Cinémas
Revue d'études cinématographiques
Journal of Film Studies

The Length of a Wide Highway: On the Archive, the (Electronic) Marketplace, and the End of a Collection

La longueur d'une large rue : les archives, le commerce (électronique) et la fin d'une collection

Jennifer Wild

Volume 24, Number 2-3, Spring 2014

Attrait de l'archive

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1025152ar
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7202/1025152ar

See table of contents

Publisher(s)

Cinémas

ISSN

1181-6945 (print)
1705-6500 (digital)

Explore this journal

Cite this article

Wild, J. (2014). The Length of a Wide Highway: On the Archive, the (Electronic) Marketplace, and the End of a Collection. *Cinémas*, *24*(2-3), 161–183. https://doi.org/10.7202/1025152ar

Article abstract

This essay is an image-driven reflection on the archive, the collection and collecting, and the act of acquisition. Using parts of her collection of cinema-related ephemera, the author draws on the writing of Apollinaire, Benjamin, Canudo, Derrida, and Dugas to animate questions about their ownership and their place and function in both the archive and the activities of writing and research. By also examining the dynamics of real and virtual marketplaces, the author in turn explores how questions concerning reproduction, purchasing and repetition inhabit the theoretical strata of today's archive, as well as comprise the archival strata of the collection itself.

The Length of a Wide Highway: On the Archive, the (Electronic) Marketplace, and the End of a Collection

Jennifer Wild

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

For this essay, I developed a phenomenological method inspired by the historian Arlette Farge in order to explore several questions. First, what is the phenomenology of the archive assembled from eBay transactions? Second, what of the materials that remain after the archive is complete? Is their phenomenological value distinct as a personal collection? To answer these questions, I departed from a classic essay structure. Allowing my images to drive the essay's organization, the text emerges as a network of historical, material and theoretical information generated by the contents of the modern archive or collection itself. The resulting method behind my textual exposition, in Farge's words (2013, p. 123), "entails a roaming voyage through the words of others" in an effort "to break through the obvious, to outflank the ordinary smooth course of scientific knowledge" that scholarly archives normally provide, but that cannot account for the experience of researching, collecting and living with archives.

ABSTRACT

This essay is an image-driven reflection on the archive, the collection and collecting, and the act of acquisition. Using parts of her collection of cinema-related ephemera, the author draws on the writing of Apollinaire, Benjamin, Canudo, Derrida, and Dugas to animate questions about their ownership and their place and function in both the archive and the activities of writing and research. By also examining the dynamics of real and virtual marketplaces, the author in turn explores how questions concerning reproduction, purchasing and repetition inhabit the theoretical strata of today's archive, as well as comprise the archival strata of the collection itself.

Lit-on une autoroute, fût-elle de papier?

Arlette Farge, *Le goût de l'archive* (1989, p. 11)

1. Ownership: *La chambre de . . .*

Walter Benjamin famously found himself in what he owned and collected. The act of unpacking his library became a scene where objects performed not their utility, but the story of their fate. On this stage, each book or object opened like a portal onto "the chaos of memories" whose power, once harnessed, propelled his philosophical excursion through the act of collecting and the collector's "very mysterious relationship to ownership," tactility, order and disorder (Benjamin 1931, pp. 486-87). But first he invited the reader into his room. There, crates opened to piles of volumes whose wrappings were errantly strewn about like fallen leaves upon the floor. "Fringe areas" of his collection—scrapbooks, family albums—saw the light of day under an "air saturated with wood dust" (pp. 491 and 486). In this scenario of visual and material disarray, things spoke first of their ownership, "the most intimate relationship that one can have to things," the author wrote. "Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them" (p. 492).

According to Apollinaire, Riciotto Canudo was apparently not a collector of things. Although he reportedly never saw Canudo's pre-Parisian dwelling in Auteuil, it was known that the room was meagrely adorned. Apart from a table and a chair, a few leaves of ivy scattered amidst candles lent an air of incantation to the space. This "high priest of a new religion"—the cinema—had only one bookshelf, and in neighbourhood parlance a thin woman was said to resemble Canudo's bed, itself very narrow ("fort étroit"). It was thus that Apollinaire (1912, p. 9) found Canudo "in his furniture," as slight and monastic as it was. Rather than living in material objects, the proponent of the "seventh art" instead seemed to live in an immaterial collection of films acquired in cinemas and in the experience of cinema-going. Canudo's collection thus accumulated dust only indirectly, as it fell upon the journals and newspapers whose leaves still harbour a view of his collection amassed in the words of his film criticism.

Unlike Canudo's, my room contains an array of things accumulated during the years I researched and wrote my book.[1] Some of my ephemera have been transformed into high-resolution digital images which, once published, will perform as a neatly arranged scholarly archive of evidence and visual argumentation. Most of my items, however, escape the limits imposed by the press. They are thus exiled to the outermost fringe area of my archive, and remain scattered upon shelves, errantly pinned on walls, and stashed away in drawers as simply a personal collection. Many of these materials contain images of rooms and spaces that possess a screen, and thus speak to the kind of ownership that possessed Canudo and defined his immaterial collection of films. These images have become the decor of my collection—rooms within a room—about the early cinema experience as it is found "in its furniture." The screen is what allows the strictly arranged enclosure of an early twentieth-century French classroom (Fig. 1) to be placed on my windowsill next to the open confines of an English cricket field

Figure 1: Postcard, "École normale d'instituteurs, l'Amphithéâtre de physique et chimie," Levallois, Paris, H. Trilte & M. Petitir Éditeurs, n.d.. Collection of the author.

(Fig. 2) where a clock tower perpetually declares 5:10 as the hour for ten small cricketers. The screen is that which welcomes a 1920 halftone print of Walter Bayes' painting *Oratio Obliqua* (1918) into the spatial fold around my desk (Fig. 3).

Bayes' title was no doubt a poetic reference to what a screen imparts by way of silent, black-and-white images within a world of colour, as depicted in the original painting. But insofar as this screen's oblique angle belongs, in my collection, not to the painting itself, but to another image, its "indirect speech" is also the view of the painting offered by reproducibility and, in this case, the unique declaration of copyright conferred upon Bayes' image by Walter Judd Ltd.: possibly in an effort to attain the best reproductive effect, this company may have enhanced some details to reproduce not the original, but a picture based on the original, whose vibrant colour was additionally stripped away to match the grey-scale of Bayes' screen.[2]

I myself do something similar when I imagine some of my objects as capably registering a historical impression of film viewing c. 1910, 1918, or 1923, the year it was argued that a film projected in the classroom transformed a pupil into a historical witness (Séchoy 1923, p. 6). For, in so doing, I confer the indirect grammar of reportage upon my materials. But the

Figure 2: Postcard, "Cricket Field & Cinema, Guard's Depot," printed in England by A.N.C.S. Ltd., n.d. Collection of the author.

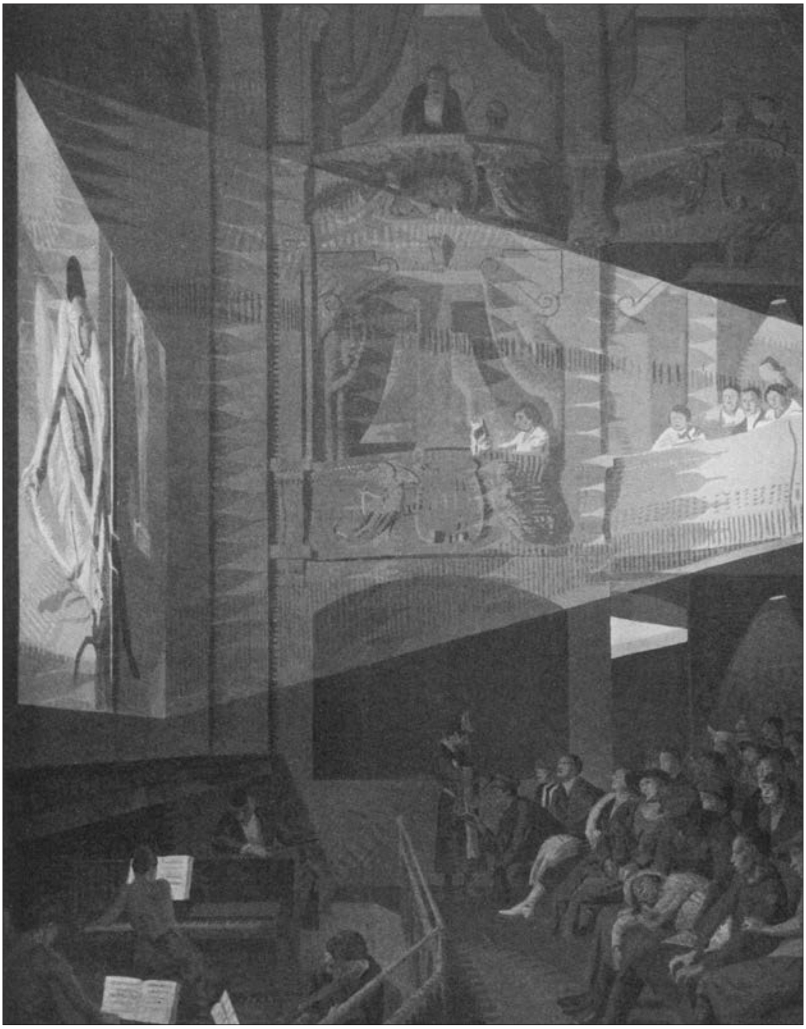

Figure 3: Halftone print, "*Oratio Obliqua* by Walter Bayes" (1918), printed by Walter Judd Ltd., *The International Studio*, 1920. Collection of the author.

fate of the images contained in this essay has not been parlayed into mere scholarly utility. These ones speak more to the errant and tactile instinct of collecting, and the contemporary conditions of building an archive. As both my souvenirs and my companions through the work of researching and writing, they furnished the order of closeness to the disorder of history that only their ownership could impart. Even in unorganized piles cluttering my desk, they provided me what the cinema screen offered Canudo in 1911 (p. 59) as "a bearing through the misty vision of the *anima mundi*." The rhetorical style of *Oratio Obliqua* may indeed capture how reproducibility conveys its meanings; but as Benjamin (1931, p. 486) also observed, it designates the speech act of the collector who is moved to talk about his collection, as Canudo so often did in criticism, and as I offer in this essay: "[O]n closer scrutiny he proves to be speaking only about himself."

For what it's worth, Canudo apparently never kept any of Apollinaire's correspondence. Apollinaire kept everything including the postcards that Canudo sent him during his travels, some of which depicted the Piazza Mercantile in his hometown of Bari, the steamer *Brighton* at Dieppe, and a photographic rendering of Canudo himself (Canudo 1905). Like Apollinaire, I'm keeping my collection, but I'm nevertheless packing it up. In Benjamin's words, "Yes, I am" (1931, p. 486).

2. Acquisition

> I-AM-ITY—The term explains itself, and is used to designate an attitude in a writer who desires to be *en évidence* all the time. The graphic signs are as follows: Large writing, and an excess of flourish in the capitals or terminals; a strong stroke or elaborate flourish under the signature: strong crossing of the t, and too frequent use of the personal pronoun.
>
> J. Harington Keene ("Grapho"),
> *The Mystery of Handwriting: A Handbook of Graphology*
> (1896, p. 97)

I had gone to the Internet auction in search of Fania Marinoff, a silent screen and stage actress who worked primarily with Gaumont's and Pathé's American units. Today, she is remembered more for her marriage to Gertrude Stein's literary executor, the author and photographer Carl Van Vechten.[3] There, on eBay, I acquired an unauthenticated autograph whose date and provenance went entirely undisclosed (Fig. 4).

But it was really her "profile" as Marcel Duchamp envisioned it in the drawing *Fania (profile)* (Philadelphia Museum of Art) that somehow justified my purchase. Sometime before he consigned her to the long sweep of his hand-drawn line, the careening rhythm of haphazard, typewritten letters and the deliberate ink smudge that some interpret as her nose, Marinoff must have—but not necessarily— appeared before him, I thought. How had she materialized prior to this act of modern portraiture that Duchamp dated "*presque* 1916," I wondered? Perhaps she stood across the room at Walter and Louise Arensberg's New Year's Eve party; perhaps she appeared to him indirectly by way of a film, local gossip, or in the new form of a publicity star profile postcard, itself an amplified, mediatized version of Canudo's self-portrait postcard received by Apollinaire in 1905.[4] As I understood it, my desire was to excavate Duchamp's receptive relation to Marinoff; more precisely, I sought to materially substantiate—authenticate—the impact of the newly expanded

Figure 4: Autograph of Fania Marinoff, c. 1930s, unauthenticated. Collection of the author.

conditions and range of extra-filmic reception that the channels of publicity, cinema stardom and an emerging film fan culture supplied the public in 1915-16. As I subsequently went on to argue in my book, these new receptive aesthetics of the cinema industry were finding their place in Dada's—and Duchamp's—formal and conceptual expression at that time.

"It has been stated by a Graphologist of some considerable experience," Henry Frith, himself a graphologist, wrote in 1886 (p. 86), "that the signature of an individual refers to the past. The writing to the present. . . . Now, in what respect did the signature indicate the past more than the present?". As I came to understand, I had bought Marinoff's signature as a guarantee of her living existence somewhere in the past; I could only wish that it meant something with respect to Duchamp's receptive position in 1916. With this rather whimsical purchase, however, it seemed that my impulses had been swiftly subsumed by the initial, violent eruption of the archive. The autograph was like its first exergue which, as Derrida (1996, p. 8) defined it, is typographical in nature. Like an epigraph, the exergue "sets the stage" of the archive by "accumulating capital in advance and in preparing the surplus value of an archive. An exergue serves to stock in anticipation and to prearchive a lexicon which, from there on, ought to lay down the law and give the order, even if this means contenting itself with naming the problem, that is, the subject" (p. 7). With film stardom's emergent discourses, Duchamp's own receptive account in his drawing and now graphological time as my lexicon for some view of the past, the "'printing' technology of archivization" built its external foundation, its substrate, that now seemed to arrogantly revel in what it did not and could not contain (p. 8). For, of course, Marinoff's signature told me nothing about Duchamp.

Still searching for the resources to name my real subject, I impulsively purchased another, equally unauthenticated autograph by Marinoff (Fig. 5). I thereby allowed the second archival exergue to rise up: less typographical than the first, its status as repetition made it more figural, private, singular, and monumental because "it is also the document of an archive" (Derrida 1996, p. 20). Weeks later, an envelope arrived. My

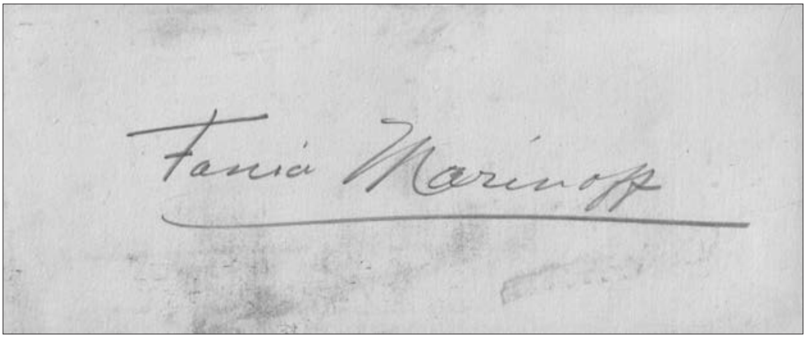

Figure 5: Autograph of Fania Marinoff, n.d., unauthenticated. Collection of the author.

name and address were in a handwritten script utterly unfamiliar for its exuberant, seemingly feverish flourishes. The long bar crossing both t's in "Apartment" and "States" was like a little roof tossed over each word in a singular, signature gesture. The ink appeared to be nearly engraved into the cheap paper. It was the indelible mark of pressure exerted upon the tip of a disposable ink-pen as it made its way across the envelope's virgin surface. It was May, but the stamps were forever delivering Christmas cheer from this unknown sender in Fort Worth, Texas.

Once I unwrapped Marinoff's likely forged graphological specimen, it dully confirmed what I had since learned: that I had been looking for an archive that did not exist. *That* archive—the one that spoke of Duchamp's encounter with Marinoff—could never be found except as its own destructive drives were displayed as "erotic simulacrum, its pseudonym in painting . . . its masks of seduction" in Duchamp's "lovely impression" of Marinoff: not an archive, but the mark of its self-obliteration, the inheritance of the archiviolithic drive, Derrida says (1996, p. 11).

Nevertheless, what was most enchanting about the parcel was the autograph's protective cardboard sleeve (Fig. 6). Hand-made with tape and the scraps of a cereal box, this was the package's internal substrate and the autograph's outside cover. Scotched upon its surface was a note from the seller:

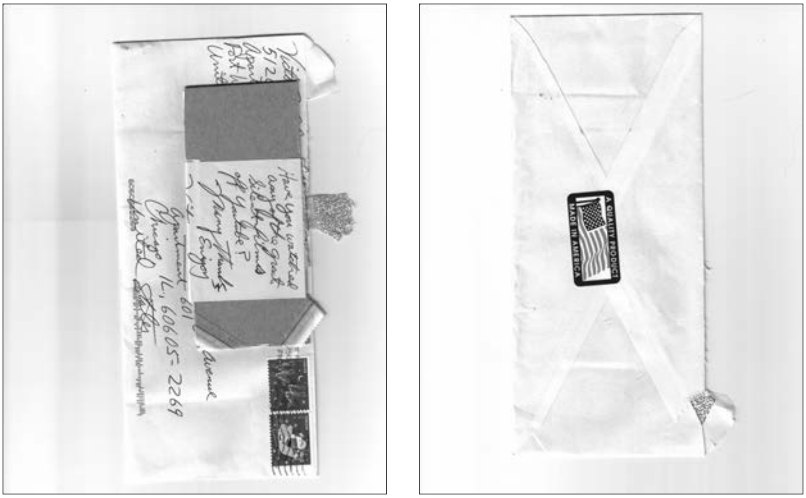

Figure 6a and b: Envelope, recto/verso, sent to author from eBay seller (2013).

> Have you watched any of the great silent films off YouTube?
> Many thanks. Enjoy.
> *Victor*.

While my purchase of the second autograph assertively confirmed the lawful economy of archival order that the first autograph established, this note—an inscription, really—performed the archive's distinctly commemorative semantics "of memory and of the memorial, of conservation" (Derrida 1996, p. 22). Yet, the declarative strokes of Victor's handiwork and script also reinfused my lacklustre purchase with the thrill of acquisition. They thereby returned my so-called "archive" to its proper status as a collection. "The period, the region, the craftsmanship, *the former ownership*—" Benjamin (1931, p. 487) wrote, "for a true collector, the whole background of an item adds to a magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object."[5] Unburdened from utility or the lack thereof, I was free to hold what Benjamin identified in "Review of the Mendelssohns' *Der Mensch in der Handschrift*" (1931, pp. 132-33) as a hieroglyph, the "bodily dimension of language" as it arises from the pictorial site of a specific body. This body, Marinoff's, in turn shook off the fate of consignation that my scholarly reception had threatened to impose by transforming her signature into a historiographical flourish, itself a sign for my authorial presence. Writerly, rather than graphological "I-am-ity," if you will.

It is pleasant to think that the historian's deepest desire to renew the old world, in Benjamin's sense, might recuse such an impulse from the domain of radical evil. "Without this evil," Derrida (1996, p. 81) reminds us, "which is also *archive fever*, the desire and the disorder of the archive, there would be neither assignation nor consignation." But this too might infringe upon something else. Namely, the circumscribed area of the collector's "magic circle" in which objects become frozen once the fiery "final thrill, the thrill of acquisition, passes over them" (Benjamin 1931, p. 487). It seems to me that such a thrill is essentially to be impressed by the absence of utility. As Derrida (1996, p. 8) found, Freud had also come under the sway of this same "impression" which he in turn conveyed to his own reader: "the feeling inspired by this excessive and ultimately gratuitous investment in a perhaps useless archive." But unlike Benjamin, Freud was perhaps less sincere. His impression, Derrida notes, was more precisely rhetorical flourish.

3. Purchasing: *Les feuilles mortes*

Currently, as I write this essay, four postcards c.1910 depicting the steamer *Brighton* at Dieppe are up for sale on eBay; there is one Marinoff autograph with the inscription "Best wishes to you" (going for a much higher price than I paid for either of mine); at least ten copies of *Archive Fever* and several "vintage" postcards offering various views of the Piazza Mercantile at Bari. However, a certain lithographed cover of the French advertising trade magazine *Vendre* (1925, Fig. 7) is no longer on the market. Attracted by its bold depiction of a screen *mise-en-abyme*, I purchased mine from a seller who proclaims to be "the world's leader in original antique and fine art prints." Like all purchases from this merchant, this came "lovingly packaged" (as advertised) in a snug, protective plastic envelope that included a certificate of authenticity adorned with Corinthian columns. Towards the bottom, a serial number: 182393.

Is there anything new about this kind of seller? Under the guise of preservation and protection, he has built a deep shaft

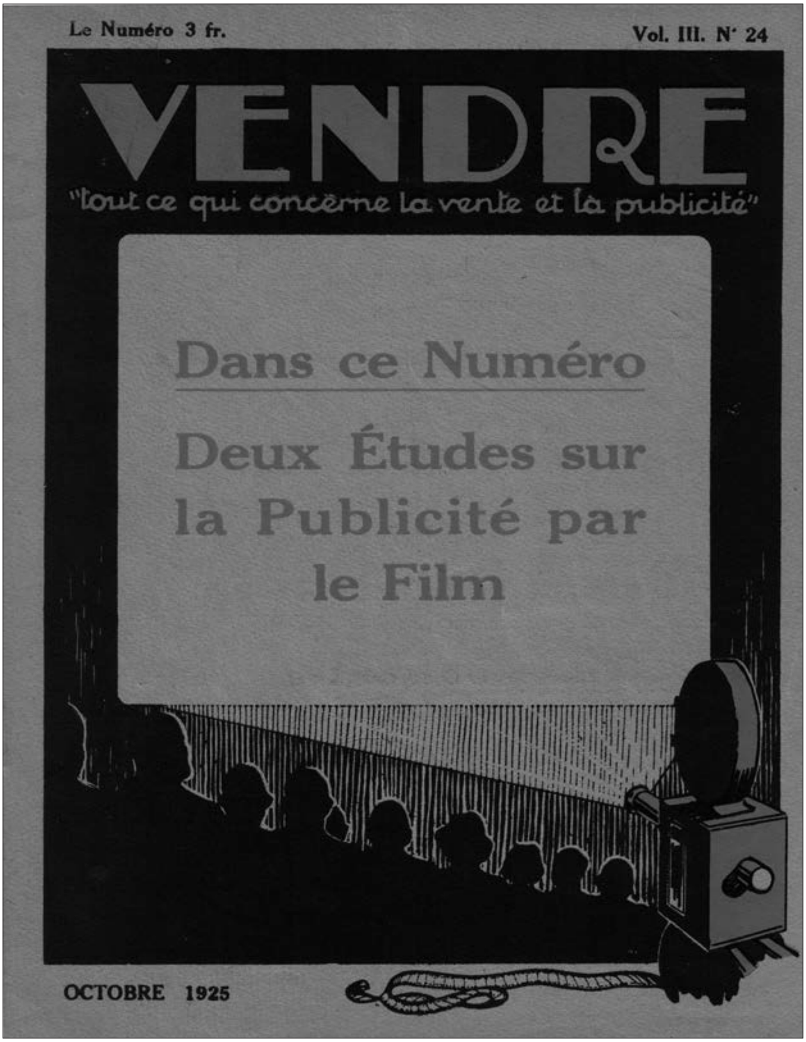

Figure 7: Anonymous lithograph, *Vendre* (cover, 1925). Collection of the author.

into the centuries-old mountain of print culture. There he mines for gems, "original ephemera," he calls them, by stripping them from their embedment in bindings and pruning off what he deems to be an excess of dead leaves. Not unlike the flea market at Saint-Ouen-de-Clignancourt where André Breton and his Surrealist cohort loved to tread, he often has his own stall within this great marketplace. In these virtual confines he presents a catalogue of his merchandise. Its reader, to paraphrase Benjamin (1931, p. 489), should ideally have a flair for discerning the quality and intensity of each item's harmonious whole. But this kind of catalogue rarely offers the requisite details for such euphony—provenance, format, previous ownership, bindings, original source, even artist or illustrator. Instead, it banks on the buyer's recognition of the knell of integrity, dedication, protection and authenticity. This is the dulcet echo of the seller's covenant offered to collectors, gift givers, "historical romantics," decorators and archivists alike.

Of the collector at auction, Benjamin found an additional set of characteristics: he or she was a knowing competitor among competitors; kept a cool head; was perhaps slightly more inclined toward anthropomorphosis. In this way, an object could in fact be justifiably rescued and brought back to life: "because he found it lonely and abandoned in the marketplace and bought it to give it its freedom—the way the prince bought a beautiful slave girl in the *Thousand and One Nights*" (1931, p. 490). But as is more and more the case, competitors are absent from eBay and hence pose no threat. Rather than bidding, a customer can simply fill her virtual cart and buy its contents now. eBay is hence increasingly like what Benjamin called the "negative of an auction," a "second-hand department" where the lack of interest becomes the collector's boon, a wide-open space where the tactical instinct unself-consciously prospers in the order of ownership and the disorder of historical versus material truth.[6] Often, there is no outbidding in the literal sense. But for the collector, this lack opens onto a logic of archaeological outbidding whereby she seeks to revel in the literal sense of excavation: the moment when the object "presents itself and comments on itself by itself" and in turn gloriously sheds the archive, archivist, collection or collector (Derrida 1996, p. 92-3). When the magazine cover presented its projector, audience and the interpolative promise of its screen, it began to shimmer with such a perceptual immediacy. At the same moment its title word *Vendre* rose up and offered itself like a certificate of authenticity, an openly reflexive guarantee concerning the reality of its attachment to the negative spaces of commerce. The marketplace, it seemed to say, could never be entirely shed.

But like Benjamin, we all still acquire things from independent shops and individual sellers. These objects undoubtedly become a chaotic storehouse that folds our own memory of the time and place of purchase on top of the particular history that the object conveys about itself. Apollinaire found this to be true also of places. Each time he passed by the school that stood at the corner of the rue de Douai and the Place Clichy, he thought of Paul Birault. Birault was the publisher of his first book, *L'enchanteur pourrissant*, whose subsequent editions of *Calligrammes*, and Philippe Soupault's and Pierre Reverdy's work, remain in the libraries of bibliophiles, he explained (1912, p. 42). His memory was triggered by the school because this was the place where Birault's press once stood, itself housed in a former convent.

My research once led me to a convent formerly located on the rue de Douai, the street where André Warnod (1947) and André Salmon (1956) both claimed to have gone to the cinema with Picasso. Jean-Jacques Meusy has uncovered the fact that before 1912, the only cinema on this street was the Artistic Cinéma-Théâtre which had been incorporated into a convent chapel formerly occupied by the Dames Zélatrices de la Sainte-Eucharistie (Meusy 1998, p. 164).[7] Perhaps because that research is done, I can now let this urban geographical intersection carry my thoughts back to the Marché des Enfants-Rouges, the covered market established in the 1620s by Louis XIII, so named for the red-clad orphans housed nearby in the Hôtel-Dieu: the Enfants-Dieu, the Enfants-Rouges (Lock 1860, p.138). Where it meets rue Charlot, where activists of '68 once scrawled their "mural newspaper" (Robb 2010, p. 372), now sits a friend's boutique packed with recuperated photographs cast off by their original owners. He too sells them in tight plastic coverings, but he also takes portraits. Buried among the cheaper items placed in outside bins, I came across a set of postcards made by the *sœurs* Bernadette from Thaon-les-Vosges where they developed a precisely modern visual style for their religious pedagogy and moralist publications.[8] Equally recalling the ancient art of shadow puppetry silhouettes and German expressionist woodcuts or cinematic *mise en scène*, the Bernadette method wielded the optical power of negative space to engrave its messages upon the retina of the beholder. *Ut videant*: the good sisters' motto in their combat against "materialist, cubist and communist art" (Bruel and Florant 2008).[9]

My examples all focus their message on the malevolence of the cinema, one of the other temptations that Satan implied when he whispered the word "modernism" in your ear.[10] In one (Fig. 8), a diabolically electrified column separates the domains of cinema and dancing, "introducers of vice." On the left, the evil rays from an unseen projector command the viewer's gaze, like that of the audience depicted, and arrest it upon a small screen where an act of violence takes place. In another (Fig. 9), a father restrains his son from passing through the monumentally framed gates of a cinema-hell on a Thursday afternoon. Within the uncleanliness of darkness, the screen would surely be the devil's illuminated writing pad and the projector his pen. With these tools he would stencil only the indelible impressions against which a whole history of moral opposition to the cinema previously engaged in battle.

Figure 8: Postcard, "Cinéma Dancing, C.C. 93—Introducteurs du vice," Thaon-les-Vosges, La Maison du "Bon Livre," n.d., c. 1930. Collection of the author.

Figure 9: Postcard, "Cinéma malpropre, C.C. 94—Désir volontaire du Mal," Thaon-les-Vosges, La Maison du "Bon Livre," n.d., c. 1930. Collection of the author.

The kind of spontaneous reverie (Fig.10) that these cinema-related objects allow may at times be light and languid, as well

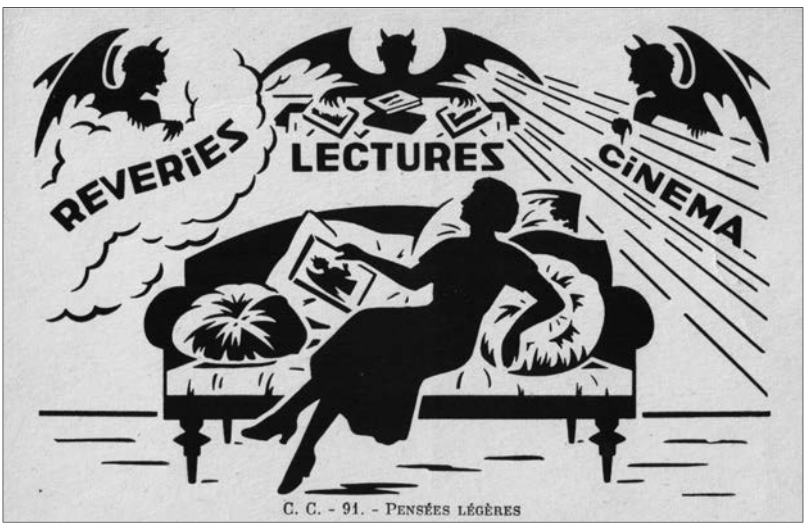

Figure 10: Postcard, "Rêveries, lectures, cinéma, C.C. 91—Pensées légères," Thaon-les-Vosges, La Maison du "Bon Livre," n.d., c. 1930. Collection of the author.

as stamped with a surcharge for historical coincidence. These thoughts are not themselves particularly dangerous, but they are as wide as the highway of purchasing that Benjamin (1931, pp. 488-89) remarked was not always comfortable. While these objects speak of the cities that, like Benjamin, revealed themselves while pursuing an acquisition, they also recall losses, endings and veritable chapters of life, as we say, that are themselves defined by the inception, evolution and termination of a project and all of its archival evidence. They thus continually provide "documentation where the 'ordinary historian' identifies none" (Derrida 1996, p. 64), and restore forgotten or repressed (anarchived) episodes to the archive's order of visibility even as they remain, quite literally, absent therein.

As I pack up my materials and bid adieu to an era, I am in fact surprised to find something forgotten yet hiding in plain sight here in my room. Stuck in a makeshift frame and poised on the lower rung of a shelf where I keep books that are no longer useful, I spy the fascinating scene taking place in the intoxication chamber of the Cabaret du Néant c. 1908 (Fig. 11). While no films, to my knowledge, were ever projected therein, I purchased this image from an itinerant vendor on the Place de la Bourse because

Figure 11: Postcard, "Cabaret du Néant, Paris-Montmartre—nº 1, salle d'intoxication," n.d., c. 1908. Collection of the author.

it seemed to convey much about the popular-cultural decor of an early twentieth-century *montmartrois* such as Picasso. On the left, a gentleman looks over the arch of a candle poised mysteriously on the tabletop before him to meet the camera's gaze. Other patrons cast ponderous looks toward the macabre candelabra suspended from above. Made from a skull and a collection of tibias, it is a provocative "mocking of Parisian audiences" without which the Cabaret "would be a moralistic endeavour" (Anonymous n.d., p. 149).[11] Like the Cabaret de l'Enfer that Atget photographed before 1911 (Atget 1912),[12] the Cabaret du Néant was located on the boulevard de Clichy, not far from where cinemas, printers, and schools came to nestle in Montmartre's formerly sacred spaces and places of worship. According to my early twentieth-century Paris guidebook, "One should come here from time to time to get used to dying" (Anonymous n.d., p. 149). This claim was made explicit by the other souvenir postcard I had placed within the frame (Fig. 12) upon which a carefully hand-cut stencil puts a skeleton into playful relief against the card's slightly discoloured background. In this particular souvenir, we find the "méthode Bernadette" *avant la lettre*—the deceased corpse of popular culture's visual lexicon that simultaneously reminds of a past experience and announces what is to come.

It was thus most curious to find something hidden behind the skeleton's fine form, tucked away in its transparent sleeve: an anonymous photograph of two unknown, bare-chested men changing the reel of a small-gauge moving picture camera (Fig. 13). Very much alive, they are perhaps on vacation. This *souvenir*, like the others, is not properly "mine"; but its rediscovery nevertheless places me, like them, on location in France even as I sit here, now, in my mid-western American room. It calls forth a forgotten moment at a springtime *brocante* from the retina of my memory, just as it places its seller *en évidence*. I recall purchasing this image to free it from the fate of the dustbin, just as early twentieth-century collectors rescued single celluloid images from their local exhibitor who would commonly "burn his images as soon as they had paid for themselves, meaning after . . . a few weeks" (Dureau 1912, p. 4). As these fanatics ran after their collection, we might characterize them as burning

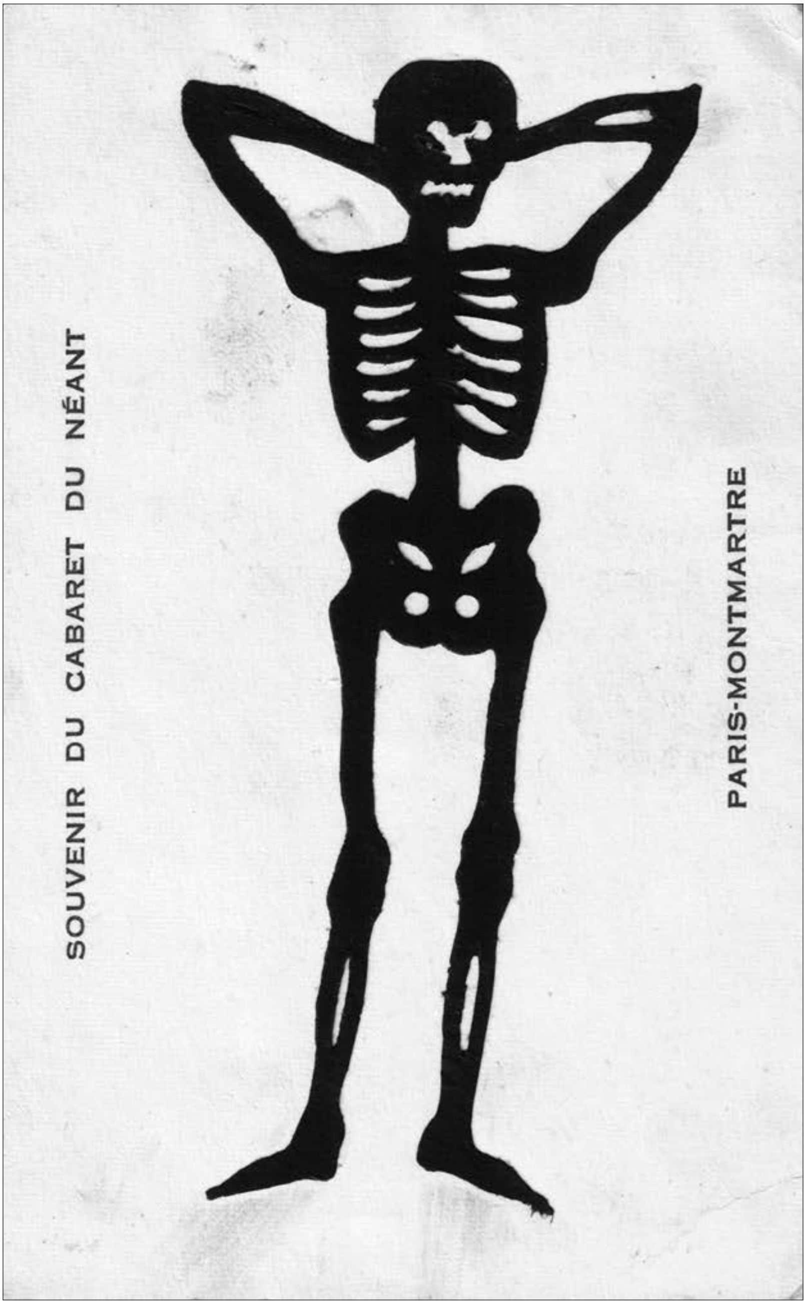

Figure 12: Postcard, "Souvenir du Cabaret du Néant, Paris-Montmartre," n.d. Collection of the author.

with a “passion for little images” (Dureau 1912, p. 1) that conserve the cinema-going experience before it slips away into the immaterial “magic circle” of memory. Theirs, like mine, may be “an irrepressible desire to return to the origin . . . the most archaic place of absolute commencement” (Derrida 1996, p. 91) of the indirect language harboured in a film’s temporal succession—its shots, actors, *mise en scène*, profilmic situation or place and moment of exhibition.

It might be that a collection is comprehended only when a project is finally extinguished, when, in the words of Quebec poet, critic and archivist Marcel Dugas (1916, p. 87), “[w]e have closed the doors on the phantoms of the years just passed . . . so that all things that made up life then adopt the stony attitude of that which is no longer, when we have erected sombre granite monuments on the paths taken and in the cemetery of our thoughts.”[13] But in the same way, perhaps it is only with the end of a collection that we gain an impression of the archive concealed therein. This archive is not only composed of personal memories. Mine contains the buried history of visual messaging style, urban and rural locales and the enfolded sum of their interior spaces. In this archive, the discourses of moralism,

Figure 13: Anonymous photograph, n.d. Collection of the author.

advertising, pedagogy, whimsical debauchery, sport, modernist typeface and amateurism play out like a kind of cinema "where everything appears faded, full of cinders beneath the falling autumn leaves" (Dugas 1916, p. 105). This was the style of film to which Dugas consigned the "little complaints about the past returned" or the creaks and groans of the *psyché*, that free-standing, full-length cheval-glass that became Dugas' evocative metaphor for the cinema.[14] The immaterial archive of reflections found in my collection, it should be said, cannot really be purchased. To risk quoting the famous advertising tag line of an American credit corporation, they are, quite literally, priceless.

University of Chicago

NOTES

1. See Jennifer Wild, *The Parisian Avant-Garde in the Age of Cinema, 1900-1923*, forthcoming from the University of California Press (2015).

2. My research to date indicates that the original is located at the Manchester City Galleries, United Kingdom.

3. Fania Marinoff's partial filmography includes: *The Unsuspected Isles* (William Hadock, Gaumont, 1915); an adaptation of Frank Norris' novel *McTeague* (1889), *Life's Whirlpool* (Barry O'Neill, William A. Brady Picture Plays, 1916); as Max Linder's co-star in *A Ringer for Max* (Max Linder, Pathé Frères, 1915); *The Lure of Mammon* (Kenean Buel, Kalem Co., 1915); *The Money Master* (George Fitzmaurice, George Kleine Productions, 1915); *The Galloper* (Donald Mackenzie, Pathé Exchange, 1915); and *Nedra* (Edward José, Pathé Exchange, 1915).

4. A 1915 British Pathé Series postcard of Fania Marinoff was sold on eBay in 2008. See http://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/scarce-fania-marinoff-1915-silent-star-vintage. Marinoff and Duchamp did indeed come to know each other within Arensberg's circle that included Duchamp, Van Vechten and Stein. Marinoff mentions Duchamp in letters to Stein throughout the 1920s. See Stein, Van Vechten and Burns (1986).

5. My emphasis.

6. Derrida treats the subjects of historical and material truth throughout *Archive Fever* (1996). On Freud's concept of historical truth, see Freud (1939).

7. See also de Rochegude (1910, p. 70).

8. See Anonymous (1939); Bruel and Florant (2008); Saint-Martin (2009). See also the collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

9. See the online examples at http://www.matiere.org/page2_mb.html.

10. See the examples in Dominique Bry, "La méthode Bernadette," *Mediapart*, 11 December 2008, http://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/comic-strip/article/111208/la-methode-bernadette.

11. See pl. 64 (Anonymous n.d.). This image is nearly identical to Fig. 11.

12. See the collection online at gallica.bnf.fr.

13. See New (2002, p. 318). According to this source, Dugas worked as an archivist in the Canadian embassy in Paris between 1920 and 1940.

14. See Wall-Romana (2013, pp. 277-281). Here, Wall-Romana explains that the word "psyché" in Dugas' title refers to "the Greek life principle, the mythical heroine, and the post-Freudian psychological realm." He too points out that the *psyché* "in its common usage of a full-length pivoting mirror, thus firm[s] up the classical analogy: textual cinema ↔ self-reflection."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anonymous n.d.: Anonymous, *Guide des plaisirs à Paris, Paris le jour, Paris la nuit*, Paris, Éditions photographiques, c. 1908, n.d., n.p.

Anonymous 1939: Anonymous, *Petit directoire de la méthode Bernadette*, Thaon-les-Vosges, Maison du "Bon Livre," 1939, 44 p.

Apollinaire 1912: Guillaume Apollinaire, "La chambre de Canudo," first published as "La vie anecdotique" [1912], reprinted in *Œuvres en prose complètes III*, Paris, NRF, Gallimard, 1993, pp. 3-50.

Apollinaire 1914: Guillaume Apollinaire, "Le couvent de la rue de Douai," first published as "La vie anecdotique" (1914), reprinted in *Œuvres en prose complètes III*, Paris, NRF, Gallimard, 1993, pp. 3-50.

Atget 1912: Eugène Atget, "Métiers, boutiques, et étalages de Paris (1898-1911)," album, Paris, 1912, n.p.

Benjamin 1931: Walter Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Collecting" [1931], in Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. 2, 1927-1934*, Cambridge, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 486-493.

Bruel and Florant 2008: Laurent Bruel and Sonia Florant, *La méthode Bernadette : images des sœurs Bernadette*, Montreuil, Matière, 2008, 167 p.

Canudo 1905: Ricciotto Canudo, "Postcard to Guillaume Apollinaire" [1905], in Giovanni Dotoli (ed.), *Lettres à Guillaume Apollinaire 1904-1918*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1999, p. 55.

Canudo 1911: Ricciotto Canudo, "The Birth of a Sixth Art" [1911], reprinted in Richard Abel (ed.), *French Film Theory and Criticism, Vol. 1, 1907-1929*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 58-66.

De Rochegude 1910: Marquis de Rochegude, *Les promenades dans toutes les rues de Paris par arrondissement, 9e arrondissement*, Paris, Librairies Hachette et Cie, 1910, 93 p.

Derrida 1996: Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996, 113 p.

Dugas 1916: Marcel Dugas, *Psyché au cinéma*, Montréal, Paradis-Vincent Éditeurs, 1916, 110 p.

Dureau 1912: Georges Dureau, "Le collectionneur de photogrammes, ou La passion des petites images," *Ciné-Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 198, 1912, pp. 1-4.

Farge 1989: Arlette Farge, *Le goût de l'archive*, Paris, Seuil, 1989, 152 p.

Farge 2013: Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archive*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013, 131 p.

Freud 1939: Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, New York, Knopf, 1939, 218 p.

Frith 1886: Henry Frith, *A Guide to the Study of Graphology With an Explanation of Some of The Mysteries of Handwriting*, London, George Routledge and Sons, 1886, 126 p.

Keene 1896: J. Harington Keene ("Grapho"), *The Mystery of Handwriting: A Handbook of Graphology*, Boston, Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1896, 155 p.

Lock 1860: Frédéric Lock, *Dictionnaire topographique et historique de l'ancien Paris (avant l'annexion)*, Paris, Librairies Hachette et Cie, 1860, 461 p.

Meusy 1998: Jean-Jacques Meusy, *Paris-Palaces, ou Le temps des cinémas (1894-1918)*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 1998, 561 p.

New 2002: William H. New (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002, 1347 p.

Robb 2010: Graham Robb, *Parisians: An Adventure History of Paris*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2010, 475 p.

Saint-Martin 2009: Isabelle Saint-Martin, "La méthode Bernadette. Une catéchèse visuelle entre invention graphique et conservatisme doctrinal," *Sociétés & Représentations*, No. 28, 2009, pp. 233-37.

Salmon 1956: André Salmon, *Souvenirs sans fin, deuxième époque (1908-1920)*, Paris, Gallimard, 1956, 349 p.

Séchoy 1923: Séchoy, "L'enseignement de l'histoire par la cinématographie," *Ciné-Schola*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1923, p. 6.

Stein, Van Vechten and Burns 1986: *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl van Vechten 1913-1946*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, 901 p.

Wall-Romana 2013: Christophe Wall-Romana, *Cinépoetry: Imaginary Cinemas in French Poetry*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2013, 480 p.

Warnod 1947: André Warnod, *Ceux de la butte*, Paris, René Julliard, 1947, 290 p.

RÉSUMÉ

La longueur d'une large rue : les archives, le commerce (électronique) et la fin d'une collection

Jennifer Wild

Ce texte est une réflexion, inspirée par des images, sur les archives et la constitution de collections. À partir de vestiges cinématographiques qu'elle a elle-même collectionnés, l'auteure prend appui sur des textes de Apollinaire, de Benjamin, de Canudo, de Derrida et de Dugas pour s'interroger sur l'acquisition et la possession de ces documents éphémères, ainsi que sur leur place et leur fonction dans les archives, aussi bien que dans l'écriture et la recherche. En examinant la dynamique du commerce réel et virtuel, l'auteure montre également comment les enjeux liés à la reproduction, à l'acquisition et à la répétition imprègnent la dimension théorique de l'archive actuelle, en plus de constituer la dimension archivistique de la collection proprement dite.