

Cardiff and Miller's *Road Trip* (2004): Between Archive and Fiction¹



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RÉSUMÉ Ce texte se fonde sur une installation des artistes canadiens Cardiff et Miller afin de réfléchir sur la nature des liens archivistiques, et sur les possibilités de l'archive comme appareil littéraire. L'auteure y interprète *Road Trip* comme une forme d'archives qui crée des liens entre les diverses couches documentaires qui se manifestent avec le temps. Elle suggère que l'impact de cette œuvre provient des tensions entre les caractéristiques probantes et narratives des « documents » différents. Comme œuvre d'art, la nature interprétée de *Road Trip* et son pouvoir de susciter une réaction émotive sont évidents et intentionnels; néanmoins, ces qualités sont inhérentes à toutes les archives. Le fait que l'art détient ce pouvoir de susciter une réaction émotive nous rappelle le besoin d'être conscient des diverses couches de sens cachées et potentielles à l'intérieur des archives, ainsi que des liens multiples qui sont incarnés par les archives, ou encore, construits par elles.

ABSTRACT This paper uses an installation by the Canadian artists Cardiff and Miller to reflect on the nature of archival relationships and the possibilities of the archive as a fictional device. *Road Trip* is interpreted as a form of archive, creating relationships between different documentary layers that play out across time. It is suggested that the work's impact derives from the tensions between the evidentiary and the narrative characteristics of the different "documents." As an artwork, the constructed nature of *Road Trip* and its power to evoke an emotional response are obvious and intentional; nevertheless, these qualities are inherent in all archives. Art's power to move reminds us of the need to be aware of the latent and potential layers of meaning within archives and the multifarious relationships they both embody and construct.

1 This article is dedicated to the memory of Professor Nigel Whiteley of the University of Lancaster, England. I would like to thank Alex Drace-Francis, Stacy Boldrick, and my anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

Introduction

A darkened room. The familiar hum and whirl of a projector signal that a slide show has begun. The luminous images could be those of any family holiday: scenes of mountains, lakes and trees, although their faded colours transform blue skies to sunsets and glaciers to lava flows. Slide follows slide, landscape replaces landscape, click by click, punctuating a conversation between two participants, whose words provide both commentary and further clues from which the viewer/listener begins to construct meaning.²

J.: "OK, so this is the first one." [new slide]

G.: "I wonder what mountain that is."

J.: "Think it's ..."

G.: (interrupting): "Wintertime."

J.: "Looks almost like Cafalun." [new slide]

G.: "Now, *that* ... um, uh ... no idea." [new slide]

J.: "He'd a good sense of composition. Now, that one's an amazing shot." [new slide]

G.: "That looks like he's hiked up somewhere. That ... that can't be from the *road*." [new slide] That one's from the road. I think that's ... uh ..."

J.: "Whoops."

Road Trip as Artwork

This article takes as its starting point *Road Trip* (2004), an artwork by Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller. Typically, Cardiff and Miller's art takes the form of "installations": assemblages of objects, often including items whose age, prehistory or found status contributes to their evident meaningfulness (even if that meaning is not always readily apparent).³ Their works often include an aural dimension and may be experienced spatially by the viewer, who walks through or around the piece. For example, in their first collaborative piece, *The Dark Pool* (1995), everyday household items and more obscure mechanical equipment, including objects associated with transcription and transmission – such as a typewriter, books, aerials, functioning loudspeakers and, prefiguring their use in *Road Trip*, mounted 35 mm slides – are arranged to suggest a long-abandoned study, with a soundtrack of mysterious voices that responds to the movement of viewers through the piece.

2 The awkwardness of this construction has persuaded me to use the more conventional "viewer" hereafter, despite its elevation of the visual over the aural. The word "audience" reverses this prioritization, in lexicographical terms at least.

3 For further information on installations as an art form, see Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London and New York: Tate and Routledge, 2005).

Such works may also have an aspect of performance, with a clear beginning, middle, and end: for example, *Opera for a Small Room* (2005), which comprises a furnished cubicle filled with records, record players, and speakers, which automatically activate to perform a twenty-minute composition of samples from the recordings alongside the voice of their invisible operator. There is thus an experienced “reality,” but the artworks are usually concerned with using these apparent traces of reality to disorientate the viewer, to create stories and evoke other worlds.⁴

Cardiff and Miller are not conventionally identified as “archival” artists;⁵ instead, their work is normally defined in terms of its interest in narrative and fiction.⁶ Nevertheless, this article will suggest that it is the archival quality of *Road Trip*, being rooted in documents which are persuasively real, that imparts much of the work’s power. All of Cardiff and Miller’s work can be defined as “archival” in the sense intended by Hal Foster, but *Road Trip* is particularly resonant for those with a more specialist, professional understanding of the term, including ways possibly unintended by the artists. Foster’s definition talks of archives that are composed of material fragments, crying out for human interpretation, which represent creative starting points rather than the closed records of completed actions: it is potentially a more optimistic vision than possible interpretations of Derrida’s *Mal d’archive*.⁷ Although, as will be shown, death and a feverish quest are underlying themes of *Road Trip*, the piece also exemplifies other archival qualities particularly clearly, for it can be understood simultaneously as an evocation of the nature of documentary traces and their interrelatedness in the archive, the ways in which such traces may be experienced, and the process by which the relationship between trace and experience may be transformed into art. It therefore provides the opportunity for exploring the creative possibilities of the archive

4 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev has said of Janet Cardiff’s work, “In a way, your work is the reverse of virtual reality. It’s fiction coming into reality, not reality going into the fiction. It goes back and forth.” Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works Including Collaborations with George Bures Miller*, catalogue of an exhibition organized by PS1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY, October 2001–January 2002 (Long Island City, NY: PS1 Contemporary Art Center, 2001), 16.

5 As defined by Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” *October*, no. 110 (Fall 2004): 3–22.

6 See, for example, Fiona Bradley, Suzanne Cotter, and Andrew Nairne, “Foreword,” in *Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller: The House of Books Has No Windows*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 31 July–28 September 2008, and the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 14 October 2008–18 January 2009, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and Oxford: Fruitmarket Gallery and Museum of Modern Art, 2008), vol. 1, 6–8; and Fiona Bradley, “Storytelling: Recent Collaborative Installations by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller” in *ibid.*, 10–17.

7 Jacques Derrida, *Mal d’archive* (Paris: Galilée, 1995), translated into English by Eric Prenowitz as *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

as a narrative and/or fictional device.⁸

As an installation, *Road Trip* is a performance: the archival relationships unfold across time rather than across space, as would be the case with the traditionally ordered paper archive.⁹ In terms of describing the work, there is therefore the particular problem of interrogating a time-based event, which has no stable, permanent existence and is especially difficult to translate into a verbal description. My attempts to do so should be read with the understanding that it necessarily flattens the piece: I cannot attempt to replicate its experiential qualities; I can merely provide sufficient information to make certain aspects comprehensible to someone who has never experienced it and, I hope, to inspire readers to make their own acquaintance with this or similar works. This can most easily be done, albeit still in a mediated form, by means of the DVDs supplied with many of Cardiff and Miller's catalogues; for the purposes of this article, what I shall be describing is not the installation itself but its representation in the DVD supplied with the book *The Killing Machine and Other Stories 1995–2007*, edited by Ralf Beil and Bartomeu Marí, which accompanied the exhibition of the same name at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2 February–1 May 2007) and the Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (20 May–26 August 2007). I have chosen to refer primarily to the DVD rather than the artwork itself for reasons of accessibility, because to do so is a more accurate representation of my own research method and also because it is itself an artfully produced record, reinforcing my argument that the layering of documents is an essential aspect of Cardiff and Miller's work.

The objects from which *Road Trip* takes its physical form are a carousel, filled with slides, positioned on a stand. The installation is normally mounted within a small, white-walled room.¹⁰ The carousel rotates automatically, projecting images onto a screen. The images are typical of the genre of personal photographs, consisting of landscape scenes, mainly in Canada but including some American locations, interspersed with a few shots of celebratory events and domestic scenes. Chairs are arranged facing the screen; viewers can choose to sit to watch the slide show. At the same time as the slides are projected, a recorded dialogue between two voices is played in stereo, timed to coincide with the images on the screen. In its institutional setting, the "white

8 Similar issues are discussed from a filmmaker's perspective in Maree Delofski, "Storytelling and Archival Material in *The Trouble with Merle*," *The Moving Image* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 82–101.

9 The user of any archive, of course, experiences its contents in time as well as space, but outside the context of use (and ignoring electronic records), the relationships within and between archival items are experienced (and represented via descriptive practices) primarily in spatial terms.

10 The size of the room, 6 x 7 metres, is taken from the description of the piece on the artists' website, <http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/roadtrip.html> (accessed 30 July 2009).

cube” of the modern gallery, the performance is framed as a work of art, which the audience might therefore be expected to experience in a particular way, generally in a reverential silence.¹¹ The environment is controlled; the only likely variation from the experience intended by the artist is that, unlike a film in a cinema, there is no program. The installation runs on a continuous loop, and therefore audience members do not always enter the room at the beginning of the performance. Nevertheless, the quotations from *Road Trip* that form part of this article are arranged sequentially from the beginning.

The DVD version of the piece is, notionally at least, a record of a single performance, although the date, time, and place are unstated. If one has previously experienced the installation, it is clear when viewing the recorded version that the artists have taken care to differentiate the representation from the work itself: they are aware that the two are and should be different. As George Miller has observed, “... something I like about art is its physicality, and how we as physical beings interact and experience it. You can't convince me that you can really experience a painting by looking at it on a computer screen. I guess you get an idea of what it's about but you can't really experience it.... To me what we are trying to do is create an experience that you can't achieve in any other way.”¹² The DVD footage is shorter than the full performance, the introductory sequence having been omitted. What is missed before the opening words quoted above is the sound of the artists entering the room, bickering gently with each other and setting up a computer. Initially, the screen is blank and the audio recording acts as a *mise en scène*. As viewers of the DVD, however, we seem to come in late, behind other audience members who are already sitting down and who obstruct the view.¹³ As in a film, the title is presented in front of the action, rather than on a wall label as it would have been in the original art exhibition. Moreover, the piece is framed as a viewing of a slide show rather than as a slide show itself. Once the location has been established, with seated audience, the shot changes to a view of projector and screen. The importance of the technology of the viewing process is thus established, encouraging the viewer of the DVD to overlook the fact that what is being experienced is a digital representation of the work via a second screen. Only once full engagement with the totality of the piece can be assumed does

11 See Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica, CA: Lapis Press, 1986).

12 Quoted in Peter Traub, “Interview with Cardiff + Miller,” *Networked Music Review* (24 September 2007), http://transition.turbulence.org/networked_music_review/2007/09/20/interview-janet-cardiff-and-george-bures-miller/ (accessed 31 August 2008).

13 The artists had already explored this effect in *The Paradise Institute* (2001), about which Janet Cardiff said, “One of the ideas we had was how we both enjoyed coming into a movie halfway through. Late at night when you turn on the TV and there's a bad movie playing, you try to figure it out. It's sometimes much more interesting, especially with a lot of 'made-for-TV' movies.” Christov-Bakargiev, *Janet Cardiff: A Survey of Works*, 15.

the shot change to a full screen of the slides. However, their status as projected slides, rather than scanned images, is emphasized by the dust visibly dancing before them. Through conscious decisions taken by the artists, the viewer is kept aware that this is a record of the performance of a work of art, rather than the work itself, and that the work has a physical context: it “takes place.” What the artists cannot know, of course, are the circumstances in which the recorded performance may be viewed. In possession of the remote control, the individual viewer of the DVD is able to play the piece innumerable times, going backwards and forwards and freeze-framing in a way that the artists must have anticipated, but which they did not allow the audience of the original piece to do. As archivists, we are similarly unable to control, or even to know, the contexts in which users access the online resources we provide and the uses they may make of them: our consequent difficulties in providing the contextual information on which we have traditionally considered archival interpretation to depend makes this an archival challenge intensified by the digital age but also an opportunity for new interpretations to emerge.

Road Trip as Archive

- J.: “Whoops.” [previous slide]
 G.: “So ...” [previous slide] “Um ...” [previous slide] “I ...” [previous slide]
 “I think we should stop.” [previous slide] “I don’t think we should be doing this.”
 J.: “Doing what?”
 G.: “Going back and forth.”
 J.: “I didn’t mean to press the rewind button.”
 G.: “I thought the slides were going to be controlled in a way that we don’t have any control over them. Like, I thought they were going to be the bead of the piece. They have to be fairly consistent: ‘be boom, be boom.’ But I guess we can also ...”
 J.: “We’re not going to talk about every one anyways.” [new slide]
 (Pause) [new slide].

Road Trip creates relationships between a number of different but simultaneously experienced “documents” that contribute to its archival quality. In order to explore this aspect of the work, it is necessary to separate the different documentary layers, to discuss the individual nature of their evidential trace. In this section, it will be assumed that the documentary layers are what they purport to be, for it is our trust that documents will fulfil their ordained function as records, our belief in their authenticity and reliability, that gives them their power.

The documentary layer provided by the soundtrack is essential to our contextualization of the slides and therefore will be described first. Listening to the dialogue, it soon becomes obvious that the work is not simply a slide show

with commentary. Instead, the audio seems to be a recording of an earlier slide show as experienced by two previous viewers, who may be posited as Cardiff and Miller or their artistic alter egos, Janet and George.¹⁴ They are discussing the making of a work of art, which will involve the slides they (and the viewer) are seeing but whose final form has yet to be agreed upon (“We’re not going to talk about every one anyways”). It may be deduced from their conversation that this is not the first time the two artists have viewed the slides. Janet seems to have been responsible for the order in which they are being presented: it is she who accidentally reverses the sequence of slides (“Whoops”), and George later accuses her of having created a disorganized order, which he requires to be remedied; by using the passive voice (“Well, somehow they got out of order, OK?”), she seems to deny her responsibility. She has also become sufficiently familiar with the subject matter of the slides, having looked up one of the scenes – the statues of legendary figures Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox at Bemidji – on the Internet. But it is not the first time George has seen the slides either: when he asks how she knows the figures are at Bemidji, she replies, “There’s a sign, *remember?*”

In addition to the words spoken, the audio provides incidental information for the listener about the spatial setting of Janet and George’s slide show. The sound of the artists walking across the room gives some idea of its internal dimensions; the intrusive noise of children outside gives some sense of the external space. This space is clearly differentiated from that of the gallery, by contrast with some of Janet Cardiff’s sound walks, in which “The virtual recorded soundscape has to mimic the real physical one in order to create a new one as a seamless combination of the two.”¹⁵ All this enhances our sense that we are overhearing a genuine conversation, but via a recording, rather than a dialogue between invisible speakers. The artists are aware that *Road Trip* has a relationship with reality that is different from many of their other works: as Cardiff has claimed, “... it is all real, it’s us arguing about whatever.”¹⁶

14 The concept of an artistic alter ego should be compared with a narrative voice in literature, which is not necessarily that of the actual author. We are familiar with the conceit that enables a man to write in the first person as a woman or a modern author to write from the past or the future, or even, as in Alice Sebold’s *The Lovely Bones* (2002), from beyond the grave. This possibility has been explored less by artists, in part because of the emphasis on the authenticity of the personal artistic vision: it is more general to divide the very different works of artists like Picasso into periods (Blue, Rose, Cubist, etc.) than to fragment their personas. It is nevertheless a possibility explored by artists such as Jamie Shovlin (for example, the *Naomi V. Jelish Archive* (2004) and *Lustfaust* (2006)) and Walid Raad (works by The Atlas Group, from 1999). “Janet and George” are the artistic alter egos of Cardiff and Miller, who work both as individual artists and as a couple.

15 Quoted from Mirjam Schaub, *Janet Cardiff: The Walk Book* (Vienna: Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, c. 2005), 15.

16 Eva Scharer, “[Interview with] Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller,” *C: International Contemporary Art* (Fall 2005), 21.

According to the artists, the soundtrack originated in recordings of their conversations that they made as they looked through the slides in preparation for a different work, originally intended to have been a “huge piece” with a guitar sound instead of or in addition to the voices.¹⁷ The recordings both documented and played an active part in the artists’ working process; they were created as an alternative or additional record, besides the paper notes that often form part of Cardiff and Miller’s artworks and their mediation via catalogues and websites. How documents and “studio-works” of all kinds function within the creative process is something that art historians have only recently begun to consider,¹⁸ and the potential significance of artists’ archives as a genre is also a relatively new area of concern.¹⁹ When listening to the conversation between Janet and George, viewers find themselves playing the role of an art historian or critic, trying to interpret the relationship between a sketch and the finished work, although according to the logic of the dialogue, the final version does not (yet) exist and there are few clues to its intended form. Documenting the creation of an artwork is not uncommon: one thinks, for example, of the photographs and films of Jackson Pollock’s action paintings, the recordings of Yves Klein’s *Events*, or Robert Smithson’s documentary film about the construction of his *Spiral Jetty* in 1970. And as the artist Tacita Dean reminded listeners to her 1997 soundwork *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty*, Smithson’s documentation is generally the primary means by which the artwork, now submerged beneath the waters of the Great Salt Lake, is experienced. In *Road Trip* (as in *Trying to Find the Spiral Jetty*), the documentation has subsequently *become* the artwork itself. But, as already suggested, the recorded conversation presents itself as a preliminary stage, rather than as a finished piece of art in its own right.²⁰ *Road Trip* blurs the distinction between art and documentation: had Cardiff and Miller not identified their original recordings as “art,” they might either have been lost once their purpose had been served or retained in the artists’ archive.

17 Scharrer, “[Interview...],” 21.

18 The concept of the “studio-work” is taken from Briony Fer, *Eva Hesse Studiowork*, published in association with an exhibition at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; the Camden Arts Centre, London; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, University of California, 2009–2011 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). In terms of artists’ archives, the curatorial division between paper and non-paper is often artificial. The role of documentation in the creative process has been considered by the Visual Intelligence Research Project, University of Lancaster, <http://www.visualintelligences.com/> (accessed 30 July 2009). A conference associated with the project has been published in the *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 6, no. 3 (2007).

19 This issue was the subject of a one-day symposium entitled “Archiving the Artist,” organized by the Tate in collaboration with ARLIS (the Art Libraries Society) on 12 June 2009.

20 As Scharrer suggests, “In ... *Road Trip* ... apparently you make that working process transparent, so that it actually becomes the work.” Scharrer, “[Interview...],” 21.

According to catalogues and the artists' website, the starting point for the studio-work (and thus eventually the artwork) was the discovery by the artists of a carousel of slides that had originally belonged to George's grandfather.²¹ That the photographer was a third person, a man, is quickly established ("He'd a good sense of composition"). "Found photographs" are a well-established artistic genre, often identified as an "archival" practice by those who consider archives to be coterminous with collections of "old stuff,"²² and found objects regularly recur within Cardiff and Miller's work, both as physical collections (as in *Opera for a Small Room*, inspired by a huge collection of old records acquired at a yard sale) and as narrative themes (as in Janet Cardiff's *Her Long Black Hair* (2004), whose "plot" depends on a found photograph of a mysterious dark-haired woman). Nevertheless, the circumstances of this discovery add another documentary dimension to the piece. Not only are the slides real objects, but they are also a series with a premeditated order, intended as a means of communication. They are a form of archive as might be understood by a professional archivist, with identifiable content, context, and structure. Moreover, that the slides were said to have been found in a carousel, rather than in a box, suggests a previous slide show, constructed by someone other than the artists, for an uncertain purpose, although it may be inferred that, like the slides, the slide show was created by George's grandfather. Most viewers at the present time would be sufficiently familiar with the social codes of a slide show to contextualize the original performance as a family occasion, with the slides providing the opportunity for describing and/or recollecting the occasions and circumstances in which the photographs were taken. Viewing family photographs is as much an oral experience as a visual one: this has been argued in the case of photograph albums,²³ but surely this is even truer of slide shows due to their more explicitly performative nature. In addition, slides tend to be a "male" form of photography; they

21 Description of the piece on the artists' website, <http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/roadtrip.html> (accessed 30 July 2009).

22 See Mark Godfrey, "Photographs Lost and Found: On Tacita Dean's *Floh*," *October*, no. 114 (Fall 2005): 90–119. An online exhibition of found photographs was inspired by a find by Frederic Bonn and Zoe Deleu in 1998: Frederic Bonn, "Look at Me: A Collection of Found Photographs," <http://www.moderna.org/lookatme/index.php> (accessed 30 July 2009). There is also a large number of found photographs on photograph sharing sites such as Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>); a search on "found photographs" on 30 July 2009 yielded 4,679 results.

23 See in particular Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), and Deborah Chambers, "Family as Place: Family Photograph Albums and the Domestication of Public and Private Space," in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London and New York: I.B.Taurus, 2003): 96–114.

are more often taken by men and involve a more technical and public mode of viewing.²⁴

The archive of the slide show is composed of a number of individual transparencies, each the record of a single moment in time. The slides themselves contain very little information regarding the context of their creation; their metadata – titles written on the mounts – record places, and their faded appearance and the differences between different film stocks contain clues as to dating, both actual and relative, but little else can be gleaned. As a series of very quotidian images taken by an individual of little historical significance, on their own they would doubtless be rejected by any currently recognized process of archival appraisal. They provide little evidence for the motivation that prompted the taking of the photographs in the first place, in this case the impetus that drove George's grandfather to capture his experiences via 35 mm exposures. Throughout the slide show, the photographer is an absent presence. Presumed to be the creator of most of the images, he is always there: a photograph is always a record of a direct physical relationship between the subject and the photographer ("That looks like he's hiked up somewhere"). But except in one possible instance, the photographer is always invisible, out of the frame.²⁵

Personal photographs should perhaps be considered not so much as records but rather as indexing points that provide access to the memories of their creator, a form of personalized finding aid. This is true of all mementoes, of course, but most personal photographs are deliberately taken for this reason, whereas other mementoes (ticket stubs, postcards, programs) are often repurposed ephemera. The very act of taking a photograph marks a place, an event, or a person as worthy of commemoration. Their indexical relationship is to a specific place or person at a particular point in time, whose image is captured in the photograph but whose *meaning* to the photographer cannot be captured through the same means. Once the living link to the creator or to the human subject of the photograph is broken, photographs become the index to an unmediated text that has been lost forever. Without the photographer's presence as narrator, the images are no longer able to tell his story, and no matter how much detective work is undertaken by the viewer, the subjective

24 Deborah Chambers, "Family as Place," 108.

25 This is an experience noted and employed by Janet Cardiff in her 2000 audio walk *Taking Pictures*, which used still photographs as an evocation of memory. The following excerpts from the script show the similarity between the works of the themes explored: "I remember when I was here before, in the fall, sightseeing with my mother. I brought my camera with me to remind myself of our visit." "Stop. Look at the next photo. Number 2. Hold it up. Move your eyes back and forth from one reality to another. The leaves are different on the tree at the right. In the photo they're red. The grass is brown." "I flip through the photographs looking for a picture of my mother on that trip. But there isn't any. She was always standing outside the frame." Quoted from Mirjam Schaub, *Janet Cardiff*, 290.

experience of George's grandfather is no longer accessible through his photographs.

The gap between information and meaning underlies much of Cardiff and Miller's work, with its obsession with books and other equipment for eliciting, transcribing, and transmitting data. Many of Cardiff and Miller's works play with the sense of mystery to create a *film noir* atmosphere suggestive of unspoken crimes. Because the notional original inhabitants of the spaces constructed by works such as *The Dark Pool* and *Opera for a Small Room* are missing, the meanings the objects held for them become "a part of history that can never be fully explained."²⁶ Herein lies the gap between record and recall, between archive and memory. This, of course, is one of the endlessly fascinating qualities of an archive: the perpetual tension between what is recorded and what is left out. *Road Trip* explores this tension with particular poignancy because of the autobiographical element and the more indexical status of both audio and slides. The audio relates to identifiable speakers, apparently having a real conversation in which the viewer is not a party (it is a conceit of many of Cardiff and Miller's works that the viewer is either directly addressed or is listening in on a conversation taking place at the time of viewing, giving an immediacy that is absent from *Road Trip*). The slides are presented as the creation of an identified person, whom viewers can accept as having had an existence beyond the realm of the artwork, yet they cannot confirm the "myth history" about him, told to George by his parents.²⁷ One of the persuasive fictions of the archive is that it can re-present the past; as the collection of slides suggests, however, the past as experience inevitably eludes the past's traces.

***Road Trip* as Narrative**

G.: "Pull it out. See if there's a label." [removes slide]

J.: "Yeah, it says 'Athabasca Falls.'"²⁸

G.: "Huh!"

J.: "Do you know where that is?"

G.: "No, I don't have a clue where that is." [replaces slide]

J.: "Let's see. The next one says 'Mount Robson.' The next one says 'Mount Fraser.' That's in B.C."

G.: "Yeah."

26 Catherine Crowston, curator's note on *The Dark Pool* as exhibited at the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff (1995), available at <http://www.banffcentre.ca/wpg/nmsc/DarkPool/index.html> (accessed 29 July 2011).

27 "I never knew my grandfather, but I had all this history, myth history about him, you know, what your parents tell you about somebody you've never known." Quoted in Scharrer, "[Interview...]," 21.

28 My thanks go to Pat Bovey for identifying this location. Athabasca Falls is south of Jasper, AB, in the Rocky Mountains.

J.: "So he must have been out in Vancouver." [new slide]
 G.: "Yeah."

Archival meaning is discovered in the connections between documents, in the relationships between them. "Facts," such as the identifications of the images, and like the slides in which they are embodied, are not themselves equivalent to meaning; facts are isolated, whereas meaning can be unfolded, like a story, and narrated.²⁹ *Road Trip* contains four dominant narratives, whose different strands slowly reveal themselves: that of the images themselves, that of the road trip, that of the construction of an artwork, and that of the two artists, both as creators and as a couple. In addition, the active role the viewer is encouraged to play in interpreting the work encourages her to add her own meanings, making the piece evolve with each viewing.

According to the 2008 catalogue description, the soundtrack of *Road Trip* is not a single conversation but a "script," created as a montage from the real recordings described above.³⁰ It was only when Cardiff and Miller listened to the recordings alongside the slides that they realized the combination could succeed as a work in its own right, after which additional conversations were recorded to supplement the original working documents.³¹ The piece therefore has its origins in the juxtaposition of various "ready-made" or "found" works³² – the original recordings and the slides – but the audio is a ready-made work that has been remade: the voice-over is heavily edited and includes secondary recordings purposely created as part of the artwork, thus giving it a fictile, if not fictive, quality. Every aspect of the piece must therefore be viewed as a deliberate construction, intended either to persuade or disorientate.³³ Nevertheless, *Road Trip's* documentary qualities described above mean that the ambiguity is less mischievous than in many of Cardiff and Miller's other works: rather, it brings a heightened sense of the possibility that the meanings, even of authentic (or apparently authentic) documents, may be uncertain and contested. Much of the more informative content of the original conversations is said to have been cut in order "to leave enough space for people to think and wonder, and not give it all away, basically."³⁴ The narratives are more powerful for being implied, because the viewers have to work to try to figure

29 John Berger, "Appearances," in John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Vintage, 1995): 81–129, see especially p. 89.

30 Scharrer, "[Interview...]," 21.

31 Bradley, "Storytelling," 13. See also Scharrer, "[Interview...]," 21.

32 A "found" work can be defined as an artwork identified as such after its creation for another purpose, similar to Marcel Duchamp's famous urinal. This is slightly different from "found" photographs, which are literally photographs that have been found outside their context of creation.

33 Scharrer, "[Interview...]," 18–21.

34 Scharrer, "[Interview...]," 21.

them out, but they are persuaded to do this in part because of a belief that the narratives are not purely fictional.

The slides were also allegedly a “found” work, but there is no independent evidence of this (and it is irrelevant to the experience of the artwork, since the discovery is not mentioned in the dialogue). The use of the word “carousel” in the artists’ description, rather than “slide tray,” suggests a circular, revolving holder, and that is what is “reproduced” in the installation, presumably with the intention of evoking the experience of the slide show, whether the one to which the sequence of slides first belonged or the one viewed by Cardiff and Miller when conceiving the piece. But at the end of the artists’ viewing, as documented by their words, a computer is turned off, suggesting that the computer-controlled projector, which includes the robotic removal of the slides, has already been created (and hence that the implication of the script – that this is how the future work *will* operate – is a fiction). However, if the slides were genuinely found in a carousel, they cannot have been put there by George’s grandfather: we are told that he died before George was born, which was in 1960 (assuming that George’s birth occurred in the same year as Miller’s), and the first rotating carousel was not introduced until the early 1960s.³⁵ In their carousel, the slides were a partial (because unnarrated) record of an original slide show, whose creator, purpose, and audience is unknown, and the artists show no interest in this aspect of the slides’ history. Indeed, it is possible that they were/are unaware of the chronological impossibility inherent in their installation. The slides equally tell a very partial story: like most personal photographs, they focus on leisure events and the depiction of a happy family at home, regardless of whether these represent life as it was normally experienced by any of the participants.

Patricia Holland has divided the viewers of personal photographs into “users” and “readers,” thus distinguishing between those who know the original context in which the photograph was taken and those who have no access to this private knowledge and have to rely on more public codes of signification.³⁶ The “public codes” of the images include their classification by subject matter, described by the artists and immediately obvious to the viewer (“the water shots,” “the ones on the Fraser River”), by film stock (“the blue film”), and by their identification as amateur or commercial slides (“This

35 1961, according to Darsie Alexander (ed.), *Slideshow*. Publication in conjunction with a travelling exhibition of the same name organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland, 27 February 2005–8 January 2006 (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), 19; and McKeever, “A Brief History of Slide Projectors,” <http://resources.kodak.com/support/pdf/en/manuals/slideProj/history.pdf> (accessed 13 April 2012).

36 Patricia Holland, “Sweet It Is to Scan...: Personal Photographs and Popular Photography” in Liz Wells (ed.), *Photography: a Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 114–158, see especially p. 118.

one I imagine he must have bought”). They also allow reference to other, remembered, images – as George points out, “the guy there, it’s almost like an image from a Hitchcock film.” Janet confirms that these are allusions they share as a couple: “Yeah, like the *39 Steps* or something.”

By titling the piece *Road Trip*, the artists deliberately linked the narrative to the genre of road movies, with their traditional male focus and theme of a search for enlightenment. The medium of film provides a metaphor for road travel (the roll of film like the rolling road) and, through tracking shots, reproduces the experience of the continuous vista framed by the car window. However, the staccato rhythm of a slide show represents discontinuity, with photographs that could only be taken from a stationary car. The discontinuity is emphasized by the momentary blank screen between the changing of the slides; nevertheless, George states that the intention is for the slide show to have a regular rhythm, with the slide changes occurring automatically – “be boom, be boom” – like a heartbeat. From the start, the relationship between the photographer and the road is established, but we do not know at first who the driver is, nor where he is going.

From the opening words (see the initial excerpt), it also becomes evident that each of the speakers has a different relationship to the slides and is using them as the vehicle for rather different narratives. For Janet, who operates primarily as a “reader,” the slides are in the first instance signifiers of their own aesthetic status. Her comments situate her as an artist, able to comment on the pictorial merits of individual shots. George, however, generally tries to relate the photographs to their external reference points, both geographical and temporal, and to the context of their creation. The position of the photographer in relation to the scene has for him a significance whose rationale is only gradually revealed.

J.: “The water shots are great.”

G.: “That’s like he’s out on the water.”

J.: “Yeah, like he’s in a canoe. Look, there’s a canoe in the shot, too.”
[new slide]

G.: “This must be all around Banff. I was told (pause) that he loved Banff.” [new slide].

The melancholy of this statement is not immediately apparent, neither to Janet nor the audience, just as George’s discomfort at the reversal of the slide order is initially puzzling. As the piece progresses, however, the listener comes to understand that George has an emotional investment in the slides as potential evidence for the life story and personality of his grandfather. He is trying to access the slides as a “user” but with varied degrees of success.

- G.: "Well, his son lived in Vancouver. So he might have been driving through the mountains to Calgary." [new slide] "Now, that's great – the out-of-focus quality."
- J.: "Yeah, this is one of the ones on the Fraser River, I think." [new slide] "Did he ever hike with other people?"
- G.: "I ... I don't know. I never knew him." [new slide] "He died before I was born."
- J.: "Oh, he did? I didn't know that – I didn't know that you hadn't met your grandfather." [new slide]

George, in particular, is concerned about identifying the subject matter of the images. The script provides a record of his experience of looking: the first slide (first quotation) is recognized as a mountain – there is an initial iconic understanding of the subject matter, but its specific identity, its indexed referent, is at first unknown. Looking at photographs is often said to be an instantaneous experience, by contrast with the way in which paintings are viewed.³⁷ However, it is clear from this example that the experience of looking at even a snapshot can change over time, as the image develops in the eyes of the viewer from that of a mountain to that of a mountain in winter to that of Mount Cafalun in winter. Identification of unfamiliar landscapes is sufficiently important for George to want to stop the slide show to look at the labels, despite his concern, voiced at other times, about breaking the rhythm and sequence of the performance. It is as though he hopes the factuality of the information derived from the slides will reinforce their value in terms of the meaning he seeks to find in them. Moreover, through reading the images topographically he becomes a "user" of the images, for he can identify many of the scenes on the basis of personal experience. Although the indexical relationship is to a view captured by another, many of the views are familiar to both artists, and they are able to supply the identification on the basis of their own visual memories – a melding of the photographer's and the viewers' autotopographies.³⁸

That the images were viewed as records of places by their creator is suggested by their labelling, although in some cases the labelling is tautological: "Home, autumn" and "Home, winter" are noted as the descriptions of two of the slides and are presumably intended as indexical identifiers rather than symbolic evocations of the idea of home across the seasons; however, "home" as the identification of a particular place is meaningless to anyone who does

37 See comments by David Hockney, discussed in Clive Scott, *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 219–23.

38 The concept of the spatialization of identity is drawn from Jennifer A. González, "Autotopographies," in Gabriel Brahm Jr. and Mark Driscoll (eds.), *Prosthetic Territories: Politics and Hypertechnologies* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995): 133–50. However, in this article, the term is associated primarily with domestic interior spaces and objects.

not already know where that “home” is. There is, however, no evidence that the slides are *genuinely* a record of a single road trip, even less that this was the momentous trip taken by George’s grandparents from Calgary to New York to seek the advice of an oncologist regarding the Hodgkin’s lymphoma from which we infer his grandfather died, although the images of New York are proof that their unknown photographer had been to the city.³⁹ We do not know whether these were originally the final slides: certainly the previous sequence of images disrupts George’s own understanding of the probable route between his grandfather’s home in Calgary and his destination, although the two artists’ discussion of the trip is timed to coincide with a slide showing a road and a car, subliminally authenticating their response. As John Berger has written:

In the relation between a photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it. The photograph, irrefutable as evidence but weak in meaning, is given a meaning by the words. And the words, which by themselves remain at the level of generalisation, are given specific authenticity by the irrefutability of the photograph.⁴⁰

The geographical improbability that the slides are a genuine record of George’s grandfather’s actual road trip is perhaps the most obvious signal (for a Canadian audience at least) that all may not be what it seems; for those unfamiliar with the locations of the places mentioned, a clue is offered when George deliberately reorders the slides in order to force them to respect the route he believed his grandfather would have taken. Likewise the inconsistent discoloration and varied authorship of the slides throw doubt on whether they might all have been taken as part of one trip, for there is no apparent chronological pattern to the different film stocks.

Most genealogical research begins with a desire for self-discovery: in trying to find out more about his grandfather, George is seeking greater understanding of himself. Since none of the slides records events at which George was present, his interpretation is not primarily an act of memory but what Marianne Hirsch has called “postmemory,” differentiated from history by personal connection and, it may be posited, from social or cultural memory by its individualized nature.⁴¹ Not having George’s emotional investment in the slides as evidential trace, other viewers may doubt that the slides will be able

39 According to an interview, the artists decided to omit information about “what actually happened” to George’s grandfather. Scharer, “[Interview...],” 21.

40 Berger, “Appearances,” 92.

41 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), see especially p. 22. See also Joan Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2007), 73–95.

to provide him with the understanding he is seeking, and towards the end of the piece, he seems to come to this recognition for himself. In their new order, the slides narrate a route George says he knows, making the images trace his own journey. But having created the new narrative, he starts to muse over the role of photography and its associations with both control and loss:

G.: "It's funny 'cause I remember when my dad ... my dad, when we ... when I was about nine, started taking all kinds of pictures of us and, uh, I think it was just when he was having an affair and was just about to leave us. Now he, he'd started shooting all these pictures. No, I don't know, maybe there's something about photos that, like, what is it? He's not in any of the photos ..."

His grandfather is not in them, nor can he be accessed through them.

As it becomes obvious that the images cannot help him in his personal quest to know his grandfather, George is moved to reflect on another loss in his life. The very presence, and thus presentness, of photographs makes their absences all the more traumatic, particularly when we expect to find something that, on examination, turns out not to be there.⁴² The potential confusion of presentness and pastness in a photograph is suggested by the language used in the script when a scene is identified; for example, "That's Quebec City" – *is*, not *was*. The *Road Trip* slides are images that, inevitably, are now viewed historically. In the shots of New York, the modern viewer instinctively scans the skyline for the twin towers of the World Trade Center, despite knowing that they had not yet been built when the photographs were taken. An awareness of chronological change, of the potential value of the images as historical documents, is suggested by Janet's explanation of the shot of the Blue Ox, which she had found as a modern image on the Internet. The statue is still there, but "Now there's trees behind." The act of comparing the two images makes their relationship a documentation of change.

Some scenes do not require personal experience to be identifiable: doubtless most viewers of the installation would be able to recognize Niagara Falls and New York. These images are so famous that they have become iconic, even symbolic. When one visits New York, it is almost obligatory to take a picture of the New York skyline, an essential element of the iconography of the city. For viewers who have visited New York themselves, these images may act as an index to their own memories. The same phenomenon is found on a number of community and photographic archive websites, whose

42 This phenomenon is discussed in relation to the photographic record of another traumatic journey, the escape of a Jewish family from Nazi Europe, during which his grandfather died, by L. Spitzer, "The Album and the Crossing," in Marianne Hirsch (ed.), *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 208–20.

Web 2.0 functionality allows users to associate their own memories with images submitted by others. That strangers' snapshots may also be used to tell one's own story has been explored by artist Lorie Novak in her *Collected Visions* project, which enabled users of the "archive" to write, design, and submit photo essays for exhibition on the project's website; many used photographs already on the site, rather than those belonging to the authors of the essays.⁴³ Indeed, it has been suggested that while "our own photographs tend to limit us to externalized and archival memory" – in other words, to a well-worn and established narrative – other people's photographs may act as a trigger to involuntary memories, the more powerful for being unexpected.⁴⁴ They may also encourage the play of the imagination, both in remembering and in constructing unremembered, entirely fictional, narratives.

The ability of both art and archives to evoke a personal response (and thus to function as a means of fashioning selfhood) is one that may best be recognized by reflecting on personal experience. For me that was emphasized when I first experienced *Road Trip* at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, in August 2008; I soon found myself conscious of three different positions from which I was engaged. My academic background is as an art historian, and I thus have an acquired tendency to seek to situate any artwork within a tradition: to identify (or construct) relationships with other artworks or with a context of production/reception. As I viewed the work, I was reminded of the visual codes and connotations of the road trip in film and literature, of other slide-based installations, other interrogations of family photographs, other audio-visual artworks, and other pieces by Cardiff and Miller. In my professional role as an archivist, I was particularly interested in the nature of the record(s) presented by the work. And on a personal level, I was touched by George's grandfather's story. A close friend had recently been diagnosed with leukemia and was, at that time, in hospital, forbidden to see anyone but immediate family, unable to communicate with the outside world. I had gone to Edinburgh to try to distract myself from the worry caused by my inevitable ignorance of his condition and prognosis. As an art historian, therefore, I could identify with Janet; as a friend, I could empathize with George. Because of these personal resonances, I entered into a relationship with the artwork that was more individualized than my appreciation of the other works on display, despite my sense that some of these were more "typical," or even, in the eyes of critics, more "important."

43 Lorie Novak, "Collected Visions," in Hirsch, *The Familial Gaze*, 14–31.

44 Scott, *The Spoken Image*, 236–7.

Archive as Fiction

My own identity as an archivist added a further layer of meaning probably not anticipated by the artists: schooled to sanctify “original order,” for example, I flinched at the casual admission that the slides had got out of order, at their reordering and the implied imposition of a story line to match George’s experience, rather than the intentions of whoever had ordered the slides in the first place.⁴⁵ As the interrogation of the nature of the record in the first part of this article suggested, it is the meanings of the slides for their creator – those prioritized by the archivist – that most easily become the least accessible, and so our documentary and descriptive practices all aim to preserve these “original” meanings. Yet even with inadequate metadata, the slides still have potential significance, and via the artwork the viewer becomes party to a representation of the developing meanings of the slides to the speakers, Janet and George, in both personal and artistic terms. That this representation is an artfully constructed one is obvious; it is scripted to encourage the audience to play detective in trying to understand the stories behind both the slides and the slide show. Yet the truths that underpin the artwork are not just the authenticity (or otherwise) of the records and their (questionable) reliability as evidence but, above all, their resonance with truths that are personal to the viewer.

For an archivist, *Road Trip* provides a good illustration of the layers of signification that we habitually overlook, those which have little to do with the inherent or intended informational content of the archive and the context of its original creation and pre-consignation use, but much to do with what the user brings to the archive, what comes in from outside and over which we (and the original creators) necessarily have little control. It has become a commonplace in archival theory to seek to restore the archivist to her position as “co-creator” of the archive;⁴⁶ where perhaps we remain less comfortable is in recognizing that our users are also co-creators.⁴⁷ Where this has been recognized – for example, in the University of Michigan’s Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections – we have generally sought to capture user knowledge in

45 The significance of the principle of “original order” to the professional identity of an archivist is underlined, rather than undermined, by ongoing discussion of its relevance to personal recordkeeping, for which see Jennifer Meehan, “Rethinking Original Order and Personal Records,” *Archivaria* 70 (Fall 2010): 27–44, and literature cited therein.

46 The co-creation concept has been discussed by *inter alia*: Terry Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives,” *Archivaria* 51 (2001): 14–35; Elisabeth Kaplan, “‘Many Paths to Partial Truths’: Archives, Anthropology and the Power of Representation,” *Archival Science* 2, nos. 3–4 (September 2002): 209–220, see especially p. 216; and Tom Nesmith, “Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives,” *American Archivist* 65, no. 1 (2002): 24–41, see especially pp. 26–27, 31.

47 A notable but not unique exception is Eric Ketelaar, “Archives as Spaces of Memory,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29, no. 1 (2008): 9–27.

order to supplement our descriptions; we turn our users into quasi-archivists.⁴⁸ We are only now beginning to work with the creators and users of archives, either pre- or post-accession, to capture their experiences in relation to the documents, to capture meanings beyond the strictly informational.⁴⁹ The press release (and consequent press coverage) of the UK National Archives' online exhibition *Africa Through a Lens* tended to centre on the informational aspect: that users might be able to identify individuals not named in the original photograph captions, but the project has also encouraged users to document personal memories.⁵⁰ The methodology of the UK project Revisiting Collections has suggested that in order to obtain such user input, archivists need to be proactive in encouraging user engagement: merely providing a space does not ensure that it will be utilized.⁵¹ That these methods have been in part based on models evolved in a museum setting perhaps indicates why this is an area in which "archival" artists have perhaps been more active: for example, in *Housed Memory* (2000–2005), Uriel Orlow filmed the shelves of the Wiener Library in London, overlaid with a soundtrack of users describing what the content of the books and boxes meant to them.⁵² A similarly oral/archival project was undertaken by Jeremy Deller in *The English Civil War Part II: The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), in which he encouraged participants in the Miners' Strike to donate to the project ephemeral documents, such as flyers and protest song lyrics, and recorded oral testimonies about their experiences; he also filmed a re-enactment of one of the most bitter confrontations between pickets and police, seeking to re-evaluate its meaning for the direct participants, both past and present, and to explore the interventionist role of

48 Magia Ghetu Krause and Elizabeth Yakel, "Interaction in Virtual Archives: The Polar Bear Expedition Digital Collections Next Generation Finding Aid," *American Archivist* 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 282–314, see especially p. 285. These projects embody the ideals discussed by Michelle Light and Tom Hyry, "Colophons and Annotations: New Directions for the Finding Aid," *American Archivist* 65 (Fall/Winter 2002): 216–30, and by Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrative Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 263–85.

49 A rare example is described in Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections," *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 87–101.

50 The National Archives, "Online Exhibitions," *Africa Through a Lens*, images from the photographic collection of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, The National Archives, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/africa/> (accessed 16 January 2012); The National Archives, press release, 10 February 2011, "Africa Through a Lens: The Colonial Office Photographic Collection," <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/press-release-africa.pdf> (accessed 16 January 2012).

51 Collections Link, Programs, "Revisiting Collections," Collections Trust, <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/programmes/revisiting-collections> (accessed 16 January 2012).

52 Michael Newman, "Archive, Testimony, and Trace: Uriel Orlow's Housed Memory," in Uriel Orlow, *Deposits* (Berlin and Zurich: The Green Box, 2006): 65–83.

media coverage in constructing both representation and meaning.⁵³

One factor that emerges from examining these types of projects is the importance of different technologies of recording and representation in enabling some of the possible meanings of records to be created, captured, and articulated. As archivists, we identify the archive as an essentially relational entity, providing meaning through the connections between its documentary contents. It seems possible, therefore, that the more varied the potential relationships within an archive are, extending across time, space, agencies and media, the richer the possibilities for the construction of the meanings that keep archives alive. We have tended to view oral history and documentary projects as means of archiving that which might otherwise go unrecorded, as an alternative to the traditional institutional archive. We might, however, consider the potential of using these and other techniques to add other layers, other voices, other possibilities to traditional archives, thus providing opportunities for different meanings to be communicated or created.⁵⁴ This is one of the ideals of “enhanced curation,” but it is an ideal whose practical implications are only starting to be explored.⁵⁵ We also need to think in terms of meaning-rich archives, as well as information-rich ones,⁵⁶ remembering that meaning may reside as much in what is left out (both from the archive and from its interpretation) as in what is included: as Miller said of *Road Trip*, “we cut out a lot of the story, because we wanted to be more subtle, and let the pictures tell the story.”⁵⁷ By thinking not only of “non-traditional” users but also of “non-traditional uses,” including the fictional, the creative, the playful, or

53 Jeremy Deller, *The English Civil War Part II: Personal Accounts of the 1984–85 Miners’ Strike* (London: Artangel, 2002). The film of the re-enactment on 17 June 2001, directed by Mike Figgis, was shown on Channel 4 in the UK and is available as a DVD or can be downloaded from http://www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/bigart/gallery_5_gallery_6.html (accessed 30 July 2009).

54 “Legacy items especially might need special forms of elaboration to give them context in the longer term”: David Kirk and Abigail Sellen, “On Human Remains: Excavating the Home Archive,” Microsoft Research Report MSR-TR-2008-85 (2008), <http://research.microsoft.com/apps/pubs/default.aspx?id=70595> (accessed 22 March 2011), p. 9.

55 See Jeremy Leighton John, “The Future of Saving Our Past,” *Nature* 459 (11 June 2009): 775–76. That descriptive practices need to be rethought in order to enrich the contextualization of archives has also been argued by Chris Hurley, “Parallel Provenance: (1) What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?” *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (2005): 110–45.

56 Foster’s ideal of archival art is that it should “turn belatedness into becomingness, to recoup failed visions in art, literature, philosophy, and everyday life into possible scenarios of alternative kinds of social relations, to transform the no-place of the archive into the no-place of a utopia.” Foster, “Archival Impulse,” p. 22. A similar liberatory ideal, with emphasis on the user, was expressed by Duff and Harris in “Stories and Names.” This emphasis on future potential and added meanings gives a different emphasis to the equally welcome emphasis on existing (but not necessarily recorded or communicated) knowledge/information in Tom Nesmith, “Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice,” *Archivaria* 60 (2005): 259–74.

57 Scharer, “[Interview...],” 21.

the disruptive, we may also be led to value alternative resources, which might otherwise be dismissed as ephemeral.

The source material used by Cardiff and Miller could be found in almost any attic; the online resources of sites such as Facebook, Flickr and any number of community archives throw up countless images virtually identical to the slides of *Road Trip*, titled, tagged, and often provided with their own descriptive commentary by both creators and viewers. Through these tools, we are now all our own artists and archivists.⁵⁸ Historically, recordkeepers have maintained institutional archives, while many historians have tried to read “against the grain” of these records, to discover the individual. Current record creation, however, probably reverses this situation: as *individuals* we probably generate as many, if not more, documents than we do via our corporate identities, with images being a particular growth area.⁵⁹ If we are anything like George’s grandfather, however, few of our personal documents will provide much in the way of traditional evidence for genealogists or biographers. As Holland has written, “although such ghostly hints of other lives may tempt the reader to engage in the detective project and to construct stories from these tentative clues, the empirical historian would do well to treat them with extreme caution.”⁶⁰ Archivists worry about whether these items may be kept at all (cloud computing, for example, puts such records beyond traditional web-archiving initiatives) – but beyond this problem, will they prove worth keeping?

Conclusion

Archivists have generally welcomed the growing recognition of the importance of archives as touchstones of memory. *Road Trip*, however, disrupts any simplistic view that documents, which externalize memories, can be the key to the internal memories – and thus the identities – of their creators. Most discussion of the posthumous archiving of personal digital data is based on the belief that it offers the potential for a more complete and accurate record

58 See Peter Williams, Jeremy Leighton John, and Ian Rowland, “The Personal Curation of Digital Objects: A Lifecycle Approach,” *Aslib Proceedings* 61, no. 4 (2009): 340–63.

59 In 2007, it was predicted that 70 percent of the digital universe would be created by individuals in 2010: John F. Ganz, et al., *The Expanding Digital Universe: An Updated Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth Through 2010*, International Data Corporation White Paper (2007), p. 1, and, for images, pp. 7–8, <http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/expanding-digital-idc-white-paper.pdf> (accessed 22 March 2011). The prediction was maintained the following year in the IDC’s update through to 2011, John F. Ganz, et al., *The Diverse and Exploding Digital Universe: An Updated Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth Through 2011* (2008), p. 2, <http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/diverse-exploding-digital-universe.pdf> (accessed 22 March 2011).

60 Holland, ““Sweet It Is to Scan...”” 118.

in order to support memorialization, an assumption that needs to be tested.⁶¹ Moreover, such discussion invariably focuses on the data creator – the equivalent of George's grandfather. Archivists have largely been absent from this interdisciplinary discussion, but we surely have a voice to contribute to any understanding of how contemporary individuals document themselves, in both the records they create and, just as importantly, the records with which they interact, exploring the performative role of documents (including archival documents) in the construction of personal and interpersonal identities.⁶² Nevertheless, identity is also determined – at least in part – by how others see and document us, and these “secondary” actions come to dominate as identity morphs into memorialization. The example of *Road Trip* suggests that, over time, accessible meanings are constructed by reaction and interpretation – by re-creation – as much as by original production. By the loss (or denial) of their original context, the documentary layers of the work can resonate in new ways. Although he is the artwork's absent presence, George's grandfather may become more famous by the reuse of his slides than through any efforts he may have made himself. We may seek to document ourselves – but we cannot dictate how (or whether) others will read these documents. That constructions of identity are as “fictional” as they are “real” should not undermine their importance: as Facebook fictions and Cardiff and Miller's *Road Trip* similarly remind us, fictions and omissions – both accepted and unacknowledged – play an essential role in negotiating and narrating our own and others' place in the world.

- 61 The concept of value is largely ignored by Evan Carroll and John Romano, *Your Digital Afterlife: When Facebook, Flickr and Twitter Are Your Estate, What's Your Legacy?* (Voices That Matter) (Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2010). Most discussion of the subject, for example on Adele McAlear's site, <http://www.deathanddigitallegacy.com> (accessed 22 March 2011), and Evan Carroll and John Romano's site, <http://www.thedigitalbeyond.com> (accessed 22 March 2011), is based on the assumption that such materials have a value that needs to be preserved. How this value might be contextualized by the creator(s) is discussed by Gilbert Cockton, Abigail Sellen, Richard Banks, and David Kirk, “Evolving and Augmenting Worth Mapping for Family Archives,” *Proceedings of HCI 2009: 23rd BCS Conference on Human-Computer Interaction*, BCS: 329–38. The importance of memorialization and the validity of the “total record” argument are questioned by Dave S. Allen and Abigail Sellen, “On Human Remains: Values and Practice in the Home Archiving of Cherished Objects,” *Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction* (TOCHI) 17, no. 3 (July 2010): 1–43, and, from a different perspective, in Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 62 Personal archives are discussed by Sue McKemmish, “Evidence of Me...,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (1996): 28–45 (and in subsequent responses in the same journal); Catherine Hobbs, “The Character of Personal Archives: Reflections on the Value of Records of Individuals,” *Archivaria* 52 (2001): 126–35; and Caroline Williams, “Personal Papers: Perceptions and Practices,” in Louise Craven (ed.), *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader* (London: Ashgate, 2008), Chapter 3.