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Narratives of Ageing and Memory in Contemporary Global North Cinema: Analyzing the Impact of COVID-19

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Media representation, such as shows and films, are commonly the primary source through which younger people encounter a variety of depictions of old age and medical conditions. These portrayals significantly shape public perceptions. Taking this into consideration this research investigates contemporary portrayals of ageing and memory, with a particular focus on dementia, in Global North cinema. It examines how recent Western films reflect a change of the societal perceptions of ageing and memory in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study employs narrative theory, ageing studies, and memory studies to analyze how these themes are constructed and interpreted, while also reviewing post-pandemic cultural theories to explore changes in perception of time and mortality. Utilizing qualitative content analysis, the study reviews films from 2020 to 2024. These films were selected for their thematic relevance and of ageing and dementia. Key examples include *The Father* (Florian Zeller, 2020), *Remember Me* (Martín Rosete, 2022), and *The Roads Not Taken* (Sally Potter, 2020).

This analysis reveals that contemporary Global North cinema is increasingly depicting ageing and memory, including dementia, as central themes that challenge traditional stereotypes of old age and decline. The films explore how memory and dementia impact individual identity and intergenerational relationships, reflecting a shift toward more realistic narratives on ageing, while also revealing how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced societal views of time and mortality.