lack and able to make meaning only through oppositions modeled on the primary schism of self/other. For Ettinger, “the signifier charges the archaic fabric for its labour of cutting samples from the level of the Real,” but only insofar as one stays within the logic of castration and the phallic gaze.³³

The matrixial framework, on the other hand, offers a method of addressing items that do not comply with traditional (phallic) understandings of the division between subject and object. For Ettinger, the gaze “is not a lost object of phantasm but a link

between trauma and phantasm of *I* and *non-I*.”³⁴ It is “not purely visual” and is “inseparable from the other unconscious dimensions of the psyche (oral, anal),” which allows it to remain “connected to the unconsciousness of others in inter-subjective and trans-subjective spheres.”³⁵ Like the Lacanian gaze, the matrixial is not solely associated with the corporeal body and uses “the erotic antennae of the psyche” to allow “traumatic differentiating-in-jointness of the *I* with the archaic m/Other.”³⁶ Most importantly, however, the matrixial gaze finds its roots long before the mirror stage:

The matrixial awareness is vehicled in human beings via the mother-to-be’s trans-subjective inscription – via her elaboration of joint traces of *I* and non-*I*, and via a joint voyage, ramified between inside and outside and diffracted between *I* and non-*I*, between different partial subject and partial objects.³⁷

The matrixial gaze thus emerges in utero and is modeled around the experience of pregnancy, when mother and infant are neither fully separate nor fully one with one another. As opposed to the castration of the mirror stage, Ettinger calls “this inscription... a co-poietic metamorphosis” that “registers affected, shared-in-difference traumas as ontogenetic memory.”³⁸ The *objet a* is likewise reinterpreted, seen not as a lost or unattainable object, but as “a link in ebbing and flowing with coemergence and cofading of *I* and non-*I*.”³⁹ The mechanism of desire in the matrixial framework therefore becomes the process of “metamorphosis... [which] induces instances of co-emergence and co-fading *as* meaning and trans-scription as memory of oblivion.”⁴⁰ It is “a field of differential trans-subjectivity” where “the intrauterine relations between future mother and future subject are by definition incestual: I conjoin in the Real the trauma and jouissance of the body of non-*I*.”⁴¹ In other words, by registering this experience as ontogenetic memory, the future subject is provided with a link back to the Real, a

necessarily traumatic memory of the Other that is simultaneously intertwined with the jouissance of the non-I, the body of the mother. As such, the matrixial encounter with the Other is not solely a source of anxiety but also imbued with pleasure.

By recognizing the confluence of anxiety and pleasure, matrixial desire resonates somewhat with Gaylyn Studlar's "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of Cinema." Written as a rebuttal to scholars like Laura Mulvey who theorized the sadistic nature of cinematic pleasure, Studlar argues that the Lacanian model "often inadvertently [reduces] the psychoanalytic complexity of spectatorship through a regressive phallogentrism that ignores a wider range of psychological influences on visual pleasure."⁴² For her, spectatorial identification with the female is equally plausible to identification with the male, which allows the possibility for "masochistic fantasy... dominated by oral pleasure, the desire to return to the nondifferentiated body state of the mother/child, and the fear of abandonment."⁴³ So, on the one hand, reunification with the mother promises pleasure to the subject (jouissance in Lacanian terminology) through a dissolution of the boundaries between self and other. On the other hand, this reunification also carries with it the threat of the abandonment, not from the mother, but from the security provided by one's very sense of self. Masochistic desire is therefore necessarily marked by ambivalence because "the promise of blissful reincorporation into the mother's body" is counterbalanced by the threat posed by the "re-fusion of the child's narcissistic ego with the mother as ideal ego is also a threat."⁴⁴

The key difference between masochistic and matrixial desire, however, is that masochism still maintains a rigid delineation between self and other. As Studlar writes, "masochistic desire depends on separation to guarantee the structure of its ambivalent

desire” because “to close the gap, to overcome separation from the mother, to fulfill desire, to achieve orgasm means death.”⁴⁵ Masochistic desire thus derives jouissance from separation, but only by positioning itself against the threat of death and self-annihilation through reuniting with the mother. This being the case, masochistic desire (like sadistic pleasure) presents a subjectivity that remains squarely within the phallic logic of self/other binarism. The matrixial sphere addresses this concern by understanding desire and subjectivity as both ambivalent *and* liminal. In doing so, it rejects the self/other paradigm and reformulates desire not as the pleasure derived from an insurmountable separation, but from a realizable “linking with the Other.”⁴⁶

The crucial item at this juncture is to recognize the matrixial encounter as essentially liminal, concerned with connections and opaque, porous boundaries (what Ettinger calls “borderspaces”), and open to the possibility of encountering the real of one’s desire. From the Lacanian perspective, such an encounter is impossible because “materials that have never been repressed by the subject cannot be returned from its ‘unconsciousness structured as a language,’ but can only appear in the Real as hallucinations.”⁴⁷ In other words, the Real is doubly foreclosed: first because there was no subject ‘there’ to repress it; and second, it is a pre-language encounter within a linguistic structure, which renders any retrieval utterly impossible. The trauma of the Real is thus the trauma of a void, an empty space that subjectivity ‘grows’ around. Ettinger contends, however, that:

Even though they are hidden behind the screen of phantasmic vision, rendered inaccessible by originary repression, the Thing with its affective tones and the forsaken Event woven in forlorn relationships, do find incarnation in the art object, art process, or art event.⁴⁸

In the matrixial framework, the artwork grants access to the Real because it views the Thing as a shared, rather than alienating, trauma. Ettinger frames this idea using Tork and Abraham's notion of "a mental hidden place, a crypt," which is "the result of a traumatic loss without memory."⁴⁹ The crypt serves as an internal barrier to the subject's self-knowledge, an amnesia serving to protect her from recognizing the trauma. This lack of awareness is what fundamentally differentiates it from the Lacanian understanding of the Thing, which requires the subject's unending investment of psychic energy to avoid an already inaccessible Real. With the crypt this is not the case: "the crypted event... penetrates the non-place of the Thing," and "as long as the crypt does not collapse, there will be neither melancholy nor a process of mourning."⁵⁰ In other words, the crypt is accessible but un-entered, present yet wholly unacknowledged, unforgotten yet unremembered. It leaves the subject "unknowingly nostalgic and grieving for a lost relationship that gets encapsulated within its psyche without introjection."⁵¹ Unlike the Thing, which demands constant repression, the crypt calls forth "a continuous investment of *I* and *non-I* in one another, in a joint object, with-in the same event and in a joint subjectivizing borderspace."⁵² The psychic process associated with this in the matrixial framework is metamorphosis, which can be understood as both corresponding and inversely related to repression in the phallic framework. So, while repression pushes down desire (defined as lack) and forestalls an encounter with the Real, metamorphosis is the poiesis of desire (defined as connecting with the other) and enables one to enter into the Real.

Metamorphosis is not the return to some sort of imaginary wholeness or unity of self, however, because it requires relinquishing the notion of one's self as an entity

distinct from the Other. Furthermore, it is important to state that both Lacan and Ettinger recognize the encounter with the Real as traumatic. For Lacan, this trauma derives from its unspeakability: the subject, who is organized linguistically at both the conscious and unconscious levels, has no method for comprehending the Real. Such an encounter would therefore dismantle the very structure that supports his existence. Ettinger, on the other hand, conceives of a subjectivity not contingent upon language and leaves open the possibility of accessing the Real. It remains traumatic, however, because it requires that the subject to “libidinally invest the traces of someone else’s trauma... within its psychic apparatus.”⁵³ The intrauterine relationship of the child and its mother serves as the model of this relationship, with the child investing in the mother’s trauma and sense of separation between self and other. Therefore, it is not only the subject’s own trauma that resides within the crypt but also that of “an-Other.” These traumas coexist in an undifferentiated form, and the Real of the child necessarily becomes indistinguishable from that of the m/Other. The crypt thus represents a place of shared trauma between *I* and *non-I*, unremembered by the subject. For Ettinger, this place is accessible for through the process of artistic creation, and she argues that the artwork allows one “to think of the enigma of transsubjective memory and joint affectivity... [where] *I* and *non-I* take part in-difference in the same Event and in the struggle of oblivion to become a memory.”⁵⁴ Here, the primacy of the link between memory and the artwork is brought to the fore, and it is this struggle within the crypt between the memories of *I* and *non-I* that constitutes the process of metramorphosis. The purpose of this process (which results in the artwork) is for the subject to experience the trauma, to experience the Real, to retrieve the contents of the crypt from its amnesia, and to recapture the memory of oblivion.

The difficulty with Ettinger's formulation, while opening up the possibility of a shared encounter with the Real, is that it seems to require that such encounters are made possible solely within a romanticized aesthetic discourse. As a model of subjectivity this is problematic because, even granting the distinction between the process of artistic creation and its resulting object, it valorizes the role of the artist in a way that seems to neglect other 'non-aesthetic' conditions. In doing so, her theory appears inadequate to address everyday encounters with the 'non-art' of our historically determined circumstances. In this way Ettinger, like Lacan, fails to sufficiently address the world outside the subject, which is populated not just with other subjects who can "wit(h)ness" shared trauma, but also with artifacts and objects that signify the presence of a profoundly impersonal history. I will return to these concerns in the third chapter's discussion of *Sans soleil*, but first it is necessary to acknowledge the previous scholars' contributions to the understanding of the gaze and memory in the films of Chris Marker.

Review of Literature

A relatively small, but growing body of work deals with both *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* as well as Marker's oeuvre as a whole. In this section I will lay out the case for adopting a non-auteurist interpretive framework as argued by Catherine Lupton and Nora Alter, which will lead into my discussion regarding the importance and interpretation of Marker's use of horizontal montage. The section will close by highlighting the key aspects of *La jetée* (trauma, gaze, and memory) and *Sans soleil* (the genre conventions of film ethnography and the problem of desire).

English language scholarship concerning Marker has begun to flourish in recent years, led by British scholars such as Catherine Lupton, whose *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* stands as the most comprehensive analysis of Marker to date. The book not only situates Marker's artistic emergence within the larger historical context of post-War Paris, but also provides textual analyses of Marker's complete body of work, ranging from his published poems and stories after the Second World War and continuing through his most recent forays into digital and multimedia in the new millennium. Her recognition of how Marker "[uses] documentary footage of the actual world to map a subjective consciousness, via incisive dialogues between the spoken commentary and assembled images" particularly stands out.⁵⁵ In fact, this is the most compelling aspect of Marker's oeuvre: calling the relationship between the actual world (pro-filmic) and the subjective consciousness into question through various gaps, overlaps and dissonances between images and the spoken word. Doing so allows his films to consistently problematize the relationship between subject/object (or Self/Other) by bringing the aural and visual realms into a dialectical relationship, with the voice offering temporal continuity to the images, and the images providing a material grounding to the spoken word. The disembodied voice becomes a recurring trope in Marker's films, and the commentaries in both *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* feature a narrator whose precise position (both psychically and physically) cannot be located in relation to the images. This spatial ambiguity only enhances the temporal displacements upon which both films turn, and Lupton sees this type of address as holding the "capacity for revelation: the power to unveil deeper realities that expand and enrich the everyday world, but remain firmly grounded in its objects and appearances."⁵⁶

Nora M. Alter esteems the director's work in similarly high regard, and, like Lupton refuses to attribute the films' affect solely to Marker himself. Noting that his "auteurism derives from his literariness or... essayist tendencies than from any cultivation on his part of a director-as-genius myth," Alter argues that "the author/artist should be decentered when contemplating the films that bear Marker's name, and the interpretative and analytical stress should be placed on the deep sociopolitical structures that determine textual production."⁵⁷ This distancing from an auteurist approach is justified, especially considering Marker's decade-long involvement with *Le Société pour le Lancement d'Oeuvres Nouvelles* (SLON), which was formed in 1967 as production and distribution cooperative. The filmmaker worked anonymously for this "militant collective"⁵⁸ as a director and editor between the years of 1967 and 1976, and although it did not conform to a particular party affiliation, SLON films "had to be political, tied closely to reality, and reject auteur cinema principles."⁵⁹ While Marker's (in)famous reluctance to give interviews makes it difficult to know the precise impact of this period on his work, it seems reasonable to assume that the SLON's demand for collective authorship, political content, and alternative distribution channels became (or already informed) prominent aspects of Marker's individual authorial intent.⁶⁰ Lupton agrees on this point: "It is too simplistic to reduce the discourse of the film to Marker's control, and thereby overwrite the gaps and tensions that are opened up between the different personae of the film."⁶¹ Central to both perspectives is the fact that Marker is radically decentered as the definitive source of meaning in his films, creating a space for multiple and often contradictory readings. This is not to say, of course, that he is absent from the texts; Marker makes explicit intertextual references both to his own films and those of

others,⁶² as well as playfully inserting himself into his own films in totemic fashion.⁶³ This contamination of the text is self-conscious, though, and undermines the perceived ‘objectivity’ of documentary form (and by extension the filmmaker) rather than establishing Marker as the unchallenged arbiter of meaning. It is within this general framework of anti- or non-auteurism, as outlined by Lupton and Alter, that both *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* should be understood.

With this foundation in place, one can now attempt a more precise aesthetic characterization of the films, but the question still remains: if not Marker himself, then what is it that gives his films such a distinctive quality? The answer is found in the tension between the voice and image, and Alter’s notion of the essay is useful here because it draws attention to the mediating impact of verbal language, which applies not only on the interpretation of images, but also refers to the manner by which an individual establishes a relationship with the phenomenal world. As such, language takes on special importance in *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* by simultaneously (and often ambiguously) ‘speaking’ to both the image and the spectator. This characteristic was singled out by André Bazin in his response to Marker’s earlier documentary *Letter from Siberia*, in which he argued that the film’s “primary material [was] intelligence, that its immediate means of expression [was] language, and that the image only [intervened] in the third position, in reference to this verbal intelligence.”⁶⁴ Calling this technique “horizontal” montage, Bazin lauded the film as evidencing “an absolutely new notion of montage” whereby “a given image doesn’t refer to the one that preceded it or the one that will follow, but rather it refers laterally, in some way, to what is said.”⁶⁵ Horizontal montage therefore relies upon a synchronic rather than diachronic understanding of time because

the idea contained in the image and the idea contained in the word are equally present and occur simultaneously. As a result there is no necessary synthesis between the aural and visual realms, which allows the film to foreground the ambiguity of its images and address. The interplay between the spoken word, the image, and the viewer becomes emblematic of Marker's film essays, and *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* illustrate how the use of horizontal montage developed over time, imparting a tonal quality to the films that is difficult to describe.

Previous scholars, in an attempt to articulate these nuances without succumbing to reductive or totalizing tendencies, have often resorted to paradoxical formulations that attempt to mimic horizontal montage's simultaneity of meaning.⁶⁶ Such statements have effectively traced the outermost contours of films that defy straightforward hermeneutic schema by their failure to comply with the very generic conventions they evoke. Pertinent to my line of inquiry includes the work of Lee Hilliker, who describes *La jetée* as "a severe and highly allusive critique of contemporary French culture in a genre hybrid that borrows codes from documentary and science fiction."⁶⁷ Patrick Ffrench also writes about the film, arguing that *La jetée* is "much closer to documentary than to fiction, and causes the structure of the fiction to tremble through the interruption of the image as the vehicle of a historical memory."⁶⁸ Regarding *Sans soleil* Burlin Barr echoes similar concerns, "the film resembles at times a documentary, a fiction and a work of ethnography, and... addresses its viewers as if it occupied these textual positions unproblematically."⁶⁹ This instability of meaning, accomplished through horizontal montage and exacerbated by challenging generic conventions, is palpable in both films, almost intoxicating in its ability to confront and engage the spectator by widening the

gaps between the spoken word and the image. With an overview of horizontal montage now in place, one can now approach the films themselves.

Thematically, *La jetée*'s central concerns are trauma, gaze and memory, and as a result much of previous scholarship has been framed either implicitly or explicitly within a psychoanalytic framework. Recognizing loss as the central structuring element of the film, Hilliker correctly identifies how the opening sequence "condenses a traumatic occurrence that has individual psychoanalytic overtones in its evocation of childhood and primal scene along with sociohistorical reference in the notion of world war."⁷⁰ French also hones in on this idea, "The imaginary world of the protagonist is shattered by the return of an image of the real by which he has always been determined and which the fantasy of a life lived twice is intended to screen off."⁷¹ In the Lacanian framework, all traumatic encounters hearken back in some way to the Real, whose return is inevitable and from which the subject attempts to screen himself off through the use of fantasy. But, as Eli Friedlander points out, "the fundamental difficulty in accessing the [R]eal is not interpreted in *La Jetée* as a solipsistic predicament, but rather through the deep anxiety that my representation, especially my self-representations, are given to me by another."⁷² In other words, the trauma of the Real is not purely internal, but rather comes as a result of the subject's 'deep anxiety' over the fact that he sees how himself is informed by how he is seen by the other. This points to the importance of the mechanism of the gaze in *La jetée*.

The gaze is the second key theoretical node in *La jetée*, and it is worth noting that most scholars have written specifically, if not explicitly, about the phallic gaze as outlined by Lacan. This is a logical choice given the tone and structure of the film, and

the model of castration and loss has yielded some fruitful observations. A notable exception, however, is found in the work of Griselda Pollock, who not only addresses the phallic gaze but also offers an alternative. So, while acknowledging that “at the heart of this exploration of subjectivity... is the face of the woman,”⁷³ Pollock also argues that there is a matrixial gaze at work that allows one to “emerge from the exclusivity of the Oedipal logic of the phallus as the only arbiter of psychic life and signification.”⁷⁴ Rather than resulting from loss or castration, trauma in the matrixial framework is a joint phenomenon, and the subject’s desire is to share the experience of the traumatic Real. Her analysis thus juxtaposes the face of the sleeping woman not with the protagonist, but with his principal jailor, whose “gaze holds authority through its spatial superiority.”⁷⁵

She writes:

He is the executioner. He interrupts the headlong rush back to the woman, whose arrested face stated that execution and figured to the man his desire... This final scene would thus appear to stage a struggle between the idealized Madonna-love object of the heterosexual man and the super-egoic law of the father who prohibits incestuous desire by death – castration.⁷⁶

According to Pollock, “the terrifying logic of the final scene” is “undone by the beauty of the film... loosening it, slipping metamorphically to another play of absence/presence, loss/connection.”⁷⁷

The difficulty with this reading, however, is that it is simply not supported by the text. In fact, the structure of *La jetée* is almost identical to that of the Oedipus myth itself, whereby King Laius, in an attempt to avoid his own death, sets into motion the events that will eventually ensure it. As Slavoj Žižek explains:

The prophecy becomes true by means of it being communicated to the persons it affects and by means of his or her attempt to elude it: one knows

in advance one's destiny, one tries to evade it, and it is by means of this very attempt that the predicted destiny realizes itself.⁷⁸

This is precisely what occurs in *La jetée*, with the opening sequence at Orly serving as prophecy, and the protagonist's attempt to avoid it (by returning to the woman) ultimately bringing about his demise. Furthermore, Pollock's implication that the film's beauty is somehow inherently matrixial is untenable, and implicitly evokes a binarism of feminine passivity/masculine aggression by situating the sleeping face of the woman against the menacing visage of "the man with extended eyes."⁷⁹ In spite of these shortcomings, Pollock provides a comprehensive account of how the phallic gaze operates in *La jetée* and offers a novel, if misapplied, way of approaching the text through the matrixial gaze.

The third primary theoretical node is memory, which *La jetée* conceives of as fundamentally traumatic, yet necessary for the constitution of a coherent self over the passage of time. As Ffrench writes:

The protagonist's memory is likened to a museum... and this museum-effect is doubled by the stillness of the film, whose images are withdrawn from the illusion of continuous motion. Their stillness further withdraws the memory from the agent and proposes rather a doubling of film spectatorship within the film: the man views his memory as if he were watching film, or as if he were visiting a museum.⁸⁰

This passage is useful because it demonstrates how, through its doubling of film spectatorship, *La jetée* sees film not just a narrative conceit or metaphor for memory, but as bearing an actual structural likeness: both are mechanisms of inscription dependent upon images and the gaze. In this way, memory functions in the narrative of *La jetée* as it does within subjective consciousness, providing a continuity of self from one moment to the next. However, as Akira Lippit observes in his study of filmmaker Michael Arnold, "The extension of the subject outside itself breaks the spatio-temporal continuity

of the corporeal body and effects a kind of dismembering in the act of remembering.”⁸¹ In other words, memory *itself* can become a type of trauma and does so in *La jetée*, requiring the protagonist to constantly reengage the past in order to preserve an understanding of self over the passage of time. As described by Friedlander, this “is not a voluntary memory but an involuntary one, a memory that belongs to the mythology of the subject and the ritual repetitions that enact it.”⁸² Within the phallic model, this means that the ritual repetition required to enact subjectivity is constant retraumatization, where every image carries the threat of castration and every memory is understood in relation to the moment of one’s death.

Several key ideas have emerged during this discussion of *La jetée*. The first is the place of trauma in the film, which provides both origin and closure through the repetition of the scene on the pier at Orly. The second central idea is the gaze, which conforms to the Lacanian model of phallic subjectivity, but has been discussed primarily as if it were a neutral structure. Finally, we have the importance of memory, which relates to both trauma and the phallic gaze. It is important to note that it is not the event itself that the subject remembers, however, but rather the trauma that grows up around it. Access to the traumatic Real is verboten within the Lacanian model, and both the gaze and memory can only serve to obscure the true meaning of the event itself. The remaining question, then, is whether or not it is possible to formulate alternative models of the gaze and memory that leave open the possibility for engaging the past without the need for traumatic repetition. Such a model would recognize that the relationship between the ‘subjective’ (memorial) and ‘objective’ (historical) pasts as dialectical, and that this fluidity allows memory to be used dynamically, reconfiguring material circumstances (images and/or

artifacts of/from the past) into novel configurations rather than projecting one's recollection of the past onto the present. With this in mind, I would like to leave *La jetée* and turn to *Sans soleil*.

Sans soleil was released twenty years after *La jetée* and addresses similar themes of history, memory, time, and representation. It is significantly more ambitious, though, both in terms of its range of subjects as well as its spectatorial address. Unlike *La jetée*, whose adherence to narrative codes limits direct engagement with extradiegetic concerns, *Sans soleil's* fictionalized ethnographic conceit explicitly interrogates the moral and philosophical implications of its themes, marking the confluence of memory and history as the primary discourse of the film. As a result, most scholars have viewed *Sans soleil* as simultaneously an aesthetic endeavor⁸³ and a broader commentary on images, historicity, and memory that coalesce around two nodes: its commentary on the documentary form and the nature of Krasna's desire.

Stella Bruzzi offers an insightful commentary on *Sans soleil* by examining one of the most obvious aspects of the film: the sound of the woman reading Krasna's letters. The use of the feminine voice runs counter to the typical masculine 'voice-of-God' endemic to the documentary format and draws attention to "the frailty of the documentary endeavor to represent reality in the most seamless way possible."⁸⁴ For her, the narrative "functions to create rather than collapse critical distance" by highlighting "the essential schism between the gender of the actual voice and that of either the fictional writer of the letters (Krasna) or the director (Marker)."⁸⁵ This observation is interesting in two ways. First, by emphasizing that the voiceover in the film cannot be perceived as neuter, Bruzzi makes clear that the words hold not only denotative or

connotative meaning, but also communicate a gendered meaning at the level of paralanguage. Second, since the female voice is the sole source of verbal meaning, the distance between her and the other two sources of information (Krasna and Marker) is brought to the fore. This gap between the potential sources of information (narrator, letter-writer, director) recalls Bazin's notion of horizontal montage by addressing the viewer with multiple simultaneous sources of meaning.

Another excellent analysis is offered by Burlin Barr, who not only examines the film's use of ethnographic genre conventions but also explores how they are undermined by the intrusion of Krasna's desire. He argues that *Sans soleil* exposes "the fallacy of a kind of detective work which adheres to a belief in a clear relation between perceptions, facts and a theory of facts."⁸⁶ Developing this idea, he demonstrates that "the intrusion of desire into fictions of neutral agency" within the film's documentary address ultimately proves that "even a sense of objective distance" is nothing more than "an aesthetic tactic."⁸⁷ The problem of accurately representing reality is readily apparent in this construction, and Barr persuasively argues that documentarian 'realism' must be understood as speaking to the desire of the documentary endeavor itself as much as to the accurate representation of the pro-filmic reality. In such a quest, one is "confronted with the ungraspable" because one approaches "an objective sedimented within interfering structures of memory, longing, fascination and desire."⁸⁸ By definition (at least in the Lacanian model), desire implies some measure of lack, and the attempt to remember the past, either through the form of history or memory, must ultimately account for this sense of something missing. For Krasna this means trying to make contact with the actual, concrete site of history, even if his efforts prove only the futility of his endeavor.

Picking up on this notion of desire, and working from an explicitly Lacanian framework, Kaja Silverman argues that “memory in *Sans soleil* is less a biographical recuperation than the perpetually repeated recovery,”⁸⁹ which “implies more than anything else the possibility of effecting change at the level of representation.”⁹⁰ Unlike *La jetée*, this repetition is enacted not to take hold of some personal loss, but rather to go beyond the bounds of an individual subjectivity and recover access to history itself. This is accomplished “through the recollection of other people’s memories,” and in doing so the film effects a “shift of libidinal value away from the privileged nexes of the image-repertoire to its seemingly insignificant elements.”⁹¹ In other words, *Sans soleil* presents not just Krasna’s memory, but also the recollections of others in an attempt to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the past. As the narrator states, “only banality still interests” him, and the images shown are not necessarily manifestations of his own desire, but the desire of others, affecting a libidinal shift away from Krasna’s subjectivity to that of others.⁹² Calling this an example of “the productive look,” Silverman demonstrates how the Lacanian framework can be opened up to include representations that, “far from being subordinate to the camera... can bend the camera to its mandates.”⁹³ From this analysis, one can see cracks opening up in the model of phallic subjectivity, but Silverman remains too firmly entrenched in the dialectic of the Lacanian gaze with and its insistence on the divide between self and other. Furthermore, the Krasna’s interest in banality still indicates the operation of desire: it is ultimately his interest in the desire of the Other that structures and informs the image-making. One must find instead a theoretical framework that is able to accommodate both the memory and desire of the Other, and with this in mind I turn to the work of Sarah Cooper.

Rather than the psychoanalytic framework, Cooper's understanding of desire is rooted in the work of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas and allows for a "radical newness that breaks from the comparative logic of reflection that sends present back to the past"⁹⁴ She finds "Krasna's position less generous"⁹⁵ than Silverman because the "film returns us time and again to focus on the position of the camera operator."⁹⁶ In other words, Silverman's productive look is problematic because it ultimately uses Krasna's subjectivity as point of reference, signaling Lacan's chain of signifiers and overwriting the gaps opened up by the film. As a result, "the filming of sexual difference [remains] a function of Krasna's desire."⁹⁷ Here one sees the equalization (and equivocation) of the camera's gaze with masculine desire, and in this way Cooper's analysis points to the need for a theory of how other types of desire might be present in *Sans soleil*. Nonetheless, she concedes that "the way in which images are spoken about in relation to [Krasna's] memory is significant to the ethics of vision that I see at work in this film... based not on openness to other but the displacement of the self."⁹⁸ As I will argue, the matrixial gaze provides a framework for both sets of concerns, offering an alternative to the definition of desire as lack as well as allowing for a displacement of the self.

To summarize, previous scholarship has shown how *La jetée* presents a model of memory that is fundamentally traumatic, requiring repetition, and ultimately returning the subject to the point where he started—the moment of death. This bleak cycle has led most scholars to approach the text from the perspective of the phallic gaze, and the film provides ample support to this reading. The question remains, however, as to whether or not there might be other models for remembering, models that are not doomed to repetition and trauma. Drawing inspiration from Griselda Pollock's novel, yet ill-

conceived analysis of *La jetée*, I argue that a different understanding of the gaze might yield a different understanding of memory, and that *Sans soleil* functions in such a manner, presenting a model for engaging the past without the need for traumatic repetition. While Kaja Silverman's productive look and Sarah Cooper's radical newness hint at this notion, the former is hamstrung by the Lacanian divide between self and other, while the latter fails to theorize how the materiality of the pro-filmic impacts both representation and memory. To address these gaps, this research will approach the films and their respective gazes as a kind of call and response, outlining key attributes of the phallic gaze and memory in *La jetée*, and then responding with a matrixial analysis of *Sans soleil* that offers alternative models of subjectivity and memory.

Summary of Lacan and Ettinger

I have thus far laid out two complementary theories of the gaze, as well as providing an overview of previous scholarship surrounding Chris Marker, *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*. Before moving on, I would like to briefly revisit and summarize Lacan and Ettinger's understandings of subjectivity to set up the following chapter's discussion of the pro-filmic.

Within Lacan's phallic model, the subject emerges during the mirror stage and enters into a world of desire defined by lack, signified by the *objet a*. The Symbolic and Imaginary realms grow up around the void, and the Lacanian subject is thus prevented from ever entering into the Real of his desire. In spite of this, the Real registers its presence through the Thing, which defies symbolization and manifests itself only through the subject's attempt to repress it. The sublime object is a concretized, material

expression of the Thing, existing only by virtue of the subject's psychic investment and reverting back to an everyday object if he approaches it too closely. Finally, the phallic model creates a distinct, unbridgeable gap between self and other, which is structured linguistically and mimics the originary schism between the eye (the pleasure of looking) and the gaze (the anxiety of being seen) that brought the subject into being.

The matrixial model constructs a different subject, starting from a place of originary feminine difference and finding her origin in the Real, intrauterine relationship with the mother. This is neither a state of symbiosis nor of union, but rather a nondifferentiated relationship between *I* and *non-I*. The *objet a* refers to the ebb and flow of these entities, and desire is defined as the attempt to return to this state, which is not re-fusion with the m/Other but rather the shared experience of trauma. The presence of the crypt, the unremembered place of this trauma, allows the subject to access the Real of her desire; and it is through the process of metamorphosis that she recovers the memory of oblivion. Although the artwork results from this process, it is activity of metamorphosis—not the object itself—that is the site of this reclamation. The matrixial sphere is not premised on the threat of castration between the eye and gaze, but rather the activity of psychic antennae that seek to connect with the primordial m/Other. It is a liminal space, where the binarism of self/other is replaced with the dynamic flow between a nondifferentiated *I* and *non-I*.

Neither of these frameworks, however, offers a sufficient understanding of the material, pro-filmic reality. For Lacan, the material, external world is reduced to little more than an unending chain of signifiers that spirals outward from the originary cut of subjectivity; for Ettinger, the emphasis on the subject's desire to link with the Other tends

to overshadow the fact that an individual's encounter with the outside world is overdetermined by historical forces, whose capacity for trauma often overwhelms the potential for jouissance. Thus, while both provide plausible and complementary theories of the gaze, neither adequately weights the importance of historical circumstances as a determining factor in the encounter between self and other (in the case of Lacan) or in the wit(h)nessing of trauma (in the case of Ettinger).

To address these concerns, the next chapter will begin with a discussion of André Bazin's theory of cinematic realism and its subsequent development by Phillip Rosen regarding indexicality. In doing so, I will provide a theoretical understanding of the pro-filmic, which underscores the inseparability of subjectivity and aesthetic concerns in cinematic representation. My reading of *La jetée* will conclude the second chapter, in which I will examine how the film presents memory, history, trauma, subjectivity and desire. Given that a substantial body of work already exists on the film, I will approach *La jetée* as a type of question, and devote the entire third chapter to answering it through an examination of the more complex, and less studied, *Sans soleil*. Overall, I hope to illustrate three things. First, the films present different understandings of the relationship between memory and history, with *La jetée* effectively obliterating the difference between the two, and *Sans soleil* emphasizing the gaps and distance between them. Second, the phallic and matrixial gazes constitute different representational logics and, as exemplified in *La jetée* and *Sans soleil*, signal different understandings of how the subject relates to a pro-filmic reality. Finally, the phallic and matrixial gazes structure memory in different ways, corresponding to the underlying logic of lack and castration in the former, and to the logic of shared trauma and metamorphosis in the latter. Through

these close readings, I will demonstrate that the films construct memory and remembering not as unary acts, but as based on an underlying gendered subjectivity that corresponds to the phallic and matrixial gazes as outlined in this chapter.

II: LA JETÉE AND PHALLIC MEMORY

In the previous chapter, I explored the phallic and matrixial gazes, which brought to light distinct understandings of subjectivity, desire and the accessibility of the Real. In this chapter I will develop my argument regarding the relationship between these ideas and phallic memory, beginning with an element missing from both theories of the gaze: a comprehensive understanding of film aesthetics, the pro-filmic, and their relation to the spectator. To examine these issues, I will utilize the seminal film theory of André Bazin, who situates cinema's realist impulse as a response to ontological concerns, and its subsequent development by Phillip Rosen, who cites indexicality and temporality as the key sources of appeal and anxiety for the spectator. The next section will provide an analysis of *La jetée* and draw attention to how the film constructs a model of memory whose primary function is to separate past from present in a manner corresponding to that of castration and loss. The chapter will conclude by addressing the relationships between memory and history as well as between the subject and the pro-filmic. From these ideas I will offer a summary of phallic memory, which will lay the groundwork for the third chapter's discussion of matrixial memory and analysis of *Sans soleil*.

Bazin, Rosen, Indexicality and Time

The most comprehensive and influential theorization of the pro-filmic is that of André Bazin, whose work began in post-War France and coincided with Marker's

transition from literary pursuits to filmmaking.¹ In his essay “Evolution of the Language of Cinema,” Bazin famously drew a distinction between “those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality.”² This is a useful starting point in two regards. On the one hand, it draws attention to Bazin’s preoccupation with film aesthetics and their relationship to the pro-filmic reality. *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* share this concern, and the formal construction of each draws attention to the fact that the pro-filmic is not only the source of the film image, but of history and memory as well. These three factors—the image, history and memory—engage one another dialectically in the films, alternately reinforcing, challenging and/or distorting the representation and functioning of each. On the other hand, distinguishing an event and its representation provides a framework for approaching Bazin’s writings as a whole, which consistently emphasize that cinema’s goal should embrace a realist aesthetic rather than succumbing “the state of unreality demanded by the spectacle.”³ The resulting tension between the pro-filmic and the aesthetic decisions requisite to the process of image-making lies at the heart of his theory, which argues unwaveringly against the use of techniques that hinder the cinema’s ability to reveal reality.

This respect for reality did not translate, however, into naïve realist aesthetic; and it is important to bear in mind that Bazin’s emphasis on reality is not reducible to simple verisimilitude. He writes:

The word ‘realism’ as it is commonly used does not have an absolute and clear meaning, so much as it indicates a certain tendency toward the faithful rendering of reality on film... But simply being realistic is not enough to make a film good. There is no point in rendering something realistically unless it is to make it more meaningful in an abstract sense.⁴

Here, one sees the awesome potential he attributes to filmmaking, whose revelatory capacity derives from the combination of its mechanical production (allowing for a faithful image of the material world) and its formal construction (enabling these images to create psychological meaning). In other words, it is a matter not just of replicating the pro-filmic, but of enhancing the spectator's understanding of the world and his or her place in it through the film's formal elements. As a result, "the paradox of the cinema is rooted in the dialectic of concrete and abstract" and "[discerning] those elements in filming which confirm our sense of natural reality and those that destroy that feeling" is a matter of both aesthetic and psychological import.⁵ The combination of these factors—the pro-filmic (concrete reality), the aesthetic (the film object as representation of this reality), and the subjective (techniques such as montage and camera placement that create the psychological effects of the cinematic apparatus)—enables cinema to act in a way that previous art forms could not, allowing for "the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its own temporal destiny."⁶

Phillip Rosen provides a thoughtful re-reading of Bazin, expanding on these ideas and framing the paradox of representation and reality as ultimately concerned with indexicality and temporality. As "a genuine index," film is a sign whose referent is not only "existent" but also "whose presence is required in the formation of the sign."⁷ This is what differentiates the photographic image from the canvas: whereas the painter might see a landscape and then paint what s/he saw in a different location, the photographic apparatus must be present at the same physical location. Film therefore provides a more tangible physical connection between the subject and the pro-filmic, but this alone does

not account for cinema's special allure. To assuage the subject's fear of death, one must also arrest time, and this is precisely why the spectator is drawn to cinema. Rosen writes:

Time passing, duration, and change are exactly what Bazin's ontological subject is driven to disavow, for they raise the problem of death. The lure of automatically produced images is attributable to subjective obsession precisely because time is a threat. It threatens the stable existence of the subject (death, decay) as well as the object (degradation, transformation).⁸

The existential concerns of Bazin's "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" are clearly echoed here, and Rosen argues that the photographic image addresses 'the problem of death' by connecting the spectator to a specific moment in time, a function he names "the indexical trace."⁹ The indexical trace thus provides an even firmer link between the pro-filmic and subject by guaranteeing that the sign was present at the same spatial-temporal location as the object. In short, cinema's significance resides in its ability to bridge the gap between the spectator (viewing a film in the present) and the actuality of the world re-presented in the diegesis (filmed at some point in the past).

This connection is only half of the picture, though, and equally crucial to Rosen's formulation is his description of the relationship between the subject and object as an "obsession." The attempt to reunite past and present is an impossible endeavor because it demonstrates that, while the "epistemological possibilities of cinema... can move the subject toward opening itself to a revelatory experience of reality," they also force the subject to confront the fact that "reality itself evolves in time."¹⁰ In other words, film's attempt to 'capture' the pro-filmic actually proves the impossibility of its own task and reactivates the subject's fear regarding the passage of time and dying. The indexical trace simultaneously aggravates and ameliorates this temporal anxiety, placing the subject in a dialectical relationship between the present moment of spectatorship and the

past moment of image creation, which Bazin understands as “a fragment of reality existing before any meanings.”¹¹ As Rosen points out, though, the importance of this fragment of reality (the indexical trace) “depends on a certain prior knowledge on the part of the spectator” regarding the ostensible “objectivity” of the camera.¹² Therefore, it is not the resemblance between the image and the pro-filmic that matters most, but rather the psychic investment on the part of the spectator, which is drawn from his or her understanding, no matter how remedial, of the cinematic apparatus.

Aesthetic concerns are thus deeply intertwined with notions of subjectivity because, as Bazin states, “the image helps us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death.”¹³ In other words, the image serves a memorializing and commemorative function, protecting and maintaining the subject’s spirit after the time of his physical death. The underlying motive for representation is therefore not merely formal, but also psychological, indicating a certain existential anxiety that motivates the production (and informs the reception) of images. In *La jetée* this concern is seen both in the actual moment of physical death, as well as the protagonist’s actions that enact an unending repetition of its image. In *Sans soleil*, this motif appears both in the mise-en-scène (through its frequent use of temples and other religious imagery) as well as in the lyricism of the narrator who laments “the unbearable vanity of the West, that has never ceased to privilege being over non-being.”¹⁴ Facing this division between living and dead, between being and non-being, Bazin views cinematic realism as some manner of intermediary, giving material substance to the psychological and metaphysical preoccupation with death. In this way, his writings take on an almost religious quality, investing cinema with the ability to thwart the degenerative effects of time, to preserve

the present and recapture the past, and to realize the lost potential of a fractured world by reassembling it into the holistic world of the diegesis. The spectator is constantly drawing and projecting meaning from and upon the image; and it is this dynamism between the subject, time and the image that lies at the heart of Bazinian realism.

Overall, Bazin's primary relevance to this project is his insistence on the inseparability of aesthetics and subjectivity, which runs counter to Lacan's claim that "the moment of seeing [spectatorship] can intervene... only as a suture, a conjunction of the imaginary and the symbolic."¹⁵ In this scenario, the world is made visible only through the "play of light and opacity," and the structuring effects of the gaze bar the subject from an 'actual' encounter with the pro-filmic.¹⁶ As a result, reality is itself forever screened off from the subject, and the film medium serves as a double bind, trapping the spectator in an image of an image. This idea, developed in great detail by Christian Metz and other theorists of film suture, understands the medium as a material substance that speaks to the subject's desire for the imaginary, unitary world of the diegesis.¹⁷ The rigid divide between the spectator and the moving image constructs a passive, wholly specular audience who are not only distanced from the reality of the pro-filmic, but also divorced from their other senses (touch, hearing, etc.) that alert them to its presence.

Bazin, on the other hand, understands that the spectator does not 'lose himself' in the moving image, but rather is acutely aware of cinema's artifice. In fact, knowledge regarding the mechanical production of images is necessary because it allows him to recognize both the indexical object's historical quality (it's presence in the past) and its psychological import (safe passage through time). At the same time, though, and like

Lacan's description of the screen, Bazin also sees the film object as lacking in some ways: there is always a distance between the image and the pro-filmic, which pulls the spectator simultaneously in two directions. The crucial difference is that, whereas Lacan sees the attempt to fill in these gaps as futile and traumatic, Bazin champions this endeavor as cinema's "guiding myth... a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time."¹⁸ For him, it is almost as if cinema possesses a transcendent materiality that allows fragments of the pro-filmic reality to be assembled into a complete, unfractured world that is simultaneously historical and atemporal. This attempt to arrest time is no less impossible than Lacanian subject's attempt to avoid the Real, however, and crucial to both approaches is the attempt to avoid death, whether it be physical (in the case of Bazin) or psychic (in the case of Lacan).

What have emerged thus far from Bazin and Rosen's work are three essential aspects concerning indexicality, the subject, and representation. First is the subject's existential anxiety, manifesting as an obsession with capturing time as a means to circumventing death. This desire, of course, is untenable. Second, the indexical trace takes on an exaggerated importance to the subject because its existence attests to its safe passage through time, functioning as both a representation of, and artifact from the past. Finally, the importance of the indexical trace is dependent upon the subject's knowledge regarding the method of its production, specifically the mechanical operation of the photographic and cinematic apparatuses. With regard to memory, the first two points are also applicable: 1) the act of remembering allows one to deny death by "mastering" time; and 2) the presence of a memory alerts the subject that he or she did, in fact, exist in the

past. The third idea, however, has no precise correlation because the formation of memories is almost entirely a mystery, even to the subject who claims them as his or her own. The process can be either—and often simultaneously—reinforced or challenged by one’s interaction with the objects, images and language around us; and, once formed, accessing these memories is a psychic function whose materiality (at least outside of neurology) is negligible. In other words, there is no such thing as an ‘indexical memory’; and, as the following analyses of *La jetée* and *Sans soleil* will demonstrate, it therefore becomes all the more important how one chooses to model the phenomenon of remembering.

La jetée

La jetée is Chris Marker’s most well known work and has become a cult favorite since its initial release in 1962.¹⁹ To date it is his only foray into fictional narrative filmmaking, and I wish to begin with a brief overview of the historical circumstances surrounding its production. As Patrick Ffrench has noted, the film’s bleak tones and dark pessimism must be contextualized as part of a larger story of post-War Europe, which is “overdetermined... by the two events designated by the names Auschwitz and Hiroshima, names which recall the operation of a totalized form of power, the realization of which produces or intends to produce that effect of total erasure signified by the word *holocaust*.”²⁰ This is a useful perspective because it explains, for example, the jailors’ use of German and the underground camps in the film as stemming from a recent historical reality rather than purely aesthetic or fictive concerns. Furthermore, the film’s production and release coincided with both the end of the Algerian War (July 1962),

during which the French army admitted to torturing prisoners, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962), which left Europe helpless as the United States and the Soviet Union pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war. Given these political contexts, the protagonist's forced experimentation with time and the post-apocalyptic vision of Paris take on a gravitas that far exceeds the standard science-fiction tropes of a future dystopia.

In cultural terms, the work of André Bazin and others at *Cahiers du cinema* had been fomenting cinephilia since 1951, and by the early Sixties the New Wave had established itself as a dominant force in French cinema.²¹ This undoubtedly helped to open distribution opportunities for more experimental Left Bank directors like Marker, whose documentary *Cuba si!* had been censored in 1961 by the Commission de Contrôle des films cinématographiques for holding the potential to “undermine French interests in Martinique and Guadeloupe.”²² At the same time, Jacques Lacan was offering his annual seminars in Paris, impacting both cultural and academic circles and offering another important point of convergence. As we have seen, his semiotic approach, coupled with a ‘return to Freud’, offered a radical notion of subjectivity and yielded a rather dismal outlook on the inner workings of desire and the psyche. Taken as a whole these political, cultural, and intellectual currents provide a background against which *La jetée* can be read, and I will now examine sections that roughly correspond to the beginning, middle, and end of the film: the opening image of the airport, the sequences with the sleeping woman (in the park and in bed), and the film's closing two minutes. These close readings will be integrated with the film's larger thematic concerns, and throughout this section the terms used (memory, desire, history, subject, etc.) should be understood as belonging to the phallic/Lacanian framework unless otherwise noted.

La jetée begins with the sound of jet engine's scream. A moment later an image of Orly Airport fades in from a black screen. A terminal building (*la jetée*, or jetty, or pier) extends from the upper right quadrant and runs diagonally across the frame. It begins, or ends, just beyond the spectator's vision, and the camera's movement away from this location has already begun before the image begins its transition from dark to light. The long shadows across the ground signal that it is either approaching dusk or soon after dawn. As the jet engine's pitch descends from piercing howl to a low rumble, the camera's movement stops, revealing the enormity of the pier, and the sounds of machinery quickly become swallowed up by the voices of a chorus singing a liturgy or requiem.



Figure 1: Opening Image of the Pier at Orly

In these opening seconds, we have a concise visual representation of the Lacanian understanding of the mirror, the emergence of the subject, and his traumatic relation to the Real. The protagonist (the Man) will ultimately die at the end of the pier, the site of

the Real, but knowledge of this exists on the other side of an uncrossable chasm.

Although we do not yet know what keeps him from it, for the spectator this gap takes the form of a black screen. Both protagonist and viewer are thus denied access to the Real, and the camera movement away from the end of the pier relays this to the viewer. As Lacan writes, “the subject is there to discover *where it was*,” and it is only by watching the rest of the film unfold that this first image, which comes from black and returns to black, can attain its actual meaning.²³

This opening scene also encapsulates the central complexity of *La jetée*: the Bazinian tension between its narrative structure and its formal elements, which simultaneously and self-consciously articulate in two directions. The first direction is within the diegesis, through a procession of still frames (and a single eight-second filmed segment) that serve as snapshots in the protagonist’s memory. At a superficial level, one can see the jumbling of these memories as merely an outgrowth of the film’s science-fiction and time travel conceits, or even as a rather obvious double entendre regarding the cut-as-edit and cut-as-castration. More significantly though, it is also a key aspect of the mirror phase, where the subject, “caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to... an ‘orthopedic’ form of its totality.”²⁴ The opening shot of Orly represents a complete, unfractured memory, but this “unique image of peacetime” is assaulted, undermined, and called into question by all the images that follow.²⁵ The encounter with the Real (*tuché*) is beyond recollection, beyond remembering, and can only be approached through repetition, which “enables us to apprehend the real, in its dialectical effects, as originally unwelcome.”²⁶ In other words, the protagonist’s memories are not a product of his interaction with the world, but

rather a process whose unavoidable recurrence slowly inches him further and further inward, closer to the ‘unwelcome’ Real that is the origin of his trauma. The narrator tells us, “the child... was bound to remember,” evoking both the inevitability and the confining nature of the protagonist’s memory.²⁷ His interaction with the Bazinian real, the pro-filmic reality of the diegesis, is thus nothing more than an illusion for him, eclipsed by his confusion and imprisoned by the memories that follow.

The second direction is an outwards movement away from the diegesis towards the spectator, who is effectively positioned as the dialectical Other that calls the protagonist’s subjectivity into being. In this scene, the scream of the jet engine corresponds to the emergence of subjectivity, and although there is no protagonist yet, the *I* has nonetheless precipitated “primordial form, prior to being objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other.”²⁸ Whereas standard models of cinematic interpellation envision this in terms of a spectator’s identification with the camera (primary) or character (secondary), both tendencies are tempered in the film by the mediating voice of the narrator.²⁹ On the one hand, the spectator’s dependence upon the voice for narrative continuity serves as ballast against the pull of primary identification. On the other hand, the viewer, while not unsympathetic to the Man, is kept at arm’s length because the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist is unknown. Remarkably, *La jetée* inverts the paradigms of spectatorial identification by addressing the viewer both as him or herself as well as the protagonist’s extra-diegetic Other. Furthermore, the images—as fragmented memories—must seek validation in something other than the reality from which they came (the pro-filmic). They have been entirely severed from the protagonist’s material existence, leading him to wonder if the woman’s face, which he

“carried with him through the whole wartime,” had really existed or if he had merely “dreamed a lovely moment to catch up with the crazy moment that came next.”³⁰ He must seek confirmation from the Other that his memories are valid, and we, the spectators, oblige him. We are pulled along in his journey, searching for the meaning of this image of Orly that opens with a scream and ends in choir. As Lacan writes, “man’s desire is the desire of the Other,” and so the spectator follows after the protagonist to the hidden place of the Real.³¹ The opening image fades back into the blackness, and after a moment’s pause we hear the narrator’s voice for the first time along with a sentence in white letters written across the screen: “*Ceci est l’histoire d’un homme marqué par une image d’enfance.*” (This is the story of a man marked by an image of his childhood.)

These words mark the entrance from the Real into the Symbolic order of language, which structures the remainder of the tale for both spectator and protagonist. For the former, this is accomplished through formal devices, most prominently the use of horizontal montage. Within the visual realm, the viewer is immersed by the images of the Man’s memory, and one cannot help but be taken aback by the beauty of the film’s photography. At the same time, the narrator’s foreboding voice creates a sense of unease that prevents the spectator from growing too close to the protagonist. Since he relates the story from an unknown point after the narrative’s conclusion, every pronouncement is infused with a sense of anticipation. This disquieting voice and alluring images run at counter purposes, and the viewer can literally feel the friction between his desire for the protagonist to overcome his immobility and the knowledge that the Man’s fate has already been decided. Apropos Bazin, this tension brings the spectator face to face with his fascination regarding the moving image and its ability to arrest time. The still frames

maintain a firm, yet porous barrier between the viewer and the diegesis, which lends greater emotional effect to the instance of actual movement (the bedroom scene) and even more so to the ‘almost’ movement of the final scene. In turn, the discrepancies between these two types of movement make clear what is typically left unstated: cinema’s apparent movement is merely a consequence of the persistence of vision. As a result, the promise of ‘capturing’ time is proven to be illusory, and the viewer finds himself or herself in the uncomfortable position of experiencing both desire to direct the narrative (and thereby control the movement of time) as well as the realization of the utter impossibility of this ambition.

For the protagonist, his journey is structured by the memory of the woman’s face (the *objet a*). By holding onto this unattainable image, a world builds around the void, making it so that “nothing tells memories from ordinary moments.”³² The Man’s recollection of the woman’s face is one of these indistinguishable memories and has no indexicality except that provided by the protagonist’s own subjectivity, which he himself doubts. The past (the image of a pre-War utopia) therefore superimposes itself over the present (the material, dystopic world of the diegesis), but this solution proves untenable. The Man is ultimately unable to extricate himself from his own historical circumstances because the conditions of his material existence (corresponding to the Bazinian reality) have a presence beyond the capacity of his memory. In other words, he is held captive not only by his jailors and experimenters, but also by his own lost recollection of the Real, which circumscribes him within an endless repetition between two points, *fort* and *da*, beginning and ending with the moment of his death.

If the opening of *La jetée* corresponds to the emergence of subjectivity and the initial movement from the Real to the Symbolic, then the middle section can be understood as an embodiment of the Imaginary order. Here, on the thirtieth day of the experiment, the protagonist finally comes into contact with the woman: “Now he is sure she is the one. As a matter of fact, it’s the only thing he may be sure of.”³³ This is the false hope of escape from the oppressive reality of the protagonist’s present, a “lure” that Lacan associates with the screen and refers to as an “imaginary capture.”³⁴ The subject, in his attempts “to treat the real by the symbolic” necessarily “encounters the imaginary to a greater or lesser degree,” and this is precisely the protagonist’s trajectory.³⁵ This initial imaginary encounter “stuns him with its splendor” and by the time “he gets out of this fascination, the woman has gone.”³⁶ He returns, however, because this moment has ensnared him, offering an illusion of reconciling his trauma (the Real) through his willing participation in the compulsory experiment of his jailors (the Symbolic). As Slavoj Žižek writes, relationships between opposites “build a harmonious totality” in the Imaginary, and “each gives the other what the other lacks.”³⁷ In other words, the protagonist’s post-apocalyptic world of privation has been replaced with the fecund world of the past, and the Man’s memory can only be understood as an accomplice. In Bazinian terms, these memories can be understood as serving the same purpose as the Egyptian statuary, which attempted to enact “the preservation of life by a representation of life.”³⁸ By holding onto these images of the woman, the Man struggles to realize and maintain an imagined reality where the actual history of war has been effaced entirely, leaving “time [to build] itself painlessly around them.”³⁹ This self-delusion, which denies both the reality of his dystopic present and the Lacanian Reality of his traumatic past, begins to fracture,

however, when “another wave of time lifts him up” and the narrator tells us that the experimenters “probably give him another shot.”⁴⁰

What comes next is a sequence of nine shots of the woman sleeping on the bench, at a time after the Man “remembers there were gardens.”⁴¹ The first three transitions are smooth, dream-like dissolves, beginning with an image of the blindfolded protagonist giving way to the woman’s peaceful face (*Figure 2*). The sound of his heartbeat lingers, however, as do the threatening tones of his jailors speaking German. For the spectator, this use of horizontal montage prevents him from becoming lost in the image, drawing attention to the distance between his own subject position and that of the protagonist. Within the diegesis, the Man’s imaginary escape is being infiltrated by these sounds from the Symbolic; but, at least for this brief interlude, his memory pushes back the actual reality of his situation. The voices disappear, and two more close-ups of the woman’s face follow, each superimposing itself over the other (*Figures 3 and 4*).



Figure 2: Bench Shot 1



Figure 3: Bench Shot 2



Figure 4: Bench Shot 3

In this third shot we see the edge of the Man’s shoulder, whose presence in the frame is an intrusion to the tranquility of the woman’s slumber (*Figure 4*). He does not belong there and cannot stay because, although these memories are his, they are of moments that never existed. As for the spectator, the allure of these frozen moments that glide from one to the next are unstable, signaled by a jarring jump cut to the fourth image that relocates the man at a distance from the woman (*Figure 5*). The use of deep focus allows

the spectator to see a small garden beyond the fence, evoking the exile of Adam and Eve after the Fall and adding to the growing sense of mourning. The next shots cut from one to the next (*Figures 6 and 7*), moving him close to her once more as the narrator's voice relates the man's dawning horror: "Now, she sleeps in the sun. He knows that in this world, where he has just landed again for a little while, in order to be sent back to her—she is dead."⁴²



Figure 5: Bench Shot 4



Figure 6: Bench Shot 5



Figure 7: Bench Shot 6

As the protagonist's *objet a*, the woman's death would mean the death of his desire, and by extension the death of the subject. She is not dead, though, and the Man looks pensively at her as she sleeps, waiting for her to awaken (*Figure 8*). The softly melancholic sounds of a French horn accompany this image, and while her face is luminous and peaceful, his is marked by the harsh symmetry of light and dark that mimics the conflict between the Imaginary and Symbolic orders.



Figure 8: Bench Shot 7



Figure 9: Bench Shot 8



Figure 10: Bench Shot 9

The next image is, perhaps, of the same moment but seen from a different camera position ninety degrees clockwise from the previous one (*Figure 9*). The change in perspective inverts the composition of the image: now it is the Man who is seen in

profile, and the woman who is seen straight ahead. This new position also takes the spectator further away from the couple, framing them in medium shot with a thick iron bar creating a barrier between them. The final image in this brief sequence increases the distance even further, by raising the camera position so that it looks down on the couple (*Figure 10*). The vertical line separating them remains, but now one can also see the shadows cast on the ground behind them, which extend the image's sense of depth and subtly imply the distortion of time created by the Man's presence. The woman's eyes are opened slightly, and the narrator resumes his commentary: "She wakes up. He speaks again..."⁴³

The spectator soon learns that this day in the park was "the starting point for a whole series of tests, in which he would meet her at different times," pulling him even further away from the protagonist by aligning his knowledge with that of the narrator.⁴⁴ Thus begins the Man's forced repetition, his return time and again to the memory of the woman. It is as if by repeating this encounter enough times, he can transform the Imaginary into the Real and substitute the image of the woman for the trauma that he can sense but not recall. But, as Lacan writes, "remembering always involves a limit" and in the therapeutic setting, the subject's analysis is blocked by "non-conviction, resistance, [and] non-cure."⁴⁵ We find each of these obstacles in the protagonist's trips back in time, and the narrator tells us that the Man never knows "whether he has made it up" (non-conviction in the form of self-doubt), "whether he is driven" (resistance to the experiment itself), or "whether he is only dreaming" (non-cure in the form of psychosis).⁴⁶ In spite of this, the protagonist has no choice; he is pushed into the past by the unknown ambitions of the jailors and pulled by his own desire for the woman. As Rosen writes, "if

time must be captured because it is a threat, then the ultimate victory for subjectivity might be seen to be to do away with time, to make it irrelevant,” and this is precisely what these trips into the past attempt to do.⁴⁷ The cost, however, is that any substantial connection to protagonist’s material existence is lost entirely to the memory of her image, which provides no indexical link back to protagonist’s pro-filmic reality. These returns to the woman, who sometimes “seems frightened,” and sometimes “leans over him,” are an attempt to flee both the Bazinian real and the Lacanian Real by losing himself in an imaginary world far away from that of his present.⁴⁸ The second sequence of the sleeping woman demonstrates the impossibility of this task.

The ‘bedroom scene’ of *La jetée* begins much like the scene in the park, with close-ups of the woman’s face dissolving from one into the other (*Figure 11*). The chirping of birds is the only sound, and the progression of eleven still images mimics actual movement, almost as if the protagonist’s memory is willing her into life. His desire to connect with the Other is possible only in his imagination, however, because to accomplish this task would be to bridge the gap separating him from the object of his desire and repair the originary split that is the source of his own subjectivity. The twelfth transition envisions what this might look like, as the still image dissolves to a filmed segment of the woman opening her eyes, looking at the camera, and blinking three times.





Figure 11: Bed Shots 1-12 (left to right)

The most important aspect of this sequence, of course, are the eight seconds when the *La jetée* abandons its formal adherence to still images. This aesthetic choice brings the spectator and protagonist closer together than at any other point in the film, allowing the viewer the familiarity of the moving image and freeing the Man from the stasis of the photograph. For the spectator, this shot takes on a secondary significance, however, because although the movement is familiar to the cinematic experience as a whole, it is made strange by the nineteen minutes of montage that preceded it. Although Bazin cautioned, “the technique of analytical cutting tends to destroy in particulate the ambiguity inherent in reality,” the use of montage in Marker’s film does precisely the opposite, emphasizing the uncertainty of each image and implicitly referencing the subjective reality of the protagonist’s memory from which they come.⁴⁹ Paradoxically, it is this brief instant of movement that causes the viewer to reflect upon the still images

that come before and after; each one is “a fragment of concrete reality in itself multiple and full of ambiguity, whose meaning emerges only after the fact, thanks to other imposed facts between which the mind establishes certain relationships.”⁵⁰ In other words, attention is drawn both to the role of the spectator as co-creator of meaning as well as to the formal choices made not just in *La jetée*, but in all filmmaking.

These seconds are equally important to the protagonist because the motion signals the only ‘real’ moment in his life. As in the park, he watches the woman sleeping peacefully, but this time the Man is unable to see himself in this picture, and this lack of ‘self’ can be interpreted in two ways. First, from the Bazinian perspective, the protagonist can be understood as realizing the myth of cinema: the unification of image and reality. From this vantage point, the man’s memories are real. His recollection of the past has fully supplanted the present moment, and dynamism of the moving image embodies reality more truthfully than the frozen, lifeless image of the photograph. From the Lacanian perspective, the point of reference is not the scene on the bench, but the opening sequence at Orly, which also began mid-process. The key difference is that it is the image itself—not the gaze/camera—that is moving, and this loss of the gaze is the loss of the protagonist’s control. As Lacan writes, “from the moment that [the] gaze appears, the subject tries to adapt himself to it,” but in this instance the protagonist is no longer able to adapt himself to his memory.⁵¹ The woman’s motion, emerging from the stillness, signifies the approach of the *objet a*; and it becomes clear that the Man’s desire is not simply to obtain the woman, but to gain mastery over time itself. The Bazinian and Lacanian models overlap in this moment, but shake violently in an attempt to make sense of its meaning. Is it a moment of transcendence, reinforced by the crescendo of the

singing birds, or do their rising voices signal the calamitous approach of the Real? The answer hangs just above the question, waiting, until the Man is brought violently back from the imaginary world of his memory to the real world of his present. This transition occurs just as the woman was beginning to fully open her eyes, and it is a castration not unlike the subject's initial encounter with the mirror. The bedroom scene ends with a cut from the face of the woman with open eyes (*Figure 12*) to the stark visage of the jailor (*Figure 13*), accompanied by the panicked sounds of the Man's heartbeat.



Figure 12: Woman with Open Eyes



Figure 13: The Jailor

This marks the beginning of the end for the protagonist, and soon another round of experiments begins that propels him into a future “better protected than the past.”⁵² As the final moments of *La jetée* make clear, all of the imagined moments with the woman occur in a sort of limbo between the initial trauma of his childhood and his inevitable return to the reality of his death.

The final ninety seconds of *La jetée* underscore the repetition inherent in the Lacanian model of subjectivity by returning the protagonist to the site/sight of his original trauma, and the film ends at the same time and place as it began: “the main pier at Orly in the middle of this hot pre-war Sunday afternoon.”⁵³ The spectator is given an establishing shot of the terminal building, much closer than the one that opened the film,

and the protagonist thinks, “in a confused way, that the child he had been was due to be there, too” (*Figure 14*).⁵⁴ He is closer to the Real than he has been since the title sequence, when the long shot of the airport faded in from the black screen, but significantly the end of the pier is still obscured even from ground level. The narration explains this close, yet unseen perspective by saying that the child is “due to be there.” In other words, the moment has not yet arrived, and therefore the meaning of this encounter is suspended a few moments longer. The camera then cuts to a close-up of the Man’s face, and the narrator tells us that he is looking for “a woman’s face at the end of the pier” (*Figure 15*).⁵⁵ As Lacan writes, “the real finds itself, in the subject, to a very great degree the accomplice of the drive,” and it is precisely the Man’s desire for the woman that has pulled him back to the site/sight of the Real.⁵⁶ Moreover, the protagonist’s eyes—presumably damaged by the “painful tests” required to send him into the future—are now shielded by a pair of dark sunglasses, which obscure his vision of the Real even though he is physically in its presence. The next cut is an eyeline match that finally shows what he is looking for: the woman is standing in the background, leaning up against the railing, and there is a silhouette of second figure standing between her and the protagonist (*Figure 16*).⁵⁷ Upon closer inspection, however, this ‘eyeline’ match proves not to belong to the eye of the protagonist, but that of the spectator as indicated by the black peephole framing the image in the lower left and right corners. The viewer is seeing something that the Man is not, and although the meaning of the second figure is still ambiguous, the rising sound of the jet engine signals to the spectator that the moment of the film’s beginning is returning once again.



Figure 14: Establishing Shot



Figure 15: Close-up



Figure 16: Eyeline Match

As the narration continues, the pace of the editing speeds up, and one shot jumps to the next as the man runs closer and closer to the end of the pier. His mad sprint is a final attempt to invest his memory with the fluidity of actual movement, and he does indeed achieve some semblance of motion (*Figure 17*).



Figure 17: Sequential Shots of Man Running

The horizontal composition of each shot has the Man blocked sequentially on the left, center and right portions of the frame, creating an illusion of lateral movement; and the vertical composition (top, bottom, top) mimics the verité style of a handheld camera. Each of these elements, mise-en-scène and cinematography, correspond to what Bazin termed “the plastics of the image,” and the rapidity of the editing simulates movement in much the same way as traditional filmmaking employs “the resources of montage” to provide a seamless viewing experience for the spectator.⁵⁸ The difference, however, is that the cut from one still frame to the next occurs at a point just below the threshold of the retina’s persistence of vision, and therefore attention is drawn to the contrived quality of the movement through the jerky motion of the image. As a result, the mechanical processes implicit in cinema’s formal construction are brought to the fore, which

challenges the sense of security provided to the spectator by the so-called ‘moving’ image. In other words, these gaps in continuity evoke the gap between past and present and call into question cinema’s ability to arrest time. The Bazinian paradox regarding the spectator’s psychic investment in cinema, always implicit, becomes explicit in *La jetée* through the montage’s simultaneous simulation and fragmentation of movement.

Furthermore, the final scene also jumps back and forth between the restricted point-of-view of the protagonist (close-ups of the woman) and that of an omniscient observer, whose viewpoint corresponds to either the spectator (as indicated by the peephole effect) or narrator (long shots that show the spatial relations of the people on the pier). In this way, motion is associated with danger by disorienting the spectator and provoking a sense of anxiety that sharply contrasts the bedroom scene, where the smooth dissolves of the woman, leading up to the actual movement, soothe the viewer with their dream-like transitions. As a result, the reality of the Man’s plight is heightened, allowing the viewer to experience the same panic and sense of foreboding. Bazin writes:

‘Realism’ consists not only showing us a corpse, but also of showing it to us under conditions that re-create certain physiological or mental givens of natural perception, or, more accurately, under conditions that seek equivalents for these givens.⁵⁹

In this instance, the protagonist’s mental givens correspond to the approach of the terrifying Lacanian Real: a return to the missed encounter that began the film, but whose meaning (death) was too traumatic for the subject to acknowledge. The editing recreates these psychological equivalents (the repetition of trauma and trauma of repetition) by allowing the viewer a glimpse of what awaits the Man: a figure in a dark suit on the left side of the pier (*Figure 18*). This knowledge comes too late, however, and as the camera

cuts to a close-up of the protagonist's killer, he finally recognizes "the man who had trailed him since the camps" (*Figure 19*).⁶⁰ The killer has menacing set of extended goggles in front of his eyes, and the Man's sunglasses take on a second meaning now, indicating that he has been fully interpellated into the Symbolic order of his own present. As the bullet strikes him down, the protagonist finally knows that "there [is] no way out of time" (*Figure 20*).

It is also important to note that the peephole effect returns in these shots, growing from three to four rounded black corners of the frame (*Figures 18 and 20*). It as if the viewer is being slowly cinched out of the story altogether, and it becomes even clearer that the close-ups belong to the protagonist whereas the long shots specifically acknowledge the spectator as occupying a place outside the diegesis. This is not the forceful distantiating found in Godard, but far more subtle, allowing the narrative's momentum to continue unimpeded while still undeniably signaling the presence of the apparatus. This choice in framing not only epitomizes the Bazinian tension regarding cinema's contradictory impulses, but also occurs just as the film reaches its climax and resolution, precisely when the spectator's identificatory tendency runs the greatest risk of overriding his or her awareness of being a spectator rather than a participant in the drama. As a result of these nuanced aesthetic choices, the final scene not only allows the viewer to see the Man's corpse, but also holds him dangling just above it, out of reach, waiting for it to hit the ground.



Figure 18: The Approach



Figure 19: The Killer



Figure 20: The Death

Within the diegesis, the next image is the most important because now the Man learns “that this haunted moment he had been granted to see as a child was the moment of his own death” (*Figure 21*).⁶¹ He is blocked halfway between the woman and his killer, facing her but falling towards him; and the triangular composition, with the Man frozen between his killer, the woman, and the ground, is significant because it corresponds to the orders of the Symbolic (the killer), Imaginary (the woman), and Real (the pier). As Žižek explains, “the Real is defined as a point of the immediate coincidence of the two poles: each pole passes immediately into its opposite; each is already in itself its own opposite.”⁶² In this case, the woman and the killer constitute the opposite poles, and the protagonist is not only suspended in time, but also between realms as he is propelled forward by his desire for the woman and thrown backwards by the force of his killer’s projectile. This vacillation between the Symbolic and the Imaginary has been the only activity constituting the subject, and the moment of death, the dissolution of the subject, is understood as the inevitable return to the Real of non-existence. The Man thus falls onto the pier, succumbing to the inescapable pull of gravity, while the silhouetted figure of the woman lingers in the background; the spectator finally sees the image that was present in the black screen that began the film (*Figure 22*).



Figure 21: *The Triangle*



Figure 22: *Final Image of the Pier at Orly*

Now, the true meaning of the Man's "memory of a twice-lived fragment of time" is made apparent: he has experienced his own death as both witness and decedent, and his subjectivity thus exists between two points.⁶³ As Zizek writes, "Lacan conceives this difference between the two deaths as the difference between real (biological) death and its symbolization, the 'settling of accounts', the accomplishment of symbolic destiny."⁶⁴ In *La jetée*, the symbolic death occurs in childhood when, unable to accept the trauma he witnesses (an encounter with his adult self as Other), the Man simultaneously inscribes and disavows the Real moment as a memory. The second point occurs at the same instant, but from the adult perspective, when he actually experiences the real, biological death that had existed previously only as a fragmented moment of time. The woman's presence at this scene is especially important because "this place 'between deaths', a place of sublime beauty as well as terrifying monsters, is the site of *das Ding*, of the real-traumatic kernel in the midst of the symbolic order."⁶⁵ In other words, the woman's face is the *objet a*, and the Man's memory of this moment is the Thing, which must be simultaneously repressed and repeated. It is this dialectic that forces him both to construct the Imaginary images of her sleeping on the bench and in bed (repetition of the memory in modified configurations), as well as to follow her to the Symbolic sight/actual

site of the Real (the return of the repressed). By doing so, the protagonist fulfills his symbolic destiny and thus forsakes his chance to escape into the future and be free of the past trauma that defines his subjectivity.

Regarding History, the Subject, and Phallic Memory

What emerges from *La jetée*, in spite of its stylistic beauty and novel narrative construction, is a depressing portrait of history, subjectivity, and memory. I will address each of these areas, beginning with the film's conception of a history with no solace in past, no comfort in the present, and no hope in the future. Its tone is bleak, its shape is circular, and one event mechanistically follows the next without hope or possibility. All these things are obvious enough, and so the question becomes: what underlying theoretical foundation gives rise to such an image of history?

To answer this question, we must first revisit Phillip Rosen, who provides a useful lexicon for talking about the pastness of film images. He argues that Bazinian ideas regarding indexicality and realism coincide with notions of historicity, which consists of two ideas: historiography, "the writing of history," and history, "the actual past the writing claims to convey."⁶⁶ In film, historiography is primarily a visual function, and in *La jetée* the importance of the static images cannot be overemphasized. Each frame is a moment cut out of time, robbed of the very movement that provides its ability to simulate the pro-filmic. This stasis prevents the spectator from being subsumed by the story, and the film's formal construction self-consciously breaks any possibility for a viewer's complete "subjective investment in the image... as 'objectivity'" by replacing it with the fragmented landscape of the protagonist's memory.⁶⁷ In doing so, Marker highlights the

spectator's desire to invest in the image without fully allowing them to do so and, in the process, calls into question the efficacy of the indexical trace as a means of circumventing time. This does not mean, however, that the film fails to present a model of history; rather, *La jetée* offers a historiography whose point of reference is the subjective, ahistorical Reality of the protagonist as opposed to the material, Bazinian reality of the pro-filmic. Memory thus becomes the only anchor connecting the image to the past, wholly dependent upon the subject and therefore falling victim to the chain of signifiers that trace back to the originary separation of the mirror phase. As a result, the past is not represented through artifacts or indexical objects, but only through events that "claim remembrance on account of their scars."⁶⁸

Furthermore, by tying the moment of personal trauma and individual death to the destruction of Paris, the danger illustrated in *La jetée* is that history itself becoming a closed-loop or self-fulfilling prophecy. The trip into the future, for example, and the willingness of "the men of the world to come" to help this "slag of another time" ensures not just of the survival of human race, but also of the authoritarian regime that subjects the protagonist to their experiments.⁶⁹ The Man is a semi-willing participant in these atrocities because he is driven by his desire to reunite with the lost object, the image of the woman that preceded the nuclear blast. But, by going into the future and 'saving' the present, he actually ensures that he will never make it back to her, or, more precisely, that he will make it back to what that moment truly was: an encounter with the Real. In other words, history becomes the guarantor of individual trauma, which in turn serves as both the start and end points of history. The film's formal construction reinforces this interpretation because, although the spectator moves between and over images (through

the montage and camera movement), the figures within the diegesis are frozen in time, completely impotent to change what lies ahead. History is no longer a source of inspiration or potentialities for the future, but rather acts as simultaneously oppressive and repressive. The distinction between the subjective and material pasts is therefore obliterated in the film, leaving memory and loss as the sole supports for the protagonist's engagement with the present: historiography becomes repetition, history becomes trauma, and the present moment becomes nothing more than an empty structure allowing future and past to continually reinscribe one another.

Given this vision of history, the next question becomes: what is the subject's relationship to the pro-filmic, Bazinian reality? By definition, this reality can be engaged only in the present moment, and as shown in *La jetée*, the phallic subject's strategy can be described as avoidance and delusion, best exemplified by the man's ongoing Imaginary relationship with the woman. By the time of their encounter in the museum, for example, the protagonist believes that he has successfully escaped the reality of his own present.⁷⁰ As the two of them walk amongst the lifeless animals, the narrator tells us the Man "may move without trouble" and that, like time itself, "the girl seems also to be tamed."⁷¹ The fallacy of this reasoning soon becomes apparent, though, because this rendezvous in the museum proves to be their last. The protagonist, whose distorted memory provides an escape into the past, is yanked back into the present by his jailors and then forced into the future. It is a dialectical tension that destroys him in the process, torn apart by the pull of his flawed memory and the unstoppable thrust of time.

The subject's attitude towards the pro-filmic is thus characterized by anxiety, and he inevitably experiences reality as a source of alienation. History, however, continues

on its march towards the future, and as a result the protagonist comes to apprehend time itself as the Other. In this way the present historical moment is like the mirror stage, “whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation.”⁷² For the protagonist, this exists beyond the present moment (which is justifiably the source of both) and into the past and future. In the case of the former, his memory’s insufficiency is indicated by the need for repetition. His desire compels him to return to the woman; but, when she opens her eyes in the bedroom, the anticipation of this moment jerks him out of this imagined recollection and back to the real face of his jailor. With regard to the latter, the Man rejects the time travelers’ offer to “accept him as one of their own” because he knows “this pacified future” must necessarily be born from the society of his jailors.⁷³ For the phallic subject, the idea of peace holds no appeal because it would mean the healing of trauma and the eradication of his desire; and yet, in spite of this, the Man knows that by fulfilling his mission, he has guaranteed the arrival of the future. Upon his return, “he [is] transferred to another part of the camp” where “he only [waits] to be executed.”⁷⁴ The protagonist’s ability to escape the reality of his situation, the immanence of the present moment, the material circumstances of his historical existence—all these have been taken from him. The past is now closed, and as Rosen writes, “it is in order to deal with the continual onset of the future... that an investment in the possibilities of freezing the past is incorporated into the desires and imaginative projections involved in Bazin’s cherished realism.”⁷⁵ For the protagonist, however, there is no reality to invest in other than the repressed memory of the Real. The woman’s face and his desire to return to it are the only supports for his subjectivity; without them, he does not exist. Furthermore, given that the woman’s face at the end of the pier signifies

the moment of his murder, the protagonist's compulsion to return to it can also be read as a subconscious desire for death, which, according to Bazin, "is nothing but the victory of time."⁷⁶ The realization of desire is foreclosed to the phallic subject, however; and rather than being able to engage with time, to accept the necessity of his death, the Man severs himself from the pro-filmic, historical reality and exists solely as an alienated subject, who conceives of time as the Other and uses his memory to avoid the present, even though it inevitably leads back to the moment of his death.

Having established *La jetée's* conception of history and the relationship between the subject and the pro-filmic, it is now possible to offer some final conclusions regarding phallic memory and to connect these ideas to the terminology provided by Lacan's theory of the gaze. First and foremost, this type of memory must be understood as fundamentally lacking, both in the sense of its functioning and its motivation. In the first case, this is demonstrated by the Man's complete misapprehension of the film's opening moment. He incorrectly believes that the woman's face holds meaning because it represents the beauty of peacetime, of a childhood before the destruction of Paris, and of a utopia that preceded the establishment of an authoritarian regime. In fact, this moment takes hold of him for exactly the opposite reason. It is the scene of ultimate annihilation, and the Man's demise actually comes before that of the city and society of his childhood. This realization leads to the second element of lack, the nature of the protagonist's desire. His apprehension of time as the Other forces him to exclude time from his memories, but doing so eviscerates them of their essence—pastness and irretrievability. As a result the Man's constitution as a historical entity is thrown into disarray, and his misrecognition of this initial encounter on the pier causes him to hold onto a moment that never existed in

the way he thought it did. So, while the Sunday afternoon at Orly is a real, historical moment, the past he desires is nonetheless foreclosed to him because of the unbridgeable gap between his interpretation of that day and its actual meaning. It is an impossible, unattainable memory that corresponds to the *objet a*; and the woman's face, which he remembers as a vision of beauty and (mis)construes as an image of salvation, actually signifies an encounter with the Real. This misremembered image functions as the Thing—continually resurfacing, continually being repressed, and serving as the missed encounter around which the Man creates his Symbolic (the jailors) and Imaginary (the sleeping woman) relationships with the world. His subject position is one of radical schizophrenia, completely divorced from a historical reality, with time as the terrifying, inaccessible Other that provides both his desire (the past) and identity (his memory). Since the Man's memory cuts him off both from the present moment and a material, substantive existence, there is no sublime object for him to approach. As a result, his journey becomes one of endless return as the Man circles around the memory of a moment whose meaning vacillates back and forth, *fort* and *da*, between misapprehension and self-annihilation.

III: SANS SOLEIL AND MATRIXIAL MEMORY

The previous chapter offered an exploration of Bazinian film theory and some conclusions regarding the phallic subject, history and memory drawn from *La jetée*. In this chapter, I will address the same concerns as they arise in *Sans soleil* and use these ideas to explore the intersections and disjunctions between Bazin's aesthetics and Ettinger's theory of the subject. To begin, I will touch on key political, technological and cultural developments that occurred after the release of *La jetée* and explore their impact on *Sans soleil*. Doing so will not only contextualize the film, but also situate Marker's evolving aesthetic sense as a response of specific historical realities. The next section will provide an overview of Krasna and the Narrator, whose presences dominate *Sans soleil*, and who are associated respectively with the visual and aural components of Bazin's horizontal montage. A series of scene analyses will follow, illustrating how the film conceives of history, trans-subjectivity, and matrixial memory. Integral to these close readings will be an examination of how *Sans soleil* incorporates Bazinian ideas into the matrixial framework, ultimately addressing problematic aspects of Ettinger's theorization regarding the status of the artwork. The chapter will conclude with a summary of matrixial memory and how its conception of time compares to that presented by the phallic framework. The differences between these ways of conceiving of the subject and his or her relationship to the past will problematize the notion of memory as a non-gendered mechanism. Ultimately, I will argue that, by acknowledging the

asymmetric reciprocity between past and present, matrixial memory is not only more compatible than phallic memory with the presence of a historical, pro-filmic reality, but also allows for a more open encounter with the future.

After *La jetée*

While *La jetée* is Chris Marker's most well known work, *Sans soleil* is undoubtedly his most ambitious. Released in 1983, more than two decades separate it from *La jetée*, and while it may be true that its larger scope can be at least partially explained by Marker's development as a filmmaker, it is equally important to mention the tremendous political, technological and cultural upheavals that transpired between the two films. One of the most important events, which finds resonance in all three categories, is the Paris uprising in May of 1968. Groups such as the Situationist International shut down the city, spraying graffiti slogans throughout the streets of Paris and standing in opposition to both the French Communist Party and the government of Charles de Gaulle. Demonstrations of solidarity between workers and students quickly spread throughout the nation, aligning large portions of French society with anti-colonial and anti-imperial movements around the world as well as connecting back to France's own history of internal political strife and revolution. After a month of unrest de Gaulle's government reasserted itself by dissolving the National Assembly and calling for new elections, which ultimately reaffirmed the state's power.¹ In large part, these political events were prefigured the year before by Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, which offered a harsh critique of global capitalism and argued that images had become a means of maintaining the economic relations of global capitalism. Debord conceived of the

spectacle not as “a collection of images” but as “a social relation between people that is mediated by images,” which led an entire cadre of filmmakers, ranging from Godard to Marker, to question the political economy of cinema.² As noted in the first chapter, these political developments likely informed Marker’s involvement with the collective SLON starting in 1967, and ten years passed before Marker attached his name as director to another film.

This movement towards a de-personalized, highly politicized style of filmmaking can be understood as part of a larger trend in post-1968 French film culture. In her book *May '68 and Film Culture*, Sylvia Harvey situates this tendency within the larger historical-aesthetic context of earlier movements such as Formalism and Futurism, which problematized not just a specific point of view, but “the very notion of the point of view itself, the idea that what the art object offers is a single of position or point of view from which the world can be viewed by the reader or spectator.”³ *Sans soleil*, both as historiography and artwork, is properly situated as part of this endeavor. On the one hand, the film’s shifting temporalities dislocate the spectator from the illusion of a stable place outside of time, from which a single view on history might be obtained. On the other hand, the film’s aesthetics consistently emphasize the myriad social and psychological contingencies upon which the image depends upon in order to communicate meaning. These contingencies are themselves inherently political, and the thrust of French filmmakers after the events of May was to draw attention to these underlying realities of cultural production. Rather than possessing “a complete autonomy within history or within the social formation,” post-1968 films sought to acknowledge the practices associated with their production by incorporating them into the artwork itself.⁴

In *Sans soleil*, this becomes one of the primary discourses, and the production of images is directly called into question through the use of narration, which consistently and explicitly evokes the act of filming as well as the post-production activity of image manipulation. More significant, however, is the way in which the film utilizes new forms of image-making, found footage and treated images, in an attempt to draw attention to the processes of cultural production.

Marker's first two post-SLON projects were *Le Fond de l'air est Rouge* (Grin Without A Cat, 1977)⁵ and *Quand le siècle a pris formes* (When the Century Took Shape, 1978), both of which are essential to understanding the use of found footage and treated images in *Sans soleil*. In the first instance, *Le Fond de l'air est Rouge* attempts the impossible task of documenting the complexity of the late Sixties and early Seventies global political unrest by using "the parts that never got into finished films."⁶ Comprised almost exclusively of others' footage, the film serves as a requiem of sorts for the failed revolutionary struggles of the preceding decade, and Marker's choice of formal construction highlights how much of history transpires without ever being codified into lasting historiographies. The significance of this reappropriation, reconfiguration, and redeployment of existing texts brings attention to the realities left behind, the images that were discarded, or—to paraphrase the narrator of *Sans soleil*—"the empty bottles history throws out the windows." Furthermore, by weaving together numerous pre-existing texts with segments shot by Marker, the film's unusual reliance on previous film documents decenters the director as the definitive source of meaning.⁷ The authors of past texts are therefore necessarily present in *Sans soleil*, adding their own voices to that of Marker's in a manner that is alternatively (and ambiguously) at odds and congruent. With respect to

treated images, Marker produced his first video installation *Quand le siècle a pris formes*, which used an image synthesizer to distort archive footage from World War One and the Russian Revolution.⁸ The advent of video technologies marks a key historical-technological moment because it allows for inexpensive, imaginative manipulations of the image. More importantly, the modification of images in *Sans soleil* (both Marker's and those of others) through the use of a Spectre image synthesizer breaks down the logic of indexical similarity, which opens up the film to imaginative readings and reinterpretation of its images.⁹

Finally, it is essential to note the emergence and rise of feminism as a powerful cultural, social and political force, especially during the decade of the Seventies. At the time of *La jetée*'s release, men dominated both the practice and theorization of cinema, but the intervening years saw a shift in the cultural landscape. Most notable was the rise of filmmaker/theorists like Laura Mulvey, who used Lacanian notions as the building blocks of feminist psychoanalytic film theory and attempted to envision a cinema free of the structuring effect of the male gaze.¹⁰ While it would be inaccurate to describe *Sans soleil* as explicitly concerned with the aims of feminism, its form of address—structured by Krasna and the female Narrator who reads his letters—cannot help but be interpreted as acknowledging feminist concerns. As Stella Bruzzi writes:

At times [the female voice] indicates a disturbing lack of independent thought... There are other moments, however, when the narrator comments upon what she is told, and there are quite protracted passages between the observations initiated by explicit directive from Krasna during which it becomes unclear whether she is voicing independent thoughts... or whether she is merely continuing with the reading and relaying of the letters.¹¹

This observation points to the problem of how to assign and/or determine authorship and agency in *Sans soleil*; and, while accurate in its conclusion regarding the confusion between Krasna and the Narrator, Bruzzi seems to believe that words spoken belong to *either* Krasna *or* the Narrator. This interpretation reinforces the self/Other paradigm of the phallic framework by implicitly holding the two figures in binary opposition to one another; but as the next section will demonstrate, the relationship between Krasna and the Narrator is matrixial rather than phallic and the ‘two’ entities actually constitute a single, yet non-identical matrixial subject-as-encounter.

Krasna and the Narrator

To begin, I want to elaborate briefly to the question of agency in *Sans soleil*. While information in the film is ostensibly conveyed through Krasna’s letters, his voice is never heard, and the letters are read by a woman never shown on camera. There is a tension between them, and the spectator is confronted with a problem of attributing agency and meaning: does it belong to Krasna, who wrote the letters but remains silent; or to the Narrator, who propels the narrative by speaking the words of another? Complicating this question is Marker’s use of horizontal montage, which not only confronts the spectator with the simultaneity of visual and aural meaning, but also continually reverses the subjectivity to which the image and voice are attached. This allows for a wide continuum of interpretations: the images can be understood as either Krasna’s film footage or his memory of the events depicted; and the constant mediating factor of the woman’s voice also makes it possible to conceive of the images as *neither* memories *nor* actual events, but rather her imaginings regarding Krasna’s letters and/or

footage. A radical displacement of the spectator results, making it impossible to definitively assign authorship to either Krasna or the woman speaking. Therefore, attributing a singular agency to either of them is imprudent because not only are Krasna and the Narrator indistinguishable; *they are also not the same*.

The ambiguity of address is one of the most striking features of *Sans soleil*, and the presence of these disparate, indistinguishable ‘authors’ is the most compelling reason for employing Ettinger’s matrixial framework because it conceives of subjectivity not as singular entity, defined and separate/castrated from the Other, but rather as an encounter. She writes:

Matrixial subjectivity-as-encounter [is] a beyond-the-phallus feminine field related (in both men and women) to plural, partial, and shared unconscious, trauma, phantasy and desire having imaginary and symbolic impact (and not only an ex-sistence in the Real).¹²

In other words, the matrixial subject is always multiple because it is premised upon the interaction of several entities (initially the pre-birth relations of child and m/Other), and in the case of *Sans soleil*, Krasna and the Narrator constitute a single matrixial subject-as-encounter. Each of them is a partial subject and a partial object, intimately relating to one another without being separate entities. As a consequence, these matrixial subjects necessarily share one another’s fantasies and traumas, which allow one to articulate relationships that are not premised on castration. As Griselda Pollock notes, the matrixial framework “moves beyond the phallic oppositions: masculine/feminine, phallic/other, to open space for what co-exists with/beside a phallic logic.”¹³ The adoption of this theoretical perspective therefore addresses the problem of gender binarism implicit in Bruzzi’s critique, while still allowing her insightful observation that the blurring of these

boundaries causes “the central relationship between image and words, traditionally so logical, becomes, in [*Sans soleil*], fluid and mutable.”¹⁴ In other words, the matrixial subject-as-encounter has formal and aesthetic implications for the film itself, which I will examine by looking more closely at the camera man and the woman who reads his letters.

Krasna and the Narrator are associated respectively, and for obvious reasons, with the visual and aural components of Bazin’s horizontal montage. Just as each of them is a partial subject, they are also partial aesthetic components, whose impact and meaning must be understood as operating laterally and occurring simultaneously. Unfortunately, the limits of language (itself dependent upon the phallic logic of signification) require that one discuss them as if they were separate entities, which can inadvertently and incorrectly lead one to the conclusion that Krasna and the Narrator have two separate sets of desires, traumas and fantasies.¹⁵ In fact, the matrixial does not serve as replacement for the phallic; they are parallel activities, just as the visual and aural aspects of the montage are intertwined without being same. This being the case, I will sometimes associate Krasna with the phallic/visual and the Narrator with the matrixial/aural in order to articulate more precisely specific aspects of *Sans soleil*. Although this distinction is largely arbitrary, it provides three advantages: 1) confusion is avoided by maintaining consistent gender designations; 2) it provides the ability to talk about the frequent tensions between the visual and aural realms; and 3) Lacan and Ettinger’s respective metaphors for subjectivity (the camera and the antennae) take on familiar technological connotations typically associated with the visual and aural reception. With this understanding in place, I will now turn to the figures themselves.

As established by Bruzzi's work, the Narrator's gender is crucial to *Sans soleil* because it serves to undermine the authority of the documentary form, but the cause of this effect goes deeper than simple opposition between masculine and feminine. As Ettinger writes "the Voice as a psychic element can only be accounted for in relation to an entirely different psychic sphere" because it—unlike relations modeled on the gaze—is experienced inside the uterus, long before the subject enters the visual realm, and even before the infant experiences the trauma of childbirth.¹⁶ As a result, the womb "becomes a matrixial acoustic-resonance camera obscura, partial-objects and partial-subjects are not separated by a cut but are rather borderlinked by frequencies, waves, resonance, and vibrations."¹⁷ In other words, the transmission of aural information is aligned with the matrixial sphere because it is within the context of the uncleft, yet unfused relationship of mother/child that this type of awareness is first engendered. Aurality therefore maintains a certain link to the Real, and "even more effectively than the Gaze, the Voice as a matrixial erotic antenna for psychic emission and reception testifies to the metamorphic processes of transformation."¹⁸ The Narrator's voice functions in precisely this manner: maintaining a borderlink not only between herself and Krasna, but also with-in-between other matrixial entities (Scottie/Krasna and Hayao/Marker, for instance), temporalities (past/present/future), and methods of inscription (historiography/memory).

These borderlinks are fostered primarily through the mesmerizing effect of the Narrator's voice. Reading Krasna's letters, she tirelessly reminds the spectator that these words are from an earlier time, telling us that "He wrote me... He wrote... He used to write me... He told me... He spoke to me... He described to me... Later he told me..."¹⁹ This is repetition without redundancy, however, and unlike the model of repression and

return portrayed in *La jetée*, the matrixial return brings the subject to a slightly different place, a slightly different self—a sense of reunion without leaving. Moreover, these constant pronouncements emphasize that the information conveyed to the spectator is doubly mediated, both by Krasna, whose letters describe only some of the images he films, and by the Narrator herself, whose phrasing and tone of voice inflect his words with an added layer of meaning. The horizontal montage confronts the viewer with a *mise en abyme* of identification whereby the subjectivities of the cameraman and the woman become indistinguishable, yet unquestionably not the same. The Narrator and Krasna are engaged in a constant “trans-individual exchange, of transformation and affective ‘communication’, between/with-in several matrixial entities.”²⁰ As a result, the film becomes simultaneously dizzying and coherent, and as in the process of metamorphosis, the “perceived borderlines dissolve” between the Narrator and Krasna “[turning] both of [them] into partial subjects.”²¹ Neither of them is complete in and of themselves and it only through the combination of his words and her voice that layers of meaning accrue.

A second importance of the Narrator’s invocations is their emphasis on the time elapsed between the writing and the reading of the letter, which forces one to question problems of temporality and its inscription. Furthermore, one cannot help but wonder about other temporal gaps that are even more uncertain: the gap between mailing the letter and receiving it, the gap between receiving and reading, or the gap between reading and speaking. The narration tends to elongate these distances through its consistent use of the past tense and through various pauses where the Narrator falls silent altogether. Images, however, carry the same immediacy no matter how far removed they are from

the event shown, and it is only through technological traces (black and white film stock or the scanning lines of video, for instance) that an approximate temporal location can be assigned to them. This “defense against the passage of time” is precisely what inspired Bazin’s faith in cinema; but by repeatedly foregrounding the pastness of Krasna’s footage, the Narrator draws attention to the fact that the images seen by the viewer are forever and irreparably separated from the events documented and described by him.²² For the spectator, this knowledge can be approached both intellectually and viscerally; and in this way she and the Narrator occupy a similar position, simultaneously critical and receptive, that defies the typical binarism of activity and passivity.

Krasna, however, is maddened by this ever-increasing distance between past and present, between word and image, between time and inscription. For much of the film, Bazin’s edict regarding ‘the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real’ can only be understood as an obsession for him, and he must therefore travel from one place to another and, through filming it, remember it as it actually was. The object he truly desires is neither Japan nor San Francisco nor Guinea-Bissau, but rather indexicality itself, which is forever promising—and then thwarting—his attempt to make contact with the real historical moment and “know where history is made.”²³ Taken alone, Krasna embodies the phallic subject, with indexicality functioning as the unattainable *objet a* that points towards the Reality of his desire: the actual site of history. The significance of his role as the cameraman is therefore twofold: positing a source for the images seen by the viewer; and, more significantly, tying his identity to the camera itself—the model for Lacan’s theory of the gaze. This anthropomorphization of the camera, a recurring

metaphor for Lacan specifically and psychoanalytic film theory in general, is taken a step further by Krasna, who writes:²⁴

Brooding at the end of the world on my island of Sal in the company of my prancing dogs I remember that month of January in Tokyo, or rather I remember the images I filmed of the month of January in Tokyo. They have substituted themselves for my memory. They are my memory.²⁵

As we see here, Krasna's memories have been subsumed by the image. They are external from the subject, and by using the film medium as a replacement for memory, he enacts a castration of sorts. All of his attempts to collect, or to re-collect, the past are doomed to failure, as he faces the impossible task of reassembling events into a cohesive narrative. Furthermore, his words belie the fact that he knows, at some level, the futile repetition of his own image making. The letter continues:

I wonder how people remember things who don't film, don't photograph, don't tape. How has mankind managed to remember? I know: it wrote the Bible. The new Bible will be an eternal magnetic tape of a time that will have to reread itself constantly just to know it existed.²⁶

In this letter, Krasna makes explicit the insufficiency of memory and offers two possible alternatives, ultimately elevating magnetic tape to the level of scripture. This speaks to Krasna's faith in memory, not unlike Bazin's faith in cinema, to "cast out the bogey of time."²⁷ But, as discussed in the previous chapter, Bazin understood the "myth of total cinema" was driven by an underlying psychological motive to circumvent death, an existential anxiety whose alleviation is ultimately untenable. Similarly, Krasna is equally incapable of realizing his myth of total memory, a flawless recollection of the past. As his very first letter tells us, "[he] will have spent [his] life trying to understand the function of remembering," only to realize that memory is "not the opposite of forgetting, but rather its lining."²⁸ For him, film is memory; and the objective, historical world of

the Bazinian real functions in the same way as the interior, subjective world of the Lacanian Real—both are inaccessible, beyond symbolization, an object forever lost to the amnesia of the past.

This phallic reading of Krasna, while accurate, is ultimately incomplete because he does not exist as a singular entity, but only in inter-relation with the Narrator. The matrixial subjectivity-as-encounter exists always in severality, and the interdependence of the Narrator's voice and Krasna's gaze is the underlying structure that defines *Sans soleil*. The next section will articulate different aspects of this matrixial encounter through a series of close readings. In keeping with the film's matrixial construction and fluctuating temporal tonalities, I will use the woman's voice to guide my exploration and sometimes draw from the narration without connecting it to the image that accompanied it. For the purposes of clarity, however, I will center my discussion around four visual nodes taken from the final third of the film: the sequence of Guinea-Bissauan revolutionaries Amilcar and Luis Cabral, which deals with a matrixial conception of history; a brief encounter with Krasna's friend Hayao, which draws attention to the relationship between aesthetic and the apparatus; the interrogation of *Vertigo*, which emphasizes the trans-subjectivity of the matrixial sphere; and the incursions into "the Zone," an image synthesizer that serves as both an actual and metaphorical device for visualizing matrixial memory. What emerges across and through these various times, personae and geographies is an extended, fugue-like meditation on history, memory, and representation, ultimately coalescing to form a matrixial artwork.

Sans soleil

The sequence of Amilcar and Luis Cabral outlines out a matrixial understanding of history and begins with Krasna's letter from the Bijagós archipelago: "The dead... move from island to island according to a rigorous protocol until they come to the last beach where they wait for the ship that will take them to the other world."²⁹ The safe passage of the physical and/or spiritual body from life to the afterlife is a recurring theme in *Sans soleil*, echoing the concerns of Bazin's "mummy complex" in which the decedent attempts "to preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance [and] snatch it away from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly... in the hold of life."³⁰ From the matrixial perspective, however, there is another place, a limbo with-in-between being and non-being. In this borderspace one is not snatched away from the flow of time into some transcendent eternity or timelessness, but rather occupies past and present simultaneously without belonging fully to either of them. The Cabral sequence evokes this liminal state by staging the story of Amilcar and Luis through a series of graphic matches that simultaneously create cadences and disjunctions, using their similar compositions to create a spatial connection while switching from color to black and white film stock (or vice versa) to signal a break in time. Apropos Rosen, this temporal distinction is made possible by both the spectator's knowledge of the cinematic apparatus, and his or her own aesthetic-historical bias: black and white film signifies pastness (and death) whereas color film signals contemporaneity (and life). This interpretation is reinforced as we learn that "in an old film clip Amilcar Cabral [waved] a gesture of good-bye to the shore," and that his half-brother "Luis Cabral made the same gesture fifteen years later on the canoe that was bringing us back" (*Figure 23*).



Figure 23: Amilcar Cabral/Luis Cabral

It becomes clear now that the first color image of the river bank, which one might have presumed to be Krasna's, is actually from this canoe trip taken by Luis, fifteen years after the one taken by his brother. Neither the color nor the black and white images belong to Krasna, and when the spectator learns Amilcar will "never see [the shore] again," it becomes clear that these images are operating in a profoundly Bazinian manner by saving him from a second spiritual death.³¹ The indexical trace seems to fulfill its objective thus far in the sequence, and the letter gives a brief account of Guinea-Bissau's revolutionary struggle while black and white footage of Amilcar and Luis continues. With the next graphic match back to color, the spectator is specifically located at the most certain point yet, a victorious day on "the seventeenth of February, 1980" (*Figure 24*).



Figure 24: Luis Cabral (guerilla)/Luis Cabral (president)

The break between past and present is momentarily healed, as aural knowledge of Amilcar's assassination is soothed by the visual image of his brother President Luis Cabral pinning a medal on a soldier. This stability, however, lasts only a moment:

But to understand it properly one must move forward in time. In a year Luis Cabral the president will be in prison, and the weeping man he has just decorated, Major Nino, will have taken power. The party will have split, Guineans and Cape Verdeans separated one from the other will be fighting over Amilcar's legacy.³²

With this information, the certain, objective history that Krasna seeks is thrown into utter disarray because its meaning is constantly being refigured by the impending presence of an ever more distant future. Approaching the past causes it to shift before one's eyes, and as a result, the indexical trace's apparent victory over time is shown to come only at the expense of all historical signification. The meaning of this encounter between Nino and Cabral will become known only retroactively, when the spectator learns "that behind this ceremony of promotions... lay a pit of post-victory bitterness, and that Nino's tears did not express an ex-warrior's emotion, but the wounded pride of a hero who felt he had not been raised high enough above the others."³³ In one way, this past event's dependence upon the future to deliver its 'meaning' is similar to the Man's return to the pier at Orly. The key difference, however, is that *La jetée* fixes the encounter with the Real as having a specific, albeit unknowable, meaning (the death of the subject). As shown in the previous chapter, this phallic structure yields a cyclical model of history that mimics pathological repetition.

Sans soleil, on the other hand, conceives of history in a far more sophisticated manner. As the Cabral sequence demonstrates, the inscription of the r/Real historical moment is subject to the degenerative effects of time that undermine the historiographic

endeavor itself. This allows the filmed encounter between Cabral and Nino to signify both its 'incomplete' past meaning (the apparent victory of the revolution and unification of the party) as well as its 'complete' present meaning (Nino's resentment for Cabral) without fully relegating the importance of the former to that of the latter. Rather than the rigid structure of repression and return, the matrixial sphere allows for the past to look, and mean, differently than it did the time before. In other words, knowledge of the r/Real historical moment is accessible to the subject, but its meaning is not fixed. History is therefore inherently unstable in the matrixial conception because it is encountered, like the matrixial subject, in severality and simultaneity, with multiple temporal articulations. It is not a severed object, but a matrixial entity with-in-between the material site of history and its inscription, and the relationship between the past and present is one of asymmetric reciprocity. More specifically, the matrixial conception of history and time does not preclude the linear causality of the signifying chain, but acknowledges that there is also a reverse-echo effect by the present upon the past. They are engaged in a constant metamorphosis, each of them granting access while simultaneously pushing the other away. The image of Amilcar in the boat, for instance, brings him visually closer to the present moment, while the Narrator relaying knowledge of his death in the past tense increases the distance between Amilcar and the spectator. Like its understanding of the Real, the matrixial conception of history is "a trembling, volatile experience of differentiation-in-co-emergence treading on the heels of fluctuations in distance-in-proximity."³⁴ These opposite, yet unopposed forces require that one engage in a constant dialogue with the past, remembering and re-remembering. Each subsequent encounter leads to a different understanding of what came before, and each new moment is

necessarily affected by an impermanent knowledge of the permanent past. Krasna, for whom the Bazinian real and psychoanalytic coincide, initially recoils from this knowledge by concluding that history ultimately “has only one friend... horror.”³⁵ It is a traumatic discovery, signaling both the impotence of the indexical trace as well as the fundamental volatility of history itself. This trauma is not singular, though, because “it will become a memory, of that which was neither repressed nor forgotten, of that which from the onset appears for the first time as a shared memory... that cannot be born and carried alone.”³⁶ In this respect, both *Sans soleil* and the matrixial are adamant in their insistence that the past must be constantly re-engaged, in spite of the trauma, in spite of the horror, in spite of the fact that history seems to advance by “plugging its memory as one plugs one's ears.”³⁷ This is not the compulsion of phallic repetition, but rather a corollary of the shared nature of the past, as fundamental to the matrixial conception of history as Bazin's understanding of the preservative impulse that drives and informs the production of images.

This marks the turning point in Krasna's quest for a perfect image of the past, and in each of the following scenes, his dual matrixial/phallic subjectivity grows closer and closer to that of the Narrator. The scene transitions from the story of Guinea-Bissau's revolutionary struggles to the laboratory of his friend Hayao who has “found a solution” to the problem of inscribing time: “if the images of the present don't change, then change the images of the past.”³⁸ Unlike Krasna, Hayao has moved completely beyond the phallic logic of castration, forsaking entirely the attempt to mend the perceived gap between past and present by willfully altering film footage with an image synthesizer he calls “the Zone” (*Figure 25*).



Figure 25: Woman Singing in the Zone

Celebrating the Bazinian tension between the image and the pro-filmic, Hayao visualizes the deleterious effects of time by subjecting images to the distortion of the Zone, whose pulsating images maintain a ghostly verisimilitude without the burden of indexicality. This “maniac” contends that his pictures are “less deceptive” than Krasna’s desire for a flawless representation of the past because “at least they proclaim themselves to be what they are: images, not the portable and compact form of an already inaccessible reality.”³⁹ In other words, Krasna’s faith in the indexical object is predicated on the phallic logic of a complete separation of subject from object, pro-filmic from image, and past from present. This framework necessarily yields an inaccessible reality, and the Narrator tells us that Krasna “[envies] Hayao in his Zone” because it allows him to “[play] with the signs of his memory” and “contemplate from a point outside of time: the only eternity we have left.”⁴⁰ With this pronouncement the Narrator falls silent, encouraging the spectator

to contemplate these words as a short sequence of the image synthesizer follows, accompanied by a gentle aria sung a cappella (*Figures 26-28*).



Figure 26: Red Cat



Figure 27: Board (long)



Figure 28: Board (close)

The centrality of the *Zone* to *Sans soleil* will be revisited, but for the time being it is sufficient to note two things. First, during this musical interlude, the film shifts out of either Krasna or the Narrator's subjectivity into that of Hayao, whose laboratory is actually Marker's editing studio. The cat, Marker's favorite animal, serves as an avatar for the director, and its presence above the image synthesizer (hand raised in greeting, no less) is both indexical and enigmatic, visually signaling his presence directly to the spectator (*Figure 26*). Within the aural realm, this acknowledgement is subtler, but just as distinctive: Hayao's surname "Yamaneko" translates as 'mountain cat.'⁴¹ These nods by the director towards the spectator serve a larger purpose than mere cleverness, however, because they emphasize both the presence of an author as well as the machinery required to produce the film object. After the long shot of the cat atop the synthesizer, the camera cuts to a time-lapse image of the circuit board, followed by a lens being pulled into focus (*Figures 27 and 28*). While this montage certainly demystifies the apparatus, its true importance lies in its use of the mechanics of the camera to visualize aspects of time. On the one hand, the time-lapse shot emphasizes the temporal malleability of the moving image by using the shadows' movement across the circuit board to show the contraction of time. On the other hand, the rack focus in the final shot

of this montage gives a simultaneous sense of fixidity and movement. The depth of field is incredibly shallow, making it possible for the cylinders in the foreground to come into sharp focus as the circuit board in the background haze over. It is a visual representation of Ettinger's notion of co-emergence and co-fading, which simultaneously drawing attention to the apparatus. This interplay between the aesthetic, the subject and the pro-filmic is distinctly Bazinian, and this brief sequence is one of the film's most important because, by incorporating uninterrupted footage of the image synthesizer, it effectively uses the machinery itself to counterbalance the otherwise overwhelming aesthetic effect it produces.

The second key point is that, in addition to their evocation of Bazinian concerns, the distorted images produced by the Zone should also be understood historically as a form of *détournement*, the redeployment of existing images or media in a manner that recontextualizes, problematizes, and often contradicts the original. As mentioned previously, the incorporation of other filmmakers' footage into *Sans soleil* provides numerous examples of this technique, and one effect of these operations is to decenter Marker as a singular source of meaning. It is also important, however, to recognize *détournement* as an aesthetic operation intended to reconfigure cultural objects for political or revolutionary purposes. Guy Debord writes:

It is... necessary to conceive of a parodic serious stage where the accumulation of detoured elements, far from aiming at arousing indignation or laughter by alluding to some original work, will express our indifference towards a meaningless and forgotten original, and concern itself with rendering a certain sublimity.⁴²

Sans soleil, both through its accumulation of others' images and its own, attempts to achieve this 'sublimity' through the hypnotizing effects of the Zone. The narrator tells us

at the film's outset that "only banality still interests [Krasna];" and it is these everyday images, those which would otherwise be "meaningless and forgotten" that find their way time and again into the Zone.⁴³ Debord characterizes this technique as minor détournement: "the détournement of an element which has not importance in itself and which draws all its meaning from a new context in which it has been placed."⁴⁴ In this case, the meaning is a place outside of time, and the image synthesizer thus serves an almost mystical function, freeing the moving image from both the passage of time and the confines of indexical likeness. The interesting aspect of the Zone is that it uses technology to simultaneously create the détournement (the treated image itself) *and* its context (the digitally distorted 'world' of the Zone). In doing so, attention is drawn to the fact that technology holds the potential to unlock the sedimented pieces of the past—the unrealized revolutionary potential of history—and reclaim them in the name of a more utopian future. The Zone therefore transforms the concreteness of the indexical image into the abstraction of the treated image in much the same way that matrixial memory turns an actual lived experience (finite, lost to time) into a mental abstraction of remembering (open-ended, simultaneously past and present).

With an understanding of history and introduction to the Zone in place, I will turn to *Sans soleil's* most complex sequence, which weaves together questions of memory, indexicality and representation into a single tapestry of matrixial trans-subjectivity. It begins as the Narrator tells us, "only one film had been capable of portraying impossible memory, insane memory: *Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo*."⁴⁵ Watching the film's title sequence, we learn Krasna "[sees] time covering a field ever wider as it [moves] away;"

and in this way, his vision of time and memory is not unlike Walter Benjamin's description of Klee's "Angelus Nova":⁴⁶

This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise... This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward.⁴⁷

The angel's sentiment, its desire to awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed, applies equally to Lacan's understanding of the Imaginary, Krasna's search for a stable image of the past, and Scottie's attempt to "[invent] a double for Madeline in another dimension of time."⁴⁸ Likewise, the storm that irresistibly propels him into the future is just as fitting: for Lacan it is the originary castration of the mirror stage; for Scottie it is the catatonia resulting from Madeleine/Judy's second (actual) death; and for Krasna it is the failed attempt to reenact the memory of *Vertigo* by assembling fragments of the pro-filmic and thereby recuperating the past through the indexical object.

The key difference, however, is that Krasna's efforts demonstrate the impossibility of retracing each link of the causal chain backwards in time; and in doing so, they draw more emphasis to the process of reassembly than to recuperation. Unlike a Lacanian understanding of the past, *Sans soleil* does not conceive of remembering as means to recapture an object lost to the signifying chain, nor does it view the subject as pathologically drawn to recuperate this missed encounter. Rather, like Benjamin, the film celebrates these inconsistencies by rejecting the notion that the past can be told as a "sequence of events like the beads of rosary" and "instead... grasps the constellation with which [its] own era has formed with a definite earlier one."⁴⁹ Krasna's filming, for

example, does not connect his San Francisco to that of Hitchcock as a series of causations, but rather as a set of simultaneously existing images, both of which are equally near and distant from the material site of the city. This imprecision is precisely what allows for the possibility of realizing his desire, of establishing a relationship with the past that leaves open the possibility “to blast open the continuum of history” into “a configuration pregnant with tensions.”⁵⁰ In other words, the past impacts the present not just as a series of causes and effects, but also as a set of imbedded fragments that carry with them previously unrealized potentialities. Pieces of the past are therefore inextricably woven into the present moment, and the *Vertigo* sequence uses a series of confusions, conflations, and connections with-in-between characters to draw attention to these tensions. By doing so, the sequence marks a transition to a distinctly matrixial perspective, and the phallic notion of an individual subjectivity is undermined by the establishment of a matrixial subjectivity-as-encounter.

This shift from phallus to matrix begins as soon as the camera cuts from *Vertigo*'s title sequence, creating a series of trans-subjective encounters by interspersing stills from Hitchcock's film with filmed footage from Krasna's camera. These types of multiple articulations continue throughout the sequence, with the Narrator's voice serving as a borderlink between them. The trip begins when Krasna traces Scottie's route from the florist shop, “where James Stewart spies on Kim Novak,” to the hills of San Francisco, “where Jimmy Stewart, Scotty, follows Kim Novak, Madeline” (*Figures 29 and 30*).⁵¹ A metamorphic link is immediately established between them, visually through the use of the graphic match and aurally by identifying the people in the images by two sets of names. In accordance with Bazinian aims, the Narrator first identifies them by the actors'

names rather than those of the characters, which establishes a signifying movement towards the pro-filmic.



Figure 29: The Florist



Figure 30: Hills of San Francisco



Ultimately, “he [follows] Madeline—as Scottie had done—to the Museum at the Legion of Honor” and sees “on the portrait, as in Madeline's hair, the spiral of time.”⁵² Here, the film’s articulations with-in-between subjectivities becomes substantially more ambiguous as the correlation between Krasna and Scottie’s worlds is broken by cutting from a still of Madeleine in the museum to spinning sculpture previously seen in the Hayao’s editing studio (*Figure 31*).

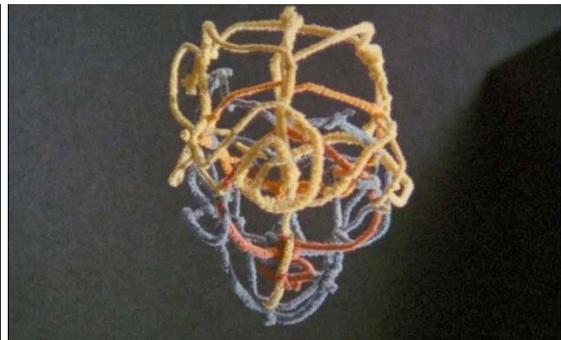


Figure 31: The Spiral

Marker has not only announced his presence once more through the evocation of Hayao, but has also connected himself to Krasna, which calls into question precisely which one of them is the “he” following Madeleine. This perforation between the two men is significant because it creates its own vertigo of identification, which simultaneously occupies multiple subject positions without specifically claiming any of them, consistent with the *I* and *non-I* of the matrixial framework. It demonstrates that, in some way,

Marker shares both Krasna and Scottie's desire to save Madeline from the spiral of time and prevent the trauma of her death. It is a specifically matrixial notion because it shows how the filmmaker is "concerned with the trauma of the Other," and that his desire is "not for a lost object but for a linking with the Other."⁵³ In other words, Scottie's desire for Madeleine and Krasna's desire for *Vertigo*, as well as their accompanying traumas, are with-in-between the filmmaker's desire and trauma. Without going too far astray into armchair analysis of Marker, it seems reasonable to construe the former as coinciding with Krasna's desire to understand the purpose of remembering and the latter as indicating a similar trauma of disillusionment surrounding the indexical trace.

Regardless of the accuracy of these speculations, it is clear that the three men constitute a matrixial subject-as-encounter, and the sequence as whole has a distinctly Bazinian tenor, pulling between abstraction and concreteness. In the case of abstraction, the Narrator's elision between the characters' names introduces ambiguity by referring to the figures on screen first as "James Stewart" and "Kim Novak;" then as "Jimmy Stewart, Scottie" and "Kim Novak, Madeleine;" and finally as "Scottie" and "Madeleine." This progression of names from the real to fictional serves to pull the spectator into Krasna's obsessive point-of-view, into the memory of a man who makes a "pilgrimage of a film [he] had seen nineteen times."⁵⁴ The montage works against this obsessive pull and towards the concrete, however, because the moving images of *Sans soleil's* San Francisco expose the 'unreality' and undeniable pastness of the still images taken from *Vertigo*. For example, a still image of Scottie is shown as he looks upwards towards Madeleine's apartment (*Figure 32*). The next image is from Krasna's camera, approximating Hitchcock's original framing (*Figure 33*). The camera then pans left, revealing what

Scottie would have seen, but it is only a vacant lot with a modern apartment building in the background (*Figure 34*). We learn that “the small Victorian hotel where Madeline disappeared had disappeared itself; concrete had replaced it, at the corner of Eddy and Gough.”⁵⁵ The degenerative effect of time are demonstrated beyond question, and the tension between the voice and montage thus implies that the images of *Vertigo* are not actually a part of Hitchcock’s film, but rather culled from Krasna’s memory, a conclusion supported by the blurring of the photographs as the camera blurs out at the end of each transition.



Figure 32: James Stewart



Figure 33: Cathedral



Figure 34: Empty Lot

The distinction between concrete/abstract, image/reality, and past/present slips even further as the scene shifts to Muir Woods, accompanied by one of the musical themes from *La jetée*.⁵⁶ As he approaches the sequoia cut, there are now three tangible, overlapping points of reference: Krasna’s, Hitchcock’s, and finally that of Marker himself, as indicated by the cut of a different tree in Paris’ *Jardin des plantes* which was the used in *La jetée*’s homage to *Vertigo* twenty years earlier (*Figures 35-37*). Krasna, in other words, is simultaneously stalking Marker and Hitchcock, and in doing so finds himself drawn deeper into the r/Reality of the images in his memory. The aesthetic effect is stunning, but as Ettinger writes, “joining the other matrixially is always joining the m/Other and risking a mental fragmentation and vulnerability.”⁵⁷ As indicated by the increasing pace of the montage, this fragmentation of a discrete subject continues through

the rest of the sequence, “[proposing] no fixed settlement, no homogenous mixture, no incision” between the entities of Krasna, Scottie and Marker.⁵⁸



Figure 35: Krasna (long) Figure 36: Hitchcock (long) Figure 37: Marker (long)

A set of close-ups brings the spectator closer to the sequoias, and the decreased distance between the cameras and their respective objects reveals discrepancies between them.

Hitchcock’s close-up shows Madeleine’s hand actually touching the tree as she “[traces] the short distance between two of those concentric lines that measured the age of the

tree” (*Figure 38*). A tree’s growth rings are indexical signs themselves, and Madeleine’s

contact with them constitutes an Imaginary wholeness of time and memory that Krasna attributes to the film. The next shot is from his camera, and he reaches for the tree

without touching, indicating both his longing for, and inaccessibility of, the object he

desires (*Figure 39*). Finally, we are given a second shot of the tree in Paris, accompanied

by dialogue explaining that Krasna “[remembers] another film in which this passage was quoted,” one in which “the hand pointed to a place outside the tree, outside of time”

(*Figure 40*).⁵⁹ In this shot, however, there is no hand seen, only a man sitting behind an

iron fence in the background, which recalls *La jetée*’s scene of the sleeping woman on the

bench. This understanding is reinforced by the theme from that film, which still softly

plays under the voice of the Narrator. Hers is the matrixial presence that creates a

borderspace with-in-between these films (*Vertigo/Sans soleil/La jetée*), times

(past/present/future), and partial subjects (Scottie/Krasna/Marker); and in the process

offers an alternative to the phallic notion of memory and time by demonstrating that past and present, as well as the image and the pro-filmic, are constantly re-inflecting one another.



Figure 38: *Hitchcock* (close) Figure 39: *Krasna* (close) Figure 40: *Marker* (close)

The final moments of the *Vertigo* sequence refigures the Scottie/Krasna/Marker entity once more, establishing the three men as a two pairs of dyads (Krasna/Scottie and Krasna/Marker). Each of them is a partial subject and a partial object, simultaneously co-emerging and co-fading, which allows them to maintain a link with-in-between one another that is premised on “neither fusion or rejection.”⁶⁰ Krasna, for instance, is taking on Scottie’s trauma by recreating the path that leads to the death of Madeleine. At the same time, he is also moving away from Scottie as he realizes that the place from which she fell was actually a “fake tower—the only thing that Hitchcock had added.”⁶¹ Similarly, Marker both identifies and distances himself from Krasna. On the one hand, Krasna is the ‘im-body-ment’ of his desire, allowing him to film the images that will become *Sans soleil*. On the other hand, Marker disassociates from Krasna through a series of questions interspersed throughout this sequence—at the florist (“Or was it the other way around?”), at San Juan Batista (“Or was it hers?”), and at the Golden Gate Bridge (“Or was it the other way around?”)—which continually undermines his attempt to reconstruct *Vertigo* and its portrayal ‘insane memory.’⁶² These contradictory impulses are mimicked in the instability of the mise-en-scène, as the spectator is shown a still from

Vertigo juxtaposed against a handheld shot of an unseen cameraman running down an empty hallway at San Juan Batista (*Figure 41*).



Figure 41: The Promenade

This jarring image is accompanied by the Narrator’s voice telling us, “he had run under the arches of the promenade in the mission as Madeleine had run towards her death.”⁶³ By this point, the spectator is completely unable to ascertain the persona to which “he” refers: Scottie chasing Madeleine, Krasna chasing Scottie, or Marker chasing the images that will become *Sans soleil*. The spectator is left to occupy an indeterminate subject position whereby one could choose—or not choose—to align him or herself with any of the three men. This moment invites the viewer to take on the position of the Narrator, whose matrixial subjectivity is neither confined nor held in opposition to Scottie, Krasna and/or Marker. Her subjectivity serves as borderlink between them, “a hybrid ‘webbing’ of links between several subjectivities,” which interlaces her with-in-between and amongst them “as a figure that is not confined to the one-body.”⁶⁴ The presence of her voice (itself without a body) is the ‘webbing’ connecting all three subject positions without being identical to any of them, and it serves as a matrixial model for a spectator’s ability to view the sequence with simultaneous awareness of Scottie, Krasna and Marker, as well sharing their respective desires and traumas. While this model of inter-subjective,

non-identical spectatorial identification “has its solaces and moments of grace,” it is also “profoundly fragilizing” because it requires the viewer—like the Narrator—to face the same traumas as Scottie, Krasna and Marker.⁶⁵ In other words, there is no ‘losing oneself’ in *Sans soleil*, but there is the loss of ‘one-self’; the spectator is drawn metamorphically with-in-between Krasna and the Narrator, allowing him or her to open up the same infirmities of history, memory and time. Building upon this understanding, I will now turn to the Zone sequence, which offers the film’s most direct and poignant illustration of matrixial memory.

The Zone is introduced halfway through *Sans soleil* as a solution to Krasna’s disenchantment with history and the failed revolutions of the past, and through a series of departures and returns, he comes to accept it as a means to reconciling the inaccuracies of inscribing the past with the actual site of history. In doing so, he realizes the profoundly matrixial desire for temporal and aesthetic liminality, which demands non-identical occupation of multiple sets of interests (reality and image, then and now, knowledge and uncertainty) as well as rejecting the indexical object and its false mastery over time. The Zone addresses these issues simultaneously by offering a model of matrixial memory that coincides with what Ettinger terms a “transcriptum,” an artwork that “gives body to a memory of the Real consisting in virtual strings and memory traces of oblivion of the Other and of the world.”⁶⁶ The artwork as transcriptum is what makes accessible the Real, either making it visible or giving it embodiment, and by tuning in-to the erotic antennae of the psyche. In the Zone, the incredible similarity of composition and iconicity constitute the virtual strings of the transcriptum, which maintain a strong aesthetic and psychical link to the same images left untreated by the image synthesizer.

At the same time, however, images in the Zone are strangely foreign to the spectator, ephemeral and sometimes phantasmagoric. They have likeness but not indexicality, and these distorted visual representations function as both memory's "lining" of which the Narrator spoke at the film's outset, and the trace of oblivion that maintains a trans-subjective borderlink between *I* and *non-I* entities.

In addition to recognizing the centrality of the transcriptum, it is also important to note the ritualistic aspect of matrixial memory. In the film, Krasna finds himself returning to the Zone time and again through a series of departures and returns that align him more and more closely with his friend Hayao, whom the Narrator describes both as a "maniac" and as having "the conviction of a fanatic."⁶⁷ There is an underlying sense of religiosity in the Zone, evocative of Bazin's faith in cinema and reinforced by Krasna's frequent trips to temples, cemeteries and places of the dead. As David Montero writes, this "finally [invests] *Sans soleil* with the same poignancy Marker encounters in the rituals he portrays."⁶⁸ Like the worshippers he observes in Tokyo, the Zone allows Krasna "to pray, Japanese style, a prayer which slips into life without interrupting it," and then watch as spectral images return carrying with them fragmented impressions of the past "like a shattered hologram."⁶⁹ The paradox, of course, is that these metaphysical invocations are initiated, interpreted and returned by the most banal of devices—a simple circuit board that looks more and more antiquated with each passing year. In doing so, the Zone not only allows one to recuperate the memory of oblivion, but also makes explicit the specific material means by which this encounter is realized. This appreciation for the pro-filmic, sorely absent from Ettinger's theorization of the subject, allows *Sans soleil* to construct a model of matrixial memory that simultaneously

encompasses the material, the psychological and the metaphysical. As the following analysis will show, the Zone ultimately speaks to Krasna in a decidedly Bazinian fashion—as an interlocutor with time.

The closing minutes of *Sans soleil* begin with the image of a woman, seen earlier in the film, kneeling to pray at an altar adorned with flowers, a stone carving of a monk, and white porcelain *Maneki Neko* (lucky cat). The Narrator tells us that “of all the prayers to time that had studded this trip the kindest was the one spoken by the woman of Gotokuji, who said simply to her cat Tora, ‘Cat, wherever you are, peace be with you’” (*Figure 42*).⁷⁰ This is the final return to Tokyo, but to understand it one must understand the one that came before, when Krasna witnessed “*dondo-yaki*, a Shinto blessing of the debris that have a right to immortality.”⁷¹ In this sequence, participants venerated the passage of time, “and when all the celebrations are over it remains only to pick up all the ornaments—all the accessories of the celebration—and by burning them, make a celebration” (*Figure 43*).⁷²



Figure 42: Woman Praying For Tora



Figure 43: Dondo-yaki Bonfire

A similar idea is also found earlier in the film, when the Narrator tells us of a ceremony for “the repose of the soul of broken dolls” where “the dolls are piled up in the temple of Kiyomitsu consecrated to Kannon—the goddess of compassion—and are burned in

public.”⁷³ These rituals do more than capitulate to time; they speed its degenerative effects by casting the materials of their construction (the ornaments and dolls) into the flame. It is a celebration of impermanence, and in this willful transformation of the material into the ephemeral the participants reach a sort of equilibrium with the inevitability of their own mortality. Unlike the Bazinian paradigm of the mummy complex, *Sans soleil* emphasizes immolation over preservation, and argues for a relationship between time and the subject that accepts the shared trauma of death as one experienced equally by all things—cats, dolls, and humans alike.

The Zone serves the same purpose in *Sans soleil*: it allows Krasna to process his traumas surrounding the instability of the past’s inscription. As Ettinger writes, “in the matrixial psychic sphere, my imprints will be trans-scribed in the other, and to begin with in the m/Other, thus my others will process traumatic events for me.”⁷⁴ In this sequence, both the Narrator and Hayao serve as the m/Other for Krasna: her, by reading his letters; and him, by providing a solution to the paradox of the indexical object. In the case of the Narrator, her constant, even-tempered voice provides the very stability missing from the volatility of the past. With regard to Hayao, his invention demonstrates that, while the moving images in the Zone cannot halt the passage of time, these fragments of the past can nonetheless be used to influence and reconfigure our understanding of the present moment. There is an asymmetric reciprocity between time and the image, as well as between past and present, with the former having greater impact in both instances. The notion of asymmetry is also a component of the matrixial sphere, but Ettinger frames her understanding primarily in terms of the relationship between artist and viewer, rather than extending it to include the much broader question of the relationship of the matrixial

subject to her historical context.⁷⁵ The sophistication of the Zone sequence lies in its ability to effectively integrate the material/historical with the psychological, which counterbalances Ettinger's tendency to overemphasize the agency of the artist. In other words, in spite of its psychical liminality, the metamorphic artwork seems hermetically sealed off from the sociohistorical context in which it is produced and interpreted. *Sans soleil*, on the other hand, rejects this romanticized notion of the artwork by constantly reminding the spectator that the subject's inscription of the past (individual memory) is embedded in a much larger, social inscription of the past (history).

The Zone also draws attention to Bazinian concerns, using the tension between the concrete and the abstract to address both the indexical object and the subject's anxiety regarding time and death. As the final scene continues, it cuts from the praying woman to a close-up of the lucky cat at Gotokuji. Its right arm is raised, a small plume of smoke rises upward in front of its face, and the only sound is the distinctive, trembling high pitch of a Theremin (*Figure 44*). She has just spoken the prayer for her cat Tora, and the lonely whine drones on for a moment, allowing the spectator to contemplate her final words: "peace be with you." The next shot flashes by in less than a second, a close-up of a circuit board similar to the one seen earlier, except this time a finger is shown pushing a white cylinder into a small slot (*Figure 45*). The next transition cuts from the finger and circuit board to the *Maneki Neko* as seen in the Zone. The stability of the first image, so realistic and tangible less than a second earlier, disappears in an invisible explosion of ones and zeros somewhere inside the circuit board; and the spectator is left with a ghostly image of the cat enveloped in hazy, vapor-like red that begins to encroach on the cat's blue face in the center of the screen (*Figure 46*).

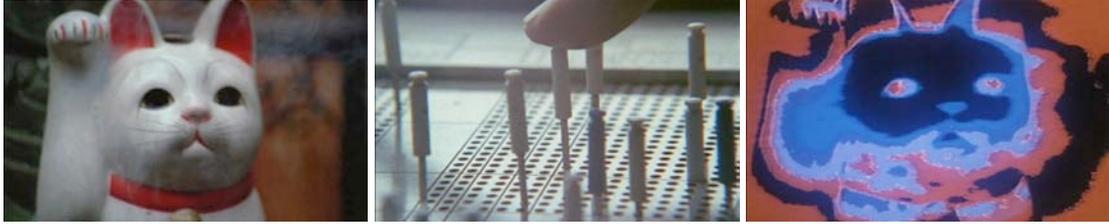


Figure 44: Lucky Cat Figure 45: Circuit Board Figure 46: Lucky Cat in Zone

For Krasna, this cat in the Zone represents the peace the woman spoke of, the realization of his desire for “a world where each memory could create its own legend.”⁷⁶ The distortion of this image indicates time’s restless degradation of all things—memory and history, self and other—which is masked by the apparent persistence of the indexical trace. As Catherine Lupton writes, “the Zone blocks the illusion that mimetic images of the past give us, which is that we can have immediate access to the past,” and the treated images occupy a sort of no-man’s land between then and now, likeness and strangeness, intimacy and unknowability.⁷⁷ Extending Ettinger’s description of the subject, they affect a temporal “distance-in-proximity while separating-in-jointness” with-in-between past and present as well as the image and pro-filmic.⁷⁸ In doing so, these images in the Zone visualize the memory of oblivion, remembering what came before (the porcelain cat) while simultaneously accentuating the distance from it (the distortion of the treated image). Furthermore, the very rapidity of the transition underscores that the past does not exist as some far off location in the geography of time, but rather at the most infinitesimal of removes. Thus, while the porcelain cat (aligned with pastness, the pro-filmic and the actual site of history) provides the initial basis for image-making and the formation of memory, the cat in Zone remembers the oblivion that was there all along—the invisible presence of the Real and the inevitable metamorphosis of time. The spectator is left with the realization that the present moment is being endlessly transformed into the future’s

past, not just as a series of cleavages (the phallic paradigm of linear causality), but also as a matrixial continuum of time, an interdependence of past and present, whereby the porcelain cat and the cat in the Zone remain connected to one another by the borderspace of matrixial memory.

Also crucial to note here is that the images of the porcelain cat and the spectral figure that exists in the Zone are held together by the image of the hand and the circuit board, which functions in two ways. First, the shot of the circuit board is almost banal in its realism, providing the spectator with a clear, precise understanding of how the images in the Zone are created. This allows the film to illustrate the process of metamorphosis concretely rather than resorting to the abstractions so prevalent in Ettinger's work. Second, taken as a triptych, the shots provide an opportunity for a trans-subjective identification: the phallic as embodied by Krasna's original footage, the Bazinian shot of the circuit board that emphasizes the pro-filmic, and the matrixial memory of oblivion in the Zone, which transmutes the first image in the sequence. As in the *Vertigo* sequence, the spectator has access to multiple points of reference, which allows him or her to establish a continuity of meaning *without* locking her into a determined subjectivity. As a result, the Bazinian real and the psychoanalytic Real are shown to be compatible within the matrixial framework, which fosters a liminal form of spectatorship and has profound implications regarding cinema's revelatory potential. In other words, the moving image has the capacity not only to capture phenomenal realities exterior to the subject, but also to envision an interior, trans-subjective exchange with-in-between matrixial entities.

The most stunning aspect of the Zone is its ability to stage this intersection of the material real and the psychic Real, as demonstrated by next two images in the sequence.

Just as the face of the *Maneki Neko* begins to erode into nothingness (*Figure 47*), the image explodes into new cat, still in the Zone but now with the red radiating out from the center (*Figure 48*). This transition is the most important of the three, as the distortion that consumes the memory of the lifeless porcelain cat suddenly transforms to the memory of a living cat, infinitely more real than the one sitting outside the temple in Gotokuji. This elision with-in-between images of the past is matrixial memory, simultaneously imaginative and flawed, and it demonstrates cinema’s potential to move beyond Bazin’s mythical dream of “a total and complete representation of reality” and to become instead a rendezvous, a meeting place where the past comes into contact with the present reality of one’s desire.⁷⁹ By recovering this memory of oblivion, the fixed image (the porcelain cat) gives way to the unstable dynamism (the actual cat), and as the camera pans down and to the left, we recognize that this is the same cat Krasna saw earlier in the film, sitting above the “Hotel Utopia” (*Figure 49*).



Figure 47: Fading Cat *Figure 48: Living Cat* *Figure 49: Hotel Utopia*

Like so many other instances in the film, this image can be interpreted in multiple ways, signaling simultaneously and ambiguously the wishes of Krasna, the Narrator, Marker or the spectator. Implicit in the choice of mise-en-scène, however, is the fact that this potential utopia—regardless of which one of them defines it—hinges not on perfect recall, but rather on the fallacies inherent in remembering. In other words, matrixial

memory is inaccurate but imaginative, alluding to the idea that hope for a better future ultimately resides in our flawed memories the past.

The goal of matrixial memory is not the perfect return of the lost object of the past, but rather in the productive processes surrounding the creation and reconstruction of memories. As Ettinger writes, “the Real in its recurrences never returns to the same, and meaning... cannot be conceived as dwelling inside the elements that signify it, but instead in complex schemas of activity that emerge from several processes of production-creation of significance.”⁸⁰ In other words, matrixial memory is a ritual engagement with an ever-changing past, enacted in the present and fully acknowledging that its own creative processes is not independent of other types of recollection (historiography, phallic memory) with their own sets of signifying logics and interests. This “co-poiesis” is “vulnerable and risk-taking” and “unlike autopoiesis, is not subordinated to the maintenance of its own organism and identity.”⁸¹ As a result, matrixial memory is an open-ended encounter with-in-between one’s desire for the past (whose realization holds the potential for both jouissance and trauma) and one’s desire for the future. This encounter “does not promise peace and harmony,” and, like Bazin’s understanding of cinema and its attempt to create a world with its own temporal destiny, it is an endeavor that is undertaken with full awareness of its paradoxes and internal contradictions.⁸² The Narrator communicates these complexities in the film’s final moments:

Finally his language touches me, because he talks to that part of us which insists on drawing profiles on prison walls. A piece of chalk to follow the contours of what is not, or is no longer, or is not yet; the handwriting each one of us will use to compose his own list of 'things that quicken the heart,' to offer, or to erase. In that moment poetry will be made by everyone...⁸³

Once again, a trans-subjective encounter is engendered in the spectator because it is unclear to whom 'his language' refers: Hayao's language speaking to Krasna, or Krasna's language to the Narrator. More important, though, is what emerges from the interaction between prison walls and the piece of chalk that draws upon them. Despite the imbalance between these two forces, the Narrator tells us that poetry will come from this encounter, and the dominant tone of the *Sans soleil's* final minutes are celebratory rather than elegiac. The Zone is therefore aligned as much with the religious rituals seen in Tokyo as with Ettinger's framework, which contends, "the impossibility of not-sharing... exacts its price and has its own beauty."⁸⁴ This is demonstrated most clearly when Hayao shows Krasna his own images, "already affected by the moss of time, freed of the lie that had prolonged the existence of those moments swallowed by the spiral."⁸⁵ While this experience may be traumatic for Krasna, for the viewer it is a profoundly Zen moment, koan-like in its juxtaposition of the concrete, material immanence of the present moment (i.e. the act of spectatorship) against the abstract, immaterial memories of the past (i.e. recollections of the film's preceding moments). Much like the indexical trace, matrixial memory functions as an arbiter between the subject and time, and the film thus concludes by effectively straddling both Bazin and Ettinger's frameworks. I will further elaborate this relationship, as well as the relationship between phallic and matrixial memory, in my closing remarks.

Conclusions

As shown in *Sans soleil*, matrixial memory is a trans-subjective, trans-temporal borderspace with-in-between partial subjects and partial objects, partial histories and

partial memories. In it, every image of the past is a shared encounter, born of the fluid relationship between past and present and the asymmetric reciprocity between them. As Ettinger writes, “a matrixial gaze arouses its own desire, which can generate dangerous encounters,” and matrixial memory extends this notion beyond the subject to include time itself.⁸⁶ It requires accepting, fully, the enormity of time, its passing calamities and joys, and ultimately the certainty of death. For Krasna to realize his desire for “a world where each memory could create its own legend,” he must also accept that his own subjectivity and memory are mere fragments of “the great wound of history.”⁸⁷ This ‘legendary’ memory is matrixial memory, where the trauma of the subject, the trauma of the past, and the trauma of history are shared experiences not only with-in-between matrixial subjects, but also with-in-between the subject and time itself. If the past is never really absent from the present, then there always remains the ability to return to the trauma and heal it and this is the function of matrixial memory.

Unlike phallic memory’s repression of the Real and construction of an Imaginary past, matrixial memory fully acknowledges the trauma of time. It does not offer a fantasy of some past wholeness, but rather contends that the present moment never fully belonged to any single subject, or even itself—it was always a past waiting to happen as well as a future waiting to arrive. Krasna finally comes to understand that the clear, certain vision of the past—the one he wants call his own—is, has been, and will forever be negotiated and reconfigured both by time’s passing and by the memories and desires of the Other. Whereas the past exerts an authoritarian control over the future in phallic framework, matrixial memory emphasizes the indeterminacy and fluidity of time, which allows for a more open encounter with what lies ahead. Because the inscription of the

past, both in the form of history or memory, is fraught with distortions, the ability of either to predict the future is necessarily conditioned by how one chooses to interpret and deploy its meaning in the present. Instead of an irretrievable lost object with each moment being severed from the one that comes before and after, matrixial memory conceives of time as an unending stream, a confluence of past, present and future that flows from an unseen source and moves towards an unknown destination. As a shared endeavor, matrixial memory is ultimately defined not by temporal coherence or continuity ascribed to single subject, but rather by the unexpected fluctuations, dilations, uncertainties and wanderings of the subject-as-encounter.

In this way, matrixial memory has much in common with Bazin's understanding of cinema. Both, through distortions of time, create an understanding of the world that, paradoxically, brings the subject closer to reality. For Bazin, this means the pro-filmic and the special ability of mechanically produced images to engender the spectator's connection to it. For Ettinger, the memory of oblivion is what allows one access to the Real, a recuperation made possible by the artwork as transcriptum. Furthermore, the matrixial framework (unlike the phallic) is able to accommodate for the subject's fascination with indexicality because it conceives of a subject who forms a connection to the world not through images castrated from reality, but by a gaze "not split and not fused with the eye, grasped as one of the eroticized aerials of the psyche."⁸⁸ In other words, the link between the image and the pro-filmic is not so much seen as sensed, and the matrixial subject is acutely aware that she is neither fully a part of, nor apart from, the representation on the screen. The indexical object occupies a similar place in Bazin's theorization, signifying simultaneously pastness and the present moment, without

belonging entirely to either. This being the case, both theories are similar in that they allow for the possibility of in-between states: the temporal liminality of the indexical object for Bazin, and the psychic liminality of the matrixial subject for Ettinger. Finally, the combination of these perspectives helps to address the shortcomings present in each. The Bazinian framework offers an understanding of the pro-filmic to the matrixial sphere, which allows one to discuss aesthetic concerns in more concrete terms than Ettinger's framework allows. In return, the matrixial emphasis on the shared trauma of the Real helps to counterbalance Bazin's exuberance regarding the possibilities of cinematic realism by acknowledging that the revelatory aspect of the artwork comes only at the expense of letting go of a discrete subjectivity in favor of subjectivity-as-encounter.

In conclusion, what most clearly separates the matrixial memory of *Sans soleil* (envisioned through the imprecise, unstable images of the Zone) from the phallic memory of *La jetée* (reliant upon the stasis of photography) is that the former finds creative potential in the indeterminacy of the past, whereas the latter, in its search for certainty, ends up reenacting the castration of the mirror and locking itself into a cycle of repetition and return. Ironically, by emphasizing the imprecision of memory and instability of history, the matrixial framework of *Sans soleil* creates space for new types of meaning, an ability to move beyond the circular, repetitious time of *La jetée* and into something else, an open encounter with the future that is influenced by, but not predicated on, the past. Matrixial memory thus acknowledges the ebb and flow of time, its inconsistencies, potentials and variations, where the past is no longer an object re-called, but an encounter remembered.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

1. “The challenge for me was to formulate this angle of originary difference, where it becomes possible to present a non-phallic gaze. To do this I had to conceive of different pre-birth relations with the m/Other and different subjective positioning vis-à-vis the ‘primitive scene’, in which the m/Other is not in undifferentiated fusion with the *I*. To do this I had first to rotate the phallic prism such as to open and articulate in the Symbolic at a distance, a breach where we can glimpse the matrixial sphere beyond the phallus. The basis for such a rotation is my experience of painting.” Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 102.
2. Catherine Lupton's *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (2004); Nora M. Alter's *Chris Marker* (2006); and Sarah Cooper's *Chris Marker* (2008).
3. Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function,” in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 76.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 78.
7. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 72.
8. Ibid., 72-73.
9. Ibid., 73.
10. Ibid., 83.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 103.
13. Ibid., 58.
14. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 45.
15. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 55.
16. Ibid., 49.
17. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 89-90.
18. Ibid., 90.
19. Ibid., 96.

20. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 221.
21. Ibid., 150.
22. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 96.
23. Ibid., 100.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 95.
27. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 26.
28. Ibid., 60-61.
29. Ibid., 83.
30. Griselda Pollock, "Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference," in *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 4.
31. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 103.
32. Ibid., 95.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., 90.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 102.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 90.
40. Ibid., 104.
41. Ibid.
42. Gaylyn Studlar, "Masochism and the Perverse Pleasures of Cinema," in *Feminism and Film*, ed. E. Ann. Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 206.
43. Ibid., 217.
44. Ibid., 210.
45. Ibid., 215.
46. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 90.
47. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 164.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 163.
50. Ibid., 164.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 165.
53. Ibid., 164.
54. Ibid., 165.

55. Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 23.
56. Ibid.
57. Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 4.
58. Min Lee, "Red Skies: Joining Forces With the Militant Collective SLON," *Film Comment* 39, no. 4 (2003): 38.
59. Ibid., 40.
60. Catherine Lupton provides a detailed history and analysis of Marker's involvement in collective filmmaking. See: Chapter 4 "Grin Without a Cat," in *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).
61. Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 156.
62. Examples include *La jetée's* allusion to Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, as well as *Sans soleil's* evocation of the former and restaging of the latter.
63. The cat and the owl are the two most frequent examples.
64. André Bazin, "Bazin On Marker," trans. Anonymous, *Film Comment* 39, no. 4 (2003): 44.
65. Ibid.
66. Examples include: "profoundly personal and utterly detached" in Terrence Rafferty, "Marker Changes Trains," *Sight and Sound* 53, no. 4 (1984): 286; "metaphysical-materialist penumbra" in Howard Hampton, "Remembrance of Revolutions Past," *Film Comment* 39, no. 3 (2003): 35; and "topos of endless return at once physical and imaginary" in Paul Arthur, "Kino-Eye: The Legacy of Soviet Cinema as Refracted Through Chris Marker's Always Critical Vision," *Film Comment* 39, no. 4 (2003): 32.
67. Lee Hilliker, "The History of the Future in Paris: Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s," *Film Criticism* 24, no. 3 (May 2000): 12.
68. Patrick Ffrech, "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetee*," *French Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2005): 32.
69. Burlin Barr, "'Wandering With Precision': Contamination and the Mise-en-scene of Desire in Chris Marker's *Sans soleil*," *Screen* 45, no. 3 (2004): 176.
70. Lee Hilliker, "The History of the Future in Paris: Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s," *Film Criticism* 24, no. 3 (May 2000): 7.
71. Patrick Ffrech, "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetée*," *French Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2005): 32.
72. Eli Friedlander, "*La Jetée*: Regarding the Gaze," *Boundary 2* 28, no. 1 (April 2001): 80.
73. Griselda Pollock, "Dreaming the Face, Screening the Death: Reflections for Jean-Louis Schefer on *La Jetée*," *Journal of Visual Culture* 4, no. 3 (2005): 299.
74. Ibid., 302.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 61.

79. Griselda Pollock, "Dreaming the Face, Screening the Death: Reflections for Jean-Louis Schefer on *La Jetée*," *Journal of Visual Culture* 4, no. 3 (2005): 302.
80. Patrick Ffrench, "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetée*," *French Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2005): 33.
81. Akira M. Lippit, "Martin Arnold's Memory Machine," *The Journal of Media Arts and Cultural Criticism* 24, no. 6 (1997): 6.
82. Eli Friedlander, "*La Jetée*: Regarding the Gaze," *Boundary 2* 28, no. 1 (April 2001): 88.
83. For an especially poetic reading, situated in the literary and photographic arts, see: Carol Mavor, "Happiness With a Long Piece of Black Leader: Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*," *Art History* 30, no. 5 (2007).
84. Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2000), 59.
85. *Ibid.*, 60.
86. Burlin Barr, "'Wandering with Precision': Contamination and the Mise-en-scene of Desire in Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*," *Screen* 45, no. 3 (2004): 175.
87. *Ibid.*, 182.
88. *Ibid.*, 174.
89. Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 185.
90. *Ibid.*, 190.
91. *Ibid.*, 191.
92. *Sans soleil*, DVD, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982).
93. Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 193.
94. Sarah Cooper, *Selfless Cinema?: Ethics and French Documentary* (London, U.K.: Legenda, 2006), 26.
95. *Ibid.*, 57.
96. *Ibid.*, 52.
97. *Ibid.*
98. *Ibid.*, 57.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Marker was one of the many future directors who attended the Filmclubs organized by Bazin's. Another account purports that Marker gave up acting to assist Bazin in the film division of Travail et Culture. See: Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 7.
2. André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 41.
3. André Bazin, "The Virtues and Limitations of Montage," in *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 45.
4. André Bazin, *Jean Renoir*, trans. W.W. Halsey II and William H. Simon (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 85.

5. André Bazin, "Theater and Cinema—Part Two," in *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 110
6. Burlin Barr, "'Wandering With Precision': Contamination and the Mise-en-scene of Desire in Chris Marker's *Sans soleil*," *Screen* 45, no. 3 (2004), 167.
7. Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 18.
8. *Ibid.*, 28.
9. *Ibid.*, 20, my emphasis.
10. *Ibid.*, 28.
11. André Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality," in *What is Cinema? Vol. II.*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 37.
12. Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 20.
13. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.
14. For an exploration of the relationship between lyricism and fears of self-dissolution, see: Burlin Barr, "'Wandering With Precision': Contamination and the Mise-en-scene of Desire in Chris Marker's *Sans soleil*," *Screen* 45, no. 3 (2004): 186-189.
15. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 118.
16. *Ibid.*, 96.
17. See, for example: Christian Metz, "From The Imaginary Signifier," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 821.
18. André Bazin, "Myth of Total Cinema in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 172-173.
19. For more on the cult status of *La jetée*, see: Alain J.-J. Cohen, "12 Monkeys, *Vertigo* and *La Jetée*. Postmodern Mythologies and Cult Films," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 1, no. 1 (November 2003).
20. Patrick Ffrench, "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetée*," *French Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2005): 35.
21. For an in-depth history of the French New Wave, see: Richard Neupert, *A History of the French New Wave Cinema* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).
22. Lee Hilliker, "The History of the Future in Paris: Chris Marker and Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s," *Film Criticism* 24, no. 3 (May 2000): 4.
23. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 45, Lacan's emphasis.
24. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function," in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 78.

25. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
26. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 69.
27. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
28. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 76.
29. See, for example: Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
30. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
31. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 115.
32. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
33. Ibid.
34. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 107.
35. Ibid., 6.
36. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
37. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 193.
38. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.
39. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 40.
46. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
47. Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 35.
48. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
49. André Bazin, "William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing," in *Bazin at Work: Major Essays and Reviews From the Forties and Fifties*, trans. Bert Cardullo and Alain Piette (New York: Routledge, 1997), 8.
50. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema? Volume II*, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 37.

51. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 83.
52. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 69.
57. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
58. André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 42.
59. André Bazin, "William Wyler, or the Jansenist of Directing," in *Bazin at Work: Major Essays and Reviews From the Forties and Fifties*, trans. Bert Cardullo and Alain Piette (New York: Routledge, 1997), 7.
60. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
61. Ibid.
62. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 195.
63. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
64. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 151.
65. Ibid.
66. Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 6.
67. Ibid., 14.
68. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
69. Ibid.
70. For an exceptional analysis of the museum scene, see: Patrick Ffrench, "The Memory of the Image in Chris Marker's *La Jetée*," *French Studies* 59, no. 1 (January 2005).
71. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
72. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function," in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 78.
73. *La Jetée.*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1962), DVD.
74. Ibid.
75. Philip Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 28-29.
76. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.

CHAPTER THREE

1. For a first-hand account of the Situationist International and the Paris occupation see: René Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (New York: Autonomedia, 1992).
2. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2000), 7.
3. Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1980), 57.
4. Ibid., 75.
5. The film's English title attempts to capture the same contradictory essence as the French expression.
6. Richard Roud, "The Left Bank Revisited," *Sight and Sound* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1977): 144.
7. The credits to *Sans soleil* list: Sana na N'hada's *Carnival in Bissau*, Jean-Michel Humeau's "Ranks ceremony," Marrio Marret and Eugenio Bentiovoglio's "Guerilla in Bissau," Danièle Tessier's "Death of a giraffe," and Haroun Tazieff's "Iceland 1970." Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and numerous other non-credited sources (Japanese television, stock military footage, etc.) also contribute significantly to the film's interpretation and tone.
8. Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 148.
9. Chris Marker, "Notes on Filmmaking," *La jetée/Sans soleil DVD Booklet* (2007): 41.
10. See, for example: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
11. Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2000), 61.
12. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 167.
13. Griselda Pollock, "Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference," in *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 6.
14. Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2000), 59.
15. As Griselda Pollock notes, "Phallic logic is still necessary for certain key elements of subjectivization and access to language." Griselda Pollock, "Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference," in *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 6.
16. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 186.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.

20. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 104.
21. Ibid., 105.
22. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.
23. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
24. For a thorough examination of the camera/eye metaphor, see Chapter 4 in Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
25. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
26. Ibid.
27. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.
28. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
29. Ibid.
30. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 166.
31. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 84.
35. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
36. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 112.
37. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Translation by Kaoru Sakabe.
42. Guy Debord, "Methods of Détournement," *Les Lèvres Nues*, no. 8 (May 1956), accessed March 11, 2011, <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/3>.
43. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
44. Guy Debord, "Methods of Détournement," *Les Lèvres Nues*, no. 8 (May 1956), accessed March 11, 2011, <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/3>.
45. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
46. Ibid.
47. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 257-258.
48. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.

49. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 263.
50. *Ibid.*, 262.
51. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 90.
54. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
55. *Ibid.*
56. This theme can be heard when the protagonist and the woman walk together in the park, after she wakes from sleeping on the bench.
57. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 108.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
60. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 103.
61. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 104.
65. *Ibid.*, 108.
66. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 167.
67. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
68. David Montero, "Film Also Ages: Time and Images in Chris Marker's *Sans soleil*," *Studies in French Cinema* 6, no. 2 (2006): 108-109.
69. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*
74. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 104.
75. "Artist and viewer are not in passive/active contradiction in relation to the screen, and yet neither do they amalgamate; they are not the same, and they are not symmetrical." *Ibid.*, 111-112.
76. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
77. Catherine Lupton, "Shock of the Old," *Film Comment* 39, no. 3: 44.

78. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 105.
79. André Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," ed. Marshall Cohen, in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy, vol. 6 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 173.
80. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 160.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., 147.
83. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
84. Bracha L. Ettinger, *The Matrixial Borderspace*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 147.
85. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
86. Bracha L. Ettinger, "Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere," *Parallax* 7, no. 4 (2001): 108.
87. *Sans Soleil*, dir. Chris Marker (France: Argos-Films, 1982), DVD.
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