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## THE DOMINANT, THE RESIDUAL AND THE EMERGENT IN ARCHIVAL IMAGINATION<sup>1</sup>

Just as the explosion of information in the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought about by the print and industrial revolution necessitated the emergence of dictionaries and encyclopedias to make sense of the capacious and chaotic world of information and knowledge, we seem to be witness to a comparable moment in the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the proliferation of archival initiatives. The career of encyclopedias were never totally exhausted by their status as epistemological enterprises and they often spilled into narrative domains, emerging as new ways of curating knowledge as narrative. The growth of encyclopedias could be read as symptomatic of seismic shifts in the world of knowledge and our uncertain place in it. They were narrative forms that attempted to manage the deluge and impose a logic of sense through classification and the imposition of order.<sup>2</sup> We see a parallel in our contemporary era with the rise of archival impulses, situated at the intersection of vastly democratized technologies of storage, retrieval and classification on the one hand, and the befuddlement that we experience by the rate of their growth and the amount of information, which defies a conventional organizational logic.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 The author is a collaborator along with Camp, Mumbai and 0xdb, Berlin of two open video archives [www.pad.ma](http://www.pad.ma) and [www.indiancine.ma](http://www.indiancine.ma). This article is an outcome of conversations and debates on archives that we have had over a number of years.
  - 2 For a historical over and its relevance to the 21<sup>st</sup> century see Mike Featherstone and Couze Venn, "Problematizing Global Knowledge and the New Encyclopaedia Project", *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23(2-3), pp. 1-20.
  - 3 The decentralization of means of archiving is simultaneously accompanied by massive projects of centralized archives of daily life, often owned and controlled by large corporations such as Google and Facebook.

Following Raymond Williams' characterization of culture as the dominant, the residual and the emergent,<sup>4</sup> one could perhaps begin to think of the present archival moment as a translucent palimpsest of the three, with the blurred edges overlapping with each other. Rejecting the classical reduction of history into epochal narratives, Williams suggested that the dominant, the residual and the emergent coexist in agonistic and cooperative relations. Similarly, the will to archive produces a productive tension between archives in their dominant, residual and emergent forms, and in this paper I shall focus on how these play out in the case of moving image archives. I will suggest that in addition to the three categories, an additional one – “the contingent” – may be a necessary addition to how we think of contemporary archives.

If archives are a response to the question of the contingency of information, they are in turn marked by their own contingent relation to social, legal, political and technological factors. With digital archives and digital information, we see a move away from the concept of the archive as a physical place to store and preserve records to that of the archive as a virtual site facilitating immediate transfer. The notion of immediate data access and feedback replaces the older logic imposed primarily by paper, and the digital possibilities of the archive bypass traditional concerns of preservation in favor of dissemination. We have however inherited the conceptual vocabulary of archives from this older logic and one of the challenges of imposing this logic of the archive upon the contemporary moment manifests itself as an ontological impossibility of the archive itself.

Does an archival instinct of the contemporary have the same connotation as the maintenance of an archive in the traditional sense? As is well known, traditionally archives emerged in the context of power, control and secrecy and Derrida reminds us that archives share their etymological roots with the *archaeon*, literally the house of the magistrate.<sup>5</sup> In his description of the fever or mal that afflicts the desire for the archive, Derrida suggests that it is marked firstly by the fever of authority and the need to establish official memory, and equally by a feverish desire to return to origins.

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4 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford England, Oxford University Press, 1978.

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

## RESIDUAL VALUE

Carolyn Steedman in, “Dust: The Archive and Cultural History”<sup>6</sup>, plays the ultimate deconstructionist joke on Derrida. She takes his metaphor of archive fever literally rather than metaphorically and examines the history of various forms of illnesses that were associated with scholarly work, in turn producing a new metaphor of the relationship between dust and the archive. Steedman notes that when the field of occupational or industrial diseases began to emerge in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the major causes was dust or vapors, which resulted in all forms of illnesses. She cites John Forbes’ definition of a new category of industrial disease in, “The Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine of 1833”: “The Diseases of Artisans”, and under this heading sat a subcategory ‘The Diseases of Literary Men’, which for thirty years, listed a range of occupational hazards understood to be caused by the activity of scholarship. These originated, said Forbes, “from want of exercise, very frequently from breathing the same atmosphere too long, from the curved position of the body, and from too ardent exercise of the brain.” Forbes allegedly claimed that this resulted in ‘Brain fever’, which was attributed to “a highly excitable state of the nervous system, which results in an increased or irregular action of the arteries in the brain”. A cautionary tale for all of us if ever there was one.

Steedman then turns to the example of Jules Michelet, widely acknowledged as the father of modern French history. Michelet reinvented the subject of history by taking it away from the aristocracy and installing a new ambitious subject – ‘the people’ or ‘the poor’. According to Steedman, when the young Michelet spent his first days in the archives, in those “catacombs of manuscripts” that made up the national Archives in Paris in the 1820s, he wrote of restoring its “papers and parchments” to the light of day by breathing in their dust. Steedman suggests that it was not just a figure of speech that he intended but, rather, a literal description of a physiological process. For Steedman it is the historian’s act of inhalation that gives life. She cites a passage from Michelet to illustrate this “these papers and parchments, so long deserted, desired no better than to be restored to the light of day . . . [A]s I breathed in their dust, I saw them rise up.”<sup>7</sup>

In reworking the idea of Derrida’s metaphor in *Archive Fever*, Carolyn Steedman contributes a range of new metaphors for us to work with: Dust, residue and fragments as forms that are central to the

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6 Cp. Carolyn Kay Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, Rutgers University Press, 2002.

7 Jules Michelet, “Preface de l’Histoire de France” quoted in Steedman.

imagination of the archive, and our relationship to history and knowledge.

Continuing with dust and fragments, let's turn to another archivist destined to breathing dust. In the late 1940s Roja Muthiah Chettiar, a painter of signs, set up a shop in Madras, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. He had moved to Madras from a small town, Kottaiyur, a few hundred kilometers away. A self-educated man, Chettiar was fascinated by visual culture, and began to build up a personal collection of print material about art and popular visual culture. Over a period of time he extended his area of interest, and started collecting books, magazines, pamphlets, posters, letters, reports, events announcements and even wedding invitations. Chettiar became a well-known figure amongst the old booksellers and the scrap dealers in Moore Road in Madras, as the man who would buy garbage. Chettiar paid far greater attention to his collection than to his business, and as a result he eventually had to shut his sign shop and move back to Kottaiyur. Once back, he set up the India Library Services, a reading room where visitors could consult the archives and were provided with coffee and lunch, for just one Rupee.

His family thought he was insane, and would constantly throw away the junk that Chettiar had accumulated. Chettiar would then have to chase his treasures as they travelled from garbage bin to scrap dealer, recovering some, losing others. Every time he ran into financial difficulties, he would look among his old envelopes, find a stamp, and send it to a stamp collector with a covering letter informing him that it was very rare, and he would be obliged if the philatelist could send him some money.

In 1983, there was a pogrom against Tamils in Sri Lanka, and Chettiar heard about the burning of the Jaffna library. Chettiar was aware that the Jaffna library contained some of the oldest and rarest Tamil manuscripts in the world. He borrowed money and traveled to Jaffna to see what he could recover, but was devastated to learn that most of the documents had been destroyed in the burning of the library. Chettiar had gone to Jaffna as an eccentric collector, and he returned an obsessive archivist, determined to collect whatever he could of Tamil print culture.

Worried about the state of his health and his ability to preserve his collection, he offered to sell it to the Tamil Nadu state archives. By then, his collection contained more than 100,000 items, including many publications dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The state refused to pay him 200,000 Rupees for what it considered to be junk. One of the regular visitors to the India Library Services was C.S. Lakshmi (Ambai), a well-known Tamil writer and feminist scholar. When Ambai was a

visiting scholar at the University of Chicago, she informed the South Asian Studies department about this eccentric archive. They immediately sent a team to evaluate the archive and offered to buy the archive for 10 million Rupees. Muthiah Chettiar never saw any of the money, since he died by the time the transaction was complete. Chettiar died of DDT poisoning as a result of years of breathing the fumes of the insecticide that he regularly used to prevent his collection from being destroyed by insects and worms. The Roja Muthiah Research Library is now one of the finest archives of South Indian materials (in India).

From the dust that Michelet breathed to the DDT fumes that killed Roja Muthiah, we are confronted with the question of what it is that we consider of value, what we discard as debris, and the residue of value. In their reflections on the process of creating value. The Raqs media collective notes:

“The extraction of value from any material, place, thing or person, involves a process of refinement. During this process, the object in question will undergo a change in state, separating into at least two substances: an extract and a residue. With respect to residue: it may be said it is that which never finds its way into the manifest narrative of how something (an object, a person, a state, or a state of being) is produced, or comes into existence. It is the accumulation of all that is left behind, when value is extracted... There are no histories of residue, no atlases of abandonment, no memoirs of what a person was but could not be.”<sup>8</sup>

Dust and rubble is what is generated when projects of great value are undertaken. From infrastructure and real estate, the two engines of economic value, all contemporary capitalist development produces an enormous amount of waste and residue of value. And as the engines of value chug along, they deposit forms of life no longer considered valuable or indeed even recognizable. And yet living as we do in the era of global warming, we are also acutely aware that one of the aspects of modern life are the ways in which the residue and rubbish of modernity come to haunt us through new risks and diseases that threaten to overturn the seamless flow of capital. Carbon monoxide, which disappeared into the air as the residues of modern industrialism, returned as one of the most pressing issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And there is perhaps no better witness to the productive and destructive forces of development and the creation of value than Jia Zhang Ke’s film, *Still Life*. If Walter Benjamin’s angel of history looks

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8 Raqs Media Collective, With Respect to Residue in Raqs Media et al. *Raqs Media Collective: Seepage*, Sternberg Press, 2010.

Janus-faced, both to the future and to the debris of the past, then Ke offers us a way out of this paradoxical gaze. *Still Life*, which documents the demolition of buildings at the site of the Three Gorges Dam, provides us with yet another image of how we can escape our fate of being reduced to worthless rubble. In the film, a dilapidated building earmarked for demolition (and destined to join the debris of socialist modernity) as China leaps forward into capitalist development, abruptly transforms into a UFO in the middle of the night and takes off to an uncertain future, or perhaps a distant past.

### THE SURPLUS OF IMAGES

Let's take this image as a starting point for thinking about the relationship between image making, the accumulation of value and the production of debris and waste. The first decade and a half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has possibly seen more images made than all the previous decades put together and it is estimated that every year billions of hours of images are produced and even more watched.<sup>9</sup> Not all of these are intentional images in the classical sense of the term and most of the work of image production is in fact made by stationery surveillance cameras which document the mundane and the extraordinary with the insouciance of a lift operator. And yet these mundane images attain value, not in and of themselves, but as a part of a database and as information. But even if we were to move from the world of the mundane image to the more traditional forms of image making, we encounter an ecstatic overproduction facilitated by the digital turn in filmmaking.

Consider the case of documentary film makers for instance: traditionally limited by meager budgets, film makers were very careful about how much they shot because the shooting ratio of footage to videos that was eventually used was an aesthetic but also often an economic choice. Freed of these constraints by the relatively lower cost of shooting digitally, documentary filmmakers are happy to keep their cameras rolling, knowing well that much of what is shot will never be used. What happens to these images, to the raw footage in the world of image value? Are they condemned to being assigned to the waste bin (even if in the form of hard discs) of image making – and what are we to make of this surplus of film? If the tragedy of celluloid and tape was its propensity to rot through the accumulation of dust and fungus it

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9 There are many competing statistics claimed; For a representative sample see Greg Jarboe, How to Visualize the Ridiculously Big Numbers Representing Global Online Video Usage, Available at: <http://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2133244/visualize-ridiculously-representing-global-online-video-usage> [accessed June 2015].

indicates that the graveyard of image is a vast swathe of residual time. I would suggest that there are three ways in which we can think of the surplus of film. Firstly, it is the life of film as surplus, or the extra footage that does not make it into a film. We can also call it the residue of aesthetic and political choices of the making of a film. Secondly, there is the contingent surplus where any act of image-making always captures the unintended, the ambient and the transient. This is especially true of stock footage such as city shots that film makers take whose historic value exceeds the intention of the film maker. And finally there is the inherent surplus of latent meaning that resides in a film, and can only be converted into valuable interpretation by a spectator.

It is perhaps these forms of surplus that have resulted in the genre of the archival film, mastered by film makers like Adam Curtis and in more recent times, Tom Anderson. Anderson's *Los Angeles Plays Itself* is a film composed entirely of fragments from Hollywood which, seen together, narrate the history of the urban form of Los Angeles, and where cinema plays an often unwitting archive of architecture. These images, taken out of their narrative context and the historic moment of their production, are then recycled as valuable images not for what they sought to capture but of what they happened to capture.

Articulating the relationship between the human subject and the historical past has been at the heart of the documentary exercise. The challenge of a contemporary period – one in which material objects are increasingly overwhelmed and outnumbered by digital documents – is for us to find new ways of sorting through these traces and to invent new methods for encountering and articulating the past.

Just as in Ke's films, ecologies of destruction are accompanied by transforming social and personal relations, we are at a precipice in which the surplus of film and the surplus of residual images challenge us to think about what it may mean to articulate a different relationship to the image bereft of value. Susan Jarosi in her work on found footage suggests that we think of recycled cinema in ecological terms.<sup>10</sup> She argues that, we can think of the value underlying found footage in terms of a "virtual projection" or that which remains dormant "beneath which or through which we are able to discern the history of a particular image writ large". This approach, she suggests, ascribes not just a physical transparency to recycled images but a notional one as well, and it is this quality that allows us to see and decipher various meanings 'behind' them. Jarosi derives her ecological argument through a reading of Gene Youngblood's

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10 Susan Jarosi, "Recycled cinema as material ecology: Raphael Montañez Ortiz's found-footage films and Computer- Laser-Videos", *Screen*, 53(3), 2012.

formulation of “The artist as ecologist” in his book, *Expanded Cinema*,<sup>11</sup> suggesting that this was perhaps the first reference to environmentalism as a trope for understanding artistic practice. Youngblood, contrasting the traditional idea of the artist as creator, sees the ecological imagination of the artists as one who reveals “previously unrecognized relationships between existing phenomena, both physical and metaphysical”. Youngblood in turn directs our attention to an often ignored etymological link that allows us to return to the question of the archive: He notes that the terms economy, ecumenical, and ecology share a common Greek root: *oikos*, a house.

#### RECLAIMING THE RESIDUAL

We began by suggesting that outside the official house of memory (or the *archeon*) lies a range of initiatives that seek to wrest the control of memory from its official houses. Now we see that the question of the economy of images, the ecology of residual images and ecology seem to come together. And if the displaced are always looking for a new home which they can call their own, then perhaps one way of thinking about the productive relation between the discarded image is to see it as images that await their activation through the creation of a new house of meaning, and there can be no higher aspiration for archives than to facilitate meaning produced through the discarded.

Just as Roja Muthiah scrounged through the garbage bins looking for discarded images and texts, rescuing materials that were discarded, Walter Benjamin’s account of the ragpicker and the collector as recyclers of value, serve as important allegorical icons to consider value and its other. As commodities sought to place themselves within the visible circuits of value in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they enabled a new form of display politics.

The collector and the ragpicker shared a common enthusiasm for the discarded, choosing to privilege a fancier’s value over use and exchange value, and in the case of the latter, rescuing value from its negation. Benjamin says:

“The collector is the true resident of the interior. He makes his concern the enlightenment of things. To him falls the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them. But he bestows on them only a collector's value, rather than use value. The collector dreams his way not only into a distant or bygone world but also into a better one – one in which, to be sure, human beings are no better provided with what they need

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11 Gene Youngblood and R. Buckminster Fuller, *Expanded Cinema*, 1st edition, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1970.



than in the everyday world, but in which things are freed from the drudgery of being useful.”<sup>12</sup>

In both cases, however, there is a common practice of making sense of that which is scattered, collecting and assembling waste to give new narrative form to experience. It is only appropriate that the metaphor that Benjamin deploys to make sense of these forms of behavior, is that of dwelling. Benjamin sought these figures, otherwise cast out of the ordinary circuits of value, to pose the possibilities of a dwelling in modernity beyond bourgeois normative forms, choosing instead to dwell in a “zone of indetermination”.

#### AN ARCHIVE OF ONE’S OWN

What kind of lesson may be drawn for how we think of the dwelling place of films and images? The vaults of national film archives store national culture and heritage and are supposed to act as public custodians but often act as gatekeepers guarding films against users and in such a context, the mythic value of films arise from their non availability. At the same time film makers work with a strict hierarchy between footage and finished film deeming the former worthless (remaining as they do beyond the magic touch of the auteur).

How then may we posit a form of dwelling of images, which exceed these normative horizons? How may we derive a practice of memory, which exceeds the historiographic project of the film archive?

In the digital era, the blurring of the lines between databases, archives, and collections seem to be mirrored in the blurred boundaries between what may be considered the proper and improper use of materials. In the case of filmmakers like Chris Marker, for instance, it is argued that the epistemological effects of their films make it difficult to determine whether Marker shot certain footage, found it on the street, or found it in an official archive. In his famous voice-over, laid over an image of three children walking up a path, Marker says:

“The first image he told me about was of three children on a road in Iceland in 1965. He said that for him, it was the image of happiness and also that he had tried several times to link it to other images, but it never worked. He wrote me: One day I’ll have to put it all alone at the beginning of a film with a long piece of black leader. If they don’t see happiness in the picture, at least they’ll see the black”.

Marker’s work is an instance of what Sobchack describes as the shift from

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12 Walter Benjamin; Tiedemann, Rolf, *The Arcades Project*, London, Cambridge Mass., 1999.

thinking of documentary as a genre to a mode of reception. She writes:

“The term ‘documentary’ designates more than a cinematic object. Along with the obvious nomination of a film genre characterized historically by certain objective textual features, the term also – and more radically – designates a particular subjective relation to an objective cinematic or televisual text. In other words, documentary is less a thing than an experience – and the term names not only a cinematic object, but also the experienced “difference” and “sufficiency” of a specific mode of consciousness and identification with the cinematic image?”<sup>13</sup>

Maybe it is time then to think of the archive less as an institution or even a designated set of practices but as an emergent form. Autonomous archival initiatives are often a response to the monopolization of public memory by the state, and the political effects that flow from such mnemonic power. But attempts to create autonomous archives do not necessarily supplement the memory machine of the state. The state archive is only one instance of the archive; they are not the definition of archives, but merely a form. As a particular form, state archives do not exhaust the concept of the archive. The task of creating an archive is neither to replicate nor to mimic state archives but to creatively produce a concept of the archive.

An archive actively creates new ways of thinking about how we access our individual and collective experiences. Autonomous archives do not just supplement what is missing in state archives; they also render what is present, unstable. When we subsume the concept of archive to its known form, we are exhausted by it and suffer from archive fever and archive fatigue. Contemporary archival impulses attempt to realize the potential of the archive as virtuality, and challenge us to think through the productive capacities of an archive beyond the blackmail of memory and amnesia. The production of a concept is a provocation, a refusal to answer to the call of the known, and an opportunity to intensify our experiences. The archive is therefore not representational; it is creative. The naming of something as an archive is not the end, but the beginning of a debate.

If archives are thought of as points of access to what count as evidence of past events, then what is at stake is precisely how certain film practices help us to locate and trace the changing ways in which we think about history and our access to it, and about how we may be able to transcend reified notions about our relationship to the past. The idea of

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13 Vivian Sobchack “Toward a Phenomenology of Non-Fictional Film Experience”, in Michael Renov and Jane Gaines (eds.), *Collecting Visible Evidence*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 241–254.

the “archive” in the context of film has been completely transformed and has now expanded in common parlance to include many kinds of collections; the term, “archival documents”, has become more complex and difficult to define. Instead of defining these documents in terms of the locations in which they have been stored, it may be more useful to think of them in terms of a new set of practices that constantly push us to think about questions of the control and ownership of the image and its reconstitution as ways in which the digital creates a rupture within the idea of history and memory. Ali Kazimi’s film, *Continuous Journey*, about the infamous Komagata Maru incident of 1914, is a case in point of the blurred boundaries between film, archives and invention. Working more or less with a handful of photographs, Kazimi animates these photographs and in the process, animates the possibilities of how we think of the archive and how film, just through panning and zooming in on a photograph, may itself become an archive of the residual.

#### OF LOVE AND TIME

In her reflections on the relationship between photography, cinema and the archive, Mary Anne Doane states that photography and film have a fundamental archival instinct embedded in them. And yet this archival nature is also ridden with paradox, because of the relationship of the moving image to the contingent.<sup>14</sup> Doane identifies the specificity of film in debates on archives, by observing that cinema is both a temporal technology as well as one whose material form is particularly susceptible to the vagaries of passing time. For Doane:

“The archive is a protection against time and its inevitable entropy and corruption, but with the introduction of film as an archival process, the task becomes that of preserving time, of preserving an experience of temporality, one that was never necessarily ‘lived’ but emerges as the counterdream of rationalization, its agonistic underside – full presence”<sup>15</sup>

Against a dominant paradigm of the rational ordering of time that shapes our temporal expectations in modernity, Doane suggests that chance and the contingent play a crucial ideological role of representing an outside, of suggesting that time is still allied with the free and indeterminable. Doane says:

“Contingency and ephemerality are produced as graspable and representable, but nevertheless antisystematic. The isolation of contingency as embodying the pure form of an

14 Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002.

15 Ibid., p. 223.

aspiration, a utopian desire, ignores the extent to which the structuring of contingency, as precisely asystematic, became the paradoxical basis of social stability in modernity. The presence of the contingent, the ephemeral, and the unintended are all aspects of cinematic time, and the challenge of the moving image as archive is the recovery of lost time, but within the cinematic”<sup>16</sup>.

If we compared the filmic moment with an older history of print history, we find many resonances. Adrian Johns, in his history of the book, argues against what has traditionally been seen as the ‘typographical fixity’ which was established by the print revolution. Earlier scholars had argued that scribal cultures were marked by all kinds of mistakes of the hand and the book was therefore not a stable object of knowledge until the emergence of print technology. Johns demonstrates the fallacy of this assumption by looking at the various conflicts that erupted with print technology, and far from ensuring fixity or authority, the early history of Printing was marked by uncertainty. For Johns, the authority of knowledge is not an inherent quality, but a transitive one. It is a question that cannot be divorced from technologies that alter our senses, our perception and our experience of knowledge. Rather than speaking about authority as something that is intrinsic to either a particular mode of production of knowledge or to any technological form, John’s work demonstrates how it would be more useful to consider the range of knowledge apparatuses which come into play to establish authority. Thus, the preconditions of knowledge cannot easily be made the object of knowledge. It is a matter of making evident or making known the structures of knowledge itself, which emerge in ways that provide definitive proof of the imperfectability of knowledge.

Similarly, while archives are apparatuses of time, which engage our experience and perception of time, the traditional understanding of an archive as a space that collects lost time, sees the experience of time as somehow being external to the archive itself. It loses sight of the fact that the archive is also where objects acquire their historical value as a result of being placed within an apparatus of time. The imagination of a video archive then plays with multiple senses of the unfolding of time. The recovery of the lost time of cinema and of the contingent can be captured through an experience of cinephilia, for what cinephilia names is the moment when the contingent takes on meaning – perhaps a private and idiosyncratic meaning, but one in which the love for the image expresses itself through a grappling with the ephemeral. Negri speaks in *Insurgencies* about the love of time. These registers, of love: of time, and of cinema,

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<sup>16</sup> Doane, p. 230.

allow us to think about the cinematic and archival apparatus of time, and the way they shape our relation to our time and the time of the image. The archive is therefore an apparatus of time, but its relation to time is not guaranteed or inherent, it is transitive and has to be grafted. The archive of the moving image grasps this problem in an erotic and sensuous fashion, grafting the experience of time as an act of love.

But if cinema holds the possibility of enabling access to the image in and of time, there is also a danger that this image may never materialize from the virtual realm that it exists in. From films that are made and never released, to films that have been lost and to films that are not accessible, the virtual archive of cinema remains an untapped potential. But cinema remains only one of the various possibilities of film – and we started with the mind-boggling fact that there are billion hours of videos produced annually, most of which is subsumed within the realm of information. Laura Marks makes a distinction between the world of the sensuous (to which images belong) and the rational bureaucratic (to which information belongs) and argues that in the regime of images, we witness a seismic shift from perceptual to information culture. Following Deleuze, she argues that all images exist within the realm of the virtual – a plane of potential – to emerge or to be subsumed into information, and while historically, all cultures have had ways to codify the perceptible, in order to discriminate in favor of those aspects of the world that are useful as information, Marks suggests that what is unprecedented in contemporary culture is the dominance of information as a plane that shapes what it is possible to perceive.

For an image to emerge from the plane of information, using a flowering metaphor, Marks says that it has to unfold and push through a plane of immanence, and this competing force is the source of the effect that accompanies every movement of unfolding, or refusal to unfold. But in addition to her question of where images come from, pertinent to our debate is, where do images go to if they do unfold from their plane of immanence? We have focused on the question of home and dwelling as tropes to think of the afterlife of images or their condemnation to the residual. If we were to return to Williams' suggestion of the emergent and think of it via the idea of unfolding, we get a picture of the archive as the realm of the virtual through which images are condemned unless they push through into the realm of the actual. This is very different from the self-description of archives as the repositories and the safe vaults that preserve the culture of the moving image. Henry Langlois, the father of archiving, argued that the best way to preserve films was to show them. For Langlois, "films are like Persian carpets, they have to be walked on".

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