

Private Passions, Public Archives: Approaches to the private collector and collection of
theatrical ephemera in the context of the public theatre archive

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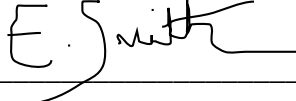
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Declaration of Authorship

I, Eve Margitta Smith, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:  Date: 27/09/2016

Abstract

This thesis considers the passions of the private collector of theatrical ephemera within the context of the public theatre archive. It interrogates the formation, the function, and the significance of the collection, foregrounding the idiosyncratic relationship between the collector and their collection. The eventual, though not inevitable, transition of a theatre collection from a private house to a public archive is interrogated throughout the thesis.

The research concentrates on three theatre collections that have made the transition from a private space to the public archive: the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection at the University of Bristol, and the Roy Waters Theatre Collection at Royal Holloway, University of London. Theoretical and critical approaches from the fields of theatre history and historiography, archive and museum studies, and the practice and psychology of collecting are consulted alongside practical archival research into the collections and personal papers of the collectors. The collector and the materials that he/she amasses are considered within a number of social, cultural, and historical contexts including: the motivations that govern the desire to collect; the social, professional, and financial networks occupied by the collector; the gender and sexuality of the collector; the role of anecdote in framing and narrating the collector and collection; the cultural capital embodied by the theatre collection, and the future of the collector and the collection in an increasingly digitised age.

As the first researcher to work on the collection of Roy Waters, this thesis offers new perspectives on an under-researched area of theatre history. This interrogation of the theatre collector and collection will argue that the collector has the potential to intervene

in the construction of theatrical histories and narratives, and that the personal relationship between collector and collection is deserving of greater recognition and consideration.

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I dedicate this work to the memories of Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander, Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters with whom it has been both a pleasure and a privilege to spend time and get to know over the past three years.

Introduction

This thesis considers the private passions and idiosyncrasies of the collector of theatrical ephemera, framing the collector's private theatre collection in the context of the public archive. It seeks to interrogate the individual motivations that drive the often obsessive quest to collect the materials of the theatrical past, examining the ways in which the theatre collection is formed, created and narrated by the collector. A private theatre collection is subject to a number of different fates. It may eventually be sold, inherited by a family member or friend, broken apart and dispersed in any number of different locations, or disposed of and thrown away. This thesis concentrates on the private theatre collection that makes the transition from the collector's home to the public archive. An interrogation of three of these collections provokes questions about the significance, purpose and expectations of the private theatre collection made public. Above all, this thesis foregrounds the *collector* of theatrical ephemera, providing a stage upon which the individuals that strive for a lifetime to gather up the material remains of performance can themselves perform. The collector and their private theatre collection in the context of the public archive is analysed within a number of critical and theoretical frameworks taken from academic disciplines including theatre and performance studies, museum studies, archive studies, material culture studies, and works on the theory and psychology of collecting.

This thesis focuses on four British collectors of theatrical ephemera who give their names to three private theatre collections, all of which are now housed within a public archive. I examine the materials gathered by Gabrielle Enthoven (1868-1950) who campaigned for over a decade in the national press for a public home for her extensive collection. Enthoven's collected materials were eventually accepted by the Victoria and Albert

Museum (V&A) in 1924 where they continue to be housed. The Gabrielle Enthoven Collection became the founding collection of the Museum's Theatre and Performance Department. The department's collections are now recognised as being the largest of their type in the world.¹

Alongside Enthoven's significant collection, I consider the theatre collection gathered by Raymond Mander (1911-1983) and Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992). Mander and Mitchenson engaged in a personal and public partnership that was marked and defined by their passion for the performing arts and their passion for collecting theatrical ephemera. The Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection (MMTC) remained at the couple's home until 1983, at which point it was relocated to Beckenham Place Park. In 2001, after a brief relocation to the Salvation Army Headquarters in London, the MMTC was moved to the Old Naval College in Greenwich, London as a part of the Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts at Trinity College of Music. In 2010 the collection was legally transferred to the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Finally, this thesis introduces the Roy Waters Theatre Collection (RWTC), a private collection built up over four decades by Roy Waters (1928-2010). Waters bequeathed his collection to the Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections at Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) where it has been housed since Waters's death in 2010. This collection is particularly significant within the context of my research as it includes detailed materials that demonstrate how and why Waters's private collection came to be housed in a public archive. This thesis is the very first work to consider Waters's collection and marks a key and pivotal step in the publicising and interrogating of both

¹ Carys Lewis and Ramona Riedzewski, 'Curtain up! The Theatre and Performance Collections at the V&A', *Archives Hub*, n. d. Web. <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/features/theatreperformancecollections/> - accessed 19 January 2016.

Waters's theatrical materials and of the private papers of the collector himself. As the only individual to have worked with Waters's materials, my research offers new insights into a theatre collection that has so far received no scholarly attention.

Publicising private passions

This thesis seeks to free the theatre collector from the footnote: a place to which he/she is commonly and unfairly relegated in academic works. The names of the collectors I focus upon here appear fleetingly in the occasional essay or chapter on theatre and performance archives; they appear in the small print of references or copyright details placed underneath a reproduced photograph or painting taken from their collection. They have been the subject of scant academic consideration. At the time of writing, Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson are not unknown to theatre and performance scholars, though neither have they attracted the full, focused attention of the researcher. Since 2014, sixty-four years after her death, Enthoven has finally been included in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) and Mander and Mitchenson both received such entries in 2004. Individuals who are commemorated in the DNB are recognised as having 'shaped British history and culture, worldwide'.² At the time of writing, Waters has very little, if any, public profile. There is, therefore, an existing hierarchy that marks and orders these collectors in the context of how much, or how little, publicity or public awareness their private lives and their private collections are, and have been, subject to.

² <http://www.oxforddnb.com/> - accessed 23 December 2015. The DNB contains records for 59,665 individuals who are considered to have contributed significantly to British history and culture. Waters does not have an entry.

The collection as a whole

When undertaking research, scholars and theatre enthusiasts are usually intent on the theatrical artefact, frequently extracting the required photographs, playbills, and programmes from the space of the collection. For many collectors, this fulfils one of the integral purposes of their collection: the collection is to be used as an aid to understanding, interpreting, and constructing the theatrical past. Mined for its separate components, however, the private theatre collection has seldom been considered in its entirety, as a singular entity. Arlette Farge articulates this process: ‘after you [the archival researcher] have read the documents, you begin culling out some among them, and by the simple acts of copying or photocopying you isolate pieces of the archive.’³ As materials are plucked from the collection, the collection becomes dispersed. Instead of being interrogated as a whole, as a body of materials, it expands to occupy multiple spaces whilst simultaneously being reduced to its singular parts. For many researchers who use the theatre collection, the collector who amassed the materials is incidental. The paucity of academic attention bestowed upon the collector of theatrical ephemera is perplexing when considered through the lens of theatre history, for which the theatre collection provides the pivotal flesh and bones of research into the theatrical past. The stuff of theatre history is used and highly valued by the researcher, whilst the individuals who gathered it, preserved it, loved it, and made it available to the public are neglected. This thesis aims to go some way to remedying this neglect and to extricate the theatre collector from the margins of theatre history, arguing for his/her importance as an individual in the making and creating of theatrical histories and narratives. The researcher depends upon the collected materials to build their arguments and hypotheses, and it is the collector who has shaped and saved

³ Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, Trans. Thomas Scott-Railton (London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 63.

these very documents and objects from which such works can be produced. David Gainsborough Roberts, a collector of twentieth-century memorabilia and, at one time, the owner of the largest private collection of Marilyn Monroe film costumes and personal garments, echoes many a collector when he states that: ‘[t]here are so many stories in my collection.’⁴ Whilst recognising the charming, the shocking, or the banal stories evoked by the objects or ephemera within a collection, I seek to excavate the stories and passions of the theatre collectors themselves that gather quietly within their private collections and personal papers, working to situate such stories in the context of the public archive.

Towards a definition of collecting

Numerous and nuanced definitions of collecting are offered in theoretical approaches to the practice of collecting. In 1944, Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby asserted: ‘it is not enough to think of him [the collector] merely as an accumulator.’⁵ A collection is more than a mere accumulation of tangible things. A stockpile of toilet rolls, a jar of one-penny pieces, or a drawer-full of socks, for example, do not possess the qualities that make a collection *a collection*. What are these qualities then? What differentiates a collection from an accumulation? Joseph Alsop suggests that: ‘to collect is to gather objects belonging to a particular category the collector happens to fancy, as magpies fancy things that are shiny, and a collection is what has been gathered.’⁶ Alsop construes a collection as a gathering

⁴ James Mollison, ‘Wannabe in my gang?’ in *The Guardian Weekend* (19 September 2015), pp. 56-64, p. 64. In 2011, Gainsborough Roberts lent his collection of Monroe memorabilia to The American Museum in Britain for an exhibition entitled ‘Marilyn - Hollywood Icon.’ In early 2015, he announced that his entire collection, estimated to be worth over £10million, would be sold off at auction. He said: ‘I have been collecting for many years, I’m 70 years of age now, I don’t have a wife and children so I thought I must sell things.’ Gainsborough Roberts’ decision demonstrates how a private collection may be sold or auctioned off rather than bequeathed, donated or offered to a public archive. See ‘Marilyn Monroe, Churchill, and Hitler memorabilia in collection to go on sale’, *BBC News* (15 January 2015). <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-jersey-30841717> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁵ Douglas Rigby and Elizabeth Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel: The Story of Collecting* (London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1944), p. 3.

⁶ Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: HarperCollins, 1982), p. 70.

of things that arouse the collector's passions, and *crucially*, things that have a relationship to one another through their shared subject matter. Similarly, G. Thomas Tanselle asserts that one must distinguish 'random accumulations of objects from purposeful selections.'⁷ This is the crucial component that distinguishes the theatre collection from a mere accumulation of unconnected objects and separates the collector from the accumulator. Rather than a senseless gathering of things, the collection is selected, created, and shaped with a self-conscious purpose and design. Rigby and Rigby add further valuable insights into the process of collecting, mirroring Alsop's understanding of the collection as having to constitute objects that share a particular connection and relationship to one another. 'A man who piles his house high with junk of every description', they declare, 'owns, in this sense, not a collection but a congeries'.⁸ They conclude that:

The first two commandments of good collecting declare, in effect, that the objects contained in the accumulation should be so related that together they may be considered an entity, and that there should be an orderly arrangement which establishes this relationship of the parts to the whole and to each other.⁹

According to these definitions, then, collecting must involve the conscious, purposeful selecting and ordering of distinct objects that belong to a similar category and that bear a meaningful and obvious connection, relationship and attachment to each other. Gathered together, such objects form a collection rather than an indistinct accumulation. These definitions, however, neglect the highly personal, passionate presence of the collector in this collecting process: the collector's need to have and to possess that drives much of the practice of collecting. Every object and artefact collected by the collector has a relationship to each other and to the collector by its very fact of having been collected: the collector is the element that narrates and creates the collection. James Clifford

⁷ G. Thomas Tanselle, 'A Rationale of Collecting' in *Studies in Bibliography*, Vol. 51 (1998), pp. 1-25, p.3.

⁸ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 338.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 339.

describes collecting as ‘an excessive, sometimes even rapacious need to *have* [transformed] into rule-governed meaningful desire’,¹⁰ whilst Niaholai Aristides describes the collection as ‘an obsession organised.’¹¹ These two definitions echo the elements of order, structure, and meaning that characterise the collection and collecting of stuff but they also frame such activities within the context of the private passions of the collector.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is a definition offered by Russell W. Belk that is most useful in defining the practice of collecting within the context of the collector of theatrical ephemera. After critiquing a number of definitions offered by other scholars, Belk synthesises such work and suggests a definitive definition. He writes: ‘**collecting is the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as a set of non-identical objects or experiences** [bold in original].’¹² That Belk includes the passions of the collector as integral to the process of collecting is pivotal in the context of this research. Unlike the other definitions offered, Belk also clarifies that collected objects are removed from ordinary use. The playbill, ticket and programme in the private theatre collection exemplify this assertion: they are locked in the space of the theatre collection and entirely removed from their original purpose. The conscious and selective gathering together and ordering of such objects by the collector produces a unique, idiosyncratic and entirely singular set of theatrical things that is recognised as constituting the private theatre collection.

¹⁰ James Clifford, ‘Objects and Selves - An Afterword’ in George W. Stocking Jr., *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), pp. 236-246, p. 238.

¹¹ Niaholai Aristides, ‘Life and Letters: Calm and Uncollected’ in *The American Scholar*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 327-336, p. 330.

¹² Russell W. Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 67.

In addition, I consider how the practice of collecting differs, or otherwise, from activities such as hoarding, activities defined by Rigby and Rigby as constituting ‘the dark borderlands of collecting’.¹³ I also explore how and why interest in theatre collecting differs from other popular subjects of collections such as stamps, books, antiques and so on, and specifically how it differs from art collections which have received great attention from scholars.

Private and/or public

This thesis is preoccupied with private and public spaces and considers how the theatre collector, collection, and archive can be understood to navigate, disturb and occupy these spaces. Distinctions between the public and the private are deeply rooted in philosophy, law, popular discourse, and recurrent spatial structuring practices,¹⁴ and these distinctions have been, and continue to be, debated, critiqued and analysed across a range of disciplines. Richard Sennett’s *The Fall of Public Man* (1977) and the English-language publication in 1989 of Jürgen Habermas’ *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) are frequently consulted by those exploring this distinction between the public and the private and thus they contribute to both my own investigations of public and private space as well as to the investigations of a number of theatre scholars upon whose work I draw.¹⁵

¹³ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, pp. 441-445.

¹⁴ Nancy Duncan, ‘Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces’ in Nancy Duncan (ed.), *BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 127-144, p. 127.

¹⁵ For example, both David Wiles and Tracy C. Davis invoke the work of Habermas and Sennett to explore the relationship between theatre and citizenship, and the relationship between the actress and the public realm respectively. See David Wiles, *Theatre and Citizenship: The History of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Tracy C. Davis, ‘Private Women and the Public Realm’ in *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 35, Issue 1 (May 1994), pp. 65-71.

It is useful to provide examples of how the words *private* and *public* are commonly defined. According to both Sennett and Habermas, the idea of a distinction between a public and private sphere originated in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe in the coffee-houses of England, the salons of France, and the table-societies of Germany.¹⁶ The meaning and interpretation of the words *public* and *private*, and understandings of public and private space, have evolved over the centuries.¹⁷ Today, however, the word *public* has many meanings including: state related, accessible to everyone, of concern to everyone, and open to general observation, view, or knowledge. Crucially, its meaning corresponds to a contrasting sense of the *private*. These common definitions seek to position the private and the public as a binary opposition, understood only in relation to one another, working against and in contrast to one another.

For the sake of clarity within this thesis, the term ‘private collection’ denotes a collection of objects or ephemera that has been gathered by an individual or individuals, as opposed to an institution, and is owned, financed, arranged, displayed, and housed by said individual, often within a private dwelling such as the individual’s home, garage, or private rooms. The public archive exists in contrast to the private collection. The public archive is a space that members of the public visit during certain prescribed times and in certain prescribed places, sometimes by appointment only. It is kept by a public institution such as a museum, a gallery, a library or a university, and its upkeep and housing is often financed to some extent by public funding. Unlike the private collector, a public archive usually has a collecting policy that is defined and restricted by a committee. Its existence

¹⁶ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962). Trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1989) and Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).

¹⁷ Sennett, for example, charts how concepts of public and private space have been interpreted in a multitude of ways from the Roman Empire, through Paris and London of the eighteenth-century, and culminating in America in the 1970s. See Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*.

is not concealed and it is considered a public asset to be used and shared communally by all. The public archive and collection is also likely to be ordered and described according to standardised museum practices, unlike the idiosyncratic methods of organisation and cataloguing that the private collector chooses to employ. Although, of course, these idiosyncrasies remain on accession to the museum/archive until the collection is catalogued and arranged by the institution's staff.

Critical approaches to the private and the public increasingly interpret the distinction between the two concepts as being far more fluid and permeable than has been suggested by Sennett and Habermas. Habermas, in particular, has been accused of dichotomizing the public and the private which is in contrast to contemporary research that increasingly seeks to dismantle such a dichotomy.¹⁸ Tracy C. Davis argues that: '[s]cholars from a range of disciplines are refining the terminology of public and private and historicizing the social effects with an eye to recognizing complexity rather than reductively concluding that one either obeys, disobeys, or lives anomalously outside the model.'¹⁹ I recognise this complexity and suggest that the public and the private, rather than opposing and antithetical concepts, are nebulous terms. They exist in what Gary T. Marx describes as 'murky conceptual waters'.²⁰ The boundaries between the two terms are not fast, as Habermas sometimes implies, but permeable.²¹ I argue throughout this thesis for the inherent contradictions, instabilities and conflicts within notions of the private and the public in the context of the private collection and the public archive. I suggest that the

¹⁸ See Craig Calhoun, 'Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere' in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (London: The MIT Press, 1993), pp. 1-50, p. 37.

¹⁹ Tracy C. Davis, 'Private Women and the Public Realm' in *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 35, Issue 1 (May 1994), pp. 65-71, p. 66.

²⁰ Gary T. Marx, 'Murky conceptual waters: The public and the private' in *Ethics and Information Technology*, Vol. 3, Issue 3 (September 2001), pp.157-169.

²¹ Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century' in Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 289-339, p. 317.

private collection and the public archive, far from being two opposing and distinct entities are engaged in a fluid, communicative relationship, informed by and in dialogue with one another. Furthermore, I argue that the private and the public intermingle, clash, co-exist and converse within the private theatre collection and the public archive which houses it. This thesis then, aims to demonstrate how the collector of theatrical ephemera also occupies a complex and unstable position as both a private and a public figure. An interrogation of these contradictions and the unstable encounters between the private and the public in the space of the theatre collection offers a re-reading of the private collection and the public archive, demanding a renewed understanding of the complex relationship between collector and collection.

Introducing the collectors

I have chosen to concentrate my field of research on Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters for a number of pertinent reasons. Firstly, I would argue that any study of the collector and private collection of theatrical ephemera must make frequent, detailed reference to Enthoven and her collection. Though public institutions around the world had been collecting theatrical ephemera and play-texts from the late 1800s, Enthoven's private theatre collection was one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind to be housed in a British public archive.²² On arrival at the Museum, her collection consisted

²² Enthoven's collection was not the first of its kind to be housed in a public archive. The Library of Congress began collecting play texts from all periods and countries in 1870, whilst the private theatre collections of actor Edwin Booth and of actor John Gilbert were given to the Players Club in New York in 1888 and the Boston Public Library in 1889 respectively. The Harvard Theatre Collection was founded in 1901 with a gift from Professor George Pierce Baker that consisted of portraits of David Garrick. Furthermore, the German actress and dramatist Clara Ziegler bequeathed her home and library to the city of Munich to be used as a theatre museum upon her death in 1909 with a legacy for the maintenance of her theatre collection. See Carolyn A. Sheehy (ed.), *Managing Performing Arts Collections in Academic and Public Libraries* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994) and Louis A. Rachow, 'The Development of Theatre Collections and their Present State: An Overview' in *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 34 (May 1993), pp. 91-96.

of approximately 80,000 playbills.²³ Indeed, before the arrival of her collection at the V&A in 1924, there had been no department or section of a British museum dedicated to theatrical or performing arts. The collection's arrival at the Museum thus altered the way in which private theatre collections were understood and recognised by both the public and the public archive. As detailed earlier, Enthoven's collected theatrical material formed the foundation of the V&A's Theatre and Performance collections, the largest such collection in the United Kingdom, and amongst, if not *the*, largest in the world. It is therefore necessary that my argument is established in the context of Enthoven and her collection, a pivotal collection and collector in the history of the private theatre collection made public.

An examination of Mander and Mitchenson and their collection forms a major component of this research due to the near unrivalled scope and size of their private collection. Prior to its inclusion within the University of Bristol Theatre Collection, the collection was one of the three largest theatre ephemera collections in England.²⁴ The collection comprises one-thousand-five-hundred reference boxes, one-thousand boxes of personal archives, and personal materials and papers concerning Mander and Mitchenson themselves. The two collectors produced no fewer than nineteen theatrical books using the materials from their private collection, ranging from works on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to a study of British Music Hall. They have been the subject of glossy magazine features, newspaper articles, theatrical anecdotes, and coffee-table books.

Finally, as the first researcher to have access to Roy Waters's private collection within its new context in the public archive of RHUL, this thesis brings a new and previously

²³ James Laver, 'Gabrielle Enthoven and the Enthoven Theatre Collection' in *Studies in English Theatre History* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1952), pp. 1-8, p. 3.

²⁴ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/mander--mitchenson-collection/> - accessed 21 October 2015.

unknown theatre collection to public attention and to the scrutiny of academic interrogation. Just as there is a hierarchy that defines the collectors in terms of their public and private appeal and profile, so too does there exist a hierarchy pertaining to the size and scope of the collections. Waters's collection cannot compete with the size and scope of the material that comprises Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson's collections, it consisting of under 400 boxes containing just a fraction of the amount of theatrical ephemera and materials contained within these more established collections. What the RWTC does provide, however, is a source of new and rich materials hitherto unexamined and untouched by scholars in the field of theatre and performance studies, allowing for new connections, parallels and relationships between collectors, private collections and the public archive to be drawn. The RWTC also gives me the opportunity to examine a more contemporary theatre collection accumulated in an age in which the digital is fast changing how the theatre collection, collector, and public archive are conceived and how they operate and are used.

The theatre collector as academic subject

There has, at the time of writing, been no major work dedicated to the collector of theatrical ephemera and the private theatre collection in the context of the public archive. Enthoven appears as a footnote in the collected letters of Oscar Wilde, whilst a small number of letters from John Gielgud to Enthoven are published in volumes of Gielgud's collected letters. In the biographies of Noël Coward there are fleeting references to Enthoven with whom he stayed in New York in the 1920s. Similarly, Mercedes de Acosta mentions Enthoven on a number of occasions in her autobiography *Here lies the Heart* (1960). Jean Scott Rogers in her study of the origins of the Theatre Museum, *Stage by Stage: The Making of the Theatre Museum* (1985), provides a fairly detailed account of

the beginnings of Enthoven's collection and its transition to the V&A. Enthoven appears momentarily in a number of biographies of Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge in which she is described as 'a playwright and theatre historian' who gave 'faultless dinner parties.'²⁵ One of the few scholarly works to consider Enthoven and her collection is Catherine Haill's chapter 'Accidents of survival: Finding a place in the V&A's theatre and performance archives' (2011).²⁶ Haill provides valuable insight into Enthoven's collecting techniques and her collection's role in founding the Museum's Theatre and Performance Department within the context of the ephemeral nature of the theatre and performance event.

Since commencing this research project, Kate Dorney and I have contributed to the publicising and scholarly recognition of Enthoven and her collection. This consists of a Wikipedia page,²⁷ V&A online blogs,²⁸ Enthoven's addition to the Oxford DNB,²⁹ a journal article by Dorney,³⁰ conference papers and lectures. The function of these activities is to establish Enthoven as a theatrical figure at the heart of the public theatre archive and to increase her profile amongst a research community whose members may offer their own previously unvoiced knowledge of Enthoven and her contemporaries. Though the outcomes of these activities are difficult to measure, it is hoped that such work has increased awareness of Enthoven and her impact upon the theatre and

²⁵ Diana Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), p. 121.

²⁶ In Glen McGillivray (ed.), *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia: Hidden Archives of Performance* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), pp. 105-128.

²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabrielle_Enthoven - accessed 23 December 2015.

²⁸ Kate Dorney, *Introducing Enthoven* (3 June 2014) - <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/tales-archives/introducing-enthoven> and Eve Smith, *The Private Life of Gabrielle Enthoven* (6 May 2015) - <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/theatre-and-performance-2/the-private-life-of-gabrielle-enthoven> - accessed 23 December 2015.

²⁹ Kate Dorney, 'Enthoven, (Augusta) Gabrielle Eden (1868–1950)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, September 2014) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57054> - accessed 23 Dec 2015.

³⁰ Kate Dorney, 'Excavating Enthoven: investigating a life of stuff' in *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, Vol. 34, Issue 2 (2014), pp. 115-125.

performance collections at the V&A, albeit, and admittedly, amongst a select group of theatre historians and scholars that are likely to seek out such information and attend such events.

Mander and Mitchenson mined their collection for information and images to create illuminating works on the history of the theatre and its leading figures. Various materials were selected and pulled from different parts of their collection - photographs, engravings, playbills - in order to complete these works, and so their collection, as I have suggested, has seldom been considered as a private theatre collection in its entirety. Though there are a number of scholars and theatre professionals who were acquainted with Mander and Mitchenson, the two collectors, like Enthoven, are not the subject of frequent scholarly speculation. In 2003, however, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded a three year cataloguing project to be undertaken on the collection. Sophie Nield, a previous trustee and member of the Board of Directors for the MMTC, worked on the project and her publications on the experiences and challenges of cataloguing the collection are drawn on throughout the thesis.

Mitchenson appears in a glossy, seven page spread in Susannah Johnston and Tim Beddow's *Collecting: The Passionate Pastime* (1986). Alongside features on some unarguably eccentric collectors and their collections including Lady Diana Cooper and her unicorn collection and Jack Hampshire and his collection of prams, Mitchenson and the other featured collectors are presented as oddities to pore over and marvel at. Mander and Mitchenson and their collection were the subject of a 1987 special episode of the

documentary series *Bygones*³¹ and they were also guests on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Desert Island Discs* in January 1978.³²

The only existing publication on Waters and his collection consists of a two-page feature published in 1996 in *Times Weekend* entitled ‘An exhibitionist in his own home: A collector brings drama to the drawing room (and the rest of the house).’³³

Archival research

This thesis brings together different approaches to the archive that include my own archival research into the personal papers of the collector alongside research into the private theatre collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. I bring the findings of this research forward in relation to a wide range of secondary sources: anecdotal, (auto)biographical, journalistic, critical, and academic. I have conducted research in a number of public archives including the Theatre and Performance collections at the V&A, the Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections at RHUL, the University of Bristol Theatre Collection, and both the Manuscripts collections and the Performing Arts collections at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. This work provides the reader with a detailed overview of a discrete selection of collectors and their private theatre collections, extending the findings and arguments beyond the particularities and peculiarities of these case studies in ways that will open up discussion and enquiry as well as demonstrating and embracing the tremendous variety of objects, books and ephemera gathered by the theatre collector. These are the materials that

³¹ Eddie Anderson, ‘The Boys of Sydenham Hall’, *Bygones Special*, Anglia Television (Broadcast 26 March 1987), Television.

³² ‘Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson’, *Desert Island Discs*, BBC Radio 4 (Broadcast Tuesday 31 January 1978) Radio. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p009mz24> - accessed 21 October 2015. Mander and Mitchenson state they would take personal photograph albums and a complete run of *Who’s Who in the Theatre* onto the desert island with them.

³³ Alan Road, ‘An exhibitionist in his own home’ in *Times Weekend* (Saturday 6 January 1996).

constitute the private theatre collection; and these are the materials that go on to form the public archive. From the masses of theatrical playbills collected by Enthoven, to the significant collection of Staffordshire porcelain theatrical figures assembled by Mander and Mitchenson, and finally to the array of Oscar Wilde materials collected by Waters, the theatre collection is an eclectic, diverse and utterly idiosyncratic thing.

i. Personal Papers

A significant element of my archival research has consisted of work on the personal papers of the theatre collector. These papers contain the materials resulting from the private life of the collector and they often accompany the private theatre collection as it moves into the public archive. The personal papers can include anything from family photographs, private correspondence, diaries, and school reports, to objects such as jewellery and medals. Enthoven's personal papers make up a discrete collection at the V&A consisting of forty-seven, as yet uncatalogued, boxes. Of these forty-seven boxes, the majority contain production ledgers and theatrical prints: only seven of these boxes contain material directly related to the private life of Enthoven. Mander and Mitchenson's collection contains a number of boxes, approximately nineteen, housing their personal papers and affects;³⁴ whilst the RWTC includes eighty boxes and one file of Waters's personal papers.

Significantly, the personal papers of theatre collectors are frequently overlooked in favour of the theatrical materials that comprise the theatre collection itself. Many personal papers belonging to theatre collectors remain uncatalogued within the public theatre archive,

³⁴ The MMTC is currently divided between two sites at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. The cataloguing of the collection is still underway and exact numbers as to the amount of boxed materials and personal papers are currently difficult to assess.

including those belonging to Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson.³⁵ Personal papers contain crucial evidence that uncover the personal minutiae of the collectors' lives: their motivations to collect; their relationships to other collectors; their beliefs in the significance and importance of their collections, and their friendships, romances, passions and peeves. These materials represent a complex palimpsest of the collector's private and public attitudes, relationships, and anxieties. In a 2001 study, *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other*, Michael Rowlands suggests that steps *are* slowly being taken toward positioning the collector as a subject worthy of recognition. Rowlands writes:

If museums partially function to gather together and preserve material that would be dispersed or lost to posterity, the bittersweet irony is that they often wilfully or negligently abandon the collector in the mists of time. Perhaps the individual is not so much lost by the institution but usurped, as the Museum takes on the role of collector. Perhaps museums are a subordinate presence in this collection of essays because this historical misdemeanour is at long last being righted and collectors, rescued from anonymity.³⁶

I echo Rowlands's words in arguing that this thesis aims to assert the collector of theatrical ephemera's right to be recognised and acknowledged as a subject worthy of rigorous scholarly attention. The personal papers of such collectors provide a wealth of primary archival material that reveals the private passions of the theatre collector, much of which has neither been used nor made use of since its arrival in the public archive. It is from these neglected materials that I can begin to recover the theatre collector. Rather than being relegated to an afterthought and kept behind the scenes, the theatre collector takes centre stage. Unlike Rowlands, however, I consider the museum, or public archive, to be a pivotal, omnipresent force within this work. The private theatre collection and

³⁵ There is something to be said here about the politics of cataloguing: about the cataloguing projects that receive funding and those that do not; about the materials that do not receive the full focus and attention of the archivist; and about the materials that are promoted and made available for archival exploration by the institution and those that remain in the less visible spaces of the archive.

³⁶ Michael Rowlands, 'Foreword' in Anthony Shelton (ed.), *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other* (London: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2001), p. 7.

theatre collector are constantly and consistently framed and analysed against the backdrop of the public archive in which they now exist and perform.

ii. Newspapers, magazines, etc.

Contemporary newspaper and magazine reports from publications such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* are used throughout this work alongside specialist theatrical publications such as *The Stage* and *The Era*. Such materials have proved invaluable in providing information in the form of special features, news stories, reviews, and obituaries about theatre collectors and their collections and theatrical activities. These sources have been particularly useful in excavating the life of Enthoven whose collection and personal papers engender as many questions as they answer.

In addition to the newspaper materials present in the archive, many of the newspaper articles I employ in this study have been accessed via digitised means within digital archives. The development of the online document and archive is explored in greater detail in Chapter Five alongside a consideration of the future of the theatre collector and collection in an increasingly digitised age.

Critical and theoretical approaches

This archival research is informed by and interrogated within a framework built upon a diverse range of critical and theoretical approaches (biographical, historical, sociological, gendered). Significant works from the fields of theatre history and historiography, archive theory, museum studies, material culture studies, and the theory and psychology of collecting practices are used to position this thesis within the context of a number of different disciplines and ways of working. This thesis synthesises these different critical lenses in order to create a select theoretical and critical context within which I interrogate

the theatre collector and private theatre collection. This approach is unashamedly eclectic in reaching out to a wide body of critical literature in order to establish and argue for new parallels and relationships between both complementary and contrasting works and disciplines to best inform and construct an investigation of the private collections of the theatre collector and to follow their transitions to a public archive.

This thesis, then, is not underpinned by one sole theoretical argument; nor does it rely on or build upon the work of one key historian, theoretician or writer. Rather, I select a number of texts that are vital in supporting, clarifying and strengthening the arguments in this thesis as well as working to expand the body of knowledge from which this thesis borrows and builds upon. I illuminate the ways in which this study offers new understandings and insights into the collector and collection of theatrical ephemera, whilst highlighting the paucity of scholarly works currently dedicated to this subject. Thus I delineate the particular space, or gap, in which this thesis can be situated. Above all, work undertaken in the field of theatre and performance history and historiography underpins this thesis, and it is to this field that this thesis makes a contribution.

Key works that are most useful in the shaping and informing of particular chapters are interrogated in further depth and analysed for the contribution that they make to this study as the thesis unfolds.

i. Theories and the psychology of collecting

I employ a select group of works and approaches that explore the history, theory, psychology and future of collecting. Though this thesis concentrates on the collecting of theatrical ephemera it is imperative to delineate the integral theories and processes of collecting itself, be that collecting art, stamps or any other materials. An engagement with

critical enquiries into the psychology of collecting is crucial to understanding the motivations that drive individuals such as Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters to collect theatrical ephemera. An investigation of important works in this area (including works by Susan M. Pearce and Russell W. Belk) are discussed below and these works enable the thesis to consider why individuals collect, how they collect, what they collect, where they collect, and who is collecting. Such works are also important in illuminating the significance of the collection within a variety of social, historical, and financial contexts.

The significant amount of writing on the theory and study of collecting marks the activity as a popular and alluring subject for the researcher and is commonly framed within the fields of psychology, material culture studies or museum studies. Rigby and Rigby's *Lock, Stock and Barrel: The Story of Collecting* (1944) offers a comprehensive exploration of collecting, ranging from an analysis of the psychological motivations that drive the collecting instinct, to a history of collecting spanning the ancient world, by way of the Italian Renaissance and culminating in contemporary America. The volume offers a diverse range of explanations as to why individuals are collecting, and asserts that collecting can be a means to immortality, to knowledge, to social distinction or to physical security. This thesis recognises Rigby and Rigby's text as an important work in the field of collecting theory. It offers a comprehensive insight into collecting that has proved invaluable in my analysis of the private passions that drive and inform the collector of theatrical ephemera. Unlike a prominent number of works in the field that concentrate on the practice of fine art collecting, Rigby and Rigby assert that though their work does indeed pay tribute to the great collectors, the 'men and women to whom the world owes

an infinite debt of gratitude',³⁷ they also pay homage to the everyday collectors, the magpies, the souvenir-snatchers, the great collectors' 'backward brothers'.³⁸ Rigby and Rigby place as much emphasis on the collector of furniture, of books, or of paperweights as to the individual whose collections fill the galleries of the world's most esteemed museums. Indeed, the authors dedicate this work to 'the enlightened amateur, preserver of so many good things of the earth, whose contribution to society, although great, has been little acknowledged.'³⁹ This dedication speaks of the collector who has commonly received less attention and whose actions, though great, are rarely the subject of analysis let alone appreciation. Rigby and Rigby's investigation thus complements and informs a thesis dedicated to celebrating the unacknowledged and enlightened private collector of theatrical ephemera.

The work of Pearce and Belk in particular is of paramount value to this research. Belk's *Collecting as luxury Consumption: Effects on individuals and households* (1995), and *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (1995), comprise a body of work that engages with many aspects of collecting. Belk offers an analysis of collecting in the context of a culture that is increasingly commercial and consumerist and he interrogates the practice of collecting in a society that prizes ownership and the accumulation of objects in proving or displaying financial and social success: key elements in understanding the capitalisation and cultural 'value' of the collection that this thesis interrogates in Chapter Four.

³⁷ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. xix.

³⁸ Ibid. Similarly, in a study day organised by the V&A, silver expert Timothy Schroder described how collectors may be categorised into five different groups: magpie, scholar, perfectionist, obsessive, and aesthete. Schroder, 'Collecting silver for the Gilberts: between private and public collection' delivered at a study day entitled 'I Just Like Beautiful Things', V&A (16 November 2013).

³⁹ Rigby and Rigby, dedication in *Lock, Stock and Barrel*.

Susan M. Pearce is one of the most influential and prolific writers on the theory of collecting in the context of the museum and public archive, and her work is employed throughout this thesis. Works such as *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study* (1992), and *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (1998) provide very useful approaches to the theatre collector, whilst a series edited by Pearce entitled *The Collector's Voice*, volumes 1-4 (2000-2002) is useful here for its ability, and desire, to situate the voice of the collector at the forefront of research into the practice of collecting. These volumes present a number of diverse materials on collectors and their collections in the form of press releases, speeches, personal memoirs, extracts from novels, newsletters, correspondence, government documents and more. This plethora of materials showcase the extent to which collecting informs the public and the individuals that comprise it and marks it less as an odd or eccentric pastime to be interrogated, but as a practice that infiltrates society at all levels from children's clubs to government policy. The materials are gathered from a huge number of varied sources and offer a considered, curated account of collecting ranging from ancient times to the present day, from the Ancient Greeks to collecting on the Internet. *Volume 3: Imperial Voices* (2002) and *Volume 4: Contemporary Voices* (2002) provide this thesis with a range of diverse and obscure sources that mark a necessary and welcome contribution to literature on the collector. Again, however, collectors of theatrical ephemera are conspicuous by their absence.

ii. Theatre history and historiography

Studies that contribute to research in theatre history and historiography also underpin the theoretical framework of this thesis. They are useful in contextualising the collector and collection of theatrical ephemera within explorations pertaining to how theatre histories

and narratives are created and constructed. Many works have contributed to my understanding but there are several key texts that have been of importance in shaping the methodological and theoretical approaches adopted by this thesis. Jacky Bratton's *New Readings in Theatre History* (2003) contributes significantly to my research, and I focus particularly on Bratton's exploration of the anecdote, a previously discounted and marginal form of historical 'evidence' due to its perceived unreliability, and how it can be embraced in the process of writing theatre histories. Bratton argues that in the anecdotes, personal memoirs and (auto)biographies of theatrical figures, there is 'a world of historical meaning in what they say about themselves, whether or not we have tangible proof of its truth.'⁴⁰ A discernible amount of material on the collectors that appear in this thesis consists of anecdotal evidence. The narrative of Enthoven's life, for example, is particularly reliant on the weaving of anecdotal evidence with fact. Throughout this thesis and in my approach to archival research, I share Bratton's drive towards an alternative writing and framing of theatrical histories that acknowledge the anecdote as a site of historical meaning; though with an acute understanding of its precariousness. *New Readings in Theatre History* complements work undertaken by Thomas Postlewait on the historiographical concern with anecdote and memory. Through the course of my research, I recognise and interrogate what Postlewait, in 'The Criteria for Evidence: Anecdotes in Shakespearean Biography, 1709-2000' (2003), terms 'the dark, troubling mutuality between anecdotes and facts'⁴¹ and I consider both Bratton and Postlewait as pivotal to the argument this thesis makes for the construction of histories that have previously been ignored due to a lack of factual evidence. I embrace the anecdote as an integral component

⁴⁰ Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 131.

⁴¹ Thomas Postlewait, 'The Criteria for Evidence: Anecdotes in Shakespearean Biography, 1709-2000' in W. B. Worthen and Peter Holland (eds.), *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 47-70, p. 66.

in the construction of the personal narratives and histories of the collector of theatrical ephemera.⁴²

Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone's essay 'The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research' (2011) is invaluable for its consideration of the ways in which theatre historians can work with theatre archives creatively in order to produce theatre histories. Gale and Featherstone consider archival research in the context of an archive that is increasingly digitised. They argue for innovative methods in the combining of digital practices with more traditional historiographical methodologies and I investigate these arguments in Chapter Five. They suggest that: 'creative archival research demands more of theatre/performance researchers than simply gathering evidence; sometimes the laundry bill is as significant as the prompt copy, and the truths which it reveals have to be balanced and interpreted with imagination.'⁴³ It is with this creativity and imagination in mind that I have sought to approach my own archival work into the collections and personal papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters, full as they are with anecdotes, missing answers and trails that lead to nowhere.

iii. The museum

Critical and theoretical approaches to the role, significance and purpose of the museum are used to position the private theatre collection in the context of the public archive. This exploration of the role and significance of the museum both culturally and societally enables an evaluation of the significance of the theatre collections it houses. Scott

⁴² At the time of writing, Paul Menzer's *Anecdotal Shakespeare: A New Performance History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015) has just been published. Anecdote is becoming an increasingly valid and embraced element in the constructing of new and alternative performance histories.

⁴³ Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone, 'The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research' in Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (eds.), *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 17-40, p. 38.

Rogers' *Stage by Stage: The Making of the Theatre Museum* is a pivotal text in the contextualising of the relationship between the private theatre collection and the public archive. As a descriptive work charting the campaign to open a theatre museum in London, from Enthoven's pleas in 1911 to the eventual opening of the Museum in 1987, Scott Rogers provides an unrivalled text from which to glean the events and activities that led to the founding of the Theatre Museum. This work is used not for its scholarly or theoretical contribution to investigations of the theatre collection and public theatre archive - of which it makes no claims to contribute - but to its unparalleled description of the historical and social context in which the private theatre collection is understood in relation to the public archive.

iv. Social, cultural and personal contexts

In addition to theoretical and critical works from the fields of collecting theory, theatre history and historiography, museum and archive studies, I am interested in situating the collector within his or her cultural context. The broader frame of my enquiry is situated within the context of a cultural materialist approach and I have looked for and selected writing that illuminates the cultural, political, social, and personal contexts in which the collector of theatrical ephemera lived, performed, and collected. The collected letters, autobiographies, biographies, and diaries of theatrical and artistic figures such as Noël Coward, Oscar Wilde, and Una Troubridge illustrate the social networks of which the collectors were a part and, more often than not, locate the collector as a footnote or an anecdotal afterthought on the periphery of the narrative which demands further exploration. Books and guides written for the perusal of the private theatre collector themselves such as George Speaight's *Collecting Theatre Memorabilia* (1988) offer a

valuable insight into the materials that arouse the private passions of the theatre collector and the methods by which they may be acquired, and for how much money.

Structuring the thesis

The chapters in this thesis are structured thematically and reflect a range of current historiographical, archival, theatrical and technological concerns and tensions that frame and characterise much of the contemporary research being carried out in the fields of theatre and performance studies, archive studies and museum studies. Such a thematic structure allows me to integrate and interrogate all four collectors, and all three collections, simultaneously within these thematic contexts. I examine themes such as absence and presence within the collection and archive; the social networks inhabited by the collector of theatrical ephemera; the motivations behind the theatre collecting impulse; the future of the digital collection; notions of historical truth; anecdote, and the significance of the theatre collection and collector in the studying and creating of theatre and performance histories. Rather than constructing this thesis as a series of case-studies featuring the individual theatre collector and their private collection, I have chosen to arrange the work thematically in order to make comparisons and contrasts between the collectors and their collections more easily visible and to enable in-depth and richer parallels and contrasts to be drawn. I have, therefore, avoided the format of the case-study in order to avoid a tendency towards what can become a divisive, sometimes sanitised structure. Within a case-study format, the collector and their collection stands alone, interrogated as an isolated figure rather than a piece of the sometimes messier, and certainly more precarious, jigsaw of theatrical collecting and collectors of which they are a part. Instead, this thematic structure permits the possibility of an analysis in which the collectors, their collecting practices and their collections can be brought into a dialogue

with one another and through which the networks in which the collector and collection are entangled can be untangled and ultimately exposed.

The chapters

Chapter One introduces Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters in greater detail, providing an overview of their theatre collections including: what they were collecting, how they collected, and how their private collections moved to the public archive. I consider how the private theatre collector gathers the materials from which theatrical narratives and histories are constructed, positioning the collector as a figure on the threshold of the past and the present.

Chapter Two takes a closer look at the private and public lives of the collectors to establish how notions of gender, sexuality, financial status and class impact upon the collector and their theatre collection. An interrogation of the social, intellectual and artistic networks in which the collector moves, demonstrates how the lived experiences of the collector shape the public theatre archive. I investigate in greater detail the transition of the private collection to the public archive, and the impact of this upon the theatre collector as a private and/or public figure.

Chapter Three interrogates notions of absence and presence in the private collection and the public archive. I suggest that both the public archive and private theatre collection are rife with absence and disappearances, the ephemeral nature of theatre itself providing what I term a ‘double-ephemerality’ in the layered space of the theatre collection. Jacques Derrida argues that there would be ‘no archive desire without [...] the possibility of a

forgetfulness'.⁴⁴ I consider the archival materials that historians choose to forget, focusing on the presence and the neglect of anecdote in the collection and archive. In this chapter, I call for the considered and increased use of anecdote in constructions of theatre histories and biographies.

Chapter Four considers the hierarchies of collecting, examining how notions of value, worth, and legitimacy present themselves in collections of different objects. I evaluate the positioning of the theatre collection within perceived hierarchies of collecting and employ Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to frame this interrogation. I question why public institutions seek to house, preserve and display the remnants of the theatrical past and how this situates theatre and performance as an integral component of a nation's history and cultural heritage.

Chapter Five looks forward to the future of the theatre collection in an age in which the collection and the archive is becoming increasingly digitised. I suggest that the practices of the collector, too, are evolving in this digital environment and I examine their changing methods of collecting, the online collecting communities they participate in, and the use of digital media within the theatre collection. Ultimately, I argue that the theatre collector remains a distinctively human agent in the creating and making of the theatre collection and public archive.

Moving on and the first conclusion

This thesis argues for the increased recognition and appreciation of the collector of theatrical ephemera, calling for a shift in the gaze of the archival researcher from the

⁴⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression'. Trans. Eric Prenowitz in *Diacritics*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 9-63, p. 19.

collected materials to the collectors themselves. I conclude that my research has demonstrated the critical importance of the private collector and private collection of theatrical ephemera in the making and preserving of theatrical histories. I suggest that this thesis contributes new provocations to the field of theatre history and goes some way to exposing the private passions of the theatre collector, and their private collection's intimate and profound relationship to the public archive. I determine that this work provides a starting point from which new stories and personal histories of theatre collectors and their collections can, and must, be uncovered. I also point to further areas and concerns unexplored by this thesis that may be considered by future works in the field.

I conclude this introduction with the words of Arlette Farge:

We cannot bring back to life those whom we find cast ashore in the archives. But this is not a reason to make them suffer a second death. There is only a narrow space in which to develop a story that will neither cancel out nor dissolve these lives, but leave them available so that another day, and elsewhere, another narrative can be built from their enigmatic presence.⁴⁵

This thesis cannot and does not seek to bring the collector of theatrical ephemera back to life. Rather, it aims to respectfully explore the private passions of the collector of theatrical ephemera. This work excavates the biographies and histories of the collectors of the theatrical past, making them available for others to find and for future histories and narratives to be made. The stories of the men and women that shape this enquiry will demonstrate the necessity for theatre histories that embrace and commemorate the remarkable, or indeed unremarkable, private lives of the collector who informs and shapes the public archive. Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are the individuals

⁴⁵ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, pp. 121-122.

that dedicated their very lives to their collections; collections that house the fundamental materials from which theatre histories and narratives are, and will continue to be, written and rewritten.

Chapter One: Haunting the Past, or the Haunted Present: the collecting and creating of theatre histories

'While the past was real, history is our creation, and it does not exist outside of us. Rather, it is continually co-constituted in our encounters with the traces of the past'.

- Jaimie Baron⁴⁶

The collector of theatrical ephemera gathers and preserves the traces of the past: the photographs that capture a single moment in a performance; the playbills that fix the day, date, and time of a past theatrical event on paper; the costumes that bear the invisible imprint of the performer's body. As Jaimie Baron asserts, histories are created and forged from encounters with the material traces of the past. The interactions that the historian and the researcher have with the materials that comprise the theatre collection give birth to the creation and production of theatre histories and narratives. I suggest that the collector, by gathering, or rescuing, the material culture secreted by the theatrical event, is a figure that occupies a space upon the threshold of the past and the present. Surrounded by the stuff of theatre history, the collector possesses the objects and documents from which the stories of the theatrical past can be created for, and in, the present. The theatrical object memorialises theatre and the collector's interactions with these objects reaffirm the object's history as a performative event.⁴⁷ As Baron articulates, histories are neither organic nor absolute: they are produced, invented, and interpreted.

This positioning of the theatre collector as bridging the space between the past and the present evokes a question posed by Caroline Newman as she considers the activities of the historian and the student of historical texts. Newman asks: 'is it we who haunt the past

⁴⁶ Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 177.

⁴⁷ Peter Holland, 'A History of Histories: From Flecknoe to Nicoll' in Worthen and Holland, *Theorizing Practice*, pp. 8-29, p. 15.

or the past that haunts us?’⁴⁸ This chapter seeks to interrogate the extent to which the collector and collection of theatrical ephemera can be understood to haunt the past, and indeed the extent to which both the collector and the materials of the past haunt the present. Can a costume, a playbill, a letter, or a first-night review, alive as they are with memories or the potential for remembering, transmit these memories to the present? Can the collected objects and personal papers present in the public archive bring forth the fleeting, ephemeral nature of the theatrical event or the life of the collector from the spaces of the dead to the spaces of the living? The activity of collecting theatrical memorabilia constitutes what I will term a ‘double ephemerality.’ The theatre collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters contain the ephemeral remains of the inevitably ephemeral performance event: a double layering of ephemerality within the space of the collection. Jacky Bratton asserts that it is the peculiarly fleeting nature of performance that provokes a desire to recapture it, to document it so as to prevent its inevitable disappearance. Bratton writes: ‘the unique poignancy of the theatrical experience, which comes from the intensity of its presence and hence the sense of loss when it is over, has evoked a wish to capture those stories, to pass on our individual sense of that magic for many generations’.⁴⁹ Can theatrical objects from the past embody the means through which to capture these stories? How might the collector be configured as a medium through which these stories from the theatrical past are (re)told and remembered for and in the present and the future?

In this chapter I introduce Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters in greater detail, illuminating their collections and mapping the transition of their private collections to the public archive. Through an investigation of collectors’

⁴⁸ Caroline Newman, ‘Cemeteries of Tradition: The Critique of Collection in Heine, Nietzsche, and Benjamin’ in *Pacific Coast Philology*, Vol. 19, No. 1-2 (November 1984), pp. 12-21, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Bratton, *New Readings*, p. 17.

relationships to their collected materials I suggest that the practice of collecting is integral to the formation of historical narratives. Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters create spaces in which theatre histories can be created, dismantled, unravelled, and interrogated in the present.

Enthoven and her private collection

In Enthoven's personal papers there are a number of different stories that recount the moment when Enthoven started to collect theatrical ephemera. In 1938, Enthoven was interviewed in *The Evening News* about the genesis of her collection. She says: 'it started when, in 1900, I noticed an inaccuracy in some book of stage history. Being passionately interested in the theatre, I wrote to the author who admitted a mistake [...] soon afterwards I happened to find some old playbills that proved my point. That was when the "collecting" flea bit me'.⁵⁰ On another occasion, Enthoven recalls that: 'soon after my marriage [I] began pasting up in scrapbooks various press cuttings dealing with the theatre. The idea of starting a collection of playbills came into my head when I purchased a quantity of them - some two hundred, I think - from a naval officer, which was the foundation of my collection.'⁵¹ Whether motivated by a passion for the theatre, a desire to eradicate historical inaccuracies, or a chance find, Enthoven began collecting in earnest after her first purchase of playbills. Her collection was comprised of theatrical materials illustrating the history of the London stage from 1730 to the present day in which she

⁵⁰ Biographical File for Gabrielle Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵¹ Gabrielle Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings 1911-52, PN 1620.L7 Folio, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. It is interesting to note that, in the early 1900s, a naval officer was in possession of a substantial playbill collection. A naval officer, and the associated attributes of authority, masculinity, and regulation, are not in the least synonymous with the collecting of playbills, at least not within modern theoretical approaches to collectors and collecting. I discuss the gendered nature of collecting in more detail in Chapter Two but it is worth noting here that modern societal attitudes to collecting might consider a naval officer and his collection of playbills to be an unusual, incongruous pairing. Enthoven makes no comment about the officer and his collection suggesting it was not in any way unusual or noteworthy at the time in which she was collecting.

lived. From the beginning, Enthoven was collecting with a positivist agenda.⁵² Most descriptions of Enthoven's collection make reference to the many thousands of playbills she collected, but she also amassed theatrical illustrations, press-cuttings, photographs, books, prints, and printed texts, again, all related to the history of the London stage. In 1916, Enthoven estimated that her collection contained over 90,000 playbills, making it the most comprehensive collection of London theatre playbills in the world.⁵³ In the early 1920s, spurred on by the collecting flea, her private theatre collection had grown so extensively that it was forcing her out of her flat in Cadogan Gardens, Kensington and Chelsea.⁵⁴

Enthoven's private collecting activities evolved into a crusade-like desire to have her private collection made public. Enthoven campaigned tenaciously in the national press for a public home for her private collection and began to lobby for the formation of a national theatre museum: a public collection for public use. Enthoven's thirteen-year long campaign to find a home for her materials began with a letter to *The Observer* in November 1911: '[s]o many valuable collections of things theatrical have been sold and scattered that would have been of inestimable value to the student and worker of the Drama, for want, I think, of a recognised place where they could be safely housed and easy of access'.⁵⁵ For over a decade Enthoven was discouraged and attempts were made to dissuade her from continuing her campaign. In 1917, however, Enthoven's ever expanding collection received the attention of the public when she donated several of her playbills to an exhibition marking the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death.⁵⁶ A few years later, in 1922, the V&A used various items from Enthoven's collection to present at the

⁵² Dorney, *Excavating Enthoven*, p. 117.

⁵³ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁴ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁵ Jean Scott Rogers, *Stage By Stage: The making of the Theatre Museum* (London: HMSO, 1985), p. xii.

⁵⁶ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

International Theatre Exhibition: Designs and Models for the Modern Stage (June 3-July 16, 1922). Two years later the museum accepted her collection as a permanent part of the museum's holdings.⁵⁷ Jean Scott Rogers notes: '[a]t the close of their exhibition the V&A bought certain of the works [belonging to Enthoven]. This gave Gabrielle Enthoven the impetus to renew her efforts to get the Director to accept her material and in 1924 she succeeded.'⁵⁸ The financial return that Enthoven enjoyed from the selling of pieces in her collection is explored in greater detail in Chapter Four, though it is worth noting that Enthoven was evidently making money from her collecting activities in 1922. Enthoven arrived at the Museum three years later in 1925 with three assistants with whom she settled down to catalogue and arrange the collection.⁵⁹ Enthoven and her private collection came to inhabit a public space. Not only did the collection, through its housing at the museum, become a publicly owned commodity, so too did Enthoven herself relocate from the private space of the domestic to the public arena of a national institution.

Mander and Mitchenson's private collection

Mander and Mitchenson were both actors. Mander, inspired perhaps by a bundle of Irving playbills given to him on his seventh birthday, became an actor when he left school, whilst Mitchenson, who had grown up with a mother who was an amateur actress and a father whose ancestors had strong theatrical connections, had his first experience of acting on the West End in 1934.⁶⁰ Mander and Mitchenson first met on Valentine's Day 1939 and later in that year appeared together in a production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*, p. xiii.

⁵⁹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. Enthoven also donated non-theatrical items to the V&A. These included engravings of Kensington Palace and Bristol cathedral, some Japanese playing cards, and a pair of Persian slippers.

⁶⁰ Rupert Rhymes, 'Mander, Raymond Josiah Gale (1911–1983)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76065> - accessed 4 January 2016.

⁶¹ Ibid.

After the Second World War, the two men formed a personal relationship and moved in together into the home of Mitchenson's mother in Sydenham, London. Realising they shared a passion for the collecting of theatrical ephemera, this period also saw the commencement of a professional and public partnership as theatre collectors. Mitchenson recalls the first acquisition the pair made together in the mid-1940s:

We more or less simultaneously saw it. It was in a very nice antique shop in Cambridge. We were on a very long tour [...] and we saw on a table a piece of Staffordshire which we recognised as Romeo and Juliet and we knew the engraving, we knew it came from a Tallis book on Shakespeare and we thought this is very interesting and we almost simultaneously said 'Look' and we went in and bought it.⁶²

From this starting point, the collection grew and grew and, in 1949, the men began to refer to it as the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection.⁶³ Unlike Enthoven whose collecting was restricted to materials concerning the London theatres, Mander and Mitchenson collected 'anything and everything to do with the theatre'.⁶⁴ This included: playbills, audio recordings, posters, programmes, props, puppets, set designs, tea-towels, glassware, ceramics, commemorative materials, costumes, books, and more. The two men were 'pioneers in many branches of collecting theatre material particularly in relation to theatrical porcelain and pottery.'⁶⁵ At the heart of the collection are the 1,493 reference boxes containing programmes, engravings, photographs and cuttings of London and

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection. The boxes that comprise the personal materials of Mander and Mitchenson have not yet been catalogued by the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. They still carry the archive references given to them by the Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts. When referencing materials in the MMTC I will not be noting the old reference system, as this is no longer valid, but I will note the description of the contents that appear on the archival boxes or folders.

⁶⁵ Quote from George Nash, who was in charge of Enthoven's collection at the V&A for twenty-eight years. In Raymond and Joe, Photos and Correspondence, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

regional theatres, from the earliest days of Drury Lane and Covent Garden to the present day.⁶⁶

In contrast to Enthoven's private collection which moved from her home to a permanent space at the V&A, the private collection of Mander and Mitchenson had a number of public homes before eventually being transferred to the University of Bristol Theatre Collection in 2010. In March 1977, a charitable trust was established with Laurence Olivier as president in order to manage the collection and ensure its long-term future, and the whole collection was given to the nation.⁶⁷ This was prompted by events a few years earlier when Lewisham council threatened to demolish the home of the two collectors and present them with a compulsory purchase order, leaving their collection vulnerable and in need of a new space in which to be housed.⁶⁸ Though the council's attempt was unsuccessful, the search began for a new, public home. Originally the National Theatre had promised to take the collection, but when this proved administratively impossible, the collection moved to the first floor of Beckenham Place Park mansion, a few months before the death of Mander in 1983, and Mitchenson moved in with it a few years later.⁶⁹ Though there were plans to eventually develop the mansion into a formal museum, the collection was never open to the public: visitors consisted almost exclusively of researchers.⁷⁰ The collection remained in this ambiguous space, neither fully private nor fully public, for fifteen years until the cost of renovating the mansion proved too much for the charitable trust.⁷¹ In 2001, after a brief period in The Salvation Army Headquarters, the collection moved to a new home as part of the Jerwood Library of the

⁶⁶ Richard Mangan, 'Mr Theatre and his fabulous collection' in *The Guardian* (7 November 1992).

⁶⁷ Celina Fox, 'Full House' in *Interiors* (November 1982), pp. 137-145, p. 144.

⁶⁸ Kristy Davis and Sophie Nield, 'The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection Access for Research Project: Uncovering the archive' in *The Indexer*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (April 2007), pp. 197-199, p. 197.

⁶⁹ Fox, *Full House*, p. 144.

⁷⁰ Richard Mangan, Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

⁷¹ Rhymes, *Mander, Raymond Josiah Gale (1911-1983)*.

Performing Arts in the Hawksmoor building at the Trinity College of Music, Old Royal Naval College, in Greenwich, under the supervision of Richard Mangan.⁷²

Mander and Mitchenson, like Enthoven, understood the need for a theatre museum. It is worth noting, however, that the Theatre Museum, established in 1987, offered to take the MMTC but were declined by the collection's trustees.⁷³ Mander and Mitchenson did not want their collection to follow in the footsteps of Enthoven's collection and become absorbed by the V&A; they did not want their collection to be 'taken-over' and subject to the rules and regulations of the Museum that might hamper their interactions with their materials.⁷⁴ Indeed, prior to the collection's move to Beckenham Place Park mansion, Mander and Mitchenson's address was included in the Yellow Pages under the heading 'Theatrical Supplies'.⁷⁵ Mander and Mitchenson wanted to maintain control over their private passions and over the making of theatre's histories.

In 2010 it was announced that the collection would be moving to its new home in Bristol. Rupert Rhymes, a trustee of the MMTC from its inception, and its former chairman, criticised the move, saying he was 'appalled at the prospect of the collection moving out of London away from Theatreland which was Ray and Joe's life'.⁷⁶ The decision had been made by the new Chairman of the collection, William Tayleur, and the collection's trust committee. Tayleur declared his delight at the move: '[o]ur founders would be delighted to know that their passion for collecting theatre material is honoured by the accession of

⁷² Davis and Nield, *The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, p. 197.

⁷³ Mangan. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ The Pauline Tooth Profile, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection. After their inclusion in the Yellow Pages, Mander and Mitchenson were frequently, and mistakenly, contacted with requests for theatrical supplies including theatrical smoke and fake moustaches, items that were indeed beyond their remit.

⁷⁶ Natalie Woolman, 'Mander and Mitchenson theatre collection to quit London' in *The Stage* (24 November 2010).

their material into the University of Bristol's collections.⁷⁷ In spite of some who lamented the collection's move from its life-long home in London, its move to Bristol ensured the safeguarding of the collection for future generations.

Waters and his private collection

Waters recalls that he began collecting theatrical ephemera for no other reason than to cover up some particularly ugly wallpaper that filled the hallway of his home in south-west London. He recalls:

The walls were covered in scuffed flock wall-paper, which I could not afford to have stripped and had not inclination to strip myself. Friends suggested the solution: treat the hall like a theatre foyer and cover it with posters and playbills [...] The playbills led on to prints and tinsel portraits, and space was soon commandeered on the walls of the ground floor rooms. I was hooked.⁷⁸

Forty years later, Waters had filled his entire three-storey home in Wandsworth with his private theatre collection. The attic room was filled with runs of theatre programmes; the top floor was decorated with framed eastern-European avant-garde posters; framed playbills, posters and photographs lined his staircase walls and stairwells; rooms on the first floor were filled with model theatres, tinsel prints, and admission tokens; on the ground floor there was a complete run of *Who's Who in the Theatre*, and the front room was covered in *Vanity Fair* prints.⁷⁹ Though Waters collected a wide and eclectic mixture of theatrical ephemera, he also had specific collecting interests and gathered materials accordingly. His collection contains a large number of materials related to Noël Coward and Henry Irving but it is ephemera related to Oscar Wilde that features most prominently in the RWTC.

⁷⁷ Maev Kennedy, 'Vast collection of theatre memorabilia finds university home' in *The Guardian* (19 November 2010).

⁷⁸ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

⁷⁹ John Tuck. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

Amongst the private collections I investigate, it is Waters's collection that has most recently made the move from a private space to the public archive. In 1989 Waters was (incorrectly) diagnosed with terminal cirrhosis of the liver and, in a newsletter to friends, Waters recounts his initial thoughts on receiving the diagnosis:

The first thing that came to mind was my theatrical ephemera. If I were going to die fairly soon, there did not seem much point in adding new items. But what should I do with all the things I had? Should I make arrangements to send the whole collection off to the drama department in one of the new universities? Would any of them want it? It seemed a pity to land any of my friends with the task of disposing [of] it all, and anyway, I rather wished it could be kept intact if possible.⁸⁰

As Waters is forced to contemplate his mortality, his immediate thought is for the future of his theatre collection. This newsletter suggests that Waters had considered bequeathing his collection to an academic institution from early 1989, if not earlier. It marks a transition from his understanding of the collection as private to an understanding of the collection's public potential.

In 2001 Waters recounts a meeting between himself, his close friend David Robinson and Professor David Mayer of the University of Manchester: 'the purpose of this convention was to determine whether my collection might be deemed a Collection, which some academic institution might be interested in housing [...] His [Mayer's] verdict was favourable [...] He thought that Royal Holloway College in London might be interested, or possibly his own university.'⁸¹ In 2002, Gilli Bush-Bailey and Richard Cave of RHUL's Drama and Theatre Department, along with David Ward of RHUL's Library, were amongst the first party from the institution to visit Waters and his collection. In the same year Waters confirms that 'this assemblage has recently been elevated to the status

⁸⁰ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No. 1 April 1989.

⁸¹ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives. It is interesting to note that Mayer was also a trustee of the MMTC from 1997-2010.

of a Collection, and it is to be bequeathed to an outpost of London University, the Theatre and Drama Department of the Royal Holloway College.’⁸² The bequest agreement was signed in 2003. That RHUL deemed his collection worthy of a place in its archives is of great significance to Waters. It alters entirely the perception he has of his collection. It changes, in his own language, from a collection to a *Collection*: lower case becomes upper case. This grammatical amendment demonstrates how Waters understands the changing status of his private collection: it is authoritative, significant and has been legitimised by a public institution. His use of the word ‘elevated’ also points to Waters’s understanding of the spaces his collection transcends: it moves from the ‘lower’ space mediated by the enthusiastic, private collector and enters the elevated space of the authoritative, professional and public archive. Waters’s status as a collector also changes. The move of his collection from his home to RHUL authorises and elevates his identity as a collector. As a man who had dedicated his life to education, the university’s decision to house the collection and make it available for generations of students to come undoubtedly gives Waters great pleasure and reaffirms his identity as an educator.

Unpacking the collection: Benjamin’s library

Walter Benjamin’s essay ‘Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting’ (1931) informs this chapter due to its effective and affective account of the personal interaction between a collector and their collection. I employ Benjamin’s essay here as a framework within which the collector of theatrical ephemera can be interrogated, and in which the materials that comprise the theatre collection can be unpacked. The essay sees Benjamin unpack the disorder of crates containing the several thousand volumes that comprise his personal library: ‘piles of volumes that are seeing daylight again after two years of

⁸² Ibid.

darkness.’⁸³ The purpose of the essay is, according to Benjamin, to give the reader ‘some insight into the relationship of a book collector to his possessions, into collecting rather than a collection.’⁸⁴ Benjamin’s essay is therefore an important and useful work in the context of this thesis for its insights into both the practice of collecting and the complex relationship between collectors and their collected objects. According to Benjamin, the tangible presence of the books in the private space of his attic is interwoven with the intangible presence of the memories they evoke. The books are material objects that both represent and embody a number of layered and intricate histories: the histories printed on the paper pages of the book; the history of where the book has been - the boxes, crates, or libraries in which it has been placed, and the intertwining of the book’s history with the personal histories of its owners. ‘Unpacking My Library’ provides an impassioned account of how a collector interacts with his collection, and how the collected objects both evoke the events and memories of the past, whilst becoming simultaneously intertwined with the memories and personal histories of the collector himself. Benjamin’s account of unpacking his library enables me to consider how the complex relationships and encounters between collectors and their collections are performed. Unpacking his library enables Benjamin to remember the histories therein; just as, I argue, the theatre collector remembers and recounts the histories embodied by and within their collected theatrical ephemera.

⁸³ Walter Benjamin, ‘Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting’ (1931) in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, edited with an introduction by Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zohn (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 59-67, p. 59.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 59-60.

Benjamin's essay is not only an exploration of the psychology, the motivations and the private passions of what he terms the 'genuine collector';⁸⁵ it is also an exploration of the physical spaces inhabited and shared by the collector and their collection. Collectors and collections occupy multiple places and spaces. For example, Benjamin sits in his private library, surrounded by his crates of books; Sigmund Freud worked from his study which was filled with his collection of Egyptian, Roman, Oriental, and Greek antiques;⁸⁶ whilst Robert Opie, when asked whether his life and his private collection of British nostalgia and advertising memorabilia are separate, answers: 'Well, they can't be. I live in it [the collection].'⁸⁷ Benjamin's description of his library and the act of unpacking it is highly evocative. Joseph D. Lewandowski writes: 'around him [Benjamin] stood - in crates, piles and stacks - roughly 2,000 books! One can only imagine such a sight: the melancholy dialectician and author painstakingly unpacking crate after crate, sorting through book after book, long into the night.'⁸⁸ This vivid portrait of a collector amongst their collection encourages the reader to engage with Benjamin's essay on a sensory plane. Indeed, Benjamin himself describes the 'air saturated with the dust of wood, the floor covered with torn paper.'⁸⁹ Just as Benjamin moves within a space dominated by the physical presence of his collection, so too does the collector of theatrical ephemera.

⁸⁵ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 59. In many of the works dedicated to the practice of collecting, a distinction is made between 'genuine' or 'real' collectors and 'fake' or 'illegitimate' collectors. J. Paul Getty, for example, remarks that: 'the true collector does not acquire objects of art for himself alone [...] he is willing and even eager to have others share his pleasure.' J. Paul Getty, *The Joys of Collecting* (London: Country Life Limited, 1966), pp. 7-8. This suggests that there exists a hierarchy of collectors, a theme I explore in greater detail in Chapter Four.

⁸⁶ John Forrester, "'Mille e tre": Freud and Collecting' in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1994), pp. 224 - 251. Sigmund Freud's London home is now a public museum and visitors can see his collection of books and antiquities preserved just as it was in his lifetime. <http://www.freud.org.uk/about/> - accessed 31 December 2015.

⁸⁷ John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, "'Unless you do these crazy things...": An interview with Robert Opie' in Elsner and Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 25-48, p. 43.

⁸⁸ Joseph D. Lewandowski, 'Unpacking: Walter Benjamin and his Library' in *Libraries and Culture*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 151-157, p. 151.

⁸⁹ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 59.

A description of the four-storey house occupied by Mander and Mitchenson evokes some of the atmosphere of a home given over to a private theatre collection: '[t]he rooms are a succession of Victorian parlours. The shelves are loaded with biographies, lined with Staffordshire figures and Parian busts; the cupboards are filled with commemorative ware'.⁹⁰ A Shakespeare bust, positioned in the men's front room, gazed out onto the street from between the curtains. Tea was taken standing up, and visitors found themselves 'dazzled by the theatrical treasure-trove - if decidedly stiff behind the knees'.⁹¹ This is reminiscent of the description I give of Waters's home earlier in the chapter and John Tuck, Director of Library Services at RHUL, provides even more detail of the ways in which Waters's collection was displayed. Visiting the collection shortly before Waters's death in 2010, Tuck describes how the collection was:

visible everywhere in the house, starting with the back of the front door, the walls of the hallway, up the stairs, on the landings, hanging from the ceilings, in the attic where Roy knocked up frames for his wide collection of Oscar Wilde related Vanity Fair prints, on book cases by his bed, in cabinets and on the walls of his study, on tables and chairs in his lounge, and adorning the walls of his toilet.⁹²

Prior to its public move to the V&A, Enthoven's collection of playbills were stored in her dining room cupboards and in specially constructed cabinets, chests and cases in every room of her 'charming bijou flat'.⁹³ Like Benjamin, the theatre collectors I consider here lived in and amongst their collections; their own lives and daily, domestic activities intertwined and inextricable from the physical remnants of the theatrical past. I investigate the ways in which Enthoven et al. performed their collections within the private space of their homes in greater detail in Chapter Two, but this glimpse of the domestic

⁹⁰ Fox, *Full House*, p. 137.

⁹¹ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁹² John Tuck, Message to the author. 1 December 2015. E-mail.

⁹³ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

environment inhabited by the collector and their collection provides the starting point from which the spaces and places they occupy can be considered.

Making meaning in private spaces

The private and the public are often framed as antithetical concepts, understood and defined in contrast to one another. As I argued in the Introduction, however, the distinction between the two realms is far more complex. As Gary T. Marx puts it: ‘[p]ublic and private borders have legitimate and illegitimate crossing points and interstitial gray [*sic*] areas that are often in dispute or unclear.’⁹⁴ The collector occupies a grey space: a space that blurs the boundaries between private and public, interior and exterior, and between the hidden and the exposed. Many of the critical approaches to individual collecting activities, however, situate the practice firmly in the realm of the private. Journalist and book collector Barton Currie, for example, describes the act of acquiring an object for a collection. He writes: ‘you come out of a bookstore carrying a first edition of something or other. You cannot explain how or why you got it, or what you paid for it. But you have it; and when you arrive home with it you creep off to some secluded room to examine it.’⁹⁵ Currie’s description marks the space occupied by the collector as secret, clandestine, and ultimately private. He also hints at an undercurrent of shame and guilt that marks such an activity. By ‘creeping’ to a secluded room the collector is eschewing any possible contact with others or any sharing of the new object. The collector leaves the public street from whence the object was purchased, and, within the safe haven of the secluded room, is only then able to revel in his or her acquisition. This transition of the object from public to private space, from object to possession, is understood by G.

⁹⁴ Marx, *Murky conceptual waters*, p. 160.

⁹⁵ Barton Currie quoted in Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, p. 74.

Thomas Tanselle to be a potentially violent act, to be what he describes as ‘the subsequent segregating of it [the object], through personal possession, from the rest of the world.’⁹⁶ Again, this removal of the object from ‘the rest of the world’ depicts it as moving from the public, accessible to the wider community, to the space of the private, and the individual. Likewise, Hannah Arendt writes that: ‘the collector not only withdraws from the public into the privacy of his four walls but takes along with him all kinds of treasures that once were public property to decorate them.’⁹⁷ This sense of privacy, so often associated with collecting, provokes unease in Waters. In 1999 Waters writes: ‘while it is a great pleasure to own items once handled by great men and women, I feel slightly guilty that these bits of the national heritage should be shut away in drawers inside my house. I do not understand why anyone should want to be secretive.’⁹⁸ Waters is an active participant in the exchange which sees an object removed from the public domain and placed into the enclosed circle of the private theatre collection: a space that Benjamin terms ‘a magic circle’.⁹⁹ However, Waters’s writing articulates his conflicted desire to both possess the object and to publicise this possession, thus ensuring its continued presence in the public sphere from which it is now absent.

Ackbar Abbas argues that the collector’s ownership of an object ‘is an interruption - not in the sense that the private owner takes objects out of circulation, but in the sense that he takes objects that *are* out of circulation and confronts cultural history with them.’¹⁰⁰ When the collector acquires an object and places them into the ‘magic circle’ of the collection, the collector is forming new narratives and forging new relationships and connections

⁹⁶ Tanselle, *A Rationale of Collecting*, p. 18.

⁹⁷ Hannah Arendt, ‘Introduction: Walter Benjamin: 1892-1940’ in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, pp. 7-58, p. 44.

⁹⁸ Oscar Wilde, wit, poet and dramatist, RWTC, RW/2/1/6/64, RHUL Archives.

⁹⁹ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁰ Ackbar Abbas, ‘Walter Benjamin’s Collector: The Fate of Modern Experience’ in *New Literary History*, Vol. 20, No. 1, (Autumn 1988), pp. 217-237, p. 231.

between previously unconnected objects. The collection, whether private or public, represents a confined space whose boundaries are tightly controlled by the collector; a space in which what is allowed in and out is vigorously restricted and mediated. The collected materials, and the entirely new space in which they are arranged, thus have the potential to interrupt existing historical narratives: the ways in which they are organised and juxtaposed by the collector allows for the possibility of new interpretations and readings of the theatrical past. Abbas, then, provides an alternative theorisation of collecting to Currie, Tanselle and Arendt. An acquired object is not removed from the public realm to be locked into a private space. Rather, in the space of the collection, an object is given the opportunity to ‘confront’ and challenge existing cultural and historical narratives as new narratives are woven from the material culture present in the collection. Similar to the quote from Baron that opens this chapter, Hayden White asserts that ‘historical narratives are verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* [emphasis in original]’.¹⁰¹ The found objects that comprise a private collection are interpreted and performed by the collector and become a piece of the jigsaw from which the content of historical narratives are written. Meaning depends on relationships and the new relationships created by the idiosyncratic juxtapositions of objects in the space of the collection have the potential to create new and alternative meanings. Meaning also depends upon who is granted access to these objects: different collectors will make different meanings, and, eventually, a myriad meanings will be made by the researchers and the public who one day access these collections in the space of the public theatre archive.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Rebecca Schneider, *Theatre & History* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 42.

The public can be private

George Speaight, a collector of theatre memorabilia,¹⁰² writes: ‘every time an object is locked away inside a museum a private owner is deprived of the pleasure of possessing it.’¹⁰³ For Speaight to suggest that an object in a museum is ‘locked away’ distorts the common perception of the museum as representing public space. In the context of this thesis, the private collection and the public archive are treated as two separate entities or conditions. As I demonstrate, however, the concepts of private and public are unstable and unfixed. Speaight’s argument speaks to this instability, marking the public space of the museum or public archive as deceptively impenetrable. Speaight marks an object’s entry into the public archive as the removal of the object from circulation. According to Speaight then, the locking away of an object inside a museum or public archive deprives the private owner the pleasure of possession. Speaight’s private collection of theatre memorabilia, consisting of materials related to Punch and Judy, juvenile drama, circus, and puppetry, did indeed end up in a public archive. After Speaight’s death in 2005, the collection was passed down to his children before being gifted to the V&A via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, a scheme that enables the taxpayer to transfer important objects of national heritage to public ownership.¹⁰⁴

Mander and Mitchenson reportedly found the word ‘museum’ rather ‘stuffy’.¹⁰⁵ Instead they envisaged their private collection moving into a public space more akin to a cultural centre; a space comprising their collection, a theatre and an elegant restaurant.¹⁰⁶ Like

¹⁰² I use the term ‘theatrical ephemera’ throughout this thesis unless a collector refers specifically to his or her collected materials as ‘theatre memorabilia’, ‘theatricalia’ or ‘theatricana’ etc.

¹⁰³ George Speaight, *Collecting Theatre Memorabilia* (Derbyshire: Moorland Publishing, 1988), p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb71-thm/375> - accessed 1 January 2015. For more information on the Acceptance in Lieu scheme see <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/cultural-property/tax-incentives/acceptance-lieu/> - accessed 1 January 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Susanna Johnston and Tim Beddow, ‘The Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection’ in Johnston and Beddow, *Collecting: The Passionate Pastime* (Middlesex: Viking, 1986), pp.79-84, p. 84.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Speaight, Mander and Mitchenson wanted their collected materials to resist incorporation into what they understood to be the oppressive space represented by the museum. Instead, the two men imagined an open, public space in which their collection performed alongside theatrical displays, poetry recitals, and live music. It was to be a living archive, rather than a collection locked away in the private space of the public museum.

Internal and embodied spaces

Concepts of the private and public are not limited to the physical or tangible spaces of the museum, the library or the home. Notions of the private and public can be manifest or understood in terms of the interior or exterior life of the collector: the private and public as embodied concepts. This is an internal, imagined space, intangible and ungraspable. On the subject of embodied, private space, Richard Sennett suggests that: ‘in private we seek out not a principle but a reflection, that of what our psyches are, what is authentic in our feelings.’¹⁰⁷ Sennett articulates this inner ‘psyche’: it is an internal space that is private, distinct from the public persona enacted in company or public spaces, and thus commonly understood to represent our ‘authentic’ self. This idea of an internal space and inner psyche is frequently employed in texts that seek to understand or delineate the relationship between a collector and their collected objects. Gershom Scholem, a close friend of Benjamin’s, for example, describes how Benjamin had a ‘deep, inner relationship to things he owned.’¹⁰⁸ That Scholem uses the word ‘inner’ marks Benjamin’s relationship to his possessions as internal, authentic, and private. Benjamin himself echoes this when describing his ‘inner need to own a library’.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship* (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 37.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Arendt, *Introduction*, p. 39.

Abbas asserts that the collector described in Benjamin's 'Unpacking My Library' is a 'traumatized, privatized, and impotent individual [...] of the interior.'¹¹⁰ This is an interior space that should, according to Benjamin, 'support him [the collector] in his illusions'.¹¹¹ This notion of illusion corresponds to Susan Stewart's argument that 'the point of the collection is forgetting - starting again in such a way that a finite number of elements create, by virtue of their combination, an infinite reverie.'¹¹² I argue that the private collection does induce what Stewart terms an 'infinite reverie'. Objects emit memories, evoke recollections, and bear both the physical and invisible traces of the past, and the past event. Waters, for example, describes his interactions with the theatrical postcards he collects. He writes: 'the messages they bear are ignored by the collector. I think that this is a pity, for many of them provide fascinating vignettes of everyday life nearly a hundred years ago. They may have nothing to do with the theatre, but they capture the imagination nonetheless.'¹¹³ An encounter with the postcards of the past fires Waters's imagination and contributes to this reverie that Stewart articulates. Within the internal, embodied space of the collector, the reveries, the imaginings, and the illusions evoked by the collected object speak to the collector. For Waters, the old newspapers that he collects 'bear a powerful charge of actuality, their style varying from breathless reportage to righteously indignant comment, all of it bringing the past vividly into the present.'¹¹⁴ This grey space in which the past and present collide is brought into being by the collector and their interior encounters with the private collection. This occurs once again as the researcher handles collected objects in the space of the public archive, an affective experience I explore later in this chapter. Gaynor Kavanagh argues that: '[t]he

¹¹⁰ Abbas, *Walter Benjamin's Collector*, p. 226.

¹¹¹ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 220.

¹¹² Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 152.

¹¹³ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No. 11 February 1995.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* Newsletter No. 5 (April 1991).

central device of the history curator's practice and indeed the self-justification of the museum is the history object: the object as evidence.¹¹⁵ Before the history object enters the public space of the museum, and before it is handled and interpreted by the curator, it exists in the private space of the collector and performs upon imagined stages. Susan M. Pearce asserts that relationships with the supposedly 'dead' objects of the collection aid in the construction of 'our ever-passing present'.¹¹⁶ I argue that the personal encounters the collector has with the objects of the theatrical past evoke, or draw out, this construction of theatre histories in the present. If theatre histories are created, and if that creation is informed by the interpretation and reinterpretation of material traces of the past by the researcher or historian in the present, then the theatre collector is the conduit by which this process is able to occur.

Private passions, secrets, and fetishes

Stewart asserts that: 'the boundary between collection and fetishism is mediated by classification and display in tension with accumulation and secrecy.'¹¹⁷ She acknowledges that approaches to collecting constantly and consistently seek to fetishize the practice. The frequent temptation to fetishize collecting can be understood to be a by-product of the prevailing portrayal of collecting as a private, secretive and clandestine activity. The collector is painted as a lonely or impotent figure who acts out their private passions in a space that is separate and closed off from the public. Harley J. Hammerman, a collector of memorabilia associated with the American playwright Eugene O'Neill, separates the collector even further from the spaces of normative, public society.

¹¹⁵ Gaynor Kavanagh, 'Objects as Evidence, or Not?' in Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Museum Studies in Material Culture* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 125-137, p. 125.

¹¹⁶ Susan M. Pearce, 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past' in Susan M. Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 19-29, p. 26.

¹¹⁷ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 163.

Hammerman writes: ‘I am a COLLECTOR. One is either a COLLECTOR or one is not, and those of you who are *not* will never understand those of us who *are* [emphasis in original].’¹¹⁸ Hammerman thus defines the collector as not only different from the non-collector, but as an entirely alien figure who defies comprehension. The collector becomes *other*. The fetishized action of locking in or enclosing an object in the ‘magic circle’ of a collection is reinforced by Jean Baudrillard who describes the collector as the ‘sultan of a secret seraglio.’¹¹⁹ This gendered depiction of the collector as sultan over his harem of women speaks of unequal power dynamics and fetishized sexuality; it denotes a sexualised relationship between collector and collected object. He continues: ‘even in circumstances where no fetishistic perversion is involved, they [the collector] will maintain about their collection an aura of the clandestine, of confinement, secrecy and dissimulation, all of which give rise to the unmistakable impression of a guilty relationship.’¹²⁰ According to Baudrillard, then, regardless of whether there is a legitimate element of sexual perversion present in the relationship between collector and collection or not, the practice of collecting and the private spaces in which it takes place provoke unease and suspicion in those who do not collect, and in the public who are denied access to these spaces.

Baudrillard argues that sexually perverse behaviour is a widespread feature of object relations. He suggests that this behaviour is demonstrated in a collector’s desire to ‘confine beauty in order to savour it in isolation.’¹²¹ In the personal papers and private collections of the individuals who I investigate in the course of this thesis, there is no

¹¹⁸ Harley J. Hammerman, ‘On Collecting O’Neill’ in *The Eugene O’Neill Review*, Vol.13, No.1 (Spring 1989), pp. 47-54, p. 47.

¹¹⁹ Jean Baudrillard, ‘The System of Collecting’ in Elsner and Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 7-24, p. 10.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p. 18.

evidence of any fetishisation or sexualised relationship in the encounters between collector and private collection.¹²² Neither is the collection secret or disguised. Indeed, the private collecting activities of Enthoven in particular were charged with a resolutely public drive.

Stewart asserts that the collection only becomes legitimate if it is made public, or at least if it is not confined to the realms of secrecy. She argues that a collection that is catalogued, arranged and classified can counteract notions of the clandestine that so often mark collecting practices. The collection marked more by chaos than it is by order, is, according to Stewart, less of a viable, socially acceptable collection and more a fetish.¹²³ The private collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters exist in spaces that are both ordered and chaotic, from Enthoven's cabinets of catalogued playbills, to Mander and Mitchenson's overflowing home in which '[a]ll objects in the house, excepting some pieces of furniture, have a theatrical connection'.¹²⁴ The temptation to contrast the private collection with the public archive is strong here. Kate Dorney acknowledges that the highly attractive and romantic vision of the long-neglected dusty, and musty territory of the archive, ripe for historical revelation, is 'more likely to be grounds for dismissal'.¹²⁵ I consider this idea of the allure of the archive in following chapters, but it is useful here to demonstrate how the public archive is expected to behave in contrast to the private collection. The public archive is synonymous with accuracy, order and organisation - (though this may not always prove to be the case) - whilst the private collection is

¹²² The personal papers of Waters contain many documents concerning the sexual experiences and encounters of Waters both as an adult and as a young man. Though these materials are valuable in interrogating the private life and private passions of Waters, they have no bearing upon his relationship or interactions with his collection of theatrical ephemera.

¹²³ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 163.

¹²⁴ Johnston and Beddow, *The Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, p. 80.

¹²⁵ Kate Dorney, 'The Ordering of Things: Allure, Access, and Archives' in *Shakespeare Bulletin*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 2010), pp. 19-36, p. 19.

described as disorderly, chaotic, intelligible to an outsider. Ruth Hoberman challenges this perception. She writes: '[f]rom its earliest incantation, the museum has been inseparable from the imagination of disorder: its evocation of extreme order brings with it an impish vision of havoc.'¹²⁶ Just as the private collection and the public archive blur and disrupt understandings of private and public space, so too do they challenge antithetical notions of chaos and order. Enthoven's private collection, for example, far from being chaotic, was organised, catalogued, and stored in corresponding cabinets.

A fascinating example of how the space of the supposed order of the public archive and the disorder of the private collection can clash and convene is present in the private collection of Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert. The Gilberts collected gold, silver, mosaics, gold boxes and enamel portrait miniatures and, before the collection became a part of the public British archive in 1996, it was on display in the Gilberts' home in Los Angeles.¹²⁷ Displayed in glass cabinets around the house, the objects were labelled in order to provide information to guests that visited the home. Many of the labels were, however, incorrectly positioned or contained incorrect information.¹²⁸ The representation of the order, authority and arrangement of the public archive belied the disorder and chaos of the private collection, and vice-versa.

Possessions and power

Possession is a state that asserts the dominance and the power of the individual who possesses; it allows the individual control over their material environment. 'Behind the unassuming façade of a terraced house in south-east London', writes Celina Fox during

¹²⁶ Ruth Hoberman, *Museum Trouble: Edwardian Fiction and the Emergence of Modernism* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), p. 3.

¹²⁷ See Nick Varley, 'Nation gets £75m gift' in *The Guardian* (11 June 1996).

¹²⁸ This was an anecdote given by a delegate who had visited the Gilberts and their collection at their Los Angeles home. Study Day: 'I Just Like Beautiful Things', V&A (16 November 2013).

her first visit to the home of Mander and Mitchenson, ‘is the private world of Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson and their Theatre Collection.’¹²⁹ Here, the private theatre collection exists behind closed doors; the banal, everyday appearance of the exterior belying the unusual world within. Keith S. Thomson asserts that: ‘[w]e collect for the power of possession.’¹³⁰ Possession involves the (dis)placing of an object from the public realm into the private realm of the collection. Possession elevates the possessor into a position of governance over the object. Baudrillard writes: ‘while the object is a resistant material body, it is also, simultaneously, a mental realm over which I hold sway, a thing whose meaning is governed by myself alone. It is all my own, the object of my passion.’¹³¹ Thomas Dacosta Kaufmann, describing the collections owned by Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1576-1612), argues that the Emperor’s collections had the potential to ‘symbolically represent his Imperial majesty, his control over a microcosm that reflected his claims to mastery of the macrocosm of the greater world’.¹³² The collection, then, is symbolic of a private world over which the collector reigns supreme. Creating and tending to a collection enables an individual to feel as though they have control over their physical environment. Just as Mander had a passion for labelling items around the family home as a young boy,¹³³ in the ordering and categorising of objects, the possessor can assert dominion over the material world they inhabit. The microcosm of the private collection, both in the space of the private home and upon its transition to the public archive, is a part of the macrocosm by and from which theatre histories are forged.

¹²⁹ Fox, *Full House*, p. 137.

¹³⁰ Keith S. Thomson, *Treasures on Earth* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), p. 29.

¹³¹ Baudrillard, *The System of Collecting*, p. 7.

¹³² Thomas Dacosta Kaufmann, ‘From Treasury to Museum: The Collections of the Austrian Habsburgs’ in Elsner and Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 137-154, p. 145.

¹³³ Rhymes, *Mander, Raymond Josiah Gale (1911–1983)*. At one stage, this tendency to label items was thought to destine Mander for a career as a museum curator. Indeed, Mander did curate the objects that comprised his private theatre collection and I suggest that the distinction between collector and curator is rather indistinct. The collector collects for and is a custodian of a private collection; a curator collects for and is a custodian of a collection or collections within a public archive.

A sense of the theatrical past

The private collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters contain a myriad theatrical items including sheet music, silk programmes, posters, costumes, and audio recordings. There is a sensory element to both collecting privately and to researching in the public archive. Anyone that has carried out archival research will be familiar with the sour smell of ageing documents and the feel of precariously thin paper. The private collector surrounds him/herself with these things. Benjamin writes: ‘one has only to watch a collector handle the objects in his glass case. As he holds them in his hands, he seems to be seeing through them into their distant past as though inspired.’¹³⁴ The objects owned by Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters do not languish behind glass cases untouched: they are there to be handled, leafed through and interacted with. Mander and Mitchenson, for example, when being filmed for Anglia Television, moved through their home wearing silk dressing gowns once belonging to Noël Coward; gowns donated to the collection by Coward himself.¹³⁵ They lived amongst their collected objects in the strongest sense: wearing them, sitting on them, and even drinking from them. Similarly, when Enthoven’s collection moved to the V&A, Enthoven followed it there, spending her days surrounded by her materials, cataloguing her playbills for use in the public archive until her death in 1950. In addition, the vast theatre collection assembled by Albert Davis (1865-1942) became the founding collection of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin’s Performing Arts collections. A magazine feature on Davis in 1931 describes what a visitor to his home could expect:

A trip to the house at 936 E. 12th Street is not without its perils, unless you have unlimited time at your command and are well up in your sleep. For once a

¹³⁴ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 61.

¹³⁵ Mander and Mitchenson were filmed for a short documentary that showcased their collection. In the programme, the pair can be seen wearing Coward’s old dressing gowns as they recline on their sofa and talk about their many objects. Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

congenial soul enters the little room where the collection is kept, and Davis begins pulling pictures and programs out of the carefully labelled file drawers, talking volubly about them all the while, the travels of the hands around the clock cease to have much meaning.¹³⁶

As Davis pulls theatrical materials from drawers for the visitor to handle, the sound of his voice punctuates this act. The pictures and programmes are animated by Davis and perform their contents in front of his assembled audience.

Speaight, in a similar manner to Waters's description of encounters with old newspapers, suggests that an interaction with an archival object 'really carries you back into the past, with the feel of the paper, the smell of the ink';¹³⁷ it gives 'the sense of losing oneself in the atmosphere of another age.'¹³⁸ Critical approaches to the historian's interaction with the historic object make frequent reference to the blurring of the past and the present that a tactile encounter provokes. Maggie B. Gale, for example, asserts that: 'any historian who has held a letter written by a performer, or touched a costume, even when wearing a standard issue pair of cotton gloves, will imagine that they feel a connection with the past'.¹³⁹ Meanwhile, Jill Lepore describes how an archival encounter with a lock of hair belonging to Noah Webster profoundly altered her relationship to her research subject:

I found myself feeling closer to Webster than I had ever felt when reading even his most personal papers. That lifeless, limp hair had spent decades in an envelope, in a folder, in a box, on a shelf, but holding it in the palm of my hand made me feel an eerie intimacy with Noah himself. And, against all logic, it made me feel as though I knew him - and, even less logically, *liked* him - just a bit better.¹⁴⁰

Collecting allows the collector to feel a connection with the past; to confront and summon history through the medium of the object. Vanessa R. Schwartz usefully describes how

¹³⁶ Albert Davis, Theater Biography Collection, Box 736, Performing Arts Collections, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

¹³⁷ Speaight, *Collecting Theatre Memorabilia*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁰ Jill Lepore, 'Historians who love too much: reflections on microhistory and biography' in *Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (June, 2001), pp. 129-144, p. 129.

history can be regarded as ‘a conversation between the past and the present’¹⁴¹ and this interrogation of the encounter between present body and past object is integral to understandings of how the collector can facilitate this conversation. This exchange, or conversation, occurs all the more intensely through the actual holding of the historic object, as Gale and Lepore articulate. The act of handling the collected object opens a portal between the past and the present through which memories, connections, and relationships are made. It is this dynamic exchange between collector and collected object that serves as a reminder of Pearce’s assertion that ‘objects are always both active and passive.’¹⁴² Conversations with the collected object, both in the space of the private collection and the public archive, consist of reactivity and receptivity: the historical object reacts to the present in which it is being framed and interpreted, whilst the collector or researcher is receptive to the history embodied and represented by the object.

Tanselle argues that ‘the starting point of thinking about collecting is recognizing the human feeling of wonder that things seem to exist outside the self [...] the act of reaching out and touching them [the collected objects] therefore produces contact both with the environment and with the past.’¹⁴³ The touching of an object, the fascination that the object, now in the collector’s possession, has a history beyond the confines of the present moment and beyond the span of the collector’s lifetime, provokes several questions: who else has held this object? How was it used? How has its significance changed over the years? The touching of the object enables the histories, the memories embodied by the object to be imagined, re-collected, and performed.

¹⁴¹ Vanessa R. Schwartz, ‘Walter Benjamin for Historians’ in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 106, No. 5 (December, 2001), pp. 1721-1743, p. 1723.

¹⁴² Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 66.

¹⁴³ Tanselle, *A Rationale of Collecting*, p. 8.

The objects housed in the public archive, like those in the private collection, can be handled and touched by the historian and the researcher. The collector, however, is no longer there to animate them. Instead, this animation and imagining is produced by the historian themselves, influenced by past encounters and personal histories. The ways in which these objects are interpreted are therefore inconsistent: their meanings alter and evolve, mirroring the inconsistency of performance itself. Furthermore, when a document or object is taken from the stores of the public archive and placed on display behind the glass wall of the cabinet, it is the museum that begins to talk for the object and shapes the ways in which it is interpreted by the audience. As the collection moves from the private space to the public archive, then, those who enliven the documents therein change, perform different roles, take centre-stage, or disappear behind the scenes.

The objects possess the collector

Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936), whose name is given to the Wellcome Trust, Wellcome Collection, and Wellcome Library, was an obsessive, arguably pathological, collector of books, curiosities, relics, medical instruments, archaeological finds, and plant samples, to name but a few of the objects he gathered. Frances Larson describes how ‘Wellcome’s social world was stitched together by objects, and objects seemed to render his world more manageable and meaningful. They were something that he thought he could control, but now it seems clear that they had been controlling him.’¹⁴⁴ Wellcome’s life was dominated by the things he collected; his collecting habit became a compulsion and the thematic boundaries within which he collected continually expanded. His wife Syrie declared that she had been forced to martyr herself to her husband’s collecting

¹⁴⁴ Frances Larson, *An Infinity of Things: How Sir Henry Wellcome Collected the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 6.

habits.¹⁴⁵ Just like an addiction, to which collecting has been compared,¹⁴⁶ Wellcome was powerless to stop. However many objects Wellcome acquired, there would always be, and there always were, more things to collect. I have suggested that the collector asserts a dominance or power over the objects that comprise the collection, pulling them from the public space into the private where the materials are made to talk. Yet the relationship between Wellcome and his collection subverts this power dynamic between the possessor and the possessed. Is the collector in control, or do the objects control the collector?

In *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (1874), Friedrich Nietzsche offers a description of what he terms three different kinds of history: the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. It is the antiquarian form of history that is most useful in the context of this chapter. Nietzsche suggests that for the antiquarian:

History belongs to the preserving and revering soul - to him who with loyalty and love looks back on his origins[...] By tending with loving hands what has long survived he intends to preserve the conditions in which he grew up for those who will come after him - and so he serves life. The possession of ancestral furniture changes its meaning in such a soul: for the soul is rather possessed by the furniture.¹⁴⁷

Though this is a description of the *antiquarian*, for the purposes of this chapter I want to substitute the word *collector*. Like the collector, the antiquarian studies the artefacts of the past and makes sense of them for and in the present. The antiquarian seeks to preserve, to honour and to take care of the objects that come into his or her possession. According to Nietzsche, the soul of the antiquarian becomes ‘possessed’ by the furniture. Again, an

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 43.

¹⁴⁶ Ruth Formanek writes that the terms ‘obsession’ and ‘compulsion’, so widely used in popular works on collecting, have not been distinguished from addiction. In a questionnaire given by Formanek to 112 collectors, 9 respondents mentioned that addiction, obsession and compulsion contributed to their motivation to collect. Ruth Formanek, ‘Why they collect: collectors reveal their motivations’ in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, pp. 327-335, p. 333. Belk has also written in detail about the relationship between collecting and addiction. See Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, pp. 141-145.

¹⁴⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (1874). Trans. Peter Preuss (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1980), p. 19.

understanding of the object as passive and the collector as active is disrupted in both Nietzsche's description of the relationship between collector and collected and in the description of Wellcome's compulsion to collect. Alan Clinton offers a more extreme understanding of this relationship by asserting that in *every* case of collecting 'the object finally possesses the possessor',¹⁴⁸ whilst Benjamin describes how 'ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them.'¹⁴⁹ I have shown how the theatre collector lives within their collection: their homes become repositories or private archives for the safeguarding of theatrical objects and ephemera. However, the collected materials of the past become embodiments or representations of the lived experiences of the collector: just as the collector performs the objects in the showing and describing of them, so too does the object perform the life of the collector. In a profile of Mander and Mitchenson's home in *Interiors* magazine, for example, Fox describes how 'almost every object evokes a memory of the original owner or an associated occasion. A cuffed hand, nonchalantly poised with a cigarette holder, turns out to be a sugar confection created by the Savoy for the centrepiece of each table at Noël Coward's 70th birthday celebration.'¹⁵⁰ The objects speak of a past theatrical moment and they sometimes speak of the collector's participation in that moment. In the case of the sugar hand, this object possesses or embodies the snatched memory of Mander and Mitchenson's presence at Coward's birthday party and deposits this within the space of the private collection. The object's meaning and history is thus comprised of multiple layers of memory and intertheatricality; layers which may be visible, layers which may become visible, and layers that remain invisible. Enthoven, meanwhile, was awarded the sobriquet of 'the

¹⁴⁸ Alan Clinton, *Printed ephemera: Collection, Organisation and Access* (London: Clive Bingley, 1981), p. 41.

¹⁴⁹ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁰ Fox, *Full House*, p. 144.

theatrical encyclopaedia'¹⁵¹ for her outstanding ability to recount the facts and the dates that comprise theatre history. The facts and events of theatre history lived on in and were performed by Enthoven. Enthoven becomes a living archive possessed by her materials, an embodied storehouse through which her privately collected materials can speak to a public audience.

Collecting oneself

Baudrillard states that: 'it is invariably *oneself* that one collects.'¹⁵² I argue throughout this thesis that the collection must be understood as a product of the collector's private passions and that each collected item bears an imprint of the individual who brought it into the space of the collection. Objects can be understood as the medium through which memories, imaginings, and histories can seep from the past into the present. Collected items are also demonstrative of the collector's own personal narrative. The private collection is therefore a space in which the histories of the past and the history of one's self become intertwined and confront each other in a dialogic exchange. Lewandowski, in response to Benjamin's 'Unpacking My Library' writes: 'as Benjamin "unpacks" his library we see, encoded, Benjamin unpacking himself.'¹⁵³ The collection becomes an extension of the collector. Indeed, at the end of his essay, Benjamin disappears inside of his books, stacking them up like bricks to create a dwelling in which he can live. As Lewandowski asserts, Benjamin 'has dissolved in his own work'.¹⁵⁴ collector and collected become inseparable, or, alternatively, the collection offers shelter to the collector. The collections created by Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are spaces in which the public histories of the theatre combine with the private histories,

¹⁵¹ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

¹⁵² Baudrillard, *The System of Collecting*, p. 12.

¹⁵³ Lewandowski, *Unpacking*, p. 152.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 157.

memories, and lived experiences of the collector themselves. Alternative readings of the collection that position the collector at the forefront of any interrogation thus result in renewed interpretations of the public archive and an acknowledgement that the theatre collector is an integral component in the subsequent process of writing and forming theatre histories.

James Laver, who was put in charge of Enthoven's collection upon its arrival at the V&A, declared after her death that 'she lives on, in the great collection that bears her name.'¹⁵⁵ Laver's statement suggests that within the space of the private collection the preservation of the theatrical past occurs alongside the preservation of the collector's life. An individual is said to live on after death in the memories of friends and family. A collector who donates or bequeaths their collection to the nation by way of the public archive can be said to live on, not through the intangible memories of those who knew them, but through the tangible objects they gather and amass, and certainly through the collection that bears their name. Rigby and Rigby assert that: 'because the collector has identified his creation so closely with himself [...] he sometimes feels that, like a strong boat, it will bear him through the centuries after his body has gone to the earth again.'¹⁵⁶ I argue that the collectors I investigate perceived their collections as a means to immortality. They have a complex desire to enter the annals of theatre history themselves alongside the facts and fictions contained within their collected objects.

The Transfer Agreement between Waters and RHUL reports the conditions that were agreed between Waters and the university in order to confirm Waters's decision to donate his private collection to the university's public archive. It stipulates a number of things

¹⁵⁵ Laver, *Gabrielle Enthoven and the Enthoven Theatre Collection*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 45.

concerning the naming of the collection on arrival at RHUL. Firstly, the agreement confirms that the collection will be stored in folders and boxes that bear a suitable label indicating the identity of the donor (Waters); secondly, any entries for items incorporated onto the library databases will include details of the donor's identity; and thirdly, any books from the collection that are retained for the library will also bear a nameplate indicating the donor's identity.¹⁵⁷ Waters was intent on remaining associated with his theatre collection. Though his body would no longer be present, his name would be attached to every object in the collection, a reminder of the man who dedicated forty years of his life to the gathering of these theatrical objects.

There are a number of collectors that take this desire to remain a part of their collection, either after their death or when the collection moves to the public archive, to the extreme. Wellcome's own ashes became a part of his eclectic collection, whether by chance or design. Forgotten within the maelstrom of his possessions, it was not until decades after his death that his ashes were finally recognised and commemorated.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, when the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection was gifted to the British nation in 1996 from its home in America, Arthur Gilbert made sure that he remained a tangible part of his private collection within its new space in the public archive of Somerset House, to which the collection moved in 2000. Maev Kennedy describes how '[t]he Gilbert name or initials are already on every door of the new galleries, but he [Gilbert] felt it needed something more. He has created a replica of his office in Los Angeles [...] complete with lifesize waxwork of himself in his usual working clothes'.¹⁵⁹ Gilbert was adamant that he would live on through his collection as a real, physical entity. He recognised, celebrated

¹⁵⁷ Transfer Agreement between Mr Roy Waters and Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London, The Library, RHUL.

¹⁵⁸ Larson, *An Infinity of Things*, p. 289.

¹⁵⁹ Maev Kennedy, 'All that glistens: Private collection of silver, gold and mosaics given to Somerset House' in *The Guardian* (18 April 2000)

and emphasised the importance of the collector; he performed an exercise in self-preservation and self-memorialisation. The replica of himself became an object within his collection. He had, to return to Baudrillard, collected himself.

Within this chapter I have argued that the collector is intrinsically connected to and interwoven within their private collection. However, it is important to note how this can change as the collection moves into the public archive. Enthoven's collection is no longer called the Enthoven Collection. After the collection's transition to the Museum in 1924 both Enthoven and the Museum actively collected materials to add to the collection that Enthoven had gathered. These materials became the core collections of the V&A's Theatre and Performance Department and comprise playbills and programmes, photographs, manuscripts, books, designs and other objects. After the death of Enthoven in 1950, and up to the present day, theatrical materials continue to be added to the department. Thus Enthoven's collection continues to grow, and other private collections, such as the Harry Beard Collection, have been added to her materials to expand the Museum's core collections.¹⁶⁰ The only collection within the Museum that now bears Enthoven's name is the collection of boxes that comprise her personal papers. Indeed, in 1924, when the V&A were still debating whether they could provide a home for her collection, Martin Hardie notes: 'if it came here Mrs Enthoven would like it to be described as the Enthoven Collection, but would make no stipulation as to additions being made or as to the collection being permanently housed in one room, or even kept together.'¹⁶¹ As her collection moved from the private into the public, then, Enthoven set into motion a process by which she would become disassociated and divorced from her

¹⁶⁰ http://www.vam.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/177639/37031_file.pdf - accessed 15 December 2015.

¹⁶¹ Nominal file: Enthoven, Gabrielle (purchases made from the Enthoven Fund) Part 1, 1910-1930, MA/1/E732/1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

collected materials. One of the motivations for this thesis, therefore, is to rescue Enthoven from her obscurity within the public archive and reconnect the private passions of the collector to the publicly housed, but dispersed, materials that may, or may not, continue to bear her name.

Saving the past/preserving trash

Ephemera can be defined as ‘objects that are perceived by their producers and initial recipients as having no significant residual value after their original purpose has been fulfilled’.¹⁶² The collector recognises the value of ephemeral materials. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal write that the act of collecting is akin to ‘saving in its strongest sense, not just casual keeping but conscious rescuing from extinction - collection as salvation’,¹⁶³ whilst Benjamin asserts that ‘one of the finest memories of a collector is the moment when he rescued a book to which he might never have given a thought, much less a wishful look, because he found it lonely and abandoned on the market place’.¹⁶⁴ Here, the collector offers salvation; they ‘rescue’ material culture and, in the juxtaposition of these found materials, they provide new patterns, connections and relationships. Paul Holdengräber argues that the collector is moved to ‘take things in for repair, provide shelter, and thereby see himself as saving the destitute things of this world’,¹⁶⁵ whilst Belk suggests that collectors ‘envision themselves paying the role of savior [*sic*] of society by preserving all that is noble and good for future generations.’¹⁶⁶ By saving the neglected

¹⁶² William P. Barlow Jr., ‘Spinning Straw into Gold: Gilding Junk through Collecting’ in *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 93-99, p. 93.

¹⁶³ John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, ‘Introduction’ in Elsner and Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 1-6, p. 1.

¹⁶⁴ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 64.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Holdengräber, ‘Between the Profane and the Redemptive: The Collector as Possessor in Walter Benjamin’s “Passagen-Werk”’ in *History and Memory*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Fall - Winter 1992), pp. 96-128. p. 112.

¹⁶⁶ Russell W. Belk, ‘Collecting as luxury consumption: Effects on individuals and households’ in *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Vol. 16 (1995) pp. 477-490, pp. 486.

and undervalued objects that society produces, the collector actively participates in the renewal and reclamation of material culture.

Are all material secretions of the past worthy of salvation? Or does the collector engage in an activity that, according to Baudrillard, is representative of history ‘rifling through its own dustbins and looking for redemption in the rubbish’?¹⁶⁷ Earlier in the chapter I discuss Nietzsche’s favourable description of the antiquarian who preserves and honours the objects of the past. Nietzsche’s understanding of the antiquarian is, however, ambivalent. For later in *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* he offers one of the *disadvantages* of the activities of the antiquarian. He describes:

the repugnant spectacle of a blind lust for collecting, of a restless raking together of all that has once been. Man envelops himself in an odour of decay [...] a craving for all things and old things; often he sinks so low as finally to be satisfied with any fare and devours with pleasure even the dust of bibliographical quisquilia.¹⁶⁸

Nietzsche paints a picture of the collector as motivated by a compulsion to possess, sinking on hands and knees to scrape up the remnants of the past, no matter how meaningless and worthless. He suggests that the collector’s ability to differentiate between the historically valuable and the historically worthless is non-existent. Waters counteracts Nietzsche’s accusation in a letter to another Wilde enthusiast in 2003. He writes: ‘collecting is, indeed, a silly business, though in years to come, when the chaff has been sifted from the grain, who is to tell what history will be gleaned from these obsessive compilations?’¹⁶⁹ Waters believed in the potential of his collected materials’ ability to one day contribute to or shape theatrical history, no matter how majestic or underwhelming the material. The theatre collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are replete with the kind of materials that Carolyn Steedman, in

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Mike Gane, *Jean Baudrillard: In Radical Uncertainty* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 94.

¹⁶⁸ Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁹ Correspondence with James Jayo, RWTC, RW/1/5/25, RHUL Archives.

her evocatively titled *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (2002), describes as ‘mad fragmentations’: those things that ‘no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there [in the archive].’¹⁷⁰ I argue that nothing becomes a part of the collection by accident: every item is actively and self-consciously placed within the collection by the collector who intends to preserve it. From Waters’s collection of folders containing torn obituaries from *The Times*, to Mander and Mitchenson’s collection of Shakespeare-themed beer glasses, all of the stuff that enters the collection has a purpose and a place. Arendt describes the collector as one who ‘seeks strange things that are considered valueless’¹⁷¹ and I explore this concept of value and worth within the theatre collection further in Chapter Four. The re-arrangement or non-arbitrary construction of collected objects, no matter how valuable or worthless, might spell out some larger structure of significance.¹⁷² There can be treasures in the trash.

Hoarding

Waters offers some insights into his private collection that further complicate the notion of collecting the ‘trash’ or the ‘rubbish’ of the past:

I collect theatrical ephemera: prints, postcards, playbills, posters and programmes; autograph letters and autobiographies; toy theatres and tinsel portraits; commemorative medallions and music covers; every kind of trash with Thespian connotations that you can imagine and I can afford. Indeed, all the money that should have gone into the maintenance and renovation of my house over the past twenty years has gone instead into this vast accumulation of rubbish.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 68. Steedman refers to the objects that were never thrown away by their original owners – the objects that somehow evade their normal and expected fate and end up being saved and placed within the archive.

¹⁷¹ Arendt, *Introduction*, p. 44.

¹⁷² Max Pensky, ‘Tactics of Remembrance: Proust, Surrealism, and the Origin of the Passagenwerk’ in Michael P. Steinberg (ed.), *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 164-189, p. 170.

¹⁷³ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No.3 April 1990.

Waters does not believe that his collected theatrical materials are worthless or rubbish; he uses these terms flippantly and self-consciously to portray the irrationality and compulsivity that sometimes mark his private passions, and his inability or reluctance to justify his habits to non-collectors. There is the typically sarcastic media view of the collector as eccentric, and, as Waters demonstrates, this is recodified by the collector as being in the British tradition of a knowing self-mockery'.¹⁷⁴ Waters does however ruminate on a particular cupboard within his home. He writes: 'over the twenty years that I have been here I have steadily filled this cupboard with junk, for I am a compulsive hoarder and hate throwing anything away, from old radio tuners with broken valves, to ugly wire fruit baskets and tatty lamp shades.'¹⁷⁵ He admits that this was the impulse behind the decision to convert his attic: 'I felt an increasing pressure on space for hoardable rubbish - I found that I was coming perilously near the point at which I might be compelled to throw something away.'¹⁷⁶ Though Waters employs similar vocabulary to describe the 'trash' that comprises both his theatre collection and the objects that fill his cupboard and attic, there is clearly something that distinguishes the two. They are distinguished by the spaces they occupy: the theatre collection is on show around his home, adorning the walls of his living room, kitchen, and bathroom. The private theatre collection is on display to outsiders who visit the private inside space of his home. The 'hoardable rubbish' is, however, closeted up in a confined space, 'dumped' in a cupboard with limited access to anyone but Waters. This is a double privatisation: the hoarded junk is made particularly private within the already private space of the home. Waters does not endeavour to buy objects for his 'collection' of hoarded rubbish, like he does for his theatre collection. Rather, he is unable, or unwilling, to throw unnecessary or broken

¹⁷⁴ Pearce and Martin, *The Collector's Voice: Volume 4*, p. 59.

¹⁷⁵ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No.5 April 1991.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

things away. Crucially, and in contrast to his theatre collection, Waters makes no attempt to secure a home or a space for these hoarded items after his death. Described by Leah Dilworth as one of the ‘troubled siblings’¹⁷⁷ of collecting, pathological hoarding is framed in contrast to the rational act of collecting. Hoarding is defined by R. O. Frost and T. L. Hartl as: ‘1. The acquisition of and failure to discard a large number of possessions that seem to be useless or of limited value. 2. Living spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed. 3. Significant distress or impairment in functioning caused by hoarding.’¹⁷⁸ According to these definitions, none of the collectors I investigate can be accused of being pathological hoarders, even if Waters declares otherwise.

Haunting the past/the haunted present

Steedman writes: ‘if the Archive is a place of dreams, it permits this one, above all others [...] of making the dead walk and talk.’¹⁷⁹ Similarly, Dennis Kennedy suggests that: ‘it remains true that performance history is memory engaged with the traces of the disappeared, the act of calling up that which cannot be completely recalled, a conjuring trick practiced on the dead.’¹⁸⁰ As I clarify in the Introduction, the purpose of this thesis is not to resurrect the dead, nor to bring the theatre collector back to life. Rather, through interactions and encounters with the collections and personal papers in the public archive, I seek to give a voice to the theatre collector, to give him or her a space amongst these pages in which they can perform. Susan Sontag argues that: ‘only because the past is dead

¹⁷⁷ Leah Dilworth, ‘Introduction’ in Leah Dilworth (ed.), *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp. 3-15, p. 8. Dilworth suggests that fetishism and compulsive buying are also the ‘troubled siblings’ of collecting.

¹⁷⁸ Quoted in Ashley E. Nordsletten and David Mataix-Cols, ‘Hoarding versus collecting: Where does pathology diverge from play?’ in *Clinical Psychology Review*, Vol. 32 (2012), pp. 165-176, p. 167.

¹⁷⁹ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 150.

¹⁸⁰ Dennis Kennedy, ‘Confessions of an Encyclopedist’ in Worthen and Holland, *Theorizing Practice*, pp. 30-46, p. 33.

is one able to read it. Only because history is fetishized in physical objects can one understand it.’¹⁸¹ According to Sontag, then, histories can be read and interpreted in, and because of, the material traces of the past. In Steedman, Kennedy, and Sontag’s descriptions of the past and its material traces, all three discuss the ‘dead’: the dead figures that roam the spaces of the archive, the dead that are conjured from the traces of the theatrical past, and the past as dead space. In addition, Rebecca Schneider, considering the historian’s interaction with the historical object, asks: ‘[f]or why is it only the dead that come alive? Do not the living also cross a kind of threshold away from the strictly immediate present moment?’¹⁸² This connects to Newman’s question that I include in the opening paragraph of this chapter: ‘is it we who haunt the past or the past that haunts us?’¹⁸³

Sontag’s assertion that the past is dead posits history as being finite and fixed. It limits the possibility of a more fluid exchange between the past and present, and it limits the possibility for the discovery and creation of new or alternative readings in history. Unlike Sontag, I argue for an understanding of the past as alive: constantly shifting and evolving as present encounters with past materials take place. These encounters happen in the space of the private collection and in the space of the public archive. Indeed, is this not one of the purposes of the public archive: to engender these interactions? To provide a dedicated space in which the dead can perform for the living, and in which the living can interpret these performances? Indeed, Jacques Derrida notes that the public archive represents ‘a movement of the promise and of the future no less than of recording the past’.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, ‘just as the past, because it can be rewritten, does not lie safely in the past’,

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*. Trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1992), p. 21.

¹⁸² Schneider, *Theatre & History*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁸³ Newman, *Cemeteries of Tradition*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 24.

writes Abbas, 'so too the future, the not-yet-written, does not lie safely in the future.'¹⁸⁵ Like the concept of private and public space that I articulate in this thesis, so too do I suggest that the spaces of the past and present exist in a relationship marked by dialogue and exchange, rather than opposition and antithesis. Newman's question regarding the haunting of the past is therefore redundant: the traces of the past, embodied in its material culture haunt the present, just as those alive in the present haunt, pore over, and intervene in the making and reanimation of the past.

Making the dead walk and talk

Nietzsche contributes to this idea of haunting when he writes:

It is astonishing: the moment, here in a wink, gone in a wink, nothing before and nothing after, returns nevertheless as a spectre to disturb the calm of a later moment. Again and again a page loosens in the scroll of time, drops out, and flutters away - and suddenly flutters back again into man's lap.¹⁸⁶

This is what the objects in the theatre collection achieve: they capture and fix a moment from the theatrical past. As the collector contemplates, animates, and handles the object, the spectre of the past disturbs the present: the document becomes 'a tear in the fabric of time, an unplanned glimpse offered into an unexpected event.'¹⁸⁷

Waters describes the part of his collection that decorates his front room:

At the time of writing I have a total of 90 different [*Vanity Fair*] prints, of which no fewer than 62 are hanging, framed, on the walls of my sitting room; the room is, effectively, papered with them. Some of my guests find it oppressive to be so densely surrounded by all these dead people, but I enjoy being able to see so many of my possessions all at the same time.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Abbas, *Walter Benjamin's Collector*, p. 236.

¹⁸⁶ Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁸⁷ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁸ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No. 6 August 1991.

Surrounded by his possessions which showcase the faces of the dead, Waters is the only living and present figure in a private space dedicated to the theatrical figures of the past. Likewise, in the home of Mander and Mitchenson: ‘looming up on the walls, larger than life, the great actors and actresses appear in their most memorable roles: the spirits of Garrick, Kemble, Grimaldi, Irving and Terry.’¹⁸⁹ The home of the theatre collector is haunted by the spirits of the long-dead stars of stage and screen, and the collector moves amongst them, re-animating them and conversing with them in the present. According to Jürgen Straub: ‘what happened certainly did happen, and yet what happens does not thereby become the past.’¹⁹⁰ The collector collects and creates pasts in the space of the private theatre collection. Here ‘the commonest objects become transfigured [...] into symbols of more comprehensive significance, and more often than not the old meaning is thereafter completely submerged in the new.’¹⁹¹ On the transition of the collection to the public archive, the objects, or the building blocks, of these new pasts and new meanings can be re-interpreted and re-configured by the historian who encounters them. Thus, a conversation between past, present and future, between collector, curator, and historian, can be initiated through the ‘magic circle’ of the collection. These conversations give credence to the words of William Faulkner who writes: ‘the past is never dead, it’s not even past.’¹⁹²

Throughout the process of writing this thesis I have been haunting the private collections and personal papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters in an attempt to reanimate their private passions and personal histories within and for the present. Joseph

¹⁸⁹ Fox, *Interiors*, p. 137.

¹⁹⁰ Jürgen Straub, ‘Telling Stories, Making History: Toward a Narrative Psychology of the Historical Construction of Meaning’ in Jürgen Straub, *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), pp. 44-98, p. 51.

¹⁹¹ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 9.

¹⁹² William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (1951) (London: Random House, 2013), p. 85.

Roach asserts that: ‘the voices of the dead may speak freely now only through the bodies of the living’,¹⁹³ and so too, then, as a researcher in the public archive, have I been haunted in the present by the past narratives of the theatre collector. Schwartz determines that, in the writing of histories, ‘the grain of sand becomes the means to understanding the desert.’¹⁹⁴ The theatre collection contains these grains of sand - the playbills, the postcards, and the photographs - that enable the desert of theatre history to be constructed and deciphered. The archival researcher becomes the living body through which the private passions of the collector, collected from the space of the public archives, can be brought to life in the present. The theatre collector constructs the histories of the theatrical past in the space of the private collection. These histories are then re-constructed, alongside the additional archival traces that embody the lived narrative of the collector, in the space of the public archive. This chapter demonstrates how encounters with the collected material of the past enables both the private theatre collector, and subsequently, the archival researcher, to make historical meanings for and in the present. The following chapter investigates the private lives and passions - the sexuality, the gender, the social class and status - of the theatre collector to determine the figures that populate the public archive and so investigate who it is that is making these theatre histories and how.

¹⁹³ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. xiii.

¹⁹⁴ Schwartz, *Walter Benjamin for Historians*, p. 1738.



Gabrielle Enthoven at her flat in front of the cabinets holding her catalogued playbills, about 1909. V&A Theatre and Performance Department ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London/Eve Smith.

Chapter Two: Positioning the Collection, Locating the Collector

'No first night was complete without the sight of seeing these two, almost Dickensian characters, dressed in cloaks, makeup and talking both at the same time, sitting in the front row.'

- Patrick Newley remembers Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson¹⁹⁵

On 3 November 2002 Roy Waters booked a night's stay in the Oscar Wilde suite of the Cadogan Hotel on Sloane Street, London. This was the room in which Wilde was arrested on 6 April 1895 on the charge of 'acts of gross indecency with other male persons.'¹⁹⁶ Waters chose this location to host a dinner party for six of his close friends and he notes the preparations for the evening in his diary:

The huge bed is canopied in damask, and gilt-framed portraits of Oscar and Bosie adorn the walls [...] On another table were two Oscar Wilde books [...] I cleared away the hotel publicity items, and set out my *Vanity Fair* cartoons, my various original press reports of the trials, the programme of the first night of *Importance*, and my Wilde Letter. I scattered among these my prepared green carnations [...] I managed to fit two bottles of Riesling into the fridge for those who might prefer hock and seltzer, which was Wilde's tippie on that fateful afternoon.¹⁹⁷

For Waters, dressed in his black corduroy suit, olive-green shirt and bright-yellow cravat,¹⁹⁸ this was an occasion to display, to show-off, to memorialise, and to perform a selection of items from his private collection of theatrical ephemera. The items are carefully packed up and transported from his semi-detached house and brought to their temporary home in the luxurious surroundings of the five-star hotel suite. The Wilde memorabilia provided by the hotel is put aside to make way for Waters's own possessions and he displays them around the room in expectation of his guests' arrival. Just like the *Vanity Fair* prints that stared down at Waters from the walls of his private living room,

¹⁹⁵ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

¹⁹⁶ John Sloan, *Authors in Context: Oscar Wilde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. xi.

¹⁹⁷ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

¹⁹⁸ Correspondence with Rachel and James Gould, RWTC, RW/1/5/15, RHUL Archives.

portraits of Wilde stared down at Waters and his display from the walls of the hotel suite. Like an actor awaiting his audience, Waters awaited his guests, readying the set and the props that accompany his performing of the collection. The theatrical objects acquired a significance and a heightened sense of poignancy in the atmosphere of the Wilde suite. The spatial realm occupied by the objects was altered, and thus their meanings, and the ways in which they were interpreted by both Waters and his guests, were altered too. The space inhabited by Waters as a collector of theatrical ephemera also changed. Waters notes: ‘alone in the room, I thought again of Oscar Wilde’s appallingly fraught afternoon there and its fateful conclusion [...] History was *then*: I am *now*: I cannot make any mystic connection between the two’.¹⁹⁹ Waters did not seek to achieve a transcendental experience by displaying objects from his collection, and performing his role as a collector, within the surroundings of the Wilde suite. But, within the space of the hotel room, I suggest that something changed.

Waters’s night in the Wilde suite of the Cadogan Hotel serves as both an effective, and affective, opening to this chapter. Effective because the chapter interrogates the different spaces (public, private, social, gendered, sexual, etc.) occupied by the collector and collection of theatrical ephemera. Affective because it depicts the personal, charged relationship between the collector and his/her collection, between performer (both collector and collected materials) and audience. Arlette Farge suggests that: ‘the archive is an excess of meaning, where the reader experiences beauty, amazement, and a certain affective tremor’.²⁰⁰ Waters’s interactions with his collected objects produce this affective

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 31

sensation, both for himself and for the guests in front of whom both collector and collection performed.

The transition of both Waters and his objects from the domestic realm of 6 Rusholme Road to the London hotel room illuminates the various and multiple spaces that the collector and collection can occupy and enables me to explore the ways, and the places, in which the collector and collection can perform. In both the Introduction and Chapter One, I have situated understandings of private and public as permeable and fluid concepts. Here, I locate the private and public realms inhabited by the theatre collector, seeking to establish how the gender, sexuality, financial status, and social networks occupied by the collector are performed in, and by, the collection. I also unpick another assumed binary that I term 'insider/outsider'. To clarify the term 'insider' I suggest this connotes a social status that allows access to people considered to be of 'high' social standing. In the case of the theatre collector, I mean this to involve a social network comprising influential, powerful and prominent members of the theatre and arts world: a network that may have repercussions for the objects acquired by the collector, both in terms of subject and ease of acquisition. These repercussions may have the power to attribute value to the collector and collection and thereby influence the transition of the two from a private to a public realm. By 'outsider' I suggest an individual or collector who does not have access to such social spaces and whose collection and collecting activities do not benefit from an established network of professionals or enthusiasts.

Interrogating the collectors' positioning within an insider/outsider framework will illuminate the spheres of acquaintance and influence, in both a professional and personal sense, occupied by Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. David Wiles, in his investigation of the relationship between theatre and citizenship, argues that 'people are

more than individuals'.²⁰¹ Locating the collector, and mapping the networks and spaces of which they are a part, will reveal the ways in which the private collection becomes public, how collectors are perceived and understood by the public, and how collectors might contribute to the making of the theatrical past. Inspired by Wiles, I argue that the private collection, and thus the public archive, is built upon the relationships, networks and communities of which the collector is a part, rather than understanding the collection as a hermetic body of materials, impervious to outside influence.

The personal papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are integral to informing this chapter. As detailed in the Introduction, these papers contain a range of materials including handwritten family trees, birth and death certificates, photographs, diaries, correspondence, bank statements, career papers, jewellery, medals, and scrapbooks. These materials, often containing intimate details of the collector's sexuality, relationships, and health, are now a part of the public archive and can therefore be accessed by members of the public. In shifting the gaze of the archival researcher towards the personal papers of the theatre collector, I offer new readings into the spaces occupied by both the collector and his/her collection. I interrogate these spaces within a framework of cultural theory that contextualises the social, financial, sexual, and gendered spaces of the collector of theatrical ephemera.

Exhibiting in private

In January 1996, Waters and his theatre collection were featured in *Times Weekend*, a section of the Saturday edition of *The Times* featuring articles on lifestyle, food, health, gardens, and fitness. This contextualises the article on Waters and his theatre collection

²⁰¹ David Wiles, *Theatre and Citizenship: The History of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 222.

as an appealing human-interest story for a Saturday afternoon read. The article features the headline: ‘An exhibitionist in his own home: A collector brings drama to the drawing room (and the rest of the house).’²⁰² The use of the word ‘exhibitionist’ creates ambiguity, signifying both an individual who arranges objects for display and one who also enjoys the spectacle of display and derives pleasure from the attention garnered by showing-off him/herself and his/her possessions. The phrase ‘exhibitionist in his own home’ also evokes the museum exhibition or display, suggesting that Waters’s home is a space in which he exhibits and curates items from his private collection for a public audience. The article plays with the overlap between the private nature of Waters’s collection and the public nature of its display in the article. It self-consciously exposes the collision between the private home and the public nature of the exhibitionist collector. The private, domestic space of Waters’s home is made public as readers of *Times Weekend* peruse Waters and his theatre collection in sitting rooms, coffee-shops, and bus-stations.

Waters took great pleasure in the displaying and arranging of theatrical materials in his home. In a 2002 diary entry, Waters reveals: ‘today has been a sort of climax. The Methuen Edition of Wilde could not remain forever on the dining room table. It ought to find a permanent home in the sitting room where I could proudly display it to visitors.’²⁰³ Similarly, in an email to John Tuck regarding Tuck’s visit to view the collection in Waters’s home, Waters writes: ‘I am sure that you will have sensed the fact that I greatly enjoyed displaying my collection to an appreciative visitor. It is a rare pleasure.’²⁰⁴ The pleasurable exhibiting of the theatre collection by the collector, and the visceral pleasure this evokes in Waters, is evidence of a number of factors integral to the practice of

²⁰² Road, *An exhibitionist in his own home*.

²⁰³ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives. A later diary entry confirms that ‘Oscar is comfortably installed in the sitting room.’

²⁰⁴ Correspondence with Royal Holloway, University of London, RWTC, RW/1/5/43, RHUL Archives.

collecting. I explore these factors in greater detail throughout the thesis and they include: the collection as representative of Waters's specialist knowledge of theatrical history; the pleasure derived from the aesthetic appeal of the collected materials; the financial investment embodied by the collection; the showcasing of ownership, and the reinforcement of a sense of self demonstrated by the collection.

This displaying and arranging of Waters's collection for the enjoyment of himself, his friends, visitors, and a journalist and photographer from *Times Weekend* unsettles the domestic space in which the private collection is located. Waters's home is not a museum; nor is it a public institution dedicated to the preservation and display of publicly owned collections. I suggest, however, that the displaying and showcasing of the collection does lend the collector's house an ambiguous, unstable status. The home becomes a theatrical space, a stage upon which the collector and collection perform, and it becomes a space with traces of the museum or the public archive in which collections are arranged, ordered, exhibited and consulted. The home of the theatre collector remains a domestic space in which the collector lives, eats, entertains and sleeps. Yet the showcasing of the collection continues to subvert antithetical ideas of public and private, closed and open, hidden and displayed. This is reflected in Waters's depiction of the time he receives theatre books and materials for temporary safekeeping from a friend. He confirms that he will store them 'in the tiny fourth bedroom of this suburban semi, which I am pleased to call the Small Library.'²⁰⁵ Waters is aware of the ambiguous status of his home, full as it is with the materials of the theatrical past, and he eagerly encourages and revels in the deliberate blurring of the spatial boundaries represented therein. In 1993 he notes that a woman arrives at the house to discuss 'the design and creation of mock curtains à la

²⁰⁵ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

Covent Garden to hang in the double doorway that leads from the hall to my dining room.²⁰⁶ Waters depicts his home as an academic and museum-like space (the Small Library) as well as a theatrical, dramatic and performative space. His house was to be emblematic of both the museum display and the collection's inherent theatricality. His house formed a triptych of the domestic, the museum, and the theatrical. This blurring of indistinct space is further illustrated and reiterated by Waters's account of a visit made to his home by two friends: 'I took the two of them upstairs to admire the D.I.Y which had transformed the little front bedroom (for some years a dumping ground for boxes of unsorted theatre programmes [...]) into a bijou library, with an illuminated display case of ephemera and a dramatically-lit model theatre'.²⁰⁷ A backlit display case, suitable for use in a museum, is on show in his self-proclaimed library, alongside the model theatre: the dramatic and the academic aspects of the collection in conversation within the confines of the private, domestic space. The traditionally private, enclosed and concealed realm of the domestic, through the displaying and exhibiting of the collection, disrupts the spatial boundary of the domestic to become a stage on which the collector can perform his/her theatrical knowledge and experiences.

After his collection had been formally bequeathed to RHUL, Waters invited Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacky Bratton for lunch at his home for a social visit, unconnected to any university business. Though this was an informal event, I suggest that it was hosted by Waters in anticipation of the pleasure he had on seeing academic researchers engage with his collection; just as he anticipated that his bequest of the collection to RHUL would enable more frequent occurrences of academic engagement with his theatrical materials to take place. Waters produced a three-course meal, each course focused around a

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

particular part of his collection which he had arranged in advance in anticipation of his visitors' research interests.²⁰⁸ New things were brought out from his collection to occupy his guests whilst he prepared the next course. Like Waters's evening with his collection at the Cadogan Hotel, this lunch with two academics affiliated with RHUL provided Waters with an audience before which he, with the help of his collected props, could perform.

On being interviewed for the piece in *Times Weekend*, Waters writes in his diary:

I prepared a lot of notes for him [Alan Road] in advance, mostly popular anecdotes connected with various items, and he came round with his tape recorder and spent a morning with me, giving me a delightful and most unusual opportunity to display and discourse upon my various bits and pieces. Off he went, and a week later *The Times* rang to ask if they could send a photographer [...] I was grinning maniacally into the camera [...] I suspect that the whole thing will be intensely shame-making.²⁰⁹

Waters makes the objects walk and talk as if they are his puppets. The collected objects are made to re-enact the evocative memories, anecdotes and theatrical pasts they embody and, as I suggest in Chapter One, Waters is the conduit through whom these theatrical histories are mediated and shared. Waters's experience of being photographed and interviewed with his collection for *Times Weekend* suggests, however, that the delight derived from a collection is tinged by a more complicated undercurrent: that of embarrassment and shame. It is one thing to share the collection with family, friends and visitors to the home, but Waters is afraid of the wider public's response to his collection and collecting tendencies. His 'maniacal' grin for the photographer suggests an unease about the publicising of what he terms his 'theatrical rubbish', as quoted in the previous chapter, and a subsequent anxiety about the response from friends and readers of the

²⁰⁸ Gilli Bush-Bailey. Message to the author. 20 November 2015. Email.

²⁰⁹ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

newspaper. In an article on the male collector, Kenneth S. Hays suggests that many male collectors ‘kept their “treasures” hidden in closets, under beds, or relegated to the basement or attic feeling uneasy that their adult friends might view them as foolish, extravagant, childish or even effeminate.’²¹⁰ I discuss the gendered nature of collecting later in this chapter, though it is useful here to consider the ways that Waters did display his collection. His hoarded, non-theatrical materials were hidden in closets and relegated to the attic, but his theatre collection was very much on show. The collection has the potential to bring the public (*Times Weekend*) into the private realm (Waters’s home), yet this is highly regulated by collectors who decide and define the private and public spaces that they, and their collections, inhabit. For Waters, however, his personal papers demonstrate that the pleasure he derived from showing his collection, or indeed the compulsion he had to exhibit, was greater than any hesitancy suggested by this occasional sense of embarrassment or humiliation at his engagement with an eccentric pastime, that, according to Frances Larson, ‘suggests a need for psychoanalysis’.²¹¹

Mander and Mitchenson: private and public performances

Mander and Mitchenson were dedicated first-nighters, attending the theatre with their distinctive costuming, as detailed in the description that opens this chapter. At home, the men dressed in cardigans, but at the theatre ‘out came the bow-ties and the bling’.²¹² Dressed in cloaks and make-up, their presence at first-nights saw them ‘not infrequently, but quite unintentionally’ upstage the rest of the audience.²¹³ Two of the ‘most colourful

²¹⁰ Kenneth S. Hays, ‘The male collector’ in *Collectors’ Showcase*, Vol. 9 (1989), pp. 62-65, p. 62.

²¹¹ Larson, *An Infinity of Things*, p. 5.

²¹² June Mendoza. Message to the author. 10 July 2015. Email.

²¹³ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

and indeed eccentric²¹⁴ characters in British theatre, Mander and Mitchenson were both camp and extraordinary. Crucially, they were performers, both having had acting careers in their youths. Whilst at the theatre, they revelled in their status as private collectors and the intimate relationships this had produced with members of theatrical society, and they performed these roles publicly. Mander and Mitchenson also brought their performances from the public space of the theatre to the private space of their home. In 1987, a short documentary was broadcast featuring the two men and their theatre collection.²¹⁵ As the opening credits roll, a seventy-six year old Mitchenson slides down his bannister, sweeping past the theatrical portraits and paintings that hang on the adjacent wall. A quick change sees the two collectors wandering around the house, donning the silk dressing gowns given to them by Coward, before selecting objects to show to the cameras and playing records of old theatrical hits.²¹⁶ Mander and Mitchenson are performing in this instance, and their collection provides them with the scenery and the props. The domestic home is a public stage, complete with camera crew, and the collectors and their private collection are the star attractions.

Gender and collecting

Susan M. Pearce argues that: ‘gender is itself constructed through collecting and collections [...] Collecting does its share to create the gender distinctions which govern social life.’²¹⁷ This is corroborated by Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf who suggest that ‘gender is expressed, shaped and marked through the process of

²¹⁴ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

²¹⁵ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections*, p. 63.

collecting.²¹⁸ According to these assertions, then, the objects that comprise a collection can help to determine, construct and validate, gender. Pearce continues: '[b]oth genders collect, whether by nurture or nature, things traditionally appropriate to their sex. Men have mechanical things and military things, women have personal things like jewellery, household things like spice jars.'²¹⁹ Similarly, Belk argues that: 'men are much more likely than women to collect automobiles, guns, stamps, antiques, books, beer cans, wines, and sports-related objects.'²²⁰ He continues with a listing of the gendered dichotomies of collecting tendencies, male characteristics listed first: 'gigantic/tiny, strong/weak, world/home, machine/nature, extinguishing/nurturing, science/art, seriousness/playfulness, functional/decorative'.²²¹ Collecting is commonly defined as being a gendered activity. If the collecting of theatrical ephemera is applied to Belk's gendered listing, it becomes clear that it correlates with traditionally (or stereotypically) female forms of collecting. The theatre collection pertains to the arts, the playful, and the decorative. It is positioned uncomfortably amongst male notions of functionality, machinery, earnestness and destruction. That Mander and Mitchenson and Waters collected *Vanity Fair* illustrations, costumes and assembled models of toy theatres rather than guns, car parts, bottle tops or stamps subverts traditional notions of the normative male collector. On the other hand, Enthoven's collecting of theatrical ephemera might be considered to correspond with the activities of the normative female collector. However, Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby attest that: 'grand-scale collecting almost always calls for aggressive and material ambition to a degree uncharacteristic of women'.²²² According

²¹⁸ Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf, 'Of mice and men: gender identity in collecting' in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, pp. 240-253, p. 240.

²¹⁹ Susan Pearce, 'Collections and Collecting' in Simon J. Knell (ed.), *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, Second Edition (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004) pp. 47-51, p. 49.

²²⁰ Belk, *Collecting as luxury consumption*, pp.484

²²¹ Ibid. pp.485.

²²² Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 326.

to the two, Enthoven's remarkable, grand-scale collection was uncharacteristic of her gender: her collecting activities were demonstrative of her male traits. It is important to acknowledge that Rigby and Rigby were writing in 1944, and, though Belk and Wallendorf state that collecting can no longer be defined as an inherently masculine or feminine activity, they still maintain that certain collecting traits are male (aggressiveness, mastery, competitiveness) whilst others are female (creativity, preservation, care).²²³

Enthoven: a female collector

Andrew Prescott notes: 'above all, records are shaped by such characteristics of their creators as their social background, education, religion and gender.'²²⁴ The impact of Enthoven's gender has a significant bearing upon her ability to collect (in terms of amassing and acquiring material) and upon the ability for her collection to move from the private to the public sphere.

Born in 1868, Enthoven grew up in late-Victorian Britain, a time, according to Tim Dolin, in which the vogue for collecting was particularly popular amongst women and in which the amateur collector was a recognised social figure in an era characterised by 'the abundance and oppressiveness of a famously cluttered age'.²²⁵ In the early years of the twentieth century new magazines such as *The Connoisseur* and the *Burlington Magazine* devoted their publications to the interests of the collector, demonstrating the rise in popularity of collecting. However, as Dolin asserts, it was the Victorian man's collection which was considered most meaningful. Public opinion reinforced the widely held belief

²²³ Belk and Wallendorf, *Of mice and men*, p. 242.

²²⁴ Quoted in Hail, *Accidents of Survival*, p. 106.

²²⁵ Tim Dolin, "'Cranford' and the Victorian Collection" in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (Winter 1993), pp. 179-206, p. 179.

in Victorian culture that the male, both physically and intellectually superior to the female, had the natural power to classify and organise. The collection gathered by a man was perceived as having academic value, and it complemented the burgeoning museum culture of the era.²²⁶ Sir Henry Wellcome's gargantuan collection of miscellanea demonstrates that he was a man of the age who subscribed to the ideals of the Victorian amateur, male collector. He believed that his accumulation of the material world contained 'the answers to history's great questions, and that if it could be gathered together in sufficient quantities it would reveal its secrets'.²²⁷ Through the classification and organisation of the guiding male hand, the material traces of history could contribute to and increase society's social and historical knowledge. In comparison to the male collection, the female collection enjoyed little respect, as Dolin makes plain:

The female collection [...] was virtually invisible as a cultural pursuit because it was considered meaningful only within the home. It was continuous with no publically-declared empirical project, but only with determinants of taste: handbooks of domestic science, magazines, and movements such as aestheticism. It identified and named nothing of substance, and contributed nothing to public knowledge [...] Its value was necessarily private, and any project of public display was deemed trivial, nonsensical, or offensive.²²⁸

The Victorian woman's collection, therefore, was accorded no gravitas. It lacked the ability to add anything of worth to the cultural wealth of the nation and it was relegated to the private sphere so as not to expose the silliness and frivolity of the female collector. Most importantly, Dolin portrays a female collection that was hidden, isolated and definitely separate from the public sphere. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to provide a thorough examination of constructions of femininity and the female collector in Victorian England. However, Dolin's description points to the social and gendered environment in which Enthoven grew up, and sets the stage for her later activities as an

²²⁶ Ibid. p. 188.

²²⁷ Larson, *An Infinity of Things*, p. 255.

²²⁸ Dolin, "*Cranford*" and the Victorian Collection, pp. 188-190.

Edwardian woman of independent financial means. The transition of Enthoven's collection from a private to a public space was a transition she had to fight for over a period of thirteen years. During this time, her collection remained in the private realm, whilst at the same time teetering on the edges of public recognition. Sir Cecil Harcourt-Smith, director and secretary of the V&A between 1909 and his retirement in 1924, was frequently approached by Enthoven who enquired as to the possibilities of the Museum housing her collection. Writing to Enthoven in 1911, he admits: 'I fear the difficulties of our undertaking such a scheme are insuperable.'²²⁹ Undeterred, Enthoven suggested she meet him in person. A member of the staff replied on his behalf: 'there is so little chance of your scheme being adopted that we should scarcely be justified in asking you to come here, as you suggest in order to discuss it.'²³⁰ After lobbying numerous museums and campaigning in the national press, Enthoven was finally successful. If Enthoven had been a man would such tenacity have been required? Would the transition of the collection from private to public been smoother and speedier if it represented the inherent social and intellectual value traditionally attributed to the male collector and collection?

'I believe there is nothing like it in the world', writes Enthoven in 1933, 'a one woman collection, worth £35,000.'²³¹ Here, Enthoven distinguishes her collection by gender: it is a female collection not a male collection. She also speaks publicly about the collection's monetary value. This collection has financial clout and a professional, public worth: her private endeavours have contributed to the creation of a valuable public asset. Enthoven acknowledges that her status as a woman is integral to both her and the public's

²²⁹ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²³⁰ Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*, pp. xii-xiii.

²³¹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

understanding of the collection. And the collection, and its eventual move to the V&A, is all the more remarkable for it.

Amateur and professional spaces

Eileen Curley in 'Recording forbidden careers: Nineteenth-century amateur theatricals' (2011) considers the role of women's private theatricals and the making and producing of scrapbooks. In sharp contrast to Dolin, Curley determines that the collecting of materials for scrapbooks produced by the amateur actress in the nineteenth-century permitted these women to transgress the rigid social boundaries of private space. Curley writes:

scrapbooks, like private theatricals, were part of a much larger series of gendered parlour behaviours which existed on the boundaries of public and private life - boundaries that sought to contain women in idealised gender roles and spaces and yet were permeable enough to permit women to acquire a public voice.²³²

She continues: 'these activities took women out of the more protected private sphere and enabled them to see that they had productive power.'²³³ There are two things at play here. Firstly, Curley concedes that the making of a scrapbook was a female activity, and an accepted female activity at that. It adheres to Dolin's description of the female collection: an activity relegated to the private, domestic sphere that was perceived as having little worth for the wider public. Curley, however, goes on to recognise a more fluid notion of the public and private space in the nineteenth-century that I am keen to acknowledge. Scrapbooks gave women the opportunity to document their own amateur dramatics. These books full of pasted materials allowed the women a small space of their own in which to demonstrate and commemorate their theatrical talents and careers, creating an

²³² Eileen Curley, 'Recording forbidden careers: Nineteenth-century amateur theatricals' in McGillivray, *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Memorabilia*, pp. 229-248, p. 230.

²³³ *Ibid.* pp. 231-232.

object charged with personal and historical meaning. Curley uses a case study to determine the power of the scrapbook to enable the female to occupy, if not all, then part of the public realm. She employs the story of Alice and Rita Lawrence, two well-known amateur actresses living in New York in the 1880s and 1890s, and the scrapbooks they produced from programmes, clippings and souvenirs detailing their own amateur acting careers. Curley suggests that the women's scrapbooks defy Dolin's gendered reading of the female collection:

The arrangement of materials within them is neither decorative nor aesthetically appealing; instead they methodically record the achievements of a career which spanned more than a decade and scores of performances. The theatricals were public, the record of the theatricals was public, and the scrapbooks themselves seem to have entered the public sphere.²³⁴

Furthermore, the traditionally female activity of scrapbooking was used by the sisters as 'a vehicle to record their theatrical exploits and in so doing [they] negotiated the boundaries between private and public behaviours deemed acceptable for women of their class.'²³⁵ These scrapbooks, then, did not stay in the home but were shared with others in public spaces. The private scrapbooks of the Lawrence sisters are now housed in Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

I use this example of the Lawrence sisters in order to interrogate the activities of Enthoven. The Lawrence sisters were amateur actors and amateur collectors of materials relating to their non-professional careers. Their collecting was motivated by a personal impulse to document their amateur careers rather than any professional agenda. Enthoven produced scrapbooks in order to document and record both her own amateur theatrical exploits *and* her professional collecting career. She was an enthusiastic amateur actress

²³⁴ Ibid. p. 235.

²³⁵ Glen McGillivray, 'The performance archive: Detritus or historical record?' in McGillivray, *Scrapbooks, Snapshots and Hidden Memorabilia*, pp. 11-28, p. 27.

and performed with the Windsor Strollers, the Old Stagers and other prominent amateur companies.²³⁶ She was a founding member and president of the Pioneer Players, a London-based theatre society founded in 1911 with Edith Craig that engaged heavily with socio-political issues of the era. The society ‘acknowledged an interest in woman’s suffrage *and* in any other current movement of interest’,²³⁷ and was ‘an important theatre club specializing in foreign, feminist and avant-garde plays.’²³⁸ Enthoven was responsible for ‘the record of the society’s work, compiling collections of press cuttings’,²³⁹ demonstrating her considerable talent for cataloguing, compiling and methodically recording.²⁴⁰ *Ellen Young*, a play written by Enthoven and Edmund Goulding, was produced by the Pioneer Players at the Savoy Theatre on 2 April 1916. Enthoven’s personal papers contain saved programmes and press cuttings about *Ellen Young* and the original typescripts of the play, as well as programmes and reviews of other plays written by Enthoven and performed in London.²⁴¹ Enthoven also created a scrapbook into which she pasted newspaper and magazine articles about her growing theatre collection, demonstrating the increasing media attention both herself and her collection were attracting. Like the Lawrence sisters, this activity of making scrapbooks records Enthoven’s theatrical career as well as documenting the changing status of her theatre collection and her role as a professional collector. Amateur and professional spaces,

²³⁶ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²³⁷ Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players, 1911-1925* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 7.

²³⁸ Sally Cline, *Radclyffe Hall: A Woman Called John* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2010), p. 292.

²³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 27.

²⁴⁰ During the First World War, Enthoven was the head of the Correspondence and Indexing department of the War Refugee Committee, and later made head of the Records Department of the Red Cross. She was awarded an OBE for these efforts. Kate Dorney comments: ‘it is not clear whether she [Enthoven] went to the Red Cross because she already possessed extraordinary skills in indexing, or whether she developed them there and then used them in her cataloguing of her collection, something of which she was inordinately proud’ in Dorney, *Excavating Enthoven*, p. 120.

²⁴¹ A review of *Ellen Young* in *The Stage* reads: ‘Mrs Enthoven seemed very well pleased with herself when she took a call as part author on Sunday, and perhaps the touches of up-to-date realism throughout a piece with central idea nullified or stultified by the feeble namby-pamby ending might have some shred of excuse’ in Personal papers of Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

private and public activities collide in the space of the scrapbook. The movement between the two statuses becomes porous and complex and is evidence, as Tracy C. Davis suggests, that: '[a]ctresses occupy multiple spheres, simultaneously'.²⁴² Not only does this pasting of articles and preserving of scraps make for a personal and private record for Enthoven to look over herself, it also contributes to the shared public record of the nation's amateur theatrical past. These become the archival materials from which narratives of Enthoven's private and public life, her status as amateur actress and professional collector, can be interrogated and (re)constructed.

In terms of her collecting activities, Enthoven was a radical woman, especially when considered against Dolin's description of perceptions of the nineteenth-century female collector. Indeed, upon the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, the end of the Victorian era gave way to the fresh social winds of Edwardian liberalism and Enthoven was on the radical end of this change. Enthoven's social group, her suffrage campaigning and her involvement in the Pioneer Players marked a refusal to submit to the confines of expected female behaviour and a rejection of Victorian values in return for an acceptance of more liberal Edwardian values. In 1912 for example, Enthoven and other suffragette friends went to see 'a special performance by the Pioneer Players of Bernard Shaw's play *Mrs Warren's Profession*, then banned from public staging for its discussion of prostitution.'²⁴³ This suggests a woman who was unafraid to expose her reputation to certain aspects of public scrutiny. Her lobbying in the national press for a theatre museum and national theatre collection, combined with the belief that her collection was of great importance to the cultural and material history of the nation, suggests a refusal to be confined to the private, female realm and a refusal to accept her collection as amounting

²⁴² Davis, *Private Women*, p. 70.

²⁴³ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall*, p. 80.

to mere trivial whimsy. Not only did Enthoven and her collection elevate the status of theatre to an arena worthy of study and exhibition in the nation's public institutions, she simultaneously elevated the status of the female collector to one worthy of respect and to one with the power to alter and inform the landscape of the nation's public archives. Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters clearly subvert normative gendered collecting traits. They complicate and disturb dichotomous notions of the male/female collector either through the objects they chose to collect or the ways in which they collected.

Piecing together private lives: Enthoven's friends

In constructing the narrative of Enthoven's life, I investigate a number of works that contextualise the social, geographical, and cultural spaces occupied by Enthoven, including biographies, autobiographies and collected letters of theatrical figures. Correspondence in the archives of the V&A reveals that Enthoven had relationships with a number of prominent members of the artistic and theatrical circles of her era including Edward Gordon Craig, John Gielgud, Edith Craig, Noël Coward, and Peggy Ashcroft. In a letter from Edith Craig in 1930, when Enthoven and her collection were at the V&A, Craig writes: 'Dear Gabrielle, do you want any *Play Pictorials* or *Playgoers and Society* as there are a lot in a shop next door to where I am staying in Leeds. They are two pence each. I expect you have them all - if not let me know'.²⁴⁴ Craig is complicit in Enthoven's professional quest to form a formidable collection of the London stage. Letters between the two women demonstrate a relationship that melded the personal and the professional, the public and the private. In 1888, Craig writes to Enthoven: 'this is just a line to say thank you for all the work you did for the matinee - the whole show would have gone to

²⁴⁴ Personal papers of Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

pot if you and one or two others hadn't pulled it through'.²⁴⁵ Enthoven was just twenty years old when this letter was written suggesting that her access to the theatrical elite was achieved through inherited and familial social status or through common causes such as the suffrage movement and amateur dramatics. It confirms that Craig and Enthoven enjoyed a professional, public relationship within the theatre. Letters also confirm that, alongside this relationship, the two women also shared a private, personal friendship. Craig's partner, Christopher St. John writes to Enthoven in 1931, addressing the letter 'dearest Gabriellino' and asking her to arrange a date when all three of them can dine together.²⁴⁶ Just as the private and public spaces that Enthoven moved in blurred and seeped, so too did the personal and professional spaces she shared with other members of theatrical society. Relationships with esteemed and well-known members of theatrical society empowered Enthoven. These relationships secured her a position of power within certain elite theatrical networks and ensured the growth and success of her collection. Simultaneously, a theatrical family's close friendship with Enthoven ensured that the family's theatrical exploits would be memorialised and preserved as a part of the nation's theatrical history as represented in Enthoven's collection.

The private and public social networks of which Enthoven was a part facilitated the accumulation of objects for her collection. After all, influential members of the London theatre scene such as the Craig siblings would undoubtedly have had ease of access to objects and ephemera unobtainable to the outsider, to the amateur collector that enjoyed no such relationships with members of the inner circle. Enthoven's connection with the Craig family is further demonstrated by newspaper cuttings from *The Standard* in 1913 which detail the Pioneer Players ball to be held in conjunction with Ellen Terry's birthday.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Christopher St. John, Manuscript Letters Collection, THM/14/19, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

The newspaper states that ‘it is safe to say that the most distinguished members of the theatrical profession will be present.’²⁴⁷ Not only was Enthoven present but her clothing received particular attention: ‘Mrs Charles Enthoven, swathed in purple draperies over gold, with golden boots and a tightly wound turban of purple and gold, suggested an Oriental vision.’²⁴⁸ Like Mander and Mitchenson, Enthoven’s clothing at public events was ostentatious and theatrical. Furthermore, Enthoven cut out and preserved this cutting for her personal archive, obviously enjoying the recognition her presence at the ball and her fashionable attire had garnered. However, in the more private setting of the Museum, Enthoven favoured a blue-checked smock over her blouse and skirt, as did the other women who worked with her on the collection. She preferred more masculine clothing because she found it efficient:²⁴⁹ her skirts had deep pockets, no doubt to hold the characteristic blue pencils that she used.²⁵⁰ In comparison to the turbans and golden boots, Enthoven’s work clothes enabled her to perform the role of earnest theatre archivist, and I suggest that her decision to reject an overtly feminine uniform allowed Enthoven to play a more traditionally masculine role: authoritative, in control, and uninhibited by constricting female fashions. Many of the lesbian women with whom Enthoven socialised also chose to wear a similarly masculine form of dress. In 1927, for example, Una Troubridge and Radclyffe Hall hosted a party, following which one guest remarked: ‘another feature of the evening was the fact that no fewer than three women - including, of course, the joint hostess, Miss Radcliffe [*sic*] Hall - were wearing dinner jackets, and two of them had starched butterfly collars.’²⁵¹ Enthoven’s decision to wear masculine

²⁴⁷ Personal papers of Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁵⁰ Hail, *Accidents of Survival*, p. 109.

²⁵¹ Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Series II: Career and Personal Papers, Scrapbooks, Re: *Adam’s Breed* and awards, 1927-28, Box 24, Folder 2, Manuscripts Collection, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

dress may have been a conscious attempt to identify with and reflect the alternative lifestyles enjoyed by many of her female acquaintances. Alternatively, and more prosaically, Enthoven simply made a choice toward more practical and effective clothing in which to work on her collection. Indeed, the other female volunteers who worked with Enthoven adopted the same blue-checked smock over a blouse and skirt: an unofficial uniform for those women who spent their days cataloguing the collection.²⁵²

Correspondence between Enthoven and Gielgud is documented in the letters and biographies of Gielgud. He was the grandnephew of Ellen Terry - further evidence of a tightly knit theatrical network and the multi-layered social spheres in which Enthoven was entangled. In Jonathan Croall's biography of Gielgud, Enthoven is described as an actress and playwright friend of Noël Coward.²⁵³ Croall includes a letter addressed to Enthoven from Gielgud in 1925 when Gielgud was acting the part of Konstantin in Chekhov's *The Seagull*: 'I'm so glad you think I'm getting rid of a few of the bad tricks. It's a very difficult part, and the producer wasn't much use as a helper, so I've had to go tentatively about my own improvements and developments since the first night'.²⁵⁴ This letter demonstrates an intimacy between the two with Gielgud revealing his appreciation of Enthoven's advice. It also exposes Gielgud's confidence in Enthoven as a source of knowledge and expertise on the acting profession and his confidence in her ability to articulate professional, specialist advice.

Enthoven produced detailed reports dating from 1932 that note the people who consulted her collection at the V&A.²⁵⁵ Gielgud was a regular visitor to the collection and his mother, Kate Terry-Gielgud, volunteered for Enthoven in the cataloguing of the

²⁵² Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁵³ Jonathan Croall, *Gielgud: A Theatrical Life 1904-2000* (London: Methuen, 2001), pp. 69.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 70.

²⁵⁵ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

collection whilst simultaneously working on her own research into the life of her mother, Kate Terry. The collection itself then, provided a public social space in which prominent members of the theatrical world carried out private research and helped to organise the public collection. John Gielgud, for example, attended the collection to undertake research in 1939, whilst Laurence Olivier carried out research under Enthoven's watchful eye in 1949.²⁵⁶

Footnotes and fleeting references

Enthoven also appears as a footnote in the collected letters of Oscar Wilde. Rupert Hart-Davis reports that Wilde wrote a letter to his friend Aimée Lowther in August 1899 describing a short poem he had written which was due to be published in a Parisian magazine. Hart-Davis fails to trace a copy of the publication but notes that:

A number of versions have been printed by people who heard Wilde tell the story, including André Gide, but the best known is probably that recorded by Mrs Gabrielle Enthoven [...] At some unspecified time she wrote down from memory versions of four prose-poems which she had heard Wilde tell [...] She had them printed in a twelve-page pamphlet with a crinkly purple cover and ECHOES printed on the front. It is undated and bears no name of author, editor or printer. The British Museum copy, which was presented by Mrs Enthoven in 1948, contains two letters from her in which she says that only 'five or six copies' were printed. One is in the collection of Mr Montgomery Hyde, and another (presented by Aimée Lowther, who was a close friend of Mrs Enthoven) used to belong to Mr Vyvyan Holland.²⁵⁷

This pamphlet can now be found in the British Library. No materials in Enthoven's personal papers at the V&A report any such meeting between herself and Wilde. However, George Nash, curator of the collection after Enthoven's death, remarks in a speech given in 1956 that Enthoven 'knew Oscar Wilde very well.'²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the

²⁵⁶ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁵⁷ Rupert Hart-Davis (ed.), *The Letters of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 809n.

²⁵⁸ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

V&A holds a copy of Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1889) which bears Enthoven's bookplate, designed by Edward Gordon Craig, on the title page and her writing which reads: 'Given me by Oscar Wilde.'²⁵⁹ Kate Dorney has recently discovered that Wilde once dedicated a poem to Enthoven in November 1889 entitled *Remorse*. (*a study in saffron*) in exchange for 'an autograph Sonnett [*sic*] of Paul Verlaine.'²⁶⁰ These traces of the relationship between Enthoven and Wilde - for traces are all that remain - offer the possibility for further unknown liaisons, meetings and rendezvous between the collector and other well-known and influential members of theatrical and artistic society. These traces hint at the potential for other remarkable social networks to exist within materials in the public archive that may never be fully uncovered. Tracy C. Davis writes: 'when working on gender history one is usually counselled to read in the margins, look for the traces of lives amid copious evidence of ostensibly [*sic*] other things'.²⁶¹ Enthoven's relationship with Wilde is reduced to a footnote, and in the process of researching the personal life of a professional, public collector, I have had to search within the margins and the spaces of other things to uncover the evidence that is missing from the collector's own private papers.

One intriguing line of enquiry into the private life of Enthoven emerges through investigations into the life of Noël Coward. Coward arrived in New York in 1921 and soon finding himself low on funds was offered a room in an apartment in which Enthoven and Cecile Sartoris were staying.²⁶² Reflecting on his stay, Coward reports how the two women said: 'that when I sold a play, or made some money somehow, I could pay rent,

²⁵⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (David Nutt: London, 1889), PR5818.H2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁶⁰ Bobby Fong, 'Oscar Wilde: Five Fugitive Pieces' in *English Literature in Translation, 1880-1920*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1 January 1979), pp. 7-16, pp. 13-14.

²⁶¹ Davis, *Private Women*, p. 69.

²⁶² Enthoven had collaborated with Sartoris in 1915 on a translation of Gabriele D'Annunzio's play *The Honeysuckle*. It played at the Lyceum in New York 1921 and at Playroom 6, Soho on 9 May 1927.

but until then I was to be their guest. [...] I accepted and moved in immediately, grateful not only for their kindness, but for their company.’²⁶³ Further investigations reveal that also present in New York at this time was Mercedes de Acosta, an American poet, playwright and novelist known for her affair with Greta Garbo. In her memoir of 1960, de Acosta recounts in detail the time she spent with Enthoven and Coward. The English musical comedy actress, Teddie Gerrard, was living in a flat close to Enthoven and de Acosta describes the period in which they were together, recounting how ‘there was snow on the ground on Christmas Eve and we each took a lighted candle and walked around Washington Square singing, in bare feet’.²⁶⁴ Present on this evening was Lord Napier Alington; Lady Irene Dean-Paul, otherwise known as the composer and pianist ‘Poldowski’; Muriel Draper, an American writer and artist, and Sinclair Lewis, who in 1930 received the Nobel Prize in Literature.²⁶⁵

Enthoven and sexuality

The people with whom Enthoven associated in New York and her close friendships with women who were in lesbian relationships, such as Edith Craig, raise questions about Enthoven’s sexual identity. *The Guardian*, describing Coward’s stay in New York, states that Coward ‘stayed with Gabrielle Enthoven and Cecile Sartoris, one of many lesbian couples who helped him, and with whom he felt absolutely at ease.’²⁶⁶ It is Enthoven’s association with the lesbian writer Radclyffe Hall and her lover Una Troubridge,

²⁶³ Noël Coward, *Autobiography: Consisting of Present Indicative, Future Indefinite and the Uncompleted Past Conditional* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 92.

²⁶⁴ Mercedes de Acosta, *Here Lies the Heart* (New York: Reynal & Company, 1960), p. 125.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Simon Callow, ‘Englishman Abroad’ in *The Guardian* (Wednesday 19 April 2006). <http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2006/apr/19/theatre> - accessed 16 December 2015.

however, that offers the greatest insight into Enthoven's sexual identity and how this identity, and the performing of this identity, shaped her private and public persona. Enthoven's personal papers contain no materials relating to either Hall or Troubridge. Rather, Enthoven appears fleetingly in biographies of the two women and in the private diaries of Troubridge. Diana Souhami, in *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall* (1998), writes: 'Toupie [Lowther] was a pivotal figure in the London lesbian scene of the twenties. Literary and artistic lesbians gravitated to her house and to another former friend of Mabel Batten's, Gabrielle Enthoven. She was a playwright and theatre historian and gave, according to Una, "faultless dinner parties"'.²⁶⁷ Enthoven's home in the elite location of 97 Cadogan Gardens, Kensington became a private space in which the artistic, aristocratic and ambitious women that comprised this group would meet. They were, according to Souhami, 'the lesbian haut monde'²⁶⁸ and they referred to each other as 'The Circle',²⁶⁹ frequenting venues such as Cave of Harmony and the Orange Tree in Soho, known for their lesbian clientele who would drink alcohol, smoke and dance together throughout the night.²⁷⁰ Enthoven belonged to an exclusive, female, and bohemian social sphere. Souhami writes:

It is doubtful whether Radclyffe Hall and Una, Natalie Barney, Romaine Brooks, Winnaretta Singer, Toupie Lowther, Colette, Evelyn Irons, Gabrielle Enthoven, Teddie Gerrard, Tallulah Bankhead and the rest, with their fine houses, stylish lovers, inherited incomes, sparkling careers and villas in the sun, were among the

²⁶⁷ Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall*, p. 121. Toupie Lowther was the sister of Aimée Lowther who, like Enthoven had presented a copy of Oscar Wilde's *Echoes* - further evidence of the complex layers and social networks of which Enthoven was a part.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 159.

²⁶⁹ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall*, p. 122.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p 177. Cline notes that the sight of women dancing together after World War I was familiar and unthreatening due to the shortage of men. Enthoven and her friends understood the private undertones and subtext of their dancing together - others who watched them may have been utterly unaware.

most persecuted and misunderstood people in the world. Nor did they need an apologist for their affairs, loves and sexual escapades.²⁷¹

The social circuit that Enthoven moved within was one of privilege, power and wealth. This social status, and the private circles she mixed in, influenced and impacted upon Enthoven's public theatrical pursuits. In a review of a 1927 Soho production of Gabriele D'Annunzio's *The Honeysuckle*, translated by Enthoven and Sartoris, the writer remarks how the performance space was 'full from end to end [...] As I looked round during the interval I caught sight of several people well known in the world of art and letters.'²⁷² Similarly, *Ellen Young* attracted the social elite to its premiere including Lady Maud Warrender, the Duchess of Rutland, Lady Diana Manners, Lady Randolph Churchill, and Princess Eristoff.²⁷³ Enthoven's social capital and positioning in exclusive lesbian and gay circles inevitably affected the public success of her theatrical endeavours, attracting the celebrated men and women of society and encouraging more reviews and greater attention. Dinners at the Savoy, nights at the theatre and weekends in country houses were regular activities. These encounters with the 'haut-monde' of the era situate Enthoven as an insider of both the theatre and arts world, and of a certain branch of high society.

One of Enthoven's scrapbooks contains the collected materials that map the journey of her collection from the private to the public space. The scrapbooks abound with letters torn from newspapers that demonstrate support for Enthoven's campaign from a number of well-known individuals. In 1911 at the start of her campaign, *The Referee* reports: 'Mrs Enthoven's scheme, ever in the inception, has already met with the warm approval

²⁷¹ Souhami, *The Trials of Radclyffe Hall*, p. 167. Of course, for women homosexuality was not illegal as it was for men at this time. The dangers in publicly performing homosexuality were quite different for men and women.

²⁷² Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

²⁷³ Matthew Kennedy, *Edmund Goulding's Dark Victory: Hollywood's Genius Bad Boy* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 18.

of Sir Herbert Tree, Sir George Alexander, Sir John Hare, and other shining lights of the stage, and it is hoped that an influential committee may be formed to assist in giving it shape and substance.²⁷⁴ The private relationships enjoyed by Enthoven enhanced and affirmed her public and professional status as a collector. The ramifications of the social networks that she inhabited were integral to the publicising, popularising, and legitimising of her private theatre collection as it entered the public realm.

Performing lesbianism in public

There were, however, disadvantages to the social, and sexual, spaces inhabited by Enthoven. These were spaces marked by subversion, rebellion, alternative lifestyles and open secrets. In 1895 Wilde had been arrested for committing acts of gross indecency with other male persons; for many years, Edith Craig lived in a ménage à trois with the artist Clare ‘Tony’ Atwood and the dramatist Christabel Marshall, otherwise known as Christopher St. John, and in 1928 Hall’s lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) became embroiled in an obscenity trial. An exclusive female club that ostensibly marked Enthoven as an insider was also one that marked her as outsider. It marked her as a public woman complicit in a bohemian, potentially scandalous, private lifestyle contradictory to the expected societal norms of a respectable public woman. Did Enthoven’s aristocratic connections, her wealth, and her famous friends protect her from society’s judgement and distaste? Did it encourage society to turn a blind eye? Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull suggest that when awareness of lesbianism as a stigmatised sexual identity increased in the twentieth-century ‘class and professional status, family acceptance (or conversely membership of an artistic bohemian world) could protect women from

²⁷⁴Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

criticism.²⁷⁵ Framed against the criteria set out by Oram and Turnbull, it appears that Enthoven's sexual identity was immune from social critique or interrogation due to her public status and private positioning. Enthoven was also immune, perhaps, because she evaded actions that attracted negative attention such as living for extended periods with other women, or publishing works on female sexuality.

However, Helen Grime asserts: 'the silences which characterize the lesbian experience in the early and mid-twentieth century are profound, particularly following the ban of *The Well of Loneliness* in 1928. Lesbian sexuality remained literally unvoiced.'²⁷⁶ In the court case surrounding Hall's lesbian novel, Sir Chartres Biron condemned the work as 'an obscene libel' that would 'corrupt those into whose hands it should fall' and ordered that all seized copies of the book be destroyed.²⁷⁷ The exclusive lesbian group of which Enthoven was a part *had* to be exclusive. It may have been an open secret amongst the elite members of artistic and theatrical society, but their sexuality was not public knowledge, or at least it was not talked about or performed publicly. The trial of Hall can be understood as a public forum for the contemporary discussion of relationships between women.²⁷⁸ The verdict was not good. Lesbianism might be acknowledged in private social groups but performing lesbianism on a public stage is likely to have provoked vehement criticism and distaste.²⁷⁹

After the trial, Enthoven's close relationship with Hall and Troubridge broke down dramatically. Troubridge, a prolific diarist, makes several references to Enthoven in her

²⁷⁵ Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull, *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: love and sex between women in Britain from 1780 to 1970* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 51.

²⁷⁶ Helen Grime, *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Twentieth Century Actress* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), p. 9.

²⁷⁷ 'Novel Condemned As Obscene' in *The Times* (Saturday 17 November 1928), p. 5.

²⁷⁸ Oram and Turnbull, *The Lesbian History Sourcebook*, p. 182.

²⁷⁹ Grime, *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies*, p. 52.

private daybooks in the early 1930s. In 1931, Troubridge recounts a conversation about Enthoven with her friends Wilma and Dickie:

They asked us the reason for our split with Gabrielle Enthoven and were not I think much astonished at what we told them. John [Radclyffe Hall] said that she would have nothing to do with an invert who repudiated her own kind when opportune to do so, and was willing to see them caricatured and made ridiculous and this Gabrielle has done with the utmost publicity. It appears that she is always urging Wilma to camouflage and 'be discreet'. Anyway, she is a rat and one we have no use for.²⁸⁰

This attack on Enthoven reveals the tensions and collisions between Enthoven's private life and the performing of her public life. She is dismissed by Troubridge and Hall because, in the wake of the obscenity trial regarding Hall's novel, Enthoven encourages discretion amongst her lesbian friends and deliberately distances herself from them.²⁸¹ She urges them to keep their private sexuality separate from their public persona and crucially, according to Troubridge, she does this publicly. This behaviour disrupts Enthoven's positioning as an insider and suggests that, like Enthoven's presentation of private and public self, the assumed binary of insider/outsider is both permeable and volatile. I suggest that Enthoven performed the private and public role of insider and outsider as situations determined, and as and when, like so many of her contemporaries, it was necessary, and safe, to do so. In 1921, an attempt was made to include sexual acts between women within the sphere of criminal law for the first time in British judicial history.²⁸² The attempt failed. According to Alkarim Jivani, what the establishment objected to more than the 'crime' of homosexuality and lesbianism was any mention of it: 'the best way of dealing with lesbianism was not to talk about it.'²⁸³ This is what

²⁸⁰ Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Day Books, Manuscripts Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. Vol. 2, Feb. 24, 1931 - April 18, 1931.

²⁸¹ Michael Baker, *Our Three Selves: A Life of Radclyffe Hall* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985), p. 283.

²⁸² Alkarim Jivani, *It's Not Unusual: A History of Lesbian and Gay Britain in the Twentieth Century* (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1997), p. 34.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

Enthoven chose to do. The public exposure of her private lesbianism was likely to have been in conflict with her persona as national campaigner and her affiliation with a renowned public institution. Indeed, the imprisonment of her friend Wilde in 1895 haunted homosexual society, with the stigma surrounding his case lingering on for decades after his death.²⁸⁴ Grime, demonstrating the impact that sexual identity could have upon one's career, suggests that Noël Coward's knighthood was awarded later than had been expected, and that this may have been because of his homosexuality,²⁸⁵ whilst the actress Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies's discretion in showcasing her lesbianism was a vital component of her strategy to maintain a respected public profile.²⁸⁶ As Grime reports, Ffrangcon-Davies concealed her lesbianism in terms of her public profile: though lesbianism was not criminalised, the suspicion of the independent spinster resulted in a high level of stigmatisation in the mid-twentieth century.²⁸⁷ If Enthoven wanted to avoid social stigmatisation, if she wanted her theatre collection to continue to attract public support and institutional backing, and if she wanted to enjoy a successful public reputation and position, remaining friends with the establishment she had been born into, Enthoven had to be discreet. To achieve this, like Ffrangcon-Davies, she had to dispel any accusations of the 'indecent' or 'obscene' that had tarnished the private activities of her friends Wilde and Hall.

Mander and Mitchenson's theatrical friends

Mander and Mitchenson, being actors themselves, knew people in the profession. In 1991, Mitchenson was described by *The Stage* as a 'legendary West End figure'²⁸⁸ whilst

²⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 16.

²⁸⁵ Grime, *Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies*, p. 197.

²⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 53.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 52-53.

²⁸⁸ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTCC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

Patricia Hodge declared he was ‘synonymous with the theatre’.²⁸⁹ The roll call of theatrical figures that Mander and Mitchenson called friends demonstrate how the two collectors penetrated the inner circle of London’s theatrical society: Noël Coward, Judi Dench, Edith Evans, Sybil Thorndike, Laurence Olivier, Peggy Ashcroft, and Timothy West, to name but a few. They were universally known as ‘The Boys’²⁹⁰ which suggests familiarity, popularity, and intimacy. The relationship that Mander and Mitchenson enjoyed with Coward was particularly close and thus positions Coward as a figure that populated the private lives of both Mander and Mitchenson *and* Enthoven. Enthoven knew Coward as a young, penniless man trying to carve a theatrical career in New York, whilst Mander and Mitchenson enjoyed a relationship with Coward when he was at the peak of his theatrical powers. According to Mitchenson, Coward christened the two collectors ‘Gog’ and ‘Magog’ because, Coward remarked: ‘I can’t *slavishly* follow in Somerset Maugham’s language and call you “*Mr. Mander*” and “*Mr. Mitchenson*.” I’ve got to call you something *else*’.²⁹¹ The two were told by Coward to ‘sort out between yourselves which is which’.²⁹² Who was Gog and who Magog is therefore uncertain. This affectionate name-calling reveals the intimate relationships enjoyed by Mander and Mitchenson and positions the men within influential and powerful theatrical spaces. Due to the social networks the collectors inhabit, their private collection is granted access to public individuals and public realms which serve to safeguard the collection and ensure its survival.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

²⁹¹ Quoted in Alan Farley, ‘Joe Mitchenson’ in Ron Lazar (ed.), *Speaking of Noël Coward: Interviews by Alan Farley* (Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2013), pp. 204-211, p. 208.

²⁹² Rhymes, *Mander, Raymond Josiah Gale (1911–1983)*.

In the early 1970s, when Lewisham council threatened Mander and Mitchenson with a compulsory purchase order which would result in the demolition of their home, friends of the collectors spoke publicly against the council's decision. In 1972 *The Guardian* reported that a public inquiry was taking place to ascertain the future of the collectors' home in Sydenham. The headline reads: 'Sir Noel to the rescue' and the article opens with a note from Coward to Mander and Mitchenson: 'I would have been desperately, desperately offended, dear boys, if you hadn't asked me for help'.²⁹³ As I acknowledge in Chapter One, the appeal against the council's decision was successful, and the collection remained in Mander and Mitchenson's home until a new, more suitable space could be found to house it. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Coward's public influence may have contributed to this successful outcome. The public spaces occupied by both Enthoven's and Mander and Mitchenson's collections were determined by the notable private networks in which the collectors were positioned.

The private life of Waters

Born in 1928, and entering his adult years at the time that Enthoven died in 1950, Waters had friends of influence but engaged with them in a different historical moment from Enthoven, though in a similar moment to Mander and Mitchenson. Only Waters's friendship group was characterised by highly-educated men and women who occupied senior positions in their chosen careers, overwhelmingly in education and the arts, rather than in the world of the theatre. His friends included Linda Zatlin, an American academic and researcher of Aubrey Beardsley; Simon Wilson, a curator at The Tate; John Gould, a distinguished professor of Greek whom Waters had met as an undergraduate student at

²⁹³ Dennis Barker, 'Sir Noel to the rescue' in *The Guardian* (14 January 1972).

Cambridge; David Robinson, film critic and director of the Pordenone Silent Film Festival, and author of, according to Waters, the definitive biography of Charlie Chaplin; Peter Thornton, former curator of fabrics at the V&A and director of the Sir John Soane's Museum, and Michel Arnaud, a London fashion photographer who worked for *Vogue* magazine. These friends, combined with Waters's Oxbridge education and distinguished career in education, point to a man who was a member of an artistic, educated, and comparatively wealthy social sphere. In this respect, like Enthoven, Waters was, on the surface, an insider; a man surrounded and admired by distinguished figures from the spheres of education, academia, and the arts.

However, describing Waters as an insider is problematic when framed against a number of the materials that comprise his personal papers. I suggest that Waters's admission to St John's College, Cambridge in the autumn of 1949, was his first passage into an elite social space with access to a network of well-connected individuals who enjoyed an insider status. Yet Waters went to Cambridge on a full scholarship having attended a state school and, throughout his entire life, he was a passionate campaigner for education for economically under-privileged and disadvantaged children.²⁹⁴ Waters provides an insight into how his Cambridge education impacted upon his identity. In 2003, he writes: 'I last saw Auntie Rose at my mother's funeral some 20 years ago, which was also the last time I had seen any of my family, all of whom I cut off, with no regrets, many years ago [...]' It is hard to define how deeply my Cambridge education has separated me from my

²⁹⁴ Waters made a series of BBC radio broadcasts in the 1960s targeted at encouraging less-able pupils to engage with learning. The transcripts and related materials for these broadcasts are included in Waters's personal papers.

family'.²⁹⁵ Waters experiences at Cambridge profoundly affected his sense of familial identity and belonging. His involvement with and acceptance into new social spaces - his father was a mechanic - created a gulf between himself and his family. His homosexuality, which I consider later in the chapter, also had an indelible impact upon Waters's relationship with his family, and his father in particular. Waters is an insider in terms of the social spaces he occupies on arrival at university and the place he makes for himself there, but he is an outsider within the space of his family from whom he becomes separated and who become representative of a different class, education, belief-system and ambition to that which Waters begins to anticipate, engage with, and enjoy. Furthermore, Waters admits that he no longer participates in relationships with members of his family, having self-consciously decided to reject the spaces they inhabit in exchange for the new spaces offered by his personal relationships. An outsider by birth, Waters endeavours to become part of the inside social elite on offer at Cambridge.

On the periphery of Waters's social network was Merlin Holland, grandson of Oscar Wilde. Waters was an avid collector of what he termed 'Wildeana' and he concentrated on collecting Wilde-related ephemera after purchasing a Wilde autograph letter in the late 1990s 'for more money than I ever paid for anything but my house and car.'²⁹⁶ There are numerous references to Holland throughout Waters's personal papers. On one occasion Waters dines out with Holland's wife, Sarah, and Simon Wilson, his curator friend, and on another Waters makes a telephone call to Holland to discuss the authenticity of a Wilde pamphlet he has purchased. In 2000, Waters writes to Holland in response to a query from him about research into English theatre companies and their performances in Paris in 1891. Holland responds: 'I really didn't expect you to go to all that trouble and what you

²⁹⁵ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

²⁹⁶ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

discovered was fascinating. I now feel very guilty at having asked you'.²⁹⁷ Holland regards Waters as a talented researcher and a knowledgeable source of theatrical history. Waters's in-depth response to Holland's query marks him as being eager to please and impress Holland, going beyond that which was expected of him. Waters does eventually meet Holland at a launch party in 2001 to celebrate Holland's new book on the Wilde libel trial. On receiving the invitation Waters writes in a letter to some friends: 'I wrote to thank him, and had an hour-long phone conversation in return. I wish I could remember what we talked about.'²⁹⁸ At a later event, when Waters is re-introduced to Holland by a mutual friend, Waters is aware that, though polite, Holland has no recollection of who Waters is, or of ever having talked to him.²⁹⁹ In 2003, a potential opportunity to meet again with Holland in person fails and Waters remarks: 'I would have been tongue tied in his presence'.³⁰⁰

I share these stories of Waters's limited encounters with Holland to reveal Waters's response to communicating with the grandson of Wilde, a theatrical figure with whom Waters was obsessed. Waters evidently identified with and admired what Wilde represented: a literary, theatrical, and sexually abject icon; an outsider. I doubt that Waters's profound admiration for and obsession with Wilde was separable from an understanding of, and empathy with, Wilde's sexuality and the hardships he endured as a result of it. Waters is thus excited, nervous and eager to please in the presence of Wilde's grandson, and embarrassed by Holland's attention, or lack of it. This contributes further to understandings of the private spaces that Waters inhabited. Holland continues to lie on the periphery of Waters social sphere - or rather it is Waters who forever remains on the

²⁹⁷ Correspondence with Merlin Holland, RWTC, RW/11/13/2, RHUL Archives.

²⁹⁸ Correspondence with Ben and Chris [Gilbert], RWTC, RW/1/5/13, RHUL Archives.

²⁹⁹ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

periphery of *Holland's* social sphere. For access to the social space of Wilde's grandson leaves Waters tongue-tied and dazed: he is the outsider wanting to gain entry into the world of the insider, and he never quite manages it. This desire to gain entry to Holland's private network is demonstrated in 2000 when Waters tries to convince Holland of a connection he shares with Wilde. Waters reveals that he grew up in a house near Kensal Green tube station and that, from the back window of his house, he could see the house in which Micheál MacLiammóir was born and raised. For many years, MacLiammóir 'toured with a deeply moving performance in *The Importance of Being Oscar*,³⁰¹ hence Waters's connection with Wilde. As Waters acknowledges, this is a 'very tenuous' connection to say the least,³⁰² but for Waters it is a connection nonetheless, and one that may ingratiate him further into the spaces inhabited by Holland and his contemporaries.

Waters and homosexuality

Waters's sexuality, like that of Enthoven's, is a revealing factor in the positioning of the collection and the locating of the collector. Waters's homosexuality was known to friends, family members and colleagues. He subscribed to *Gay Times Magazine*,³⁰³ he considered boycotting the newsagent W. H. Smith for its refusal to stock the first edition of *Gay News* in the 1970s,³⁰⁴ and he attended a Gay Pride event in London in 1985.³⁰⁵ For Waters, however, it appears that his homosexuality was yet another element in his sense of being an outsider. An ambiguous document included in his personal papers consists of a few sheets of paper entitled 'Psychoanalysis (1949)'.³⁰⁶ Although not directly attributed to Waters, I suggest that he is the author of this document. The sheets of paper are divided

³⁰¹ Correspondence with Merlin Holland, RWTC, RW/11/13/2, RHUL Archives.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Creative writing relating to Roy Waters's friends, RWTC, RW/1/4/7/4, RHUL Archives.

³⁰⁴ Correspondence with Hazel Hardy, RWTC, RW/1/5/20, RHUL Archives.

³⁰⁵ Loose photographs of Roy Waters and friends, RWTC, RW/1/7/24, RHUL Archives.

³⁰⁶ Correspondence relating to health, RWTC, RW/1/2/5, RHUL Archives.

into four columns: ‘Possible Homosexuality’, ‘Masturbation’, ‘Exhibitionism’ and ‘Miscellaneous’, each column filled with handwritten notes and observations. It details how Waters suspected he was homosexual from the age of fifteen. At the age of twenty he accompanied another gay friend to a field one evening with the anticipation of having sex. Waters became disgusted by the act and felt acute shame and embarrassment. His lack of prowess on the sporting field at school led to his father declaring him a huge disappointment and culminated in Waters attempting suicide as a teenager. His effeminate nature, lack of interest in women and inability to succeed at stereotypically ‘male’ pursuits resulted in a feeling of intense isolation and alienation for Waters.³⁰⁷ This document points to Waters identifying as a social misfit and outsider. In the current climate in which this archival material is accessed, such documents are sad, shocking and surprising. The archive becomes a space in which the personal tragedies and sorrows of a man living in the mid-late twentieth-century are exposed and relived through their affective impact upon the archival researcher. These materials attest to a historical and societal recognition of homosexuality that irrevocably shaped and influenced the sense of shame, self and social identity and alienation experienced by Waters and doubtless many other men who shared his anxieties.

Waters’s sexual identity was formed in an age in which homosexuality was illegal. It was not until 1967, when Waters was in his late thirties, that the law changed. This was a change that, for many people, ‘was seen as a fundamental acknowledgement - belated though it was - of gay men’s right to exist.’³⁰⁸ I suggest that this shift in cultural attitude came too late for Waters. As late as 1987 the *British Social Attitudes Survey* revealed that seventy-four per cent of respondents did not approve of homosexual relationships.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Jivani, *It’s Not Unusual*, p. 149.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 195.

Waters's personal papers contain materials that demonstrate his preoccupation with, his frustration with, and his desire to understand his homosexuality. He collected many newspaper cuttings from the 1980s relating to the story of Michael Trestrail, one of Queen Elizabeth II's bodyguards who was exposed as having had an affair with a male prostitute and subsequently forced to resign.³¹⁰ He also saved cuttings on Christian opinions of homosexuality as well as a newspaper article about a 2006 exhibition in Oslo about homosexuality in animals.³¹¹ However, as homosexuality became less taboo, less closeted, Waters evidently felt able to publicly express his sexual identity, albeit in trusted and safe spaces. When working for the Inner London Education Authority in 1986, Waters, along with his colleagues, sent a Christmas card to members of staff at the organisation. The entry for Waters, alongside his photograph, reads 'R. W. Waters has no sons or daughters, that's the reality of homosexuality.'³¹² This public performance of Waters's homosexuality is light-hearted and humorous. However, the reality of his identification as a gay man reveals that his public persona is in contrast with his private experiences. One email sent in 2001 illuminates the impact his homosexuality has had upon his private life. A heterosexual, male friend emails Waters asking for relationship advice. Waters's response is poignant and upsetting: 'it is useless to ask me about the norm of life with regard to the relationship of two people who love each other.'³¹³ For Waters then, his own relationship history (or lack of) does not fit in with normative, socially-expected patterns of behaviour. He is an outsider, and feels himself unable to empathise, and certainly unable to give advice. Indeed, in the most revealing comments on the effect homosexuality has had upon his private life, Waters, writing to a friend,

³¹⁰ Published letters and articles by Roy Waters, RWTC, RW/1/4/1, RHUL Archives.

³¹¹ Papers located in Roy Waters's printed book collection, RWTC, RW/1/12. RHUL Archives.

³¹² Creative writing and presentations relating to Roy Waters's career, RWTC, RW/1/4/7/2, RHUL Archives.

³¹³ Correspondence with Jan Babik, RWTC, RW/1/5/3, RHUL Archives.

remarks: 'most outsiders become cynics, and most homosexuals view themselves, however fiercely they proclaim their sexuality, as outsiders.'³¹⁴ Waters's sexuality leaves him isolated. Again, in a society in which homosexuality is now accepted, the materials that comprise Waters's collection reveal the anguish experienced by many homosexuals who were unable to express themselves either privately or publicly. Waters's papers thus contribute to a material history of homosexuality that continues to emerge and to be accessed by archival researchers who can go some way to publicising, and honouring, the private suffering felt by generations of men and women.

Statements on the gendered nature of collecting from Pearce, Belk and Wallendorf that I quote earlier in the chapter, posit the male collector as collecting stereotypically male items: guns, cars and so on. By subverting traditionally male collecting habits, the male collectors of theatrical ephemera assume a collecting identity that is traditionally female and effeminate. The collecting of theatrical ephemera lent Waters an identity of which he was proud. At the age of fourteen, Waters was given a prominent acting role in a school play. Theatre and amateur dramatics became a passion: it was an activity that Waters excelled at, and a world in which he felt he finally belonged.³¹⁵ Theatrical spaces enabled Waters to feel he belonged to a world which celebrates and accepts homosexual men; a world in which the collecting of memorabilia of gay men such as Oscar Wilde and Noël Coward is applauded and encouraged. Yet, unlike Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, Waters is not an insider within the world of theatre: he does not himself perform or work professionally in theatrical spaces. He remains forever the outsider looking in. I argue, however, that the performing of his collection enabled Waters to perform his sexuality. His theatre collection filled his home; his identity was displayed on walls and

³¹⁴ Correspondence with Rachel and James Gould, RWTC, RW/1/5/15, RHUL Archives.

³¹⁵ Correspondence relating to health, RWTC, RW/1/2/5, RHUL Archives.

bookshelves. This was a man who was passionate about theatre, and a man who was passionate about a number of famously and recognisably homosexual theatre men. These passions were on full display for all visitors to Waters's home to see. In his study, a framed poster of David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust hung alongside numerous erotic postcards of naked men.³¹⁶ The displaying of Waters theatre collection allowed for a displaying and recognition of his homosexuality.

Mander and Mitchenson: sexual identity

I choose to consider the ways in which Mander and Mitchenson performed their sexuality at this point in order to contrast them with Waters. Mander and Mitchenson were, according to Patrick Newley, openly gay and camp.³¹⁷ Though the two life-long partners were born approximately twenty years before Waters, I suggest that their experiences of being homosexual men, and the ways in which they performed their sexuality, were less fraught and less anguished than that of Waters. Mander and Mitchenson moved into Mitchenson's mother's four-storey home together after the Second World War, and lived there until Mander's death in 1983. Their partnership was both personal and publicly known, private and professional. I argue that Mander and Mitchenson were able to enjoy a homosexual partnership for over forty years because of their insider status within theatrical spaces, a space that is traditionally tolerant of alternative sexualities and lifestyles. As early as the 1930s the theatre had a reputation for being gay friendly both on- and off-stage and it became a place where gay men could meet other like-minded

³¹⁶ Loose photographs of Roy Waters and friends, RWTC, RW/1/7/24, RHUL Archives. David Bowie has since passed away and public reaction to his death demonstrates how Bowie's androgyny and public persona revolutionised attitudes to sexuality. As Ziggy Stardust, Bowie became an LGBT icon whose sexual ambiguity helped others gain the impetus to express themselves. See Maya Oppenheim, 'David Bowie: How the glam rock artist became an LGBT icon' in *The Independent* (Monday 11 January 2016).

³¹⁷ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

people.³¹⁸ Mander and Mitchenson's entire professional and personal lives had been spent in the theatre. It is worth noting, however, that homosexuality was still illegal: gay men may have been tolerated by the public within theatrical spaces, but homosexual men were no safer in these spaces. In 1953, for example, John Gielgud was arrested in Chelsea for soliciting in a public toilet and fined £10.³¹⁹ Gielgud received many letters of sympathy and support following his conviction and continued to perform publicly on stage: '[t]he miracle is that my friends have stood by me so superbly' he writes eight days after being arrested, 'and even the public looks like letting me go on with my work.'³²⁰ Unlike Waters, who, though passionate about the theatre had spent his professional career in the more conservative spaces of formal education, Mander and Mitchenson, and indeed Gielgud, were better protected from the distaste, judgment, and exclusion that marked the lives of homosexual men who inhabited less tolerant public and professional spaces than the space of the theatre.³²¹

The financial status of the collector

The formation of private theatre collections are, to a large extent, dependent on the financial means available to the collector. The collector's finances determine what can be collected and how much can be collected which, in turn, impacts upon the eventual size and scope of the private theatre collection. A consideration of the financial status of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters is therefore important in interrogating the theatre collections that make up the public archive.

³¹⁸ Jivani, *It's Not Unusual*, p. 50.

³¹⁹ Richard Mangan (ed.), *Gielgud's Letters* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p. 171.

³²⁰ Letter to Cecil Beaton (28 October 1953). Ibid. p. 172.

³²¹ Waters had to be far more closeted in his professional role as a teacher who had daily contact with supposedly impressionable young men than Mander and Mitchenson who worked in theatrical circles.

Enthoven's finances

Enthoven enjoyed a privileged background. Her father had served as a colonial administrator in India and Egypt and had taken his family with him on his postings before settling in Windsor.³²² On occasion, Enthoven was taken to Windsor Castle to play with the young princess, later Queen Mary,³²³ whilst the photographs contained in her personal papers reveal an abundance of foreign trips and holidays taken by Enthoven over a number of years. Photographs show her on holiday in Florence, Cannes, Grasse, and Dinard, as well as on trips to the British coast and attending parties at the Ascot race course.³²⁴ According to Matthew Kennedy, the play *Ellen Young* was created with 'Enthoven's cash and Edmund's words'.³²⁵ These materials strongly suggest a woman of abundant financial means. There are, however, hints that Enthoven's financial status altered, or fluctuated as the years progressed. When Enthoven and Sartoris gave Coward a room in their New York apartment in 1921, he reflects: 'they were neither of them in the least well off, and this was a blessed gesture of sheer charity.'³²⁶ A few years later, in 1928, Enthoven writes to the Carnegie Trust to ask for money to continue her work on the collection: 'I am now at the end of my tether as I have no idea what to do, or by what means to raise the necessary money to carry on this work [...] I have given up so much during the last thirty years.'³²⁷ Enthoven did admit that: 'all the money I should have spent on my clothes I spent on playbills'.³²⁸ In the late 1920s Enthoven and her friends, including Sybil Thorndike, appealed in the national newspapers for the public to donate

³²² Dorney, *Excavating Enthoven*, p. 116.

³²³ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³²⁴ Personal papers of Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³²⁵ Kennedy, *Edmund Goulding's Dark Victory*, p. 18.

³²⁶ Coward, *Autobiography*, p. 92.

³²⁷ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³²⁸ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

funds to ensure the successful cataloguing and arranging of her collection at the V&A. Enthoven worked on her collection unpaid from its arrival at the Museum in 1925, to her death in 1950. Towards the end of her life Enthoven was no longer able to afford a taxi from her home to the V&A and, at eighty years of age, would walk the journey every morning and evening with the aid of a stick.³²⁹ Enthoven's work on the organising and cataloguing of the collection proved a constant drain upon her private funds, in addition to the money which she constantly spent on filling gaps in the collection.³³⁰ Indeed, George Nash asserts that Enthoven 'poured every penny that she could afford in to the Enthoven Collection [...] with the coming of inflation she had lost a great deal of income.'³³¹ It appears that Enthoven dedicated much of her considerable financial means to the gathering and upkeep of her vast collection. She spent her money on the items that comprised her collection and on the time and tools required to organise and catalogue it. She was not recompensed for the decades she spent at the Museum with her team of assistants: it was a public and a professional role that depleted her private finances and personal circumstances. Enthoven bequeathed the residue of her estate to the Ministry of Education who, at the time, were responsible for the V&A's finances. The bequest states that her money would be used to ensure that 'proper accommodation for the Gabrielle Enthoven Theatrical collection continues to be provided and for the cataloguing, maintenance arrangement, and description of the Playbills, Prints, Printed Tickets, and other material'.³³² The value of Enthoven's estate, and the sum left to the Ministry for Education, totalled £20,727.6s.7d.³³³ If this sum is calculated to reflect inflation,

³²⁹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³³⁰ Nominal File: Enthoven, Gabrielle (purchases made from the Enthoven Fund) Part 2, 1930-1950, MA/1/E732/2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³³¹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³³² Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³³³ Ibid.

Enthoven's estate would be valued at over £580,000 in today's terms.³³⁴ Inflation may have depleted Enthoven's finances, but she was determined that, even after death, her private funds would continue to ensure the public success of her collection.

Waters's finances

Waters spent a great deal of his own money on accumulating objects for the collection and, on occasion, he admits that his spending has the tendency to be extravagant. The feature on Waters in *Times Weekend* reports one of his more memorable expenditures. When at a conference one time, Waters began to look through a catalogue of theatrical ephemera he had brought along with him: 'he spotted an entry for a promissory note signed by David Garrick. Waters left the room in search of a telephone. Within moments he had agreed on a price of £400 - more than he had ever paid for anything other than his house and his car.'³³⁵ Waters had enjoyed a long and successful career as a teacher, deputy head teacher, and head teacher, before becoming a district school inspector. His personal papers attest to champagne dinners, trips on the Eurostar to Paris, haircuts at Harrods, holidays to Greece, and numerous expensive updates to his home computer. It was after his retirement in 1989 that his collecting activities gained pace, and a large amount of his savings went towards the expanding of his collection. However, without a regular income, Waters's funds were not limitless. In 2002, Waters notes: 'my domestic bills [...] have totalled well over £2,000, so my savings are reduced by that amount with nothing to replenish them. Think of the Wilde items I could have acquired.'³³⁶ Waters evidently does continue to think about all the items he could acquire as his personal papers are full of

³³⁴ Bank of England Inflation Calculator - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/index1.aspx> - accessed 18 January 2016.

³³⁵ Road, *An exhibitionist in his own home*.

³³⁶ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

detailed descriptions of new purchases and acquisitions. He occasionally reveals his financial anxieties, but they never quite seem to prevent him from expanding his collection: '[h]ow can I afford all this? It goes without saying that I cannot.'³³⁷ During John Tuck's visit to Waters in February 2010, just a few months before Waters's death, Tuck asks Waters whether he continues to add to his collection: '[h]e said not really but then in front of me in a fruit bowl I saw what looked like recent acquisitions. There were some Russian postcards and some cabinet photographs of Oscar Wilde from his time in America [...] I think he was still buying'.³³⁸ Waters outlines his financial philosophy in a newsletter in 2001. After having just paid £600 for a complete set of the *Southern Illinois Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and other Stage Personnel in London, 1600-1800*, Waters notes: '[t]his extravagant purchase is in line with my new philosophy: After the age of seventy, every pound saved is a pound wasted.'³³⁹ Waters was keen to put this philosophy into practice, and, as Tuck's memories of his time with Waters suggest, the collector continued to spend his money and continued to add to his collection up until the very end of his life. Waters left the sum of £80,000 to RHUL for the purposes of cataloguing and housing his collection.³⁴⁰ This sum of money enabled RHUL to appoint an archivist to ensure that the collection was properly listed, managed, and made available to the public. One of the key clauses of the Transfer Agreement made between Waters and the university stated that once the collected materials had been listed, they would be made available to researchers.³⁴¹ Waters left money to RHUL to ensure that his private collection would be made accessible to the public. Without this financial legacy, the university was unable to offer Waters's

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ John Tuck. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. E-mail.

³³⁹ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

³⁴⁰ Last will of Roy William Waters, 16 May 2008. Requested from www.gov.uk.

³⁴¹ Transfer Agreement between Waters and RHUL, RHUL Library.

collection a public home.³⁴² It was not enough to know that the collection was to be housed in a public institution, it had to be used. After his death, documents reveal that the gross value of Waters's estate totalled £949,914.³⁴³

Mander and Mitchenson's finances

In 1989, Mitchenson declared: 'I have never craved wealth or a lot of money. What I craved was something useful, something London didn't have - it's got everything else, even a collection of matchboxes.'³⁴⁴ Neither Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, nor Waters were motivated to collect for financial reasons. Instead, their financial capital was invested in their collections, an aspect of their collecting practice that I investigate in greater detail in Chapter Four. After starting their collection, Mander and Mitchenson began to put aside money they earned from their acting jobs in order to create a purchase fund to enable the pair to 'buy one or two nice things'.³⁴⁵ After the collection was given over to a charitable trust in 1977, parties and celebrity lunches were held to raise funds for the management and safekeeping of the collection.

I suggest that the financial status of Mander and Mitchenson impacted upon their collection very little. Arguably it had the least effect on the formation of the private collection of all three of the collections I consider here. Mander and Mitchenson's social network extended so far and wide throughout theatrical circles that they could depend on their many friends and acquaintances to supply them with objects and materials for the

³⁴² Bush-Bailey, Message to the author. 20 December 2015. Email.

³⁴³ Grant of Roy William Waters, The District Probate Registry at Brighton, 1 December 2010. It is to be presumed that the value of Waters's theatre collection is included within this figure.

³⁴⁴ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

³⁴⁵ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

collection, regardless of their financial circumstances. The roll call of Mitchenson's friends in the theatre was legion,³⁴⁶ and this forging of theatrical relationships was very deliberate. Mitchenson recalls:

What we did do so much in our early days was to get to know so many people. We contacted actors and actresses, we started by sending them good wishes for the first night and would then pop into their dressing rooms and get to know them. And by this means it brought a tremendous lot of stuff into the collection. Quite so many thousands of things, from various famous people.³⁴⁷

Mitchenson understood the ways in which his private relationships could impact positively on his public collection. Their collection was augmented with numerous gifts from actors and actresses tidying their homes and donating unwanted items, to say nothing of the legacies they left the two men.³⁴⁸ Among the family papers given to the collection - a mark of the respect with which they were held - were those of the Terrys, Constance Collier, Sam Cowell and John Parker,³⁴⁹ whilst Kate Gielgud declared that 'they're the chaps I'm leaving all the theatre stuff to'.³⁵⁰ The private relationships and social networks enjoyed by Mander and Mitchenson can thus be mapped in the private collection and, in turn, the public archive becomes a repository in which complex theatrical networks can be uncovered.

Connecting the collectors

There is a small but tantalising piece of material evidence that adds further richness and complexity to an understanding of the networks inhabited by the theatre collectors I

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

³⁴⁸ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

investigate. Merlin Holland's father, Vyvyan Holland, was Wilde's second son and once owned the pamphlets published by Enthoven that contained Wilde's lost poem. Through a connection, however loosely woven, Waters is therefore linked to Enthoven, the Hollands and Wilde.

There is a more substantial link between Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson. Indeed, archival materials reveal that the three enjoyed a personal, and professional relationship. Mander described Enthoven as 'a wonderful butch lady always known as "Gab"'.³⁵¹ Enthoven used to ask Mander and Mitchenson to bring a suitcase with them when they went to visit her at the V&A.³⁵² On these occasions she would give the two men any items she deemed unsuitable for her own theatre collection, any duplicates, or any items she suspected might get caught up in the Museum's red tape.³⁵³

Such findings demonstrate the rich potential of information housed in the personal papers and associated materials of theatre collectors and their collections. The smallest, seemingly innocuous fragments, can reveal connections over generations, illuminating and extending the networks inhabited by the men and women who collect. In turn, these private, hidden, or forgotten encounters become vulnerable to public exposure and scrutiny. The theatre collection is more than the product of one individual: it is the result of collaboration between a community of collectors; a result of trading, swapping, and exchanging materials. The public archive becomes a space in which the activities of

³⁵¹ In Tom Sutcliffe, 'Stalled by the Government [...]' in *The Guardian* (Tuesday 15 March 1977).

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.* This article does not specify what items Enthoven considered 'unsuitable' to remain in her collection at the V&A. I suggest these unsuitable items may have comprised any materials that did not relate specifically to the history of the London stage, for example regional playbills, or European and American theatrical materials. Unhindered by such specific collecting boundaries, it is likely Mander and Mitchenson would have accepted these unwanted items with pleasure.

private theatre collectors overlap and exist in conversation with one another, informing the contents of the collection and performing for the archival researcher.

Positioning the collection, locating the collector

The collector of theatrical ephemera occupies ambiguous spaces in both public and private realms, and these realms are fluid, subject to change, and dependent on the historical moment in which the collector is present. Nancy Fraser argues that, in political discourse, the public and the private ‘are powerful terms frequently deployed to delegitimize some interests, views, and topics and to valorize others.’³⁵⁴ The public persona performed by Enthoven was in contrast to the persona she performed in private: a private performance that was delegitimized and devalued by a societal discourse which deemed such private behaviour unsuitable for public display. The tenacity with which Enthoven fought for publicity for her private collection in an era in which the female collection was mostly relegated to the domestic realm is demonstrative of her outsider status, of her refusal to perform in spaces expected of her gender. She was, in many ways, however, an insider: upper-class, financially independent, educated, and influential. But her gender and her sexuality complicate the spaces in which Enthoven can be located.

Similarly, the gendered and sexual spaces occupied by Mander and Mitchenson and Waters, and their rejection of typically male collecting habits, disturb the spaces in which the male collector is commonly found. However, the world in which these male collectors immersed themselves was the world of theatre. This was a theatrical space in which Polari, a secret language used by gay men, was spoken; in which Coward and Binkie Beaumont produced plays and songs with gay subtexts, and in which homosexuality was

³⁵⁴ Nancy Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy’ in Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 109-142, p. 131.

tacitly accepted.³⁵⁵ Collecting theatrical ephemera gives the collector access to a space in which their private lives and passions can be expressed publicly, or implicitly, through their collection.

The private and the public involve multiple meanings over time and across contexts, cultures, kinds of persons and social categories.³⁵⁶ The collectors I focus upon are products of the historical, cultural, and geographical moment of which they were a part. Their collections and personal papers constitute not only the history of the theatre, but the history of how gender and sexuality is performed publicly and privately, the history of how social networks contribute to the building of private collections and public archives, and the history of how individual private lives are shaped by public discourse. Future collectors will contribute their own distinct histories dependent on the spaces they inhabit and the public and private identities they assume. According to Tracy C. Davis, critics of Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* focus upon his portrayal of a public and a private space consisting entirely of white males, to the exclusion of women.³⁵⁷ The public theatre archive is a space comprised of the private lives of both women and men who subvert traditional or normative notions of femininity and masculinity, and who performed their gender, sexuality, and identity through the sometimes ambiguous materials that comprise their collections.

Whilst Enthoven's legacy is that of public campaigner and founder of the V&A's Theatre and Performance Department, and whilst Mander and Mitchenson's legacy is that of theatre archivists and authors of theatre books, Waters's legacy is less public and less

³⁵⁵ Jivani, *It's Not Unusual*, pp. 14-21.

³⁵⁶ Marx, *Murky conceptual waters*, p. 160.

³⁵⁷ Davis, *Private Women*, p. 66. Davis concedes that Habermas's lack of consideration or acknowledgement of gendered space is likely to be a product of the early 1960s in which Habermas was writing.

easy to identify or characterise. In 1989, in one of his regular newsletters, Waters notes: 'I also suspect that by committing my life to paper I am hoping to give it some kind of purpose, meaning and shape.'³⁵⁸ Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters made their private collections public. In doing so, they made their own lives, through their personal papers, open to public interrogation. The gathered remains of their private lives occupy infrequently examined boxes that sit within the institutions housing their public collections. The collectors' stories, or parts of these stories, are available to be read and interpreted by the specialist researcher. However, these stories remain hidden unless specifically sought for by a researcher; the stories are no longer visible unless pulled from the shelves of the archive or painstakingly located in the footnote of a book. Positioning the collection and locating the collector is a task fraught with ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction. When the private collection crosses over into the public archive, private stories reach the threshold of public communication, some for the very first time. In the theatre archive, antithetical notions of public and private, past and present, and the living and the dead degenerate and disintegrate, slip and seep. In the context of the private theatre collection and the public theatre archive the border or boundary that separates and defines the two spaces becomes permeable and unstable. The collection represents and re-enacts the personal lives of the collector: each object imprinted with a memory or a moment. When this collection reaches the public space, it is the archival researcher and historian who embodies these stories, who can begin to perform the collector's history. This is a locating and a positioning of ephemeral events: a theatrical performance, or the performance of a life lived. Both collectors and archival researchers navigate the spaces of the ephemeral, spaces in which the public and private intermingle with the present and

³⁵⁸ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No.13 April 1989.

the absent. It is to notions of presence, absence, and ephemerality that I turn in the following chapter.



Joe Mitchenson (left) and Raymond Mander (right) at home with their theatre collection, circa 1970s. © University of Bristol Theatre Collection/Eve Smith.



Chapter Three: An Accumulation of Absences

*'Nothing starts in the Archive, nothing, ever at all, though things certainly end up there.
You find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of
things; discontinuities.'*

- Carolyn Steedman³⁵⁹

In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993) Peggy Phelan argues: 'performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented [...] once it does so, it becomes other than performance.'³⁶⁰ Within the context of Phelan's assertion then, the moment that the present becomes past arguably marks the moment of a performance's disappearance. Performance may thus be considered an act of perpetual disappearance, constantly and consistently missing, elusive and intrinsically ephemeral. The mass of theatrical ephemera produced by such an ephemeral form marks it as paradoxical. Indeed, Kristy Davis - who worked as an assistant archive cataloguer on the MMTC - asserts that performing arts ephemera is loaded with an extra dimension of ephemerality due to the nature of the inherently ephemeral act from whence it came.³⁶¹ Davis's argument supports the term I employ in Chapter One: the 'double ephemerality' of the theatre collection. This chapter will examine the private theatre collections and the public theatre archives that contain the surviving material remnants of the supposedly disappearing art of performance. I also consider how the collector who amasses this material exists within or beyond the remains and the traces they leave behind, and the impact of both theatrical and personal ephemera on the activities of the archival researcher and historian. This ephemera, this material recording and documenting of the missing is,

³⁵⁹ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 59.

³⁶⁰ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 146.

³⁶¹ Kristy Davis, 'Slipping thru the Cracks: Issues with Performing Arts Ephemera' presented at the *World Library and Information Congress: 71st IFLA General Conference and Council*. Oslo, Norway. (14-18 August 2005), pp. 1-8, p. 4.

as Phelan asserts, something other, something different, than performance. This may seem an obvious statement: of course a yellowing playbill or a dog-eared programme cannot replace the entirety of a lived performance. This ephemera then: what is it, and what does it represent? To what extent can the theatre collection and archive retrieve, revive, or recapture performance? How can performance emerge, or indeed re-emerge, through its material remains in order to aid in the construction of historical narratives and theatrical histories? Rather than understanding the theatre collection as an accumulation of ‘stuff’, I offer an alternative understanding of the theatre collection and public archive as an accumulation of absences. The objects and ephemera that constitute them speak of time, of place, of cast, of costume; they offer glimpses into the theatrical past, into the shadowy spaces of the possible, the likely, and the supposed. They can never demonstrate or emulate the intrinsic present and presence of performance. What I posit, therefore, is an understanding that the theatre collection and archive be better understood as an accumulation of material evidence, but an evidence fraught with absence, with gaps and holes, with unanswered questions, with the missing. Just as the materials that constitute the archive and collection are marked by such absences, so too are the personal materials that narrate the lives of the collector themselves. An awareness and understanding of the absences and the missing things inherent in both the spaces of the archive and the collection are integral to forging improved understandings of the archive, the collection, and the collector, and to the ways in which they are interrogated.

Defining the public archive

Francis X. Blouin Jr. describes how, particularly in the early modern period, archives were understood as locations which denoted historical authority and authenticity. He writes: ‘the authority embedded in the notion of an authentic record privileged the

archives as an authoritative source in understanding the past.’³⁶² The theatre collection then, and the one that resides in a public institution, is, or certainly was, understood as containing the authentic, authoritative past. The conscious and unconscious, the purposeful and the accidental decisions or events that led particular materials to be housed within the public and national archives imbued such documentation with a powerful authenticity and legitimacy. This material *is* theatre history. Mike Featherstone reiterates the historical might of the archive, asserting that in the eighteenth-century, archives contributed to ‘the formation and legitimation of the nation. The archive, then, was also a crucial site for national memory’.³⁶³ ‘National memory’ suggests a lack of plurality or possibility; it denotes one, singular, true and collective memory shared by the nation. The archive - and the public museum and library - was understood to contain the material that constructed the nation and created the sense of an ‘imagined community’.³⁶⁴ Three-hundred years ago then, in the eighteenth-century, the ephemera gathered within the archives and displayed in the museums constituted a society’s shared and authentic theatrical heritage: accepted, established and conclusive; a theatrical heritage that I explore in greater detail in Chapter Four.

The ways in which the archive is now understood have evolved and Blouin Jr. describes how, in recent decades, the dominating notion of archival material as representing or embodying a singular authentic past began to be questioned, particularly in response to growing work in the field of cultural theory on the locating of memory within the archive. Rather than understanding the archive as a site of manifest truth and history, he writes that this recent work ‘has pushed the boundaries of historical understanding to include

³⁶² Francis X. Blouin Jr., ‘History and Memory: The Problem of the Archive’ in *PMLA*, Vol. 119, No. 2 (March 2004), pp. 296-298, p. 296.

³⁶³ Mike Featherstone, ‘Archive’ in *Theory Culture Society*, Vol. 23 (2006), pp. 591-596, p. 592.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

the relevance of memory as recollection, opening the possibility of multiple pasts.³⁶⁵

Similarly, Harriet Bradley describes the archive as: ‘the repository of memories: individual and collective, official and unofficial, licit and illicit, legitimating and subversive.’³⁶⁶ Like Blouin Jr., Bradley recognises the archive as a space in which memories are housed and these memories are subjective, multiple and can exist harmoniously or in conflict with existing histories and narratives. This renders the archive as an unstable space in which the user can manipulate materials to create a myriad pasts.

The concept of a national, shared and authoritative memory that ultimately defined a society’s collective history has been disrupted and rejected. Ephemera and other archival materials perform numerous memories, recollections and histories. Indeed, Joseph Roach, whose introduction to his influential study *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996) concentrates on the relationship between performance, substitution and the missing, asks the pertinent questions: ‘Whose forgetting? Whose memory? Whose history?’³⁶⁷ Roach’s use of the pronoun ‘whose’ suggests plurality and multiplicity of memory, history, and recollection: here, in the archive, they become memories, histories, and recollections.³⁶⁸ Pierre Nora illuminates this paradigm shift from archive as dominant purveyor of controlled and singular history to the archive as a site of shifting, evolving historical narratives. He writes:

In just a few years, then, the materialization of memory has been tremendously dilated, multiplied, decentralized, democratized. In the classical period, the three main producers of archives were the great families, the church, and the state. But

³⁶⁵ Blouin Jr., *History and Memory*, p. 297.

³⁶⁶ Harriet Bradley, ‘The seductions of the archive: voices lost and found’ in *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May 1999), pp. 107-122, p. 108.

³⁶⁷ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, p. 7.

³⁶⁸ In November 2015, Palgrave Macmillan published *Theatre History and Historiography: Ethics, Evidence and Truth* edited by Claire Cochrane and Jo Robinson, a work that seeks to confront issues pertaining to the instability of historical evidence and the unreliability of memory in writing theatre histories. I reference this to demonstrate how the field of theatre history and historiography continues to grapple and struggle with the construction of theatre histories founded on archival or anecdotal evidence, and how it is constantly looking for new ways in which to tackle or to acknowledge these difficulties.

who, today, does not feel compelled to record his feelings, to write his memoirs - not only the most minor historical actor but also his witnesses, his spouse, and his doctor.³⁶⁹

This ‘materialization of memory’ is a potent idea, and has ramifications in the understanding of the documents and ephemera that constitute the theatre collection and archive. Nora’s suggestion that memory can become material, or be materialized, is very useful in the context of this research. He suggests that memory exists in objects and that objects become containers and carriers of memory. Memory, when embedded or entwined within an object, becomes something that can be held and touched, and the collection and the archive become a storehouse of memory and memories. This memory is multiple and is now generated not only by religious bodies, the state, and the societal elite, but by, as Nora posits, everyone and anyone who documents, records or preserves the intricacies of a life or an event. Every individual that preserves a moment and a memory in writing, on film, or by any other means contributes to the materialization of memory. These material memories may end up in the archive. The memories of the theatrical past, as I outline in Chapter One, are generated by Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters among others.

The precariousness of memory

Memory, however, is delicate and precarious, liable to alter, disappear, and then re-emerge. In ‘Unpacking My Library’ Walter Benjamin asserts: ‘every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories’.³⁷⁰ Benjamin’s

³⁶⁹ Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’ in *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989), pp. 7-24, p. 14. Cheryl Avery and Mona Holmlund go one step further than Nora. They argue that: ‘[w]e are all archivists. Throughout our lives we select, store, and review [...] We are all implicated in the archival project’ in ‘Introduction’ in Avery and Holmlund (eds.), *Better Off Forgetting? Essays on Archives, Public Policy, and Collective Memory* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. xi-xvii, p. xi.

³⁷⁰ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 60.

description of the realm of memory as being ‘chaotic’ speaks to Blouin Jr.’s description of multiple pasts and overlapping recollections. Memory is not tangible, it cannot be quantified or measured. Memory is elusive, subjective, and liable to evolve, alter, and to be elaborated upon, to disappear, to fail, and to go missing. Rebecca Duclos highlights the difficulties in describing the space occupied by the material within the collection or archives, infused as it is with multiple memories, pasts and histories. She considers what she usefully terms the ‘cartographies of collecting’ and how interactions with the collection engender a mapping through a space which is both physical and metaphysical.³⁷¹ She writes how ‘museological language is continually reaching for a more poetic tone when attempting to describe the psychic spaces which objects help us to reach.’³⁷² Archives and collections occupy a very real, physical, concrete space: within the cavernous repositories of a public institution, or the cabinets or shelves within a domestic dwelling. Enthoven’s collection is housed in the space of the V&A, Waters’s collection occupies a single room in the archives of RHUL, whilst Mander and Mitchenson’s collection is separated between two sites belonging to the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.³⁷³ But this psychic space that Duclos alludes to is that which is represented, radiated or embodied by the object, with its precarious amalgamation of time, recollection and history. These qualities of the historic object allude to Benjamin’s use of the term ‘aura’, a term I explore in greater detail in Chapter Five. Duclos continues: ‘many collectors, curators and writers struggle to find ways to articulate how collections work in terms of memory, nostalgia, or sentimentality’; collections have the ability to ‘move their viewers so passionately between the visible and the invisible, between what

³⁷¹ Rebecca Duclos, ‘The cartographies of collecting’ in Knell, *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, pp. 84-101, p. 85.

³⁷² *Ibid.* p. 98.

³⁷³ The MMTC is divided between the University of Bristol’s main archive in the heart of the city on Park Row and a building in Langford that, rather incongruously, is situated next door to the University abattoir.

is here and what lies there, between presence and absence.’³⁷⁴ It is the notion of absence and the idea of invisibility that I will consider in greater detail. The collection and archive do contain facts: verifiable evidence and documentation present within and amongst the theatrical ephemera. Yet the gaps, the chaos of memories, the forgotten or discarded objects ensure that what is present is also interwoven with what is absent: with imaginings, subjectivities and discrepancies. Thomas Postlewait stresses that: ‘the writing of history requires a special kind of witnessing because all events, having slipped into the past, become nothing except documented traces and undocumented memories.’³⁷⁵ I seek to expose what becomes of the memories that *are* documented, and I want to explore how events that have slipped into the past may be recalled, retold, and historicised in the space of the private collection and public archive. How does the historian or archival researcher incorporate and interpret the documented and *undocumented* memories within the collection and the archive when constructing historical narratives? Matthew Reason suggests that: ‘the powerful imagery that declares that the archive reveals the past to us is complemented by claims of archival limitation and fabrication.’³⁷⁶ I want to consider how the archive may be limited by notions of absence, gaps and spaces: the archive as a site of disappearance and the incomplete. I also want to examine how accusations of archival limitation or fabrication can instead open up creative possibilities in approaches to the construction of theatrical histories, particularly when interrogating materials that comprise anecdotal or unverifiable ‘evidence’.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Thomas Postlewait, ‘Writing History Today’ in *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (November, 2000), pp. 83-106, p. 84.

³⁷⁶ Matthew Reason, ‘Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance’ in *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 82-89, p. 84.

The anecdote as evidence

In *New Readings in Theatre History* Jacky Bratton interrogates the fact-based approach common, and even pervasive, in a number of historiographical methodologies that are used to rigorously probe theatrical memoirs, biographies and anecdote for *fact*. She writes how these materials ‘have often been trawled for “factual” information that can be extracted and corroborated from other documentary sources, in the approved manner that makes them into evidence that can be trusted’.³⁷⁷ It is this fact contained within the material that is commonly understood to constitute a legitimate historical source; the facts that aid in the construction of a verifiable historical narrative. The many thousands of playbills and programmes collected by Enthoven, for example, can be understood to comprise the factual, verifiable documents located in the archive that can then be stripped of the data and evidence they display to form an authentic theatrical narrative. A playbill in Enthoven’s collection from 1789, for example, advertises a performance of *Mary Queen of Scots* starring Mr Kemble and Mrs Siddons at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane for Tuesday 24 March of that year. Unless corroborated by a torn ticket, journal entry, or other piece of evidence, it is not certain that this performance took place. However, the document presents the historian with a snapshot of the theatrical past; it demonstrates, in that particular moment, what plays were being shown and where; the actors and the actresses who performed the roles, and the type of play produced by the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. This playbill does not reveal whether any cast-members were changed before the performance took place, what the audience reception of the performance was, or how much the tickets could be bought for. These questions may be answered by additional documentary evidence in the archive such as contemporary newspaper reviews or account

³⁷⁷ Bratton, *New Readings*, p. 95.

books containing the number of tickets sold. Whether this supplementary material was gathered and found its way into the archive, or was disregarded and consigned to the scrapheap of history, is another consideration when understanding the collection and archive as being a space of gaps and the missing. But what, as Bratton suggests, is understood of the stuff left behind once the dates, the data, the facts contained within the document have been trawled through and mined from the source? What happens to the stories, the tales, the jokes, and the anecdotes contained within collections, memoirs and biographies once stripped of their 'value' and their supposed historical 'worth'? Postlewait, like Bratton, describes how anecdotes appeal due to their charm and their ability to convey the bizarre and the fascinating, whilst simultaneously being understood as suspect historical sources.³⁷⁸ This impulse to understand anecdote as an entertaining, though dubious, diversion and the subsequent rejection of anecdote in favour of verifiable evidence has, as both Bratton and Postlewait contest, influenced methodological approaches to the writing and forming of theatre histories. Anecdote has routinely been understood as unreliable, non-academic and untrustworthy. The anecdote's worth traditionally lies in being shared around the dinner table to entertain or it is used to instruct the newcomer or apprentice in the ways of that profession rather than existing as a key component within the canon of historical 'evidence'.

Dramatic recollections

The actress Fanny Kelly performed a one-woman show at the Strand Theatre in 1833 entitled 'Dramatic Recollections - a sketch about Mrs Parthian and her Shakespearean

³⁷⁸ Postlewait, *The Criteria for Evidence*, p. 50. I am reminded of publications such as Ned Sherrin's *Theatrical Anecdotes: A Connoisseur's Collection of Legend's, Stories and Gossip* (London: Virgin Books, 1991) and Roy Hudd's *Book of Music-hall, Variety and Showbiz Anecdotes* (London: The Robson Press, 1998). These publications serve to titillate, amuse and entertain the reader and make no claims to authenticity. Traditionally, the anecdote has been used for these purposes: not for the purpose of aiding the construction of scholarly theatrical histories.

collection'. In the performance, Kelly plays Mrs Parthian, 'an old lady, troubled with confused dramatic recollections',³⁷⁹ who takes the audience around her living-room, telling stories, anecdotes and performing pieces from her Shakespearean Collection. This example provides a wonderful insight into contemporary understandings of the historical veracity of theatrical anecdote, which continue to resonate in current historiographical behaviours:

I trust Miss Kelly will be soon here - I long to have a private play got up - 'Hang a Green Drawing Curtain across the front Room' - as the late Adam Smith said in his lively Song on the Wealth of Nations - If my memory serves me this Mr. Smith was that Mr. Smith - Gentleman Smith - who played Charles in the School for Scandal and who paid his addresses to some one in Drury Lane which were rejected - Mr. Charles Mathews has a Dramatic Gallery - if I remember rightly - and thanks to my Nephew who managed my Finances for the purposes - I have a pleasing Shakespearian Collection - got together at comparatively small expence [*sic*].³⁸⁰

Kelly continues to describe some of the prized Shakespearean Curiosities within her collection:

No.62 - The head of a Stag closely resembling the one alluded to by the melancholy Jacques. –

No. 43 - The Handkerchief which modern research has satisfactorily proved that Desdemona never gave to Cassio -

No. 72 - The identical Knocker which did not wake Duncan with it's [*sic*] knocking.

No. 8 - A Picture Frame (very old) understood to have contained until quite lately a copy of an Original Picture of Shakespeare.³⁸¹

Kelly's dramatic recollections satirise and parody the caricature of the confused, unreliable and untrustworthy teller of similarly confused theatrical tales and anecdotes. I use this piece as an example to expose the negative aspects commonly attributed to the

³⁷⁹ In Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Performing Herself: AutoBiography & Fanny Kelly's Dramatic Recollections* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 56.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 187.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187-188.

anecdote. The frequent and repetitive use of the phrase ‘if I remember rightly’ infuses Mrs Parthian’s recollections with doubt and provokes a comic distrust amongst the audience as to the validity or truth of her claims: her tales are vague, she confuses people with one another, and her speech is convoluted and strays off on seemingly unrelated tangents. It also reveals the precarious status of the theatrical object in representing a valid historical truth, if such a truth can be said to exist at all: this knocker never woke Duncan, this handkerchief never belonged to Desdemona, this is an empty picture frame but it *may* have contained an original picture of Shakespeare. Does this matter? The objects may have no genuine connection or relationship to a theatrical event but, as Susan M. Pearce asserts, objects are not innocent.³⁸² The handkerchief or the stag’s head lack any verifiable evidence as to their provenance or theatrical authenticity, but, as I argue in Chapter One, they are imbued with past memories. This monologue also suggests that the empty picture frame, without its Shakespeare picture - if indeed it ever did contain one - may once have been believed to be the authentic article, a picture frame that has been woven in and out of anecdote over the years, sometimes ‘proven’ to be an authentic object, and sometimes ‘proven’ to be fraudulent. Within these Dramatic Recollections, then, Kelly the performer is using her own collection of anecdotes and memories to satirise and perform the amateur history enthusiast. This performance is also an example of intertheatricality at work. The audience recognise the plays and the players performed by Kelly and thus her stories and anecdotes gain layers of theatrical meaning.

Bratton argues for a reclaiming of the theatrical anecdote to engender new histories, whilst Postlewait recognises the ‘dark, troubling mutuality between anecdotes and facts’.³⁸³ Rather than dismiss them, or attempt to glean some form of evidence or truth

³⁸² Susan M. Pearce, ‘Museum Studies in Material Culture’ in Pearce, *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, pp. 1-9, p. 8.

³⁸³ Postlewait, *The Criteria for Evidence*, p. 6

from them, Bratton suggests that the anecdote should be incorporated in the writing of theatre histories to give rise to new readings in theatre history. Speaking of the theatrical memoirs, anecdotes and (auto)biographies that have so often been understood as only acquiring meaning when the facts and data within are able to be objectively verified, Bratton stresses that ‘these informal histories shape the past for us’³⁸⁴ and that there is ‘a world of historical meaning in what they say about themselves, whether or not we have tangible proof of its truth’.³⁸⁵ Mike Pearson affirms Bratton’s proposal by describing how theatre can ‘generate narratives and texts, not only as data, but as operational experience and anecdote.’³⁸⁶ Both Bratton and Pearson then argue for an understanding and acceptance of anecdote as vital components in an understanding of theatre history. Just as evidence such as verifiable dates and data aid in the construction of history, so too must memories and recollections form a part of this creation. Theatre, with all of its elusive, intangible, ephemeral magic, cannot, and must not, be reduced to data or fact: its potency is situated in what Gaynor Kavanagh terms the ‘dream space’: a space in which memory, the past and the present, presence and absence collide and flow.³⁸⁷ The theatrical anecdote and recollection, though incomplete and unfixed, become a vital source from which theatrical narratives can be created; even if this narrative is defined by the fissures, cracks and dislocations that tenuously bridge the ‘authentic’ evidence. In the context of this thesis, the anecdote is an imperative element in the (re)construction of the lives and the private passions of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. Anecdote is also an

³⁸⁴ Bratton, *New Readings*, p. 105.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

³⁸⁶ Mike Pearson, ‘Theatre/archaeology’ in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter 1994), pp. 133-161, p. 135.

³⁸⁷ See Gaynor Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

intrinsic component of the script that is written, practised, and performed by the collector when interacting with their collection in front of an assembled audience.

Enthoven's positivist agenda

The vast collection amassed by Enthoven provides the archival researcher with facts, with details of the location, dates, plays and cast members of theatrical events occurring in London theatres from the 1730s. Enthoven was collecting with a very specific intention: her material would constitute the factual and verifiable history of the London stage. In an interview in *The Evening Standard* in 1924, Enthoven asserts:

It was really in the interest of historical accuracy that I began my collection. I have tried to make it as perfect as possible [...] I do want to lay stress on the practical value of the collection. Already these old play bills have been of great value in the identification of drawings, of costume and scenery, and some have considerable literary and dramatic interest [...] My object has not been to collect curiosities, but to make a collection which will be of value in affording reliable material for the art of the theatre and for theatrical curiosity.³⁸⁸

Enthoven's language reveals how she understood her collection. The material was to be 'perfect', 'reliable', historically accurate. It would aid in the identification of previously unknown or unverifiable sources. She was not in the business of collecting curiosities as other collectors may be tempted to. She had no interest in acquiring the kind of objects that Fanny Kelly as Mrs Parthian so comically describes: objects of unverifiable, questionable, or imagined provenance. Enthoven wanted objects that contained facts, and objects that, when massed together, would constitute a linear, complete and authoritative history of the London stage. Similarly, Mander reveals how he and Mitchenson were 'very particular about the pedigree of any object. There are some dubious relics which have been handed down as having been used by David Garrick or Sir Henry Irving but we

³⁸⁸ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

don't include anything that has not been verified.'³⁸⁹ Writing in 1924 to Martin Hardie, the Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the V&A, Enthoven reports: 'I have just counted and found that if I could get a Programme for every play produced (which of course I could not,) I should have had, 1922 -158, 1923 - 160. So that if one allowed for changes of cast about 200 would be the outside. In my count I added private shows and all.'³⁹⁰ This letter demonstrates Enthoven's preoccupation with possessing an exhaustive and complete set of London's theatrical records, whilst acknowledging the impossibility of this endeavour. She had a fundamental belief and trust in theatrical ephemera's ability to construct a definitive and accurate historical narrative: '[a]ll facts go to make history',³⁹¹ she proclaimed. Like Sir Henry Wellcome, Enthoven had faith in the document's ability to reveal the past. Wellcome 'believed that his collection, if comprehensive enough, would teach him - and his audience - everything they needed to know about the history of human health. He would be the one to reveal this history to others; he would own it on everyone else's behalf.'³⁹² This was how Enthoven understood her collection of theatrical ephemera. For Enthoven, then, history is comprised of facts. And the documents within Enthoven's collection, the material traces of London's theatrical past, contained the facts that would construct London's theatre history. As such, she prized acquisitions which filled gaps in her records rather than desiring single examples of curious rarity.³⁹³ In an interview in *The Evening News* in 1913, for example, Enthoven declares: 'one never knows whether the appearance of the understudy may not be the first public performance of a second Mrs Siddons'.³⁹⁴ It was vital, therefore, that everything possible be acquired: one never knew if a single, unassuming playbill may, with hindsight, signal a crucial

³⁸⁹ The Pauline Tooth Profile, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

³⁹⁰ Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³⁹¹ Biographical file for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³⁹² Larson, *An Infinity of Things*, p. 76.

³⁹³ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

moment within theatre history. She thus strove for completeness, she was a product of her time, collecting very much with a positivist agenda. Letters were sent to London's theatres requesting they send Enthoven up-to-date programmes and records.³⁹⁵ The collection was to be a living collection therefore, constantly updated, constantly capturing the present past, the just-gone, and the still-remembered. A letter addressed to the *Daily Telegraph* in 1951 from the Museum declares that Enthoven's collection 'makes the history of the night before as readily available as the history of the centuries.'³⁹⁶ Performance was to be understood, remembered and recollected by the facts and the data it produced. This is the material evidence of the theatre, and this material evidence constitutes its history. Anecdote or memoir had no role in bridging historical gaps or records. Apart from when it came to the history of Enthoven herself.

Enthoven and anecdote

Gilli Bush-Bailey describes how 'the historian of the less prominent woman must deal with the complexities and lacunae of incomplete evidence',³⁹⁷ and the personal papers and materials related to Enthoven are beset with such complexities. When examining the life of Enthoven - theatre historian, amateur actress, theatre archivist, playwright - it soon becomes evident that the evidence is missing or incomplete, and that anecdote is an essential component in understanding who she was, why she collected, and what led her to collect. Kate Dorney suggests that:

one of the intriguing aspects of Enthoven's character documented in interviews and articles she wrote is the extent to which she professed her belief in facts and indexing but also prided herself on her insider status and her position as a repository of anecdotal knowledge.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

³⁹⁶ Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A, Theatre and Performance Department.

³⁹⁷ Bush-Bailey, *Performing Herself*, p. 5.

³⁹⁸ Dorney, *Excavating Enthoven*, p. 122.

Contemporary magazine and newspaper articles abound with stories and anecdotes that Enthoven and her contemporaries recounted about her life, some quite remarkable. One reporter from *The Era*, for example, reports how Enthoven had revealed it was Henry Irving who had taught her how to walk properly as an actress, despite the fact that, due to an accident, one of his legs was shorter than the other.³⁹⁹ In a tea-time talk delivered at the Malvern Drama Festival in 1934, the *Malvern Gazette* reports that: ‘not the least amusing of Mrs Enthoven’s stories was that of her first visit to a theatre, as a child, how she crawled beneath the legs of the gallery-queue and entered the theatre finally on the shoulder of a burly navvy and shared an orange with him in the front row.’⁴⁰⁰ Rumours circulate that she enjoys tripping up late-comers; her speech at Malvern is peppered with humorous stories; she recounts tales of personal encounters with the most celebrated and renowned members of theatrical society (without ever providing such trifles as dates, locations or witnesses to the event). A reporter from *The Times* in 1934 writes: ‘much as she [Enthoven] dislikes late-comers, she assures me that it is not true, as has been said, that she ever attempts to trip them up as they force their way past her!’⁴⁰¹ Enthoven thus comments on her own anecdotes, or the anecdotal evidence that surrounds her, playing with these anecdotes, sharing them, and occasionally refuting them. These examples, a very small amount amongst the plethora that can be found within Enthoven’s personal papers and scrapbooks, enforce Dorney’s assertion that Enthoven was proud of her ability to share and perform anecdotes; eager to tell of her rendezvous with the best-known names in theatrical society. A predilection for anecdote and story-telling may have been exempt from Enthoven’s collecting activities – the materials being gathered for the factual

³⁹⁹ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. In January 1931, however, Enthoven had sent a letter to the editor of the *Daily Mail* demanding that theatres refuse entry to late-comers.

data they could secrete - but anecdote was rife, encouraged even, within the collected materials representing Enthoven's private life. These reports and articles are then torn from the pages of newspapers and magazines and pasted into scrapbooks by Enthoven herself. She accumulates and preserves the collected anecdotal evidence and reported stories that form her public persona. Indeed, Dorney stresses that: 'anecdotes are essential to our understanding of Enthoven. Beyond the bare facts of her birth, marriage and death, most of the information we have is anecdotal, and much of that comments on her own love of anecdotes [...] Without the anecdote little is known about Enthoven'.⁴⁰² With the anecdote, therefore, more about Enthoven's life is known, or if not 'known' then suggested, proposed. But are these tales true? And, if not, does that matter?

The material legacy of Enthoven's life does contain documents that illuminate the anecdote. Her personal papers contain photographs, (some dated, many not), that show for example, that Enthoven and her family stayed at the home of the acclaimed actress Eleonora Duse in Florence during the Christmas of 1900.⁴⁰³ Her Last Will and Testament reveals that she left the sum of fifty pounds to Edith Craig; a Chinese statuette of a warrior on a horse to Noël Coward, and her red onyx cigarette box to Mercedes de Acosta.⁴⁰⁴ A letter from Marda Vanne on 27 December 1933 confirms that Enthoven drank mulled wine with Vanne and Vanne's partner Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies at their home in Hampstead on Christmas Eve; the wine giving Vanne a painful stomach ache. That Vanne ends the letter with 'this is a mad letter and madder still when I end it with I love you',⁴⁰⁵ however, raises more questions, supplies the potential for more gaps, than it provides answers or evidence. Anecdote must thus be considered both in terms of what is said,

⁴⁰² Dorney, *Excavating Enthoven*, p. 124.

⁴⁰³ Personal papers for Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁴⁰⁴ Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁴⁰⁵ Marda Vanne, Manuscript Letters Collection, THM/14/22, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

what is implied, and what is omitted, what is not said. Indeed, the anecdotes performed by Enthoven invariably include those acquaintances that occupied 'safer' social spaces, rather than acquaintances such as Radclyffe Hall who were considered suspect by the wider reading or listening public. James Laver, describes how Enthoven's 'stories were innumerable, and some of them from any other lips would have seemed a trifle "tall"'.⁴⁰⁶ He describes how Enthoven talked behind the scenes with Queen Victoria; introduced Mrs Campbell to Sarah Bernhardt, and rode Mrs Cornwallis's horse over Ascot: stories which are retold and reanimated on a number of occasions in interviews given by Enthoven herself.⁴⁰⁷ Laver's hint that her innumerable stories may well have been embellished or embroidered in order to amuse, entertain or astonish are reiterated by Sally Cline who describes how 'every story Gabrielle told was "tall" and Hall later fictionalized some of the tallest'.⁴⁰⁸ In 1931 Una Troubridge reports that: 'mischief and misunderstanding invariably follow in the wake of Gabrielle Enthoven.'⁴⁰⁹ The anecdotal evidence from Enthoven herself and that from her contemporaries, marks her as being an unreliable narrator and marks any definitive understanding or conclusions as to the private space she occupied, elusive and problematic. That her stories were regarded by more than one source as being 'tall' marks the already dubious status of the anecdote as even more contentious. What these stories do reveal and reiterate, however, is Enthoven's penchant for performance.

⁴⁰⁶ Biographical file for Gabrielle Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Cline, *Radclyffe Hall*, p. 74.

⁴⁰⁹ Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge Papers, Day Books, Manuscripts Collection, Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin. Vol. 4, June 13, 1931 - July 30, 1931.

Mander and Mitchenson: cataloguing the collection

Like Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson sought to assemble a comprehensive theatre collection and to eradicate as many gaps or absences in the materials as possible. One visitor to the collection commented: ‘there can be few performers of the last century and a half who are not represented in the collection, even the circus’⁴¹⁰ whilst Noël Coward remarked: ‘[w]hatever information or illustrations are required, from Mrs Bracegirdle and earlier, to Tuesday Weld and later, they will produce in a trice’.⁴¹¹ In the context of the MMTC, materials that were missing or absent were not the result of an oversight or a missed acquisition. Rather, due to the sheer scope of the collection, objects and documents had a tendency to get lost, swamped by the volume of materials they shared a space with. Mitchenson remarks that the collection ‘has grown to such a vast amount, thousands and thousands of theatrical postcards, hundreds of china figures. Some of these things have been catalogued, but there is a tremendous lot not catalogued, and not named.’⁴¹² These unnamed objects are present within the space of the private collection, but they are absent from the catalogue and leave no mark.

In 2003, a three year project dedicated to the cataloguing and digitisation of the MMTC, funded by the AHRC, was initiated. Up until the commencement of the project none of the materials in the collection were catalogued electronically: knowledge of what was present in the collection existed in a slip catalogue for the library, in an index card catalogue for the pottery, and in the personal, embodied knowledge of Richard Mangan, the collection’s administrator. Mangan acknowledges that, after the death of Mitchenson

⁴¹⁰ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

⁴¹¹ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁴¹² Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

in 1992: '[i]t's probably true that my knowledge of the Collection was as near as we got to a catalogue!'⁴¹³ Personal knowledge and memories can be forgotten, lost, or misplaced.

Kristy Davis and Sophie Nield, who both worked on this project, assert that:

Without a catalogue of its holdings, the [Mander and Mitchenson] collection runs the risk of losing valuable information regarding the nature and scope of the materials, where they are located, if there is any relational material, knowing whether there are any duplication or gaps, and whether any of the material has gone missing or has been damaged.⁴¹⁴

This remark demonstrates how precarious notions of presence and absence are in the context of the theatre collection: present materials can be absent, absent materials can be present. Jacques Derrida usefully acknowledges that the 'passage from the private to the public [...] does not always mean from the secret to the nonsecret.'⁴¹⁵ At the time of writing, the Mander and Mitchenson Reference Box collection has been fully catalogued: the rest of the collection continues to be assessed and prioritised for future cataloguing projects.⁴¹⁶

Mander, Mitchenson, and anecdote

In comparison to the materials contained in Enthoven's personal papers, the MMTC contains an array of documents that offer the researcher a more detailed account of the private passions of Mander and Mitchenson. The personal papers of the two men provide the evidence that goes toward compiling a factual record of their lives: their birth certificates, details of the schools they attended, materials that commemorate the plays they performed in, and the recording of memorable dates and events in their lives. The majority of materials present in Mander and Mitchenson's personal papers are, however,

⁴¹³ Mangan. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

⁴¹⁴ Davis and Nield, *The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, p. 198.

⁴¹⁵ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 10.

⁴¹⁶ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/mander--mitchenson-collection/> - accessed 23 October 2015.

like Enthoven, anecdotal, or are constructed from anecdotal evidence. Personal interviews and conversations with the two men teem with entertaining and elaborate episodes of their theatrical escapades. The couple revelled in anecdote and were often themselves the subject of the anecdote, constantly recounting stories and re-enacting their theatrical activities and encounters. The rooms in their home were ‘stuffed with theatrical memories’.⁴¹⁷ These ephemeral, spoken stories are as present, and as vital in the narrating of the collection as the tangible theatrical materials they illuminate. Just as anecdotal evidence contributes to the construction of narratives surrounding the life of Enthoven, so too are the lives of Mander and Mitchenson framed and understood against a backdrop of the anecdotes they performed and actively encouraged. In an interview in 1992, for example, Mitchenson spoke of his relationship with Edith Evans, recounting one particular tale of a meeting between Evans and the two collectors. He says: ‘[s]he was a very good friend [...] I can remember one day in particular when she came to lunch carrying an enormous, very glossy, rather tarty, handbag. We spent the whole time longing for her to come out with that famous phrase in her inimitable way (“A *handbag!*”) - but she never did.’⁴¹⁸

Bratton argues that: ‘the recounting of anecdotes, which are the building blocks of theatrical memoir and biography, may be understood not simply as the vehicle of more or less dubious or provable facts, but as a process of identity-formation that extends beyond individuals to the group or community to which they belong.’⁴¹⁹ Postlewait mirrors Bratton’s assertion by claiming that ‘many records are not factual; many

⁴¹⁷ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁴¹⁸ In Fox, *Full House*, p. 138. A reference to Evans’ inimitable role as Lady Bracknell in the 1952 film production of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

⁴¹⁹ Bratton, *New Readings*, p. 102.

anecdotes not only contain a kernel of factuality but also express representative truths.⁴²⁰ I argue that the anecdotes concerning Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson then, no matter how tall, are integral to the biographical constructing of these collectors. The concept of anecdote as a key element in the formation of identity is particularly important in the way in which Mander and Mitchenson employ anecdote to assert and reinforce their identities as theatrical insiders. Indeed, Peter O'Toole once described Mitchenson as having been 'omnipresent ever since I can remember.'⁴²¹ The sharing and repetition of anecdotes was a way in which the collectors could assure their presence in theatrical circles, even in their absence.⁴²² According to Postlewait, the dependence and unquestioning faith in the factual record may be problematic: an un-interrogated record may prove to be far from factual. The anecdotal evidence thus provides alternative material whilst pointing to the vast absences they simultaneously suggest. It may never be proven that Enthoven was a lesbian, or that with the help of Charles George Gordon she unearthed an ancient temple in the Egyptian desert, nor that she discovered in the midst of her sixtieth birthday party that she was, in fact, sixty-two.⁴²³ What it *does* demonstrate and evidence is that Enthoven was a consummate and entertaining raconteur; an individual who had the propensity to exaggerate and romanticise the truth. David Roberts claims that theatre history is 'a mound of anecdote shored up against oblivion.'⁴²⁴ No matter the holes, the questions, the spaces inherent within the anecdote, it prevents total oblivion, total disappearance of the historic figure. Anecdotes combine with facts to make some kind of history, a history that Bratton argues has as much validity as the

⁴²⁰ Postlewait, *The Criteria for Evidence*, p. 65.

⁴²¹ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTCC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁴²² As Oscar Wilde asserts: 'there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.' In Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 6.

⁴²³ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁴²⁴ David Roberts, 'Making the Word Count: towards an Analytical Database of Theatre Reviews' in *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (November 1999), pp. 332-338, p. 335.

history dependent only on verifiable truths. I suggest that a history peppered with anecdote and stories is all the more fruitful, all the more enriched than those histories that choose to reject it. Jim Davis asserts: ‘it is very difficult - perhaps impossible - to write history in which some form of speculation or imagination does not occur, either in making connections between sources or in assessing new evidence that has been unearthed or in filling in the gaps when evidence is unavailable’.⁴²⁵ These anecdotes and ‘tall tales’, as doubtful or incredulous as they may be, offer the archival researcher and historian a sparse plot from which more detailed fragments of setting, story, and character may be added to fill in the historical narrative. Anecdotes also encourage the researcher to interpret and perform archival research more creatively. Explorations of such anecdotal accounts root and centre the speculation or imagination that Davis suggests the writing of history requires. This rooting may be fanciful or unsubstantiated but it is a rooting nonetheless.

Waters and absence

In the newsletters that Waters sent to friends during the period of 1989-1995 he describes, in often minute detail, the family of squirrels that live in his garden, the interactions with his neighbours in the nearby supermarket, and the changes that occur to the businesses on his local high-street in Wandsworth.⁴²⁶ In comparison to Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, Waters’s collection contains materials that give the researcher a detailed insight into the daily occurrences of Waters’s life. He assiduously retained personal documents and correspondence with the intention of preserving them alongside the theatrical ephemera he had accumulated. His personal papers were meticulously curated and systematically saved. For example, in a letter to Rachel Gould in 2002, the daughter

⁴²⁵ Jim Davis, Katie Normington and Gilli Bush-Bailey with Jacky Bratton, ‘Researching Theatre History and Historiography’ in Kershaw and Nicholson, *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, pp. 86-110, p. 92.

⁴²⁶ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives.

of one of Waters's friends, John Gould, from his time at Cambridge University, Waters reveals the method he uses to store and preserve his personal correspondence:

With regards to letters in general, I have become since my retirement over 14 years ago, a rather prolific epistolator [*sic*]. My letters are both many and long [...] Quite soon I found that two of my already over-crowded filing cabinet drawers were crammed with this personal correspondence. A cull became essential [...] I decided on a cut-off date. I had to be ruthless. All letters, from whatever source, which were two years old, would be jettisoned [...] all of this may seem strange to you. If I had unlimited storage space I would have kept everything, though not as mementos of my friends - rather as part of my personal archive.⁴²⁷

It is unclear whether Waters was motivated to store and preserve this correspondence (most of which consists of emails that he printed off to keep) as a result of RHUL's decision to accept Waters's bequest and house his collection and personal papers upon his death, or whether Waters had always adopted this method. That he terms it a 'personal archive' demonstrates Waters's desire to safeguard the remnants of his life for future perusal. The letters were not kept as aides-mémoires to inspire or evoke past relationships or memories: they were systematically curated by Waters and treated as the material components of his life's narrative. Not only was his collection to be archived, he himself was to be too. Waters, like Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, was simultaneously collector and archivist. Yet this revelation demonstrates that the will to preserve the complete, to eradicate any holes within the record of his correspondence, necessitates that reams of paper detailing entire relationships, friendships, periods in Waters's life be discarded, consigned to the scrapheap of history. Gould's response is one of anger and indignation: 'I can't say (that's not a figure of speech) how sad I am to think you've thrown away all Daddy's letters to you. It seems such a strange thing for you, with your collector's instinct, to do [...] Letters seem to me the chief thing that captures someone's

⁴²⁷ Correspondence with Rachel and James Gould, RWTC, RW/1/5/15, RHUL Archives.

personality. I can't believe you threw his letters away.'⁴²⁸ Waters has purposefully and consciously created absences and allowed documents to disappear. Carolyn Steedman stresses that: 'in the Archive you cannot be shocked at its exclusions, its emptinesses, at what is *not* catalogued.'⁴²⁹ For Steedman, the archive, by its very nature, is as much defined as what is there, as what is not. The emptinesses and the exclusions, like the anecdote, allow for the construction of a theatrical and historical narrative as dependent on the present as it is on the absent. Reason agrees, suggesting that: 'disappearance and documentation seem to go hand in hand'.⁴³⁰ They exist in a dynamic relationship, each dependent on the other. The understanding that ephemera, that 'fragment of social history... a reflection of the spirit of its time... which is not expected to survive' [ellipsis in original],⁴³¹ does indeed perish, or disappear provokes a mourning amongst the historian and the archival researcher. I suggest, however, that this disappearance, this archival absence is something to be embraced rather than lamented.

Incompleteness in the archive

In *Of other spaces* (1986), Michel Foucault describes the site of the museum and library as embodying:

The idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organising in this a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Carolyn Steedman, 'The space of memory: in an archive' in *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 11 (November 1998), pp. 65-83, p. 67.

⁴³⁰ Reason, *Archive or Memory?* p. 83.

⁴³¹ A definition of ephemera from Maurice Rickard, Founder of the Ephemera Society in the United Kingdom. Quoted in Davis, *Slipping thru the cracks*, p. 3.

⁴³² Quoted in Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.

This concept, this utopian site in which all of the material that ever was, is, or will be can be stored or archived, points to the desire for completeness and perfection. It suggests something nostalgic: a time or a place in which everything is certain, complete, full of possibility and the possibility of perfection. Here, memory, time and history can be stored and preserved forever. Earlier in the chapter I considered how the inherent ephemerality of performance problematizes the ephemeral material that it produces. Archival theory may have rejected the notion of the hierarchical archive as depicted by Foucault, but there still exists a tension, an archival anxiety about theatre's impermanence, about what disappears, goes missing, and becomes absent. Reason declares that it is possible to see 'the transformation of a valuation of live performance's ephemerality into a fear of ephemerality and a subsequent valuation of documentation and the document [...] The value of the archive is in the action of archiving, in halting disappearance and preserving for the future.'⁴³³ The impulse to archive and to document, to safeguard the fleeting nature of performance is a reaction to the fear of the event or the life being lost, forgotten, or disappearing.

If this uneasiness about the incomplete archive is transferred to the material that comprises the theatre collection however, it becomes apparent that the absent may be celebrated, may even be coveted. Mieke Bal, writing on the narrative of collecting, asserts: 'perfection, as a subjectively construed standard of idealization, may come so dangerously close that the collector cannot bear to pursue it. Unlike what one might tend to assume, this is not a happy, but an extremely unhappy, ending of our narrative.'⁴³⁴ Perfection implies the complete: a collection that is entire and whole, a site void of missing gaps or spaces. Bal suggests that this state of perfection is abhorrent to the

⁴³³ Reason, *Archive or Memory?*, p. 84.

⁴³⁴ Mieke Bal, 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting' in Elsner and Cardinal, *The Cultures of Collecting*, pp. 97-115, p. 113.

collector, for it signals the end of the collection and the end of the quest. Mitchenson suggests that collectors of Shakespeare ‘can go on collecting Shakespeare forever, there are so many variations of him.’⁴³⁵ These collectors of Shakespeare defy the ending of the collection, that state of perfection: they can surely never collect *everything* on the subject of Shakespeare and so, fortunately, the hunt lasts the collector a lifetime. Similarly, Jean Baudrillard suggests: ‘what makes a collection transcend mere accumulation is not only the fact of its being culturally complex, but the fact of its incompleteness, the fact that it *lacks* something. Lack always means lack of something unequivocally defined: one needs such and such an absent object.’⁴³⁶ The collection is thus defined by its inherent absences. Baudrillard continues: ‘an object acquires its exceptional value *by dint of being absent*... What we have begun to suspect is that *the collection is never really initiated in order to be completed*. Might it not be that the missing item in the collection is in fact an indispensable and positive part of the whole? [italics in original]’⁴³⁷ The archive can never be complete: it is impossible to collect everything.

The collection on the other hand, and the collection defined by rigid parameters and very specific criteria, *can* be completed: the last part of the jigsaw puzzle can be found. Baudrillard, like Bal, argues that this drive towards completeness is undesirable; that the absences of the collection are a necessary and fundamental component of the whole. If this concept of the collection, and the covert desire for absence, is projected onto the concept of the archive, then the fear of absence and disappearance can be interrogated. Helen Freshwater describes how ‘the archive can be a dangerously seductive place. Instead of becoming lost in its dusty, forbidding, textual corridors, it is all too easy to

⁴³⁵ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

⁴³⁶ Baudrillard, *The System of Collecting*, p. 23.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

become enchanted.⁴³⁸ It is the allure of the absent that seduces the historian and the archival researcher; the belief that the missing will reappear, that an anecdote will spark a change of direction, which in turn will reveal hitherto unexamined or neglected materials. Steedman echoes this statement when she argues that: ‘in one view, the practice of history in its modern mode is just one long exercise of the deep satisfaction of *finding things*’.⁴³⁹ In A. S. Byatt’s *Possession: A Romance* (1991), a novel that follows the archival quest of two young scholars, the character of Doctor Maud Bailey exclaims: ‘you know, if you read the collected letters of any writer - if you read her biography - you will always get a sense that there's something missing, something biographers don't have access to, the real thing, the crucial thing, the thing that really mattered to the poet herself. There are always letters that were destroyed. The letters, usually.’⁴⁴⁰ It is this missing thing, and more importantly, the belief in the *crucial* thing that drives the researcher’s journey through the archive; the belief, or the hope, that one single fragment will reveal itself and that this fragment will have the potential to alter or disrupt previously unchallenged historical narratives. As Bailey asserts, however, there are always items that have been destroyed. The archive is thus a site in which presence and absence exist simultaneously; sometimes the presence outweighs the absence, at times the absences overwhelm what is present. Within the archives then, and not just the archives of theatre history, the historian reads and studies what is there whilst being forever mindful of what is not; the silences and the absences of the material and the documents speak to the archival researcher with as loud a voice, as a great a presence, as the material which *is* present.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Helen Freshwater, ‘The Allure of the Archive’ in *Poetics Today*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2003), pp. 729-758, p. 734.

⁴³⁹ Steedman, *Dust*, p. 10.

⁴⁴⁰ A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance* (London: Vintage, 1991), p. 89.

⁴⁴¹ Steedman. *Dust*, p. 151.

Embodied archives

Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are no longer living. Yet their personal papers and the material they accumulated reside within the public archive, available to the historian who wishes to consult these documents. I suggest that the material that comprises both the theatre collection and the personal papers can be understood as sites of embodiment, and an assertion from Laura Engel provides a fascinating route into exploring this notion. Engel argues:

Attention to material objects like jewellery, drawings, prints and letters, reinforces both the ‘reality’ of the flesh that was once there and the uncanny idea that what we have left is only a trace of what was once present. Love letters, or letters that foreground desire for connection or presence that is now absence, form a kind of fascinating paradigm for the unconscious mechanisms of archival research. That is our own longing to make the intangible tangible and to bring the invisible center [*sic*] stage.⁴⁴²

The jewellery contained in the personal papers of Enthoven, for example, - the pink clip-on earrings, the cream necklace, the black earrings bordered with gold - or the Royal Horse Artillery medal and old button that are housed amongst other pins and badges in a box of Mitchenson’s personal effects suggest, as Engel writes, both the absence and the presence of the body. The ears to which the earrings clipped, the lapel upon which the medal was pinned, the fingers that cradled the pen from which the letters were written: all have disappeared. Yet the material speaks of what once was, and what, through the object, continues to be. The absent body of the collector, of the actor, of the audience member haunts the present and is embodied by the material traces it produced. This is reiterated by Terry Eagleton’s assertion that, in regards to the letter: ‘nothing could be at once more intimate and more alienable [...] The letter is part of the body which is

⁴⁴² Laura Engel, ‘The Secret Life of Archives: Sally Siddons, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and The Material of Memory’ in *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640-1830*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Article 2 (2014), pp. 1-15, p. 13.

detachable: torn from the very depths of the subject.⁴⁴³ Like Engel, then, Eagleton understands the letter to be representative of the body, or indeed a very part of the body which exists apart and detached from it. These embodied objects can be understood as a present extension of the now absent. The body eludes the historian; it no longer exists. Yet, through the objects and materials in the archive and in the collection, the intangible is embodied by the tangible; the invisible may fleetingly become visible. The MMTC contains recorded tapes in which Mitchenson talks about his theatre collection to Bill Fournier. Fournier asserts that: ‘one of the objects of these recorded conversations that you have been kind enough to make is to form a sort of talking catalogue of some of the items in the collection.’⁴⁴⁴ Mitchenson’s disembodied voice thus becomes a part of the collection, a narrator from the past, a present voice from a now absent body. In the archive ‘a phantom speaks’, writes Derrida, ‘a bit like the answering machine whose voice outlives its moment of recording’.⁴⁴⁵ This embodiment, and this disembodied voice, prevent a total and complete disappearance. The collector’s voice haunts the archive. Mark Franco and Annette Richards describe how ‘traces may fade completely, but marks tend to remain, like scars [...] Marks are, in the most mundane sense, the archives themselves, which do not disappear unless we ignore them, forget how to work with them, or destroy them.’⁴⁴⁶ The letters, the prints, the jewellery that comprise the archive and the collection are marked by the absent body: the smudge of ink that betrays a careless hand, eyes that stare out of a fading photograph. The missing body may remain dormant, absent unless, as Franco and Richards assert, the material that it marks is used, worked with and preserved: if the material is performed and reanimated by the bodies working in the

⁴⁴³ Quoted in Freshwater, *The Allure of the Archive*, p. 735.

⁴⁴⁴ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁴⁴⁵ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 42.

⁴⁴⁶ Mark Franco and Annette Richards quoted in Davis et al., *Research Theatre History and Historiography*, p. 103.

archive. The notion of haunting and of embodiment reappears in Joseph Roach's work when he describes the role of the actor. Instead of the embodied object, Roach suggests that the *actor* becomes the vessel within which memories, other bodies, and absent pasts can be discovered. He writes:

even in death actors' roles tend to stay with them. They gather in the memory of audiences, like ghosts, as each new interpretation of a role sustains or upsets expectations derived from the previous ones. This is the sense in which audiences may come to regard the performer as an eccentric but meticulous curator of cultural memory, a medium for speaking with the dead.^{447 448}

In the public archive, the archival researcher becomes, like Roach's actor, a medium for speaking with the theatre collectors of the past and with the previous researchers who have been there before. In the writing of this thesis, I become the medium through which Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters can speak. Waters is speaking for the first time and his archive has not been marked by traces of any researcher but myself. Waters's story is thus told from my perspective: his voice is mediated through layers of my own personal experiences and idiosyncrasies, unhindered and unaffected by any previous researchers' conclusions or assertions. Through the curation of archival materials, the researcher comes to subjectively embody a selection of the memories and

⁴⁴⁷ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, p. 78. Bratton employs a similar example to that of Roach in her description of the comic Charles Mathews. Here, Bratton is concerned with mimicry and provides a description of Mathews showing visitors around his gallery, a gallery which contained a considerable amount of theatrical memorabilia and portraiture: 'had imitation been encouraged, we might at this moment have had his [Shakespeare's] living semblance, with all his peculiarities and manner, before us. I knew Tate Wilkinson, who knew Garrick; Garrick knew Betterton; Betterton knew Booth; Booth knew Davenant, who was Shakespeare's godson; Davenant knew Ben Jonson, and Ben Jonson was Shakespeare's friend. Now had they possessed the power of handing down imitation from each other, I might this evening have put Shakespeare before you.' Like Roach, Bratton's inclusion of Mathews' 'Gallery monopolylogue' allows for an understanding of the actor as embodying the dead, or the absent, allowing the past to speak to the present, for absent bodies to perform in the present. In Bratton, *New Readings*, p. 114.

⁴⁴⁸ For a detailed exploration of work that extends this idea see Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (USA: The University of Michigan Press, 2003). In this work Carlson explores the concept of recycled memories and the conjuring of past performances and theatrical 'ghosts' inherent in theatrical productions

the traces of past theatrical lives and events; the researcher is marked by the absent performer, or by parts and elements of the performer he/she chooses to be marked by.⁴⁴⁹

Manipulating archival space

I have demonstrated that the site and space in which the archive and collection is situated is complex, unstable and ambiguous. Jim Davis describes the dilemma in extracting theatre history from the archive, particularly from pictorial evidence. The dilemma: ‘refers to the gap between the actuality of events in the past and how they have been represented’.⁴⁵⁰ This gap can be understood as a space in itself: a chasm between the real and the representation of the real; the murky waters in which the evidence, the anecdote, the imagined, the proven, the absent, and the present are situated, and from which the archival researcher and historian must fish for material. Multiple spaces thus exist simultaneously, and I suggest that there are three: the performance in its immediate presence; the space which contains the evidence of the performance once it is over and resigned to the past (the archive, the collection, the body of the performer or audience member); and the space in-between in which things disappear, go missing, are discarded, or else are chosen for preservation and saved. According to Jim Davis, research methods in performance history and historiography must enable both memorialisation *and* disruption.⁴⁵¹ Again, the notion of presence and absence, chaos and disorder, preservation and loss exist in a dynamic and co-dependent relationship.

⁴⁴⁹ Pearce and Martin extend the idea of the collection as a site of embodiment to its furthest limits. Exploring the tattooed or pierced body, Pearce asserts that these highly personal markings can ‘transform the body into a site of collection’, and turn the body into ‘the ultimate collection site.’ See Pearce and Martin, *The Collector’s Voice: Volume 4*, pp. 231.

⁴⁵⁰ Davis et al., *Researching Theatre History and Historiography*, p. 95.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 97.

The researcher also manipulates and creates the archival space for him/herself. As Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone write: ‘researchers become archivists, collators and cataloguers. They must make decisions about whether to keep or reject a result, and unpick the connections between results which are engineered solely by the particular search.’⁴⁵² Researchers and historians thus create space: they traverse the space of the archive, discarding, collecting, bridging gaps and making connections. This is evocative of Engel’s inspired understanding of the archival researcher as ‘archival tourist’ who is: ‘part of the scene of research and has agency in the recreation of the past, at the same time that the archivist remains separated from the material because they are always ultimately foreign.’⁴⁵³ If Engel’s metaphor is extended, the archivist, like the tourist, explores the archival space; they turn down unfamiliar streets, they forgo the map to discover unmarked places; they find traces of a site that no longer appears on the map. It remains, like the tourist’s destination, foreign. The archival tourist navigates his/her way through the archive. In excavating the life of the theatre collector, the archival tourist is a living body through which private passions and personal and theatrical histories can be revived, publicised, and performed, told and re-told. The past speaks to the present through the accumulation of material that history produces, through its ghostly traces. The archival tourist is reminded, to employ the much quoted opening line of L. P. Hartley’s *The Go-Between* (1953), that: ‘the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.’⁴⁵⁴

Performing the archive

Describing the archive, Nora poetically posits it as a place in which moments of history are: ‘torn away from the movement of history, then returned; no longer quite life, not yet

⁴⁵² Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 35.

⁴⁵³ Engel, ‘*The Secret Life of Archives*’, p. 5.

⁴⁵⁴ L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953) (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), p. 1.

death, like shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded'.⁴⁵⁵ The accumulation of material that comprises the theatre collection, then, can be seen as these shells on the shore, straddling the space between the living and the dead, the lost and the found, the hidden and the emerging. Nora's description has the potential to illustrate the archive as existing in a state not unlike purgatory: a waiting room within which the object and the material awaits its fate; awaits the archival researcher or historian to (re)animate it. Mindy Aloff, writing on the ephemera produced by dance performances, describes how 'while such leavings constitute a husk of dancing, they are also the kernels of dance history'.⁴⁵⁶ The archive can be understood as this husk, the outer shell within which can be found kernels of truths, snapshots of the past. But this is an accumulation of absences: they offer us only glimpses into the past, a fleeting, fragmented emergence of a performance or a person. The anecdote, the 'tall tales', the items and objects that never made it into the hallowed space of the archive: they speak of what is absent, and through their noted absence continue to be a constant presence. In the public archive, sometimes the absent past is not so absent after all.

The impossibility of capturing the presence of performance should not be lamented. As Dorney so memorably articulates: 'in the performing arts we create documents that document a performance and the process of making it because we can't file the thing itself. But that's ok, we never could. We never filed a war, or a disease in the National Archives, only the documents that followed its progress and noted the decisions and measures taken'.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ Nora, *Between Memory and History*, p. 12.

⁴⁵⁶ Quoted in Reason, *Archive or Memory?*, p. 85.

⁴⁵⁷ Kate Dorney, 'Archives' in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2013), pp. 8-10, p. 10.

In 2000, British playwright Arnold Wesker sold his papers, including hand-written books of dreams, cheque books and diaries, to the Harry Ransom Center. At the time of this sale, in an open letter published on his own website, Wesker compiled a list of a number of his items mislaid by theatre directors: several scripts of his play *Denial*, videos of BBC productions of his work, and various other related documents. However, the most significant missing items, according to Wesker, were ‘non-existent replies from Trevor Nunn to Wesker's attempts to persuade him to mount a production of his play *Shylock*.’⁴⁵⁸ Wesker writes: ‘Dear Trevor, The evidence seems to be that I have a place in contemporary world theatre earning courtesy and respect, so I’m bewildered you have opted for silence.’⁴⁵⁹ Sometimes, the silences or the non-existent materials in the archive reveal more about the intricacies and nuances of a life or a series of events than the archival marks they leave behind. I argue for a greater recognition and embracing of the absences and lacunae that shape the materials in the collections and personal papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters in the hope that a creative interrogation of these absences and missing materials will contribute to the greater presence of these individuals and their legacies in constructions of theatre histories. Though the public theatre archives are marked by gaps and missing materials, they constitute the theatrical heritage of the nation. I turn now to an interrogation of how this theatrical heritage is understood within the public space of the museum and theatre archive, and how the theatre collector can, and should, be considered a part of this theatrical heritage alongside the materials they gather.

⁴⁵⁸ James Campbell, ‘NB’ in *The Times Literary Supplement* (Friday 18 February 2000), p. 16.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*



Roy Waters at home surrounded by his *Vanity Fair* prints, circa 1980s. © RHUL Archives/Eve Smith.

Chapter Four: C/collectors and C/collections Capitalised

'From the days of Thespis to the knighthood of Henry Irving, society in general censured those who trod the boards, and historians frowned upon the theatre as a discipline worthy of scholarly attention.'

- Louis A. Rachow⁴⁶⁰

In 1990 Walsall Museum and Art Gallery launched an exhibition of the private collections of the town's local inhabitants. The exhibition, entitled *The People's Show*, showcased the collections of objects, miscellanea and curios collected by members of the Walsall community. Collectors were recruited from newspaper advertisements and interviewed by museum staff resulting in sixty-three local collectors being selected to present some sixteen-thousand collected objects.⁴⁶¹ The exhibition was a huge success attracting over 10,000 visitors - the highest number of attendees to an exhibition in the museum's recent history - and much coverage in both the local and national press.⁴⁶² Such was the success of the exhibition that *The People's Show* was produced again in Walsall in 1992 whilst a further fourteen other museums emulated the scheme across the country. In 1994 a nationwide celebration of the exhibitions, *The People's Show Festival*, was launched with over fifty museums taking part.⁴⁶³ The range of items exhibited during these shows was diverse, unique and, inevitably, outlandish. Airline travel sick bags, marbles and customised ties were displayed alongside eggcups and gambling machines. According to Susan Pearce, the exhibition looked 'more like a mad version of the kind of English pub

⁴⁶⁰ Louis A. Rachow, 'The Development of Theatre Collections and their Present State: An Overview' in *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 34 (May 1993), pp. 91-96, p. 91.

⁴⁶¹ Susan Pearce, 'Knowing the New' in Graeme Weare and J. C. H. King (eds.), *Extreme Collecting: Challenging Practices for 21st Century Museums* (Oxford: Bergahn Books, 2012), pp. 93-101, p. 95.

⁴⁶² Robin Francis, 'The People's Show: A Critical Analysis' in *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, No. 1 (May 1996). <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ycrnw3c/JCMS/issue1/francis.html> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* Approximately one million people had visited the People's Show Festival by the end of 1994.

which features rugby club scarves than a normal, sober museum display which a visitor anticipates.⁴⁶⁴ Walsall Museum and Art Gallery, known primarily for its collection of Epstein sculptures, had created a remarkable space in which the mad, idiosyncratic passions of the private collector were displayed alongside galleries containing respected works of art. Stolen hotel soaps and McDonald's toys disrupted the sober space of the museum, sharing both the space and, by implication, the status, of the Epstein sculptures; sculptures celebrated within the domains of art history and connoisseurship. Jo Digger, Keeper of Fine Art at the museum during the period in which *The People's Show* was launched, describes how 'exiting from the exhibition now, in its finished form, is like coming up for fresh air from an intense underworld of personal passions.'⁴⁶⁵ This underworld of private collecting, with all of the associated notions of the hidden, and the unspoken, had been exposed. The exhibition had, according to Pearce, subverted and dismantled the concept and content of the museum display that a visitor comes to anticipate. Most importantly, the private passions of the collector were granted a space, and exposed, in a realm traditionally synonymous with high culture, exclusivity, scholarship, and artistic and intellectual accomplishment.

Responses to *The People's Show*

There are a number of conflicting narratives concerning the reception of the exhibitions; exhibitions that, according to Robin Francis, demonstrate an 'up-front light-hearted celebration of popular culture.'⁴⁶⁶ The shows and the festival were, arguably, a manifestation of democracy: a rejection of elitist values and cultural snobbery; a refusal to adhere to the traditional ideas of what constitutes a museum piece, and a platform from

⁴⁶⁴ Pearce, *Knowing the New*, p. 95.

⁴⁶⁵ Quoted in Pearce and Martin, *The Collector's Voice: Volume 4*, p. 76.

⁴⁶⁶ Francis, *The People's Show*.

which to debate notions of what and who society values, and why. Indeed, Anthony Burton argues that cultural capital has, in the last two hundred years ‘been redistributed, transferred from the possession of the rich and the privileged to the ownership of the larger community [...] Museums, as the new owners of cultural property, are surrogates for the person in the street.’⁴⁶⁷ The People’s Show is representative of this paradigm shift that Burton speaks of. The Walsall museum became a democratic space dictated and directed by the very community it served. The success of the exhibitions in terms of press attention, attendance figures and feedback demonstrated that communities wanted to see, share, and support the private passions of their neighbours.

Opponents to the exhibitions argued that the shows were vulgar and crass: a presentation of bad taste unsuitable for display within a public museum or gallery; a crude collection of worthless objects devoid of cultural merit that transformed a respected public space into one that celebrated mass-produced tat and the ignorant amateurs who senselessly accumulated it. Digger asserts that past exhibitions featuring similar private collections had often elicited ‘a degree of almost contempt for the “bad taste” and non-professional expertise acquired by many collectors’ and, similarly, a collector who had visited The People’s Show commented that: ‘some of our serious collector friends felt that the People’s Show was cheap and nasty.’⁴⁶⁸

Different forms of capital

The People’s Show gives rise to questions concerning the nature of value, taste, and cultural capital in relation to the private collection. The collector whose ‘serious’ collecting friends felt the show to be cheap and nasty continues: ‘we did not agree and

⁴⁶⁷ Anthony Burton, *Vision & Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), pp. 7-8.

⁴⁶⁸ Quoted in Susan M. Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (London: Sage, 1998), pp. 69.

did not feel that because some collections were lightweight i.e. like keyrings or ducks (of all descriptions!) or sugar bags, they should be disregarded.⁴⁶⁹ This collector's observations are integral to an interrogation of the perceived cultural capital of the private collection and collector, and the potential of the two to infiltrate the public space of the museum. Firstly, it posits that there is a distinction between the 'serious' collector and the 'not-so-serious collector', the amateur and the professional. Secondly, it determines that some collections are 'lightweight' suggesting a hierarchical system in which collected objects are placed. Thirdly, collections considered to be lightweight are afforded a lowly status within this hierarchical system and deserve to be disregarded, particularly in the space of the public institution, in favour of collections considered to occupy a more powerful position within this system. The People's Show represents an arena in which fundamental preoccupations concerning the value, authenticity, and cultural worth of the private collection, and the objects therein, are played out. The private collector, too, depending on what he or she collects is not exempt from classification when positioned within this framework of hierarchy and value judgement. I want to investigate where the private collection and collector of theatrical ephemera, or what Raymond Mander knowingly calls 'theatrical tat',⁴⁷⁰ is positioned within this hierarchical system of taste, value and culture.

This chapter considers the different forms of capital invested within both the collection and collector of theatrical ephemera: cultural capital, financial capital, the capital of knowledge, and the personal capital of the collector themselves. I investigate how concepts of taste, value and worth are embodied or represented by the theatre collection and collector. Would the private theatre collection with its yellowing playbills, theatrical

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

tea-towels, and colourful nineteenth-century cartes-de-visite have been welcome within the temporary underworld of The People's Show exhibitions? Or does the private theatre collection enjoy a higher status than a collection of ducks or airline sick-bags? I use these exhibitions as an example by which debates pertaining to the value and worth of an object, the cultural significance of different collections of objects, and the rights or suitability of an object to occupy a space in a museum, can be unpicked and interrogated. Using Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and, specifically, his work on taste and value, I will consider the theatre collection's cultural significance and explore this in relation to other collections, going beyond the timeframe of Bourdieu's work to include twenty-first century responses to the cultural capital of the theatre collection and its relationship to the museum in which it is housed. In Chapter Two I considered the social, gendered and professional spaces occupied by the collector. This chapter will enter the private and public spaces occupied by the collected material itself, exploring how theatrical ephemera is recognised within concepts of taste, value, and beauty; how cultural and financial capital is represented in, or by, the theatre collection, and how Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander, Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters construct, embody, or perform these forms of capital in both private and public spaces.

Bourdieu and cultural capital

In his seminal work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) Bourdieu presents an analysis of two surveys carried out in 1963 and in 1967-68. These surveys sought to determine how cultural goods ranging from music and art to clothing and furniture are consumed, and the ways in which they are consumed and by whom. Bourdieu established that there is a close connection between cultural practices or opinions and educational capital: the more, or the better, educated one is, the more one

participates in cultural practices or demonstrates cultural tastes considered legitimate or academic. Significantly, the study revealed that there is a correlation between museum visits and the level of education that one has received: the higher the level of education, and the more qualifications achieved, the more frequent were visits to the museum.⁴⁷¹

For Bourdieu, there exists a ‘sacred character, separate and separating, of high culture - the icy solemnity of the great museums, the grandiose luxury of the opera-houses and major theatres, the décor and decorum of concert halls.’⁴⁷² According to Bourdieu, the museum, invested as it is with a character of high culture, legitimises and sanctifies the objects and materials it displays and holds. This, by implication, inevitably creates a distinction between artefacts considered legitimate and those considered illegitimate: those artefacts invested with cultural capital, significance, and power, and those understood to be divest of cultural capital, significance and power, or indeed to possess it in smaller, or insignificant, amounts. Objects in the museum, the museum supposedly representing a divisive space of legitimate culture, are implicitly imbued with status, significance and cultural capital. The education of those that visit the museum and understand and appreciate these works of art facilitates the possession of cultural capital: the museum itself becomes an environment in which legitimate objects can be legitimately enjoyed. Tony Bennett, in his introduction to *Distinction*, writes that institutions of legitimation, such as museums, art galleries and universities, distinguish between ‘those cultural goods that are canonized as “art” and other cultural goods, those

⁴⁷¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984). Trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1984, 2010), pp. 5-10. Bourdieu asserts that capital cultural, though acquired through education can also be inherited. For example, an individual may have few academic qualifications but frequently engage in the perusal of legitimate cultural forms, i.e. classical music concerts or art gallery visits due to it being directly inherited or self-taught. See pp. 73-78.

⁴⁷² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 26.

commonly described as either popular or mass culture, that are accorded a lower status⁴⁷³ due to the legitimate institution's processes of classification and evaluation. By displaying objects in the sacred space of the museum, by classifying them within esteemed categories of creative and intellectual endeavour, and by favourably evaluating them as being of value to those educated to understand and interpret such value, the museum implicitly creates a distinction and a hierarchy within material culture and how it is consumed. Suzanne Keene acknowledges that: 'economic value is fairly easily defined: it is generated by the consumption by individuals or collectively of cultural goods and services. Cultural value is different, with social, aesthetic, spiritual, historical, symbolic, and authenticity values.'⁴⁷⁴ Legitimate institutions and the individuals that organise, manage, work for, and frequent such institutions are the determiners of such cultural values.

Who visits museums?

It is important to acknowledge that the surveys conducted by Bourdieu took place over half a century ago. Museums have evolved considerably in the twenty-first century and, rather than representing embodiments of high culture, status and elitism, museums are now actively engaging with the wider public. Indeed, in a special report on museums in *The Economist*, Fiammetta Rocco writes that in 2013 over half of the British population had visited a museum or gallery in the past year.⁴⁷⁵ Museums, then, can no longer be accused of being exclusive spaces managed by the few, for the few.

⁴⁷³ Tony Bennett, 'Introduction to the Routledge Classics Edition' in Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. xvii-xxiii, p. xviii.

⁴⁷⁴ Suzanne Keene, *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collections* (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), p.159.

⁴⁷⁵ Fiammetta Rocco, 'Special Report: Museums: Temples of Delight' in *The Economist* (21 December 2013). <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21591707-museums-world-over-are-doing-amazingly-well-says-fiammetta-rocco-can-they-keep> - accessed 21 October 2015.

In 2015 the V&A opened an exhibition entitled ‘All of This Belongs to You’, in which the Museum examined the role of public institutions in contemporary life and asked what it means to be responsible for a national collection. The exhibition ‘raised questions about the opportunities, obligations and limits to participation’.⁴⁷⁶ By staging this exhibition, the Museum explicitly acknowledged the purpose of the public museum: an institution that houses the treasures of society *for* society and *on behalf* of society. However, though Bourdieu’s work may have been produced over fifty years ago, and though the recent V&A exhibition suggests that museums belong to all members of society regardless of class or education, recent reports into the audiences attracted by cultural institutions such as museums reveal that, though museum audiences are increasing year upon year and exhibitions are reaching more and more of the population, this population, as Bourdieu discovered, continues to consist of individuals who possess the greatest cultural capital. *The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value* acknowledges that: ‘in 2014 Britain, high socio-economic background, university-level educational attainment and a professional occupation are still the most reliable predictors of high levels of engagement and participation in a wide range of cultural activities.’⁴⁷⁷ In relation to museum audiences, the report declares that measures such as enabling free entry to national museums has failed to make Britain’s museums more inclusive and, in

⁴⁷⁶ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/all-of-this-belongs-to-you/all-of-this-belongs-to-you/> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁴⁷⁷ The University of Warwick: The Warwick Commission, *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth: The 2015 Report by the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value* (Warwick: The University of Warwick, 2015), p. 33. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_report_2015.pdf. It is worth acknowledging that the statistics used to inform this report may require greater interrogation. Perhaps the individuals that come from high socio-economic backgrounds or have professional occupations are more inclined to participate in such studies or surveys, or are more likely to be asked to.

the period 2008/9 - 2011/12, higher social groups accounted for 87 per cent of all museums visits, the lower social groups for only 13 per cent.⁴⁷⁸

In 1984, Bourdieu asserted that highly educated individuals are far more likely to visit museums than those who lack such an education, and the 2015 report by the Warwick Commission corroborates Bourdieu's assumption. However, Rocco disturbs Bourdieu's notion of the museum as possessing a sacred character that separates high culture from mass or popular culture, highly-educated individuals from the uneducated masses. She describes how, in contrast to traditional and outmoded understandings of the museum as 'old, dusty, boring and barely relevant to real life',⁴⁷⁹ the range of collections and objects that museums display has 'broadened spectacularly and now goes well beyond traditional subjects such as art and artefacts, science and history.'⁴⁸⁰ Museums may even cover a range of what Rocco terms 'oddball specialties':⁴⁸¹ a term reminiscent of the objects displayed at The People's Show exhibitions. The museum is no longer the space conceived of by Bourdieu: its collecting remit - indeed the very materials it exists to preserve - has radically evolved and expanded to include popular and mass cultural objects, including theatrical ephemera; it is a place visited by growing numbers of the population, even if that population continues to consist mostly of individuals possessing the greatest levels of cultural capital, and it is a space that increasingly and self-reflexively acknowledges its role as a public service, providing a space in which the material culture of a society can be safeguarded and protected for the very society that created it.

As the museums and the archives that house the nation's cultural heritage become more open and democratic, and as they continue to exhibit the materials that are traditionally

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 34.

⁴⁷⁹ Rocco, *Special Report: Museums*.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

judged to have less cultural capital, new readings and new insights into the collecting of alternative objects can be forged for new audiences. It is interesting to note, however, that scholarly works investigating both the history and the current climate of collecting overwhelmingly concentrate on the collecting of fine art, rather than the collecting of theatrical ephemera and other more unusual passions. Like the space of the museum, the spaces in which fine art is discussed, interrogated, and collected is traditionally marked by wealth, cultural capital, and a classical education. As I demonstrate, this museum space is changing, and so too, I argue, should the objects upon which theoretical approaches to collecting focus, evolve and diversify.

Objectives and mission statements

The museum maintains its role as an institution that seeks to educate and inspire learning and the acquisition of knowledge within the community it serves. The V&A's mission statement is: 'To be the world's leading museum of art and design. To enrich people's lives and inspire individuals and everyone in the creative industries, through the promotion of knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the designed world', with an objective to stimulate 'enjoyment and appreciation of art, design and performance.'⁴⁸²

The objectives and mission statements of other museums around the world adhere to similar principles and objectives. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for example, 'collects, studies, conserves, and presents significant works of art across all times and cultures in order to connect people to creativity, knowledge, and ideas',⁴⁸³ whilst The Harry Ransom Center 'encourages discovery, inspires creativity, and advances understanding of the humanities for a broad and diverse audience through the preservation

⁴⁸² <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/v/v-and-a-mission-and-objectives/> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁴⁸³ A supplement to the museum's original mission statement of 1870, added by the trustees of the museum in January 2015: <http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/mission-statement> - accessed 21 October 2015.

and sharing of its extraordinary collections.⁴⁸⁴ These mission statements convey both the type of materials held by the museum and the impact of the materials on those who have access to them. The statements also reflect the requirements of those organisations and businesses who fund the institutions. The materials are significant and extraordinary: the acquisition of specific objects from the fields of art and design lends the V&A such cultural capital that it claims to be the world's leader on the subject. Not only do visitors to the institutions see the objects, the museums imagine, or anticipate, that visitors' sheer proximity to such artefacts and the ways in which these artefacts are presented and framed will encourage creativity and, more importantly, the ability to understand, appreciate, and enjoy such artefacts. The objects chosen for display in a museum, be that a renowned work of art or an eighteenth-century playbill, are invested with cultural capital. They have been selected or acquired by the museum for their extraordinary aesthetic or historic attributes. A visit to the museum imbues the visitor themselves with their own cultural capital: the museum enables the visitor to correctly and appropriately recognise and consume culturally valuable and important materials. Cultural capital thus breeds cultural capital.

Russell W. Belk, however, argues that not everyone can or does possess cultural capital and that the accusations of exclusivity and elitism that are levelled at the museum space ensure that cultural capital is consumed by those already possessing this capital themselves. Belk asserts that cultural capital, which facilitates the understanding and appreciation of the 'mysteries of high culture', is unequally distributed and belongs primarily to members of higher social classes; the very social classes that dominate museum audiences.⁴⁸⁵ Belk made this assertion in 1995 and in the subsequent twenty

⁴⁸⁴ <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/about/us/> - accessed 22 October 2015.

⁴⁸⁵ Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, p. 108.

years that have passed, museum attendance figures have increased. 2012-2013 marked the highest number of visitors to museums in England ever recorded since government records began in 2005.⁴⁸⁶ Belk's argument that museums primarily serve members of the educated, higher classes and exclusively house objects of high culture has been seconded by the report from the Warwick Commission. What is changing, however, is the *stuff* that museums are collecting. Museums as a space dedicated solely to the collecting of elite and priceless treasures made or produced by the elite can be challenged, even disputed, in the evolving climate of the museum in the twenty-first-century.

The hierarchy of objects

The production and consumption of capital culture operates within a socio-cultural system whereby institutions of legitimation such as museums and universities select the objects and materials to legitimise. In turn, the visitors or audiences that interact with these objects, that pursue culturally legitimate activities and practices, are themselves cementing and validating their own reserves of cultural capital. An analysis of the conflicting responses to The People's Show provides an example of the hierarchy at work in which objects and collections are classified and organised. Bourdieu argues: 'one can never entirely escape from the hierarchy of legitimacies. Because the very meaning and value of a cultural object varies according to the system of objects in which it is placed.'⁴⁸⁷ An object may be legitimate and may be placed within an institution of legitimisation, but there will always be objects *more* legitimate, or spaces with a more legitimating power. Bourdieu describes how cultural materials such as detective stories, strip cartoons or science-fiction have the potential to be considered either prestigious literary and artistic

⁴⁸⁶ Rocco, *Special Report: Museums*.

⁴⁸⁷ Bourdieu. *Distinction*, p. 81.

cultural assets or ordinary, unremarkable cultural materials.⁴⁸⁸ The either/or is dependent upon the system of objects within which the detective story and so on is placed: placed within a museum amongst legitimate objects, the material is viewed as meaningful, powerful, and of great cultural import. Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby determine that ‘value’ is: ‘the estimation of the worth of an object in comparison to the worth of other objects.’⁴⁸⁹ Tucked away on the bottom of a private book-shelf, the signifiers of cultural capital that mark the detective story, or the playbill, are obscured, if not lost altogether. However, if these items are placed in the public museum, the value of these artefacts is measured and defined in comparison to the other artefacts they share a space with, and their value and cultural capital increases and is legitimised. The collection exhibited at a church fête or in a small local museum has less legitimacy than an exhibition at the V&A or the British Museum. The private collection, and the value and capital therein, is contextualised by the public space it goes on to inhabit. The value and the capital of the private collection that exists in a private space can be determined by the researcher who seeks the collection out and fixes the collection as a phenomenon deserving of academic interrogation.

Public museums and private collectors

In *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, Pearce posits the museum and the private collector as two opposing bodies with ultimately conflicting objectives. She asserts, like Bourdieu, that the museum is a sacred, professional space that showcases elite objects and represents high culture. It mounts formal exhibits, conducts and encourages research and is managed by qualified, knowledgeable persons. According to Pearce, the collector

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 371.

is frequently positioned in contrast to the museum. She notes that collectors traditionally represent the profane and the non-professional; they are seen to deal in low culture and the popular; they display their materials informally and are unqualified or without academic training. They preside over a private space of self-gratification.⁴⁹⁰ These divisive classifications of museum and collector are complicated by The People's Show in which collectors formally exhibited their private collections of mass-produced, popular objects in a professional space populated by a staff of experts and scholars. Though 37 per cent of the collectors that exhibited in The People's Show had taken part due to expectations of enjoyment and self-gratification, 31 per cent had taken part in order to educate others and to share their knowledge.⁴⁹¹

The museum and the collector are not opposing concepts. Many of the world's museums and galleries were built upon the foundations of private collectors and their collections. The British Museum, for example, came into being from the private collection of Sir Hans Sloane in 1753, a bequest in his will consisting of some 71,000 books, manuscripts and natural specimens;⁴⁹² whilst the fine art collections of John Julius Angerstein formed the nucleus of The National Gallery in London.⁴⁹³ Richard Harris, a private collector of materials devoted to the iconography of death who has exhibited at the Wellcome Collection remarks: 'in some greater sense, I'm in some way contributing to the greater good of society, maybe I'm overstating myself [...] but I think it could serve that purpose'.⁴⁹⁴ Just as the mission statements and objectives of national museums

⁴⁹⁰ Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, p. 67.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² https://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/the_museums_story/general_history/sir_hans_sloane.aspx - accessed 23 November 2015.

⁴⁹³ <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/history/collectors-and-benefactors/john-julius-angerstein> - accessed 23 November 2015.

⁴⁹⁴ Richard Harris speaking in a podcast for the Wellcome Collection in 2013 entitled *Richard Harris: Collecting Death*.

demonstrate a desire to engage with, educate, and inspire society, Harris demonstrates that the private collector, too, can share the museum's public aims. The collector takes pleasure from performing alongside and with their collection and the museum might be the greatest public stage upon which the collector's possessions can be put on show, and the collector's passions performed.

What makes a museum?

The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom lists the eligibility requirements for an organisation seeking accredited museum status. To be eligible an organisation must, amongst other things: hold a long-term collection of artefacts, have a formal constitution, provide two years of relevant accounts and, above all, meet the Museum Association's 1998 definition of the museum which reads: '[m]useums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.'⁴⁹⁵ Keith S. Thomson asserts that the objects displayed or preserved in a museum are 'treasures of nature and artifice (plus a great deal of the lesser debris of human affairs) [they] are the material manifestation of something intangible and precious: our cultural heritage.'⁴⁹⁶ Thomson acknowledges that cultural heritage is not only comprised of sacred treasures or objects of high culture; part of cultural heritage is comprised of the 'lesser debris of human affairs', the trash excavated from history's dustbin.

⁴⁹⁵ Arts Council England, *Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom: Accreditation Standard* (October 2011) - http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/accreditation_standard_english_web.pdf - accessed 22 October 2015.

⁴⁹⁶ Thomson, *Treasures on Earth*, p. 1.

Aside from landmark institutions such as the V&A, the Ashmolean Museum, Imperial War Museum North and so on, Britain is also home to a number of museums that reflect what Rocco terms the ‘oddball museums.’ The public can meander through The Dog Collar Museum in Kent; marvel at The Colman’s Mustard Shop and Museum in Norwich; and visit the Pencil Museum in Keswick.⁴⁹⁷ Sidney Colvin, who became Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum in 1884, declared that the Museum was the ‘epitome of the civilization of the world’.⁴⁹⁸ Indeed, according to Ruth Hoberman, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries institutions such as the British Museum were producers of knowledge; imperial archives that enacted a fantasy of control over ‘information, peoples, and colonies through the compilation of knowledge.’⁴⁹⁹ Contemporary museums dedicated to mustard jars, pencils, and dog collars do not lend themselves to either Colvin or Hoberman’s description of what an institution such as the British Museum came to represent. In the twenty-first-century, however, ideas about what a museum is and what it should be doing are evolving. As unconventional as these oddball museums may be when considered within a framework of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century museum theory – a framework that promoted the idea of the museum as a space of high culture and social governance and transformation⁵⁰⁰ - they are museums nonetheless and they serve to share and communicate cultural meanings and values.

Adding value to the public archive

The Theatre Collection at Bristol was awarded full Accredited Museum status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2009.⁵⁰¹ The procurement of certain

⁴⁹⁷ ‘Top 10: Unusual British Museums’ in *The Telegraph* (15 June, 2009). <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/picturegalleries/5540092/Top-10-Unusual-British-museums.html>.

⁴⁹⁸ Quoted in Hoberman, *Museum Trouble*, p. 164.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 134.

⁵⁰⁰ See Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, pp. 17-21.

⁵⁰¹ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/about/> - accessed 19 January 2016.

collections or objects can increase the cultural capital of the museum or academic archive it is acquired by. When the MMTC arrived at Bristol, Vice-Chancellor Professor Eric Thomas hosted a launch party to celebrate the acquisition. Thomas remarked, in a public press-release, that: ‘the university is honoured to be chosen as the most suitable home for this esteemed collection’,⁵⁰² whilst Jo Elsworth, Director of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection, said: ‘we are delighted that the M&M trustees have chosen Bristol as the new home for this distinguished collection.’⁵⁰³ Of course, as both Thomas and Elsworth were commenting on the collection during the public launch of its acquisition, they were understandably enthusiastic, keen to sing the praises of the collection and what its acquisition might signify. The acquisition of the MMTC increased and augmented the cultural capital and cultural status of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. Indeed, the MMTC, according to those at Bristol, enabled the Bristol collection to evolve from an important, national archive of British theatre history into an internationally renowned institution housing one of the largest British theatre archives in the world.⁵⁰⁴ The addition of the MMTC collection immeasurably increases the cultural capital of the archive: it will attract more visitors, more research, and, most likely, more funding. Similarly in October 2012, RHUL hosted a launch party to mark the acquisition of the RWTC, inviting esteemed guests from academic institutions, museums, and the theatre. The acquisition of both the Mander and Mitchenson and the Waters collection were celebrated by both Bristol University and RHUL, recognised as memorable occasions of success and a coup for the institutions that would house them. Indeed, RHUL had expressed interest in acquiring the MMTC for the RHUL archives on the basis that, together with the RWTC, the university would become an important repository of theatre collections. This was not

⁵⁰² University of Bristol Press Release, ‘University of Bristol celebrates the arrival of the Mander & Mitchenson Theatre Collection’ (7 June 2011). <http://www.bris.ac.uk/news/2011/7666.html> - accessed 22 October 2015

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

to be, however, and the trustees of the MMTC eventually selected Bristol as the new public home for the collection.⁵⁰⁵

Making a theatre museum

Although Enthoven worked with her collection in the V&A until her death in 1950, Britain still had, at this point, no national museum or institution dedicated solely to the theatrical arts. In 1924, Martin Hardie noted that: ‘The Ministry of the Beaux-Arts in Paris has, for the last few years, been systematically forming a collection of play-bills of the world, to record the entire movement of the stage. There are similar collections at Rome, Milan, Stockholm and elsewhere but there is apparently nothing of the kind in this country.’⁵⁰⁶ The British Theatre Museum Association (BTMA) was founded over thirty years later in 1957, and acquired a small space in Leighton House in June 1963 in which to display theatrical items.⁵⁰⁷ It was not until 1987 that the Theatre Museum opened in London’s Covent Garden.⁵⁰⁸ In a speech delivered in 1968 by the Viscount Norwich, chairman of the BTMA, Norwich demonstrates his chagrin at the absence of an established theatre museum in Britain, particularly when theatre museums existed in ‘other countries, whose contributions to drama have been less refulgent.’⁵⁰⁹ These countries, such as France, Germany, Russia, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Denmark, have, he continues, ‘shown themselves far more enlightened’⁵¹⁰ than Britain. Unlike many other European countries and American institutions, Britain had given no dedicated space to the display or preservation of the nation’s theatre collections: they remained in the hands

⁵⁰⁵ Bush-Bailey. Message to the author. 20 December 2015. Email.

⁵⁰⁶ Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁰⁷ Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁰⁸ For a full account of the history and making of The Theatre Museum see Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*.

⁵⁰⁹ The Viscount Norwich. ‘The British Theatre Museum’ in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 116, No. 5144 (July 1968), pp. 637-652, p. 639.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

of private collectors or in subsidiary departments of larger museums. Furthermore, Norwich also comments on the acquisition of the Edward Gordon Craig archive by the Rondel Collection in France, this country ‘having apparently decided that it wasn’t worth buying.’⁵¹¹ He points out that the British government cannot find the funds to purchase theatrical archives such as Gordon Craig’s to aid in the formation of a great theatre museum, but they are quick to find funds to support institutions such as the Imperial War Museum; the arena of imperial war being of greater cultural capital and significance than the nation’s rich theatrical history. ‘If the Government is prepared to spend quite such astronomical sums annually on museums of war’, Norwich remarks, ‘I’m blowed if I can see why they shouldn’t be able to find one half of one per cent of those sums for a museum of peace.’⁵¹² The arts are overlooked in favour of apparently more urgent subjects, such as the nation’s military history.

Enthoven recognised the cultural value in theatrical ephemera and her own collection though others were harder to convince. In 1971, twenty years after Enthoven’s death, *The Evening Standard* ran a campaign to rid Somerset House of the two thousand civil servants that occupied it and turn it into a space for ‘worthier tenants’: a national museum of theatre was touted as being that worthy cause.⁵¹³ The campaign gained momentum and in 1975 the Government confirmed that space and funding would be given to a national Theatre Museum, and the Flower Market building in Covent Garden was considered the most suitable space in which to install it. In 1982, however, the Government announced that the Theatre Museum would be abandoned as part of drastic cuts in Government expenditure: a national museum of theatre was not a priority and money was to be better

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Ibid. p. 647.

⁵¹³ Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*, p. 21. This chapter is not intended to provide a thorough history of the making of the Theatre Museum but to consider key factors such as public and Government responses to the making of the Museum and the complex and convoluted process by which it finally came to be in 1987.

spent elsewhere. Alexander Schouvaloff, Curator of the Theatre Museum declared that: ‘the fight was on. The Museum had to be saved.’⁵¹⁴ The announcement that plans for a national theatre museum were to be abandoned made the front pages of the national news, indicating the extent of public interest in the scheme. That the nation’s collective theatrical heritage was to remain both homeless and unsupported by the Minister for the Arts was deemed to be of paramount public interest, worthy of front page news. *The Evening Standard*, a long-time supporter of the museum, reacted with loud criticism of the decision. In an article published on 11 July 1982, the newspaper declared: ‘How mean! The Theatre Museum is not a toy that this Government can set up and destroy at will like a child in a nursery! As last year’s Standard campaign made plain, it is an important showcase of a vital part of British culture and one which is long overdue’.⁵¹⁵ Like Enthoven over half a century before, the newspaper recognised the cultural capital of the theatrical material both collected and donated to the museum by the British public. Letters in support of the museum poured in from members of the public, members of the theatrical professions, and members of university drama departments. In an open letter to *The Times*, a number of celebrated members of the theatrical community urged the public and the Government to recognise the cultural value of the theatre collection and archive. Harold Pinter, John Gielgud and others argued that: ‘the theatre is one of the few arts in which this country can claim an almost unchallenged supremacy. There are over 400 theatre museums and archives in existence and yet our Theatre Museum, which has one of the greatest collections in the world, is still without a home’.⁵¹⁶ Members of the public were galvanised. As Schouvaloff notes: ‘the intensity and vigour of the response to our appeal for help was so overwhelming and gratifying that on 11 August the Minister for

⁵¹⁴ Alexander Schouvaloff, ‘Preface’ in James Fowler (ed.), *Images of Show Business: from the Theatre Museum*, V&A (London: Methuen, 1982).

⁵¹⁵ Quoted in Scott Rogers, *Stage by Stage*, p. 35.

⁵¹⁶ ‘Final Curtain for Theatre Museum?’ in *The Times* (Wednesday 7 July 1982).

the Arts announced that the Museum would go ahead as planned.⁵¹⁷ The Theatre Museum, the first permanent tribute to Britain's theatrical heritage, opened on 23 April 1987, Shakespeare's 423rd birthday, and 76 years after Enthoven wrote her first letter to the British press campaigning for a section in a British museum to be devoted to the performing arts. Britain now had an institution in the heart of London's West-End that celebrated, displayed, and, most importantly, legitimised the materials produced by the theatrical event. Enthoven was a woman who was ahead of her time.

American archives

When Enthoven gave her playbills to the nation in 1924, the only other theatrical collection in the world of equal importance was the collection in the Harvard College Library; a collection that consisted of theatre bills from all nations which were constantly being added to, catalogued and lavishly displayed.⁵¹⁸ In 1927, an article in *The Scotsman* reported that: 'in the libraries of the American Universities, great attention is devoted to the theatre. Undergraduates find ready to hand a mass of information that would require several years to trace in our libraries.'⁵¹⁹ The lack of regard or cultural status conferred upon Britain's theatre collections and heritage was regularly and unfavourably compared to the attitudes of American institutions. American institutions had great financial resources with which to purchase and conserve not only their own theatrical materials, but materials from Britain and around the world. The speed at which Britain moved to

⁵¹⁷ Schouvaloff, *Preface*.

⁵¹⁸ Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. In 1924 Martin Hardie reports: 'at Harvard a whole wing (3 storeys high) has been devoted to a theatrical section and the original donor of the building constantly works on this collection with four Assistants.'

⁵¹⁹ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

create the cultural capital of the nation's theatrical ephemera was lamentably, and in some minds, inexcusably, slow in comparison to other nations, and to the USA in particular.⁵²⁰

Enthoven's personal papers reveal that American institutions and collectors offered to purchase her collection before it was accepted by the V&A. In the year that the Museum finally accepted Enthoven's playbills, Hardie warned: 'if we do not accept, the collection will be sold in America'.⁵²¹ In 1927 Enthoven claimed that one American collector had once offered her the considerable sum of £9,000 for her collection, equivalent to approximately £510,000 today,⁵²² whilst Walter Payne, then President of the Society of West-End Theatre Managers, confirmed that: 'notwithstanding many and tempting offers from abroad to dispose of the collection for very substantial sums, it is happily to remain in England, where its acceptance by the Museum is evidence of its national value and importance.'⁵²³ The Museum's acceptance of the collection marks a significant shift in attitudes regarding the legitimacy and value of British private theatre collections and the role of such collections in representing a shared theatrical heritage.

Belk articulates the power of the collection, theatrical or otherwise, to contribute to the cultural capital of a society, and the implications to a nation's sense of self if these collections are lost, removed, or sold. He writes:

instead of the individual or family level of self, it may be the community, regional, or national level of self that is extended by an institutional collection. Thus, for example, a loss to the Smithsonian collections would be a loss to the American

⁵²⁰ Scott Rogers, on the display of England's theatrical heritage in Leighton House in 1963, writes: 'overseas visitors, particularly Americans, were astonished to find that England, the country of Shakespeare and possessing the finest theatrical tradition in the civilized world, had only one room for the display of its treasures.' Scott Rogers, *Stage By Stage*, p. 12.

⁵²¹ Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵²² Bank of England inflation calculator - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/flash/default.aspx> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁵²³ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

sense of self, just as a loss to the Louvre collections would be a loss to the French sense of self.⁵²⁴

The threat of an American institution purchasing Enthoven's collection contributed to the V&A's decision to house and preserve her theatrical materials.⁵²⁵ Similarly, in a letter addressed to Mander and Mitchenson in 1972, when the future of their home and collection was uncertain due to the threat of demolition from Lewisham council, Ros McCoola, Principal Lecturer in Drama at the City of Portsmouth College of Education, writes: 'I would be most grateful to hear from you exactly what is happening, and where, ultimately, your valuable material will be housed. Please do NOT, I implore you, allow it to go to America.'⁵²⁶ There appears to be a specific resistance to American libraries acquiring British materials. The driving force that propels British institutions and individuals to send their archives and collections to the USA is a financial one. Arnold Wesker, for example, discusses his reasons for selling his personal archive to the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin in 2000: '[y]ou sell archives when you need money [...] What is unarguable, however, is the honour bestowed when purchased by a prestigious university. Honour doesn't plug up a leaking roof, and we all would prefer to be honoured in our own country, but honour is honour'.⁵²⁷ And money is money. The private theatre collections and archives that comprise the public archive are representative of the nation's theatrical heritage; they are a key component of the narrative that helps to construct and maintain a nation's identity and sense of self. When this heritage and sense of national selfhood is lost or abandoned because other nations,

⁵²⁴ Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, p. 102.

⁵²⁵ A great number of British theatre collections are housed in American institutions. These include a significant collection of plays submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's Office between 1737 and 1824 which are now housed at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁵²⁶ Raymond and Joe, *Photos and Correspondence*, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre.

⁵²⁷ Megan Barnard, 'Part 4: The Expanding Mission: The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, 1988-Present' in Megan Barnard (ed.), *Collecting the Imagination: The First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), pp. 83-113, p. 90.

particularly America, can better afford to keep them, there is, naturally, a resistance: a resistance marked by envy, frustration, and bitter resignation that money is one of the key components in maintaining, and keeping hold of, the nation's material heritage.

Defining value and taste

In 2015, the V&A hosted an exhibition entitled 'What is Luxury?'⁵²⁸ The exhibition interrogated how luxury is made and understood; how the concept of luxury alters and evolves depending on who engages with it, and it sought to challenge preconceived notions of what value is. The online content that complemented the exhibition features an interactive game that can be played by visitors to the Museum's website. The game is called 'What is Luxury? The Definery' and asks the player a series of questions to determine whether an object possessed by the player is luxury or vulgar: '[o]wning objects can be so confusing. You might like something but what do others think of it... Is your object luxury or vulgar? Will you be teased or envied behind your back? Sniggered at or sucked up to? Is it class or crass? Certainty is such a luxury.'⁵²⁹ The player can define the value of any object they own - toothbrush, necklace, playbill - and answer a number of questions to determine whether the object is a luxury or a vulgar item; though as the game suggests, a certain or definitive answer to this question is a luxury in itself. The very presence of such an exhibition confirms that institutions are still grappling with questions as to what is valued and why. Questions such as 'how much does it cost?', 'is it handmade or mass produced?', and 'how much do you love this object?' are posed in order to ascertain the status or value of the player's object. The game suggests that luxury is marked by the extraordinary, the exclusive, and the non-essential; it represents an

⁵²⁸ The exhibition ran from 24 April-27 September 2015.

⁵²⁹ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/exhibitions/what-is-luxury/the-definery/> - accessed 21 October 2015.

investment of time and remarkable skill; it exists beyond the mass-produced and the demands of the market, and it is also highly personal and subjective. The personal and the subjective aspect of value and worth is of particular interest when considering collectors and their collections, and the institutions that choose to acquire them. Inextricably connected with these concepts is the concept of taste: of good or bad taste. How tasteful is the theatre collection? Who is measuring or classifying this taste?

I want to provide an example of how concepts of taste have long been associated with and debated within the public exhibition and museum. As far back as 1857, in a final report analysing the impact of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of the same year, the exhibition's executive committee note: 'to give an educational direction to its enjoyments was one great aim of the Exhibition; to promote the education not of the understanding only, but of the taste, the invention, the fancy [...] of the people by the force of example.'⁵³⁰ The executive committee believed in the power of the exhibition as a means through which the taste of the people could be refined. By showcasing the most tasteful and beautiful art treasures by both ancient and modern masters, the exhibition could forcefully educate the public in matters of taste, and direct them in their consumption of objects that represented the 'correct' or the most legitimate taste. As demonstrated, however, many objects that reside in legitimate institutions such as museums, libraries and universities have come from the private collections of individuals. In 1854 art historian and author Lady Eastlake insisted that: 'the taste of the country has had its roots in private impulses.'⁵³¹ She recognised the role of the collector as an arbiter and creator of taste. Bourdieu asserts that: 'tastes (i.e. manifested preferences) are the

⁵³⁰ In Susan Pearce, Alexandra Bounia and Paul Martin (eds.), *The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting. Volume 3. Imperial Voices* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2002), p. 8.

⁵³¹ Quoted in Burton, *Vision and Accident*, p. 11.

practical affirmation of an inevitable difference.⁵³² He continues: ‘objectively and subjectively aesthetic stances adopted in matters like cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to assert one’s position in social space, as a rank to be upheld or a distance to be kept.’⁵³³ In 1931 Enthoven gave her opinion on the clothing that should be worn during trips to the theatre:

people should always dress for first nights. The theatre looks so nice when they do [...] I think all of those who can should dress regularly - for the stalls, at least. I believe that if we gave up dressing, our theatres in London, which are the cleanest in the world, would be allowed to get dirty. As it is, they are kept specially clean for the sake of those who come in beautiful clothes.⁵³⁴

For Enthoven, dressing tastefully for the theatre asserted the taste inherent in the art of theatre: dressing shabbily or informally would encourage the respect and high ranking of the theatrical event to diminish. If clothing is representative of taste, the theatre audience, if dressed tastefully, mark themselves to be an audience with cultural aspirations and the ability to discern between good and bad taste. The cultural capital possessed by the theatre audience inevitably reflects upon the cultural capital of the theatre. Indeed, the theatre, like the museum, has frequently been a part of the discourse of culture’s civilising powers: in the late 1800s theatres introduced such practices as advanced ticket booking and dress codes that sought to bring in a wealthier, more educated audience.⁵³⁵ Tastefully dressed audiences thus began to fill the theatres of the West End. Taste, or the demonstration of taste, is a powerful social marker and a distinct indicator of the status and position of an

⁵³² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, pp. 49-50.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵³⁵ Hye-Kyung Lee, ‘Uses of civilising claims: Three moments in British Theatre History’ in *Poetics*, Vol. 36 (2008), pp. 287-300, p. 291. John Pick offers an alternative reading of the eventual appropriation of the theatre by the middle classes as deeply problematic. According to Pick, the turn to the theatre as educative and morally improving can be understood as a particularly oppressive act of middle-class hegemony. See John Pick, *The West End: Mismanagement and Snobbery* (Eastbourne: John Offord, 1983).

individual or an institution.⁵³⁶ Taste is as much marked by what one appreciates and enjoys as by what one dismisses or discredits. The ability to apprehend and enjoy the beautiful and the aesthetically outstanding, and the ability to discern what is of good quality or artistic excellence is therefore an integral component of cultural capital. For Bourdieu, middle class wealth and stability (which was enjoyed by Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters) is synonymous with good taste: the two reinforce each other and create cultural capital. Certain objects denote taste and the possession of cultural capital, and by extension, so do certain collections. Bennett describes how, from a Bourdieusian standpoint, legitimate institutions and the collections they display mark, produce and organise a distinction between those whose tastes are regarded as excellent because they have been organised and legitimated and those tastes which, lacking such markers of the legitimate, are accorded a more lowly status.⁵³⁷ Bourdieu confirms: ‘taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classification, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar.’⁵³⁸ To return momentarily to The People’s Show exhibitions, the juxtaposition of legitimate institutions with objects of lowly status and questionable taste, determined the precariousness that defined responses to the shows. Where can the theatre collection be situated within hierarchies of good or bad taste, or within the separate spheres of ‘high’, legitimate culture and ‘low’, undistinguished culture?

⁵³⁶ In the context of the collection the concept of taste can also have a moral component. For example, in 1972 Henry Hurford Janes, friend and collector of Edith Evans, wrote to a literary agent concerning the publication of Evans’s literary remains.: ‘She has kept everything from the very beginning - added to these handwritten and printed archives are extensive notes made by myself or my wife on her very personal life as she has revealed it during these past few months. Obviously for matters of taste some of these cannot be published.’ In Material relating to Evans, materials relating to legal battle over Evans’s papers, Misc. Janes material, Henry Hurford Janes Collection of Edith Evans, Box 6 of 7, Performing Arts Collections, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

⁵³⁷ Bennett, *Introduction*, pp. xix-xx.

⁵³⁸ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. xxix.

The value of theatrical materials

George Speaight, in *Collecting Theatrical Memorabilia*, exclaims: ‘what a rich field the theatre provides for the collector! The beauty of some of the objects is outstanding - scene and costume designs, fine engravings, splendidly printed books.’⁵³⁹ Speaight’s guide to collecting theatre material ‘is not written for investors. It is written for people who love old and beautiful things associated with the exciting art of the theatre.’⁵⁴⁰ If, as Keene asserts, one of the primary motivations to collect lies in an object’s aesthetic appeal, then theatrical materials provide rich pickings for the collector.⁵⁴¹ One of the remarkable features of the theatre collection that differentiates it from other collections is the sheer range and variety of materials that go towards creating it. Unlike a collection of stamps, or first-edition books, a theatre collection can contain all manner of objects. In 1922 the V&A mounted the ‘International Theatre Exhibition: designs and models for the modern stage’. In the foreword to the accompanying exhibition catalogue, Cecil Harcourt-Smith, Director of the Museum, writes: ‘The Museum is the officially constituted centre and home for all branches of Industrial Art and Design, and there is, obviously, no branch of Art covering quite so wide a field as the Theatre, which touches Architecture, Painting, Design, and Decoration in many forms.’⁵⁴² Norwich echoes Harcourt-Smith asserting: ‘theatre museums are particularly fascinating because they have a scope much broader than almost any other kind of museum devoted to a single specialized subject. The theatre itself covers such an immense range - literature, art, design, costume, machinery and engineering, interior decoration, folk-lore, sociology, even economics.’⁵⁴³ So what

⁵³⁹ Speaight, *Collecting Theatrical Memorabilia*, p. 9.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 143.

⁵⁴¹ Keene, *Fragments of the World*, p. 26.

⁵⁴² Victoria and Albert Museum, *International Theatre Exhibition: designs and models for the modern stage, Victoria and Albert Museum, June 3-July 16, 1922* (London: S. Phillips, 1922).

⁵⁴³ Norwich, *The British Theatre Museum*, p. 639.

objects are theatre collectors collecting: how unique, rare, or limited are the objects? Are they mass-produced, easily obtainable, or of questionable taste? Does the possession of the objects lend the collector cultural capital, prestige, or status?

As I note earlier in the chapter, a large number of studies in collecting focus on works of art, revered national collections, or the powerful men and women who assembled them. Private theatre collections are seldom associated with works of fine art or with luxury materials. In the case of the three collectors upon whom this thesis concentrates, the plethora of material collected is diverse. Mander and Mitchenson confirm that their recreations include ‘collecting anything and everything theatrical [and] sunbathing.’⁵⁴⁴ Though Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters did collect within particular thematic boundaries, their private collections include playbills, books, tea-towels, autograph letters, posters, correspondence, costumes and other items of clothing, porcelain figures, glassware, newspapers, tinsel portraits, sound recordings, photographs, postcards, models, and sheet music to name but a few. The objects are made from a variety of materials: enamel, fabric, wax, glass, but the majority of the items in their collections are made from paper.

The different values of Enthoven’s playbills

Pearce details how an object’s value can be determined by evaluating it against a number of criteria including: the aesthetic quality, the knowledge quality, the authenticity, and the uniqueness of the object.⁵⁴⁵ For example, the value of an object may be evaluated depending on the material it is made from. According to an illustration provided by Pearce, an object can be placed upon a scale to determine its value from high value to low

⁵⁴⁴ Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Biographical Information 1.1, Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁵⁴⁵ Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, p. 38.

value: it may appear at the top of the scale in which high quality materials such as marble and precious metals are used; it may appear in the middle of the scale if it is constructed from materials such as leather or wood, and it will appear at the lower end of the scale if constructed from low grade materials such as cheap alloys or plastic. Scales of value are presented for other classifications: knowledge quality (ranging from embodying concepts that support modernist intellectual frames, to lacking any intellectual content); aesthetic quality (from being recognised as excellent in its content, skill and expression, to being perceived as poor, shoddy or dowdy); historical association (links with historical cultural heroes and culturally recognised events, to having no culturally recognised links or historical association); uniqueness (from being rare or one of a very limited production, to being common and mass-produced), and authenticity (recognised as genuine, to being a commercial reproduction or copy).⁵⁴⁶ Where is Enthoven's collection of playbills positioned within these paradigms of value? Speaking of her anxiety about the future of her collection, Enthoven admits: 'if this collection is not catalogued and looked after, the greater part of it will disintegrate, as a very large number of playbills were printed with such bad ink, on such poor paper, that they will crumble away, which would be a great disaster as they are the only historic dramatic records in this country.'⁵⁴⁷ There are a number of conflicting facets at play here. Firstly, the playbills, as Enthoven herself concedes, are made from poor quality materials: bad ink and low-grade, cheap paper: they were not made to last. Playbills were ephemeral materials that became redundant once their primary purpose was complete, once the show had ended. It is this very ephemerality though that marks Enthoven's playbills as embodying different kinds of value. Secondly, Enthoven acknowledges the disaster that would occur were her playbills to disintegrate.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

For these playbills, though not measuring highly on Pearce's scale as to the quality of material used, measure very highly on scales of knowledge quality and historical association. The playbills have strong links to historical cultural events and recognised people. Almost as important are the names they contain of the performers who are unrecognised or absent from the historical record, as I explore in Chapter Three. The information contained by the playbills registers highly on the scale of knowledge quality: they are artefacts that can reveal the facts of the theatrical past and aid in the construction of new, or neglected, narratives. The rarity value of the playbill is transformed as the years pass. As the playbill is damaged or disintegrates, the ones that survive become rarer and more valuable. As Douglas and Elizabeth Rigby assert, rarity is often 'produced by the passage of time, but if to age one adds the ingredient of fragility, rarity is almost certain to result.'⁵⁴⁸ For all of Enthoven's faith in the intrinsic value of the history and knowledge embodied by the playbill, she was not enthusiastic about its aesthetic value, or indeed, its lack of aesthetic value. She says: 'one thing I think may be seen from a glance at my collection and that is that the modern programme is much handier and prettier than the long narrow bill of the eighteenth century, which was a hideously ugly thing.'⁵⁴⁹

Aesthetic value of the theatre collection

Waters's collection consists of theatrical objects ranging from tins of theatrical make-up, a plastic and rolled cardboard cigarette holder used by Gloria Swanson in 1950, and souvenir towels, to autograph letters from Oscar Wilde, an original oil painting by Samuel de Wilde, and an engraved metal goblet from 1872. Many items in Waters's collection

⁵⁴⁸Rigby and Rigby, *Lock, Stock and Barrel*, p. 384.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

are also mass-produced. *Vanity Fair* caricature prints were pulled from the magazine to be framed and hung on the walls of his sitting room whilst neatly framed posters advertising Noël Coward plays hung on the walls of his office. Pearce confirms that: ‘mass produced commodities are given a spurious character in terms of social values through the process of collecting; that is, they are treated as if they had a cultural value, although society traditionally denies this value to them.’⁵⁵⁰ Mass-produced items that can be torn from magazines or purchased from theatre box-offices become a part of the collection, and this component, according to the paradigms of value set out by Pearce, is categorised as non-authentic, common, and collected for the sake of collecting rather than adding anything of value or quality to the collection. Waters also regularly scanned *The Times* for theatrical obituaries, cutting them out and saving them: ‘probably the least expensive sub-section of my collection [...] which now occupy several thick folders.’⁵⁵¹ Waters certainly treated these mass-produced newspaper and magazine cuttings as though they had cultural value; and, for him, they did, and for the researchers in the public archive, they do. They embodied potential knowledge value and would one day embody valuable historical associations. Waters recognised the lack of aesthetic excellence that characterised much of the material in his collection, though his eyes were regularly caught by the turquoise scintillation of two of his tinselled portraits of Mr Riggs.⁵⁵² Indeed, one of the most expensive items in his collection was a Garrick letter: ‘I paid £300 for that scrap of paper’,⁵⁵³ which was added to his assortment of autograph letters, some consisting merely of pages torn directly from autograph albums. Though just a scrap of paper (low grade material, little aesthetic quality), the rare Garrick letter, like the

⁵⁵⁰ Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary practice*, p. 41.

⁵⁵¹ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives, No. 3 April 1990.

⁵⁵² Ibid. No. 8 September 1992.

⁵⁵³ Ibid. No. 4 October 1990.

Enthoven playbill, was valuable for its authenticity, its uniqueness, and its historical association.

Mander and Mitchenson's materials

‘As is appropriate for a consumer society filled with an over-abundance of objects’, argues Belk, ‘the key skill shown in a collector’s expertise is that of discrimination.’⁵⁵⁴ Mander and Mitchenson resolutely failed to demonstrate this key skill. Their house overflowed with anything and everything remotely connected to the performing arts. Over a hundred tea-towels bearing designs such as ‘Stratford-upon-Avon’ written upon them shared a space with cheap glassware and crockery sporting very tenuous links to the theatre. ‘I’m afraid every part of this house had to be occupied,’ said Mitchenson, ‘every spot is utilised, the walls, everywhere.’⁵⁵⁵ The bulk of their materials, like the majority of theatre collections, are ephemeral, consisting of tonnes of paper. Many of the objects that reside in a performing arts collection are mass-produced, made from low-quality materials, designed to be ephemeral, and to be discarded when their function has diminished; items such as posters, programmes and postcards.⁵⁵⁶ In the *Bygones* television documentary that showcased the MMTC, there was one object that the two collectors were keen to show off. Robed in their Coward dressing gowns, Mitchenson delights at showing the audience at home a Gracie Fields Crown Devon jug that, when wound up, plays the music from Fields’s signature song ‘Sally in Our Alley.’ The jug is far from being the embodiment of good taste or Bourdieusian concepts of ‘high’ culture.

⁵⁵⁴ Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, p. 88.

⁵⁵⁵ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

⁵⁵⁶ Richard Bonyngue explains that in 1897 there were more than a thousand manufacturers of illustrated cards in Germany alone and more than sixty producing postcard albums for collectors. In 1908, 860 million cards were sent through the post. Collecting theatrical postcards was incredibly popular in the early 1900s and regained popularity amongst collectors in the 1960s. Bonyngue, a collector of theatrical postcards himself, admits that he selects cards for his collection from a purely aesthetic point of view. Bonyngue, *A Collector's Guide to Theatrical Postcards* (London: Grange Books, 1993), p. 7.

Rather it is best described, as are many of the items in both Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters's collections, as being kitsch. Pearce describes how, for many people, kitsch 'has a subversive, ironic capacity which is innate in its cultural awfulness.'⁵⁵⁷ She suggests that the word kitsch derives from the German *kitschen*, meaning to collect rubbish in the street,⁵⁵⁸ and many items in the MMTC could be accused of being rubbish, non-authentic artefacts that mark much of the collection as tasteless or embodying a low status. In 1968, John Gielgud writes: 'Mander and Mitchenson are a strange, freakish pair - no taste but enormous diligence.'⁵⁵⁹ Gielgud may be cruel, but he illuminates how the couple's collection may have been perceived by other members of the theatrical profession. Gielgud is a theatrical insider: a man with a strong and illustrious theatrical lineage as well as an upper-middle class background in terms of his financial and educational upbringing and expectations. For Gielgud to class Mander and Mitchenson as having no taste suggests that he is commenting on two men he considers to be relative outsiders; a strange couple who do not share or cannot grasp a sense of Gielgud's refined and educated understanding of what constitutes taste, of what embodies cultural capital.

A magical value

There is something more complex at play within the theatre collection and the values it contains or embodies. For the theatre collection has a value that sits apart from and beyond the classification systems of high or low culture, good or bad taste, beautiful or ugly, authentic or fake, and so on. Theatre collections may contain such items as shoe buckles, a scratched mirror, or an old make-up table. To the untrained eye, this haphazard collection of objects is meaningless, worthless or of little value. As Keene asserts,

⁵⁵⁷ Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice*, p. 37.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Quoted in Mangan, *Gielgud's Letters*, p. 343.

however: ‘the cultural capital that an object represents is nearly always relative, derived from the perceptions of the viewer, which in turn depend on what is known about it.’⁵⁶⁰ The cultural capital of the shoe buckles, the mirror, and the make-up table, and thus the cultural capital of the collection, alters when the knowledgeable observer recognises that this was the make-up table of Mrs Siddons, that these were the shoe buckles belonging to David Garrick, and that the mirror came from the dressing room of Hebert Beerbohm Tree.⁵⁶¹ A handbag owned by Vivien Leigh and a pair of slippers worn by Henry Irving are housed in Mander and Mitchenson’s collection, whilst in Waters’s collection a cigarette tin marked with an ink illustration is revealed as having belonged to Edward Gordon Craig. Charles Mathews’s homestead, an ‘interesting museum of dramatic curiosities’, contained ‘Garrick medals in copper, silver, and bronze; a lock of his hair; the garter worn by him in *Richard the Third*.’⁵⁶² I argue that tarnished medals, locks of hair, old slippers - objects that struggle to assert themselves within a value system which reveres the beautiful, the luxurious, or the unique - demonstrate their value within different systems and in different ways within the space of the private theatre collection.

In 1979, Philip Larkin delivered a speech at a conference on modern literary manuscripts, a speech in which he considered the difficulties experienced by librarians in selecting and acquiring literary manuscripts and archives. Larkin argues that a literary manuscript - like any object a collector may acquire - has two values: a meaningful value and a magical value. The meaningful value is the degree to which an object, in this case a manuscript, helps to enlarge public knowledge and understanding of a person’s life or work. The meaningful value of a playbill or prompt script, for example, increases understanding and

⁵⁶⁰ Keene, *Fragments of the World*, p. 167.

⁵⁶¹ These objects were a part of the British Theatre Museum Collection in 1963 and were shown in exhibitions at Leighton House. In Norwich, *The British Theatre Museum*, p. 645.

⁵⁶² Personal papers for Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

knowledge of a theatrical event, of the behind-the-scenes machinations of a particular play at a particular time. This equates to Pearce's system of values, of knowledge value and historical association, and are values fêted by the museum that aims to educate and inspire learning and knowledge amongst its viewing public. It is the second value described by Larkin that characterises the theatre collection, with its fraying garters, old tins, and handbags: the magical value. 'The magical value', says Larkin, 'is the older and more universal: this is the paper he wrote on, these are the words as he wrote them [...]' Not every manuscript has meaningful value, whereas it is bound to have magical value, if it is worth keeping at all.⁵⁶³ The objects that comprise the theatre collection, then, perhaps more than any other value, are imbued with the magical value. This magical value is celebrated and exploited by the collector. This value ensures that the theatrical past is reanimated, retold, and re-performed by the collector in the present.

Amateur and professional collectors

Keith S. Thomson writes: 'for the serious collector there is the added attraction that the barriers between amateur and professional break down. One is admitted into the company of scholars and experts.'⁵⁶⁴ As the museum and its curators represent research and scholarly endeavour, disseminating their knowledge of the collections to the wider public, so too can the collector inhabit a space in which knowledge exists as a potent form of capital. This form of capital is arguably the most powerful capital possessed by the collector of theatrical ephemera. Through their collected materials, Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters possess a thorough, often unrivalled, knowledge of theatrical history and the facts, data and anecdotes that comprise it. Of note is the way in which

⁵⁶³ Philip Larkin, 'A Neglected Responsibility' in *Encounter*, Issue 19 (July 1979), pp. 33-41, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁶⁴ Thomson, *Treasures on Earth*, p. 3.

Enthoven, Mander, and Mitchenson are described in their obituaries. *The Times* announces Enthoven's death as the death of an 'Archivist of the Theatre',⁵⁶⁵ whilst Mander and Mitchenson are variously described as theatrical researchers, actors, historians and pioneers.⁵⁶⁶ In 1981 the Garrick Club issued an invitation to 'A Special Dinner given by B.M. Fournier Esq. to celebrate The Outstanding Achievements of Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson in their Scholarship and lives devoted to the Theatre.'⁵⁶⁷ Their status as collectors (with all of the derogatory and negative connotations that can be ascribed to it, as explored in Chapter One) takes second place to these more respected, legitimate and scholarly epithets. It is worth noting that this respected status is enjoyed by the living collector: it is not a status that is finally honoured posthumously alongside the collection's transition to the public institution. Belk suggests that the collector is a 'knowledgeable person with an expertise, no matter how narrow or esoteric [...] Moreover, successful collecting involves a connoisseurship, preservationism, scholarship.'⁵⁶⁸ Connoisseurship and scholarship are traditionally linked to the collecting of fine art and antiques, but for Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters scholarship and the demonstration of expertise was an intrinsic element of their collecting process: the objects in the collection lead to the acquisition of theatrical knowledge. The more playbills and programmes at the collector's fingertips, the more facts, figures and nuggets of information they possess. This continual acquisition of knowledge engendered by the gathering of theatrical objects leads, in turn, to the careful, educated and informed acquisition of more objects and more materials for the collection.

⁵⁶⁵ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁶⁶ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁵⁶⁷ Raymond and Joe personal, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection. It is worth noting the status of the Garrick Club, however, a private members Club situated in the heart of London's Theatre land and restricted to gentlemen members only. Enthoven, for all of her impressive theatrical scholarship would not even have been permitted to walk up the main staircase.

⁵⁶⁸ Belk, *Collecting as Luxury Consumption*, p. 487.

The collector's knowledge informs and increases the collection; the increased collection informs and increases the collector's knowledge. As William P. Barlow Jr., a collector of a vast array of different categories of ephemera, asserts: '[w]e, as collectors, by contributing our time, expertise, and possibly some connoisseurship, may well be able to spin the straw of unwanted, unappreciated, and inexpensive ephemera into the gold of a coherent, scholarly, and aesthetically valuable collection.'⁵⁶⁹

Enthoven: a theatrical expert

I have considered Enthoven's staunch belief in the playbill's embodiment of knowledge and the potential for scholarship in earlier chapters. Her own mastery of theatrical history and her own skills as a theatre archivist position Enthoven as an expert in the field of theatre and the performing arts. Marda Vanne wrote to her: 'you know more about every kind of theatrical enterprise than most actors, producers and managers, put together [...you are] the wisest woman I know.'⁵⁷⁰ Enthoven put this wisdom to use in educating the British people in the rich history of the nation's theatre. She mounted and curated a number of exhibitions at the V&A using materials from her own collection on Sir Henry Irving (1930), Sarah Siddons (1931), Covent Garden Theatre (1932) and Victorian pantomime (1934).⁵⁷¹ The material was legitimised by the museum, worthy of exhibition to the British public, and implicit in promoting further interest and exploration of the nation's theatrical heritage. Enthoven also drew upon her collection to present a number of national radio programmes about the theatre including: 'Playbills of the Past and Present' (1926) and 'Theatre: Unconsidered Trifles, by Gabrielle Enthoven' (1938).⁵⁷² As Mander and Mitchenson point out in a letter to *The Stage* in 1957, Enthoven was also

⁵⁶⁹ Barlow Jr., *Spinning Straw into Gold*, p. 99.

⁵⁷⁰ Marda Vanne, Manuscript Letters Collection, THM/14/22, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁷¹ Burton, *Vision and Accident*, p.111.

⁵⁷² Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

the co-editor, alongside John Parker (who, as I mention earlier left his personal papers to Mander and Mitchenson), of a planned second volume of *A Dictionary of the Drama*, originally published by W. Davenport Adams in 1904.⁵⁷³ In 1934, a decade after Enthoven's collection had been given to the nation, Enthoven notes: 'my correspondence is growing embarrassingly big as the collection becomes more widely known' and she is subject to 'constant applications by letter, telegraph and telephone from numbers of people for information of all sorts in connection with the historical side of London theatres.'⁵⁷⁴ Enthoven was consulted by various film companies and the BBC who approached her with theatrical enquiries due to her unrivalled knowledge of the history of the London theatres.⁵⁷⁵ Enthoven was also recognised internationally for her cataloguing and archiving skills. In the 1930s a representative of the New York Public Library was sent to Enthoven to learn her methods for filing and cataloguing, whilst the Arts Theatre Monthly of America requested that she send them a full description of the collection and the way it was being arranged.⁵⁷⁶ Museums can increase the cultural capital that their collections represent by adding to what is known of them through research.⁵⁷⁷ As Enthoven demonstrates, the collector can also increase their own, personal cultural capital by embodying and disseminating the knowledge that their collection contains and represents.

Mander and Mitchenson: professional collectors

Of the three collections and collectors I consider, it is Mander and Mitchenson that most explicitly exploit the cultural capital and the knowledge inherent in their theatre

⁵⁷³ Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, 'Letters of the week' in *The Stage* (17 October 1954). Mander and Mitchenson confirm that this volume was eventually abandoned.

⁵⁷⁴ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁷⁷ Keene, *Fragments of the Earth*, p.161.

collection. The two men advised writers, researchers and members of the theatrical profession; they supplied materials and illustrations for thousands of books, articles and theatre programmes, and they produced several scholarly theatre books that remain definitive in their field.⁵⁷⁸ The information and illustrations in their books were taken directly from the materials in their collection and include *The Wagner Companion* (1977) and *British Music Hall* (1974). Walter Benjamin writes: ‘of all the ways of acquiring books, writing them oneself is regarded as the most praiseworthy method’.⁵⁷⁹ Mander and Mitchenson countered their dissatisfaction with the existing publications on the theatre by writing and illustrating theatre histories using materials from their own collection. The books then entered their collections: they collected themselves, just as Arthur Gilbert and Sir Henry Wellcome did, and they became something for other theatre collectors to collect. They wrote books because they failed to find such books already in existence and they made enormous contributions to theatrical scholarship. Their collection was the means by which they achieved this. American collector Albert Davis’s theatre collection was used to similar effect: ‘writers of articles and books on the stage, the screen, the circus [...] have almost literally beaten a path to his modest Flatbush home. His programs and pictures, many of which are the only copies in existence, have been reproduced in more than a score of such books.’⁵⁸⁰ Mander and Mitchenson were also archivists to Sadler’s Wells Theatre and the Old Vic Theatre Company; they wrote and presented a series of radio programmes on the theatre during the Second World War, and they also identified an important source for a distinct group of seven Staffordshire figures.⁵⁸¹ Coward, who was the subject of a book written by the pair, said: ‘[t]he best compliment I can pay them

⁵⁷⁸ Davis and Nield, *The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, p. 197.

⁵⁷⁹ Benjamin, *Unpacking my Library*, p. 61.

⁵⁸⁰ Albert Davis, Theater Biography Collection, Box 736, Performing Arts Collections, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

⁵⁸¹ Speaight, *Collecting Theatre Memorabilia*, p. 123.

is that we all turn to them and their famous collection when in trouble. And they never fail us.’⁵⁸² For the theatrical profession, for theatre scholars and students, and for general hobbyists, the knowledge amassed by Mander and Mitchenson was invaluable. Like Enthoven, and unlike the majority of amateur collectors that showcased their objects at The People’s Shows, they were professional collectors and they were the source to which the public turned for answers to their theatrical queries.

Waters’s status as a collector

Unlike Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, Waters’s obituary in *The Guardian* makes only a fleeting reference to his collection.⁵⁸³ Instead it focuses upon his esteemed career in education. It was his position as a teacher and inspector that awarded Waters cultural gravitas, rather than his role as a collector or scholar of the theatre. Indeed, in 2003 Waters himself admits: ‘[i]f I could remember all that I had read about Oscar Wilde I should be the world’s leading expert. In fact I recall only disconnected scraps and that inaccurately.’⁵⁸⁴ Waters’s collection was not used primarily as an archive from which scholarly theatrical works were produced, or from which rigorous research was performed. Though he read and re-read, and evidently enjoyed his collection of books on Wilde and other theatrical subjects, he was not assiduous or obsessive in retaining the knowledge or in recounting the facts; indeed, he would often forget before the chance to share such knowledge presented itself. Like Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson however, Waters was keen on writing to newspapers to correct misleading articles on the

⁵⁸² Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

⁵⁸³ Rod Usher, ‘Roy Waters obituary’ in *The Guardian* (Tuesday 13 July 2010). <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/jul/13/roy-waters-obituary> - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁵⁸⁴ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

theatre or to offer further information.⁵⁸⁵ Waters did partake in a spattering of scholarly pursuits in which he employed his collection to good use. Unlike Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, many of these pursuits were aided by digital technologies. In 2003 he tells a friend that he is in the process of emailing photos of Eleanora Duse from his collection to a professor at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia,⁵⁸⁶ and he was occasionally involved in contributing research on Aubrey Beardsley for Dr Linda Zatlin, an American scholar and friend. A lecturer in local history also asks Waters to write an article for him on the history of music hall in and around Lambeth.⁵⁸⁷ Waters was involved in a number of online groups dedicated to Wilde, his great collecting interest. He subscribed to an internet site named ‘Oscholars’, a group of journals and webpages devoted to the literature and arts of the fin-de-siècle; he was a member of a Wilde group on the Yahoo! website, and he attended occasional conferences and colloquia on Wilde. Waters did, from time to time, write articles on Wilde using materials from his collection. In 2002 he was asked to contribute to a monthly internet journal on Wilde. Waters reports:

I had acquired a rare 1929 illustrated sale catalogue of a massive collection of Wilde manuscripts, letters and first editions, and this was to be the subject of my essay. I spent 2 evenings copying and commenting on items in the catalogue, and another 2 evenings emailing friends for additional information, and then 2 more evenings squabbling with the editor about additions and amendments.⁵⁸⁸

The acquisition of a rare piece prompts Waters to mine it for its historical associations and the knowledge it contains, and to share that knowledge with others interested in Wilde. Waters also proposes a piece for the Oscholars website, though he admits: ‘my

⁵⁸⁵ For example, *The Times* published a letter from Waters in 1988 in which he points out the great number of inaccuracies in a report on theatre in education written by barrister and dramatist John Mortimer. Waters received a number of letters from readers and friends congratulating him for exposing such mistakes. In Published letters and articles by Roy Waters, RWTC, RW/1/4/1, RHUL Archives.

⁵⁸⁶ Correspondence with Hazel Hardy, RWTC, RW/1/5/20, RHUL Archives.

⁵⁸⁷ Roy Waters newsletters, RWTC, RW/1/2/3, RHUL Archives. No. 9 February 1993.

⁵⁸⁸ Correspondence with Ben and Chris [Gilbert], RWTC, RW/1/5/13, RHUL Archives.

proposed piece based on the Wilde reviews would be far from scholarly.⁵⁸⁹ Rather than published monographs or academic articles, Waters's work was published online on websites most likely to be visited by enthusiasts, hobbyists or armchair intellectuals. I discuss in greater detail how the internet and other online technologies can impact the ways in which collectors interact with their materials in the following chapter. Unlike Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, Waters did not utilise his collection as an enterprise from which meticulously written scholarly works would spring, or from which national exhibitions could be mounted. Though the fundamental purpose of Waters's collection during his lifetime was not to facilitate theatrical research, its transition to the archives of a university institution has ensured it is now used for this purpose.

The financial capital of the collection

Bennett acknowledges that within a Bourdieusian framework: 'there are mechanisms for converting cultural capital into economic capital, and back again.'⁵⁹⁰ Collectors of theatrical ephemera have cultural capital, and the collection itself represents cultural capital. Speaight asserts: 'as a strictly financial investment, the theatrical object or collection is not worth looking at.'⁵⁹¹ the collection is to be admired for what Larkin terms the 'magical value', as I define earlier in the chapter, and its scholarly credentials, but not for its ability to generate wealth or income for the collector. There are no indications that Waters ever made any money from his collection, though Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson did. The collection thus comes to represent another form of capital: financial capital: the collection as a private asset that generates money.

⁵⁸⁹ Correspondence with Brien Chitty, Secretary of the Irving Society, RWTC, RW/1/5/6, RHUL Archives.

⁵⁹⁰ Bennett, *Introduction*, p. xviii.

⁵⁹¹ Speaight, *Collecting Theatrical Memorabilia*, p. 142.

Enthoven sold a great number of duplicate playbills to American institutions. In 1914 she sold 26,000 playbills to Harvard College Library and a further 14,000 in 1924.⁵⁹² In 1932 she writes to Martin Hardie: ‘I thought you might like to know that in August I sold about 3,000 duplicate playbills to Columbia University, New York and so was lately able to buy the following for the Enthoven Collection [...]’.⁵⁹³ Enthoven’s collection generated income. This income, however, was invested back into her collection, increasing her collection’s financial, and cultural, capital. As I detail in Chapter Two, Enthoven bequeathed her personal fortune to the Ministry of Education for the establishment of a theatre collection bequest fund. Similarly, Waters left money to RHUL to ensure the cataloguing and preservation of his collection when it was passed to the university. Both collectors thus utilised financial capital to ensure the continued, if not increased, cultural capital of their collections.

The MMTC was a financial asset in that it generated a substantial income for Mander and Mitchenson, both directly and indirectly. In notable comparison to both Enthoven and Waters, the men’s private theatre collection was their livelihood: they made a living from the hiring or lending of certain items from the collection to television companies, and they published books and articles using materials from their collection for which they were financially compensated. Mitchenson describes how he and Mander would contact magazines asking whether they needed illustrations: ‘we went out and made work [...] *The Radio Times*, all these magazines we illustrated and that brought in our bread and butter.’⁵⁹⁴ Mitchenson had other ideas as to how the collection could generate more income for the pair. Before the time in which collections and archives could be displayed

⁵⁹² Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁹³ Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁵⁹⁴ Joe Mitchenson: Interviews, Transcripts, Tapes, Joe Mitchenson Personal 4, MMTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

and viewed online, researchers and theatre enthusiasts had to arrange to visit the collection in situ. Visitors to Mander and Mitchenson's home who had some need to see an object, or some desire to view the collection, would be required to pay 'an entrance fee for them to come into it, and be shown around.'⁵⁹⁵ The two collectors understood and exploited the money-making potential of their collection. A particularly good example of this occurs when Professor John Stokes phoned the collectors about a research enquiry he had. Stokes reports how Mander and Mitchenson: 'asked, first, for my credentials - easy enough since I was a registered PhD student, though they weren't much impressed - and second (much more difficult) if I had any money, because didn't I know that this was a private collection, privately funded, not a charity?'⁵⁹⁶ The cultural capital of the collection begets financial capital, which is reinvested into the collection. The reinvestment enables more choice purchases to be added to the collection, or better systems of cataloguing to take place, which in turn increases the cultural capital of the collection.

The collector as cultural capital

In 1926, the oldest American playbill in existence was discovered behind the back of an old mirror.⁵⁹⁷ To the untrained eye this piece of paper was an old scrap destined for the rubbish bin. To the expert theatre collector who possesses the knowledge, the expertise and the learning, the playbill represents significant financial capital: it could be sold for a substantial sum of money. More than this, however, the expert theatre collector recognises that this scrap of paper represents great *cultural* capital and is deserving of a place in an institution that will legitimise and celebrate the historic value of the playbill.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ John Stokes, 'Victorian Theatricalities Forum. Response: John Stokes' in *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, No. 8 (2009), pp. 1-6, p. 1. http://193.61.20.140/issue8/papers/stokes_forum.pdf - accessed 21 October 2015.

⁵⁹⁷ Personal papers for Gabrielle Enthoven, THM/114, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

The theatre collection, like the museum itself, may not fit into any single notion of good or bad taste, high or low quality, but it has, eventually, been designated a space in the museum, a space it may share with works of fine art and acknowledged masterpieces, in which cultural capital exists and in which the nation's theatrical heritage is legitimised. I argue that the collector of theatrical memorabilia is a precious commodity to a nation that celebrates and cares for its theatrical heritage. In the preface to James Fowler's *Images of Show Business: from the theatre museum, V&A*, Alexander Schouvaloff dedicates the book to the theatre collector, to 'those who have generously given their treasured collections to the Museum because without them there would have been nothing to save.'⁵⁹⁸

In 1980 the acclaimed portrait painter June Mendoza walked from her home to a four-storey house in Sydenham. Mendoza is a renowned artist who has been commissioned to paint such figures as Queen Elizabeth II and Baroness Margaret Thatcher. This time, however, Mendoza had not been commissioned to paint the portrait. She had chosen to paint the sitters herself. The sitters were Mander and Mitchenson: 'I can't remember how I first met Ray and Joe, but of course I HAD to paint them,' she writes.⁵⁹⁹ Mendoza painted the two collectors in oil. Describing the process, Mendoza writes: '[s]o how to paint them; the public or private. It had to be both. So we did the divinely cluttered theatre background as in our morning tea break, (each object of theatrical significance) [Mendoza is referring to the men's living room which is full of theatrical objects], accompanied by animal [Mander and Mitchenson's beloved pet cats], and a "proper" portrait of each in their Opening Night apparel.'⁶⁰⁰ The portrait depicts two facets of Mander and Mitchenson: one, in the background of the portrait, at home in their cardigans, surrounded

⁵⁹⁸ In Fowler, *Images of Show Business*.

⁵⁹⁹ June Mendoza. Message to the author. 10 July 2015. Email.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

by their theatrical treasures and their beloved cats; and two, in the foreground posing regally in their opening night cloaks and bow-ties, significant theatrical object in hand. The painting was displayed at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' annual exhibition, after which it became a part of the two men's theatre collection.⁶⁰¹ Again, they had collected themselves. Mander and Mitchenson had been preserved on canvas, rendered in oils, and displayed for an audience at a prestigious national event. The collectors, through their collecting activities, had become embodiments of legitimate cultural capital, immortalised in a work of fine art. The theatre collectors themselves are exhibited in the museum, becoming, alongside their collection, a part of the nation's theatrical heritage. The private theatre collector has been recognised for the crucial contribution they make to the public archive. This oil painting is now propped up against a storeroom wall in a room in Langford belonging to the University of Bristol's Theatre Collection. For those unable to see this painting in Bristol, a digital image is available online.⁶⁰² In this chapter I have argued that the nation's theatrical heritage is an integral part of the nation's social, cultural and historical identity. The theatre collector, as the figure who gathers and protects this heritage, is worthy of greater recognition and appreciation. As I move to the final chapter of this thesis it becomes necessary to consider the future of the private theatre collection and the public theatre archive, and the potential futures of the three theatre collections I focus upon in this work. Just as Mendoza's portrait of Mander and Mitchenson demonstrates, objects in the public archive are becoming increasingly digitised and this will unarguably have an impact upon the ways in which collectors

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² The portrait can be viewed online at: <http://artuk.org/discover/artworks/raymond-mander-and-joe-mitchenson-192758> - accessed 29 November 2015.

collect, the ways in which collections can be accessed, the ways in which the nation's theatrical heritage is displayed, and the spaces in which it is made to perform.

Chapter Five: Playbills and Pixels: the theatre collection and collector in the digital age

‘Reading what people have had to say about the future of knowledge in an electronic world, you sometimes have the picture of somebody holding all the books in the library by their spines and shaking them until the sentences fall loose in space.’

- Geoffrey Nunberg⁶⁰³

The archival tourist has a new destination:⁶⁰⁴ the digital archive. The Internet has provided unprecedented public access to the objects, the manuscripts and the photographs that are housed in the archives of institutions from the Bodleian Library in Oxford, whose scheme Digital.Bodleian enables online users to access the library’s collections online for the first time,⁶⁰⁵ to New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art whose online collections number 418,302 digital records.⁶⁰⁶ Medieval texts, eighteenth-century newspaper articles, and high-resolution images of artefacts can be accessed and pored over with the click of a button. Digital technologies such as the Internet, digital photography, and e-books have transformed the way in which individuals interact with and source information in the twenty-first-century. Digital innovations have redefined how archival materials can be shared, accessed and consumed, and by whom, destabilising and disturbing notions of spatial and geographical boundaries and possibilities. Geoffrey Nunberg’s analogy of the dispersion of knowledge in a digitised age evokes a potent imagining of digital space. On the one hand, this is a space in which information has been liberated from the space of the library or archive: sentences are shaken free, set loose to be discovered and interpreted

⁶⁰³ Geoffrey Nunberg on the fragmented nature of information in the digital world. Quoted in David M. Levy, *Scrolling Forward: making sense of documents in the digital age* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001), p. 114.

⁶⁰⁴ I re-employ Laura Engel’s evocative term ‘archival tourist’ here. See Engel, *The Secret Life of Archives*.

⁶⁰⁵ At the time of writing, Digital.Bodleian provides access to over 2.5 million digital images of objects from the library’s collections, with 1.5million digital images currently awaiting release. From Keynote speech by Lucie Burgess at Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities conference, Salford (12-14 October 2015). Lecture.

⁶⁰⁶ ‘The Collection Online’ can be browsed using a number of criteria including: date, artist, department, and object. <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online> - accessed 27 October 2015.

by online users around the world. Alternatively, the digital space can be read as one which involves the maltreatment and neglect of the physical object: the book is held by its spine and shaken vigorously until its sentences fall loose. The sentences disperse, no longer occupying a logical or prescribed space within the narrative of the book, but now senseless, a fragment of a missing whole, out of context and open to false interpretation.

In this chapter I consider the future of the theatre collection in the digital age. I consider what is happening, and what will happen, to the stuff that makes up the private theatre collection and, in turn, the public archive. Jacky Bratton writes: ‘playbills are the essence of theatrical antiquarianism. They are the solid, comfortable, substantive stuff of theatre history [...] The body of theatre history hangs upon these bones; its face, its gestures are familiar to us from these types and borders.’⁶⁰⁷ Bratton’s assertion is a familiar one, and one that has been employed throughout this thesis. I want to investigate what happens to understandings and interpretations of the theatrical past when the body upon which it hangs inhabits a different space: when the material becomes digitised, or indeed, when the material never materialises but is *born* digital, only ever having existed as data or code.⁶⁰⁸ What is happening when the playbill is pixelated?

I explore how the status and role of the collector of theatrical ephemera evolves or changes when the theatrical material they collect is digitised. In an age in which the material in the theatre collection is occupying an increasingly virtual space, the collector remains synonymous with the physical and the palpable: the man or woman who surrounds themselves with real, touchable things. Susan M. Pearce and Paul Martin

⁶⁰⁷ Bratton, *New Readings*, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁰⁸ Jerome de Groot defines born-digital materials as: ‘that which does not materially or physically exist in analogue form. This includes a huge range of materials: emails, online documents, electronic information, CCTV images, office suite documents, websites, audio files, blogs, databases.’ In De Groot, *Consuming history: historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 92-93.

assert: 'collecting, by its very nature, is about the accruing of portable material culture.'⁶⁰⁹

To position the collector in a virtual age, then, is to destabilise the relationship between the collector and the solid objects of their collection. Does the collector become an archaic anomaly in a society that increasingly values the virtual? Is the cluttered house of the collector undesirable as functional, minimalist interior design becomes increasingly fashionable? How are the theatre collector's collecting methods, interactions with other collectors, and relationships with the tangible material of theatre history evolving and adapting?

Narrating the digital collection

There exists a particular narrative to every collection: how that collection has been arranged, what it consists of, and how these contents are ordered. The collector narrates the collection and the collection is something more than the sum of its parts. When the collection loses its collector and moves into the public archive, the researcher begins to narrate the collection for him/herself, moving materials around and making new connections. When an item is removed from or displaced within the collection, the collection's narrative, as originally determined by the collector, is disturbed. According to Ross Parry, the digital space is a 'de-centred space, with distant visitors and atomised distributed collections.'⁶¹⁰ This is useful when determining how the collection is narrated in a digital space. Online users can access digital images from public digital archives, download them and save them to their own digital spaces. They can grab images and parts of online records and catalogues and re-frame them and re-position them on other parts of the web. Websites such as Pinterest enable users to create their own, personalised

⁶⁰⁹ Pearce and Martin, *The Collector's Voice: Volume 4*, p. 81.

⁶¹⁰ Ross Parry, *Recoding the Museum: digital heritage and the technologies of change* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 101.

archives of images and information, creating brand new personal digital collections comprising of materials that have been gathered, or collected, from a number of diverse online sources.

The digital collection can be accessed and used by anyone, not just the expert curator or celebrated collector. The digitised collection is being accessed and reconfigured by a plethora of new and previously unofficial, or illegitimate, voices. By illegitimate, I mean those voices who hold no official position of employment or authoritative status within the academic or museum environment. These ‘illegitimate’ voices lack the cultural capital of those individuals who have commonly spoken for and on behalf of the archive and the theatrical object and have, importantly, been listened to. In Chapter One I explore how collectors can engender new readings in theatre history through the (re)arrangement of collected ephemera in the enclosed space of the collection. I suggest here that the online, dispersed users of the digitised collection, like the traditional collector, have the power to create and narrate new collections and give rise to new readings in theatre history through the creative and unlikely juxtapositions of digital materials.

Opposing the digital object

Nunberg’s opening statement to this chapter, and the contrasting ways in which it can be understood, demonstrate the problematic nature of the object in the digital age. The potential of the digital age in re-imagining how information is consumed, how objects are perceived, and how humans interact with the inanimate, is cast variously and consistently as both utopian and dystopian. Those that are suspect or cynical about the ongoing digitisation of books, photographs, and other objects are branded luddites, relics of the past afraid to embrace the awesome possibilities of the digital. At its most apocalyptic,

according to Andrew Green, the increasing digitisation of the material world might look like this:

libraries and archives have no future expect as museums of the written word. Future generations will get their knowledge online and directly [...] Even what libraries used to call 'special collections', historic or rare publications and unique archives, will have been electronically cloned and networked long ago by commercial organisations.⁶¹¹

Green's forecast conveys the common anxieties shared by opponents, or if not opponents then cautious observers, of the digital revolution in the context of the public library, museum or archive. Collections will be available to look at, study and peruse online, negating or obscuring the need for a physical space in which books and other objects are physically consulted.

Furthermore, as Green hints, there are financial implications in the digitisation of objects and documents. Digitisation projects cost money and the annual budgets of museums and public archives are increasingly dedicating larger portions of their income to the digitisation of their collections. It is estimated that, since the mid-1990s, £130 million has been spent on the creation of digital content in the UK.⁶¹² Digital.Bodleian, for example, has worked with Google to digitise over 400,000 books housed in the Bodleian library.⁶¹³ It is worth noting that, though Google does not charge institutions to scan their books, it can block institutions and place restrictions on their ability to provide free access to these digital records for a fixed period of time. It is important to acknowledge that many digitisation projects also exist behind paywalls: users wishing to access digital newspaper archives, such as *The Times Archive* or *The Stage Online Archive*, must subscribe, or

⁶¹¹ Andrew Green quoted in Andrew Prescott, 'The Digital Library' in Lorna M. Hughes (ed.), *Evaluating and Measuring the Value, Use and Impact of Digital Collections* (London: Facet Publishing, 2012), pp. 13-34, p. 34.

⁶¹² Ben Showers, 'A strategic approach to the understanding and evaluation of impact' in Hughes, *Evaluating and Measuring*, pp. 63-72, p. 63.

⁶¹³ Burgess, Keynote speech.

belong to an academic institution that has paid for a subscription. In the course of researching the private passions of Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters, a large number of useful materials have been made available to me through online access via my institutional affiliation with RHUL. Without this privileged access to digital archives my research would undoubtedly be impoverished as a result. In addition, commercially supported digital archives are at risk if the commercial company runs out of money, leaving the archive unsupported and unmanaged. If the theatre collector runs out of money very little can be added to the existing collection. If the digital archive runs out of funding, however, it may disappear altogether.

I argue that the digital collection and archive, then, like the physical collection and archive, is also a space in which private and public co-exist and overlap; in which spaces can be both open and closed. Nancy Duncan argues that space is ‘subject to various territorializing and deterritorializing processes whereby local control is fixed, claimed, challenged, forfeited and privatized.’⁶¹⁴ In the space of the private collection, it is the collector that determines these processes; in the space of the public archive it is the curator or archivist; in the space of the digital collection these processes are increasingly determined by commercial interests. Though there exist many scholarly spaces online, with the digital collection the challenges of physically accessing the archival space are replaced by financial challenges as digitisation becomes a commercial endeavour. According to Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan, who consider democratic access to digital Shakespeares, the online world is fuelled by a capitalist system and online ‘access is partially illusory [...] biased towards those with economic and educational advantages,

⁶¹⁴ Duncan, *Renegotiating Gender*, p. 129.

particularly where paywalls, memberships or restricted access to a computer are involved.⁶¹⁵ This suggests that the digitisation of collections or archival materials may not be as democratic, or as public, as it first appears. Nevertheless, digital technologies open up the public archive to users around the world and access is continually being redefined and reconstituted. There is a question here connected to the cultural capital available to, and accrued by, individuals who are able to access the online collection. There are evidently limitations to the online archive but digital archives such as ancestry.co.uk and the increasing digitisation of materials held in local record offices become an entry point into archives for the general public.

Museums and digitisation projects

At the time of writing, museums, galleries, libraries and public archives are systematically engaged in programs of digitisation; that is, making their holdings and collections accessible in various online formats. Such is the scale of the digitisation of institutional holdings that Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone assert that a whole generation of theatre and performance scholars exist for whom the online archives available on the Internet are their major source of research knowledge.⁶¹⁶ Rather than working with traditional boxes of paper, materials can be located, and viewed, quickly and conveniently at the touch of a button. As demand for online resources continues apace, so too are institutions working to increase representation of their collections online. Kate Dorney, on her experience as Curator of Modern and Contemporary Performance within the Theatre and Performance Department at the V&A, writes: ‘above all, everyone would

⁶¹⁵ Carson and Kirwan, ‘Conclusion: Digital dreaming’ in Carson and Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Digital World*, pp. 238-257, p. 255.

⁶¹⁶ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, pp. 17-18. Gale and Featherstone suggest that theatre and performance scholars must be able to work within and across both the digital and the traditional archive: the digital is not a replacement for the traditional and the ideologies and potential of both formats must be understood and navigated.

like us to digitize more material.’⁶¹⁷ At the time of writing in 2010, Dorney explains that within the previous two years the department has digitised more than twelve-thousand Victorian and Edwardian cartes-de-visite and cabinet photographs, around ten-thousand 18th century theatrical prints, and a large number of twentieth-century photographs. In addition to this, the department had been digitally cataloguing and imaging ten-thousand nineteenth-century playbills, programs, posters and ledgers relating to East London theatres.⁶¹⁸ More than five years have passed since the publication of Dorney’s article - a significant amount of time in relation to the speed at which digital technologies continue to evolve.

Today, digitisation of its holdings continues to remain at the forefront of the Museum’s aims and action plans. The V&A’s strategic plan of 2011-2015 demonstrates the import placed upon digitisation. One of the main objectives of the plan is: ‘[t]o provide all our visitors with the best quality experience and optimum access to our collections, both physically and digitally.’⁶¹⁹ The Museum acknowledges that its visitors access the collections both physically - in the gallery spaces, the reading rooms and so on - and virtually, on the Museum’s website and, crucially, equal importance is placed upon the two modes of access. Experiencing the V&A and its collections can be achieved in person in the Museum space or in person through the medium of a screen or monitor and both have the potential to be a good or a bad experience. Improving the collections’ online presence is a major objective in the Museum’s strategic plan. It aims to increase visits to its website by ten per cent year on year as well as increasing the number of online

⁶¹⁷ Dorney, *The Ordering of Things*, p. 25.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid. In September 2009 the V&A put its object database online allowing much greater access to its collections.

⁶¹⁹ Victoria and Albert Museum, *V&A 2014-2015 Iteration of the Strategic Plan 2011-2015* (2014). http://www.vam.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/240576/14-15-Iteration-of-the-Strategic-Plan1.pdf - accessed 1 September 2015.

catalogue records in 2014-2015 by 25,000, and the number of object images online by 78,000.⁶²⁰ The Museum is working towards the target of having 90 per cent of its collections accessible online by 2016.⁶²¹

The V&A is not alone in its decision to undertake a mammoth program of digitisation. In the USA, for example, the Smithsonian Institute, consisting of nineteen museums and a zoo, has a remit to digitize its *entire* collection.⁶²² That the collection consists of 137 million objects, 100,000 cubic feet of archival material, and 1.8 million library volumes speaks of the gargantuan challenge that such a project entails.⁶²³ Other examples of such digitisation projects include: the Electronic Ephemera Project: a two- year project between 2007-2009 that digitised and provided online access to 65,000 items from the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera including silk playbills, theatrical tickets, and ephemera related to actors, actresses and entertainers;⁶²⁴ the Digital Performance Archive led by Nottingham Trent and Salford Universities which resulted in a video and CD-ROM archive detailing the analysis of digital performance events and developments during the 1990s,⁶²⁵ and the 2003 AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection Access for Research Project which I have discussed in earlier chapters and which sought to create an online catalogue for the MMTC as well as a digital media archive of images from the collection.⁶²⁶ ‘For years’, declares former Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough, ‘the vast resources of the Smithsonian were powered by the pen; they can now

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Lorna M. Hughes, ‘Introduction: the value, use and impact of digital collections’ in Hughes, *Evaluating and Measuring*, pp. 1-10, p. 1.

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ See D. Tomkins et al., ‘The Electronic Ephemera project: digitizing the John Johnson Collection’ in *The Ephemera: Journal of the Ephemeral Society*, No.143 (Winter 2008), pp. 12-19. Access to this collection is behind a paywall and is available to UK users only if they are affiliated with a public library, school or university. Institutions outside of the UK must pay and subscribe in order to access the online materials.

⁶²⁵ See ‘Announcement: DPA - Digital Performance Archive’ in *Digital Creativity*, Vol. 10, No.3 (1999), p. 192.

⁶²⁶ See Davis and Nield, *The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, pp. 197-199.

be powered by the pixel.’⁶²⁷ This declaration demonstrates the faith placed in the superlative potential and promises of the archive and the collection made digital. It also suggests that the ways in which public archives are being managed and maintained is fundamentally changing.

Archives for the 21st century

In November 2009, the British government published *Archives for the 21st Century*, a document that detailed government policy on archives. According to government policy: ‘people have come to expect information to be accessible online, at all times, and their approach to archives is no different.’⁶²⁸ ‘Individual citizens’, it continues, ‘increasingly expect information to be accessible online as a right, not a privilege.’⁶²⁹ In 2012, The National Archives published *Archives for the 21st Century in action: refreshed 2012-2015* to build upon the original government document and to acknowledge changes and developments in archival practice. The document dictates that all archives *should* convert existing catalogues - the finding aids used by institutions to help users locate an object - into electronic form within five years.⁶³⁰ Both government policy and industry practice recognise the imperative of making archives and collections accessible online. At the time of writing, just over five per cent of The National Archives’ records have been digitised and made available online.⁶³¹ This seems like a small percentage, but considering that The National Archives hold over eleven million records, the digitisation of even five per

⁶²⁷ Quoted in Smithsonian News Release, *Volunteers Needed for Massive Smithsonian Digitization Project* (12 August 2014). <http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/volunteers-needed-massive-smithsonian-digitization-project> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶²⁸ HM Government, *Archives for the 21st Century* (UK: The Stationary Office Limited, November 2009), p. 1. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archives-for-the-21st-century.pdf> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁶³⁰ The National Archives, *Archives for the 21st Century in action: refreshed 2012-2015* (2012), p. 15. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archives21centuryrefreshed-final.pdf> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶³¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> - accessed 2 September 2015.

cent reflects a significant expenditure of the institution's time, finance, and other resources. Jerome de Groot illuminates the exponential increase in the public's interaction with online archival records over the years. In 2000, members of the public downloaded zero documents from the National Archives website; in 2008 this number grew to around 66 million downloads per year.⁶³² In January 2002, Britain's 1901 census was digitised and made publicly available online. 1.2 million users accessed the website *per hour*, and such was the extent of traffic that the website, unable to cope with such demand, was forced to come offline and remain that way for a further ten months. In 2009, the digitised version of the 1911 census was made available online and played host to 3.4 million searches by the public in its first 24 hours.⁶³³ In 2002, the Harry Ransom Center digitally scanned nearly thirteen hundred pages of its two-volume copy of the Gutenberg Bible and made it available to view online. In less than one month, the digitised Bible had attracted more than fourteen million online views.⁶³⁴ I provide these statistics to reveal the outstanding success of just a small number of digitisation projects and to demonstrate how the digitisation of archives is radically altering the archival landscape, and thus the spaces in which the private theatre collection can exist. These examples suggest that members of the public are anticipating the arrival of online archives and certain materials: they await their own collections in order to discover the online traces of their own ancestors. If users of the archive are demanding that archives be made digital, then I argue that the 'murky conceptual waters',⁶³⁵ to re-employ Gary T. Marx's phrase, of the private

⁶³² de Groot, *Consuming History*, p. 93. De Groot is providing the figures for the number of documents downloaded. There will be millions more users that will have accessed the online documents and viewed them without having downloaded them.

⁶³³ Gillian Oliver, 'The digital archive' in Hughes, *Evaluating and Measuring*, pp.49-60, p. 51.

⁶³⁴ Barnard, *Part 4: The Expanding Mission*, p. 109.

⁶³⁵ Marx, *Murky conceptual waters*.

and the public, wherein the collection and the collector is located, become further complicated by a third space: the digital space.

Providing greater public access to collections

The paramount motivation in the V&A's commitment to making its collections available online is one of access. As Dorney iterates: 'as a publicly funded organization, we put access at the top of our institutional agenda and we exist to serve the widest possible cultural project of debate, contestation, and reinterpretation.'⁶³⁶ In 2012-2013, the Museum's website had upwards of 16,260,300 unique visitors.⁶³⁷ Of course, these users may have been accessing anything from Museum opening times to the menu in the Museum's café but it demonstrates the vast user base attracted to the Museum's online presence.

Today, many museums and public institutions have more of their audience online than on-site.⁶³⁸ The British Library, for example, received more than 74 million visits to their website in 2009-2010, with just 500,000 actual visits to the site of the Library itself.⁶³⁹ The digitisation of collections has enabled them to be opened up to an unprecedented number of people that may otherwise have never had the chance, the money, or the time to access them on site. Simon Tanner describes the process of digitisation as 'bringing collections out of the dark',⁶⁴⁰ a concept supported by Claire Hudson, Head of Collections Management in the V&A's Theatre and Performance Department. For Hudson, though the digital image of an object is inferior to direct physical access to the object itself, the

⁶³⁶ Dorney, *The Ordering of Things*, p. 25.

⁶³⁷ V&A, *V&A 2014-2015 Iteration of the Strategic Plan 2011-2015*.

⁶³⁸ Burgess, Keynote speech.

⁶³⁹ Prescott, *The Digital Library*, p. 18.

⁶⁴⁰ Simon Tanner, 'The value and impact of digitized resources for learning, teaching, research and enjoyment' in Hughes, *Evaluating and Measuring*, pp.103-120, p.108.

image can be a solution in a scenario in which physical access to an object is denied completely. Objects such as large, rolled textiles, objects in remote stores, objects too delicate or fragile to handle, and other objects needing specialised storage environments such as freezers or preservation tanks can now be accessed through the medium of the digital image.⁶⁴¹ Similarly, Carson acknowledges how digital technologies can provide greater access to rare and delicate items such as theatre designs and posters, as well as bulky theatrical items such as props that can be difficult to make available to the public in archive reading rooms.⁶⁴² As I explain in Chapter Three, the MMTC is split between two University of Bristol Theatre Collection sites. Whilst the main Bristol site encompasses a reading room that is open to researchers, the other archival site is closed to the general public. I was fortunate enough, however, to be granted special access to this site by staff at the Theatre Collection. The site is comprised of rooms containing some of the largest and most fragile items in the MMTC including paintings, costumes, and busts. It is difficult to foresee how these items can obtain a more public position within the space of the archive, unless, as Hudson and Carson articulate, they are brought out of the dark, out of the less visible spaces of the supposedly public archive, and made available to view in digital form.

Digitisation as a form of preservation

According to Tanner, digitisation: ‘allows many scholars and students around the world access to what has been in the past only accessible to the very few’⁶⁴³ - if accessible at all. Fragile playbills, delicate costumes, or disintegrating manuscripts have the potential to be reborn digitally; their digital surrogate providing access to the object unable to withstand

⁶⁴¹ Claire Hudson, ‘The Digital Museum’ in Hughes, *Evaluating and Measuring*, pp. 35-48, p. 42.

⁶⁴² Christie Carson, ‘Theatre and Technology: Battling with the Box’ in *Digital Creativity*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1999), pp. 129-134, p. 131.

⁶⁴³ Tanner, *The value and impact of digitized resources*, p. 108.

bright light, fluctuating temperatures, or repeated handling by users in the reading room. Online, the image can be manipulated, zoomed-in and zoomed-out of, and closely studied without any damage to the original. There is also the possibility of digitally remembering or recovering objects that have been destroyed. For example, in the 1990s years of conflict and Taliban rule saw Afghanistan's national museum bombed and looted. It was feared that valuable artefacts had disappeared or been destroyed.⁶⁴⁴ In Chapter Three I suggest that the theatre collection can prevent a total disappearance of the collector and the theatrical past. I argue that so too can the digital record prevent a complete disappearance of the destroyed, disintegrating, or missing archival object.

The digital archive makes many promises pertaining to its ability to preserve the collection. The digital space is one which is painted as impervious to the ravages of time, a space in which the object can be fixed, stabilised and secured, unlike its material counterpart. As I articulate, the process of collecting is frequently assimilated with the need or compulsion to preserve or to save the material culture of society. The digitisation of material enables the private collector or the public institution to fix an object within a particular temporal moment, safeguarding it from future decay or damage. Cybèle Werts declares: 'data may seem ephemeral on the surface, but can and does live forever on the Internet.'⁶⁴⁵ According to Werts, then, ephemera ceases to be ephemeral once converted into a digital form and made available online. Slip catalogues and card catalogues can be converted into online catalogues: the data about materials and books in the archive, the data regarding an archive's holdings, can be preserved online, even if the object itself

⁶⁴⁴ Roland Hughes, 'Rescuing Palmyra: History's lesson in how to save artefacts', *BBC News* (21 May 2015). It was later revealed that 22,000 of the museum's most valuable items were saved and stored in a vault by the museum's director and four other men. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32824379> - accessed 27 October 2015.

⁶⁴⁵ Cybèle Werts, 'Conserving for the Future by Archiving our Past; A Story about Technology and Digitization Informed by a Vintage Paperback Book Collection' in *Education Libraries*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter 2010), pp. 47-62, p.47.

cannot. If Werts' argument is accepted, then data contained in original materials such as library catalogues can be seen as fragile and precarious, whilst migrating that data online and transforming it into digital catalogues, such as those provided on Archives Hub, appear more robust. Records on the internet do not live 'forever' as Werts asserts: data is lost or goes missing every day. Many books and records did, and do not, make the transition from the card catalogue to the digital catalogue. Librarians and archivists delete digital records or dispose of physical objects every day.

Gillian Oliver is keen to dispel this myth of digital permanence and the misconception of digitisation as a preservation strategy: 'it is important to stress that digitization must only be viewed as a preservation strategy in the sense that it provides a surrogate that can be used to facilitate access.'⁶⁴⁶ I agree with Oliver: digital files and documents do indeed go missing; they are deleted, purposefully or accidentally; they disappear; Internet URLs cease to work, and links break (a phenomenon known as 'link rot'). Ron Miller, a freelance technology journalist and blogger, the majority of whose written output appears online, describes how 'the other day I was writing an article and I wanted to link to a piece I wrote when I was at CITEworld [technology publication] in 2013 - just two years ago. I went searching for it, but soon discovered that IDG, the publication's owners had taken the site down - and all of its content with it.'⁶⁴⁷ Miller has the subsequent realisation that: 'much of my writing from this entire century is simply gone. I could have preserved each article I've written, of course, if I could keep up and remember to do it.'⁶⁴⁸ I argue that Werts's assertion that data can and does exist 'forever' online is highly problematic. Data

⁶⁴⁶ Oliver, *The digital archive*, p. 52.

⁶⁴⁷ Ron Miller, 'The Internet is Failing the Website Preservation Test' on *TechCrunch* (27 August 2015). <http://techcrunch.com/2015/08/27/the-internet-is-failing-the-website-preservation-test/> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. Jaimie Baron speaks of the great irony of the digital age's unprecedented proliferation of digital stuff and the ease with which it can disappear: 'the most-recorded era thus far may become an empty space in the historical record akin to the Dark Ages.' In Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 154.

can exist for an infinite length of time online but it needs maintaining. Technology evolves at a rapid pace: cassette tapes, video tapes, floppy discs, and slide projectors become obsolete technologies of the past. Digital media are not stable: they are constantly in a state of flux, evolution and growth. Something as mundane and simple as a broken part that can no longer be replaced can render a digital document completely inaccessible.⁶⁴⁹ The double ephemerality of the theatrical object is thus wrapped within another layer of ephemerality when it moves to an online space: the ephemerality of the digital record.

Terry Cook also disrupts the notion of the permanent value of the digital record, acknowledging that the electronic record ‘will become either unreadable or incomprehensible unless it is recopied and its structure and functionality reconfigured into new software every few years.’⁶⁵⁰ Digital collections and archives, just like the real things must be preserved and tended to. If neglected they will deteriorate and decay. Just as the archivist must work with conservation teams to preserve the paper and fabric of the material object, so too must they understand the new techniques required to preserve the integrity and safety of digital materials whose structures evolve at an ever-increasing pace.⁶⁵¹

Corroborating the notion of digital items as transient, and prone to disappearance, Alberto Manguel poetically compares the web, and the data it holds, to the unpredictable nature of the sea. He writes: ‘[i]mmaterial as water, too vast for any mortal apprehension, the

⁶⁴⁹ Avery and Holmlund, *Introduction*, pp. xii-xiii.

⁶⁵⁰ Terry Cook, ‘Archival Science and postmodernism: new formulations for old concepts’ in *Archival Science*, Vol. 1 (2001), pp. 3-24, p. 20.

⁶⁵¹ Robin Alston, in his inaugural lecture at University College London in 1993, spoke of the need for librarians of the future to develop both ancient and modern skills in regards to their guardianship of collections and archives. Robin Alston, ‘The Battle of the Books, Inaugural Lecture UCL February 9th 1993’ in *Humanist Discussion Group*, Vol. 7, No. 0176 (Friday 10 Sep 1993). <http://dhumanist.org/Archives/Virginia/v07/0175.html> - accessed 2 September 2015.

Web's outstanding qualities allow us to confuse the ungraspable with the eternal. Like the sea, the Web is volatile: 70 per cent of its communication lasts less than four months. Its virtue (its virtuality) entails a constant present.⁶⁵² The digital collection is therefore paradoxical: the stuff that comprises the theatrical past is fixed in an unstable space that must be constantly reconfigured for and in the present.

Locating digital collections and selecting objects for digitisation

Those who provide online access to collections must ensure, quite simply, that these collections and the objects therein can be *found*. There is no use in creating an online collection or archive if search engines or similar facilities fail to locate digital records or images due to insufficient or inaccurate data being attached to the record. This can result in an infinite number of digital images, or online catalogue records, floating loose in space like the sentences from Nunberg's book - difficult, if not impossible, to locate. Archivists may simply be contributing to the 'digital landfill', digitising countless archival documents but providing the public with little benefit from doing so.⁶⁵³ Indeed, such is the mounting dependence on accessing collections online, that if a record or traces of an object's existence cannot be located online then there is the danger that users will assume it does not exist *at all*. As Cheryl Avery and Mona Holmlund assert: 'there is a widespread expectation that whatever we need to find will be at our fingertips - if those fingertips are on a keyboard.'⁶⁵⁴ Julie Anne Lambert, Librarian of the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera, argues that:

Scholars tend to assume that the digital resource is complete. However many warnings you post on the Web, they will take the easy option of searching what is there and not asking questions beyond what is readily available. There is a growing and worrisome trend: now that so very much is available on the Web,

⁶⁵² Alberto Manguel, *The Library at Night* (Canada: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), p. 28.

⁶⁵³ Oliver, *The digital archive*, p. 60.

⁶⁵⁴ Avery and Holmlund, *Introduction*, p. xii.

will users assume that you have, in the space of a few years, catalogued and digitized one and a half million items?⁶⁵⁵

Just as the collector searches for and gathers objects to place within their collection, so too do archivists and curators search for and select the objects and records to be digitised and made available online. Curatorship is precisely about selection, illumination, and the decision to display certain objects over others. For this reason, some items will be prioritised for digitisation, whilst others will remain un-digitised and unable to be located or accessed online.

Cook argues that the major act of determining the historical meaning and import of an object or collection occurs not when the historian opens the archival box or folder, but when the archivist fills said box and, by implication, chooses to dispose of the unselected materials.⁶⁵⁶ Archivists and curators, by selecting and rejecting the documents and objects to be digitised, take part in a process by which new online collections and archives are formed and created. They themselves become collectors in and of the public archive.

At its most extreme, Jaimie Baron writes that objects that do not exist in digital format may cease to be part of the historical record as no one will be able to find them.⁶⁵⁷ Meanwhile, those objects and documents that do exist digitally and are easily accessible may come to dominate the historical record - a position that may be incongruous with the object's original historical significance.⁶⁵⁸ The private collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are replete with materials that have little or no online

⁶⁵⁵ Julie Anne Lambert, 'Immortalizing the Mayfly: Permanent Ephemera: An Illusion or a (Virtual) Reality?' in *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2008), pp. 142-156, p. 156. Similarly, Gale and Featherstone remind online users, in this instance, users of the V&A's 'Search the Collections' tool, that: 'as with many collections, users must be aware that the online display is the tip of the collection iceberg' in Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 28.

⁶⁵⁶ Terry Cook, 'The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the changing Archival Landscape' in *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (September 2009), pp. 497-534, pp. 511-12.

⁶⁵⁷ Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 143

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

presence. These include: a bundle of papers from the MMTC containing articles and information on fairies, some theatre clippings, and a picture of a tiger cub; a small book in Enthoven's personal papers entitled 'G.R her rubbish book 1892 August' - the R standing for Enthoven's maiden name 'Romaine' - containing handwritten poems, quotes she liked, and two of her pencil sketches, and hand-sketched diagrams of Waters's family tree dating back to 1876. It is a decision for those who work in the public archives to decide whether these eclectic materials be digitised or not, and whether there is sufficient public demand to justify their digitisation. These materials may not be the crowning treasures of the collection but, as I explore in Chapter Four, they contain different kinds of value and combine with other materials to construct the historical record and lived narrative of the collector. It is imperative that these materials, due to their lack of digitisation, do not go missing from this historical record, and, as long as there are bodies in the public archive, they will resist disappearance. These materials reveal the nature of the collector who assembled it: their personalities, their private passions, and their eccentricities. In short, they reveal the very human presence of the theatre collector in an age in which human, material interactions with the collection and the archive are being increasingly replaced by the digital.

Digitally manipulating the archive

In 2002, the V&A's Theatre and Performance Department - then The Theatre Museum - commenced work on the PeoplePlayUK project after being awarded £330,000 by the New Opportunities Fund's NOF-Digitise programme. The aim of the project was to create a website to showcase the Museum's theatre collections to an online audience. The website contained packaged content about areas such as pantomime, dance and music hall, a database of objects complete with images and object stories, and lively interpretations of

archival materials including audio and visual recordings of actors reading from archival documents.⁶⁵⁹ Fifteen-hundred of the Theatre Museum's *prime* objects were digitised and placed online.⁶⁶⁰ There is, at play here, yet another element of selection, a doubling of the selection process. For not only are the best, or the prime, objects chosen for digitisation, so too are the best digital representations of the objects selected. Digital images are rejected for being fuzzy, out-of-focus, poorly lit, or unclear. Online users will demand the highest quality image available. Werts describes how 'adjusting the brightness, contrast, color [*sic*] balance, or sharpening the picture may be necessary if the scanned version does not match the original as well as it might.'⁶⁶¹ Digital representations are thus digitally altered to better digitally present the object they are representing. Not only is the digital surrogate of the object manipulated to better look like the object, so too is the digital object manipulated to showcase the original object at its very best. Suzanne Keene describes how 'yellowing or darkening [of the object] can be removed by processing the digital image. Parts can be joined, blemishes obliterated, missing pieces restored, on the surrogate image.'⁶⁶² Furthermore, Werts advises those who are digitising a book or other object to 'always choose the very best copy of the product at hand', and explains that, for some 'there is no advantage to the reader to see remainder marks, price stickers, and frayed edges, and so they clean up the book, both physically and digitally.'⁶⁶³ The online archive and collection becomes sanitised and disinfected: coffee cup stains, rusty marks of metal paper-clips, and tears can be erased. I argue that these marks and traces of

⁶⁵⁹ See Hudson, *The Digital Museum*. PeoplePlayUK was taken offline in 2009 due to flaws that had allowed hackers to launch malicious emails purporting to be from the Museum. Some of the website's content has since been assimilated with V&A online content. This demonstrates another element of digitisation that is worthy of consideration in future research. How safe is the digital collection and archive? What are the motives of users that may want to hijack or corrupt these collections?

⁶⁶⁰ Claire Hudson, 'From Stage to Screen: The Theatre Museum's Digitization Project' in *New Review of Information Networking*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2004), pp. 265-170, p. 266.

⁶⁶¹ Werts, *Conserving for the Future*, p. 53.

⁶⁶² Suzanne Keene, *Digital Collections: Museums and the Information Age* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998), p. 25.

⁶⁶³ Werts, *Conserving for the Future*, p. 49.

environment and of the moment in which the document was created are as integral to the researcher's encounter with the document as the words or the subject matter it contains. The digital restoration of the document removes the bodily traces and the past actions of the subject from the object: the tears, the ripped stickers, or the frayed edges that occur through repeated handling are removed from the online historical record, and so too are the embodied traces of the object's creator wiped away.

The real versus the digital

Peter Walsh asserts: 'when image-altering software is cheap and easy to use, and manipulated images are commonplace, photographs no longer set the standard for visual truth.'⁶⁶⁴ As Gale and Featherstone assert, there are indeed questions of authenticity and truth raised by the digital, in particular how the quality of the real is understood to exist within the digital image. The 'intended throw-away thinness of a nineteenth-century playbill or the vivid colours of a late Victorian advertisement'⁶⁶⁵ might be lost when the material becomes digital. Parry speaks of how notions of the 'virtual' and the 'real' were interrogated as collections began to be digitised. 'On one side', he writes, 'stood *real* objects, genuine and trusted: these were the collections that gave the museum (so the argument went) its core function and role in society and culture.'⁶⁶⁶ On the other side were the 'virtual' objects: "Immaterial" in every sense, these digital representations appeared to be viewed as secondary and marginalised within the main functions of physical display.'⁶⁶⁷ Within this paradigm, the 'real' thing is material, present, solid, tangible and authentic. The 'virtual' is inauthentic, intangible, elusive, and counterfeit: a

⁶⁶⁴ Peter Walsh, 'Rise and Fall of the Post-Photographic Museum: Technology and the Transformation of Art' in Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine (eds.), *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage* (London: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 19-34, p. 31.

⁶⁶⁵ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, pp. 32-33.

⁶⁶⁶ Parry, *Recoding the Museum*, p. 61.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

second-hand imitation of the original. Due to the relatively recent introduction of the digital and the speed at which it is used in everyday activities and interactions, the vocabulary used to describe and interpret it is still in its infancy: the digital surrogate or born-digital document *is* different to the material object; but no one is sure why. Walter Benjamin famously refers to the ‘aura’ of an object in his essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ (1936). Benjamin suggests that: ‘[e]ven the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.’⁶⁶⁸ He states: ‘the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity.’⁶⁶⁹ In the context of the digital age, Benjamin’s much quoted essay denotes the digital surrogate or reproduction as inauthentic and lacking that enigmatic quality, or aura, intrinsic within the real or original item. Within a Benjaminian framework then, instead of occupying a distinct, narrated space and presence within the confines of a collection or public archive, the digital copy exists in an indistinct space in which its aura and authenticity is lost. However, it is important to take into account the multiplicity of users of online archives. Users have different needs, different expectations, and different reasons for using the archive: the aura or the authenticity of the object that arguably becomes obscured as the object goes digital may be of little, if any, consideration or necessity, to the online user.

Gale and Featherstone suggest that, instead of dismissing the digital as suspect, inauthentic, and not real, users should be open to the new possibilities it provides. They propose that: ‘some digitisation processes allow for an alteration of the original and provide us with new ways of viewing materials, new versions of the real, and this might be something we might take advantage of rather than dismiss the representation of the

⁶⁶⁸ Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, pp. 219-253, p. 222.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

object as inauthentic.’⁶⁷⁰ As I demonstrate, the digitisation of the collection and archive is an integral component of the archival landscape as it evolves and adapts to the demands of the twenty-first-century. If the possibilities and potential of the digital collection are to be fully explored then collectors, curators, archivists, and researchers must as Gale and Featherstone suggest, respond creatively to the dynamic qualities of the digital. As the collector of theatrical ephemera responds creatively to the digital, the online landscape has the potential to host a new kind of theatre collection, a collection marked by new forms of social networks, containing new forms of theatrical materials, and arranged in new ways that dismantle previous spatial limitations.

Digital museums and archives

Cook prophesises that: ‘archives themselves as institutions will gradually change from being places only for the storage of old records that researchers must visit to consult, to becoming virtual "archives without walls," existing on the Internet to facilitate access by the public to thousands of interlinked record-keeping systems.’⁶⁷¹ Indeed, the digital museum and archive already exists. The Digital Art Museum, for example, is an online site dedicated to the history and practice of digital fine art. It exhibits works of digital art in online exhibitions and exists solely in digital space: there is no material counterpart to the museum that exists in ‘real life’.⁶⁷² The Pararchive Project seeks to produce a digital resource comprised of online and digital materials that users can search through and *collect* before combining them with their own media. This will create new digital archives and collections created and born digitally by the online user.⁶⁷³ Furthermore, the AHRB-funded research project ‘Designing Shakespeare: An Audio Visual Archive, 1960-2000’

⁶⁷⁰ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 33.

⁶⁷¹ Cook, *Archival Science*, p. 23.

⁶⁷² <http://dam.org/home> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶⁷³ <http://pararchive.com/about/the-project/> - accessed 2 September 2015.

is an online space comprising text databases, image databases, video interviews, and VRML (Virtual Reality Modelling Language) models of the theatre spaces most often used for staging Shakespeare in Stratford and London.⁶⁷⁴ The success of the digitised collection and the large volume of online audiences who access the collections have given rise to debates as to the future of the material museum. ‘In its more extreme form,’ Parry writes, ‘the debates even foretold the end of the museum visit. With ready Web access to digital surrogates and resources, visitors might simply stop visiting museums.’⁶⁷⁵ In actual fact, investigations have demonstrated that the digitisation of a museum’s holdings *increases* visitor numbers to the physical site of the museum and,⁶⁷⁶ as I explore in the previous chapter, museum attendance figures are increasing year upon year. The online presence of the collection serves to build the reputation and profile of the museum, and to break down barriers to cultural capital, consequently leading to larger numbers of visitors seeking to engage with objects ‘in the flesh’.⁶⁷⁷ Thus the virtual gives way to the ‘real’. As Dorney suggests: ‘the demand for instant and remote access is simultaneously at odds with the allure of the archive [...] and complicit in enhancing desire for laying hands on the real thing.’⁶⁷⁸

The allure of the digital archive

Though Gale and Featherstone point out the seductive nature of the electronic archive - its simplicity, flexibility, and ease of access⁶⁷⁹ - I wonder if it can ever compete with the nature of the traditional archive, what Helen Freshwater and Arlette Farge term the

⁶⁷⁴ <http://www.ahds.rhul.ac.uk/ahdscollections/> - accessed 29 January 2016.

⁶⁷⁵ Parry, *Recoding the Museum*, p. 62.

⁶⁷⁶ Hudson, *The digital museum*, p. 41.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁸ Dorney, *The Ordering of Things*, p. 25.

⁶⁷⁹ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 27.

‘allure’ of the archive.⁶⁸⁰ Opponents of the digital archive are quick to describe how interactions with a digital interface obviate an integral part of the visceral, affective experience of working in the archive or of performing the private collection, experiences that Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters particularly enjoyed. Bruce R. Smith’s essay ‘Getting back to the library, getting back to the body’ (2014), explores how digital technologies limit the lived experience of research in the physical archive. Describing his time in the Ahmanson Reading Room in the Huntington Library, Smith recounts: ‘[t]he physical bulk of the folio, its thing-ness, the texture of the paper, the smell of the old leather: all of these factors communicated a very different sense of presence than I had felt with the [online] texts.’⁶⁸¹ He continues: ‘digital images do not fully communicate the physicality of what they represent.’⁶⁸² Farge’s *The Allure of the Archives* is a paean to this lived experience in the archive, to the three-dimensional object in the archive. Her account of working in the archive is punctuated with the sensual minutiae of time spent in the museum and reading room: the sound of pencils being tapped rhythmically on wooden desks; the fluctuations in temperature; the eye contact between users who vie for the best desk upon which to lay their archival materials.⁶⁸³ The digital archive cannot replicate or simulate this experience. Museums will continue to exist as long as the public retain that human desire for contact with the materials in the archive and collection, and the online archive works to promote this experience for the audience.

⁶⁸⁰ See Freshwater and Farge, *The Allure of the Archive, The Allure of the Archives*.

⁶⁸¹ Bruce R. Smith, ‘Getting back to the library, getting back to the body’ in Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan (eds.), *Shakespeare and the Digital World: Redefining Scholarship and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 24-32, p. 26.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.* p. 27.

⁶⁸³ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*. This was originally published in 1989 as *Le Goût de l’Archive*, or *The Taste of the Archive*. This title suggests many interpretations pertaining to that particular archival quality: the sensual taste of the archive, how it engages with the senses, or the appreciation or predilection for the archive, for example.

In 1992, *SPREd* magazine gives a description of Mander and Mitchenson's home and the theatre collection that it housed: '[t]he interior was purple and dark. Every conceivable wall space was thickly encrusted with pictures. Heaps of files and books reached from floor to ceiling.'⁶⁸⁴ This evocative image of the physicality of the theatre collection and the environment it inhabits is the antithesis of both the collection in situ at the museum and, even more so, the collection made digital: the thumbnail images of the individual objects on a white screen, ordered and neat. I describe the private spaces in which Enthoven's, Mander and Mitchenson's, and Waters's collections were housed throughout this thesis. Now these collections inhabit the space of the public archive. Enthoven's collection is dispersed throughout the core collections of the V&A, whilst her personal papers are housed in boxes in the Museum's stores. Mander and Mitchenson's collection is split up between a number of rooms in the two sites belonging to the University of Bristol Theatre collection: packed up in boxes, stored on shelves, hanging from rails, or propped up against storeroom walls. Waters's collection is now catalogued, separated and organised into green boxes housed in a single room in the RHUL archives whilst his mannequin stands alone in the furthest corner of the room.

Now that they exist in the public archive, these private theatre collections have also achieved an online presence. Enthoven's personal papers exist digitally in the form of a short description on the V&A's National Art Library catalogue.⁶⁸⁵ The entry notes that the collection consists of just seven boxes including photographs, correspondence, typescripts of plays, and personal items including medals. Digital images and records of

⁶⁸⁴ The University of Bristol Theatre Collection, Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection. Mitchenson, Joe (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992).

⁶⁸⁵ <http://catalogue.nal.vam.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=1B58O267L7069.9332&profile=nal&source=~!horizon&view=subscriptionssummary&uri=full=3100001~!586042~!10&ri=7&aspect=subtab114&menu=search&ipp=20&spp=20&staffonly=&term=Enthoven,+Gabrielle,+1868-1950&index=NAME&uindex=&aspect=subtab114&menu=search&ri=7> – accessed 29 January 2016.

theatrical materials that once comprised Enthoven's theatre collection can now be viewed via the Museum's Search the Collections tool. Only a small percentage of the MMTC has been catalogued and these catalogues have been made available online. These digital records exist in the form of spreadsheets and PDF documents accessible through the University of Bristol Theatre Collection's website.⁶⁸⁶ Unlike the Enthoven materials and the MMTC, the entirety of the RWTC exists online in the form of a digital catalogue.⁶⁸⁷ The collection is reduced to short written descriptions of the materials contained inside hundreds of boxes and folders. The RHUL archives website also contains a number of online 'exhibitions' showcasing and explaining a small number of documents in the RWTC which are illustrated by digital images of items from the collection.⁶⁸⁸ However, at the time of writing, there is no database of digital images of items in the collection available to search through online, though this remains something that RHUL hopes to achieve in the near future.⁶⁸⁹

I suggest that public archives need to discover more creative ways of digitising their collections in order to retain some of the elusive allure of the archive and some of the theatricality and performativity of the private collection. Can this theatricality be reproduced in the space of the archive, without the presence of the collector? The private theatre collections of Mander and Mitchenson and of Waters particularly were arranged and displayed in order to entertain, amuse, and enchant. The stories connected with the materials were brought to life by the collector's performances. I argue that the online

⁶⁸⁶ <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/mander--mitchenson-collection/> - accessed 29 January 2016.

⁶⁸⁷ <http://www.calmview.eu/royalholloway/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=RW> - accessed 29 January 2016.

⁶⁸⁸ <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/archives/exhibitions/roywaterstheatreollection/roywaterstheatreollection.aspx> - accessed 29 January 2016.

⁶⁸⁹ Annabel Valentine. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

presence of the collector and collection, at least as it currently exists, denies the collector's ambitions and obscures the collection's performativity.

Towards a more democratic archive

Cook suggests that at the heart of the new postmodern, computerised landscape is 'a shift away from viewing records as static physical objects, and towards understanding them as dynamic virtual concepts.'⁶⁹⁰ For Cook, the digital record and collection exist in a fluid, easily manipulated online space rather than in the stable hierarchical organisation of the museum or public archive. I suggest that this is a space in which online audiences have a unique and increased agency in determining the fate of the digital object. Just as digitisation projects continue to be created and funded, so too do projects invite the online audience to participate in programs of digitisation. Digital archives seek to capture the knowledge of online communities in order to enrich and enhance archival description.⁶⁹¹ The National Archives of the USA, for example, invite Americans to become 'citizen archivists' by helping to transcribe and tag digitised records from the archive as well as to upload their own digital records.⁶⁹² The online project urges users to 'Start your mission!' in order to 'Help Unlock History!' One of the most exciting digitisation schemes is being undertaken by the New York Public Library (NYPL) in a scheme entitled NYPL Labs: 'an interdisciplinary team working to reformat and reposition the Library's knowledge for the Internet age.'⁶⁹³ One project, 'What's on the Menu?' has enlisted the public's help in transcribing the Library's materials from one of the largest culinary archives in the world. The project is one of the most successful documented library crowdsourcing projects and was awarded the Roy Rosenzweig Prize for

⁶⁹⁰ Cook, *Archival science*, p. 4.

⁶⁹¹ Oliver, *The digital archive*, p. 52.

⁶⁹² <https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/> - accessed 28 January 2016.

⁶⁹³ <http://www.nypl.org/collections/labs> - accessed 27 October 2015.

innovation in Digital History in 2011.⁶⁹⁴ The V&A also harnessed the power of the online audience launching an Image Crowd-Sourcing Project in 2008. The project ran until 2011 and asked users to join in the task to format the digital images used in the Museum's online Search the Collections tool in order to supply better quality and more usable images of the objects in the collections.⁶⁹⁵ Such rhetoric portrays the ongoing digital archive as a game to be played or a task to be completed, a community project that empowers the anonymous user to play an active role in the unlocking of the nation's collections. In this way, digital technology has challenged the tenet of the authorship and authority of the curator.⁶⁹⁶ I use these examples to demonstrate how online archives are harnessing the power of online communities. Indeed, in 1930, when Enthoven was in need of volunteers to aid in the mammoth task of cataloguing her collection, a Patricia Shaw contacted her asking: 'are you in need of any voluntary assistance in connection with the cataloguing etc. of the Enthoven Collection of Playbills? I have a certain amount of free time on my hands which I would most gladly use for such a purpose. I have no special qualifications for the work, except an intelligent interest in the Theatre.'⁶⁹⁷ The digitisation of the public archive demonstrates the extent to which those with an interest in the theatre, or otherwise, can aid in the organisation and configuration of the archive and collection in ways unimaginable and practically impossible prior to advances in digital technology.

Parry suggests that: 'evidence of the curator's hand may have begun to disappear from the records, replaced by the anonymity and homogeneity of the digitised text of the

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/crowdsourcing/> - accessed 2 September 2015.

⁶⁹⁶ See Jacky Bratton and Grant Tyler Peterson, 'The internet: history 2.0?' in David Wiles and Christine Dymkowski (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 299-313, pp. 305-306 and Parry, *Recoding the Museum*, p. 138.

⁶⁹⁷ Nominal file: Enthoven, Part 1, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

dataset.⁶⁹⁸ Similarly, these records are being altered and reimagined by the anonymous hand of the online user. The popularity of digitisation projects and the increasing ability to manipulate, distort or alter digital records gives rise to questions about the authorship of the online record and the skill sets and knowledge required of those who author. Carson writes: ‘the speed, accuracy and flexibility of digital processes and communication are invaluable to the workings of contemporary theatre and theatre research.’⁶⁹⁹ Indeed, as Carson asserts, digital processes have revolutionised theatre research: things can be found, and they can be found quicker. Smith provides a practical example of how digital technologies are affecting theatre research. Working on a conference paper, Smith finds that all the modern texts he requires are available to read online: ‘by accessing digital images of the pages of these books [...] I didn’t even have to rely on my recollections of just where the passages I wanted were located: I could simply enter a key word as a search term, and there the desired text would be on my computer screen’.⁷⁰⁰ However, if anyone with an Internet connection is given the power to transcribe, to tag, to alter, and to upload records and documents online, the notion of accuracy in the online space is one that needs to be consistently interrogated by users of the digital collection. Peterson argues: ‘the internet’s accessibility undermines academic hegemony.’⁷⁰¹ Furthermore, Carson asserts: ‘[a]udience, viewer, user, critic, reader, creator, actor, director, playwright, all of these terms have either had their meaning amplified or drastically altered in the online environment. There has been an implosion of authority with all of the hierarchies of the twentieth-century world shifting or breaking down.’⁷⁰² The online environment and its digitisation projects are revolutionising the archival landscape. The legitimate,

⁶⁹⁸ Parry, *Recoding the Museum*, p. 51.

⁶⁹⁹ Carson, *Theatre and Technology*, p. 129.

⁷⁰⁰ Smith, *Getting back to the library*, p. 24.

⁷⁰¹ Bratton and Peterson, *The internet: history 2.0?*, p. 307.

⁷⁰² Christie Carson, ‘Creating a critical model for the twenty-first century’ in Carson and Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Digital World*, pp. 226-237, p. 227.

hierarchical space of the public archive, a space presided over by the guardians of legitimate knowledge such as the curator and the archivist, is collapsing and evolving into a more public space, a space belonging to more and more people, regardless of legitimate training, education, and expertise.

The collector in the digital age

Of the three collections I interrogate in this thesis, it is Waters's collection that truly navigates the space between the analogue and the digital. Collecting up until his death at the age of eighty-two, the collection contains materials from both the pre- and post-digital age. Black and white family photographs, handwritten letters, and newspapers coexist alongside email print offs, newsletters created by Waters using computer programmes and pieces of clip art, digital photos, and diary entries detailing his collecting activities online. Waters was an avid user of email and regularly corresponded online with friends and other collectors around the world. He used email because of its speed, its convenience, and its ability to enable him to keep in contact with friends and acquaintances abroad, but he was also fastidious in rendering these born-digital documents material. Like many early users of the internet, Waters was not a digital native and though he enjoyed interacting with the digital, he also backed up his digital transactions and activities in hard copy. In an email to a friend in 2003, Waters describes: 'when I receive an email, the print out sits in a pile until I have replied to it. When I do so I file both away, and forget about them.'⁷⁰³ Waters actively printed out and made tangible the digital traces of his online communication and activities. His digital life became a part of his physical, personal archive. I suggest that this was motivated by two things. Firstly, Waters's collector's instinct and his desire to be surrounded by the tangible

⁷⁰³ Correspondence with Hazel Hardy, RWTC, RW/1/5/20, RHUL Archives.

traces of his life persuaded him to make the intangible traces tangible. Secondly, Waters's life traversed the analogue and the digital age and, as digital communication was a fairly new concept gaining momentum only in the last two decades of Waters's life, he had inherent trust in printed materials rather than in the digital. Included in Waters's personal papers are hundreds of printed emails, some pages consisting of only one or two sentences or unintelligible URLs. Just as the digital document loses the seductive allure of the material record, I argue that so does the digital made physical. The printed email fails to emit the aura of the handwritten letters that appear in other parts of Waters collection. Yet researchers of the future may find allure within the material forms of these digital records as this habit becomes an increasingly historical oddity. Unlike the written letters or photographs, the email does not embody the collector: it does not carry the traces of the collector's physicality. As the digital age unfolds and collectors rely more and more upon the digital medium, the public archive will transform into a space in which the private collections it contains are made up of digitally created records. The imprint of the collector will become less and less evident.

Waters embraced the power of the digital in relation to his collection and his role as a collector. In 2001, Waters describes how 'the Internet provides my only diversion, and each night I explore the second hand book sites for new Oscar Wilde goodies.'⁷⁰⁴ Waters spent many evenings scouring websites such as the online bookshop AbeBooks in order to locate new items for his collection, though he still continued to acquire objects from more traditional sources such as ephemera fairs, dealers, booksellers and postal catalogues. AbeBooks is a space in which booksellers from around the world can list their items for sale. The virtual promise of a book is achieved by the book's material delivery.

⁷⁰⁴ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

The Internet is an outstanding resource for the collector, with auction sites such as eBay providing collectors with the opportunity to source objects from around the world and from untraditional vendors. Pearce and Martin confirm that, with the Internet: ‘the potential for object location and addition to the collection is boosted, and the prospects for unknown finds are significantly increased. Therefore, the Internet offers, through a different sensory perception, an extension of the anticipation felt by collectors when attending collectors’ fairs, car-boot sales and so on.’⁷⁰⁵ The digital age has transformed the ways in which theatre collectors can collect. Unconfined to serendipitous finds in local book or antique shops, which often marked the acquisitions of materials by Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, and no longer dependent on chance meetings with naval officers or the stock of the ephemera dealer and auction house, collectors can now search specifically and in detail for the object they desire on a digital platform. Collectors are therefore no longer limited to or restricted by geographical spaces. Just as a collection embodies private and public spaces, so too can it now embody a myriad geographical spaces as objects that are located in countries around the world are brought into the enclosed space of the collection.

Human search engines

Search engines and tools such as the V&A’s Search the Collections can provide the answers to many research questions. In the case of the collection in the pre-digital era, this information was embodied by the collector and performed in the writing of theatrical books, articles, and radio programmes. According to June Mendoza, Mander and Mitchenson’s knowledge of the theatre was: ‘encyclopaedic. In their heads. During one session [of portrait painting] Joe took a call from the US. He answered immediately

⁷⁰⁵ Pearce and Martin, *The Collector’s Voice: Volume 4*, p. 81.

without any reference, got off the phone and said “mother took me to see that at the --- Theatre, in --- (date), when I was --- (childhood date)!!!”⁷⁰⁶ Enthoven, too, as I report earlier, was nicknamed the ‘theatrical encyclopaedia’ due to her unparalleled knowledge of theatre history.⁷⁰⁷ Enthoven reports how, in 1949, she received over 350 letters, the majority of which contained written enquiries concerning her collection.⁷⁰⁸ The letters arrived from France, America, Belgium, Finland and Switzerland, whilst Enthoven also received a number of telephone enquiries.⁷⁰⁹ I suggest that the collectors themselves assumed the role of human search engines: those interested in the collection or in some snippet of theatrical knowledge had only to ask or enquire of the collector and the answer would be given, or they simply had to consult the books or articles produced by the collector to find the answer they required.

The MMTC goes digital

Prior to the digitised collection, the only individuals that knew the exact contents of a collection were the collectors themselves, or the subsequent archivists and curators who worked with the collections. In 2003, the three-year AHRC funded project to form a digital catalogue and a database of digital images of the MMTC commenced. As I acknowledge in Chapter Three, prior to the creation of online catalogues, extensive knowledge of the collection’s contents had been limited to Mander and Mitchenson and to Richard Mangan, whilst a few card catalogues existed for small parts of the collection. Sophie Nield describes how, after Mander’s and Mitchenson’s deaths: ‘the excellent personal knowledge of Richard Mangan as Administrator, gained over many years

⁷⁰⁶ Mendoza. Message to the author. 10 July 2015. Email.

⁷⁰⁷ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷⁰⁸ Biographical File for Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

association, served as a finding aid for researchers and members of the profession.⁷¹⁰ Mangan asserts that Mitchenson ‘knew the collection intimately, of course, and could point me or an assistant to whatever box might contain the information we sought.’⁷¹¹ On starting work with the collection in 1988, Mangan remembers: ‘I was impressed by the size of the archive and realized that I should have to work hard to really get a good grasp of what it contained. It took me two or three years to do so!’⁷¹² Paul Davidson, who worked on the AHRC project with Nield, asserts that with the creation of an online catalogue for the MMTC ‘a search no longer has to be limited by an individual’s knowledge or by the physical order of the archive itself.’⁷¹³ Indeed, part of the title of this project was ‘Access for Research Project: Uncovering the Archive’. The digitisation of the MMTC promised to reveal the knowledge within the collection and open it up to public access. However, as Carson reminds us ‘access to information is not the same as knowledge’.⁷¹⁴ The collector, the curator and the archivist have long been keepers of the unwritten knowledge and the intertheatricality within a collection, and the researcher has long relied upon these individuals for help in finding, sourcing and interpreting archival materials. Many users of the archive are unable, for a number of reasons, to use electronic catalogues. Many users want to view an object in the flesh. As Lambert asserts, there are people that: ‘need to actually see the hollows in the paper from the letterpress printing, the lines, the dots. They want to use their physical magnifying glass, not the one on the computer screen, however good the image, whatever the resolution.’⁷¹⁵ Public archives thus continue to provide information on their holdings over the phone, via email, in

⁷¹⁰ S. Nield, P. Davidson, and K. Davis, ‘The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection Access for Research Project: Conversations with Cataloguers’ in *Theatre Notebook*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (2005), pp. 144-164, p. 146.

⁷¹¹ Mangan. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ In Nield, Davidson and Davis, *The AHRC Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection*, p. 147.

⁷¹⁴ Christie Carson, ‘Introduction: Research’ in Carson and Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Digital World*, pp. 10-13, p. 10.

⁷¹⁵ Lambert, *Immortalizing the Mayfly*, p. 156.

writing and in person. The digital cannot replace the knowledge of the curator, the archivist or the collector. Rather, it can complement them.

Collectors and cultural capital in a digital age

The Internet can be a stage upon which collectors can perform and disseminate their knowledge, allowing them to reach a global, online community. Collectors can post online blogs, post in forums, and contribute to online digitisation projects. The Internet provides a space in which collectors can better communicate with each other, exchanging information, offering advice, and showing off their latest acquisitions.⁷¹⁶ Waters, as I acknowledge in the previous chapter, was a member of online groups created for Wilde enthusiasts and collectors. These online communities organised events for collectors to meet in ‘real-life’ as well as publishing online features and news. George Speaight argues that:

Any collector will need to obtain further information about some items that he has obtained, to compare them with other examples, and perhaps to inform other collectors and historians of his discoveries. This process of seeking and exchanging information between a friendly group of fellow enthusiasts is a vital element in the art of collecting.⁷¹⁷

The Internet certainly serves this purpose: it is a collaborative space in which collectors can connect. It is a public space that facilitates the discussion of private passions. I acknowledge, however, that due to the democratic nature of the Internet, in which information can be shared and contributed by online users, the currency and the cultural

⁷¹⁶ The Collectors Club of Great Britain has a website that hosts galleries comprising photos of collectors and their objects; forums on which collectors can communicate, ask advice, and swap stories; details of upcoming auctions, and details of clubs for collectors to join. ‘Whatever your passion - dolls houses & miniatures, stamps & coins, diecast models, teddies, books and magazines, model railways, militaria, toys and games, TV and film memorabilia or general collectors of vintage and new - this all-encompassing website is perfect for both the novice and experienced old hand’ - <http://www.collectors-club-of-great-britain.co.uk/> - accessed 26 October 2015.

⁷¹⁷ Speaight, *Collecting Theatre Memorabilia*, p. 150.

capital of the collector that I argue for in Chapter Four may diminish. Stephen Poliakoff's television drama *Shooting the Past* (1999) dramatizes these anxieties. The drama centres on a photographic library and archive facing closure. The building that houses the archive has been purchased by an American company who expect that the archive will be disposed of or sold off before the re-modelling and modernisation of the building begins. I provide this example to demonstrate the anxieties and tensions concerning the digital age and how digitisation is both changing and modifying forms of knowledge, and how that knowledge is being consumed and disseminated. In *Shooting the Past* the archive is the scene of the drama and the site in which archival anxieties are performed. The drama's archive is based upon the closure of the Hulton Picture Library, an archive set up to preserve the social documentary photography of *Picture Post*.⁷¹⁸ After being sold to a number of different institutions, the Library eventually ended up as a part of image library megalith Getty Images.⁷¹⁹ At the end of the drama, Head Librarian Oswald Bates, played by Timothy Spall, attempts suicide, fearing the eventual destruction of the collection in an increasingly commercialised and modern world in which the physical archive struggles to find a suitable space. Baron writes that: 'his suicide suggests his awareness that the human archivist who knows a collection by heart will inevitably be superseded by the efficiency of the computer search engine.'⁷²⁰ The replacement of experts by machines is a recurring fear in debates about the digitised archive. In these fears, the human search engine becomes the Internet search engine; curators and archivists are made redundant, and images are uploaded to machines rather than being cared for by archive staff. Just as Waters performs his Wilde material in the space of the Cadogan Hotel, and as Mander

⁷¹⁸ Dorney, *Archives*, p. 9.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid. Carson and Kirwan acknowledge that the strange conundrum of digital technology is that it 'both breaks down old hierarchies and institutions and creates new monolithic powers with equal ease and without discretion.' In Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan, 'Shakespeare and the digital world: Introduction' in Carson and Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Digital World*, pp. 1-9, p. 3.

⁷²⁰ Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 138.

and Mitchenson perform their collection in the *Bygones* television documentary, in Poliakov's drama, the archive performs its own anxiety as it becomes increasingly digitised.

New digital space

Digitisation creates a new space for the collection, a digital cyberspace where the object and the document exist on the screen. The material stuff of the collection takes up space: it fills boxes, cabinets, book shelves, and folders. In turn, these boxes and folders take up space in the home of the collector or the exhibition space or the store of the museum and archive. Thousands of linear feet are occupied by the materials of the theatrical past. The digitisation of documents and records provides an alternative space: a space which can relieve the burden of the physical space. Waters, when asked to provide a copy of one of the old Christmas pantomimes he regularly authored to a friend, replies: 'I cannot imagine how our little pantomimes could interest anyone outside our circle of friends, but of course you may use Omelette [the pantomime], or any others, in whatever way you wish. I still have it on my hard disk (which is almost as cluttered as my attic - I am an obsessive hoarder).'⁷²¹ For Waters, his objects exist both physically and digitally, and he understands his digital space as an alternative space which he can fill with his personal records, his writings, his collection notes, and his newsletters. Like his attic room which is cluttered with wire fruit bowls and broken lamps, so too does his digital space become cluttered with the traces of his digital activities and in need of a clear-out. His digital space is not infinite: it can and will become full. I suggest that access to digital space provides the collector with the opportunity to fill two spaces: the physical and the digital. It is not just the activity of collecting that gives pleasure to the collector but the arranging

⁷²¹ Correspondence with Mary Haddigham, RWTC, RW/1/5/17, RHUL Archives.

and organising of the collected materials: knowing what is in the collection and where to find it. The digital world significantly expands the possibilities for the arranging and organising of the collection. Just as the wall space is filled with framed playbills and the shelves occupied by first editions, the theatre collector can begin to fill his/her digital spaces with images, catalogues, and records, enabling the collection to flow between both the physical and digital realm.

Parry describes virtual space as ‘a liminal space, a space somewhere between the tangible and the imaginary, this is a threshold, indeed upon which museums have always thrived.’⁷²² Parry’s description echoes the many tensions present within the conflict between virtual and physical space: materiality vs. immateriality, the aura of the original vs. the digital surrogate, and the manageable, touchable object vs. the object suspended in virtual reality. Parry goes on to describe the movement of an object from a museum to an online space as the transition from a hard to a soft space. According to Parry, the hard space of the museum is prescribed, authored, physical, closed, linear, and distant. This space gives way to a soft, digital space that is more dynamic, discursive, imagined, open, radical, and immersive.⁷²³ This new space destabilises notions of the private and the public. Jacques Derrida writes: ‘what circulates on the internet belongs to an automatic space of publication: the public/private distinction is increasingly being wiped out’,⁷²⁴ whilst Harriet Bradley notes that the digitisation of the collection ‘brings an inversion of the public/private relationship as the contents of the great storehouses of the public sphere flow into the living spaces of private individuals.’⁷²⁵ The Internet allows the theatre

⁷²² Parry, *Recoding the Museum*, p. 72. This is reminiscent of what Gaynor Kavanagh describes as the ‘dream space’ of the museum. See Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum*.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ Derrida quoted in Michael J. Paulus, Jr., ‘Reconceptualizing Academic Libraries and Archives in the Digital Age’ in *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (2011), pp. 939-952, p. 943.

⁷²⁵ Bradley, *The seductions of the archive*, p. 117.

collector to open up their private collection to an unprecedented public. The collector can put their theatrical collection online: they can post digital images of the items from their collection; they can produce online catalogues and listings of the objects they possess; they can show off new acquisitions and make requests for more. They can invite the public directly into their private home, offering virtual tours of their collections using technologies such as webcams. Thus public and private space become increasingly chaotic in the digital realm. The theatre collection and the collector in situ at their home in Kensington, Sydenham, or Wandsworth can now perform to an infinite number of enthusiasts or researchers on a global stage through the medium of digital technologies.

Digitising the theatre collection

In September 1930, *The Sunday Times* described Enthoven at work on her collection in the V&A: ‘one finds when browsing in a quiet room where Mrs Enthoven and her staff investigate, sort, classify, index, and mend old papers with the tenderness of a doctor caring for a sick child, curious facts.’⁷²⁶ This image of the collector and the archivist, surrounded by their objects, their papers, and their tools becomes more romantic and more nostalgic as the collection and the public archive increasingly respond to the digital. Instead of using the pen, or in Enthoven’s case the ubiquitous blue pencil, collectors, curators and archivists can be found in front of the screen, creating catalogues and databases online as a way of managing their materials, rather than being an embodied presence moving in and through the collection. In 1987, Alan Farley interviewed Mitchenson and asked him if the collection was computerised at all. Mitchenson replies: ‘not really, no. I know that Colin [Mabberly, the collection’s curator] has attempted that, but the poor chap, he’s had so much on his plate with everything going, that he hasn’t

⁷²⁶ Enthoven, Collection of Press Cuttings, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

been able to get really far with that. In fact, it seems to want another, even *younger*, generation to start that.⁷²⁷ This younger generation did indeed start that, and the process of digitising the Mander and Mitchenson collection is still ongoing. Over five thousand images from the collection can now be viewed online at ArenaPAL, a website devoted to providing online access to performing arts images.⁷²⁸ This project was only fulfilled through funding provided by the AHRC: again, providing greater public access to the images from the MMTC comes at a cost.

The potential of digital theatre collections

The Internet has opened up the theatre collection: it has brought it out of the dark, providing unprecedented access to objects that were once accessible only to the few. It has provided collectors with a new digital space in which they can share their collection and their collecting methods, in which they can acquire objects from around the world, and in which they can share their expertise and knowledge. Rob Wilton, for example, a seller of theatre, music, opera, and film programmes, has a dedicated website on which he advertises and sells his theatrical ephemera to collectors around the world.⁷²⁹ Divided into categories such as pantomime, dance, and Shakespeare programmes, Wilton lists the programmes, including details such as dates, the condition and the price. Collectors can browse his listings before contacting Wilton who is based in London and posts his programmes internationally. The Internet has also given online users the chance to create new, born-digital collections and archives, juxtaposing digital images, and gathering information from a huge range of different sources. Is it possible to imagine the theatre collector existing in a completely digital space, a space in which their collection is solely

⁷²⁷ Quoted in Farley, *Joe Mitchenson*, p. 208.

⁷²⁸ See <http://www.arenapal.com/imageflows2/?s=mander+mitchenson> – accessed 29 January 2016.

⁷²⁹ <http://www.phyllis.demon.co.uk/theatricalia/01smt/smt2939.htm> - accessed 23 October 2015.

virtual? Such online collections do exist, and have existed for many years. Matthew Lloyd, the great-grandson of actor and music-hall performer Arthur Lloyd (1839-1904) has created a website dedicated to his great-grandfather which contains over 2,400 pages of information and more than 10,600 archival images collected and collated by Matthew Lloyd himself.⁷³⁰ According to Lloyd, over one million people visit the website every year and it attracts over 3,000 visits each day. Lloyd asserts: ‘with the Internet there was finally somewhere I could help bring Arthur Lloyd and his entire Theatrical Family back into the public consciousness.’⁷³¹ The website also hosts a forum in which users can pose research questions and engage with an international research community. Similarly, a collector of vintage picture postcards of Gladys Cooper has created a website to share digital images of the postcards in his/her collection. None of the postcards are for sale and the collector states that the purpose of the website is ‘to provide information and interest to other postcard collectors, particularly collectors of Gladys Cooper postcards. Hopefully it will be a help when referencing your own collection.’⁷³² Featuring hundreds of digital images of the postcards in the collector’s collection and unmotivated by commercial or financial gain, this site simply enables the collector to showcase his/her collection to an international audience, sharing knowledge, and giving his/her private collection an unprecedented public presence in a new, digital space.

Pearce and Martin assert: ‘collecting, with its deep roots in the material world, acts as a bulwark against the increasing role of digital technology.’⁷³³ The theatre collector, I suggest, *is* synonymous with the substantial stuff of the theatrical past: Enthoven amidst her collection of playbills in ‘an upper chamber at South Kensington all in confusion,

⁷³⁰ <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/> - accessed 23 October 2015.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*

⁷³² See <http://gladyscooper.com/> - Accessed 23 October 2015.

⁷³³ Pearce and Martin, *The Collector's Voice: Volume 4*, p. 81.

mountains of them, torrents of them, crammed into pigeon holes, bulging from presses, and overflowing chairs and tables’;⁷³⁴ Mitchenson providing a tour of his collection of theatrical pottery and porcelain, taking ‘great pleasure in the gasps of delight’ from admiring visitors,⁷³⁵ and Waters in a dark room in which he kept his wax figures, the curtains closed to keep out any sunlight which might dull or melt them.⁷³⁶

Walsh argues that: ‘Benjamin has the aura of art exactly the wrong way around [...] The more reproduced an artwork is - and the more mechanical and impersonal the reproductions - the more important the original becomes.’⁷³⁷ In the digital age, when the contents of a collection can be multiplied, distributed, copied and manipulated, desire for the original thing, and to be in the presence of the original thing, increases. Baron writes that the computerised age of the archive engenders a fear that the digital will take over and dehumanize the archive and the collection by ‘transforming archives into webs of searchable information rather than spaces in which stories may be traced through the careful observation of the human eye and the capacity of human association and memory.’⁷³⁸ Eddie Anderson, describing the MMTC, asserts that: ‘it’s the personal memories that make this collection so lively.’⁷³⁹ In an age in which digital technologies are revolutionising public access and interaction with theatre collections and archives, I argue that the collector remains an integral, living component of a virtual world

⁷³⁴ Personal Papers for Gabrielle Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷³⁵ Mangan. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

⁷³⁶ Bush-Bailey. Message to the author. 20 December 2015. Email.

⁷³⁷ Walsh, *Rise and Fall of the Post-Photographic Museum*, p. 29.

⁷³⁸ Baron, *The Archive Effect*, p. 138.

⁷³⁹ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

The future of the theatre collector and collection

The future of collecting and the theatre collection in a digital age is uncertain and exciting, open to new, innovative and creative possibilities. Peterson observes that: ‘the internet’s floodgates are open to performance histories that would have otherwise remained in the margins.’⁷⁴⁰ Just as Matthew Lloyd asserts that his online collection of Arthur Lloyd ephemera can engender a greater public consciousness of the nineteenth-century performer, so too can marginal performance histories achieve a greater public audience through their online presence. Though Mander and Mitchenson opened up their home to those who wished to view the collection, the digitisation of the theatre collection opens up and illuminates the theatrical materials of the past on a scale that the private collector and the public archive has been unable to achieve. Furthermore, Gale and Featherstone acknowledge that online archives allow researchers to curate their own collections of materials from the digital realm, arguing that: ‘researchers become archivists, collators and cataloguers.’⁷⁴¹ The digital archive can offer new, fresh readings of the theatrical past through the juxtaposition of a range of digital materials, enabling researchers to construct and collate new theatrical histories and narratives. In turn, these online collecting activities can bring marginal histories to public consciousness as digital access to archival materials improves. Speaking of the online space dedicated to the PeoplePlayUk project, Hudson asserts that the V&A used: ‘the fun, frivolity and drama associated with the performing arts to try to bring the objects alive. But we also wanted our information to take people a stage further than conventional captions. We wanted to provide the stories behind those objects, and about the people connected with them.’⁷⁴² I suggest that the digital world cannot, and does not, seek to eclipse or replace the human individuals and

⁷⁴⁰ Bratton and Peterson, *The internet: history 2.0?* p. 303.

⁷⁴¹ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 35.

⁷⁴² Hudson, *From Stage to Screen*, p. 266.

stories at the heart of the collection. Rather, the online environment can offer an additional space upon which the collection can perform and be exhibited to a global audience. No longer in the hands of the guardians of legitimate knowledge, information is opened up to users around the world whose online connections and conversations can add to and enhance the narratives and histories of the theatre collector. Those things that are missing or absent from the private and public spaces of the archive have the potential to be (re)discovered in the space of the digital.

Today's theatre collectors can harness the incredible power of the digital space to publicise, enhance, and grow their collections. Enthoven's private collection may have found a public home a lot earlier had she had been collecting in the digital age: online campaigns, online petitions, or crowd-funding tools may have provided Enthoven with increased social and financial power to move her collection from a private to a public space. The digital space in which the private collection, public archive, and theatre collector can now be found, is a relatively new space for the archival tourist to explore. As users of digital archives increase rapidly, and as museum attendance figures continue to grow, the human and the digital are negotiating the ways in which they can exist side-by-side within a relationship of exchange and dialogue. Yet no matter what the future of the theatre collection holds, whether in a virtual or a physical space, I argue that the collector will remain at the heart of it: the embodied human presence, gathering, performing, and protecting the material, or the virtual, relics of the theatrical past. The playbill has been pixelated, but the collector of theatrical ephemera has not.

Conclusions: New Readings in the Archive: shifting the researcher's gaze

'Why detain you with these worn-out stories? Why this wasted time? Why archive this? Why these investments in paper, in ink, in characters? Why mobilize so much space and so much work, so much typographic composition? Does this merit printing? Aren't these stories to be had everywhere?'

- Jacques Derrida⁷⁴³

Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander, Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters devoted decades of their lives to the collecting of theatrical ephemera. They filled their homes with the material remains left behind by the theatrical event and the theatrical personality. These materials, gathered by the collector and placed into the space of the private theatre collection, become the stuff of the nation's theatrical heritage and the stuff from which theatre histories are created and forged. The private passions of the theatre collector shape the public theatre archive. Furthermore, just as the items that comprise the collection become a part of the nation's material history, so too do the personal papers that narrate the individual lives of the collector. For the transition of the theatre collection from a private to a public space fixes the collector upon the archival record. James Laver notes that Enthoven 'had the theatre in her blood; and for many years of her life devoted herself to amassing the collection of playbills on which her fame rests.'⁷⁴⁴ I have suggested throughout this work that the collecting of theatrical ephemera has the potential to make a public figure out of a private personality. The collectors I study here become performers on the public stage of the archive; they become a small part of the public's historic consciousness alongside the materials they gather.

⁷⁴³ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 13.

⁷⁴⁴ Laver, *Gabrielle Enthoven and the Enthoven Theatre Collection*, p. 1.

According to Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone, the ‘aesthetic taste of the private collector [...] might be central to the formation of an archive.’⁷⁴⁵ I argue that the collector of theatrical ephemera is *absolutely* central to the formation of the nation’s public archives. Richard Dunn writes: ‘by engaging with the performing arts, through the Theatre Museum, the V&A has encountered a set of collecting issues which do not align naturally with its central purposes’.⁷⁴⁶ Enthoven changed the landscape of the public archive and the landscape of the V&A. Without the collecting endeavours of Enthoven the V&A’s Theatre and Performance Department, if it existed at all, might be arranged entirely differently or founded upon entirely different materials. Without Enthoven’s input, the department might have formulated different collecting policies in order to complement the private passions of different theatre collectors and enhance their idiosyncratic collections. After a number of years, these policies or ambitions might have altered entirely the aesthetic, historical, and geographical content of the materials, and the *mise en scène* of the archive, as they are recognised today. In addition, the arrival of the RWTC in the public archives of RHUL has given rise to a desire at the university to continue to increase and build upon its holdings of theatrical ephemera in the future.⁷⁴⁷ The private collector of theatrical ephemera creates, designs, and manipulates the public space of the theatre archive.

The private collection and the twenty-first-century public archive

I suggest that Enthoven inspired and influenced the collectors that followed her, including Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. She was a revolutionary that paved the way for theatrical research and ensured that theatre histories could be created and constructed in

⁷⁴⁵ Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 26.

⁷⁴⁶ Richard Dunn, ‘The future of collecting: lessons from the past’ in Knell, *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, pp. 62-71, p. 65.

⁷⁴⁷ Annabel Valentine. Message to the author. 1 December 2015. Email.

and for the future. She secured public archival space for the material culture secreted by the theatrical event, legitimising it and imbuing it with cultural capital. In the twenty-first-century the museum has distanced itself from its reputation as an elite institution built to display the high-status treasures of society for the educated and upper-class visitors that attend it. Today, the museum seeks to become an increasingly democratic space attracting more diverse audiences in which the material heritage of the nation, from dog collars to vinyl records, can be displayed to the public in order to entertain, to inspire and to educate. In an exhibition reminiscent of The People's Shows in the 1990s, the Barbican Centre staged an exhibition in 2015 entitled 'Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector', the first exhibition in the UK to present the private collections of post-war and contemporary artists.⁷⁴⁸ Peter Blake's vast collection of miniature elephants and Victorian dolls was displayed alongside Damien Hirst's collection of animal skeletons and human skulls. Like The People's Show, the Barbican's exhibition provided a space for the exploration and legitimisation of the private collection. According to Mark Brown in a review of Magnificent Obsessions: '[a]nyone even a little embarrassed by their private collection of ceramic frogs can take heart from an exhibition opening on Thursday - there are more novelty cookie jars, vibrantly coloured tea towels and animal-based cream jugs than may ever have been gathered in a major British art gallery.'⁷⁴⁹

Enthoven was far from embarrassed by her collection. In 1925, in response to a disparaging article about the V&A's acquisition of her collection, Enthoven writes: 'the Playbills are far from being "a white elephant" at the Museum, as your correspondent states. If they were, the Authorities, who had a perfectly free hand, would not have

⁷⁴⁸ The exhibition ran from 12 February - 25 May 2015.

⁷⁴⁹ Mark Brown, 'Damien Hirst's stuffed animals among artists' obsessions on show at Barbican' in *The Guardian* (11 February 2015). <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/11/damien-hirst-artists-magnificent-obsessions-barbican> - accessed 15 February 2016.

accepted them, and might have referred the whole matter to the Natural History Museum or the Zoo.⁷⁵⁰ Enthoven, like Mander and Mitchenson and Waters, recognized the cultural capital inherent within the theatre collection, even if they would not have necessarily labelled them in that way. Public exhibitions of private collections, however, most commonly feature private collections of art, rather than collections of skulls, scarves, or biscuit jars. At the time of writing, the Ashmolean Museum, for example, is exhibiting works by Andy Warhol from the private collection of commodities trader Andrew J. Hall, who ‘approaches art collecting with the fanatical dedication of an oarsman.’⁷⁵¹ Private collections of art undoubtedly occupy different public spaces than the collection of theatrical ephemera. Art collections signify considerable wealth, connoisseurship, prestige, and taste: they are private collections that are created by the few. Within the context of this thesis which calls for an increased acknowledgement and interrogation of the collector of theatrical ephemera, contemporary exhibitions such as *Magnificent Obsessions* are encouraging for both their publicizing, and celebration of collectors, their eccentricities, and their private passions, whatever those private passions may be.

Performing private lives in the public archive

I open this conclusion with a number of questions from Jacques Derrida about why paper and ink are used to immortalise worn-out stories in the archive, stories that have been heard time and time again. ‘Aren’t these stories to be had everywhere?’ he asks. The stories that tell the lives and the histories of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and

⁷⁵⁰ Nominal File: Enthoven, Gabrielle (cataloguing of the Enthoven Fund) Part 4, 1925-1950, MA/1/E732/4, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷⁵¹ Nick Paumgarten, ‘Salesman: Days and nights in Leo Koenig’s gallery’ in *The New Yorker* (17 October 2005). <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/10/17/salesman-5> - accessed 15 February 2016. The Ashmolean Museum exhibition, entitled ‘Andy Warhol: Works from the Hall Collection’, runs 4 February-15 May 2016.

Waters are not to be had everywhere. These collectors perform in footnotes, in margins, and in asides, if they are permitted to perform at all. The archived traces of their presence are stored in boxes; they await an archival tourist to pull them out and reanimate them. More paper and ink needs to be invested in the telling of their stories. I argue throughout this thesis that the private and public spaces occupied by the collector and collection of theatrical ephemera are permeable: these spaces, unlike those defined by Jürgen Habermas and Richard Sennett, intermingle, confront one-another, and converse. Many of the theatre collections in public British archives remain, for example, uncatalogued and inaccessible.⁷⁵² Though the theatre collection has a space in the public archive, it may prove difficult to find. Gary T. Marx usefully articulates the contradictions inherent within public and private spaces:

we can note the public within the private at least in relative terms when we consider 'public' to involve visibility. Private places such as a home have areas which are more public e.g., a porch, entry way, living and dining room, and external walls and the interiors viewable from street-facing windows. These contrast with less public areas such as a bedroom, bathroom, upstairs and less visible interior sections.⁷⁵³

Conversely, public places such as the archive have areas which are more private. The personal papers that tell the private lives of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters are the less visible sections of the public archive. At the time of writing, the personal papers of Waters are the only ones to be thus far catalogued. The archival tourist goes to the space of the archive and brings back the souvenirs that allow the personal histories and private passions of the collector to perform before a public audience. As the

⁷⁵² Gale and Featherstone, *The Imperative of the Archive*, p. 25. Gale and Featherstone report that American archives are well funded, managed and maintained in comparison to British archives. Less than 75 per cent of the holdings in US archives are catalogued and accessible which suggests the scale of work to be undertaken in making British archives more public.

⁷⁵³ Marx, *Murky conceptual waters*, p. 162.

digital archive endeavours to make more archival material accessible, so too is this thesis a step toward making the more private sections of the public theatre archive more visible.

New readings in theatre collections

This thesis exhibits a selection of the rich materials that can be discovered in the private collections that make up the public theatre archive. I have interpreted the letters, photographs, typescripts, diaries, newsletters, and newspaper cuttings that comprise the personal papers of the theatre collector in order to exhibit the less visible, the uninterrogated, and the hidden narratives and histories of the individuals who narrate and historicise the theatrical event. Allowing the collector to perform within the pages of this work, paves the way for new readings in theatre history and in the public theatre archive.

In the summer of 1977, Waters notes:

A library can scarcely be said to exist without Books. And it cannot exist usefully without a Librarian. Uncollated, uncatalogued, unclassified, unkempt, uncouth, it is nothing: a meaningless repository of printed paper, serving no purpose. It is the Librarian, with his intimate knowledge and deep personal concern who, like Frankenstein, assembles the dismembered limbs and charges them with life.⁷⁵⁴

Like the librarian who makes meaning from an assemblage of books, so too does the theatre collector make meaning from the material remains of the theatre. I have discussed how collectors are integral to the making of theatre histories: they provide the stuff from which theatre histories are made; they embody the threshold where past and present collide, and they have the means to reanimate, re-perform, and re-present the theatrical past to a present audience. In addition, I suggest that the living body in the archive, the archival researcher, can assemble the dismembered limbs and the scattered traces of the theatre collector and charge them with life preventing them, to re-employ Arlette Farge's

⁷⁵⁴ Inner London Education Authority notes on libraries and books, RWTC, RW/1/4/4, RHUL Archives.

words, from suffering ‘a second death’.⁷⁵⁵ The researcher and the historian can thus start to populate the public space of the archive with the private lives of the theatre collector through a new and creative interrogation of the theatre collection which foregrounds the collector, rather than the collected. Collectors must be written into theatre histories, their stories, as intertwined as they are with such written-about figures as Coward and Wilde, need to be told and shared.

Collecting and interrogating materials from the theatre collections and personal papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters opens up new spaces in both the public theatre archive and in the study of theatre histories in which connections can be made and stories can surface. An exploration of these documents has illuminated complex social networks occupied by the collector that comprise notable theatrical and artistic individuals including Noël Coward, John Gielgud, Oscar Wilde, the Craigs, Una Troubridge, Radclyffe Hall, Laurence Olivier, Edith Evans, Judi Dench, Merlin Holland, and Sybil Thorndike. Investigations have also illuminated the relationships between theatre collectors. Enthoven and Mander and Mitchenson, as I have shown, exchanged materials and shared knowledge with one-another. Waters sent letters to other collectors such as George Speaight, with whom he discussed tinsel portraits.⁷⁵⁶ In the 1987 *Bygones* television documentary, narrator Eddie Anderson asks Mander and Mitchenson about their collecting:

Anderson: Were you the first collectors of theatrical memorabilia?

Mitchenson: yes we were very much alone-

Mander: no-

⁷⁵⁵ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 121.

⁷⁵⁶ Loose narrative diary entries, RWTC, RW/1/2/4, RHUL Archives.

Mitchenson: there for Mrs Enthoven-

Mander: Gabrielle Enthoven-

Mitchenson: [Exasperated] Raymond, I was going to say that but you just cut in - except for a lady Mrs Gabrielle Enthoven who was a very good friend of ours.⁷⁵⁷

Future interrogations of the traces left behind by the theatre collector may well shine light upon further networks waiting to be discovered and illuminate new readings of a public theatre archive built upon the friendships and relationships that contribute to the shaping of a private theatre collection.

In constructing a narrative of the private passions of the theatre collector, I have relied a great deal upon the anecdotal evidence that can be found in the papers of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. Thomas Postlewait argues that, in the writing of Shakespeare biographies, there has been a struggle ‘not simply between facts and anecdotes but between the reliable and unreliable aspects of anecdotes.’⁷⁵⁸ In the context of this thesis, anecdotes fulfil the criteria of evidence. I am not particularly concerned whether the anecdotes I discover in the papers of the theatre collector are more or less reliable than others. For each anecdote tells a story, and each anecdote, no matter how inconceivable, reveals a trace of the individual who communicated it, imagined it, experienced it, and performed it. The histories of the theatre collector must necessarily include anecdotal evidence and I argue, like Jacky Bratton, that the anecdote merits a place, and henceforth a more visible place, in the writing of alternative theatre histories. Anecdotes inject theatre histories with drama. I hope that future works on the theatre collector embrace the anecdote. In a historical record that is marked by absence and

⁷⁵⁷ Anderson, *The Boys of Sydenham Hall*.

⁷⁵⁸ Postlewait, *The Criteria for Evidence*, p. 64.

asymmetries of evidence, anecdotes can go some way to disrupting the archival silence that has the habit of enveloping the collector of theatrical ephemera.

Personal reflections and limitations

I approach this thesis as a non-collector who, though empathetic towards and appreciative of the private passions of the theatre collector, does not share the obsessive impulse to collect. Whether this has resulted in different approaches to the activities of Enthoven et al. than those undertaken by an avid collector of theatrical ephemera, or otherwise, might be of fruitful consideration for authors of future works that follow this thesis.

I have been aware throughout the researching and writing of this thesis how alluring the archive can be. To spend a significant amount of time working through the personal papers and private collections of individuals such as Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters produces a peculiar and protective relationship between collector (myself) and collected (Enthoven et al.). This is particularly realised in my research into Waters and his collection. As the first researcher to work on Waters's materials I feel a responsibility towards the accurate and respectful portraying of his private passions and public life. Farge suggests that the archival researcher: 'can come to have such a fondness for the documents and for the archives themselves that [they] forget to be wary of the traps they can lay or the risk of not keeping enough distance from them.'⁷⁵⁹ She warns: 'you can become absorbed by the archives to the point that you no longer know how to interrogate them'.⁷⁶⁰ The personal papers that lie in the public archive occupy an intimate space and permit an intimate relationship between researcher and researched, the past and the present, and the living and the dead. It is therefore with Farge's warning at the

⁷⁵⁹ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, p. 69.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 70.

forefront of my mind that I have strived to interrogate this work objectively. In the context of this work, the private passions, or fondness, an archival researcher may develop for an archived individual remain private, though perhaps apparent.

I have limited this thesis to an exploration of the lives and collections of four men and women. This is the first work to consider the private collection of Waters, and it is the first work to synthesise the theatrical and personal materials located in the collections of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters. These investigations provide unique comparisons, connections, contradictions, and insights into the personal narratives of a select group of theatre collectors and the transition their private collections have made to the public archive. Further works may choose to interrogate different collectors and collections, providing new juxtapositions which have the potential to either complicate or reinforce the findings of this thesis. Similarly, there is scope for research into international theatre collectors and collections in order to explore the cultural significance, or otherwise, of theatre collectors and collections around the world.

I have focused on the financial status of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters rather than providing a space for detailed investigations into the current state of public funding for museums and the archive. In a climate in which public sector funding for national museums is being cut,⁷⁶¹ future researchers may decide to take a more detailed look at government policy and the financial implications of moving a private collection to the public archive. The future of the public archive, and the number of private

⁷⁶¹ The Museums Association is campaigning against the cuts. Since 2012, funding to England's national museums has been cut by 30 per cent in real terms. <http://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/funding-cuts/fighting-the-cuts> - accessed 11 February 2016.

collections that can potentially find a space there, may be at risk, resulting in a change to the nation's archival landscape.

Though I have touched upon the digitisation of the public archive and the potential ramifications for the private collector of theatrical ephemera, I acknowledge that there is further work to be done in this area. As the archive becomes increasingly digitised and new technologies continue to be introduced, the activities of the private collector, and the ways in which the private collector is accessed, are evolving and this evolution demands the focused attention of the archival researcher. The material remains of the theatrical event are becoming increasingly absent as cast lists, tickets, programmes, and the event itself move to an online, digital platform. As paper tickets are replaced by e-tickets what material remains will the theatre of the twenty-first century produce? What will there be for the theatre collector of the twenty-second century to collect? The future of collecting theatrical ephemera is destined to change, or at least to change from the ways in which Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and, to an extent, Waters practiced their private passions. I have shown how these four collectors collected and how their private collections moved into a public space. Future researchers will grapple with private space, public space *and*, increasingly, cyberspace. I look forward to seeing the results.

First conclusions: shifting the gaze

J. Paul Getty, in his introduction to *The Joys of Collecting* (1966), writes: '[m]y collecting over the years has been a labor [*sic*] of love and, I believe, it might make a story worth telling.'⁷⁶² The stories of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, Waters and their theatre collections are worth telling. I tell some of these stories here, together, for the first time.

⁷⁶² Getty, *The Joys of Collecting*, p. 12.

According to Farge, even the most intimate personal materials, abandoned somewhere and only discovered years later: ‘nonetheless presupposes that whoever wrote it was in some fundamental way looking for it to be discovered, in the belief that the events of his or her life called for a written record.’⁷⁶³ The collectors I investigate here recorded the details of their professional and personal lives in scrapbooks, albums, diary entries, and letters. They fixed their lives on paper and photographic film. They gave interviews and they permitted the press to enter their homes and report on what they discovered there. As a result, the traces of their private passions can now be found in digital newspaper archives as well as in the traditional boxes of the public archive. Writing to RHUL in 2002, Waters explains why he has chosen to bequeath his collection to the university: ‘of course, it is also partly a reflection of my own egoism [...] As extinction approaches I would like to feel that something lingers on a little longer, however briefly’.⁷⁶⁴

Enthoven was the first president of the Society for Theatre Research and in 1952 the Society dedicated a book to her memory. In this dedication, Laver writes: ‘[t]o the Nation she gave a lifetime of devoted service, to her friends she was ready to give everything she had. Her generosity was proverbial’.⁷⁶⁵ He asserts, however, that: ‘[t]o those of us who had the privilege of knowing her personally it still seems as if her greatest gift was herself.’⁷⁶⁶ Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters gave their theatre collections to the nation. They also gave themselves.

Since the commencement of this research project in 2013, Kate Dorney and I have worked to uncover the details of Enthoven’s life and collecting activities from materials in the public archive. Dorney remarks: ‘excavating her [Enthoven] has become an exercise in

⁷⁶³ Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶⁴ Correspondence with Royal Holloway, University of London, RWTC, RW/1/5/43, RHUL Archives.

⁷⁶⁵ Laver, *Gabrielle Enthoven and the Enthoven Theatre Collection*, p. 8.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

mirroring her own obsession with collecting and compiling facts'.⁷⁶⁷ This thesis is a collection of the anecdotes, traces, and facts that, when brought together, begin to form a history or a narrative of the theatre collector and their collections. My research into the private passions of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters marks a space in which the collectors become collected. As Walter Benjamin unpacks his library and contemplates his possessions, he unpacks 'a spring tide of memories'.⁷⁶⁸ As Enthoven goes through her playbills with a blue pencil, as Mander and Mitchenson move through their home wearing Coward's silk robes, and as Waters reads aloud to himself from books in his collection,⁷⁶⁹ so too does the theatre collector release and re-animate the memories of past theatrical events. In unpacking the theatre collections and personal papers of the collector, I unpack the private passions of the individuals and the traces that mark their now absent bodies, traces that are housed in the public archives. In unpacking these materials I, and other archival researchers, can allow them to linger on and continue to perform, however briefly, just as they expected they might.

In her will of 1946, Enthoven declares:

I desire that my body shall be cremated without the celebration of any funeral service in the cheapest possible manner as my Trustees shall decide [and] that my ashes shall be scattered and I desire that none of my friends shall attend my funeral nor wear mourning for me of any kind and they shall be requested not to send any flowers.⁷⁷⁰

Similarly, Waters, in his will of 2008, declares: 'I request that after my death my body be used for organ transplant or failing that for medical education. After such [...] I wish my remains to be cremated and I express the wish and hope [...] that my executors inform all

⁷⁶⁷ Dorney, 'Excavating Enthoven: the Life and Times of a Theatre Collector.' Society for Theatre Research. Swedenborg Hall, London. (11 February 2016). Lecture.

⁷⁶⁸ Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*, p. 60.

⁷⁶⁹ In 2002, Waters reports: 'I like to read aloud to myself. I give a subdued performance, as though I were reading on the wireless.' In Correspondence with Hazel Hardy, RWTC, RW/1/5/20, RHUL Archives.

⁷⁷⁰ Nominal File: Enthoven, Part 2, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

persons on my Christmas card list of my death, but for there to be no ceremony or gathering of people'.⁷⁷¹ Both Enthoven and Waters requested that the end of their lives be marked quietly and privately, without an audience. There was to be no public fanfare, no big celebration nor any extended mourning. Though their deaths received no public performance, it is my hope that the archival researcher can summon the collector into the present through encounters with their collected materials. Enthoven and Waters may not have desired an audience to mark their death, but they deserve an audience in the space of the public archive.⁷⁷²

Recalling an encounter with Mander and Mitchenson one evening, in which Patrick Newley presented the two men with a scrapbook of photographs taken by Lord Maugham of Noël Coward at his home in Switzerland, Newley remembers: '[t]heir beady eyes gazed at the worn album and before I could explain how it had come into my possession, they both said in unison "Thank you, that will do nicely"'. It was snatched out of my hands within seconds. But it couldn't have gone to a better home.'⁷⁷³ Mander and Mitchenson, like Enthoven and Waters, recognised the potential in theatrical ephemera and theatrical objects to inform and enrich theatre history. I argue that investigations into the theatre collector and their private collections informs and enriches not only theatre histories, but understandings of the public theatre archive. The theatre collector merits collection.

I want to end this thesis with a reminder of what the public archive is: what it is for, what it might mean, and what it can be. I open this conclusion with Derrida, and I will finish with him too. Derrida writes: 'the question of the archive is not, we repeat, a question of

⁷⁷¹ Last will of Roy William Waters, 16 May 2008.

⁷⁷² Curiously, I have been unable to find a record of any funeral arrangements or celebrations for either Mander or Mitchenson.

⁷⁷³ Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992) Obituaries and Death Information (1992), Joe Mitchenson Personal 3, MMTTC, University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

the past [...] It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow.⁷⁷⁴ Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters may have surrounded themselves with the materials of the theatrical past, but they did this with the knowledge that they were making the theatre histories of and for the future. I, too, have surrounded myself with the theatre collectors of the past, but I turn to them in order to offer new readings of the old, to forge new spaces in readings in theatre history, and to argue that archival researchers have a responsibility to recognise the private passions of the collectors that create, narrate, and populate the public theatre archive.

Though this marks the conclusion of this thesis, it is my hope that these investigations mark the beginning of new readings in a theatre history that recognises and embraces the collector of theatrical ephemera as a colourful, integral, and rich component of the nation's theatre history, and the public archives which house it. The private passions of Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson, and Waters that I uncover here suggest that there are a multitude of hitherto unknown, untold, and unrevealed personal stories awaiting discovery. The stories I tell here only begin to scratch the surface of the archive. Once uncovered these stories have the potential to illuminate new theatrical networks, connections, and layers that can perform before future audiences to enrich, complicate, and redesign the landscape of the archive and the histories it begets. It is my hope that this work marks a shift in the archival researcher's gaze; a gaze that necessarily looks upon the materials that comprise the flesh and bones of theatrical research, but a gaze that begins to incorporate the materials that embody the absent flesh and bones of the collector. For, without the private passions of the collector of theatrical ephemera, the

⁷⁷⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, p. 27.

public archive is a depleted space and the researcher's gaze has far less theatrical riches upon which to focus.

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Appendix: an overview of the private collections and personal papers of Gabrielle Enthoven, Raymond Mander, Joe Mitchenson, and Roy Waters, and the institutions that house them

i. Gabrielle Enthoven: the Victoria and Albert Museum

The theatrical materials gathered by Gabrielle Enthoven (1868-1950) were donated to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1924. Enthoven's collection came to be known as the Gabrielle Enthoven Theatrical Collection and included over 80,000 theatrical playbills, prints, play-texts, engravings and other printed theatrical materials relating exclusively to the London stage. Enthoven collected documentation and designs but did not collect three-dimensional material.

Today, visitors to the Museum's archives are unable to request items from the Gabrielle Enthoven Theatrical Collection: it no longer exists. Enthoven's materials are no longer kept together and they no longer exist as a discrete collection. Rather, Enthoven's entire collection forms the basis of the V&A's Theatre and Performance Collections. Her playbills, prints and other materials came to be the starting point and foundation of what the V&A terms its 'Core Collections'. Over the years, theatrical materials from a number of different collectors, companies, and theatres have been added to Enthoven's initial collection of theatrical ephemera, and they continue to be added today in order to enrich the Museum's Core Collections.

The Core Collections that comprise the V&A's Theatre and Performance Collections are categorised as follows: Photographs, People, Productions, Buildings, Companies, Letters and Library. Enthoven's collected materials are now distributed between these groups. Enthoven's name, therefore, is now disassociated from the materials she collected. The

Core Collections contain the most popular and heavily used materials within the V&A's Theatre and Performance archives. They include the following: printed books, periodicals, manuscripts, prompt books, designs, photographs and negatives, autograph letters, playbills, programmes, prints and videos. Enthoven's original collection was later augmented by a number of other major museum acquisitions including: the Harry Beard Collection (mainly books and prints) and the libraries of many other private theatre collectors including Professor Arnold Rood (Edward Gordon Craig), and Cyril Beaumont (ballet).

Enthoven collected materials that depicted, represented, and narrated the theatrical activities and histories of the London theatres only. Subsequently, the V&A tends to hold more theatrical documentation pertaining to London than to the regions. Enthoven's collection was famed for its huge number of London playbills, including a substantial number of rare Garrick playbills dating from the 1700s, and the Museum's archive now contains over half-a-million playbills arranged according to the theatre in which the play was performed. Particular strengths of the Theatre and Performance archives include materials relating to performing arts companies, twentieth-century stage designers, actors, directors, and performing arts photographers.

The V&A's Core Collections are complemented by a number of discrete collections and archives including, for example, the Arts Council of Great Britain records (1928-1997). There is one collection amongst these discrete collections that continues to bear Enthoven's name: the Personal Papers of Gabrielle Enthoven. Unlike Enthoven's collected theatrical materials, these personal papers remain together as a discrete collection and they came to be housed in the Museum after Enthoven's death in 1950.

The degree to which Enthoven approved of her personal papers being made public, or the degree to which she was in any way complicit with this, is uncertain. This collection contains a number of Enthoven's personal diaries, letters, manuscripts, photographs, ephemera, business papers, newspaper-cuttings, medals, typescripts of plays, stories and lectures written by Enthoven, and sketches and paintings from her childhood. These papers offer an insight into Enthoven's private life including her personal relationships, her passion for the theatre, and her service during the First and Second World Wars.

The Personal Papers of Gabrielle Enthoven have not yet been fully appraised, catalogued and re-housed. At the time of writing, the V&A treat this collection as an uncatalogued collection as there is currently no full online archive catalogue available for these personal papers. There is a short collection level catalogue description of this collection on the National Art Library Catalogue website.⁷⁷⁵ The online description advises that this collection consists of 7 boxes. However, the collection is made up of 47 boxes, though only 7 of these boxes contain Enthoven's personal effects. The remainder of the boxes contain theatrical prints, playbills, posters and engravings collected by Enthoven as well a substantial number of ledgers in which Enthoven produced indexes documenting the playbills she had collected. Though the collection is not catalogued, all of the material therein is fully accessible to the public. The Museum asks that researchers wishing to access these personal papers give notice of twenty working days and an indication of the type of materials required. In due course, when the time, funding, and appropriate staff are available, the Museum plans to create a full public archive catalogue for the collection

⁷⁷⁵ See

<http://catalogue.nal.vam.ac.uk/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=146850112E0OA.4291&profile=nal&source=~!horizon&view=subscriptionsummary&uri=full=3100001~!586042~!0&ri=1&aspect=subtab114&menu=search&ipp=20&spp=20&staffonly=&term=Gabrielle+Enthoven+&index=TW&uindex=&aspect=subtab114&menu=search&ri=1> – accessed 14 July 2016.

and fully rehouse the materials. The V&A hopes that this will be completed within the next two years given the increased interest in Enthoven and her personal history.⁷⁷⁶

The Theatre and Performance Collections also house an A3 scrapbook created by Enthoven and comprised of newspaper-cuttings detailing her collecting activities and the increasing publicity her collection attracts as it moves from her flat in Chelsea to the public space of the V&A. This scrapbook has no online record but can be requested via email or in person in the Archive and Library Study Room.⁷⁷⁷ A further source of information on Enthoven and her collection can be found in the Gabrielle Enthoven Theatre Museum Biographical File. This file consists of newspaper cuttings, speeches, notes and published chapters pertaining to Enthoven and her collecting activities and put together by museum staff.⁷⁷⁸ The institutional archive of the V&A also contains a number of records that chart the Museum's acquisition of Enthoven's collection. Again, no online record exists for these materials though they can be requested from staff at Blythe House.⁷⁷⁹

The V&A's Theatre and Performance Archives are located at Blythe House, an archive in Kensington Olympia, London. Access to these materials is available in the Archive and Library Study Room at Blythe House through appointment only. Appointments are available from Wednesday to Friday between 10:15 and 16:30. Appointments can be made by contacting TMenquiries@vam.ac.uk. Researchers can use the V&A's Search the Collections facility in order to locate online records and digital images of materials

⁷⁷⁶ Ramona Riedzewski. Message to the author. 8 July 2016. Email.

⁷⁷⁷ PN 1620.L7 Folio, Enthoven, Gabrielle, Collection of Press Cuttings 1911-52, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷⁷⁸ Biographical File for Gabrielle Enthoven, V&A Theatre and Performance Department.

⁷⁷⁹ See: Nominal File: Enthoven, Gabrielle (purchases made from the Enthoven Fund) Part 1, 1910-1930, Ref: MA/1/E732/1; Part 2, 1930-1950, Ref: MA/1/E732/2; Part 3, 1950-1969, Ref: MA/1/E732/3, and Part 4, 1925-1950, Ref: MA/1/E732/4.

included in the Theatre and Performance Collections.⁷⁸⁰ It is important to note that Enthoven's personal papers and the theatrical materials that comprise the Core Collections have long been accessible to the researcher regardless of their online presence (or lack thereof). Enthoven's knowledge of her collection and of the London stage was famously encyclopaedic and from 1925 Enthoven supplied materials to researchers who visited the Museum to work with her collection.

The V&A was established after the 1851 Great Exhibition with the aim of educating and inspiring the public. It was the first museum in the world to establish a dedicated Research Department and research continues to be a core activity of the Museum today. The V&A's core purpose in collecting theatre history materials is to enable and to encourage research into theatre and performance in the United Kingdom. The Museum's Theatre and Performance Collections are made accessible not only through the Archive and Library Study Room but also via the Museum's website, exhibitions, gallery displays, study days, workshops and other educational activities. The V&A continuously acquires theatrical material through gift and purchase, and systematically collects daily theatre reviews, and programmes from over 200 UK theatres. Enthoven's theatre collection continues to grow.

ii. The Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection: the University of Bristol Theatre Collection

The Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson Theatre Collection (MMTC) was created over the lifetimes of Raymond Mander (1911-1983) and Joe Mitchenson (1911-1992), two men who enjoyed professional careers within the theatre before dedicating their lives to

⁷⁸⁰ See http://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?q=Theatre%20&%20Performance%20&_ga=1.247795726.86999171.1464883086 - accessed 18 August 2016.

the collecting of theatrical ephemera. Unlike Enthoven's collection which consisted primarily of two-dimensional, paper-based materials, the MMTC is comprised of an eclectic array of artefacts including artwork, photographs, props, costumes, ceramics and playbills, and is particularly famed for its collection of over 400 Staffordshire and other pottery figures of actors and actresses in character. The collection has been housed in a number of different locations since it first moved from the couple's home to a public location in 1987, including Beckenham Place Park and the Jerwood Library of the Performing Arts, Trinity College of Music. The MMTC was legally transferred to the University of Bristol Theatre Collection in 2010 and is currently housed at two different sites belonging to the Theatre Collection: the main site at Park Row and a secondary off-site store at the university's Langford campus. The necessary construction of the Langford site was funded by the university in order to house the vast array of materials, including large paintings and busts, which comprise the MMTC.

The MMTC is an internationally renowned theatre collection containing materials dating from the eighteenth-century to modern times and is particularly recognised for its strengths in the London stage and in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theatrical history. At the heart of the collection are 1,500 reference boxes containing archival materials such as playbills, scripts, newspaper-cuttings, designs, and photographs. These reference boxes are arranged thematically and detail the lives and careers of every actor, director, producer, composer, and musician of note over the last 200 years of theatre history. The collection contains a great number of materials pertaining to Greater and Inner London theatres but, unlike Enthoven, Mander and Mitchenson also collected a wealth of documentation on regional theatres including the Octagon Theatre in Bolton and the Nottingham Playhouse. These reference boxes are supplemented by over 1,000 boxes of personal archives containing costumes, audio recordings, ephemera, and props

showcasing the personal and professional lives of theatre personalities including Noël Coward (with whom the two men enjoyed a close personal friendship, and who also features heavily in the RWTC). Unlike Enthoven, yet similarly to Waters, Mander and Mitchenson also collected materials relating to often neglected art forms including circus, music hall, toy theatres, variety, and magic. The extensive library of over 15,000 volumes that accompanied the MMTC to Bristol is currently being amalgamated with the Theatre Collection's existing library.

In addition to the theatrical materials contained in the MMTC, the collection also contains a number of boxes comprising Mander and Mitchenson's personal papers. Like the personal papers of both Enthoven and Waters, these papers include correspondence, photographs, diaries, career papers, and newspaper-cuttings detailing the private lives of Mander and Mitchenson. The MMTC includes an estimated 19 boxes consisting primarily of Mander and Mitchenson's personal papers and effects. Like both Enthoven and Waters, these personal papers were added to the MMTC after the deaths of the two men and did not form a part of the theatre collection prior to the collection's transition to a public space.

The MMTC has always been available to the public, both as a private collection within Mander and Mitchenson's home, and in its numerous public locations. The two collectors regularly welcomed researchers into their home in order to provide access to the collection and they answered queries via letter and telephone. When the collection moved to its first public home in Beckenham Place Park, Richard Mangan was employed to oversee the collection. At this time there existed a slip catalogue for the library and an index card catalogue for the pottery; the extent and scope of the remainder of the

collection's contents existed within the embodied knowledge of Mangan himself who assisted the public with their enquiries.

Today, everything within the MMTC remains available to the public, though there are varying levels of cataloguing across different sections of the collection. For example, the 1,500 reference boxes at the heart of the collection have been catalogued to file level,⁷⁸¹ whilst individual file level catalogue lists for Greater London Theatres, Inner London Theatres, Regional Theatres and Actors can be viewed online.⁷⁸² Most other sections of the MMTC, including Mander and Mitchenson's personal papers, are not catalogued and a specific date as to when this cataloguing will be completed cannot be offered.⁷⁸³ The cataloguing of the MMTC will be a gradual process over at least ten years depending on factors including successful grant applications. Staff at the Theatre Collection can advise researchers on materials that are not currently catalogued and make these available subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. A useful resource for researchers is ArenaPal, a website that includes over 5,000 digital images of items taken from the MMTC.⁷⁸⁴

The University of Bristol Theatre Collection is open to everyone and the entire MMTC is available to the public. The Theatre Collection has a reading room located at Park Row in which materials can be viewed. Researchers are advised to arrange an appointment in order for staff to ensure the requested material is available. The reading room is open Monday, 12pm-16:45pm, and Tuesday-Friday, 9:30am-16:45pm. Though researchers do not have access to the off-site store at the Langford campus, requested materials can be

⁷⁸¹ For spreadsheets containing file lists for the reference boxes see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatre-collection/explore/theatre/mander--mitchenson-collection/> - accessed 18 August 2016.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Laura Gardner. Message to the author. 17 August 2016. Email.

⁷⁸⁴ See <http://www.arenapal.com/cms/> - accessed 18 August 2016.

brought over from the store to the Park Row site for research purposes. Park Row also contains an open-access reference library and a small exhibition area which displays a number of items from the Theatre Collection. Enquires and appointments can be made by telephone on +44(0)117 331 5045 or by email on theatre-collection@bristol.ac.uk.

The MMTC represents forty per cent of the University of Bristol Theatre Collection's holdings and signified the largest acquisition in the Collection's entire history. Founded in 1951 to serve the university's drama department, the first of its kind in the United Kingdom, the Theatre Collection is now one of the world's largest archives of British Theatre History and Live Art. The archive continues to serve its original purpose as a resource for inspiring and encouraging new theatre research within and beyond the university and the wider Bristol community. The Theatre Collection is motivated by the desire to 'curate a world class collection relating to the history of British theatre that provides a unique insight into theatre, the process of creating theatre and theatre's broader cultural contexts'.⁷⁸⁵ Strengths of the archive at Bristol include: theatre in the South West, nineteenth-century theatre, Post-Second World War theatre, live art and performance art, scenery and costume design, and other related artwork.

iii. The Roy Waters Theatre Collection: Royal Holloway, University of London

Roy Waters (1928-2010) collected theatrical ephemera ranging from the seventeenth- to the twenty-first century for over a period of forty years and bequeathed his collection to The Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections upon his death in 2010. Waters's private collection, including theatrical books, postcards, photographs, tinsel portraits and

⁷⁸⁵ University of Bristol Theatre Collection, *Collections Development Policy* (June 2016).

models of toy theatres, came to be known as The Roy Waters Theatre Collection (RWTC).

Before his death in May 2010, Waters made arrangements with Royal Holloway, University of London concerning the housing and maintenance of his theatre collection. Waters bequeathed his entire collection of theatrical artefacts, papers, books, and materials to the university archive together with the sum of £80,000 for the purposes of cataloguing and housing the collection for future researchers. Royal Holloway began this process in March 2011 and the fully catalogued collection was finally made available to external researchers in October 2012 following a launch party and drinks reception hosted by the university.

Waters's theatre collection contains a vast and eclectic array of materials including printed documents such as cigarette cards and three-dimensional objects such as Agatha Walker wax figurines of *The Beggar's Opera*. There is a particular emphasis on materials featuring popular actors, actresses and dramatists. Waters's collection vividly illustrates the theatrical careers of well-known performers from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, through autograph letters, photographs, news-cuttings, prints, playbills, programmes and artefacts. The collection is comprised of over 300 boxes of materials and includes over 3000 photographic postcards; over 8,000 programmes; almost 400 pieces of sheet music including songs performed by Madame Vestris; over 3,000 books relating to the history of the stage, famous dramatists, actors and actresses; runs of periodicals such as 'Play Pictorial' and 'Music Hall Records', and hundreds of photographs, particularly cartes de visite and cabinet photographs, of theatrical performers. Highlights of the collection include letters written by Oscar Wilde, a Samuel

de Wilde painting of Stephen Kemble as Falstaff, a sick-note for J. S. Grimaldi, and a large collection of programmes from the nineteenth- to the twenty-first century.

As Waters's collection continued to grow over a period of forty years, specific areas of interest began to develop. The collection has a particular emphasis on materials relating to Noël Coward, Henry Irving, and Oscar Wilde, all three of which merit their own discrete collections within the RWTC. Oscar Wilde came to be Waters's greatest passion and notable items in the collection relating to Wilde include a number of very rare photographs of Wilde taken by Napoleon Sarony and Vanity Fair prints of the legal teams involved in Wilde's court cases.

The RWTC also includes 80 boxes and 1 file containing Waters's personal papers, a substantially greater number than those included in either Enthoven's collection or within the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection. Like the personal papers of Enthoven, Waters's papers consist of materials ranging from private photographs and correspondence to diaries, Christmas cards, and career papers. These papers provide an intimate insight into Waters's homosexuality, his career, his health, and the motivations that propelled his desire to collect. Waters made a conscious decision to include his personal archive within his theatre collection after his death and he made arrangements for his personal papers to make the move to Royal Holloway alongside his collected theatre materials. Whilst Waters was alive he invited individuals into his home to study or view items from his theatre collection. Waters's personal papers, however, were only made public, and publically accessible to researchers, upon his death and upon the collection's arrival and subsequent cataloguing at the university archive.

The RWTC is fully housed and catalogued as a result of the £80,000 that Waters left to the Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections. The entire collection is available to the public subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 whilst all records containing personal information about individuals are subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. For these reasons, there are a small number of materials that have restricted access. These materials are clearly marked and will become publically accessible in due course.

The collection has an online catalogue featuring item level descriptions of all the materials that comprise the RWTC.⁷⁸⁶ Royal Holloway endeavours to give Waters's collection an online presence through blogs from researchers who have worked with the collection as well as online exhibitions on the archive's website featuring digital images from the collection and detailed contextual descriptions. The university archive also mounted an exhibition featuring highlights from the collection in September 2011, a year before the collection was opened up for public research.

Materials from the Roy Waters Theatre Collection can be viewed by appointment only at Royal Holloway, University of London's Egham campus. The collection is housed in a single room in the university archive on the third floor of the South Tower of the Founder's Library. Access to the archive reading room is by prior appointment Wednesday to Friday, 9:30-13:00 and 14:00-16:30. Contact +44 (0)1784 443814 or email archives@royalholloway.ac.uk.

⁷⁸⁶ See <http://www.calmview.eu/royalholloway/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=RW> – accessed 25 July 2016.

Royal Holloway Archives and Special Collections were historically concerned with maintaining records relating to the history of higher education for women and records that chronicle the foundation and development of both Bedford and Royal Holloway colleges. The archive holds over fifty collections of personal papers relating to early students and staff. However, the university archive also collects special collections which support research strengths within the curriculum including women's history, history of higher education and theatre history. In addition to the RWTC, Royal Holloway also houses the Gay Sweatshop, Half Moon and RedShift Theatre Collections, all of which support theatre research conducted by Royal Holloway students and staff as well as external academics and enthusiasts. The university is currently working towards achieving Archives Service Accreditation, the UK wide standard for archives services which defines good practice and agreed standards.