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# Memory and the future<sup>1</sup>

*Imaginations of socially just futures for humans usually take the idea of single, homogenous, secure historical time for granted.*

– Dipesh Chakrabarty<sup>2</sup>

Studies of processes and practices of memory explore how people respond to events in the past: how they remember, forget, account for, forgive, memorialise, or commemorate what has happened, and, often, how the way in which they do so produces, reproduces or challenges certain forms of politics or certain specific political structures and systems located in particular places and times. I have already explored aspects of memory in Chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter, I consider time and notions of memory. One segment of the field of memory studies focuses on the memory of violent events – wars, genocides and disappearances, for example – events often described as traumatic. As part of this study, as in memory studies more broadly, we are often led to examine the picture of time or temporality that these practices produce or reproduce.

In my book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, I argued that practices of memory in relation to so-called traumatic events can sometimes, though by no means always, instantiate a form of time that is distinct from linear homogeneous time.<sup>3</sup> I called this form of time *trauma time*. My argument was that since the contemporary form of political order we call the state or sovereign power relies for its existence and its authority on the production of a homogeneous linear or narrative time, trauma time could be seen as an opening for challenge to the state. Whereas state-favoured forms of commemoration favour the insertion of traumatic events into a narrative of heroism and

sacrifice that reinforces the national story, survivors or witnesses of traumatic events often prefer a more open form of memorialisation, one that encircles the trauma and challenges the narrative. Practices of memory in relation to traumatic events could thus potentially provide openings for prising apart the forms of sovereign power we call the state and the ways of life produced by such forms of power.<sup>4</sup>

However, the echo of an ingrained temporal linearity returns to haunt my argument, and, I would suggest, the arguments of other scholars working in this field. Whilst disclaiming any prescriptive aim, and refusing to say how and when openings for a challenge to sovereign power should be seized and by whom, or to specify what alternative forms of authority should or could be put in place, and focusing instead on drawing attention to examples where this has occurred, there is no doubt a desire for change at the root of such scholarly endeavours. In this sense, they remain, on paper at least, trapped within the linearity they attempt to challenge. Are studies of memory and trauma attempts to produce a better world? If so do they rely on the very narrative or continuous time they purport to destabilise?

What I do in this chapter is explore what this means, both for my own argument and for the activity of memory studies and international politics scholarship more generally. I use Chris Marker's film *La Jetée* as a prompt to examine how notions of time are linked to particular ideas of politics and political futures.<sup>5</sup> I explore how these notions of time can be examined in terms of Eric Santner's account of being in the midst of life in his book *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*.<sup>6</sup> If the study of how people remember the past is framed within or by an attempt to change the future, how can that be appropriate given the general challenge to commonly held notions of past, present and future implicit in memory studies, and especially studies of traumatic memory?

### *La Jetée*

Chris Marker's *La Jetée* is a film framed by a traumatic event – an event that stays 'stored there in [the] eyes' of the protagonist of the film, a man whose story we are told but who is not given a name.<sup>7</sup> The

meaning of the traumatic event, which took place at Orly airport, only becomes clear retrospectively: it only ever will have been. At the time, the child who witnesses it does not fully grasp what is going on. It is only at the very end of the film that he realises what it was that he had seen. And yet he retains from the scene one strong image – the image of a woman's face. He returns to this image of the face repeatedly in his thoughts over the succeeding years.

Two memories are fused in the film: the protagonist's memory of a childhood incident and the images of a woman's face, and a collective memory of past destruction. The film is set in the aftermath of a supposed third world war – a nuclear exchange that has left Paris destroyed and its surface inhabited by rats. Humans are confined to a subterranean landscape of tunnels resembling the spaces of the Nazi concentration camps. Released in 1962, the film reflects in its fictional setting reverberations of unease from the collective past of the Second World War a mere seventeen years earlier, the more recent Algerian War, and the anxieties and tensions of the ongoing Cold War.<sup>8</sup> The underground world of prisoners and experiments conjures up the atmosphere of the Nazi camps, and images of the scenes of destruction of Paris reflect the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the fire-bombed cities of Germany. The Cuban missile crisis took place in 1962 and the tensions in the film embody the sense prevalent at that time of nuclear war as an imminent prospect.

The film offers what I read as two distinct fantasies of the future, and two notions of time and politics: first, the notion that the future is something that can be produced or at least influenced by our actions; and second, the idea that the future is in some sense predetermined – and we cannot escape it. The first is, if you like, a linear, progressive notion of time; the second could be seen as a more circular picture. Crucially though, both see time as an external background against which events unfold; time exists independently of us, and the film postulates a science fiction world where we can travel through this external time in the way we might think of travel through geographical space. Both envision an external, pre-existing narrative time, or, as Giorgio Agamben puts it, a 'chronological time, as the time *in which* we are'. Such a time, he argues, 'separates us from ourselves and transforms us into impotent spectators of ourselves – spectators who

look at the time that flies without any time left, continually missing themselves'.<sup>9</sup>

However, simultaneously and most interestingly for me, the film offers glimpses of another form of time entirely, one where neither past nor future exist as such and where memory is disconnected and fragmentary. This other form of time is portrayed particularly in the scenes in the middle part of the film, though it can be seen throughout in the photogrammatic techniques used. It reminds me of what Agamben calls 'messianic time, an operational time in which we take hold of and achieve our representations of time'.<sup>10</sup> The messianic 'is a caesura that divides the division between times and introduces a remnant, a zone of undecidability, in which the past is dislocated into the present and the present is extended into the past'.<sup>11</sup> This is similar to what I am calling trauma time.<sup>12</sup> For Agamben, it is 'the time *that* we ourselves are, and for this reason is the only real time, the only time we have'.<sup>13</sup>

Both the first two notions or fantasies of time propose an escape *from* the ordinary, everyday world of the present: the first imagines that such an escape is possible, *that the future can be changed*, the second that an escape is impossible, or, in other words, *that the future is predetermined*. Both are, as Eric Santner puts it, 'seduced by the prospect of an *exception* to the space of social reality and meaning by the fantasy of an advent, boundary, or outer limit'.<sup>14</sup> The exception, in this case, is situated in another time, a future time, a time outside the everyday life of the present. What Santner suggests we examine instead is the opposite, an escape *into* the midst of everyday life, or, in other words, a giving up of 'the fantasies that keep us in the thrall of some sort of exceptional "beyond"'.<sup>15</sup> Agamben's messianic time and my trauma time can be seen as entailing a traversing of the fantasy such as Santner envisages.<sup>16</sup>

Returning now to *La Jetée*, I will try to show how the idea of an escape *from* the everyday and an escape *into* the everyday might be seen to play out.

### Escape *from* the everyday

In Chris Marker's fictional underworld beneath the contaminated streets of Paris are captives and their guards. Scientists, whispering

disturbingly to each other in German, experiment on the prisoners. The scientists' aim seems to be to find a way out of the post-nuclear war situation – a means of survival – through time travel, and in particular through making contact with the future. They intend to ask the help of a supposed future humanity. Commentators often misread the time travel in the film as an attempt to journey into the past in order to change it and prevent the nuclear war.<sup>17</sup> Salvation, perhaps, is generally expected to be found by changing the past rather than by summoning aid from the future. Certainly, a scenario that seeks to return to the past and change it is widespread in science fiction. But in this case, the film is set in a present that calls on the future for redemption, and the visits to the past it shows happen in order to develop techniques of time travel that will make this appeal to the future possible.

In this first fantasy, the future is seen as something we can change. The everyday world inhabited by the prisoners and guards in the underground tunnels beneath Paris is imagined as a dystopian post-nuclear world, a world dominated by the idea of survival and motivated by the desire to escape this dystopia. What is at work is a fantasy of possibility and control: *'if they were able to conceive or to dream another time, perhaps they would be able to live in it'*.<sup>18</sup>

The solution proposed is not a direct escape to a different time, but rather that the tools for salvation and a different future are to be found in the future: a future that is supposed to be there, a future where humanity has survived. The answer to problems in the present is to be found in that future. By travelling to the future and bringing back food, medicine and sources of energy, humanity will be saved. The assumption or presupposition is that if the future exists then people obviously found a way to escape their current predicament. It would then be the inevitable duty of these future people to help their forebears – and thus reconfirm their own existence. And they do: they give the visitor from their past a source of energy strong enough to power the regeneration of industry in his present.

This is a fantasy of control and possibility, of progress towards a better future by developing a means of travelling through time. The second fantasy is one of impossibility and determinism. It was the protagonist of the film who was the subject of the experiment in time

travel. He had been chosen because of the strong image of the woman's face that he carried in his memory from the event on the observation pier at Orly airport in the time before the destruction. After sending him on several journeys into the past, a technique to project him into the future was perfected. His visit to the future was successful, and his usefulness to the scientists ended. He awaited his fate. The people of the future offered him the possibility of joining them, but, instead, he chose to travel back to that day at Orly, in search of the woman who might be waiting for him. Once there he finally realised what it was he had witnessed the first time: the moment of his own death. Escape was not possible: *'there was no way to escape Time'*.<sup>19</sup>

In this second fantasy of the future, time becomes a circle, coming back to a beginning that always already entailed a particular end. It points to the impossibility of controlling the future, and a determinism or a fatalism that reflects back on the attempts of the scientists at time travel: if the future is predetermined, then attempts to produce a better future are part of that rather than a vital intervention without which a different future would appear.

Both of these fantasies, and indeed the whole conceit of the film as a science fiction narrative, rely on the notion of an external background time of past, present and future, which is there as an outside, beyond our reach or control, though we may or may not be able to move backwards and forwards within it. It may be linear, stretching into the future and the past, or it may be circular, turning back on itself like a Mobius strip, but it is external to us. In the first fantasy, the future exists outside the world, as 'some sort of a "beyond" of the space of meaning that would nonetheless be a possible object of meaningful experience'.<sup>20</sup> The second enacts the fantasy of witnessing one's own death, or in other words of 'occupying the place of an impossible gaze at the outer limits of one's being-in-the-world'.<sup>21</sup> Most studies of memory politics also rely on this notion of an external universal time.

### Escape *into* the everyday

But the film is more than the expected science fiction narrative, and it does more than reveal or perhaps pander to our fantasies of time and the future. At the centre of the film, framed within the experiments

with time travel, is a simple love story. Rather than just providing a romantic interest, this story presents an alternative to the external flow of time: it proposes a time that is disjointed, a time of encounter, of lack or excess, and of loss.

In this part of the film, we see a series of everyday settings in the world before the war: '*a dateless world*': a missed meeting in a department store, where the man catches a glimpse for the first time of the woman whose face he recalls so clearly, but is distracted by the plethora of goods on display and loses her again; another encounter where they are close and he speaks to her; a stroll in a park, surrounded by other people, and children; they sit in the sun, inspect their surroundings; he watches her sleeping; a final encounter in a museum of natural history, '*filled with timeless animals*', where they are surrounded by specimens of what seems like every form of natural life, but stuffed, behind glass, or classified, in cabinets, and they talk, laugh, and move among the exhibits almost as if they are exhibits themselves.<sup>22</sup>

On each occasion, there is a certain hospitality to the other, an openness: '*She welcomes him in a simple way.*'<sup>23</sup> The notion of simple acceptance recalls Jacques Derrida's hospitality: 'Let us say yes to *who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.'<sup>24</sup> There is an acceptance of what happens, without a demand for reason or justification. Though the man is unsure whether he is dreaming or inventing what is happening, he goes along with it. As for the woman, she doesn't know when or whether the man will appear, but she accepts him as he is: '*She calls him her ghost.*'<sup>25</sup> When he tells her the impossible story of where he comes from, she does not mock or question: '*she listens; she doesn't laugh*'.<sup>26</sup>

During these encounters we have a suggestion that the lived experience of time is nothing like an external universal time: '*They are without memories, without plans. Time builds itself painlessly around them. Their only landmarks are the flavor of the moment they are living and the markings on the walls.*'<sup>27</sup> There are no plans for the future, and there is no memory of the past. As in Agamben's messianic

time, the moment of encounter is the only time they have, and a time they seize and hold. It is an escape *into* the everyday, into what Santner calls ‘the midst of life’, and involves letting go of the fantasy of an outside, an external time.<sup>28</sup> It means traversing both the fantasy of a better future *and* the fantasy of the impossibility of escape. Being in the midst of life also involves ‘a mode of tarrying with’ an ‘unassumable excess’ rather than ‘defending against it’.<sup>29</sup>

In this central part of the story the face emphasises the singularity of the moment and the form of the encounter. The woman has a face: indeed, as we saw, it was the image of her face, held in the man’s memory, that was used to engineer these encounters in time. The man’s face appears when he is with the woman, but is hidden during the scenes in the underground passages. White plastic foam masks cover his eyes as the scientists experiment on him. The scientists wear goggles. The faces of the future are disembodied. In the only moment where the film slips from a montage of still photographs to a moving image, it is the woman’s face that we are looking at. She opens her eyes and looks at the camera, or, as Janet Harbord puts it, ‘the woman looks at us and we mimic her’.<sup>30</sup> We look into her eyes.

These parts of the story can be read as an interruption of a linear or circular notion of external pre-existing time, but so can the photographic techniques of the film as a whole.<sup>31</sup> It is not just the uncanny moment where the woman opens her eyes and looks at us – when one watches the film one cannot be sure that this moment has actually happened – but rather the way in which the film is constructed from still photographs woven together but ‘separated by straight cuts, fades and dissolves of varying duration’ and operating through well-worn cinematic traditions of ‘establishing shots, eyeline matches, shot-counter-shot, close-ups and so forth’.<sup>32</sup> This technique almost lulls us into reading movement into the still images as if we were watching a moving picture, not a series of stills. It is eerie, too – as if there were breath and life in the characters, but not quite.

Jenny Chamarette argues that in *La Jetée*, ‘Marker’s move away from illusionary cinematic movement and continuity ... makes obvious the impossibility of a pure representation of time.’ In traditional cinema, an illusion of the familiar flow of time is produced. But in *La Jetée*, ‘both subject-matter and medium invoke an exploration of a

subject-in-time ... through a narrational and image-based temporality that is deliberately striated, separated, made unreal and cut into moments'.<sup>33</sup> Although Chamarette reads this exploration as ultimately pessimistic, showing the entrapment of the protagonist within the circularity that leads inevitably to his death, it can be read differently. Despite the strong linearity of the superimposed science fiction narrative, the film, through its photogrammatic structure, gestures at the impossibility of an external linear narrative temporality, or, rather at the gap between such a notion of time and the time of the everyday.<sup>34</sup>

The science fiction narrative itself, which seems at first so plausible, given its genre, is riddled with contradictions and impossibilities. The efforts of the scientists, directed at obtaining resources to ensure a better future, one in which humanity survives, rely on the presumption that humanity has already survived: what they are trying to do wouldn't make sense unless the result they were striving to produce had already happened. What seems to be predicated on the idea that the future can be changed turns out to be reliant on the notion that the future is predetermined. The fantasy is doubled-edged: the future is both open to change and predetermined at the same time.

The moment of death that closes the film is also in a sense double-edged. It seems a sign of entrapment, of the impossibility of escape. Indeed the voice-over tells us the man '*understood that there was no way to escape time, and that this moment he had been granted to watch as a child ... was the moment of his own death*'.<sup>35</sup> This seems to mean that his attempt to travel back in time, to encounter the woman again and remain there on this occasion, is doomed to fail. His going back to the moment at Orly turns out not to be a choice but to already have been necessary to complete the first moment. The fantasy of possibility turns out to entail an impossible doubling once more: he realized '*that the child he had been was due to be there too, watching the planes*'.<sup>36</sup> He can only go back by being in two places, and two times, at once: fantasies of a secure time and place fall apart.

Slavoj Žižek's writing on Lacan's phrase 'a letter always arrives at its destination' is perhaps helpful here.<sup>37</sup> Žižek points out that the idea that a letter always reaches its destination is a function of a retroactive reading of events, where contingency is read as necessity. In a sense what this is saying is that a letter only becomes

what it is retrospectively. There is, in other words, no external linear background time in which the letter could continually exist, where we could track it step by step on its way to its destination, if you like. There can be no essence; nothing can 'be' as such, without a concept of continuous, linear time. Towards the end of his discussion, Žižek remarks: 'the only letter that nobody can evade, that sooner or later reaches us, i.e., the letter which has each of us as its infallible addressee, is death'. This is, inevitably, an encounter with the traumatic real, lying in wait, as it were, 'at the end of the imaginary as well as the symbolic itinerary'.<sup>38</sup>

However, this traumatic real 'is not only death but also life ... the very notion of life is alien to the symbolic order'.<sup>39</sup> Maurice Blanchot's short reflections entitled *The Instant of My Death* recount his memory of the moment where he faced death by firing squad, and his feeling in that instant 'of compassion with suffering humanity, the happiness of not being immortal or eternal'.<sup>40</sup> Later, he tells us, 'all that remains is the feeling of lightness that is death itself or, to put it more precisely, the instant of my death henceforth always in abeyance'.<sup>41</sup> For Santner it is precisely our defences against this moment always in abeyance – translated into our faith in the social or symbolic order, its abstraction from life and its fantasy that we call social reality – a reality that for Santner is specifically a biopolitical order – that 'keeps us from opening to the midst of life' and lead us to an escape *from* the everyday rather than an escape *into* the everyday.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

What might all this mean for memory scholars, or, indeed, scholars more broadly? Are studies of politics, memory and trauma attempts to produce a better world? If so, do they rely on the very narrative or continuous time they purport to destabilise?

In my own work on memory, trauma and politics I have examined 'the struggle that takes place between survivors of trauma and the sovereign powers that they confront'. I examined instances 'where the state normalised and disciplined trauma to reinstate linear narratives' and where 'those attempts have been subverted'.<sup>43</sup> I pointed out that in any case, the traumatic excess escapes capture. However, lurking

behind my argument is a notion that resistance to state-imposed forms of memory (or forgetting) might lead to a better world. I talk, for example, of what we should do: 'if we are to resist attempts to "gen-trify" or depoliticise' trauma we have to recall that what we call social reality is a fantasy, and one we must attempt to traverse.<sup>44</sup> We need to 'retrieve ... the properly political domain, ... the sphere of trauma time'.<sup>45</sup> Embedded in these injunctions is the idea of a future time, one that we can make different from the present, and hence the fantasy of a homogeneous, external time against which our actions take place resurfaces.

If we appear at first glance to risk reinforcing the fantasy of an escape *from* the everyday, what might an escape *into* the everyday mean for scholarly enquiry? What does it mean to remain in the midst of life?

To address this question somewhat obliquely, I shall return briefly to Santner's story of Franz Rosenzweig.<sup>46</sup> In his writings, Rosenzweig 'explicitly distinguishes his understanding of being-in-the-midst-of-life from what he takes to be the concept of the human subject, its life, and world found in philosophy'.<sup>47</sup> Rosenzweig saw the academic life as a 'defence against the exigencies of being in the midst of life', driven by questions imposed from outside rather than arising from life.<sup>48</sup> He withdrew from academic work, refusing any longer to answer to a discipline-driven scientific curiosity, but rather attending only to questions that arose when he was inquired of by men rather than scholars: 'there is a man in each scholar, a man who enquires and stands in need of answers'.<sup>49</sup>

Scientific curiosity, which Rosenzweig identifies with metaphysical thinking, is seen as a defence against opening to the midst of life. The 'lure of metaphysical thinking' isn't just a danger to philosophers, but to everyone; it doesn't 'befall everyday life from the outside; everyday life itself is congenitally susceptible to this mode of thinking which is ... a kind of withdrawal from, a kind of fantasmatic defence against, our being in the midst or flow of life'.<sup>50</sup> In modernity, it is the norm. More than that, Rosenzweig sees it as a defence against death: 'If living means dying, [man] prefers not to live. He chooses death in life. He escapes from the inevitability of death into the paralysis of artificial death.'<sup>51</sup>

Being in the midst of life, as we have seen, entails ‘a certain *suspension* of fantasy’ and of metaphysics.<sup>52</sup> It involves ‘a mode of tarrying with [an] unassumable excess’, a trauma.<sup>53</sup> In some ways, scholars of memory are perhaps among those best placed to operate from the midst of life. Despite the way that culturally prevalent notions of memory frame it in terms of a linear movement from past to present to future, we tend to be concerned with particular practices of memory, firmly located in particular presents. In a sense our interest in what we call traumatic events prompts us to do this: such events bleed across time and generations, do not take place once and for all but often only retrospectively or in repetition, and defy location, narration and description. Memory scholars are well placed to heed Chris Marker’s warning about the type of politics – or type of social fantasy – that might bring a dystopian future about: a politics that seeks answers in some outside – something other than the everyday, the midst of life.

Marker’s film points at one and the same time to the impossibility and yet the importance of inhabiting another time: not a past or a future, but another form of time altogether. It shows how powerful and embedded notions of external time are and how strong a part they play in social fantasy, or at least in a biopolitical social fantasy. It may be possible to *live* another time, to *inhabit* it, but not to tell of it. As I have noted before, ‘trauma time cannot be described in the language we have without recourse to notions of linearity’.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps Marker’s film embodies ‘another way of telling’. As John Berger argues in his book of this name, ‘the photograph cuts across time and discloses a cross-section of the event or events which were developing at that instant’. It ‘tends to make meaning ambiguous’, whilst simultaneously allowing us ‘to see the interconnectedness and related coexistence of events’. Some photographs can convey what is ‘too extensive and too interwoven to enumerate very satisfactorily in words’.<sup>55</sup> Such photographs, which Berger calls exceptional, inhabit trauma time, messianic time, the time of the now, the time of the everyday, and show it to us in a way language generally cannot. Marker’s film incorporates such photographs and enhances their ambiguity and interconnectedness through the way they are woven into a linear narrative, which they destabilise rather than illustrate.

As memory scholars, we often turn to images or photographs, or alternatively to fictional forms, in an attempt to convey what we mean. Maybe our arguments cannot be contained in familiar academic prose but call for some attempt at escape from those constraints – an escape *into* the everyday, perhaps. And as scholars more generally, perhaps what we are being called to do here is similar to the everyday close listening and slow rebuilding examined in Chapter 2, as opposed to the busy-ness Santner identifies in his more recent work.<sup>56</sup> Is the everyday what Frayn, in his play *Copenhagen*, has Heisenberg term ‘this most precious meanwhile’, where we forgo ideas of metaphysical (or any other) certainty?<sup>57</sup> Is it perhaps, to think back to the previous chapter, that being in ‘*the midst of life*’ is, as Santner puts it, what happens ‘when we truly inhabit the proximity to our neighbour, assume responsibility for the claims his or her singular and uncanny presence makes on us not only in extreme circumstances’ – like the humanitarian emergencies we discussed in that chapter – ‘but every day’.<sup>58</sup> The question that remains, of course, and one both Rosenzweig and Santner ask, is whether such a comportment, such a habitation, is compatible with, or is allowed in the academic world. If it is not permitted, or not possible, what then?

## Notes

- 1 An early version of this chapter was presented at the workshop on ‘Memory, trauma and change in world politics’ held in Montreal on 15 March 2011. I would like to thank Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte for inviting me to speak at the workshop, Maja Zehfuss for her discussant remarks on the paper, and participants for their comments and questions. The workshop and the research for this paper were supported by an International Studies Association Venture Workshop award. The paper was also discussed at a meeting of the Performance and Politics Research Group at Aberystwyth University on 15 February 2011, and I would like to thank colleagues in that group for their contributions.
- 2 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008: 15.
- 3 Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- 4 As discussed in Chapter 4, sovereign power, as articulated by Giorgio Agamben, relies on distinctions, particularly that between bare life and

- politically qualified life (Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- 5 *La Jetée*. Directed by Chris Marker, Argos Films, 1962.
- 6 Eric L. Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. See also Eric L. Santner, 'Miracles Happen: Benjamin, Rosenzweig, Freud, and the Matter of the Neighbor.' In *The Neighbor: Three Enquiries in Political Theology*, edited by Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner and Kenneth Reinhard, 76–133. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005; Eric L. Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006; and his own study of memory and film, Eric Santner, *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory and Film in Postwar Germany*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- 7 The phrase is Michael Herr's, from his book *Dispatches*; quoted in Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996: 10.
- 8 Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future*. London: Reaktion Books, 2005: 88.
- 9 Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*. Translated by Patricia Dailey. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005: 68. Original emphasis.
- 10 Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 68.
- 11 Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 74.
- 12 I make this argument more fully in Jenny Edkins, 'Time, Personhood, Politics.' In *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary Criticism*, edited by Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eaglestone, 127–40. London: Routledge, 2013.
- 13 Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 68. Original emphasis.
- 14 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 30. Original emphasis.
- 15 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 31.
- 16 The phrase 'traversing the fantasy' reflects a Lacanian approach such as that adopted by Slavoj Žižek; see for example Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso, 1989. I discussed this approach in Chapter 3.
- 17 For example, Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006: 94; Kai Lindroos, *Now-Time – Image-Space: Temporalization of Politics in Walter Benjamin's Philosophy of Art and History*. Jyväskylä: SoPhi, University of Jyväskylä, 1998: 219.
- 18 Chris Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*. New York: Zone Books, 1992. This volume contains all the still images which comprise the film, with the text of the voiceover script in English and French. There are no page numbers. Quotations from this volume in the rest of the chapter are shown in italics.

- 19 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.
- 20 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 13–14.
- 21 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 14.
- 22 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.
- 23 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.
- 24 Derrida, *On Hospitality*, 77, cited in Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010: 219. Original emphasis.
- 25 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*. Again, I am reminded of Derrida, this time of his hauntology or spectrality. See, for example, his discussion of Nietzsche's phantom friends in Jacques Derrida, 'The Politics of Friendship.' *Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 11 (1988): 632–44: 287–8.
- 26 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.
- 27 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*. The markings on the walls are mysterious scribbles, not quite graffiti, that appear in only one of the stills but are referred to a couple of times in the voice-over.
- 28 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 11–24.
- 29 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 22.
- 30 Janet Harbord, *Chris Marker: La Jetée*. London: Afterall Books, 2009: 24.
- 31 Jenny Chamarette, 'A Short Film About Time: Dynamism and Stillness in Chris Marker's "La Jetée".' In *Rhythms: Essays in French Literature, Thought and Culture*, edited by Elizabeth Lindley and Laura McMahon, 217–35. Berne: Peter Lang, 2008.
- 32 Lupton, *Chris Marker*, 91.
- 33 Chamarette, 'A Short Film About Time', 221.
- 34 It would be interesting to examine this in relation to another montage, this time not one of still photographs but of film excerpts, in Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010): 'The Clock draws attention to time as a multifaceted protagonist of cinematic narrative. With virtuosic skill, the artist has excerpted each of these moments from their original contexts and edited them together to form a 24-hour montage, which unfolds in real time. While constructed from a dizzying variety of periods, contexts and film genres whose storylines seem to have shattered in a multitude of narrative shards, The Clock uncannily proceeds at a unified pace as if re-ordered by the latent narrative of time itself. Because it is synchronized with the local time of the exhibition space, the work conflates cinematic and actual time, revealing each passing minute as a repository of alternately suspenseful, tragic or romantic narrative possibilities.' Press release, Paula Cooper Gallery, <https://www.paulacoopergallery.com/exhibitions/christian-marclay-the-clock/press-release>. Thanks to Mike Pearson for drawing my attention to this piece.
- 35 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.
- 36 Marker, *La Jetée: ciné roman*.

- 37 Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*. London: Routledge, 1992: 1–28. See also Jacques Lacan, ‘Seminar on “the Purloined Letter”.’ *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 38–72.
- 38 Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom*, 21.
- 39 Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom*, 22.
- 40 Maurice Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*. Translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000: 5. I am grateful to Karoline Gritzner for drawing my attention to the relevance of Blanchot here. Jacques Derrida’s reflections on Blanchot’s ‘memoir’ are contained in the same volume (Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*. Translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- 41 Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*, 11.
- 42 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 45.
- 43 Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 230.
- 44 Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 14.
- 45 Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 229.
- 46 Rosenzweig’s major work is *The Star of Redemption*. Translated by William W. Hallo. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
- 47 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 14.
- 48 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 15.
- 49 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 18. Santner did not follow this path of leaving academia; he moved from memory studies based on looking at film, through theoretical work and back to work on fiction, examining the work of German novelist W.G. Sebald.
- 50 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 21.
- 51 Franz Rosenzweig, *Understanding the Sick and the Healthy: A View of World, Man and God*. Translated by Nahum Glatzer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999: 102. Cited in Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 22.
- 52 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 10.
- 53 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 22.
- 54 Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 16.
- 55 John Berger and Jean Mohr. *Another Way of Telling*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995: 120. The sketches Berger uses to explain what forms of temporality he is thinking of remind one of Agamben’s attempts to illustrate messianic time (Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 63–5).
- 56 Eric L. Santner, *The Weight of All Flesh: On the Subject-Matter of Political Economy (the Berkeley Tanner Lectures)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- 57 Michael Frayn, *Copenhagen*. London: Methuen Drama, 1998: 96.
- 58 Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 7.