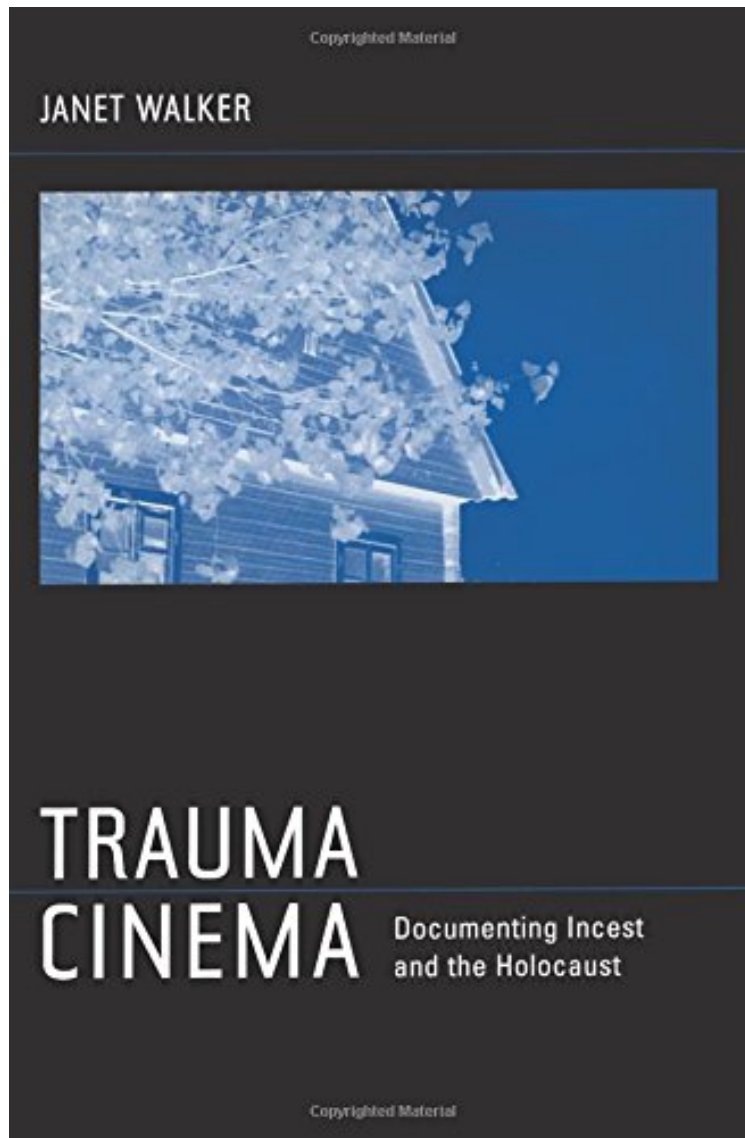


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# Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust

*Janet Walker*

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**Janet Walker : Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust:

Trauma Cinema focuses on a new breed of documentary films and videos that adopt catastrophe as their subject matter and trauma as their aesthetic. Incorporating oral testimony, home-movie footage, and documentary reenactment, these

documentaries express the havoc trauma wreaks on history and memory. Janet Walker uses incest and the Holocaust as a double thematic focus and fiction films as a point of comparison. Her astute and original examination considers the Hollywood classic *Kings Row* and the television movie *Sybil* in relation to vanguard nonfiction works, including Errol Morris's *Mr. Death*, Lynn Hershman's video diaries, and the chilling genealogy of incest, *Just, Melvin*. Both incest and the Holocaust have also been featured in contemporary psychological literature on trauma and memory. The author employs theories of post traumatic stress disorder and histories of the so-called memory wars to illuminate the amnesias, fantasies, and mistakes in memory that must be taken into account, along with corroborated evidence, if we are to understand how personal and public historical meaning is made. Janet Walker's engrossing narrative demonstrates that the past does not come down to us purely and simply through eyewitness accounts and tangible artifacts. Her incisive analysis exposes the frailty of memory in the face of disquieting events while her joint consideration of trauma cinema and psychological theorizing radically reconstructs the roadblocks at the intersection of catastrophe, memory, and historical representation.

"A well-researched, elegantly written and original book. Walker offers extremely nuanced and insightful readings that call on her expertise as film historian, feminist theorist, and psychoanalytic scholar. The breadth of the book's reach will expand the vernacular of documentary studies in a most significant way." *From the Inside Flap*

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