Remembering Cinema: 
On the *film-souvenir*

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**Abstract**

This paper reflects upon Jean-Pierre Meunier’s term *film-souvenir* and how it enables us to conceive of different possible alliances between filmic practices and memory. Drawing from audiovisual testimonies and the work of contemporary filmmaker and media artist Atom Egoyan, the essay suggests that *film-souvenir* goes beyond Meunier’s designation of the term as a specific filmic consciousness and even beyond its commonly accepted translation of ‘home movie.’ The French term opens up our understanding of film as always already related to memory, continually emphasizing the persistent nature of cinematic practices as not only driven by a desire to reproduce and learn or to immerse and phantasm, but also to remember.

**Keywords:** Memory; home movie; audiovisual testimony; Atom Egoyan; Jean-Pierre Meunier

**Introduction**

It all started with a book: a medium-sized paperback that had for years been standing on a shelf of a bookcase in the hall of my parents’ apartment in Brussels. The book was part of my father’s extended collection of essays on cinema, philosophy, and other related topics that inhabited the domestic décor of my childhood home. I had passed by the book every day for so many years without even touching it... until one day: a seemingly regular day that resulted in a paradigmatic and disciplinary epiphany that I only understood years later when pursuing academia. In the early and mid-1990s, my interest for both philosophy and cinema was already clearly marked, as I had studied and graduated in both disciplines. At that time, however, my research was still a timid juxtaposition of cinema and philosophy and did

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not consider the more dynamic notion of the two fields ‘with(in)’ each other. Jean-Pierre Meunier’s *The Structure of the Film Experience* (*Les Structures de l’expérience filmique*, 1969) was my first real encounter with the alliance of philosophy *and* cinema, and it proved to be a formative one. When I first read it, it influenced my perception not only of what philosophy (particularly phenomenology) is but, more significantly, what philosophy can do beyond itself. Now, Meunier’s eye-opening text, as a long-time companion, continues to fuel my filmic sensibility and thought processes.

This anecdote, as personal and true as it is, is not actually that far removed from one of the main elements Meunier discusses in his book: the experiencing and encountering of an *objet-souvenir*. This (or my) ‘souvenir-book’ takes Meunier’s *film-souvenir* as a pivotal entry point for understanding how the home movie (which might be associated with the family film, amateur film, etc.) engages with and provokes a specific filmic experience. It is from this notion of *film-souvenir* that I would like to draw a few thoughts.

**Film Practices, Memory Practices**

My interest in Meunier’s book derived not solely from its phenomenological approach to film, which admittedly felt extremely refreshing when I was conducting my studies in philosophy, but was mainly guided by its peculiar attention to memory thanks to the term *film-souvenir*.

Notably, the book took on a special relevance when I became closely interested in the work of Canadian-Armenian contemporary filmmaker and media artist Atom Egoyan (on whom I have also been working for a long time now), whose work served as a perfect vis-à-vis for illuminating Meunier’s thoughts. In his feature films, as well as in his shorts and video installations, Egoyan discusses the relationship between memory and (domestic) audiovisual technology, as well as how recording and filming devices stand as existential objects that influence how we perceive the world, ourselves, and others. Audiovisual technology pervades the integrality of Egoyan’s work, either by being inserted prominently in the narrative or by exploring its modalities of presentation and preservation through lens-media installations, for example.

Meunier defines the *film-souvenir* as a film that addresses an object that is existent and known; in other words, the opposite of a fiction film, whose object is unknown and non-existent. Further, “the home movie appears as a constitutive activity: it looks beyond the image, to the person-in-general
that it depicts, in order to produce and maintain his existence even during the screening” (p. 88). In the home movie, the viewer is less apprehended by each detail that constitutes the image but, as Sobchack notes, is in a process of “recovery of the memory of the whole person or event.” Thus, Meunier conceives of the film-souvenir through evocation and as a mnemonic tool through which the viewer relates to, or rather identifies with, an absent person or a past event.

According to Roger Odin, the family film is “made by a family member about characters, events or objects that are, in one way or another, linked to this family’s history and to the privileged use of those family members.” There is thus a correspondence between the one who makes and produces the image and the one who potentially watches it. This explains why it is not always captivating or engaging to watch another family’s home videos. Nevertheless, when we watch somebody else’s ‘foreign’ home movie, we also land in the familiar, not just because your family could be my family, but also because, from a more formal point of view, the often grainy, shaking, unpolished images recall a specific filmic and aesthetic mode. The acquaintance is thus not so much solicited by the person or event on-screen (some ‘generic’ figures) as by its recognizable, ‘familiar’ aesthetics. Odin reminds us that the family film is usually characterized and perceived as animated photography. On that note, Meunier writes that photography

functions as an analogical representation of the absent person. But it lacks life. [...] If I desire to rediscover [retrouver] these known gestures, I can then, if I am an amateur filmmaker, project a film that represents the person in question, if they have been filmed on a certain occasion. The cinematic image, more than the portrait or the photograph, restores life and this time, I really do find the person (p. 87/88).

Incidentally, in Egoyan’s feature films, thanks to the inclusion of the videographic medium into the narrative, we often see characters who are precisely caught in such situations as watching, often obsessively, domestic videographic images, which they rely on to confirm or restore their existential being. Thus, Egoyan borrows the practice and the aesthetics of home movies in order to point to the question and complexity of cinema as a process of authorship and spectatorship. Here I can think, for example, of the short film A Portrait of Arshile (1995), but also the three features Egoyan made in the 1980s (which historically coincide with the rise of domestic audiovisual technologies), as well as most of his lens-based media installations since the 1990s.
The *film-souvenir* plays with the evocation and recollection of a moment in time and space and is comparable to a photo album or an archive box that contains material traces charged with emotional values. Yet, the significance of what is portrayed in home movies is not solely to be found in its visual or topical arrangement, but mostly in the narrative around the time and space that belong to the ‘imaginary’ of the family life. As Sobchack puts it, “the *film-souvenir* tends to be a chronicle of temporal fragments that exists for us as a marker of experience and has little to do with causality.”

The constitutive engagement characteristic of the *film-souvenir* is stronger than the image itself simply because, beyond the screen, the filmed person means ‘more.’ The *film-souvenir* is therefore inevitably partial and ‘unfinished’ but is nevertheless perceived, during the viewing, as generalized (a “person-in-general” says Meunier [p. 86]). Though, as Egoyan often addresses in his films and videos, the image can become *all* that we know of a person we are supposed to know personally. In that sense, the *film-souvenir* complicates the idea of ‘more’ and ‘less:’ the portrayed person or matter is less than what he/she/it means, but often more by its very audiovisual and material existence, because, in the *film-souvenir*, it is the existential charge that is stronger and more salient than the epistemological one.

But the ‘more’ and the ‘less’ also have to do with a sense of failure. As Meunier writes: “We ‘play’ at believing in this presence, but we never get there since we are always aware of the absence of the object” (p. 122). And he adds: “In the home-movie attitude, our behavior consists of a vain effort to ‘presentify’ the object, an attempt to enter into intersubjective relations with other people, which necessarily leads to disappointment” (p. 123). This type of identification entails a vain effort to induce a presence that “remains irremediably out of our grasp” (p. 124).

Here, I should mention another type of media object related to memory on which I have been working closely: audiovisual testimonies in the context of traumatic mass violence (such as the Armenian genocide). These filmic testimonies, I argue, somehow ‘test’ the notion of the *film-souvenir*. The lack and discomfort associated with audiovisual testimonies are not only ontological in the sense of ‘uncanny’ or of what is no more, but in the historical, social, and political circumstances that render the video testimonies even more relevant (and that also complicate the tension between the private and the public). In my own research for instance, I watched people who were watching, even discovering, testimonial videos of their close relatives who survived the genocide. Heirs and family members literally discovering, *for the first time*, that their parents or grandparents had not only been recorded or were taping themselves, but that such home video tapes exist in the first
place. This forces us to redefine, more cautiously, what is really ‘known’ and how visual and cinematic media might play a significant and vital role. It is not just a matter of ‘presentifying’ a known person or event, but – in the context of mass violence – of asking the question: how does the ‘known’ interact with the ‘unknowable’ in terms of traumatic memory?

Significantly, I noticed that, most of the time, the private and intimate setting of the home video is the only space or territory where trauma can be told (or not) and transmitted to family members and how, often because of the lack of something else (such as a safe and shared repository for such stories to be heard), it could move from there (or not) to a more open and public space. This means that, despite their restricted visibility, these home videos allow for difficult stories to be inscribed (even if the telling of them is inherently complicated) and testify to an enduring historical and sociopolitical invisibility. At the same time, these audiovisual testimonies are not to be labeled as ‘orphan films’ in the sense of being abandoned, because they are somehow preserved but not exposed or circulated.

To ‘recover,’ following the terminology of Meunier’s *film-souvenir*, can almost be conceived in psychoanalytical terms here: something is saved, materially and psychically. This being said, family members do not automatically watch the films meticulously, also because there is an inevitable impossibility to watch those often painful and unbearable audiovisual testimonies. Pertinently, in many of Egoyan’s films (which often deal with trauma, including the inherited traces of the Armenian genocide), we see characters who have a very fetishistic relationship with their home movies. In Egoyan’s feature film *Family Viewing* (1987), for instance, the main character (a young man named Van) discovers the existence of videocassettes from his Armenian childhood that he did not know about (or remember?). It is, in that case, a (re-)discovery of something that has not been unveiled before. It literally creates a sense of newness of something that, materially speaking, was previously thought to be non-existent. This set-up slightly complicates the fact that, as Sobchack writes, “In the home-movie experience, I don’t have to learn anything about my son from the images. Indeed, I know more of him than the images show me. I don’t have to work at comprehending him (although I do have to work at evoking him).” So if Meunier argues that the *film-souvenir* does not teach us anything about the person represented, the question of learning about the material existence of the film and how it generates a specific filmic consciousness still remains. This is precisely why audiovisual family testimonies, often equated to home movies, are significant. Incidentally, in the short film *A Portrait of Arshile* that Egoyan made in the mid-1990s, the filmmaker combines the intimacy of the familial
home video and the testimonial legacy of the Armenian genocide; thereby not solely interrogating and blurring the difference between the private and the public, but insisting on the home recording as the only means to access family history and history in the broader sense.

In Egoyan's fiction film *Family Viewing*, Van accesses his Armenian childhood with his lost mother (an origin that was denied to him) through videocassettes. The videographic image is at once familiar and strange/other; it is also at once recuperative and informative. More importantly, however, is the fact that the audiovisual testimonies exist: his being Armenian is possible and accessible through the home video. What Van experiences when he watches the cassettes is the comfort of existing ‘again’ together with the discomfort of having disappeared. The feeling of deceiving is, linked to the politics of denial, heavily connotated.

Thanks to the home videos, there is a rediscovery of something that has not been disclosed before. It creates a sense of newness in something that, materially speaking, was previously thought to be non-existent. This, once again, proves that, with the film-souvenir, it is often not only about the retrieving of a “person-in-general,” as Meunier puts it, but, I would suggest, the retrieving of the object itself: the cassette, the medium as a recording and viewing machine and the imaginary that surrounds it; what we could term an ‘audiovisual object-in-general.’

With the film-souvenir, the knowing usually precedes the viewing, and the viewing itself confirms or emotionally charges the knowing. But when a viewer watches a home movie of a person with whom he or she is intimately bound, without the knowledge that that moment was filmed or recorded (like in audiovisual testimonies or in *Family Viewing*), the viewing après-coup turns into an event in itself. Again, this is not due to what is precisely depicted and told in the moving image, but because of the very existence of the recording trace. It is not about learning in terms of content information, it is about learning of the material existence of the recording. The viewing consists in the presence of another self on-screen which is equated with another self as screen: a sort of double strangeness and sameness, or an unreachable (known) someone through the reachable screen. To put it differently, the film-souvenir could be designated as a film that aims to create another self at home in movies, one that stipulates a form of identification moved by a sense of familiarity and strangeness. In viewing and discovering such film-souvenirs, there is at once a feeling of sameness and otherness, that is activated through the medium, almost in the double sense of the word medium.
What Is Lost, What Is Preserved

Let me now point to the translation of the term *film-souvenir* in Meunier’s book. Departing from the assumption that any act of translation is marked by loss (due to the challenge of preserving the original meaning), a translation is in itself a mourning gesture, comparable to a souvenir of what is no more. Yet, a translation does not always only constitute a loss or even betrayal to the original text, as it can sometimes add something more to it.

Sobchack confesses (between brackets!) that the original French word *film-souvenir* is much more precise than its English counterpart and that the English translation might have certain limitations. Let me therefore draw from and stress the translator’s 34th footnote which explains that Meunier’s term “refers to films made for private purposes, with the goal of acting as a keepsake or record of an event in the individual’s life, such as weddings, vacations, family gatherings, etc.” The translator’s note also clearly indicates that even if “the English term ‘home movie’ comes close to this meaning,” the question and role of memory is not apparent in this notion (p. 156).

If ‘home movie’ is the most appropriate translation, the French expression *film-souvenir* might address something beyond the distinctive forms of consciousness that Meunier designates. The hyphen indicates the closeness and dynamic relationship between souvenir and film and, in doing so, accentuates the value and motif of film as a mnemonic medium. If ‘home movie’ indicates ‘home’ and the type of private and ‘familiar’ family events that are recorded there, it also acknowledges something inherently related to memory. Thus, if I maintain the French term it is not for the sake of safeguarding Meunier’s original language, but to highlight the interplay between film and memory that, in turn, welcomes a plurality of remembering filmic practices and variations without sticking to one category or corpus in particular. Moreover, there is not one *film-souvenir* attitude but a plurality of attitudes wherein, obviously, each context plays its role.

The notion of *film-souvenir* also surpasses its formal and cultural dimension to become, as it were, the consciousness of cinema itself. Here, cinema is to be understood as a web of various practices, of making and responding to moving images. It is as though, in the work of Egoyan, the French word and its English translation come together. That is, by using the aesthetics of the home video in his films, Egoyan not only touches upon the familial and intimate elements characteristic of this cinematic form, but also on the consciousness of cinema. By creating *mise en abymes*, such as the film-within-a-film trope, it is not only the technological and aesthetic process
of cinema that is reduplicated, but the process of cinema as a remembering machine. What is more, Egoyan’s filmic practices mirror, at various levels and from several viewpoints (e.g. narrative, personages), the notion that *retrouver* is both an illusion and the attracting force of cinema – what is no more (or even perhaps what has never been).

My proposition not only draws from the admitted fact that, as Meunier writes about these modalities, “we should not expect definitive conclusions” (p. 36), but that the *film-souvenir* enables us to think more broadly and purposefully of the filmic attitude (or a subjective relationship to the souvenir-object) as an ‘impulse,’ of film originating from an archival gesture and attitude (or even an ‘archive fever’ in a Derridean sense).

In other words, not translating *film-souvenir* does not imply that the proposed translation of ‘home movies’ should be refuted, but that it could be valuable, beyond Meunier’s own intentions, to think of the particularity of the *film-souvenir* as a form together with the particularity of film as souvenir (and vice versa). This also provides the opportunity to question the epistemic and imaginary knowledge vis-à-vis the people captured in the *film-souvenir* videos who are no longer there.

Further, as a more marginalized cinematic form (in comparison to documentaries and fiction films) and as somehow ‘openly’ defined and thus not strictly specified, the *film-souvenir* object acquires an added value in its capacity to be thought of beyond its textual and formal features. It forces us to ponder what makes it filmic in the first place.

Beyond the fact that Meunier’s modalities are flexible (as he has admitted and Sobchack has insisted on), I wonder if the *film-souvenir* is not solely in the attitude of the spectator, but, as it were, in the attitude of cinema tout court. It is as though the *film-souvenir* epitomizes, in a sort of media-archeological fashion, the emergence of filmic practices (including proto-cinematic ones) and the numerous practices that pervade the digital age. In that case, could the *film-souvenir* not be the zero degree of cinematic practice; one that reminds us that, beyond the desire to comprehend (documentary) and to participate (fiction), film is an ongoing search for something or someone that is no more or, at the very least, ‘out of focus’? In other words, the *attitude-souvenir* is an inherent recording and viewing attitude (memory as mediated). And if, as Meunier puts it, “the cinematic image truly plays the role of medium. It serves as an intermediary between the reality perceived and my current consciousness of this reality” (p. 88), I would add, the medium is not just a liaison provider, but also (despite its content) an end in itself.

Significantly, the *film-souvenir* is the only category for which Meunier does not really give an explicit or detailed example, reminding us quite
evidently that those films are, and very often remain, untitled. Evidently, such family films do not have a theatrical life, and when they are viewed, they are seen in the context of private archives or collections. This is yet more proof of the film-souvenir’s significance as a recording trace more than what it depicts or represents. Paradoxically, perhaps, in the film-souvenir, the viewer – because he or she views him or herself (or another ‘alter ego’ such as a family member) in those moving images – does not get pulled into the image, but rather it is the image (as mediating object) that pulls him or her in an affective mode of comfort and discomfort – the comfort of existing ‘again’ together with the discomfort of having disappeared. Indeed, as Sobchack summarizes, the images of the film-souvenir “are not apprehended for themselves, but rather as the catalyst to a primarily constitutive and generalizing activity that transcends their specificity in an attempt to call up and reactivate the ‘real’ and ‘whole’ person or event that is (or was) elsewhere and at some other time.”

In the film-souvenir, the image fulfills what it was intended to do in the first place: trace, track, and bring life to the life-world of the person filmed for the benefit of the viewer within his or her own life-world. The image is the intermediary through which the viewer can enter into a relation with and reach that someone or that something. Nevertheless, Meunier specifies that the image is a substitute or a simulacrum of a presence; this idea is also at the heart of Egoyan’s practices and preoccupations. But if Meunier indicates that at no moment do we lose sight of this fact, it is, interestingly, rarely the case for many of the characters in Egoyan’s films, who are viscerally depending on (and often addicted to) domestic audiovisual images and technologies.

The reason why Egoyan is constantly exploring the home movie is, as I have mentioned, to underpin and complicate the notion of cinematic practices as memory. For instance, what Meunier describes in the following quote is to be found everywhere in the work of Egoyan: “To a far greater extent than the photo, the home movie, by means of the life that movement confers on it, is conducive to inducing a high degree of nostalgia, regret, or other sentiments in us” (p. 109). In all his films and media projects, audiovisual and recording technology reflects the longing for what is no more, and because it is no more, it accentuates the longing, often articulated in a very obsessive and repetitive way.

Importantly, I do not wish to incite an all-encompassing conception of the viewing experience as one that is indifferent to the modalities or types of image that are viewed; rather, I suggest that the film-souvenir attitude is both particular to certain types of film and, ontologically speaking, of cinema. In other words, the spectatorial mode of the film-souvenir corresponds to
specific objects (materially and immaterially) and, as it were, to the ‘Object of cinema.’ Therefore, I would imply that despite the fact that such films have often been perceived as marginal (academically and professionally), the unfinished character of the film-souvenir actually indicates that cinema itself remains unfinished; it is ongoing, infinite, and escapes all forms of strict delineation regarding how it manifests itself.

Also, the film-souvenir stresses the paradox inherent in all visual representation since it is an image of the world (a representation) but made within the lived world – a familiar and affective one in this case. It is a representation of something/someone that, while existing out of that image, can somehow be recuperated or, better, preserved, in that image. The film-souvenir therefore situates itself between the excess, the surplus, and the lack, the loss. It also, as noted above, lays itself between comfort and discomfort.

**Remembering Cinema**

Ultimately, maintaining the original term film-souvenir is a question not so much of being faithful to the original word, as reinforcing the possibility of focusing on attitudes rather than genres, on experiences rather than layouts, on existential engagements rather than filmic textual features. In doing so, it further concedes that Meunier’s concepts themselves are forceful and dynamic, and, more generically, that cinema (filming and viewing) is somehow epitomized through the ‘natural’ gesture of recording and preserving the ephemerality of life (and of film). If, with the film-souvenir, Meunier paves the way for a largely neglected filmic practice that had long escaped any canonical place in academic studies and filmic institutions, it also condenses, with its apparent minimal means, what is at the core of the filming gesture. That is, the film-souvenir offers new directions to think of the large panel of non-theatrical practices, but it also ad minima translates the scopic and archival regime into which we are culturally and affectively immersed. It also implies a sense of being unfinished: because the concept itself is mobile and elastic and because the home movie relies on an unpolished format (even if nowadays there are plenty of apps that enable family images to become ‘perfect,’ leaving us with the question of what is ‘unfinished’ in the digital age). More importantly, however, it is unfinished because cinema (in all its multiple practices) is constantly reinventing itself.

In the same way that Meunier’s book opens up ways to (re-)think many concepts and categories central to film-philosophy and film theories, I
would venture that the concept of *film-souvenir* is, similarly, a notion that enables us to ponder the tenacious and persistent being of cinema (and its ‘others’) and the multiple ways cinema involves a desire not just to reproduce and learn or to immerse and phantasm, but to remember. With the *film-souvenir* it is cinema that – despite its inherent and possible failures, illusions, incompleteness – *remembers* (and, accordingly, forgets) itself.

**Notes**

1. To be sure, Egoyan’s work is not a mere illustration of Meunier’s ideas on the *film-souvenir*, but the artist’s entire work is an ongoing exploration of it: not only from a narrative and character point of view, but also in terms of aesthetics and visual strategies and, even more significantly, when Egoyan pays particular attention to the presentation and viewing context (e.g., his video- and lens-based media installations that contribute to the ‘Black Box, White Cube’ discussions).

2. Meunier adds that “there is, on the part of consciousness, a positing of existence, a generalization of the matter of the image that refers to a person-in-general, who constitutes the locus of our attention, and finally, the creative activity” (p. 88).


4. As Sobchack summarizes, “these objectively specific images, however, are subjectively generalized by the spectator in a vain effort to evoke presence – that is, the whole ensemble of a well-known person’s gestures and comportment or of temporal events surrounding those depicted on the screen.” Ibid., p. 247.


6. Needless to say, in the digital age, the lines between the private/family sphere and the public one are constantly put into question. This tension between the intimate and the collective is another key concern in Egoyan’s work.

7. Inversely, in the digital age (and thanks to all sorts of technological devices and applications), the images tend to be too perfect.

8. More specifically, Odin says that this type of home video presents recurrent stylistic elements, such as an absence of closure, a narrative crumbling, an undetermined temporality, a paradoxical relation to space, a direct address to the camera, a rather incoherent juxtaposition of shots, and an interference of perception. See *Le Film de famille*, pp. 28-31.

9. The analogy between photography and recording technology is central to Egoyan’s early films. That being said, one could note that Meunier falls short
on the difference between photography and film (life being added simply by the fact that images are moving).


11. Some of the family videos (containing family stories marked by such tragedies as genocide) have very limited exposure: some are secretly preserved and are not shown to anyone outside of the family circle, while others function as oral testimony and are recorded and archived in specific locations such as the Zoryan Institute (a documentation center in the US and Canada dedicated to the Armenian genocide). In all these situations, however, the films are rarely shown to the general public.

12. There is also the potentiality, for the survivors and their heirs, that watching such testimonial home videos leads to triggering or reliving the original trauma. On these types of question, see Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1991).

13. This is what Meunier and Sobchack suggest when they distinguish the specificity of the image from the whole ensemble the person, or the event to which it refers. We could also add that the recorded object, through its materiality, adds an extra layer to the understanding of a ‘positing of existence’ that is thus central here.


15. Thus, the *film-souvenir* can also, just like the documentary, have the ability to teach.

16. Here I think, for example, of Paul Ricœur who, in *Sur la traduction*, speaks of “une correspondance sans adéquation” or “une équivalence sans identité” (Paris: Bayard, 2003), p. 40 and p. 60. Or, in a more radical way of what Derrida has written on this question in various essays. See, for example, *Of Hospitality*, with Anne Dufourmantelle (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).


18. Needless to say, there is an analogy at play between the working of memory in the psyche and the working of film. If memory also alludes to a subjective and ‘situated’ trace of time as Jenny Chamarette puts it, memory is “a subjective trace of the experience of time or as a trace of the encounter with time – always in contact with time and temporality, but never encompassing it.” See her essay “Memory, Representation of Time and Cinema,” in P. Collier, A.M. Elsner and O. Smith (eds.), *Anamnesia. Private and Public Memory in Modern French Culture* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 243-256.

19. The *mise en abyme* is close to what Meunier refers to when he writes “the likes of Godard and Varda have honed a certain number of procedures aiming to break the spectator’s enchantment, and to invite them to take their distances. But these are, when it comes down to it, rather artificial and rarely used procedures” (p. 113). This last point could benefit from being updated and, on that note, most of Egoyan’s filmic practices could be added
to it. Egoyan often uses the domestic videographic medium as a metaphor for cinema, to create mirror effects.


21. Sobchack writes: “Perhaps the most important of Meunier’s conclusions is that the structural form of cinematic identification does not depend necessarily (even if it does sufficiently) on the ‘type’ of film objectively unfolding on the screen. However each type of film may objectively and actively solicit our spectatorial consciousness, in the end, we will actively and subjectively ‘take up’ the film and position its existence and status as the kind of film object it is, based on a personal and cultural knowledge less deliberate than lived.” Sobchack, “Toward a Phenomenology,” p. 246. She further adds: “If we understand cinematic identification as a general comportment and attentive attitude toward the screen that is informed by personal and cultural knowledge, then one woman’s irreal situation comedy may be another’s home movie.” Ibid., p. 247.

22. Ibid.

23. What is more, it is also a way to question the non-theatricality of film as a condition of possibility of its theatricality.

24. Here, it might also be worth mentioning that there are specific apps (such as “Super 8 Instant Video Footage”) that simulate the worn-out Super-8 aesthetic as a way of evoking old home movies.

About the author

Marie-Aude Baronian is Associate Professor in Film and Visual Culture at the Media Studies department of the University of Amsterdam. She has lectured and published extensively on media, testimony and memory, ethics and aesthetics, film philosophy, fashion, French thought, and Armenian diasporic audiovisual practices. She has not only written on several filmmakers (e.g. Atom Egoyan, Sergei Paradjanov, the Dardenne Brothers), but she has also authored many articles on various artists, philosophers, and designers. Her work and research interests are interdisciplinary and include, next to film studies and philosophy, disciplines such as memory studies, fashion studies, Armenian studies, and material culture. Her most recent monographs include *Mémoire et Image: Regards sur la Catastrophe arménienne* (L’Age d’Homme, 2013; English translation in preparation) and *Screening Memory: The Prosthetic Images of Atom Egoyan* (Editions Académie Royale Belgique, 2017). She is also completing a monograph on Emmanuel Levinas and the moving image. Currently, she works on textile, clothing, and fashion in
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