Trafficking (in) the Archive: Canada, Copyright, and the Study of Television

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Our ESSAY IS INDEBTED TO THE IDEA OF TRAFFICKING, that is, to the idea that the movement of certain things, in certain contexts, is illicit. We propose in this paper that the dissemination of knowledge for most media scholarship in Canada inherently involves trafficking in covert archives. Our particular interest is in television texts and the idea that, within the increasingly constricting context of Canadian copyright and privacy laws, using, sharing, format shifting, copying, screening, and teaching Canadian television texts are collectively an illegal activity.

We are certainly not the first ones to make note of this movement. In 1990, Mary Jane Miller wrote a piece that was included in the proceedings stemming from a symposium of the International Council of Archives by the National Archives of Canada. It is called, wonderfully, "Archives from the Point of View of the Scholarly User: or, If I died and went to a platonic archetype of a sound and moving images archive this is what I'd find." In it, she describes the televisual scholar's archival paradise. It's a place where there are archivists who know and value the work of the television scholar. It's a place where one can sit and watch or read through all sorts of material, because a television archive should not just contain television texts but also all sorts of written materials (scripts, memos, reviews, letters)

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As scholars of Canadian television we struggle daily with the issue of accessibility. In this paper we will outline the politics and practices that have converged to make the study and teaching of Canadian television an increasingly difficult, and potentially illegal, activity. As our interest in this subject has deepened, we have read with great interest the discussions—and strategies—put forward by scholars writing in other national contexts. Canada is not the only country with problems related to television archiving; we are not unique in being preoccupied with the question of the television archive. But the particular intersection of barriers and histories we face as Canadian television scholars is, we think, unique. We are residents of a nation that produces lots of content, all of it largely publicly funded, with no history of syndication. We have no public or private national archive for television that is accessible to scholars. Our policies regarding "fair use" (a term not used in Canada) are not only punitive but will, we believe, potentially inhibit the future of Canadian television scholarship. The journal Critical Studies in Television—and the extensive accompanying website, the brainchild of the inexhaustible Kim Akass and Janet McCabe—has been an important voice in bringing the debates about archives and archiving to the forefront of the television studies community. We note that the CST listsery, largely highlighting events in the United Kingdom, abounds with information, conferences, and workshops related to archives and archiving. A whole section of the website offers information about archives in which television holdings can be found. Recently, Michele Hilmes has described the amazing media archive that resides (accessibly) at the University of Wisconsin, Madison:

Not only does the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) collection reside in Madison—the only accessible archive of a

¹ See, most recently, for example, the 2010 issue of *Critical Studies in Television* as well as the 21 May 2010 special issue of *Flow* on "The Archive."

major us network, holding over 600 boxes of papers and more than 3000 recordings—but so do more than 500 other mediarelated collections. They range from the enormous, such as the United Artists archive of films, television programs, and corporate records, to the small and obscure but still fascinating.

It is worth noting that no such collection appears to be housed, accessibly, in any Canadian institution, academic or otherwise. When Canadian scholars need texts to study they rely on informal networks or, as we call them here, practices of trafficking.

How Did We Get Here? A Few Possible Answers

Raymond Williams's 1975 landmark observation that television's medium specificity is distinguished by its ability to blur the distinction between discrete units of programming into one continuous "flow" is largely taken for granted as a foundational premise for thinking on, writing about, and archiving television (Television). Following Williams—and Marshall McLuhan's earlier claim that with television, "the medium is the message"—the study of television had been primarily aligned with communications. In this context, the study of television *content* became a secondary scholarly priority to the reception or political economy of the television *medium* its addictive siren call to stay tuned, stay watching through commercials, multiple channels, and an endless parade of shows. Overwhelmingly, in the history of the study of television, what people have watched on television has been considered of secondary importance to how we watch or the kind of genres that make up the televisual flow. Specific analysis of television shows have been few and far between until relatively recently, particularly in Canada.

Pioneers in the textual analysis of television such as John Caughie and Charlotte Brundson, for example, demonstrated that a television text can (and should) be located in other kinds of knowledge flows such as the formation of national publics and identities. This mode of analysis aligned the study of television with the projects and politics of the discipline of film studies, which in recent years has been welcoming television studies into the fold, renaming university departments "film and television" or "film and media" or incorporating the study of television under the category "film." In less than a decade, film's primacy as the scholarly medium for moving image study as been challenged by the appearance of television texts in video stores, online, and in the lexicon of students' cultural imaginary. Ironically, film studies, which long shunned television as its poor

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cousin, is incorporating both television's disciplinary framework and its texts into departments in a move to stay relevant.

While this relatively newfound appreciation for the textual analysis of television is exciting, it does pose challenges for a field of study and teaching that does not particularly value the preservation and circulation of the texts to which we require access in order to do our work. For researchers of television, particularly in the context of Canada, the metaphor of televisual flow is ironic, since most of the television texts we seek are non-liquid, in that for a number of reasons they are dammed up. Television scholars, then, particularly in Canada, become traffickers in what are often illicit collections of archival television.

Licensing Agreements, Fair Dealing, and the Law

Much of what interrupts the flow of archival television is the law. In Canada, the same rules that have served to protect television labour impede the free flow of television content including in the arena of scholarship. Until the advent of syndication and videocassette recorders, in a time when television was considered to be ephemeral, it was customary in Canada for broadcasters to either purchase the right to a television show for a period of time or an agreed upon number of broadcasts. After the lapsed period of time, or after the number of plays had been reached, a broadcaster, if interested, would renegotiate its use of the material.

In a time when it appears that television is more widely available than ever before—DVD box sets, streamed online, or archived in various legal and illegal digital archives—it is important to understand that a significant amount of television in Canada is inaccessible due to lapsed licensing agreements. In theory, the rights to all television could be renegotiated. In theory, the renegotiation of rights to the material, especially that with minimal market potential, could be facilitated by union representation. In practice, it will not happen. The CBC's digital archive editorial board reported that there is a significant impediment to making television available online, since unions understandably do not want to risk potential missed sales of shows in DVD format. The fact is, however, that most Canadian shows have minimal market potential and will never be packaged and sold. The amount of television in this category, whose circulation, ultimately, is dammed up, is significant. This television content, held hostage by lapsed licensing agreements, has essentially left the realm of televisual flow.

What this means for television scholars in Canada is that it is not possible to make copies of shows that are in licensing limbo. This situation is

made all the worse because, to a very significant extent, television is not archived in consistent and accessible ways in Canada, the way that film, music, and literature are. Even the spotty collection in a national archive is often a closed door, as is the collection in the CBC.² In order to view and work on these kinds of shows, the only real hope for interested scholars is thus to access personal copies recorded from broadcast television. In many cases, these informal archives are preferable to broadcast masters since they are primary source documents in the sense that they record the show as it appeared, complete with station breaks and advertisements.

For the scholar, these informal personal archives are often arbitrary and difficult to find, but when they are found they are invaluable. For the teacher, however, the use-value of these artifacts is fraught. In Canada, copyright law has been undergoing revision and debate, with the initial proposal of Bill C-61 in 2008, then in 2010, Bill C-32, that, after public consultation, is stalled due to an upcoming federal election.³ At issue for television scholars is the ambiguous fair dealing provision for education which, although relatively untested, appears to allow for less flexibility than the U.S. provisions for "fair use." Laura Murray has advocated that Canada adopt the language of the U.S. copyright law that identifies provisions "such as," so as not to prescribe exceptions at the expense of others. It is unclear to scholars and to our knowledge untested in the courts whether showing personal copies of television in the classroom or at a conference would fall under Canada's fair dealing provision or whether it would account for migrating forward personal collections of broadcast television from VHS to digital formats.

U.S. Syndication / Canadian Constipation?

Although the discourse of Canadian television policy is premised on sustaining a national cultural heritage, there is no centralized archive for Canadian television that is accessible to researchers or to the public. National collections such as Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, while in theory are public, are beholden to licensing, rights, and institutional policies that prevent the circulation

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² A colleague recently shared a story [with me] about an actor who wanted to show his wife a film he had made in the 1960s that was archived at the CBC; he was told he would have to pay over two hundred dollars for the privilege, which included the rental of an auditorium.

³ For an excellent interpretation of the Bill, its history and issues, see Michael Geist's blog: www.michaelgeist.ca. This page gives a grounding on the proposed bill's issues: www.michaelgeist.ca/content/view/5080/125.

and "migrating forward" of texts for study and teaching. Even though the idea of flow in television studies has been contested, the idea of television has been associated with flow. Flow is tied up in the concept of syndication in its various forms—changing currents, repeating, recycling, and coming back. Canadian television doesn't flow. There is a damming up of the content and occasional breaks in the dam occur as Canadian content becomes part of the more visible currents of global televisual flow. As this happens, these texts of become resignified, that is, their origins become obscured as they are repurposed for optimal use in new markets. Examples of this include *Degrassi*, *Road to Avonlea*, and *You Can't Do That on Television* (Thompson Spears 2009).

While prominence in the international marketplace may raise the currency of national texts in Canada, it is still no guarantee of syndication or archival space. Serra Tinic describes—only slightly tongue in cheek—the lack of syndication of Canadian television as an "epic fail," particularly in light of "Canadian broadcasting policy's obsession with cultural cohesion and nation building." In the discussion that follows Tinic's Flow article, the respondents note that, for instance, it is easier to see syndicated Canadian series in the United States and that, with barriers to research so profound, fewer and fewer scholars are going to bother to try and study Canadian television. This is a loss not only to Canadians but to an international community who, whether it is officially acknowledged or not, has been influenced by generations of Canadian TV series. 4 As Geoff Pevere (2002) relates in his discussion of Canadian comedy series, "it is arguable that export forms of Canadian comedy have not just meshed with the American comedic mainstream, but have strongly influenced its direction, current and depth, for better or worse" (129). Given how widely American comedy's reach is seen to be, this influence is not insignificant.

What Tinic seems to be highlighting in her short essay is the importance of the rerun as a living artifact of material culture. The recent volume

4 Canadian series often fall off the radar when histories of influence are being written, despite the vast amount of television that Canada produces. While there is a lot of discussion of American influence (including positive influence, for example, in Rixon), it would seem that Canadian TV is historically weightless. In the history of contemporary teen TV, for example, most people begin with Beverly Hills 90210 although Degrassi predates that series by several years and it has been suggested that Degrassi was the model onto which the very different 90210 was eventually mapped (see Davis and Dickenson; one essay in this volume does note that Australian teen TV tends to follow format that is closer to Degrassi than 90210). The extensive presence of Canadians in the American television industry and the migration/repurposing of Canadian content within American networks have been under-theorized.

Circulation and the City articulates a problematic about urban life that we might well appropriate for the study of Canadian television, inviting "us to come to know [television] through its materiality.... [C]irculation is not simply something that happens to [television], nor is it even something that happens exclusively *in* [television]. Rather, [television] is constituted by circulation" (9). If the circulation of the text is inhibited, as it has been in the case of Canadian television, a variety of things happen, one of which is that we become unanchored from a primary source through which cultural identity has been produced. Second, television as a metanarrative produced across time and space becomes unanchored from its past, so we have no history, except for a non-history or what Tinic describes as "existing in a state of perpetual present." This connects us to Paul Attallah's ironic observation that most Canadian television scholarship is obsessed with measuring authentic Canadianness even as what constitutes that idea and its televisual performance increasingly passes through transnational circuits from production to consumption. Canadian television is influenced by texts produced elsewhere, just as our texts migrate globally and influence what comes to be produced elsewhere. But tracking these influences is virtually impossible when traces of the original texts have all but vanished, at least from accessible scholarly spaces.

Which brings us back to the value of personal archives, that is, their portability through space and time. Even in the days of bulky VHS tapes, collections could be accumulated and sedimented over time, providing a relatively efficient mode of accumulation and circulation. Videotapes inaugurated an unprecedented era of informal data sharing. "In graduate school," Michele writes, "when I was writing about Buffy the Vampire Slayer I was often calling home (from a payphone in that just pre-cell phone era) in a panic: 'My class is running late please tape Buffy for me.' If that did not work, I had to start calling around to friends (no email lists or Facebook yet either), hoping someone else had a tape to share." This type of informal archiving (even if not a permanent) practice refused various types of borders because it followed the logic of both televisual flow (catching bits of what came before and what came after the show you actually wanted to tape) as well as the impulses of the viewer which are about interest and accessibility, not usually about point of origin. Television's flow is not nationally contained or contained by "nowness." A scan of the programming on the national public broadcaster (the CBC) today reveals: a Canadian recipe show; a repeat of a Canadian sketch comedy; a repeat of an American drama; one and a half hours of local/regional news; a new episode of *Coronation Street* (UK soap); two American game shows;

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two Canadian talk/comedy shows; a new episode of *The Fifth Estate*; the national news; a repeat of a late night Canadian talk show; a repeat of a Canadian comedy festival series; a repeat of the American drama aired earlier; a 2003 American movie; a Canadian financial show ... in one twelve-hour cycle.

The fabulous collection of tapes now housed in Michele's basement (discussed below) do not only contain Canadian television, although that was one of Mary Jane Miller's primary points of interest in making them. They also contain all sorts of accidental snippets, as well as ephemera and advertising. And, of course, they contain shows from other countries, particularly American and British television series, miniseries, made-fortelevision movies, and movies.

Ephemerality versus Physical Archives

Trafficking in television is a gesture of rethinking the artifact and posing the question: What is the archive for? Is the archive a mechanism to keep the text safe, contained and "at home" within national borders? At root, the archive's discourse of preservation is at odds with television's original conception as a medium of ephemerality and flow. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why television studies continues to be so poorly served by the archive. As traffickers of television who ultimately desire an accessible collection of Canadian television, our work is guided by the question of whether or not we can move this illicit trafficking of materials into a legitimate form of sharing.

In the new context of flow for television content, some of it is "bottled" and sold in digital forms. Some of the flow has seeped into basements and attics and other forgotten corners in the form of personal VHS collections. While the flow of Canadian television is erratic and dependent, it does not stop. Trafficking contributes to this continuous movement. We see trafficking in television as a kind of political intervention. This movement of television that we inadvertently aid and abet is a form of agency; it allows us to do work on texts, produced with public money, that, ironically, we are no longer allowed to see.

On the other hand, the U.S. system of television circulation is cumulative. "Old" television content continues to circulate as syndicated programming (internationally), and new programming adds to the stream of televisual flow. The situation in Canada—what Tinic calls our "no rerun nation"—is different. Without a tradition of syndication, the discourse of television funding is all about *nowness* and the next big thing, not, as Tinic has established, about longevity or continuity.

Funding for television in Canada is conditional on distribution. This funding caveat suggests that the merit of television is in circulation. Until recently, the broadcast was the end goal for Canadian television. Changes in 2010 to the Canadian Television Fund, administered by Telefilm, suggest a change in the discourse of circulation. Under these new guidelines, eligible television projects are required to make use of another media format to be considered for funding (for example, a DVD release, web streaming, a digital media spinoff). While these revised guidelines acknowledge the plasticity of content in the context of digital platforms, they still do not mean that television content will be archived in a meaningful or accessible way. Canadian television shows on DVD have been rare until very recently, which almost completely excludes older series for reasons relating to rights, as described above. As scholars and teachers, the amount of television we have access to legally in Canada is a fraction of what has been produced. This lack of accessibility is having a prescriptive effect on scholarship.

In Canadian television, since we often don't have legal access to our illicit artifacts, scholars are unable to show primary source documents at conferences or share research with students in the classroom. Scholars are prohibited from reading texts temporally, for example to do a historical examination of tropes across a body of work. It is a challenge for scholars to construct adequate samples in order to identify patterns. It is also difficult for colleagues in Canadian television to test findings and revise hypotheses in response to our colleagues' work. As these are essential aspects of a scholarly community, trafficking in informal television archives is one way that we make our discipline disciplinary.

Part of the archival issue for Canadian television is spatial. There are essentially three models for archives and accessibility for English-Canada. The first is the example of the CBC. This organization has taken care of its archives and has digitized much of its collection. The digitization, we understand, has been undertaken not simply to preserve a television archive but to make the collection efficient to navigate so as to offer it for sale as a stock shot library. Well cared for as the archive may be, although the collection is facilitated with public money, this archive is by no means a public archive. The collection exists primarily for use by the institution and, understandably, researchers are not guaranteed access to it and cannot be given viewing copies of what it contains. From the perspective of a television researcher outside the CBC, this is a well cared for, inaccessible archive which we applaud in theory but which is ultimately useless to us in practice.

Whereas CBC's archive is in good condition but inaccessible, the second archival model is a relatively accessible archive in questionable condition. While Library and Archives Canada is accessible to the public, its collections are reliant on donations and therefore appear, from the perspective of a researcher, scant and ad hoc. Organized by fonds, the archive is constituted as the sum total of donations and is often a challenge to navigate systematically. While this kind of archive certainly has merit and makes collections available for the public to view in one location, it is not ideal. Since television does not appear to have been a particular priority for such a large archive, we have on occasion arranged research trips to view tapes that turned out to be unwatchable. As copies cannot be made of material in the archive, researchers must travel to Ottawa to view their desired material on site during hours of operation that have been reduced in recent years.

Since the CBC has excellent collections with poor accessibility and Library and Archives Canada has on-site access with scant or deteriorating television collections, a third model, undoubtedly a stretch to call an archive, is nevertheless the most efficient and useful model we presently have at our disposal. The circulation of personal television collections, the practice of which we call "trafficking," provides the backbone of television research in this country. This most valuable archive is virtual in the sense that it has no permanent home, is not catalogued formally, and circulates by post and by word of mouth to whoever shows an interest and might benefit from its content.⁵

One hallmark of our imagined community of covert Canadian television scholars is the remarkable generosity of its members. In practice, perhaps surprisingly, the rarity of material does not deter participant scholars from loaning out their collections. Mutual appreciation for the material appears to elicit both trust and the symbiotic sharing of resources. Far from meeting in darkened alleys, traffickers in illicit collections of television reside primarily in the proverbial ivory towers of the academy.

Lest We Forget: The Value of VHS, the Danger of DVD

For the most part, the objects we are trafficking are VHS tapes or digitized copies of recorded, broadcast television. They might be our personal col-

5 Of course there are a variety of ways in which scholars also use more literally virtual archives, such as those found on YouTube and file sharing sites. While they are somewhat beyond the scope of this essay, it is true that Internet archival platforms offer many resources—albeit ones often unreliable, unstable, and heavily border patrolled—for scholars.

lections, our institutions, or an adopted collection found, for example, in a friend's basement or at a garage sale. Collectively, these informal, personal archives are haphazard and sometimes instrumental collections of ephemeral television broadcasts. In many ways, these are exactly what we need.

Such collections allow for repeat viewings of a television text in our own environments. The flexibility of this option solves, for one thing, a labour issue. Practically speaking, since our work schedules involve teaching, scholarship, administration, and often parenting, having access to television texts we require to do our work in our homes and offices enables us to "work with a sandwich"—to incorporate the practice of close reading into everyday life. The time and cost of traveling to archives to do the kind of close work and repeat viewing that analysis requires is, practically speaking, prohibitive.

But what scholar wouldn't want to take their archival object home with them for convenience? The particular issue that these personal collections address for Canadian television scholars is that the texts captured in personal collections are not in the archives to begin with. In cases where shows are archived, it is usually the master tape that is saved—the best quality example of the show from an archival point of view. What this means is that even the CBC's archive—the best preserved collection—does not contain television as it appeared on television with commercials and associated ephemera. Although the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) requires broadcasters to keep written logs of what they broadcast, stations do not need to archive recordings of their broadcasts. Personal collections of broadcast television are, in most cases, the only record we have of a television show in the context of the televisual flow in which it originally appeared. These personal collections, for scholars who examine television contextually, are the only existing primary texts.

For Charles Acland (2009), the VHS tape is an archival gesture. He identifies three reasons why we should pay attention to VHS tapes and the informal archives that likely litter millions of basements, attics, and storage lockers. First, they help us understand our relationship with television as a material artifact. These tapes represent the first generation of time shifting; through them, the idea of the archive becomes tangible because it is possible to stop the televisual flow and review it. Second, Acland argues that online archiving in spaces like YouTube creates the impression that all of television is accessible. However, what is missing from the archive is often what might be found in those informal archives described above: the mundane, the unique, the historical, and the obscure traces of Canadian (and other) cultures. Third, although the VHS format is waning, it is not dead, which affords us opportunities to make use of it. We should consider residual media or, as Acland (2007) writes in the introduction to his edited volume by that name, "commodities [that] become a type of raw material once again." Walter Benjamin, says Acland, "alerts us to the transformative possibilities" of residual media, that the memory trace that the "discarded object possesses" has "the potential for revolutionary motivation." While, says Acland, according to Benjamin the "revolutionary kernel may be rarely realized, [but] still, the discarded object varies out a semiotic richness ripe for appropriation" (xvii).

Will Straw notes the way in which the VCR and VHS tape were seen in the 1980s as changing the way "cultural knowledges were stored and transported" (6)—the introduction of trafficking as we know it. What the rise of video and the video store did was create a space for a new kind of accessible spectatorship. Straw writes, "the videocassette has played a role in reuniting audiences with a cinema that they had long believed they could no longer understand" (6); better, he suggests we might think of the videocassette as "a tool of orientation, as an instrument of cultural way-finding" (6). Examples of "way-finding" abound in personal collections of recorded television. Inherently, personal recordings are interventions in televisual flow—whether for time shifting or repeat viewing. Having two VCRs allowed viewers to edit mash-ups or remake versions of original television text, removing commercials or swearing, for example.

Until recently, VHS recording was the only way to "own" television. DVDS quickly went from being nonexistent to dominating the market. Online digital archives such as YouTube create the impression that the most obscure moving image is available and accessible. Of course, this is not the case. The availability of digital television texts does not mitigate the pragmatic issue of the law, particularly for television scholars. Just because we can purchase a DVD does not mean that we can show it legally in the classroom. Arguably, the apparent availability of new television series on DVD or YouTube's random archive distracts us from more systemic issues of archives and accessibility.

Because of television's flow and its attendant discourses of continuity and innovation, there is pressure on television scholars to be in the now, to write about the new and the next up-and-coming thing. In responding to what is available now, we risk creating an ahistorical narrative that dangerously mirrors the ahistorical hegemony of national discourse. As scholars of Canadian television we are always playing catch up, but if the past is being actively discarded there will be nothing to refer back to. One

prescriptive effect of the current state of Canadian television archives is that access to material keeps us writing about the present even if we want to write about or in dialogue with the past. As Will Straw writes,

Every videocassette or DVD transports the particular text that marks its distinctiveness, but each, as well, transports and stores sets of cultural knowledges that may be mobilized in the viewing of other texts. This is a commonplace of cultural analysis but might be profitably reworked within the theory of media storage and transportation. As Greg Urban notes, new texts reinvigorate elements of the surrounding cultural texture in ways we are often invited to see as novel, as initiating cultural movement. Each such mopping up, however, represents a storage and retransmission of these clusters of meaning, a reassertion of their cultural presence and authority (9).

Shayne Pepper notes in his work on HBO, "[a]s we continually try to keep up with new content, we must not ignore the crucial history of HBO's early years and all that the archive has to offer." Pepper's point, that in order to fully understand "HBO's discourse of innovative 'quality television,' it is absolutely essential that we have a clearer understanding of how that discourse was established in the first place," is relevant for our understanding of the study of Canadian Tv. Pepper's point takes us back to Serra Tinic's caution about the risks/deficiencies of scholarship from a national context and industrial context where there is little or no syndication. It takes us back to the painstaking work of scholars like Mary Jane Miller, who have for decades laboured to write about texts even they had never seen, texts they pieced together from tiny fragments from which close textual analysis is difficult if not impossible.

And what about Mary Jane Miller? She is the key to our work in many ways. She has for a long time been the hub through which the work on many young Canadian television scholars has passed in one way or another. She has been known to have the best collection of tapes on which are recorded the most complete collection of Canadian television series available in the world. It is only through her generosity (and one must be generous to trust sending those tapes to others and to take the time to organize this type of traffic) that many of us have been able to do our work at all. When Mary Jane retired she was unsure about what to do with this large (and rather cumbersome) collection. But she knew how valuable it was as a source of scholarship and wanted to ensure that it remained, as much as possible, accessible and, if possible, that its contents were, at some point, migrated forward into new and hopefully more stable and

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And it's complicated.

accessible formats (as she describes in her article about fantasy archives that we discuss above). Keen interest was expressed by a number of people, including university libraries, but none could promise that *anyone* would ever be able to actually *use* these tapes again. No one could say that scholars would be able to use these tapes to study Canadian TV, and that was not something with which Mary Jane could live. So she packed all those tapes up into about seventeen boxes and, over the course of a month or so, shipped them all, by courier, from southern Ontario to us in Nova Scotia. At least here she suggested they had a chance to be of use, and their presence would encourage us to keep fighting for the dream she had dreamed.

Now that Mary Jane Miller has passed on the hub of circulation, as traffickers we find ourselves wondering about what our next steps should be. We began this paper with a description of Miller's utopian vision of an accessible and collaborative archive. It strikes us that twenty years later, while so little has changed for television archives in Canada, what she envisioned is now possible. Miller imagined the world of file sharing that we now inhabit, and yet despite these amazing leaps in technology since the time of her writing her boxes sit in the basement; we are still trafficking in illicit goods. And it's complicated. Recently, a colleague posted a query on a listsery about a search for some Canadian TV series that she hoped to show in a course she was offering. It's possible we have some of the things she was looking for, but, at the moment and despite Mary Jane's catalogue, we have no resources for addressing these types of requests. The tapes are ageing, and as they age they will become more delicate. We don't have a space for them (outside of Michele's basement and prior to that most of the floor space of Michele's office) or, as yet, funding for digital transfer and archiving. But even if we did have a fabulous, designated server packed with the digital files uploaded from these tapes, sharing them (even creating the files themselves) involves trafficking in illegal materials.

Conclusion

In a different context, Canadian artist Vera Frenkle has written of archives: "Something survives; something changes, and forces of chance help to bind these elements into a new entity from which emanates the uncanniness of an apparent but indescribable family resemblance." She continues, "the ways in which concepts and imagery find new meanings while retaining their essences remain intriguing" (149). In considering the future of her projects, including *The Institute*, which holds some relevance for the question of archives. Frenkle concludes that

implicit in this project is a hopeful assumption that it is possible to govern and be governed well, and to create a society in which art in all its forms can be acknowledged as the engine that it is. In the meantime, the corollary task is to reflect the far less hopeful conditions that actually exist. The calcifying impact of certain forms of cultural bureaucracy aren't the only forces destructive to art and to well-being, though often the least visible. Floods, studio moves, divorces, deaths and clumsy de-accessioning procedures are powerful editing processes. In an inevitable, organic and unpredictable process, some artworks survive, others don't. (172)

In the introduction to this essay, we mentioned the recent piece Michele Hilmes contributed to the Critical Studies in Television website, addressing the existing collection of media archives at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She notes a few things. First, the collection began when one American news commentator donated his work to the university and encouraged others to do the same. As people did, the momentum was there for the university to create a centre in which to house and develop holdings: "convincing NBC to donate its records in 1958 was one of its biggest coups, and other extensive collections followed." In 1960, Hilmes writes, they created the "Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research in order to expand the archives into these aspects of media culture. When the WCFTR acquired the massive United Artists Corporation collection in 1965, containing more than 5000 films and television programs and more than 2000 boxes of paper records, its reputations was launched." This amazing achievement does not mean that these archival materials are hidden away. Instead, "each year hundreds of researchers make the trip to Madison as an indispensable step in investigating the history of media and entertainment in the us." This is what we need, both in terms of investment and physical space, in Canada.

Even the creation of an archive does not diminish the need for the development of a culture in which academic work is acknowledged as a necessary and important part of the nation. We need to recognize that studying television—which means showing it in our classrooms and sharing it with other scholars—is an inextricable part of the development of contemporary culture and not something that should fall, however unintentionally this may have happened, into the realm of illicit activity. We need space, as a nation, where people from national and international communities can come to study Canadian television and where they won't be met with incredulity and remarks like "Why would you want to do

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that" or "Oh, you want to actually watch the shows in real time?" Both of these statements were made to scholars who wanted access to well-known Canadian TV shows.

This approach is, at least in part, what we are lacking in Canada. Changing a culture takes time. We can't go back in time and change Canada's relationship to television. Derek Kompare writes of the U.S. context: "Why reruns? Why has television in this country consistently presented, indeed, has relied upon, so many of its past texts?" (x). Part of what we consistently wonder is why we have as a nation consistently refuted the televisual texts of our past and even today make no effort to present them or even make them accessible for study? Why have we turned people who want to study Canadian television into fools or, worse, thieves? It's clearly time to change things and to try and bring a new vision (or to implement one that has been fighting for visibility for at least two decades) to light. It is our hope that we are on our way to making Mary Jane Miller's dream archive feasible, with the tools we have at hand. Our goal is to make the idea of trafficking obsolete by formalizing relationships with text, context, and history. Digitizing personal collections into an archive whose motivation is sharing legibility and accessibility formalizes circulation patterns that exist only informally at the moment. We hope that personal collections, which are theoretically outside the purview of broadcasting and licensing agreements, can be amassed to form a meaningful collection. In mobilizing the advantage of social networks to make visible connections that were previously invisible, mounting calls for material through Facebook, for example, we see potential for gathering errant basement collections into the most valuable resource for television we have in Canada: a collection that is cumulative, searchable, and accessible.

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