'memoria rerum: Animated Materiality, Memory and Amnesia'. In Maarten van Gagldonk,László Munteán, Ali Shobeiri (eds) *Animation and Memory*, Palgrave Animation series, Chan, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland, October 2020

Bio
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Abstract
After establishing a theoretical framework from rhetoric, memory, film and media studies, this chapter examines stop-motion films with implicit and explicit themes of memory, dream and amnesia from the Quay Brothers and Hiraki Sawa. Phenomenological and heuristic approaches are developed for how these films function and demonstrate how animated objects present relational actants that interpret, reify or represent dreamed or lost memory in a diegesis shared with human actors. Jane Bennett's notion of 'thing power' (2010) further underpins a discussion of how stop motion animation can visually articulate intangible, invisible memory as *memoria rerum* – the memory of things.

Keywords
Memory studies, ars memoria, stop motion animation, Quay Brothers, Hiraki Sawa, film studies, agency, amnesia, dream

As a time-based media form, stop motion is a special case of animation film. It shares formal, spatial, material and temporal cinematic features and techniques with non-animated film, and it can work with objects, places and things that are often where memories are located. As in live-action film, these objects and spaces can be accessed outside the film experience; we can hold them in our hands, enter a room that has been filmed in, share them with others. Pierre Nora's concept of "sites of memory" is significant in this context because it has three aspects: material, functional and symbolic (1989, 19), and this suggests memory is rooted in experiential, visible and tangible phenomena, in environment, gesture, image and object. Creators of stop motion can work with a range of real world objects, materials and textures, that can be physical mementos or placeholders of a memory for the artist, of a subject or of a figure in the film's diegetic world. When animated, objects can depict what is unseen, but felt and remembered in human consciousness. After a survey of key concepts from memory studies relevant to animation as moving image, I explore concepts from Classic Greek rhetoric of oratory persuasion to then map their *ars memorativa* to contemporary media analogies. Then, I examine films with implicit and explicit themes of memory, from the Quay Brothers and Hiraki Sawa, to develop phenomenological and heuristic approaches for how these films function. I demonstrate how they present relational actants – in effect, how things in stop motion can visually present dream memory in the former, and in the latter, eradicated memory in the diegetic presence of a living human protagonist. The aim is to offer an analytical framework of memory studies for this animation technique and to reveal how

the artists' animation of matter can act as a performative vehicle and reified intermediary for experiences of individual cultural memory, and for the loss or recall of these.

Memory studies and theory have engaged extensively with literature, visual arts, photography, documentary and narrative film, with a growing interest in media and materiality. In the relatively new field of animation scholarship, similar to the early days of film and media studies, few authors work in a single, discrete discipline, as research and writing on animation can and does draw on many other fields of knowledge. At the outset of her *Memory and Culture*, Astrid Erll observes that "'[m]emory is a topic that integrates disparate elements like no other [and it is] a sociocultural phenomenon" (2011, 1). Animation studies, theory and aesthetics also has remarkable interdisciplinary range for similar reasons. In the Introduction to their expansive, multidisciplinary *Handbook of Memory Studies*, one of a number of such collections, Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen describe the field as an "archipelagos of memory" (2016, 2), an apt metaphor for the lengthening, interlinking chain of formerly discrete disciplines; yet they also suggest that "this creative variety of perspectives has implied, to some extent, a theoretical isolationism, most often underpinned by disciplinary conventions" (1). This was once the case with animation, but it is also expanding with a solid critical base in many fields. Yet in a scoping exercise, I've found very little critical writing on the topic of animation and memory which is somewhat surprising, not least as a time-based media form that works with artistic materials, animation can transmute the unseen raw material of human nature, memory and experience into visual imagery.

There seem to be as many potential areas for memory studies to examine as there are individual and shared expressions of memory, and a recent spate of collections and publications attest to this, from the historically arranged keyworks of the *Collective Memory Reader* (2011) to others specific to anthropology, politics, language or film. László Munteán, Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik's recent *Materialising Memory in Art and Popular Culture* (2017) delectably begins with Marcel Proust's madeleine and deals specifically with matter, stuff and things, and entanglements, two topics I will return to. Tota and Hagen offer that "the field…is continually refocusing and reinventing itself…[and] varies from country to country both in regards to their historical development, empirical focus and conceptual framework" (2016, 1-2). They suggest there are "multiple pathways in how to approach the study of memory in terms of grammar and vocabularies, methodologies and at what level research is located (micro, meso, macro, national, international, transnational, network)", as well as ask how individuals, organisations, collectives, generations and societies "come to experience, use and debate memory" (2). They also comment on "technologies [that] mediate meaning and experience of past and future memories" (2); as it is a set of techniques and principles that work with, and within, the technologies of film and digital media, animation can present a broad and inclusive continuum of representation and mediation, from stop-motion real-world objects, physical environments and photographic documentation to mimetic or abstract frame-by-frame artistry.

Its worth asking the question of what and where memories 'are'. Alon Confino observes the notion of memory in cultural, historical, political and social studies "has been used to denote very different things, which nonetheless share a topical common denominator: the ways in which people construct a sense of the past…[and] to denote the representation of the past and the making of it into a shared cultural knowledge of successive generations" (1997, 1386). Approaches to social and collective memory, and audience memory (including anamnesis), include a range of external aspects that generate a collective mind, such as material and symbolic (influence, immaterial, social, cultural); public memory and

cultural trauma (ethics), as well as ethnic, generational and national groups. These external aspects are something animation filmmakers can circumvent or modify through a range of styles, materials and techniques that remove visual evidence of national, ethnic or gendered membership, and the form, though it can work with photographs and pixilation of humans, can diverge from representations of individual or groups of human beings.

While history, and histories, like autobiography, can be based on memories, Maurice Halbwachs regarded "history as dead memory, a way of preserving pasts to which we no longer have an 'organic' experiential relation" (Lentin 2010, 24) and thus demarcated memory from history, as does Pierre Nora, who distinguishes history that belongs "to everyone and no one", from "memory [that] takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images and objects" (1989, 9). Others see memory and history in a dialectical relationship, or argue for an understanding and contextualisation of historical and political contingencies because "the historical analysis of interpretations produces interpretations on its own" (Feindt et al 2014, 41); more often than not, history is 'written by the winners'. As stop motion animation can work with tangible cultural and material objects to satisfy the concreteness Nora sets out for memory, Marita Sturken's implication of cultural memory in power dynamics is relevant. What she terms "technologies of memory [are]…produced through objects, images, and representations. These are…not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning" (1997, 9). But history is important, and memory studies also has a history.

In terms of how memory is recorded and shared, Jacques Le Goff (1992) determined five periods that are also developments towards technical processes. Astrid Erll summarises these in *Memory and Culture* as follows: 1. ethnic memory (oral transmission without writing); 2. "the 'rise of memory, from orality to writing, from prehistory and antiquity'" – commemoration and documentary recording; 3. the Middle Ages – "medieval memory 'in equilibrium' between orality and writing'"; 4. "the 'progress of written and figured memory from the Renaissance to the present'" from the printing press to archives, libraries museums (shared identities across nations) and 5."the 'contemporary evolutions in memory'" (Erll, 2011, 116-17; in-text citations from Le Goff 1992, 51-99). In the last 150 years electronic sound and photochemical images introduced new technologies for expression, transmission and interpretation of memory. To ask a central question here with regard to analogue recording, and even more so with digital technologies, I paraphrase Confino: How can we evaluate, control and verify the importance of evidence? (2006, 180) He points out that this is not possible without a "systematic study of reception" (2006, 180). And much debated too, is reception of evidence and its interpretation, and the need for intermediaries to interpret (here I mention Aby Warburg, Walther Benjamin, Hanna Arendt and Theodor Adorno as critical touchstones in the West, and there are many others). Another theme is the construction and reception of memory, its hegemonic dominance, and our acceptance of how it *should* feel – what we can call 'official' memory – and , and on the other side, its contestation in a vernacular sense of how social reality *really* feels. These debates can be found in generational, political and social differences of historical remembering (Confino 1997, 1401) of trauma or historical events, for instance.

From ars memoria *to media*

Another question for us to ask when considering the visual imagery of animation is: how does memory work? In the Greek Classical period (Le Goff's second period of the "rise of memory") notable poets who examined memory include Quintillian and Aristotles, and in *De oratore* (55 BCE) Cicero tells us Simonides invented the art of memory as one of five

elements of the rhetorical system of oratory persuasion. According to Cicero in his *Rhetoric ad Herrennium* of around 80 BCE, memory is described as "the treasure-house of inventions" (Yates [1966] 1999, 20). To develop oratory, imaginary mnemonic structuring aimed to create a 'memory building' or 'palace' composed of a series of imagined places and spaces that are populated by other elements: these helped visualise and remember the organisation of a speech, for instance. Later techniques developed besides the architectural references are graphical and textual mnemonics. In her seminal *Art of Memory*, Francis Yates suggests "we have to think of the ancient orator as moving in imagination through his memory building *whilst* he is making his speech, drawing from the memorised places and images he has placed on them" ([1966] 1999, 3). She wrote that these "inner techniques…depend on visual impressions of almost incredible intensity" and that Cicero emphasised "the art of memory rested, not only on the discovery of the importance of order for memory, but also on the discovery that the sense of sight is the strongest of all the senses" (4). In the Greek rhetorical system, memory is an internally visualised imagination of a trajectory. In a memory palace, the orator moves backwards, forwards, in any direction. The spatiotemporal nature of the method is apparent, and it is interesting to speculate what the Classic poets, whose mnemonic supports were the cultural products available them – text, art and architecture – would have done with their *ars memorativa* if cinema had been invented then (the cinema studies model for media memory is of course Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave'). This heuristic technique of mental shortcuts went through many adaptations over the centuries, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. Today it would be described as a cognitive map or mnemonic ordering, and computing employs memory as a mechanism, such as Distributed Shared Memory Systems, all of this in anticipation of AI (artificial intelligence) but that's another topic for another time.

As neurological and cognitive processes, memory and its recall, and its companion, forgetting, are at work constantly in our waking and unconscious lives. These are experiences that remain invisible, subjective and personal until their interpretation and expression through some form of communication. In her writings on the mental, social and material features of memory culture, Astrid Erll notes that "media not only connect [these] three dimensions of memory culture; they are also the interface between the *collected* and *collective*, the cognitive and the social/media level of memory" (2011, 104), and she observes that there are "different modes of remembering identical past events" (104) as individuals, society, political or family history. Neiger et al make a valuable distinction between media and "memory agents such as academia or historical museums which are, by and large, committed to a common ethos of depicting the past according to agreed-upon, publicly known conventions" but they contrast this by observing that "the divergence among media genres is enormous" (Neiger, Meyers and Zandberg 2011, 7). Later I will propose that there is an additional divergence and wealth of visual expression available to animation directors and artists, not least because besides the breadth of genres it can engage, animation (not a genre) is also set of techniques, and a filmic and digital media form. The images produced by these techniques extend beyond formal and visual qualities of non-animated film and other arts practice. But what does memory 'look like', and how does it get from mind to linguistic articulation to screen?

Personal memory is intangible and becomes accessible to ourselves and others through a number of processes including excogitation, the process of thinking things out. Moving image media enhance accessibility to interpretations of memories, but the same event can have different narrative and stylistic approaches, visualisation strategies and construction (Tekin 2012, 6), all of which depend on differing cultural or social originators of artworks. Media and memory studies work with a variety of memory typologies and analytical tools,

like textual and content analysis (visual and sound) of formal film elements (narrative, mise-en-scène, etc), and interpretation, from explicit to implicit to symptomatic (Bordwell and Thompson 2008, 60-64), and again, these can be subject to a director's (and critic's) own preferences and subjectivity. Kuhn et al comment on distinctive features of cinema memory research: "the mix of approaches, modes of investigation, source materials, data and uses of data it deploys and creates" (2017, 9). Just a few they mention include questionnaires and focus groups to interviews, observations, diaries, testimonies and memories, most of which are worked with qualitatively, increasingly with digital tools (9-10), but they also raise questions about validity and transparency of data (11) and encourage wide sharing of raw data. The range of different disciplinary meanings for the term collective memory is further problematized by film: Grainge suggests"[t]he notion of authentic and territorialised memory, tied to personal and collective experience, has been challenged in a media world where the past may no longer be felt or understood in any culturally specific or referential sense"(2003, 7).

Entangledness and cognitio confusa: The Comb (From the Museums of Sleep)

Alon Confino suggests "the term 'memory' can be useful in articulating the connections between the cultural, the social, and the political, between representation and social experience" (1997, 1388). I'm interested in this notion of articulation, and the term has a number of meanings, from a technical sense of joining segments or clear distinct speech to fluent and coherent expression of ideas or feelings. I'll now briefly explore how describing a memory has affinities with the psychoanalytic process, the articulation in spoken language of the simultaneity and chaos of remembering dreams, and making language-based sense during verbal recall of the disjointed simultaneity of a dream, and put this to test on a film. Episodic or repetitive memory of fragments of experiences are elements of dreams, an epiphenomena of regenerative sleep. These fragments are what Sigmund Freud called "residues of daytime life…[that] are essential ingredients in the formation of dreams, since experience has revealed the surprising fact that in the content of every dream some link with a recent daytime impression—often of the most insignificant sort—is to be detected" (1913, 559-61). For neuroscientist Penelope Lewis, "dreams not only replay memory fragments but also create brand-new, highly creative mixtures of memories and knowledge" (2013, 96). Whether retained in the mind, or communicated verbally, both are conscious attempts to comprehend and structure what is recalled. Isidora Stancovic describes this as a "preserved memory flash [that] is without context, lacking basic information about what came before and after it. It is due to narration and interpretation that these flashes have subsequently gained shape and structure, thus becoming stabile" (2014, 89-90). Rudolf Arnheim also helps us here: "Visual structuring occurs in two ways which, for lack of more precise terms, [he] call[s] the *intuitive* and the *intellectual* mode . . . [in the former]. . . [t]he result is a true *cognitio confusa*, in which every component is dependent on every other. The structure of the whole controls the parts and vice versa." (1980, 494). I see a relation between Arnheims' *cognitio confusa* and entanglement, a term that has leverage in memory studies.

> In a synchronic perspective, memory's entangledness is presented as twofold. Every act of remembering inscribes an individual in multiple social frames. This polyphony entails the simultaneous existence of concurrent interpretations of the past. In a diachronic perspective, memory is entangled in the dynamic relation between single acts of remembering and changing mnemonic patterns. (Feindt et al 2014: 24)

Because it can present both synchrony and diachrony, the moving image can work with this polyphony and with both of Arnheim's modes (intuitive and intellectual). Images can

represent a "mode of cognition …available only through perception" (Arnheim 1980, 494) that he calls "intuitive perception [which] conveys the experience of a structure" (495) and which I would describe as synchronous (in Feindt's sense) as well as condensed and displaced (as in Freud's), but this perception "does not offer its 'intellectual' analysis" (495). The intellectual analysis in a film is made possible by the visual and aural articulation of its formal and narrative structuring – from composition and camera movement to montage and editing (which is also its diachrony).

[A digression, dear reader. To try this yourself, please take a moment to call up a memory or remember a dream you've had recently. What is it you remember about it? Were your eyes closed or open? Does this memory have a structure? Is it something you internally visualise, or feel physically, or emotionally, or both? How would you reconstruct and describe it to someone else? What about its temporality? If a dream, did it have any connection to your waking life?]

The Quay Brothers' 1990 *The Comb (From the Museums of Sleep)* features two animated realms (Feindt et al's 'frames'). One is the black/white 'real world' realm of a pixilated sleeping woman in a room, the other a coloured realm of animated puppets, environments and objects, with portals between levels full of entangled filaments and textures connected by passages between them that a puppet negotiates with ladders. The sound is spoken mutterings and demented laughter, and string music adds an emotional quality and spatial connectedness to the visual disconnectedness of the 'snakes and ladders' construction of the dream world. In the black and white realm of the dreamer, one of her fingers wiggles erratically, and her fitful twitches and movements seem to trigger similar events in the coloured animated dream world. Her deep breathing is cross-cut with similar rhythmic movements of objects in the coloured realm, her rolling over and entanglement in bed sheets alternates with animated scenes of the twisting and pulling of thick fabrics. This twitching is also mirrored in the coloured animated dream world by one of the fingers of disjoined floating or flying animated hands. In this stop motion film, the synchronous simultaneity and brevity of the dreamer's dream is diachronically and temporally separated into two diegetic worlds, in the mise-en scène and through editing. The film is a cinematic, animated metaphor for the psychoanalytical practice of temporalizing and describing the immaterial sensation of the memory fragments of dreaming, extending the probable, actual seconds of dreams into 17 minutes of screen time. Not a memory palace, this film's enigmatic structure is one of instability and entanglement, where the sleeper's insignificant day residue neurological finger twitch sets the animated dream realm in motion.

Figure 1 *The Comb*

The rich vividness and complexity of these images and sound track present an animated dream, and not a dreamer's own interpretation of it. The pronouncedly non-narrative quality of the Quay Brothers' film and the temporal and spatial dilation of the momentary ephemerality and intangibility of the dream may actually offer us a complexity of the plurality of images closer to a dream experience than the reduction of its memory through verbal recall and logical articulation discussed above. In language-based psychoanalysis, or indeed in any conversation or interview on memory, verbalisation implies condensation, reduction and spatiotemporal organisation of mental images. This involves two heuristic processes. One is the effortless, intuitive and emotional experience of a dream (that I suggest is depicted in the Quay Brothers' film), that is then organised and unpacked by another heuristic system – rationalism – to systematically, deliberately and verbally process and articulate a logic from that dream, or memory. This articulation turns

memories into single moments, distinct from memory, that Halbwachs suggests has a "plurality at any given moment" (Feindt et al 2014, 32) and, similar to what the 'talking cure' does in reconstruction of dreams, the individual relies "on frameworks of social memory…most frequently distort[ing] that past in the act of reconstructing it" (Halbwachs [1925] 1992, 182). Thus memory is both fixed and volatile, diachronic and synchronic.

It is important to note how the interpretative nature of the psychoanalytic process, and memory studies too as noted above, can be idiosyncratic and subject to psychologist George Elton Mayo's 'Hawthorne effect', specifically the 'secondary observer affect' that has gained traction in recent years. Tota and Hagen note that "by producing knowledge, by naming things differently, we change the objects of our research" (2015, 3). Researchers (including the author of this chapter) have their own subjectivity and idiosyncrasies that influence the way they approach data; in other words, a potential lack of objectivity and discrepancies in evaluation.

Memoria rerum *and* le lieu amnésique

I'll now turn to my second focus on animated materiality in animation, through amnesia as a pathology of memory, and address the phrase in my title – memoria rerum, the memory of things. In a constructive critique of cultural amnesia, Apostolos Lampropoulos and Vassilik Markidou state that "[r]ecent theorising on the theme of forgetting dwells upon the compulsion, desire, effort, or demand to erase, avoid, and ultimately obliterate from memory what has already happened" (2010, 1). Amnesia is not the same as forgetting, and the erasing, avoidance and obliteration of memory is unwilled and without effort – it is neurobiological for the most part. Confino suggests "the beauty of memory is that it is imprecise enough to be appropriated by unexpected hands, to connect apparently unrelated topics, to explain anew old problems" (1997, 1403). Before addressing this in the context of amnesia, I will explore this notion of imprecision and connection of unrelated topics. The disarray of dreams and memory discussed above bear comparison with inner speech, that has a particular function in cinema viewing and textual reading. In *Thought and Language* (1934), Russian Formalist Lev Vygotsky described inner speech, summarised by Robert Stam et al as

> A modality of speech having origins in childhood which continue into adult life, which entail a verbalised mode of intra-psychic signification of a flux of dialogue within the individual unconsciousness. Inner speech is characterised by a radically altered and abbreviated syntax, a tendency to syncretic imagery, and condensations and syntagmatic distortions. (1992, 12).

What inner speech shares with entangled or imprecise memory is disconnectedness, fragmentary character and economic reduction of words, its semantic creativity, its dissolving of borders between words and in the shortening of sentences by retaining the predicate while deleting the subject; in other words, it is action-based, which is relevant for the movement of non-living things in stop-motion animation. This becomes clear in Vygotsky's notion of the syncretic image, a "heap of objects . . . that are in one way or another combined in a single fused image in the child's representation and perception" (1987, 134-5). To refine the syncretic image, children "are guided not by the objective connections present in the things themselves, but by the subjective connections that are given in their own perception" (1987, 135). A simple example would be a pile of stones – objectively seen, an unmoving pile of objects – and the connections between an animated heap of them, imagined or created through stop motion. This technique is a special case in animation in that it shares concrete formal, spatial, material and temporal features with

non-animated film, and further can animate inanimate materials from the physical world.

Jane Bennett's concept of 'thing power' and vital materialism are important in this context; indeed, the cover of her *Vibrant Matter* (2010) features a photograph of an installation of suspended bricks. Her project is a recent contribution to 'thing theory', a longstanding philosophical and aesthetic interest in objects and things, from Bishop Berkeley and Hume, Bergson, Bachelard and Deleuze, to Bill Brown's seminal book *Things* (2004), and his *Other Things* (2015). A professor of political science, Bennett's philosophical, and I would say, poetic, project is sympathetic to the material life and the ethics and legal rights of things, encompassing stones to gutter trash and dust, worms and trees, and it has been incisive in my own approaches to understanding both the experience of animated matter and its relation to the world we live in. Here I work with her notion of the agency of vitality: "the capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and design of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own" (2010, viii). Bennett believes our resistance to 'thing power' lies in "deep cultural attachments to the ideas that matter is inanimate and that real agency belongs only to humans or to God" (2010, 119). To imagine 'thing power', Bennett describes what she calls an onto- story: she asks us to

> picture an ontological field without any unequivocal demarcations between human, animal, vegetable, or mineral. *All* forces and flows (materialities) are or can become lively, affective, and signalling. And so an affective, speaking human body is not *radically* different from the affective, signalling nonhumans with which it coexists, hosts, enjoys, serves, consumes, produces and competes. (2010, 116-117).

The film I'll discuss now – *Lineament* – works with things and a *non*-affective, *non*-signalling, *non*-speaking human body[i]. It changes the ontological field Bennett describes in that the non-human, non-animal and mineral are lively, affective and signalling. Made by artist Hiraki Sawa in 2012, it is part of a series of works called *Figment*, that was stimulated by the experience of a friend of Sawa's who woke up one morning with an unexplained amnesia: he didn't know who he was, where he was, what he was doing there. This is not the same as forgetting. Aleida Assmann observes "a basic asymmetry: not remembering, but forgetting is the default mode of humans and societies. Remembering is negation of and resistance to forgetting, usually involving a will and effort, a veto against the destructive power of time." (2014). The film is specifically *not* about an individual's will and effort in dealing with the destructive power of time, but rather the unwilled, neurobiological affliction of amnesia.

Sawa's interpretation of this experience is a 19 minute two-channel installation. The audio track is a palindrome, with a modified turntable in the gallery space playing a record forward and then backwards. The installation begins with a pan to the left of a room with a window on the right screen, and a text fades in and out on the left screen.

"A boy shuts his eyes for a moment.
When he wakes the world he once knew is gone.
His room is an unfamiliar place. His language has failed him.
He has forgotten everything and everyone he ever knew. Gone.
The world he now lives in is one of lost things." (*Lineament*, Hiraki Sawa, 2012)

The work is filmed in live-action, fast and slow motion and pixilation. The man's eyes are fixed in a blank gaze or twitching, and at two points his face is etched out by white scratches and what looks like distressed film emulsion (see figure 2). In the second half of

the film he is sitting, handling objects – a metal spring, a vinyl record, a book, stones on a desk.

Discussing external material records and places that constitute Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory], Isidora Stancović suggests Nora's "main purpose of the *lieux de mémoire* is to create those kind of places in which we could anchor our memories" and we must deliberately create them: "if the memories that those bastions encompass would vanish, those *places* would become useless" (Stancovic 2014, 91). *Lineament* provides an interpretative visual record of exactly these vanished memories, presenting us with the aporetic puzzle of the sites and objects as, instead, a *lieu amnésique.* It is occupied by a man without memory, who is surrounded by an animated network of spaces and things connected by filaments, wires, and incrementally developing white and black spirals on windows and walls. The film literally has a memory thread running through it, the lines and filaments that connect objects and the subject. Lampropoulos and Markidou argue that "The symptoms of amnesia are primarily detected by those not suffering from it, and are related both to the amnesiac's total inability to trace the past and to an exigency to help him/her to remedy this state as soon as possible." (2010, 1); the film's memory threads perform the exigency of tracing a past that the amnesiac cannot. As viewers of this film installation, while we can't remedy the subject's loss of memory, we may experience an empathetic engagement with what it might feel like to be amnesiac.

Figure 2 *Lineament* 2-channel installation view

A number of conditions are set by Nora for *lieux de mémoire,* one of which is that "there must be a will to remember" (1989, 19). The film's objects no longer have a symbolic function for the amnesiac, yet in their interconnected choreographies, that suggest a kind of thing-based memory palace, they demonstrate an on-screen expression of will. Facilitated by stop-motion animation, they are Bruno Latour's actants and interveners, that Bennett describes as "a source of action" that acts or to which an activity is granted by others without special motivation of humans: "an actant is neither an object nor a subject but an 'intervener'…that makes things happen, becomes the decisive force catalyzing an event" (Bennett, 2010, 9). Through the artist's stop-motion technical interventions, the film's animated objects become relational actants of a different kind: in their combinations and interactions, they form assemblages, what Bennett describes from her encounter with a gutter's detritus as "objects [that] appear[ed] as things, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics" (2010, 5). *Lineament's* animated inanimate forms of matter and stuff are what she describes as "ontologically multiple" (2010, 8). Watching the film we may ascribe our own meaning or signification to them, particularly in their rhythmic counterpointing with shots of the human subject.

Nora proposes "the most fundamental purpose of the "*lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial . . . *lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications (1989, 19). Alison Landsberg introduced the concept of prosthetic memory as " memories which do not come from a person's lived experience in any strict sense" (1995: 175). Her concept has become important in film and memory studies, as it allows exploration of "the impact of mass cultural technologies and their particular ability to make memories available to those who may not have lived or experienced them directly" (Grainge 2003, 16). Stop motion proffers a *literal* prosthetic memory for the amnesiac in *Lineament*; the concrete animated objects are like devices that stand in for, reify and replace

his lost memory, connected by the animated filaments, cogs and other objects. They perform a possible anamnesis, communicated to us.

But *Lineament* remains a puzzle, as it works only minimally with narrative film syntax and formal elements and what seems to be a cognitively absent human subject. Miriam Hansen has written that the "tradition of narrative film conflicts with a materialist aesthetics of film because it imposes the closed structure of 'a finite, ordered [and I would say along with Bennett, human-centric] cosmos' upon the heterogeneous, heteronomous, open-ended flow of life" (Hansen 1997, xxxi). Also in terms of traditions, Bennett voices a slight frustration; that "[i]t seems necessary and impossible to rewrite the default grammar of agency, a grammar that assigns activity to people and passivity to things" (2010, 119). My proposal is this: that it may well be that the grammar of stop motion animation does affect this default grammar of closed structures, in that this technique works with matter and provides a visual experience of the vital materialism Bennett is imagining. Perhaps what we are seeing in Sawa's film is a memory of the things 'themselves'. *Lineament* offers an alternative to Bennett's critique of default grammar of only human agency as active. The wiped identity of the erased and passive human subject is determined by the movement of non-anthropomorphised inorganic materials and complex assemblages that are the locus of his forgotten, lost memories, connected by scraggly, itchily twining filaments that penetrate and climb walls. Sitting at his desk, although he is handling these objects, he has no memory; memory lies exclusively in the animated objects we see. In Bennett's understanding of the beginning of an ethics for the vital materialist, this means "recognition of human participation in a shared, vital materiality" (2010, 14). *Lineament* visualises such a participation between human and animated material, in that the assemblages and their workings provide the erased man access in a diegetic present to materials, perhaps demonstrating his memory and past life. This is Nora's "*milieu de mémoire*, real environments of memory" (1989, 2).

The human protagonist of this film has experienced a kind of memory death, and its apposite here to consider whether the film presents a two-channel filmic heterotopia, Foucault's 'other place' that is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1986, 25). Hallam and Hockey suggest "death has the power to create a heterotopia, that is, the layering of meanings at a single material site" (2001: 84). And because heterotopias have a spatial aspect and a temporal aspect, they can function as a memorial site; in *Lineament* it is a series of sites, a filmic memory palace, for the man's erased memories. Sawa's film presents us with a protagonist in the presence of animated agency, that I suggest is a visualisation of what Hansen refers to as Walter Benjamin's understanding of Proust's concept of *mémoire involontaire*, "a sensorily and synaesthetically triggered embodied memory that can be retrieved only through 'actualisation, not reflection' (Benjamin SW 2, 244, 246-47, cited in Hansen 2012, 109). And it is through touching and listening that the subject engages with his animated environment, and through this, engages us. Robert Burgoyne suggests that "film is now, to a greater extent than before, associated with the body; it engages the viewer at the somatic level, immersing the spectator in experiences and impressions that, like memories, seem to be burned in." (2003, 223) In a context of body gestures, discussing the "classic conception of memory" Richard Candida Smith notes "memory "relie[s] upon a fusion of the senses" (Smith 2002, 2). At various points in *Lineament* we see the man engaging various sensual modalities in his interactions with the things around him (see figure 3); he holds a record to his ear, sits at a desk facing and touching a collection of objects, watches a thread unspool from a record.

Figure 3 *Lineament* 2-channel installation

Writing about dance and body knowledge as one of multiple intelligences, Tota asks "If the body's intelligence can be acknowledged, can it be also proved if the body itself contributes to the process of remembering?" (2015, 460) It may be that in the man's touching and listening to objects that present an enhanced material reality, this film is demonstrating a sensory-perceptual representation of the man's cerebrally forgotten and lost, but physically experienced and 'remembered' events. As well, besides linear time, which is a social and scientific construct, Tota argues that "the body's memory has to do with two different modalities of time: the linear and the immanent ones, the so-called eternal present" (2015, 467) in which "the body introduces another experience of time where past, present and future are linked together…this immanency is a "space-time of the body" (466-7). *Lineament* displays this immanence, also in the eternal present of cinematic projection and suggested by the amnesiac's memory loss; it presents a past/present/future, through what we could call a 'memory tense', or maybe an amnesiac tense**.** Sawa's series of amnesia films can also be regarded as a communication of Marian Hirsch's concept of postmemory, whose "connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through representation, projection and creation…[and] adopting the traumatic experiences – and thus also the memories – of others as experiences one might oneself have had" (2001, 220-1). Hirsch is writing about Holocaust photographs; in the case of *Lineament,* the filmically represented traumatic experience of amnesia can connect the viewer to the amnesia or dementia of a family member (or a mem*ento mori* of memory that lies ahead for some of us, as life expectancy increases). But ultimately, in the Sawa's film, to riff off of scriptwriter William Goldman, "nobody knows anything" (*Adventures in the Screen Trade 1983).*

Conclusion

Because they can mediate internal, intangible experience, animation techniques are extremely efficient for visually articulating the mental shapes of memory, dream, and the complex processes of human thought. Animation films could encourage a re-evaluation or a corrective of a memory, for instance by adding something that was missing / not witnessed / not relevant at the time. This may be because it can focus on the editing process of filmic selection in shaping social recollections, while not obliged to work with real-world veracity. In *Lineament*, the objects and filament connecting them present what Bennett calls a "site of enchantment" that also implies a capacity for metamorphosis (a central feature of animation): "sophisticated modes of communication among non-humans, the strange agency of physical systems at far-from-equilibrium states, and the animation of objects by video technologies and animation whose effects are not fully captured by the idea of "commodity fetishism." (2001, 4) Animated memory film does not have to demonstrate authenticity or history, but can, through the use of photos, archives and live-action sequences. It can create the memory of a non-human figure or visualise metaphors: object, fantasy, thing, idea, animal, in essence giving visual form to vital materiality, perhaps, even, suggesting a collective memory of imagined communities of things.

Animation and film has become more complicated with further ethical implications for the ways memory, collective or individual, are created on screens. Vivian Sobchack has written about the "spatial and temporal grounding of a photo-realist cinema that up until now has been indexically related to human physical existence as it is daily experienced in space and time" (2000, 138), and a few years later, Robert Burgoyne, like many others, expressed concern that " the increasing use of computer generated, artificial visual environments…appears to threaten not only the certitude and authenticity that we associate with photography, which is often described as a 'visual record', but also the loss

of the ethical and moral dimension that Bazin associated with film" (Burgoyne, 2003, 221). However, he tempers this with a positive aspect of the importance of emotions and affect: "Film appears to have acquired, more than ever, the mantle of meaningfulness and authenticity with relation to the past – not necessarily of accuracy or fidelity to the record, but of meaningfulness, understood in terms of emotional and affective truth." (Burgoyne 2003: 223). In addition to human affect and agency of things, I hope I've shown how animation, through animated vital materialism, can also enhance ethical concerns and respect for the material world – filaments, fabric, stones – and imaginations of what unarticulated memories may lie there.

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[1] The film can be viewed on Hiraki Sawa's artist page of the James Cohan Gallery http://www.jamescohan.com/artists/hiraki-sawa