

being accompanied by the person who made the record. Over the years exceptions have evolved, most, but not all of which, reflect common sense. Ewart provides a brief introduction to the hearsay problem and newer problems created by photocopies and computer copies but the bulk of the publication is devoted to the statutory and common law exceptions to the hearsay rule which allow for the introduction of documents into court proceedings.

The admissibility of public documents is only one of these exceptions, but it is the one of most interest to archivists. Ewart details the criteria determining what is a public record as well as the procedures for the introduction of such records into court. Of some interest to those whose collections contain corporate records is the fact that under some circumstances they may be considered as public records. The book is thankfully not an exhaustive treatment of the public document question and Ewart deals in twenty-six pages with a subject that the multi-volume *Wigmore on Evidence* takes over 350 pages to cover. Additional chapters deal with business and banking records, and an appendix contains provisions of provincial and federal evidence acts referring to documents.

Cases involving documents which have been held in an archives have not been frequently before the courts and it is therefore not surprising to find little mention of the question in this publication. For archivists who have confidence in the importance of their collections it comes as a bit of a shock to read a comment in a 1905 case that has been favourably received by Ontario courts. In speaking of the common law requirement that a public record introduced into court be a permanent record Lord Watson stated: "No doubt the document survives, but the mere fact that a document intended for a temporary purpose of this kind, is found, after a long lapse of years in the archives of a Government office, does not constitute it the authority of a register." (p. 156)

While this is not a necessary volume for every archives library, its value (should you or your documents have to go to court) is such that it would be a useful acquisition for the collection of your legal advisor. The price may seem steep for those unfamiliar with the cost of legal texts but it is well within the expected range for a volume of its type.

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Le labyrinthe du monde. Volume I. Souvenirs pieux. MARGUERITE YOURCENAR. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1974. 369 p. \$4.95 pa.

Le labyrinthe du monde. Volume II. Archives du Nord. MARGUERITE YOURCENAR. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1977. 374 p. ISBN 2-07-037328-2 \$4.95 pa.

Marguerite Yourcenar was honoured in 1980 as the first woman to be elected to the prestigious *Académie française* since its inception in 1635. Born in Brussels in 1903, Yourcenar published her first work, a novel entitled *Alexis ou le Traité du vain Combat*, in 1928. Since then, she has produced another six novels, two plays, several works of poetry, a number of collections of essays, and translations of a variety of Greek and English works. *Souvenirs pieux* and *Archives du Nord* are the first two volumes of an autobiographical/genealogical triptych. The third volume, provisionally titled *Quoi, l'Éternité?*, has not yet appeared.

In both *Souvenirs pieux* and *Archives du Nord* Yourcenar shows an uncommon appreciation of the records which enable her to bring her forebears back to life. Not only do the records she uses furnish her with the information she needs to tell her family's story, they also add their own unique dimension to the genealogical drama. In effect, Yourcenar moves the historian's footnotes from the bottom of the page into the body of the text where they become a part of the story she is reconstructing. *Souvenirs pieux* begins with the author's birth and works back to her maternal grandparents; in *Archives du Nord* she traces the history of her paternal family from earliest medieval times up to the moment of her own birth. Central to both stories are the "archives" left behind as evidence about the lives and times of her ancestors in Belgium and France. Yourcenar uses and describes a variety of records with which archivists are familiar. Letters from personal correspondence, photographs, postcards, family portraits, scrapbooks, diaries, educational and government records — all are skilfully handled, though perhaps more with the novelist's concern to capture the nuances of feeling and emotion than with the historian's preoccupation with the accuracy of socio-historical detail.

Yourcenar's discussion of nineteenth-century photography is one instance among many which could be cited to illustrate the important place she gives to records in the telling of her family's story. Photography, she suggests, has a magical — indeed spiritual — aspect. Posing in their bourgeois attire, her ancestors appear to her as phantoms, like poltergeists visiting her: "Pour la première fois, depuis que le monde est monde, la lumière, dirigée par l'ingéniosité humaine, capte des spectres de vivants. Ces gens, qui aujourd'hui sont authentiquement des fantômes se tiennent devant nous, comme leurs revenants pourraient le faire, vêtus de spectrales redingotes et de fantomales crinolines. Peut-être n'a-t-on jamais remarqué que les premiers grands portraits photographiques sont contemporains des premières séances spirites."

Of course, the titles which Yourcenar chose for the two volumes of *Le labyrinthe du monde* also attest to her appreciation of the significance of records. *Souvenirs pieux* refers to the personal devotional journals kept by individuals, including her mother. Described in some detail by the author, these journals were illustrated with religious icons and annotated with personal prayers which might reflect the most deeply felt ideas and feelings of their owners.

"Archives" also takes on new proportions in *Le labyrinthe du monde*. Although the title *Archives du Nord* refers to an actual archival institution, Yourcenar undoubtedly intended the title to have a much broader and more profound significance which, perhaps, could only have been sensed and expressed by one endowed with such extraordinary literary sensibility. Her notion of archives includes not only the records at the institution, but all the evidence in personal possessions and property (les châteaux) which were or have remained part of the family patrimony and conversations with surviving witnesses. And at the primordial beginning of *Archives du Nord*, in the absence of conventional records, she draws on the landscape, the most permanent yet unyielding of records, to glimpse the lives of those who first roamed her family's domain. This too is part of the archives.

Yourcenar's conception of records also seems to expand beyond their putative physical definition to include a quasi-genetic function which has an almost metaphysical quality. For records are the means by which past generations transmit their personalities to future generations; they carry the substance which gives life and shapes life in succeeding generations. In addition, archives also have the power to impart life to our progenitors, for

the writer, whether archivist, genealogist, or historian, is like the heart pumping its vital substance into long-departed ancestors. *Le labyrinthe du monde*, in fact, bears eloquent testimony to the distorting effect and essential falsity of current conceptual and terminological conveniences in the archival and records management professions which imply that records are “active,” or alive, only so long as they are serving the cause of organizational or societal efficiency, effectiveness, and economy, that they pass into “dormant” middle age as their administrative usefulness decreases, and that they are “dead,” or archival, once they have lapsed into operational obsolescence. This description of the stages of the life cycle of records reflects the primacy of administrative culture today, a culture which, like any predominant culture, imposes its language and perspective on many aspects of contemporary society — including archives. Swamped as they often are by the demands of this situation, it is easy for archivists to forget the larger significance of their work. In reading Yourcenar’s books, I was happily reminded that, far from being records morticians working at some final resting place for lifeless matter, archivists are involved in preserving life through the care and study of records, the living cells of individual and collective memory.

Those who are interested in sampling Marguerite Yourcenar’s writing can now consult the growing number of English translations which have accompanied her recent popularity in the English-speaking world. *The Dark Brain of Piranesi*, a collection of essays on literary subjects originally published in 1962 under the title *Sous bénéfice d’inventaire*, is her most recently translated work.

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Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War. MARIA TIPPETT. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984. xii, 136 p. ISBN 0-8020-2541-2 \$24.95.

On entering the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, the current visitor first sees an enormous black, white, and red canvas the size of a Baroque altarpiece floating above the staircase: Edward Wadsworth’s *Dazzle-Ships in Drydock at Liverpool*. Having ascended the staircase, he soon confronts the signature picture in the National Gallery’s Old Master Collection: Benjamin West’s *The Death of Wolfe*. That both these pictures came to the gallery as part of the remarkable Canadian War Memorials Fund (CWMF) is not acknowledged in either case. Since large-scale acts of arts patronage in Canada are very infrequently encountered, it is particularly surprising that the recipient institution should have failed to give credit where credit is due. Lest we forget the generosity and vision behind Lord Beaverbrook’s scheme to document Canada’s contribution to World War I by commissioning mostly English and Canadian artists to produce an unprecedented number of works of art of all kinds, Maria Tippett has focused on this singular act of patronage to reconstruct a chapter of our cultural heritage. The story had been outlined before in Major R.F. Wodehouse’s *A Check List of The War Collections* published by the National Gallery in 1968, but not with the abundance of detail or with the in-depth analysis of the results which Tippett offers in this illustrated essay.

As a newspaperman, Beaverbrook was very familiar with the idea of the artist-journalist (often competent hacks who had supplied sketches of the Crimean, American Civil, and Boer Wars from the front for the illustrated press), but he did not