

What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift

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RÉSUMÉ Cet essai analyse l'histoire de la pensée archivistique depuis la publication du Manuel hollandais il y a un siècle. Il suggère qu'un nouveau paradigme émerge au sein de la profession sur la base de ce passé inspirant. Les idées des principaux penseurs des traditions archivistiques d'Europe, d'Amérique du Nord, ou d'Australie sont considérées dans le contexte de leur époque respective que leurs contributions aient été de premier plan ou symboliques. L'accent est mis sur ces théoriciens qui ont su reconnaître et articuler les changements radicaux affectant la nature des archives, les créateurs d'archives, les systèmes de gestion des documents, l'utilisation des archives, ainsi que les mutations de société à survenir dans les domaines culturel, juridique, technologique, social, et philosophique qui ont eu une influence sur la théorie et la pratique archivistiques. Tout cela s'imbrique aujourd'hui dans les différents types de discours qui sous-tendent la pratique professionnelle. Des lors, on voit cinq thèmes émerger de l'évolution de l'archivistique au cours des cent dernières années. Les tendances actuelles suggèrent qu'il faut revoir les bases conceptuelles des principes archivistiques traditionnels pour mettre davantage l'accent sur le processus plutôt que sur le produit en vue de mieux protéger la mémoire des nations et des personnes.

ABSTRACT This essay analyzes the history of archival thought since the publication of the Dutch *Manual* a century ago and suggests that from this inspiring past a new conceptual paradigm is emerging for the profession. Ideas of leading or symbolic thinkers within the European, North American, and Australian archival traditions are considered within the context of their times. The focus is on those theorists able to recognize and articulate radical changes in the nature of records, record-creating organizations, record-keeping systems, record uses, and in the wider cultural, legal, technological, social, and philosophical trends in society, as well as the impact of these changes on archival theory and practice. That articulation forms our collective discourse, the metatext or narrative that animates our professional practice, and from it five broad themes are seen to emerge from the evolution of archives over the last one hundred years. For the future, the trends of the century suggest the need to reconceptualize traditional archival principles from a product-focused to a process-oriented activity, to preserve in the best manner the collective memory of nations and peoples.

Prologue: Memory, Archives, and Archival History

The history of archival thought in this century reflects the interaction of

archival theory and practice as archivists everywhere have sought to preserve the memory of the world.¹ Former National Archivist of Canada and ICA President Jean-Pierre Wallot has set the inspiring goal for archivists of “building a living memory for the history of our present.” The resulting “houses of memory,” in his words, will contain “the keys to the collective memory” of nations and peoples, and to the protection of rights and privileges. Thereby the world’s citizens can open the doors to personal and societal well-being that comes from experiencing continuity with the past, from a sense of roots, of belonging, of identity.² Archivists recall that Memory, in Greek mythology, is the Mother of all the Muses. Through her, society may be nursed to healthy and creative maturity.

Yet such societal or collective memory has not been formed haphazardly throughout history, nor are the results without controversy. Historians in a postmodernist milieu are now studying very carefully the processes over time that have determined what was worth remembering and, as important, what was forgotten, deliberately or accidentally. Such collective “remembering”—and “forgetting”—occurs through galleries, museums, libraries, historic sites, historic monuments, public commemorations, and archives—perhaps most especially through archives.

French historian Jacques Le Goff refers to the politics of archival memory: since ancient times, those in power decided who was allowed to speak and who was forced into silence, both in public life and in archival records. Indeed, archives had their institutional origins in the ancient world as agents for legitimizing such power and for marginalizing those without power. This initial emphasis has continued. Medieval archives, scholars now find, were collected—and later often weeded and reconstructed—not only to keep evidence of legal and business transactions, but also explicitly to serve historical and sacral/symbolic purposes, but only for those figures and events judged worthy of celebrating, or memorializing, within the context of their time. Taking the opposite perspective of those marginalized by the archival enterprise, American historian Gerda Lerner has convincingly traced from the Middle Ages to this century the systemic exclusion of women from society’s memory tools and institutions, including archives. World War I archives are now revealed to have been subjected to significant tampering and alteration in order to make Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig appear less culpable for the slaughter on the Western Front over which he had command and much responsibility. And from yet another perspective, archivists in developing countries are now seriously questioning whether classic archival concepts that emerged from the written culture of European bureaucracies are appropriate for preserving the memories of oral cultures. All acts of societal remembering, in short, are culturally bound and have momentous implications. As Czech novelist Milan Kundera asserts, “the struggle against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”³ But whose memory? And who determines the outcome of the struggle?

These questions seem to me the central issues of archival history. How, for example, have archivists reflected these changing societal realities and power struggles as they built their “houses of memory”? How have archival assumptions, concepts, and strategies reflected the dominant structures and societal ethos of their own time? Upon what basis, reflecting what shifting values, have archivists decided who should be admitted into their houses of memory, and who excluded? To answer these questions, we need an intellectual history of our profession. We need to understand better our own politics of memory, the very ideas and assumptions that have shaped us, if we want our “memory houses” to reflect more accurately all components of the complex societies they allegedly serve. Archival history has other uses too. Canadian archival educator Barbara Craig has stated the matter eloquently: “Just as personal identity is anchored in a strong historical sense[,] so is our professional identity—both come from the ability to experience ... continuity. Surely if you have nothing to look backward to, and with pride, you have nothing to look forward to with hope.”⁴ Without continuity with the past, future directions lack legitimacy. Without understanding our predecessors’ intellectual struggles, we lose the benefit of their experiences and are condemned to repeat their errors. As Shakespeare discerned, “what is past is prologue.” Before archivists as a profession can write their prologue for the next century, they need to understand better their own past.

Exploring the Archival Discourse: Possibilities and Limitations

Many books could (and should) be written by archivists about their professional history, across the centuries and millennia, across cultures, languages, gender, and nationalities, across differing media and differing types of record creators, across the bridge of theory and practice, that is, across the chasm of the guiding principles and ideas on one side and their actual implementation in archival institutions on the other. This single (if rather long) essay is limited to but one century in the rich history of archival ideas, and is further limited to the Western European tradition through a Canadian filter. I think, however, that the analytical methodology employed here might be useful in other historical contexts concerning the archival past.

In my view, analyzing the history of archival ideas requires listening to the archival discourse of the time or place involved. Archival historical analysis requires revisiting the principal professional discussions that leading archivists had about their work and with each other. It requires hearing again, and understanding within the context of their time, and our own, their assumptions, ideas, and concepts.

Archival “theory” and archival “theorist” in this approach do not relate, respectively, to some immutable set of fixed principles and their constant defenders across varying realms of practice. That kind of historical perspective

is rather too Positivist and outdated for a late twentieth-century observer to adopt. Rather, archival thinking over the century should be viewed as constantly evolving, ever mutating as it adapts to radical changes in the nature of records, record-creating organizations, record-keeping systems, record uses, and the wider cultural, legal, technological, social, and philosophical trends in society. Archival ideas formed in one time and place reflect many of these external factors, which ideas are often reconstructed, even rediscovered in another time and place, or reshaped across generations in the same place. The best archival theorists are those who have been able to recognize and articulate these radical changes in society and then deal conceptually with their impact on archival theory and practice. That articulation forms our collective discourse, the metatext or narrative animating our professional practice, and thus properly is the focus of an intellectual history of archives.

In examining the archival discourse of this century since the publication of the famous Dutch *Manual* of 1898, I am limiting my analysis to some key European, North American, and Australian thinkers whose works have found expression in English-language sources. Moreover, my focus will be primarily on the twin pillars of the archival profession, appraisal and arrangement/description, as these have been affected by changes in cultures, media, and technology, even while recognizing that lively debates have occurred in the profession around preservation issues, public programming, or the archives as a place of custody, among others. And given the main audience of this journal, I have placed some emphasis on Canadian traditions, where relevant, within this larger Western European narrative. There are of course many archival traditions outside these geographical and linguistic limitations. Yet in some ways that is irrelevant, for my thesis is that the analysis in this paper, despite my limited foci, will reveal historical trends that have some universality even within the broad pluralism that characterizes the international archival profession. While I give voice to particular speakers in one language, I am suggesting that the issues they have addressed will be found to transcend their own national and linguistic circumstances and thus be relevant to all archivists.

The Dutch Manual of 1898: Archival Principles Defined

Exactly one hundred years ago, the Dutch trio of Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin published their famous *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*. Of course Muller, Feith, and Fruin's work did not spring to life in a vacuum during the 1890s. Archives in various forms had existed for centuries, but modern archival principles *per se*, despite some obscure precedents, were only articulated in detail in nineteenth-century France and Germany.⁵ Yet, ironically, the important treatises which brought these principles to world attention in the early twentieth century were not written by German or French authors, but rather by Dutch, English, and Italian archivists.⁶

Of these, the Dutch *Manual* has had a major influence, because it was the first, and because it reached many archivists through French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese, and other translations.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin produced their manual for the Dutch Association of Archivists, in cooperation with the State Archives of the Netherlands and the Ministry of the Interior. Each of the one hundred rules advanced in the *Manual* was formally debated by the Society during the 1890s. Typical of a work written by committee, the accompanying text bears many marks of careful qualification and elaborate examples, even if the rules themselves are forcefully stated. The *Manual* also reflects Muller's exposure to French archival theory from his attendance in 1873 at the *École des chartes* in Paris and the introduction from Germany of the concept of provenance into several Dutch archives.

The Dutch authors' chief contribution was to articulate the most important principles (or "rules") concerning both the nature and the treatment of archives. The trio stated in their very first rule, which to them was "the foundation upon which everything must rest," that archives are "the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials...." Rules 8 and 16 enunciated the twin pillars of classic archival theory: archives so defined "must be kept carefully separate" and not mixed with the archives of other creators, or placed into artificial arrangements based on chronology, geography, or subject; and the arrangement of such archives "must be based on the original organization of the archival collection, which in the main corresponds to the organization of the administrative body that produced it." There, simply stated, are the concepts of provenance and original order. The latter rule of respecting and, if necessary, re-establishing the original filing and classification system used by the creator, was considered by the Dutch authors to be "the most important of all, ... from which all other rules follow." They believed that by so respecting the arrangement of original record-keeping systems, the all-important archival activity of elucidating the administrative context in which the records are originally created could be much facilitated.⁷

We now recognize certain limitations of the pioneering Dutch *Manual*. As noted, it is first and foremost about arrangement and description, as is reflected in the very title of the book; it has little to say about appraisal and selection as we now understand these terms. It is about government, public, or corporate records and their orderly transfer to archival repositories to preserve their original order and classification; it dismisses private and personal archives to the purview of libraries and librarians. Most important, the *Manual* is based on experience the authors had either with limited numbers of medieval documents susceptible to careful diplomatic analysis or with records found in well-organized departmental registries within stable administrations. Such experience led directly to their assumption, as noted above, that the "original organi-

zation of the archive” in the creating institution would correspond “in its main outline with the organization of the administration which produced it.”⁸

This close relationship no longer holds true in modern organizations where numerous record-keeping systems in several media in many sub-offices no longer closely correspond to the internal structural organization or to the multiple functions of the creating administration. Moreover, the computer and telecommunications revolutions of the last decade have radically accelerated this decentralization and diffusion, to a point where operational functions now cross all manner of structural or organizational lines. Herein lies the reason for the recent dissonance between the archival perceptions animating appraisal and electronic records strategies and those underpinning arrangement and description. A detailed understanding of rapidly changing administrative structures, functions, and work activities is central to modern archival appraisal and for controlling electronic records, as it is to contemporary business process reengineering and computer system design. Yet such understandings can no longer be derived solely from the study of records following the classic Dutch methodologies devised for arrangement and description.

The Dutch authors described accurately what they saw in the registries and administrative structures of their time, and from that experience they articulated our core professional principles. Yet as administrative structures have significantly changed over this century, these principles have sometimes been too rigidly defended or too literally interpreted. This is not the fault of the Dutch authors, but rather a tribute to the convincing nature of their work. Indeed, while the authors were rather too modest in describing their work as “tedious and meticulous,” they were generous, and realistic, in not wanting it to sit “like a heavy yoke on the shoulders of our colleagues. We shall not mind,” they stated, “if there are deviations from ... [the rules] in certain details or even in essentials.” Over the past century, there certainly have been deviations from, as well as confirmations of, the principles articulated by Muller, Feith, and Fruin.⁹ The importance of the Dutch *Manual* rests on its codification of European archival theory and its enunciation of a methodology for treating archives. Transatlantic archival pioneer Ernst Posner observed that the *Manual* gave “final sanction” to theoretical principles that had gradually been evolving throughout the previous century, while the first international archival congress in Brussels in 1910 formally endorsed the Dutch principles.¹⁰ As late as 1956, American archival theorist Theodore R. Schellenberg called the Dutch *Manual* “a Bible for modern archivists,”¹¹ and both he and English theorist Sir Hilary Jenkinson based their landmark books on this very solid Dutch foundation. Whether directly or through Jenkinson and Schellenberg, the work of Muller, Feith, and Fruin has widely influenced our collective theory and practice.

Sir Hilary Jenkinson: The Sanctity of Evidence Proclaimed

Twenty-four years after the Dutch book, Hilary Jenkinson produced the second

major treatise on archival theory and practice. Jenkinson's defence therein of archives as impartial evidence and his vision of the archivist as guardian of evidence have justly become clarion calls to the profession. In a passage that appears in no less than four of his addresses,¹² Jenkinson exclaimed:

The Archivist's career is one of service. He exists in order to make other people's work possible.... His Creed, the Sanctity of Evidence; his Task, the Conservation of every scrap of Evidence attaching to the Documents committed to his charge; his aim to provide, without prejudice or afterthought, for all who wish to know the Means of Knowledge.... The good Archivist is perhaps the most selfless devotee of Truth the modern world produces.

If records were the natural byproducts of administration, the untainted evidence of acts and transactions, then no post-creation interference could be allowed, Jenkinson asserted, or their character as impartial evidence would be undermined. If archives were the organic emanation of documents from a record creator, then severing any record from that organic whole seemed to violate fundamental archival principles as established by the Dutch. If records were to maintain their innocence in an archival setting, then any appraisal by the archivist was utterly inappropriate. Such exercise of "personal judgement" by the archivist, as Jenkinson knew appraisal must necessarily involve, would tarnish the impartiality of archives as evidence, as of course would any consideration of saving archives to meet their actual or anticipated uses by researchers. The archivist's role was to keep, not select archives. Consistent with such an approach, archivists were known in Britain as "keepers." While the huge volumes of records generated by the First World War gave Jenkinson a perspective which the Dutch archivists did not have, he never felt comfortable, despite some faint-hearted concessions later in his career, with archivists doing any sort of appraisal or selection.

Jenkinson's solution to this dilemma was to consign to the records creator the unwelcome task of reducing vast accumulations of modern records, thus "making the Administrator the sole agent for the selection and destruction of his own documents...." Archivists would then take charge of the remnant, in exactly the same way they cared in Jenkinson's day for medieval and early modern records, where because of small accumulations no destruction was necessary in an archival setting. While Jenkinson himself raised the concerns that these administrators may not destroy enough, or may destroy too much, or may even create records that consciously have one eye on history as much as provide unbiased evidence of transactions, he advanced no satisfactory solution to these dilemmas.

In fairness, it should be noted that Jenkinson did encourage a limited "archive-making" role for archivists, consisting of articulating standards whereby administrators could create and maintain high-quality archives in the future that would bear the characteristics of authentic, impartial evidence that he

thought were invested in past archives. This was hardly a satisfactory solution to appraisal, although it was a useful step. He admitted the insoluble dilemma, given his overall approach, that this “archive-making” intervention would have to distinguish more “important” agencies (and programmes and activities) from others, and yet these very judgements of importance and value—which are the foundation of modern archival appraisal—immediately undermine his impartial archivist, and therefore Jenkinson, always consistent at least, conceded that “upon this point we have no suggestions to offer”! He does not seem to have appreciated that even his limited intervention of setting standards for “archive-making” would also undermine the innocence of records as natural or pure accumulations that their administrators created, organized, and used in the normal course of business as they (and not standard-setting archivists) saw fit.¹³

American archivist Gerald Ham recently, starkly, but correctly commented on the central Jenkinsonian dilemma about appraisal: “Allowing the creator to designate what should be the archival record solves the problems of complexity, impermanence, and volume of contemporary records by ignoring them.”¹⁴ Jenkinson’s approach to appraisal and, indeed, to the very definition of archives would (no doubt to his horror) give sanction to record creators such as U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon or George Bush to destroy or remove from public scrutiny any records containing unfavourable evidence of their actions while in office, thus undermining both democratic accountability and historical knowledge. At its most extreme, Jenkinson’s approach would allow the archival legacy to be perverted by administrative whim or state ideology, as in the former Soviet Union, where provenance was undermined by the establishment of one state fonds and archival records attained value solely by the degree to which they reflected the “official” view of history.¹⁵

In the area of arrangement and description, Jenkinson introduced the concept of the “archive group” as a difference in interpretation, if not principle, from the European concept of the *fonds d’archives*. Jenkinson’s view was somewhat more all-encompassing, with his archive group containing the entirety of records “from the work of an Administration which was an organic whole, complete in itself, capable of dealing independently, without any added or external authority, with every side of any business which could normally be presented to it.” Consistent with his “very catholic definition” of archives as the entire records universe of an administration or agency, he admitted that the archive group for very large agencies might contain “*fonds within fonds*,” a subtlety which more recent codifiers of descriptive standards sometimes overlook. It is important to listen carefully to Jenkinson’s turn of phrase. He refers to an Administration which *was* an organic whole, thus illustrating again his focus, just like the Dutch trio, on medieval and early modern records, with their closed series, their stable and long-dead creators, and their status as inherited records from the past. That transfers of records from open-ended series from

fluid administrative structures might create anomalies to challenge the archive group concept did not occur to Jenkinson.¹⁶

Jenkinson had joined the Public Record Office in London in 1906, where his work focused almost exclusively on medieval and early nation-state records. This experience helps to explain his insistence on the legal character of archival records, their evidential nature, and their stability and inherited completeness. His archival assumptions also reflect his personal identification with the corporate culture of the prewar British Civil Service, which underpins his faith in the government “Administrator” being an honourable, educated, and civilized person capable of exercising disinterested judgements in terms of record preservation. Our world of lying presidents and corrupt commissars would have been entirely foreign, and doubtless repugnant, to him. As for his notions that “Truth” was revealed through archival documents or that the archivist was an unbiased “keeper” of records and a “selfless devotee of Truth,” Jenkinson was simply mirroring the empirical Positivism common to the historiography with which he was deeply familiar and schooled.

In summary, Jenkinson’s views on appraisal are no longer valid for modern records or for modern society’s expectations of what archives should do, nor is his perspective on the stable nature of administrations or the fixed order of record arrangement useful for modern descriptive problems. But his spirited defence of the evidential character of records certainly remains inspirational to archivists everywhere. As will be seen, his ideas are enjoying a revival today, especially in Australia and Canada, but also among many electronic records theorists everywhere, in the face of ephemeral records, virtual documents, decontextualized information, and increasing incidents of unscrupulous and haphazard record destruction.¹⁷ The trick for neo-Jenkinsonian enthusiasts is to follow the spirit, not the letter, of his magisterial assertions.

Two broad themes emerge in the history of European archival ideas up to 1930: archival principles had been derived primarily from solving problems in the arrangement and description of older records; and those principles very much reflected the authors’ time, place, and the type of records they encountered. A further illustration of these two themes may be found in the work of noted Italian archival theorist, Eugenio Casanova, whose principal work appeared in 1928. Like Jenkinson and the Dutch trio, Casanova mirrored the intellectual currents of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries when he, in the recent words of Italian archival commentator Oddo Bucci, “gave the discipline its empirical slant, constructed it as a descriptive science, and applied to it the imperative of positivist historiography, which aimed at the accumulation of facts rather than at the elaboration of concepts....” But such Positivist historiography and “fact”-based empiricism have by the late twentieth century long been discredited. Bucci notes that new societal changes fundamentally “undermine habits and norms of conduct, involving a break with principles that have long governed the processes whereby archival records are created, trans-

mitted, conserved and exploited. It is clear," he continues, "that radical innovations in archival practice are becoming increasingly incompatible with the continuance of a doctrine seeking to remain enclosed within the bulwarks of its traditional principles." What Bucci says of Casanova, and which is equally true of Jenkinson and the Dutch trio, is that archival principles are not fixed for all time, but, like views of history itself, or literature, or philosophy, reflect the spirit of their times and then are interpreted anew by succeeding generations.¹⁸

Facing Modern Records: T.R. Schellenberg and the American Voice

The next principal initiative in articulating the archival discourse came from the United States. Not having the luxury to formulate archival principles based on the meticulous analysis of limited numbers of old documents, nor able to rely solely on the "descriptive science" of Casanova, Jenkinson, and the Dutch authors, American archivists began their collective professional activity facing a mounting crisis of contemporary records, only a tiny fraction of which could be preserved as archives. When the National Archives in Washington was created in 1934, it inherited an awesome backlog of about one million metres of federal records, with a growth rate of more than sixty thousand metres annually. By 1943, under the expansion of the state to cope with the Great Depression and World War II, that growth rate had reached six hundred thousand metres annually.¹⁹ This had two principal results: the first was the emergence of the North American records management profession to help agencies cope with this paper avalanche; and the second was a fundamental reorientation of the archival profession in North America, and wherever its influential ideas were read and translated.

Margaret Cross Norton, a pioneering American archival writer and State Archivist of Illinois, asserted in 1944 that, in light of these incredible volumes of modern records, "it is obviously no longer possible for any agency to preserve all records which result from its activities. The emphasis of archives work," she noted in conscious contrast to Jenkinson, "has shifted from preservation of records to selection of records for preservation." Philip C. Brooks, a key thinker at the U.S. National Archives, was explicit in his criticism of Jenkinson's view that archivists could safely remain "aloof from responsibility for how public agencies managed their records," which would simply mean that "too many records would be badly handled and even lost before archivists took custody of them."²⁰ From these concerns came the American "life cycle" concept, where records were first organized and actively used by their creators, then stored for an additional period of infrequent use in off-site record centres, and then, when their operational use ended entirely, "selected" as archivally valuable and transferred to an archives, or declared non-archival and destroyed. Like Norton, Brooks argued for a close relationship throughout this whole "life cycle" between archivists doing such selection of records for long-term preser-

vation and records managers organizing and caring for active records in departments: the appraisal function, he argued, “can best be performed with a complete understanding of the records of an agency in their relationships to each other as they are created rather than after they have lain forgotten and deteriorating for twenty years.” Specifying how that selection work was actually to be done was left for Theodore R. Schellenberg to summarize from his colleagues’ work and then articulate in his landmark books and reports. In developing these selection or appraisal criteria, Schellenberg became “the father of appraisal theory in the United States.”²¹

Schellenberg asserted that records had primary and secondary values. Primary value reflected the importance of records to their original creator; secondary value their use to subsequent researchers. Primary value related to the degree to which records served their creators on-going operational needs—not unlike Jenkinson allowing the determination of long-term value to rest with the “Administrator.” Secondary values, which Schellenberg sub-divided into evidential and informational values, were quite different, for they reflected the importance of records for secondary research by subsequent users, not primary use by their original creator. On this point, Schellenberg explicitly denied that his “evidential value” was linked to Jenkinson’s sense of archives as “evidence.” For Schellenberg, evidential values reflected the importance of records for researchers, not for administrators, in documenting the functions, programmes, policies, and procedures of the creator. These values were to be determined, after appropriate research and analysis, by Schellenberg’s archivist, not by Jenkinson’s administrator. Informational value, the other half of secondary value, concerned the content of records relating to “persons, corporate bodies, things, problems, conditions, and the like” incidental to “the action of the Government itself.” Deciding which informational content was important, and which was not—deciding, that is, who gets invited into the archival “houses of memory” and who does not—was again to be determined by the archivist, drawing on his or her training as an historian and consulting with “subject-matter specialists,” in order to reflect as many research interests as possible.²² This search for informational value was most important to Schellenberg, given its “usefulness ... for the larger documentation of American life.”²³ Certainly consistent with his focus on secondary research, Schellenberg to his credit attempted much more than the Dutch trio or Jenkinson to build bridges between archivists and librarians, and between archivists caring for institutional records and those responsible for private manuscripts.²⁴

Another major change in archival thinking was introduced by Schellenberg and his American colleagues. The Dutch and Jenkinson believed that all material created and received by an administration was “archives.” For Schellenberg, “archives” were only that much smaller portion that had been chosen by the archivist for preservation from the larger, original whole, which he termed “records.” Records were the concern of records managers and

creating institutions; archives were the concern of archivists and archival institutions. Despite good cooperation between the two professions, and the “continuum”-like cooperation envisioned by Philip Brooks, the Schellenbergian distinction between “records” and “archives” has tended to emphasize the differences between records managers and archivists, and between records and archives, rather than their similarities and interconnections. That legacy creates strategic problems for archivists in a computerized world, because electronic records especially require “up front” intervention by archivists if records are to be preserved as archival evidence.²⁵

In arrangement and description, Schellenberg invented the record group concept as a tool to cope with the huge volumes of records generated by “a highly complex government” where, in his words, “no governmental unit completely meets Jenkinson’s requirements [for the archive group] ... of completeness and independence....” Schellenberg rightly noted that in modern administrations “all units are interrelated and few are completely independent in their dealing with the business that is their main concern.” Because of this complexity of administration and large volumes of records, the American record group “considered quantity, as well as provenance,” as a criterion for its creation. Such an approach necessarily proceeded “somewhat arbitrarily,” as such practical factors would differ across time and place in terms of assessing “the desirability of making the unit of convenient size and character for the work of arrangement and description and for the publication of inventories.”²⁶ Where the record group concept has been adopted, so too have been many of these arbitrary and practical compromises, to the point where some critics have asserted that the concept obscures more than protects provenance.²⁷

Schellenberg was pointed in his criticism of Jenkinson: “I’m tired of having an old fossil cited to me as an authority in archival matters.”²⁸ Rather than allow Jenkinson’s “Administrator” to decide what should be in archives, Schellenberg insisted that archivists should make this crucial decision themselves and work with records managers and subject specialists to influence the future shape of the archival record. Rather than shy away from records destruction, Schellenberg spearheaded the process that eventually destroyed millions of metres of records. Rather than insist on the alleged purity of either the European *fonds d’archives* or Jenkinson’s archive group, Schellenberg popularized the record group as an exercise in compromise seemingly suitable for the arrangement and description of records from complex government agencies.

In all this, Schellenberg reflected the contemporary American political culture of “New Deal statism, with its emphasis on the benefits of a management technocracy and of efficiency,” where the archivist became “a contributing partner to the corporate management team....”²⁹ Reflecting as well contemporary social engineering initiatives in the new fields of sociology, social work, and urban planning, and the major interventionist activities of government

reformers in Depression reconstruction projects, archivists could themselves likewise become efficient “engineers” intervening in and managing the world of contemporary records. Since Schellenberg’s generation also coincided in its upbringing with the widespread professionalization of academic history in the universities, it is also not surprising to find in his work the close identification of archivists with historians, and archival “informational value” with historical themes and interpretations.

Much praise is due to Schellenberg. Unlike Jenkinson, he anticipated the future rather than defended the past, and he joined management techniques to historical scholarship in archives. Despite working with federal government records and within a huge national bureaucracy, he also saw the need for archivists to be linked with broader cultural issues and allied information professions. Yet some of the compromises he encouraged, especially when amplified by his successors, now trouble some archivists.

One such issue is the concept of use-defined archives. Most American archivists after Schellenberg have until very recently emphasized—more than he did—that discerning real or anticipated use by scholars, and particularly by academic historians, should be the central methodology for determining which records have archival value. “Recent trends in historiography are of prime importance to us” was the appraisal advice offered by Meyer H. Fishbein, a leading appraisal thinker of the National Archives and Records Service in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁰ Maynard Brichford, in the manual on appraisal approved by the Society of American Archivists in 1977, asserted that “successful appraisal is directly related to the archivist’s primary role as a representative of the research community. The appraiser should approach records ... [by] evaluating demand as reflected by past, present, and prospective research use.... In reaching a decision ... they consider long-term needs for documentary sources and the potential demands of scholars.”³¹ Yet such use-based approaches to defining the very nature of archives, Gerald Ham later objected, resulted in “a selection process [that was] so random, so fragmented, so uncoordinated, and even so often accidental ... [and one that] too often reflected narrow research interests rather than the broad spectrum of human experience. If we cannot transcend these obstacles,” Ham warned, “then the archivist will remain at best nothing more than a weathervane moved by the changing winds of historiography.”³² Worse yet, a use-based approach to archives removes records from their organic context within the activities of their creator and imposes criteria on both appraisal and description that are external to the record and its provenance.³³ By so shifting the appraisal focus of archivists and the definition of archival value away from record-creating processes and record creators, advocates of use-defined appraisal ultimately reduce archival theory to “much ado about shelving,” that is, to a few practical rules meant to supplement what is for them the key knowledge base for archivists: the historical subject content of records, recent historiography, and users’ expectations and wishes.³⁴

Societal Analysis and Functional Appraisal: Towards a Broader View of Archives

If archivists are not to appraise, acquire, and describe as archival records primarily those that historians and other users want (as Schellenberg and his successors advocated); if archivists are not comfortable assuming that the records creator will be able to decide fairly what records to keep, beyond a very narrow range needed to meet the agency's legal obligations and short-term accountabilities (as Jenkinson recommended), what are archivists to do? Answers and alternative approaches have come from Germany, the United States, and Canada. Believing that archives should reflect more globally the society that creates them, these differing "societal approaches" explore new conceptions of archival theory and methodology. This perspective represents a fundamental change in the archival discourse from one based on the state to one reflecting the broader society that the state serves.³⁵ Now, it may be said that archives are of the people, for the people, often even by the people.³⁶

Perhaps the first major voice raised in favour of a new societal paradigm for archives was by Germany's Hans Booms, although Schellenberg's secondary values indirectly (and through historians' filters) also attempted to break the statist paradigm. Booms remains the most important thinker on the philosophical underpinnings of archival appraisal. Reacting against the worst excesses of the traditional archival statist approach, whereby the state's ideological values are imposed on the very definition of the archival record, Booms asserted that society must be allowed to define its own core values, and that these values should then be representatively mirrored through archival records. "If there is indeed anything or anyone qualified to lend legitimacy to archival appraisal," Booms wrote, "it is society itself, and the public opinions it expresses—assuming, of course, that these are allowed to develop freely. The public and public opinion," Booms observed, "...sanctions public actions, essentially generates the socio-political process, and legitimizes political authority. Therefore, should not public opinion also legitimize archival appraisal? Could it also not provide the fundamental orientation for the process of archival appraisal?"³⁷ His essential insight was that society, not Schellenberg's specialized users and not Jenkinson's state administrators, must generate the values that define "importance" and therefore archival significance and archival retention. This led to the corollary that "archivists need to orient themselves to the values of the records' contemporaries, for whose sake the records were created." In 1991 Booms asserted that society's values were best identified not directly by research into societal dynamics and public opinion, as he had earlier advocated, but indirectly through research into the functions of those key records creators designated by society to realize its needs and wishes. He asserted that "archivists require a useful analysis of records-creating functions to help them connect the documentary needs ... with the records themselves." In this way,

there is an “immediate transition” from his admittedly amorphous attempt earlier to define societal values through public opinion research to a very concrete focus on the provenance of records as expressed through the functionality of their creators, which, in Booms’ words, “is why [and how] provenance must remain the immutable foundation of the appraisal process.”³⁸

Booms’ approach of mirroring societal values through the functions of the record creator is also the direction of the new macroappraisal acquisition strategy implemented in 1991 at the National Archives of Canada and articulated in my own theoretical writings since the late 1980s. This new conceptualization is finding increasing favour in some international circles. In this Canadian approach, the older archival focus on the subject content of records, and on having that content directly reflect public opinion or users’ needs or historical trends, has been replaced by a new focus on the larger or “macro” context of the records, as revealed through their creators’ functions, programmes, activities, and transactions, that is, through the context and process of the records’ own creation. I drew inspiration for my own theoretical work and for the National Archives practical models from Booms’ societal ideals, and those of his colleague, Siegfried Buttner. I did so, however, at a *philosophical* level (i.e., archival “value” should be defined by social constructs and societal functions, rather than by either Jenkinson’s creators or Schellenberg’s users). I did not do so at the *strategic* level (i.e., an appraisal methodology, like Booms’ first model, whereby archivists would research directly into societal trends and public opinion issues to try directly to “document society”). Rather, the National Archives has adopted a functional-structural macroappraisal methodology that focuses research instead on records creators rather than directly on society, on the assumption that those creators, and those citizens and organizations with whom they interact, indirectly represent the collective functioning of society. This is similar to Booms’ 1991 concept of an “immediate transition” from amorphous societal functions to the concrete provenance-based institutional manifestations of those functions. I thus consciously placed my writings and the National Archives appraisal methodology in a context-based, provenance-centred framework rather than in a content-based, historical-documentalist one.³⁹

This Canadian reinterpretation of provenance makes that principle more conceptual than physical, as is appropriate for the age of the electronic record. The “new” provenance is also more functional than structural, as is fitting for an era where organizational stability is everywhere disappearing. But it is provenance nonetheless, whereby the contextual circumstances of record creation are again made the centre of the archivist’s universe of activities, rather than some external criteria such as use, public opinion, or historiographical trends. The Canadian approach is not driven by the Dutch or Jenkinsonian *literal* provenance principles based on arrangement and description, which asserted an exact congruity between creator function, creator structure, and record-

keeping system. Nevertheless, the Canadian approach does recognize and respect the intent behind those older principles, which was to link recorded information with the organic context of institutional (or personal) activity. That organic context of activity can no longer be determined, initially at least, by trying to appraise billions of records in paper form, let alone their more elusive electronic or visual counterparts. Rather, the focus must first be on the organic context itself of record-keeping, and thus on analyzing and appraising the importance of government functions, programmes, activities, and transactions—and citizen interactions with them—that cause records to be created. Then the appraisal conclusions so derived are tested before they are finalized by a selective hermeneutic “reading” of the actual record “texts”—but only after the macroappraisal of functions and business processes has been completed.⁴⁰

The state archives in the Netherlands has adopted at the very same time as the Canadians a similar method of appraising government functions rather than appraising individual records. In its well-known PIVOT project, the Dutch decided that, “instead of looking to traditional principles of archives and records management, which in fact tend chiefly to select and retain information generated by the administrative processes, the proposed strategy bases the evaluation of information on its role in government activities and tasks. Following such an approach, agencies would first analyze the processes critical to their missions and the tasks required to carry them out; selection and evaluation of information used in these activities should reflect the appraised value of the tasks.... In general, information needed to reconstruct the critical functions of government is what should be retained....”⁴¹ For the Dutch as for the Canadians, appraisal is not focused, in the first instance, on the records or on individual documents, but on the government functions or tasks or activities that generate records. The Canadian project is much broader in scope, however, for it also involves the interaction of the citizen with the state and the impact of state actions on the citizens as revealed through case file series, whereas the Dutch project focuses primarily on policy and internal tasks and is not as concerned with case-level implementation and related records. While the Dutch PIVOT project is radical in its functional methodology, it remains more statist than societal in its focus.

Another new theoretical approach certainly employing “societal” rather than “statist” thinking has been elaborated by Helen Samuels in the United States, with her concept of the “documentation strategy.” Recognizing that the scale of modern record-keeping can only be understood by some level of analysis above that of the record and its creating institution, Samuels conceived the documentation strategy as a multi-institutional, cooperative analysis that combines many archives’ appraisal activities in order to document the main themes, issues, activities, or functions of society. The documentation strategy integrates in its analysis official government and other institutional records with personal manuscripts and visual media, as well as published information and even oral

history. Its focus is not in the first instance provenancial, however, but on themes such as educating college students or developing the computer industry.⁴² Not surprisingly, therefore, the documentation strategy approach has been criticized because it carries, unless applied on a very narrow and local basis, the threat of overlapping themes/functions and thus the possibility of duplication of archivists' research work and of records acquisition. Moreover, the themes or subjects chosen will always be in dispute, and thus the approach reflects some of the "weathervane" faults of the American Schellenbergian tradition.⁴³ For these reasons, the documentation strategy is most appropriate for the world of personal manuscripts and non-corporate records rather than for government or institutional records, or as a supplement to the latter to be used in collection strategies to target related creators of private fonds for acquisition.

Samuels recognized this Schellenbergian fallacy in her earlier work, and has since developed the concept of the "institutional functional analysis" in her important book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*, which, despite its title, has applicability for any institutional archives. Here she argues that archivists first need, not unlike what Hans Booms recommended in 1991, and as practised by the National Archives of Canada and the Dutch PIVOT project, to research and understand the functions and activities of their own institutions, and she outlines a precise methodology for such functional analysis leading to a strategic plan to appraise each institution's records. In retrospect, Samuels agrees that she really developed her two broad concepts in reverse order of logic: once the "institutional functional analysis" has allowed the archivist to appraise the records of his or her parent or sponsoring institution, then the archivist can intelligently engage in a wider, interinstitutional "documentation strategy" to locate related personal records that might complement or supplement the institutional archives. With both concepts, the key issue for Samuels is that, on a much broader scale than archivists traditionally have done, "analysis and planning must precede collecting."⁴⁴ By bridging the world of corporate records archivists with that of personal manuscript archivists, by focusing on the entire interrelated information universe (records in all media as well as publications and other cultural artifacts) of all relevant creators rather than just a portion of them, by advocating a research-based, functional approach to institutional appraisal rather than the old search for "values" in the content of records, Samuels provides an important direction for coping with the voluminous records of complex modern organizations and contemporary societies, and thus for revitalizing archival theory.

Samuels' approach of searching for connections between formal institutional archives and private manuscript archives was anticipated in Canada by the "total archives" concept which, from the early 1970s, articulated a long-evolving Canadian tradition.⁴⁵ That tradition is certainly shared by other countries, but rarely with the balance between public and private archives at the national level that Canada displays, and indeed in virtually all non-business

archival institutions across the country. The Canadian “total archives” approach involves the integration of the official role of archives as guardians of their sponsors’ continuing corporate requirements for recorded evidence of their transactions *and* the cultural role of archives as preservers of societal memory and historical identity, in both cases encompassing all media. Like Booms, Cook, and Samuels, the Canadian approach therefore reflects a wider vision of archives, one sanctioned in and reflective of society at large rather than one shaped primarily by powerful interest groups of either users or creators, or the state. In the rather inspired words of Canadian archivist Ian Wilson, the Canadian “total archives” tradition focuses more on the records of *governance* rather than on those of *government*. “Governance” includes cognizance of the interaction of citizens with the state, the impact of the state on society, and the functions or activities of society itself, as much as it does the governing structures and their inward-facing bureaucrats. The archival task is to preserve recorded evidence of governance, not just of governments governing. The “total archives” perspective may be threatened with marginalization, the late Shirley Spragge stated in an emotional parting call to her colleagues, only if Canadian archivists overlook or abdicate their own traditions.⁴⁶

No one better represents the new “societal” rather than “statist” paradigm than Canada’s Hugh Taylor. Himself a key architect of the “total archives” concept at the National Archives of Canada, Taylor came to Canada from England in 1965 and was influenced early on by the communications and media theories of Canadians Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan. Taylor soon began blending together an acute awareness of the transforming character of new audio-visual and electronic recording media and the immense power of world-wide communication technologies, with deep ecological, holistic, and spiritual perspectives. With this potent mixture, he pulled many Canadian and international archivists out of their “historical shunt” of looking after old records and placed them firmly in the Information Age of electronic records, global communications networks, and local community heritage concerns and bio-regional initiatives. Through it all, he exuded a revitalized sense of the contextuality (or provenance) of records by exploring the rich interconnections between society and the documentary record, between the act and the document. In a long series of speculative, probing essays, Taylor challenged archivists to see the archival connections in the evolution from the ancient to the medieval to the industrial to the information society, and from the oral to the written to the visual and to the electronic record. Moreover, Taylor discerned, in our new world of interactive electronic transactions and communications, “a return to conceptual orality,” that is to say, a return to the medieval framework where words or documents gained meaning only as they were “closely related to their context and to actions arising from that context.” In that oral tradition, meaning “lay not in the records themselves, but [in] the transactions and customs to which they bore witness as ‘evidences.’” Given the centrality of

these “evidential” or contextualized actions both to the very definition and even existence of the record in the Information Age and to any subsequent understanding of it, Taylor encouraged archivists to adopt “a new form of ‘social historiography’ to make clear how and why records were created....” Archivists need to do this, in Taylor’s view, because, faced with incredible information overloads and technological transformations, they need to concentrate less on “dealing with individual documents and series” and more on “the recognition of forms and patterns of knowledge which may be the only way by which we will transcend the morass of information and data into which we will otherwise fall....”⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Taylor’s thoughtful speculations also explicitly challenged archivists not to remain isolated in their professional cloisters or behind disciplinary walls.

By combining in his own person the European and North American traditions, by enhancing rather than undermining the archival traditions of his adopted country, by ranging imaginatively from medieval orality to the “global village,” by welcoming rather than shunning the new electronic and visual record, by searching for patterns and connections in place of fragmentation and compartmentalization, and by linking archives to their social, philosophical, and technological contexts, Taylor demonstrated that archivists could still serve society well as its new “chip monks,” rather than simply as allies (or minions) of the powers of the state.

Provenance Refreshed: Canada and Australia

Hugh Taylor’s work led North American, and especially Canadian, archivists to what Canadian archival educator Tom Nesmith has called “a rediscovery of provenance.”⁴⁸ In many ways, of course, provenance had not been lost. But until the later 1970s, North Americans limited their use of the concept of provenance to a narrow range of arrangement and description activities. Even here they allowed compromises such as the Schellenbergian record group to weaken the contextualizing power of provenance. While provenance was never openly rejected, therefore, and theoretical lip-service was paid to the concept, all too often in practice it was either ignored or actually undermined. Following Schellenberg’s widespread influence, knowledge of the historical subject content of the records replaced provenance as the animating force in most North American archival appraisal, description, and public service until the late 1970s. Accordingly, the ideal education of the archivist was perceived to consist of graduate degrees in history supplemented by on-the-job training.

Nesmith argues that this older approach has changed radically in Canada over the past two decades, from both Canadian and European influences. Archivists trained as historians began to apply their historical skills and research methodologies not as before to the subject content of records, but to researching and understanding, in Nesmith’s words, “the evidential context

which gave them birth.” In this Nesmith was himself a leader, calling for a “history of the record” as the basis of Hugh Taylor’s “new form” of socio-historiographical scholarship, and establishing on a regular basis in *Archivaria* a “Studies in Documents” section as a way to develop a “modern diplomatic.”⁴⁹ Supporting this same thrust to refresh provenance, I then argued that, by focusing on “provenance, *respect des fonds*, context, evolution, interrelationships, order” of records, that is, on the traditional heart of our professional and theoretical discourse, archivists could move from an “information” to a “knowledge” paradigm, and thus to renewed relevance in the era of electronic records and networked communications.⁵⁰ Rather than abandoning archival principles for those of information management or computer science, as some commentators were then suggesting, or remaining locked in the Schellenbergian content-centred cocoon, Canadian archivists began discovering (or “rediscovering”) the intellectual excitement of contextualized information that was their own profession’s legacy. A whole range of archival studies soon flourished across Canada to “explore provenance information about the creators of documentation, the administration of documents, and the forms, functions, and physical characteristics of various archival documents” in all media.⁵¹

Perhaps not surprisingly, this encouraging Canadian atmosphere led Americans David Bearman and Richard Lytle to publish their oft-cited 1985 article “The Power of the Principle of Provenance,” in *Archivaria* rather than in the United States. In this landmark statement, they argued that provenance-based retrieval of information, centred on a study of form and function of records, and the context of creation, and re-presented to researchers in authority records, was superior to subject- and content-based methods of retrieval, and thus provided the key to the archivist having a valuable role in the age of electronic records. Provenance was not some past legacy, but rather a promise of future relevance based on the archivist’s “unique perspective ... [of] how organizations create, use, and discard information.”⁵²

To this indigenous Canadian stream of rediscovering the intellectual or theoretical core of the profession through the historical and contextual analysis of records and their creators was joined an awakened interest in European archival theory *per se*. The key figure here is Luciana Duranti, who came to Canada from Italy in 1987 and articulated through a series of six articles the centuries-old discipline of diplomatics and posited its continued relevance for understanding modern records.⁵³ Duranti’s exposition contained a rigour of analysis beyond that which had evolved through the above-noted Canadian neo-provenance or “history of the record” approach, and helped to spark, with her other work and that of her students, a neo-Jenkinsonian revival of focusing archivists’ attention on the record, especially on its properties as evidence of the acts and transactions of its creator.⁵⁴ While diplomatics has much of value to say to modern archivists (as does the central thrust of the indigenous “history of the record” approach) about the necessity to conduct careful research into

the form, structure, and authorship of documents, especially in electronic environments, it is evident that diplomatics must still be coupled with a broader understanding, as Booms, Samuels, Taylor, Nesmith, and Cook suggest, of the animating functions, structures, and interrelationships of the creators that contextualize those isolated, individual documents.⁵⁵ As these two traditions merge in the Canadian archival discourse, it should not become a question of a top-down functional analysis of creators being better or worse than a bottom-up diplomatic analysis of individual documents, but rather a recognition that both approaches have important insights to offer to a contextualized understanding of the record, and thus both should be used as interrelated tools by the archivist.⁵⁶ The top-down approach permits a better understanding of function, process, and activity; the bottom-up approach allows sharper insight into evidential transactions. One cautionary note must be added, however. Despite the benefits of enriched understanding offered by the neo-Jenkinsonian approach, its implicit emphasis—like that of Jenkinson himself—on the archives of administrations and institutions must not be allowed to turn the Canadian archival profession away from its “total archives” comprehensiveness in the public and private sectors, nor to diminish the overall cultural dimensions of all archives.⁵⁷

This rediscovery of provenance, this richer understanding of creator contextuality that can turn information into knowledge, has had three major results in Canada that have drawn widespread international attention and praise, as well as a host of more local benefits. The first impact is the new macroappraisal acquisition strategy articulated at the National Archives of Canada, which is now being adopted in some other countries and jurisdictions. As mentioned before, this strategy features a functions-oriented, multi-media, and provenance-centred approach that does not assess records for their anticipated research uses, but rather seeks to reflect in the archival record the functions, programmes, and activities of records creators *and* those in society with whom they interact or whose values they indirectly reflect.⁵⁸ The second impact of the rediscovery of provenance is a major Canada-wide national initiative to develop a system of descriptive standards that replaces Schellenberg’s record group with the provenance-centred concept of the archival fonds; structures description in a general-to-specific, multi-level, multi-media relationship for all record entities within a single fonds; and asserts the need to protect provenance further through authority files to illuminate multiple-creator relationships—as well as codifying precise rules for describing archives within such a reordered contextualized universe.⁵⁹ The third impact has been the establishment of several world-class, full-time, graduate-level archival education programmes. The articulation of professional educational requirements for archivists certainly reflects the rediscovery of provenance and revival of archival theory in Canada, and, in turn, by the work of these programmes’ professors and students, actively contributes to it.⁶⁰

If Canadians were thus acquiring a much stronger and more conscious appreciation of the relevance of provenance to address modern archival problems, European archivists have also made the same affirmation. In at least four recent volumes of essays representing authors from many countries, European archivists have wrestled with the continued relevance of provenance to the challenges facing archives today. That archivists from the birthplace of archival theory have felt the need to undertake repeatedly this re-examination may help Europeans to forgive North Americans their temporary archival apostasy and to understand the enthusiasm of their recent rediscoveries! Europeans through these studies have in large part reaffirmed the relevance of the principle of provenance, but see the need to interpret it liberally rather than literally, conceptually rather than physically, if the principle is to continue to vitalize the profession as it faces the new environment of the automated office and electronic records.⁶¹

The most forceful reinterpretation of provenance since the mid-century has come from Australia, in the work of Peter Scott and his colleagues.⁶² While most archival theorists after Jenkinson and Schellenberg have concentrated on the thorny problems of appraisal or electronic records, Peter Scott focused on description. The traditional archival model for description, as articulated by the Dutch trio, and only slightly adapted or somewhat modified by, respectively, Jenkinson and Schellenberg, assumed a mono-hierarchical and thus mono-provenancial administrative and records environment, and these theorists designed their descriptive concepts and tools accordingly. Scott's fundamental insight was that the traditional archival assumption of a one-to-one relationship between the record and its creating administration was no longer valid. He also demonstrated clearly that administrations themselves were no longer mono-hierarchical in structure or function, but ever-changing, complex dynamisms, as were their record-keeping systems. He therefore developed the Australian series system approach as a means for describing multiple interrelationships between numerous creators and numerous series of records, wherever they may be on the continuum of records administration: in the office(s) of creation, in the office of current control, or in the archives. Scott's own focus was on interrelating records and their immediate creator(s). Australian archivists are now testing enriching this contextuality by adding other multiple relationships based on formal functions and the larger ambient provenance contexts beyond those of the immediate creator.⁶³ All these interrelationships are not fixed one-to-one linkages, as in most archival descriptive approaches (despite some cross-referencing), but rather exist as many-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many relationships: between many series and one creator, between many creators and one series, between many creators and many series, between creators and other creators, between series and other series, and between series and creators to functions, and the reverse. In effect, Scott shifted the entire

archival description enterprise from a static cataloguing mode to a dynamic system of multiple interrelationships.

Unfortunately, the misconception exists that the Australian series system is simply a very minimalist version of Jenkinson's archive group or Schellenberg's record group or the European *fonds d'archives*.⁶⁴ This misconception masks Scott's truly revolutionary changes to archival description and indeed archival theory generally. Scott's essential contribution was to break through (rather than simply modify) not just the descriptive strait-jacket of the Schellenbergian record group, but the whole mindset of the "physicality" of archives upon which most archival thinking since the Dutch *Manual* had implicitly been based. In this way, as is finally being acknowledged, Peter Scott is the founder of the "postcustodial" revolution in world archival thinking.⁶⁵ Although he worked in a paper world, his insights are now especially relevant for archivists facing electronic records, where—just as in Scott's system—the physicality of the record has little importance compared to its multi-relational contexts of creation and contemporary use.

In recent years, Australian archivists have developed a second useful contribution to the archival discourse and another significant revitalization of provenance thinking about the context and character of archives. Reacting to several major public scandals, in which important records were lost or intentionally destroyed, Australian archival educators Sue McKemish and Frank Upward have written with much sophistication about the concept of "accountability" throughout the records continuum—a notion that certainly has been long prevalent in Europe, especially France, and accepted by many archivists, but rarely articulated with the sustained power of the Australians.⁶⁶ Consciously based on Jenkinson's central dictums and on Canadian articulations of a neo-provenance creed, and especially on the insights of visiting American theorist David Bearman, McKemish and Upward assert that the Schellenbergian distinction between "records" and "archives" as the purview of, respectively, records managers and archivists distracts from their common, unifying purpose as "archival documents" at any point in their life, which they see as a common continuum rather than separate, distinct cycles. McKemish and Upward observe correctly that information technology professionals too often are concerned only with the efficient access and use of information, and lose sight of the essential qualities of "integrity, completeness, accuracy and reliability" that information must also have if it is to serve as evidence of actions for anyone: creators, sponsors, citizens, or later archival researchers. Such evidentiary qualities of archival documents form, in short, a basis for the institution's internal accountability and for a wider public accountability essential for any democracy where leaders and institutions are required to account to the people for their actions. Unless institutions can thus be held accountable, which includes being accountable for ensuring that these qualities of "recordness" are

present in their record-keeping systems, then any efficient access gained to information will be meaningless, for current and archival users alike.⁶⁷

Australian colleague Glenda Acland has crystallized the issue by telling archivists to manage records rather than relics.⁶⁸ Needless to say, the Australian Jenkinsonians do not follow their master's stance as passive keepers and custodians of records, but rather see archivists as active interveners, even auditors, in the archival document continuum.⁶⁹ The Australian articulation anew of the evidentiary character of archival documents within an accountability framework is very important, because it combines archival concepts concerning evidence and recordness with creating institutions' own self-interest in protecting themselves legally and ethically. It thus sanctions a potentially powerful strategy to get archival issues addressed by record creators at the front end of the records continuum, which is essential if an archival record is to survive in the electronic era. Yet with its heavy focus on institutional and official records in its formulation and examples, the accountability approach also carries with it, as some Australian advocates are now beginning to recognize,⁷⁰ a danger of rendering into two camps the administrative and cultural roles of archivists, and thus of devaluing archives' role as a bastion of national culture and societal memory in favour of narrower, strictly legal accountabilities. The same threat is implicit in the emphases of Canada's neo-Jenkinsonians and, as will be seen, in the formulations of some electronic records theorists.

“Reinventing Archives”: Electronic Records and Archival Theory

The revitalization or rediscovery of provenance has also been motivated by the many challenges posed to archivists by electronic records. Discussion about such records is increasingly dominating the professional discourse, and is leading to exciting new conceptual insights, as well as to new strategies and practices.⁷¹ Despite significant contributions by Canadians and Australians, the leadership in the electronic records discourse belongs to the United States, especially to David Bearman.⁷²

The early impact of electronic records, or machine-readable records as they were called, was not quite so promising, however. In panic over the then relatively new technology, some commentators in the 1970s and early 1980s advocated that archivists should stop being archivists, and instead become computer specialists or information managers in order to cope with this challenging new medium. In what I have called the “first generation” of electronic records archives, there was also a strong emphasis on information content over provenancial context, on library cataloguing over archival description, on one-time, one-shot statistical datafiles over continuing and continually altering relational databases and office systems, and on treating electronic datafiles as discrete and isolated items rather than as part of the comprehensive, multimedia information universe of the record creator.⁷³ Such approaches by the

pioneering, first-generation of electronic records archivists are perfectly understandable: the only working models available to them had been created by data librarians dealing with social science datafiles bearing the above characteristics. This changed by the mid-1980s when new information technology featuring relational databases became the norm in business, universities, and government. The archivally valuable computerized data in such large social and economic programmes' relational systems are often added, revised, or deleted almost every second. Outside the world of such databases, wherein information is at least structured logically, there is the automated office, where text, data, graphics, images, and voice are converted into electronic formats, and even combined into "compound" or "smart" multimedia documents. All these new and complex computerized formats, until controlled, standardized, and linked to business processes, threaten decision-making accountability and the long-term corporate memory of record creators, especially when joined with a telecommunications revolution affecting the transmission and interconnectivity of this electronic information. Even more, these new formats threaten the very possibility that archives can continue as vibrant institutions able to maintain such records in their full context or functionality over decades and centuries. If an electronic document has only a transient existence as a "virtual" composite or fleeting "view" on the computer screen of randomly stored information created by the different commands of different users in different organizational structures for different purposes, how does any one accountable institution preserve reliable evidence of specific transactions? What is the functional context of such transient and disjointed data? Whither provenance? Electronic records, much like the earlier thinking of Peter Scott, bring archivists to the era of virtual archives and virtual records, where the physical record and its arrangement, so central to much traditional archival discourse in this century, is now of rather secondary importance compared to the functional context in which the record is created, described by its creator, and used by its contemporaries. Such revolutionary changes suggested by the electronic record have led archival theorists, such as Sue McKemmish of Australia, to ask, "Are records ever actual?"⁷⁴

Answers to these fundamental challenges are beginning to come. Archivists are now perceiving that a world of relational databases, of complex software linkages, of electronic office systems, of hypermedia documents, of multi-layered geographical information systems, is, when all the high-technology rhetoric is put aside, still a world of information relationships, of interconnections, of context, of evidence, of provenance. Re-creating such relationships for complex electronic records should be no different for the archivist, at a conceptual and theoretical level, than unravelling the interconnections of the many series of records that were typical of the nineteenth-century office, and linking them to their animating functions and creators. Of course, at the level of strategy and tactics, there is a world of difference. Margaret Hedstrom and

David Bearman accordingly recommend “reinventing archives” entirely by moving the focus away from actual custody of records in archives and more towards remote control of records left on interconnected computers all over the government or business. Archivists would then be less concerned with traditional curatorship of physical objects than with the centralized management of organizational behaviour in order to protect a sense of “recordness” or evidence in the organization(s)’ computerized information systems.⁷⁵ But the essence of the archivist’s task of comprehending and elucidating contextual linkages remains the same.

David Bearman, the most visionary of thinkers dealing with electronic records, echoes these themes throughout his many writings. He asserts, for example, that “the important point of these challenges to the traditional document is that the boundaries of the document have given way to a creative authoring event in which user and system participate. Only the context in which these virtual documents are created can give us an understanding of their content.” Bearman argues, reassuringly for archivists, that this new mindset “corresponds closely to a professional perspective of the archivist, which has long focused on provenance and the context of records creation rather than on the physical record or its contents.” He concludes that, in terms of the many problems posed by electronic records, “the analysis to date has enriched the concept of provenance and reinforced its direct link to missions, functions and ultimately the activities and transactions of an organization rather than to organizational units....”⁷⁶ For some archivists, this latter phrase may prove more troubling. Such conceptual linkages of records to functions and business processes rather than to single administrative units undermine many of the traditional perspectives of archival theory and methodology, as defined above in the work of the Dutch trio, Jenkinson, Casanova, even Schellenberg. Electronic records present this stark challenge to archivists: core archival principles will only be preserved by discarding many of their traditional interpretations and practical applications.

While there is much long-term merit to the new strategic directions suggested for the archival profession to deal with the electronic records of governments and major corporations, such as implementing formal functional requirements for record-keeping through policy and procedure or within metadata-encapsulated record objects as part of business-acceptable communication standards, these methodologies are much less relevant for private sector records, or even for the records of many small, transient, let alone defunct, government agencies, boards, and commissions. Archivists must not ignore present (if perhaps flawed) electronic records-creating realities or older legacy system records in order to pursue exclusively reengineering strategies for the future, or assume that metadata descriptions will replace the broad contextuality of archival “value added” descriptions. It seems clear that, for some years at least, the assumptions made by electronic records theorists about redesigning

computer systems' functional requirements to preserve the integrity and reliability of records, about enforcing organizational accountability through policy fiat, and about long-term custodial control being assigned to the creator of archival records will *de facto* privilege the powerful, relatively stable, and continuing creators of records capable of such reengineering, and thus, equally, will disadvantage private and transient record creators who are not so capable or for whom it is irrelevant. Indeed, the very limiting definition of an archival record, increasingly used by electronic records archivists, as consisting of evidence of business transactions, excludes, at least implicitly, any record—and their creators—not meeting this narrow accountability-driven definition from the very purview of archives and archivists. The “politics of memory” are apparently with us still.⁷⁷

Conclusion I: What is the Past that Forms Our Prologue

The challenge of the electronic record provides archivists with a perspective from which to reflect back on the archival discourse of the century, on the various interpretations of the interaction of theory and practice. Every archivist in almost every country shares the cumulative benefit of Muller, Feith, and Fruin's formal articulation of core archival principles; of Jenkinson's moral defence of the sanctity of evidence; of Schellenberg's attempts to address actively the voluminous records of complex modern administrations; of Booms, Samuels, and others' broadening of the archival vision from an administrative to a societal conceptual basis; of Taylor's imaginative transformation of fixed archival mindsets from past to flexible future mode; of the Canadian rediscovery and the Australian recasting of provenance in light of the complex contextuality of modern records; of Bearman's persistent challenges to archivists to move from being keepers to auditors if they hope to preserve provenance and protect the evidential accountability of archival electronic records. Yet despite the richness of archival thinking since the publication of the Dutch manual, whereby all archivists are the beneficiaries of those who have gone before, there remains today the need for a fundamental change in archival thinking. The major shifts in the archival discourse of this century suggest the need to recognize these patterns of change within that discourse and to debate the related issues and implications for archival methodologies and strategies, and then to incorporate the results into daily practice. In listening to the collective archival discourse from 1898 to the present, I believe that there are five such broad themes or changes that have emerged, and these in turn suggest to me the need to reconceptualize some of our basic theoretical concepts for the future.

The first theme is a marked change in the very reason why archives exist. There has been a collective shift from a juridical-administrative justification for archives grounded in concepts of the state, to a socio-cultural justification for

archives grounded in wider public policy and public use. This broad shift reflects in part the dominance during this century of historians as the driving force within the profession and in part the changing expectations by citizens of what archives should be and how the past should be conceived and protected and made available. Archives traditionally were founded by the state, to serve the state, as part of the state's hierarchical structure and organizational culture. Archival theory not surprisingly found its early legitimization in statist theories and models, and from the study of the character and properties of older state records. Such theory has since been widely adopted in many other kinds of archival institutions around the world. Public sanction for archives late in the twentieth century, or at least for taxpayer-funded non-business archives in democracies, has changed fundamentally from this earlier statist model: archives are now of the people, for the people, even by the people. Few citizens would approve the expenditure of large sums of money to fund archives whose contents mainly featured bureaucrats talking to each other. While the maintenance of government accountability and administrative continuity and the protection of personal rights are still rightly recognized as important purposes for archives, the principal justification for archives to most users and to the public at large rests on archives being able to offer citizens a sense of identity, locality, history, culture, and personal and collective memory. Simply stated, it is no longer acceptable to limit the definition of society's memory solely to the documentary residue left over by powerful record creators. Public and historical accountability demands more of archives, and of archivists. However, whether that socio-cultural justification is manifested by methodologies based on patterns of use, the study of society and its institutions directly, the functional provenance analysis of records creators, or some other means has not yet been resolved by archivists.

The second theme emerging from the archival discourse relates to how archives and archivists have tried to preserve authentic, reliable records as evidence of acts and transactions. Archivists throughout the century have consistently sought to understand and illuminate the context or provenance of a record as much as its subject content. Archivists first accomplished this protection of context by preserving in unbroken custody and in original order all surviving records no longer needed by their parent administration. Such records were most often closed series from defunct organizations, or were old, isolated, prestigious documents. Archivists have now dramatically shifted their focus. Today, they try instead to ensure that records are initially created according to acceptable standards for evidence and, going further, to ensure that all important acts and ideas are adequately documented by such reliable evidence. In a world of rapidly changing and very complex organizations that create voluminous and decentralized records, in a world of electronic records with their transient and virtual documents, their relational and multi-purpose databases, and their cross-institutional communication networks, no reliable record will

even survive to be available to the archivist to preserve in the traditional way—unless the archivist intervenes in the active life of the record, sometimes before it is even created. When such records are able to be preserved in archives, the comfortable notion of the permanent value of archival records over time will require similar modification, simply because the electronic record either will become entirely unreadable or must be recopied and its structure and functionality reconfigured into new software every few years.⁷⁸ Traditional preservation of archival records focused on proper standards for the repair, restoration, storage, and use of the physical medium that was the record. With electronic records, the physical medium becomes almost totally irrelevant, as the records themselves will be migrated forward long before the physical storage medium deteriorates. What will be important is reconfiguring the actual functionality and thus provenance or evidence-bearing context of the “original” record, and it is on that problem that archivists must increasingly focus their attention.

The third broad theme relates to the source of archival theory. A century ago, archival principles were derived from a diplomatics-based analysis of individual documents or from the rules devised for the arrangement and description of groups or closed series of records received by archives from stable, monohierarchical institutions. A quite different perspective is now required. Because there are countless on-going series of multi-media records to appraise within unstable organizations, because such appraisal should often occur at the computer system-design stage before a single record has been created, modern appraisal focuses on the functions and transactions of the record creator, rather than on individual records and their potential uses. The focus has shifted, therefore, from the actual record to its functional process or context of creation, from the physical artifact to the “very act and deed” which first caused that artifact to be created. While this shift in archival perspective from the record to its context was initially stimulated by the spectre of virtual documents in computer systems and by the recent developments of function-based appraisal theory, it reflects some of the strategies for interrelational description of multiple-creator fonds, or postcustodial proposals for “archives without walls” existing on a world-wide Internet. Archival theory now takes its inspiration from analysis of record-creating processes rather than from the arrangement and description of recorded products in archives. As Eric Ketelaar concludes, “functional archival science replaces descriptive archival science, ... only by a functional interpretation of the context surrounding the creation of documents, can one understand the integrity of the *fonds* and the functions of the archival documents in their original context.”⁷⁹

The fourth theme to emerge from our collective history over the past hundred years is related to the previous three. Because of the now-required active intervention by the archivist in record-keeping processes in order to ensure that the properties of reliable evidence exist for records, because of the need to research and understand the nature of function, structure, process, and

context and to interpret their relative importance as the basis for modern archival appraisal (and description), the traditional notion of the impartiality of the archivist is no longer acceptable—if it ever was. Archivists inevitably will inject their own values into all such activities, as indeed they will by their very choice, in eras of limited resources and overwhelming volumes of records, of which creators, which systems, which functions, which transactions, which descriptive and diffusion mechanisms, indeed which records, will get full, partial, or no archival attention. Archivists have therefore changed over the past century from being passive keepers of an entire documentary residue left by creators to becoming active shapers of the archival heritage. They have evolved from being, allegedly, impartial custodians of inherited records to becoming intervening agents who set record-keeping standards and, most pointedly, who select for archival preservation only a tiny portion of the entire universe of recorded information. Archivists have become in this way very active builders of their own “houses of memory.” And so, each day, they should examine their own politics of memory in the archive-creating and memory-formation process. By doing so, with sensitivity and some historical perspective, archivists may better balance which functions, activities, organizations, and people in society, through their records, are to be included and which are to be excluded from the world’s collective memory.

The fifth and final theme is that archival theory should not be seen as a set of immutable scientific laws disinterestedly formed and holding true for all time. The leading archival thinkers in this century have imaginatively reinvented the concept of archives in ways that very much reflected, sometimes unconsciously, sometimes consciously, the dominant strains of public discourse in their time and place. Archival theory has reflected, and has evolved through, several such broader societal phases: from nineteenth-century European Positivism to American New Deal managerialism, onward to the media-focused McLuhanism of the 1960s and to more recent postmodern historicism. If recognized, this changing nature of archival theory over time becomes a professional strength, not a weakness. Indeed, the best archival theorists have usually been those able to recognize and articulate broad, often radical changes in society, in organizational structure, and in record-keeping technologies, and then integrate the impact of these changes into archival work and archival thought. If Hugh Taylor and Tom Nesmith rightly urge archivists to undertake a new scholarship to study the very rich links between the authoring context and the resulting record, a similar research focus is needed for the profession concerning the relationship between the archivist and his or her contemporary society, both now and in the past.

And, finally, an important qualifier. The history of archival theory, despite the foregoing simplified presentation because of space constraints, is not a linear evolution, with exclusive schools of thinkers, neatly ascending in some cumulative process to the glorious Archival Theoretical Consensus of the

present day. Archival history is instead a rich collage of overlapping layers, of contradictory ideas existing simultaneously or even blended together, of thinkers exhibiting differences of emphasis more than of fundamental ideas, of individual thinkers changing their ideas in light of new circumstances, of old ideas appearing in new guises in new places. The pendulum of thought swings back and forth, as one generation solves its predecessor's problems, but thereby creates new problems for the next generation to address, with ideas having their day, being discarded, and then even being revitalized in modified form in later work. And so it should be.

Conclusion II: What is the Prologue from our Past?

Where, then, do we go in future? After surveying the archival ideas of the century, I believe that we are gradually developing a new conceptual or theoretical framework for our profession. In the new century ahead, I think that archivists will continue to shift their emphasis from the analysis of the properties and characteristics of individual documents to an analysis of the functions, processes, and transactions which cause documents to be created. Appraisal will therefore continue to change from being an assessment of records for their potential research value to becoming a macroappraisal analysis of the creator's key functions, programmes, activities, and interactions with clients, which the records subsequently selected for continued preservation should most succinctly mirror. Arrangement and description will concentrate less on physical record entities and media, and develop instead enriched "value-added" contextual understandings of the information systems and multiple institutions/persons that create records and of related system documentation and computer metadata. The role of archives within at least public administrations and corporate bodies may change from being a supplicant agency hoping for cooperation from record-creating entities in the transfer of old records to becoming an auditing agency that monitors creators' performance in maintaining and servicing certain categories of archival records left under the creator's control.⁸⁰ Reference and outreach services may accordingly change when archives gradually evolve from being primarily sites for the storage of old records that researchers visit to becoming instead virtual archives where archivists, from their contextualized postings to the Internet, will facilitate access by the public anywhere in the world to thousands of interlinked record-keeping systems both under the control of archives and those larger, more complex systems left in the custody of their creators. Preservation will certainly shift its focus from maintaining discardable physical storage formats to safeguarding through repeated migrations the structure and contextual functionality of the information itself.

These coming conceptual shifts in archival practice suggest to me the need to redefine core archival theory. To respond to these challenges, provenance should change from being seen as the notion of linking a record directly to its

single office of origin in a hierarchical structure, to becoming instead a concept focused on these functions and business processes of the creator that caused the record to be created, within and across constantly evolving organizations. Provenance is thereby transformed from the static identification of records with a structure to a dynamic relationship with a creating or authoring activity. Original order should change from being viewed as the notion of a physical place for each record within a single series of records, to becoming instead a logical reflection of multiple authorship and multiple readership, where, for example, data may be united in multiple ways into new conceptual or virtual “orders” (or “series”) for different transactions by different creators. A record will therefore belong to or reflect several series or original orders, not just one.⁸¹ In similar fashion, the concept of the record itself should change from being perceived as a single piece of recording medium that integrates the structure, content, and context of information in one physical place, to becoming a virtual composite of many scattered parts linked together (under varying software controls and business processes) to perform, or bear evidence of, a transaction or idea. Likewise, the archival fonds should not be conceived as reflecting some static physical order based on rules arising from the transfer, arrangement, or accumulation of records, but rather should reflect the dynamic multiple creatorship and multiple authorship focused around function and activity that more accurately captures the contextuality of records in the modern world.

All these changes move the theoretical (and practical) focus of archives away from the record and toward the creative act or authoring intent or functional context behind the record. This new paradigm for archives replaces the profession’s traditional intellectual focus on the physical record—that thing which is under our actual physical custody in archives—with a renewed focus on the context, purpose, intent, interrelationships, functionality, and accountability of the record, its creator, and its creation processes, wherever these occur. Because this suggested focus goes well beyond drawing inspiration for archival activity from the study of records placed in the custody of an archives, it has been termed a postcustodial mindset for archives.⁸² Such a postcustodial paradigm for archives, let it be quickly stated, does not mean abandoning archival principles or no longer acquiring records, but rather reconceiving traditional, Jenkinsonian guardianship of evidence from a physical to a conceptual framework, from a product-focused to a process-oriented activity, from matter to mind.⁸³

By embracing this postcustodial and conceptual redefinition of provenance as the dynamic relationship between all connected functions, creators, and “records,” archivists can develop an intellectual framework to address, with confidence, the challenges of integrating electronic records into their professional practice, of appraising complex modern records with acuity, of describing in rich context archival records in all media, and of enhancing the

contextualized use and understanding of archives by their many publics. A redefined sense of provenance also offers archivists, their sponsors, and their researchers a means to stop drowning in an overwhelming sea of meaningless data and to find instead patterns of contextualized knowledge, which in turn leads to the hope for wisdom and understanding. From the contextual principles of the archival past, the guiding prologue to the archival future emerges. From the lessons of their history, archivists may find inspiration to guide humankind with greater sensitivity through these varied “houses of memory” that they so lovingly construct. And by so reflecting the postmodern and postcustodial ethos of their times, archivists today can facilitate “making present the voices of what is past, not to entomb either the past or the present, but to give them life together in a place common to both in memory.”⁸⁴

Notes

- 1 This article has a long history and owes much to many colleagues, whom I want to acknowledge here in order to make clear my gratitude, and which history will make clear the provenance of a paper already cited in various existing versions. The paper was first commissioned in 1993 as the third plenary address to be delivered at the Thirteenth International Congress on Archives to be held in Beijing, China, in September 1996. After several drafts greatly benefitted from comments by colleagues (see below), a very long paper was finalized in May 1995, which was distributed to delegates at the Congress in English and Chinese. To reduce translation costs into the other ICA official languages (Spanish, German, Russian, and French) for Congress distribution, a second version was produced in December 1995, approximately one-half the length of its predecessor, and this second, much tighter version forms the core of the present article, but with some additions from the first and with significant updating and refocusing, many more extensive explanatory endnotes, and especially overall rewriting to make the article more “Canadian,” by setting Canadian archival traditions and contributions within the original broader international context. A brief third version highlighting only the key themes of the paper, approximately one-seventh the length of the original paper’s text, was also prepared for actual delivery in Beijing, and that summary forms part of the conclusion of this article. The ICA will pro forma publish a significantly different version of the paper without any of these changes. I consider this version in *Archivaria* to be the definitive text. In writing the original version of the paper, I received the formal advice of twenty-eight archivists in six countries. I wish to thank sincerely these colleagues who took the time to comment (often very extensively) on my earlier drafts. Their criticisms have much improved the content of this version of the paper, as well as its predecessors, and I hope that none are distressed by the many changes subsequently introduced. Any errors that remain are my full responsibility. The readers were from Australia (Glenda Acland, Sue McKemmish, and Angela Slatter), China (Han Yumei), the Netherlands (Jan van den Broek and F.C.J. [Eric] Ketelaar), South Africa (Verne Harris), the United States (David Bearman, Richard Cox, Margaret Hedstrom, Jim O’Toole, and Helen Samuels), and Canada (Barbara Craig, Gordon Dodds, Luciana Duranti, Tom Nesmith, Hugh Taylor, and Ian Wilson); and my National Archives of Canada colleagues (Gabrielle Blais, Brien Brothman, Richard Brown, Jacques Grimard, Candace Loewen, Lee McDonald, John McDonald, Heather MacNeil, Joan Schwartz, and Jean-Pierre Wallot). The paper at various stages also benefitted from the careful editorial corrections of Ed Dahl and Tim Cook of the National Archives of Canada. I wish to thank Jean-Pierre Wallot and Lee McDonald for the rare luxury (in terms of my past publications) of significant time away from work to research and write the various versions of the paper, and to Sheila Powell, as General

Editor of *Archivaria*, for agreeing to publish a very long article in one rather than two or more segments and for her usual helpful editorial comments.

- 2 Jean-Pierre Wallot, "Building a Living Memory for the History of Our Present: Perspectives on Archival Appraisal," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 2 (1991), pp. 263–82, with citations from p. 282.
- 3 Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, translated by Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York, 1992), pp. xvi–xvii, 59–60, and *passim*. On medieval archives and their purposes, see Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 86–87, 177, and especially chapter 3: "Archival Memory and the Destruction of the Past" and *passim*; and Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989); also on the symbolic rather than evidential characteristics of some records, see James O'Toole, "The Symbolic Significance of Archives," *American Archivist* 56 (Spring 1993), pp. 234–55. For women and archives, see Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York and Oxford, 1993), *passim*, but especially chapter 11: "The Search for Women's History;" see also Anke Voss-Hubbard, "'No Documents – No History': Mary Ritter Beard and the Early History of Women's Archives," *American Archivist* 58 (Winter 1995), pp. 16–30. On World War I, see Denis Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment* (Harmondsworth, 1991), especially the final section: "Falsifying the Record." Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1980), Part I, Section ii, cited in Justin Kaplan, ed., *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 16th ed. (Boston, 1992), p. 761. For discussion about the "controlling" politics of archiving, see Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Postcustodial and Postmodernist Era," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22 (November 1994), especially pp. 315–20.

Archivists need to explore this field of "memory scholarship" more carefully, for it puts into context many unquestioned assumptions underpinning archival theory and conceptualization, even if the authors (unlike those above) rarely explicitly address archives (except for Clanchy). See, for example, Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1984), which is a fascinating exploration in cross-cultural history of the interaction of Ming Dynasty China and sixteenth-century Counter-Reformation Christian Europe, as well as a good introduction to the art of memory, which was then in the final throes of a very long history. For the original ground-breaking analysis of memory and its elevated place for over one thousand years in Western education and culture, and of various fantastic mnemonic devices (such as memory palaces, memory trees, and memory theatres), see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966). Continuing analysis in that vein is Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990). The classic analysis of the shift from oral memory to memory recordings (or written records, and thus archives) is Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and Cambridge MA, 1993), although Patrick Geary (as cited above) respectfully questions some of Clanchy's central interpretations. For the use of the past to construct memories through various civic and heritage initiatives in order to defend one's status in the present, a whole range of recent studies have been produced: the pioneering study was Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); and three of the best known are David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge MA, 1985); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1991); and John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 1992). Biochemists, psychologists, poets, literary critics, and philosophers, among others, join historians (and one hopes archivists) in being drawn to the study or mystique of memory: what it is, how it works, and why it functions as it does, both in remembering and in forgetting. Their works could fill a library, but for a short, yet incisive introduction, see Mary Warnock, *Memory* (London and Boston, 1987).

- 4 Barbara L. Craig, "Outward Visions, Inward Glimpse: Archives History and Professional Identity," *Archival Issues* 17 (1992), p. 121. The fullest argument for archivists researching, writing, and reading their own history, including the many benefits this will have for daily practice and professional well-being, is Richard J. Cox, "On the Value of Archival History in the United States" (originally 1988), in Richard J. Cox, *American Archival Analysis: The Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States* (Metuchen, N.J., 1990), pp. 182–200. Lamentably few have followed Cox's sound advice, and oddly so considering the historical training of most archivists.
- 5 The best short summaries in English are Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist* 55 (Winter 1992), pp. 14–24; and Luciana Duranti, "The Odyssey of Records Managers," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, N.J., 1993), pp. 29–60. Their notes point to many other sources and in other languages. Also useful is James Gregory Bradsher and Michele F. Pacifico, "History of Archives Administration," in James Gregory Bradsher, ed., *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 18–33; as well as several of the essays on national archival traditions published in Oddo Bucci, ed., *Archival Science on the Threshold of the Year 2000* (Macerata, Italy, 1992). A recent overview of the nature of the profession, including significant historical perspectives, is James M. O'Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1990).
- 6 Duchein, "History of European Archives," p. 19.
- 7 S. Muller, J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1898), translation (1940) of the 2nd ed. by Arthur H. Leavitt (New York, reissued 1968), pp. 13–20, 33–35, 52–59. The story of the *Manual* is best told in English in Marjorie Rabe Barritt, "Coming to America: Dutch *Archivistiek* and American Archival Practice," *Archival Issues* 18 (1993), pp. 43–54. I have used the 1940 translations of the terms found in the *Manual* itself, rather than Barritt's modernization of them. More recently, see Cornelis Dekker, "La Bible archivistique néerlandaise et ce qu'il en est advenu," in Bucci, *Archival Science on the Threshold*, pp. 69–79. The best source of biographical information on the Dutch trio, including their not entirely happy interpersonal relations, is Eric Ketelaar, "Muller, Feith et Fruin," *Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique* 57, nos. 1–2 (1986), pp. 255–68.
- 8 Cited by Frank Upward, who also makes this critical point, in his "In Search of the Continuum: Ian Maclean's 'Australian Experience' Essays on Recordkeeping," in Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, eds., *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First 50 Years* (Clayton, 1994), pp. 110–30.
- 9 Muller, Feith, and Fruin, *Manual*, p. 9 (authors' original preface). The Dutch themselves led the way in recognizing new administrative realities affecting record-keeping and thus in recasting or expanding the original rules; it is unfortunate that some others do not show the same flexibility towards their successors. As an example of such changes by the Dutch, see Herman Hardenberg, "Some Reflections on the Principles for the Arrangement of Archives," in Peter Walne, ed., *Modern Archives Administration and Records Management: A RAMP Reader* (Paris, 1985), pp. 111–14. Eric Ketelaar has shown that a nineteenth-century Dutch forerunner to the *Manual*'s authors, Theodoor Van Riemsdijk, broached the idea of functional and organizational analysis as the basis of archival theory, but that his ideas were pushed aside, which thereby "blocked the development of archival theory for a long time." See "Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996), pp. 31–40.
- 10 Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution," in Ken Munden, ed., *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner* (Washington, 1967), p. 31; Lawrence D. Geller, "Joseph Cuvelier, Belgian Archival Education, and the First International Congress of Archivists, Brussels, 1910," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), p. 26.
- 11 Cited in Barritt, "Coming to America," *Archival Issues*, p. 52.
- 12 "Memoir of Sir Hilary Jenkinson," in J. Conway Davies, *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary*

- Jenkinson, C.B.E., LL.D., F.S.A. (London, 1957). This "Memoir" is the best biographical sketch of Jenkinson, which can be supplemented by Richard Stapleton, "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983–84), pp. 75–85.
- 13 Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London, 1968, a reissue of the revised second edition of 1937), pp. 149–55, 190.
- 14 F. Gerald Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, 1993), p. 9. Even archivists very friendly towards Jenkinson opposed his views on appraisal; in a *festschrift* in his honour, the leading archivists of Canada and Australia underlined the difficulties of Jenkinson's approach: see W. Kaye Lamb, "The Fine Art of Destruction," pp. 50–56, and Ian Maclean, "An Analysis of Jenkinson's 'Manual of Archive Administration' in the Light of Australian Experience," pp. 150–51, both in Albert E.J. Hollaender, ed., *Essays in Memory of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Chichester, 1962).
- 15 See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Moscow and Leningrad* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 23–60; and, more pointedly, her recent *Intellectual Access and Descriptive Standards for Post-Soviet Archives: What Is to be Done?*, International Research and Exchanges Board preliminary preprint version (Princeton, March 1992), pp. 9–23. From the 1930s on, she notes (p. 10), archivists had "to emphasize Marxist-Leninist conceptions of history and to demonstrate the ingredients of class struggle and the victory of the toiling masses. Archivists were fired for preparing 'objective' or purely factual descriptions of materials, rather than showing how a given group of documents portrayed struggle against the ruling class. Archival documents not pertaining to party themes were simply not described or their inherent nature and provenance not recorded."
- 16 Jenkinson, *Manual of Archive Administration*, pp. 101–2. Jenkinson's sense of breadth in arrangement still survives in British archival practice. Although his "archive group" is now termed simply the "group," it retains Jenkinson's broad definition. Conversely, the term "archive group" itself relates to even broader thematic categories. See Michael Cook, *The Management of Information from Archives* (Aldershot, 1986), pp. 85–87, and Chapter 5 generally, especially the examples on p. 92. The context of Jenkinson's ideas and their impact (and weaknesses) are nicely analyzed in Michael Roper, "The Development of the Principles of Provenance and Respect for Original Order in the Public Record Office," in Barbara L. Craig, ed., *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* (Ottawa, 1992), pp. 134–49.
- 17 See, for example, the unabashed Jenkinsonianism of the Australians, perhaps represented best in Sue McKemmish, "Introducing Archives and Archival Programs," in Judith Ellis, ed., *Keeping Archives*, 2nd ed. (Port Melbourne, 1993), pp. 1–24; Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, eds., *Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping* (Melbourne, 1993); Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, "Somewhere Beyond Custody," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22 (May 1994), pp. 138–49; and most explicitly Glenda Acland, "Archivist – Keeper, Undertaker or Auditor?," *Archives and Manuscripts* 19 (May 1991), pp. 9–15. For Canada, the most explicit statement is by Heather MacNeil, "Archival Theory and Practice: Between Two Paradigms," *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 6–20. For a Canadian neo-Jenkinsonian perspective on appraisal, see Luciana Duranti, "The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory," *American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994), pp. 328–44. In these examples, Australian neo-Jenkinsonians tend to follow the Master's spirit, while their Canadian counterparts adhere more to the letter of his dictums. All Jenkinsonians should remember that even the Master himself dismissed as "fools" any archivists "unduly" influenced by administrative and institutional concerns, and stated that researchers' "interests and needs must therefore be ultimately the governing consideration." In the same letter to Professor F.M. Powicke of Oxford, 22 January 1946, Jenkinson also asserted that "no Archivist can do his job efficiently without learning a little History deliberately ... and a good deal incidentally.... It would be unwise to try and prevent the Archivist practising occasionally the metier of Historian." Cited

- in Laura Millar, "The End of 'Total Archives'?: An Analysis of Changing Acquisition Practices in Canadian Archival Repositories," (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1996), p. 255.
- 18 For the Italian scene and Casanova's work, see Bucci, "The Evolution of Archival Science," pp. 17–43. The quotations are pp. 34–35, and from his "Introduction," p. 11.
 - 19 The figures are taken from James Gregory Bradsher, "An Administrative History of the Disposal of Federal Records, 1789–1949," *Provenance* 3 (Fall 1985), pp. 1–21. I have made the rounded conversions from imperial to metric measurements.
 - 20 Margaret Cross Norton, "Records Disposal," in Thornton W. Mitchell, ed., *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archives and Records Management* (Chicago, 1975), p. 232, and "The Archivist and Records Management" in the same volume; Philip C. Brooks, "The Selection of Records for Preservation," *American Archivist* 3 (October 1940), p. 226; on the contrast with Jenkinson, see Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934–1968* (Chapel Hill, 1978), p. 178. Brooks' interventionist notion was re-articulated and explored further by Jay Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management–Archives Relationship," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985–86), pp. 43–51, and the idea of front-end work by archivists on this records continuum underpins much current thinking about electronic records. Atherton's continuum formulation was itself anticipated by Ian Maclean of Australia: see his "An Analysis of Jenkinson's 'Manual of Archive Administration' in the Light of Australian Experience," pp. 128–52; and Ian Maclean, "Australian Experience in Record and Archives Management," *American Archivist* 22 (October 1959), pp. 387–418. The continuum concept has recently been reactivated, with much broader implications for archival theory that are welcomingly inclusive of all dimensions and sectors of archival work and ideas: social/cultural and legal/administrative accountabilities, public and private sectors, individual and corporate creators, document-focused rules of evidence and functional/contextual linkages. See Frank Upward, "Australia and the Records Continuum," paper presented to the Society of American Archivists, San Diego, August 1996, publication forthcoming in *Archives and Manuscripts*.
 - 21 Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives*, p. 7. Schellenberg's fullest statement of his oft-cited principles is "The Appraisal of Modern Public Records," *National Archives Bulletin* 8 (Washington, 1956), pp. 1–46. An extract is available in Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice* (Washington, 1984), pp. 57–70.
 - 22 Quotations from *Ibid.*, pp. 58–63, 69.
 - 23 Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives*, p. 8. Schellenberg's influence remains strong; a recent textbook chapter asserted that his secondary values relating to "research uses" are still "the principal concern of archivists." See Maygene F. Daniels, "Records Appraisal and Disposition," in Bradsher, *Managing Archives*, p. 60.
 - 24 For an analysis of Schellenberg's personal evolution, especially regarding private archives and archival relations with librarians, see Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis* (Seattle and London, 1983), pp. 47–64, and *passim*.
 - 25 The Australians have been most articulate in objecting to the Schellenbergian distinction between "records" and "archives" as one that distracts from their common, unifying purpose as "archival documents" at any point in their life along the records continuum. See, for example, McKemmish and Upward, *Archival Documents*, pp. 1, 22, and *passim*; or Glenda Acland, "Managing the Record Rather Than the Relic," *Archives and Manuscripts* 20 (May 1992), pp. 57–63. For the Australian interpretation and implementation of the records continuum instead of the life cycle approach, see several of the authors (but especially Frank Upward) in McKemmish and Piggott, *Records Continuum*.
 - 26 Schellenberg, *Management of Archives*, pp. 162ff. For a parallel American statement at the time, and an influential source of thinking on this topic, see Oliver W. Holmes, "Archival

- Arrangement – Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels,” *American Archivist* 27 (January 1964), pp. 21–41, and especially pp. 25–27.
- 27 A growing number of critics strongly advocate the end of the record group and a return to a more strict adherence to provenance rather than to Schellenberg’s practical compromise. The first objections were raised by Australian Peter Scott in “The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment,” *American Archivist* 29 (October 1966), p. 502, and *passim*; and more recently David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, “The Power of the Principle of Provenance,” *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985–86), p. 20; and Terry Cook, “The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description, and Provenance in the Postcustodial Era,” in Terry Eastwood, ed., *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice* (Ottawa, 1992), especially pp. 47–52. The decade-long Canadian effort to design and implement a national system of bilingual descriptive standards, through *Rules for Archival Description (RAD)*, is also intended to address the worst failings of the Schellenbergian record group. While *RAD* does so by establishing a more contextual framework for records description than existed before in Canada, it also includes its own compromises (and thus blurring of provenance) by adhering to traditional European definitions of the archival fonds that originated from physical arrangement rather than creation activity, and by overlooking the major implications of Scott’s work and that of later electronic records theorists (Bearman, Cook, Hedstrom, Brothman) concerning multiple creators and virtual series. Despite good intentions to the contrary, perhaps the Canadian archival fonds is really just another name for the record group?
- 28 Cited in McCoy, *National Archives*, p. 180. The biographical details for Schellenberg may be found in “In Memoriam: T.R. Schellenberg,” *American Archivist* 33 (April 1970), pp. 190–202.
- 29 Barbara L. Craig, “What are the Clients? Who are the Products? The Future of Archival Public Services in Perspective,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 139–40, where she speculates on the impact of contemporary social mores on the development of archival ideas.
- 30 Meyer H. Fishbein, “A Viewpoint on Appraisal of National Records,” *American Archivist* 33 (April 1970), p. 175.
- 31 Maynard J. Brichford, *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal & Accessioning* (Chicago, 1977), p. 13. Despite growing protests against this approach to archives, it continues, with explicit acknowledgement of Schellenberg’s influence; see Elizabeth Lockwood, “‘Imponderable Matters’: The Influence of New Trends in History on Appraisal at the National Archives,” *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990), pp. 394–405.
- 32 F. Gerald Ham, “The Archival Edge,” in Daniels and Walch, *Modern Archives Reader*, pp. 328–29.
- 33 For this reason especially, I have pointedly criticized the use-defined approach to archives: see Terry Cook, “Viewing the World Upside Down: Reflections on the Theoretical Underpinnings of Archival Public Programming,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 123–34; “Easy To Byte, Harder To Chew: The Second Generation of Electronic Records Archives,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991–92), pp. 210–11; and “Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal,” in Craig, *Archival Imagination*, pp. 40–42, and *passim*. Almost all the writers on contemporary archival frameworks in the following paragraphs also reject, at least implicitly, use-defined appraisal to determine the actual composition of archives. More explicitly on the subject, see Eric Ketelaar, “Exploitation of New Archival Materials,” *Archivum* 35 (1989), pp. 189–99. I agree wholeheartedly with Ketelaar that archives should not be appraised and acquired to support use; once acquired, however, I certainly agree (and have advocated) that their description, reference, and diffusion should reflect client needs as far as possible.
- 34 That this utilitarian content-based approach would radically diminish, if not deny, the value of any archival theory, is best revealed in John Roberts, “Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving,” *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987), pp. 66–74; and “Archival Theory: Myth or Banality,” *American Archivist* 53 (Winter 1990), pp. 110–20. The leading proponent of the use-

- based approach, Elsie T. Freeman (now Finch), also exemplifies this kind of thinking, when she dismisses traditional archival theory as mere “rules of order and practice (sometimes called principles);” see her “In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User’s Point of View,” *American Archivist* 47 (Spring 1984), pp. 112–13, 119. Note the title, which mirrors the content of Lawrence Dowler’s “The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records,” *American Archivist* 51 (Winter and Spring 1988), p. 74, and *passim*. For a supportive Canadian view of this largely United States perspective, see Gabrielle Blais and David Enns, “From Paper Archives to People Archives: Public Programming in the Management of Archives,” *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 101–13, and especially p. 109. For a countering Canadian view, challenging Roberts’s assertions, see Terry Eastwood, “What is Archival Theory and Why is it Important,” *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 122–30, printed with two more responses by John Roberts in the same issue.
- 35 Oddo Bucci makes the same observation, in “Evolution of Archival Science,” p. 35, and ff.
- 36 Abraham Lincoln’s memorable phrase was first given an archival twist by Eric Ketelaar; see his “Archives of the People, By the People, For the People,” *South Africa Archives Journal* 34 (1992), pp. 5–16.
- 37 Hans Booms, “Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources,” *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987), (original 1972: translation by Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhower), p. 104. On the lack of legitimacy provided by Hegelian models based on a prediction of historical trends in society, or by the Schellenbergian dream of “a futurology of research interests,” or by Marxist or other models using alleged “objective laws for social development,” all of which models ignore the very “existential conditions of human existence,” as well as the impossibility of ever knowing accurately what “society” is or means, see p. 100, and *passim* (pp. 69–107). For an amplification of Booms’ views that records reflect or embody an “image” of society, see the work of his Bundesarchiv colleague, Siegfried Büttner, as described in Terry Cook, *The Archival Appraisal of Records Containing Personal Information: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris, 1991), pp. iv–v, 35–37; and *inter alia* through comments on Büttner’s views by Hans Booms himself, “Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity,” *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991–92), pp. 28–29.
- 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–33 (quotations from pp. 31–33).
- 39 See Cook, *Archival Appraisal of Records*; and “Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal.” Those who do not read my work carefully can occasionally get this important distinction confused, or even reversed, between the philosophical warrant for “societal” archives and the actual provenance-based appraisal strategies and research methodologies developed to realize that warrant. As a result, some have even suggested that my work is part of the “archivist as subject-content historian” or “European documentalist” traditions—which are exactly the traditions against which I have been reacting (and have so stated explicitly) in articulating these new approaches! Attempting to reposition archivists from being passive receptors of records to active appraisers does not mean advocating their abandonment of provenance as the basis of archival decision-making (including appraisal), or nostalgic hankering to transform archivists into either European documentalists or Schellenbergian historians. For the critiques, see Angelika Menne-Haritz, “Appraisal or Selection: Can a Content Oriented Appraisal be Harmonized with the Principle of Provenance?” in Kerstin Abukhanfusa and Jan Sydbeck, eds., *The Principle of Provenance: Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2–3 September 1993* (Sweden, 1994), pp. 103–31, abridged as “Appraisal or Documentation: Can We Appraise Archives by Selecting Content?” *American Archivist* 57 (Summer 1994); and Terry Eastwood, “Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies,” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 232–52; which I have rebutted with Terry Cook, “‘Another Brick in the Wall’: Terry

Eastwood's Masonry and Archival Walls, History, and Archival Appraisal," *Archivaria* 37 (Summer 1994), pp. 96–103.

In an otherwise interesting slant on the archivist's *métier*, Elizabeth Diamond assumes that archival "value" in my approach would be determined by judging the importance of records to the "administrative historian;" see her "The Archivist as Forensic Scientist—Seeing Ourselves in a Different Way," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), pp. 145–46. In so stating, she confuses methodology with theory. While the archivist doing macroappraisal must obviously do sustained research into the records of administrative activity (functions, business processes, structures, activities), he or she does so in order to discern the degree of sharpness of the *societal image and citizen-state interaction* revealed by the record-creating processes within those general administrative activities, not to focus on the history of administrations *per se*. It is research into the history and character of *records*, not *administrations*, to learn how and why *records* were created, and what those records-creation, records-organization, and contemporary record-use processes reveal about societal functions, citizen-state interaction, and governance dynamics. The records which after this research are found to mirror most succinctly those societal functions and interactions are judged to have archival value. The theoretical stance and focus is societal, therefore, not administrative. Perhaps it is enough to say that research into records to understand their context is not the same as appraising records.

- 40 For the actual approach, see Terry Cook, "An Appraisal Methodology: Guidelines for Performing An Archival Appraisal," (December 1991); and Terry Cook, "Government-Wide Plan for the Disposition of Records 1991–1996" (October 1990) both internal National Archives reports. For a proposed sophistication of these methodologies, although one still requiring fuller implementation strategies, see Richard Brown, "Records Acquisition Strategy and Its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991–92), pp. 34–56; and Richard Brown, "Macro-Appraisal Theory and the Context of the Public Records Creator," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), pp. 121–72.
- 41 T.K. Bikson and E.F. Frinking, *Preserving the Present: Toward Viable Electronic Records* (The Hague, 1993), pp. 33–34.
- 42 The original statement is Helen Willa Samuels, "Who Controls The Past," *American Archivist* 49 (Spring 1986), pp. 109–24. A later article updates the theme, and contains additional cross-references; see Richard J. Cox and Helen W. Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda to Improve the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter-Spring 1988), pp. 28–42. Two other oft-cited examples are Larry Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987), pp. 12–47; and Richard J. Cox, "A Documentation Strategy Case Study: Western New York," *American Archivist* 52 (Spring 1989), pp. 192–200 (quotation is p. 193). The working out of Samuels's approach, without the theoretical underpinnings, was first evidenced in Joan K. Haas, Helen Willa Samuels, and Barbara Trippel Simmons, *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide* (Chicago, 1985).
- 43 For critiques, see David Bearman, *Archival Methods*, (Pittsburgh, 1989), pp. 13–15; and Terry Cook, "Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), pp. 181–91.
- 44 Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Metuchen, N.J., and London, 1992), p. 15, and *passim*. See also her overview of both documentation strategies and institutional functional analyses in Helen W. Samuels, "Improving our Disposition: Documentation Strategy," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991–92), pp. 125–40. Curiously, Samuels publicly launched (and later published in this latter essay) her new approach at the same 1991 conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Banff at which Hans Booms made the significant modification of his own ideas, in part because of his concern that his older documentation plan of assessing public opinion might be confused with Samuels's older documentation strategies, with which he disagreed! Both of these major

thinkers on appraisal matters, therefore, unbeknownst to each other, added significant new dimensions to their ideas, and moved in the same provenance-based, functions-driven direction for the same reason at the same time, in exact step with the new Canadian macroappraisal approach. For Booms on Samuels, see his “*Überlieferungsbildung*,” p. 32. For Samuels’s own rejection of the American tradition of defining value through use and for her insistence on the centrality of provenance, see *Varsity Letters*, pp. 8, 13, and 16. For another, complementary approach to developing strategic plans for appraisal, see Joan D. Krizack, *Documentation Planning for the U.S. Health Care System* (Baltimore, 1994).

- 45 The best analysis is Wilfred I. Smith, “‘Total Archives’: The Canadian Experience” (originally 1986), in Nesmith, *Canadian Archival Studies*, pp. 133–50. For a supportive but critical view, see Terry Cook, “The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on ‘Total Archives,’” *Archivaria* 9 (Winter 1979–80), pp. 141–49.
- 46 See Ian E. Wilson, “Reflections on *Archival Strategies*,” *American Archivist* 58 (Fall 1995), pp. 414–29; and Shirley Sprage, “The Abdication Crisis: Are Archivists Giving Up Their Cultural Responsibility?,” *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), pp. 173–81. The reasons for the growing threat to “total archives” are studied in detail and with subtlety by Laura Millar, in her already-cited doctoral thesis: “The End of ‘Total Archives’?: An Analysis of Changing Acquisition Practices in Canadian Archival Repositories.” For a complementary analysis of other reasons for this threat, see Joan M. Schwartz, “‘We make our tools and our tools make us’: Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats,” *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), pp. 40–74. Robert A.J. McDonald puts the case exactly right in “Acquiring and Preserving Private Records: Cultural versus Administrative Perspectives,” *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), pp. 162–63, by stating that those undermining “total archives” either fail to understand the essence of the Canadian archival tradition or lack the imagination or nerve to recast “total archives” to flourish in economically difficult times. Merely doing what we think our sponsors want or need regarding their own institutional records, or what we think will please them and show that we are being good corporate “players,” is, as Shirley Sprage says, too easy an abdication of the archivist’s mission and responsibilities.
- 47 Hugh A. Taylor, “Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 25 (Winter 1987–88), pp. 15, 18, 24; “The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries As Heritage,” *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982–83), pp. 118, 122; “Information Ecology and the Archives of the 1980s,” *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), p. 25; and “Towards the New Archivist: The Integrated Professional,” paper delivered at the annual conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, Windsor, June 1988, manuscript, pp. 7–8. Other important statements in a large and continuing body of work are Hugh A. Taylor, “The Media of Record: Archives in the Wake of McLuhan,” *Georgia Archive* 6 (Spring 1978), pp. 1–10; “My Very Act and Deed’: Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs,” *American Archivist* 51 (Fall 1988), pp. 456–69; “Recycling the Past: The Archivist in the Age of Ecology,” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), pp. 203–13; and “Some Concluding Thoughts,” to a special theme issue of the *American Archivist* 57 (Winter 1994), pp. 138–43, devoted to the future of archives. The fullest analysis of Taylor’s thought is Tom Nesmith’s “Hugh Taylor’s Contextual Idea for Archives and the Foundation of Graduate Education in Archival Studies,” in Craig, *The Archival Imagination*, pp. 13–37. Most of the essays in this *festschrift* reveal *inter alia* the profound impact of Hugh Taylor’s ideas on an entire generation of archivists in Canada and elsewhere.
- 48 Tom Nesmith, “Introduction: Archival Studies in English-Speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance,” in Nesmith, *Canadian Archival Studies*, pp. 1–28; see p. 4 regarding Taylor’s leadership in this rediscovery.
- 49 *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 18–19. See also Tom Nesmith, “Archives from the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship,” (originally 1982), in *Ibid.*, pp. 159–84; and his introductory editorial, “*Archivaria* After Ten Years,” *Archivaria* 20 (Summer 1985), pp. 13–21. To these ends,

Nesmith also teaches as the central core of the graduate-level archival education programme he created at the University of Manitoba a Tayloresque-humanist exploration of the nature and impact of record-keeping in society, historically and for the present day and future (see note 60 below).

- 50 Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984–85), pp. 46, 49.
- 51 Nesmith, "Introduction," p. 18. His book (*Canadian Archival Studies*) was also designed, in part, to showcase the rich variety of this exploration and rediscovery of provenance, based on the study and analysis of records and records creators.
- 52 Bearman and Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," pp. 14–27, especially p. 14 for the quotation and footnote 1 for their sensitivity to the positive Canadian influences in receiving their work.
- 53 See Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science," *Archivaria* 28 (Summer 1989), pp. 7–27, for a general statement in the first of a series of six articles, and especially "Part V," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991), for an explicit enunciation of the overall diplomatic method and approach, as opposed to its component parts outlined in the four earlier articles.
- 54 For a flavour, see Heather MacNeil, "Weaving Provenancial and Documentary Relations," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), pp. 192–98; Janet Turner, "Experimenting with New Tools: Special Diplomatics and the Study of Authority in the United Church of Canada," *Archivaria* 30 (Summer 1990), pp. 91–103; and Terry Eastwood, "How Goes It with Appraisal?," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), pp. 111–21, as well as his article in note 34 above. For highlights of Luciana Duranti's work, see those cited in notes 5 and 53 above, as well as her main theoretical statements in "The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory;" "The Archival Body of Knowledge: Archival Theory, Method, and Practice, and Graduate and Continuing Education," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 34 (Winter 1993), pp. 10–11; and "Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 5–10. Other Canadian archivists not within Duranti's immediate orbit have also defended the primacy of the record: Barbara Craig, for example, has repeatedly called attention to the record's importance, demonstrating thereby that there is the potential for much compatibility between the "history of the record" approach (of which she is a good representative) and the "diplomatics" stream; see among others her "The Acts of the Appraisers: The Context, the Plan and the Record," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), pp. 175–80, and well as her many writing on health and British government records. For a different, post-modernist, and certainly non-Jenkinsonian perspective on the importance of the record, as hermeneutic text to be read (in the sense of contextualized narration), see Brown, "Records Acquisition Strategy and Its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics." As my critics rarely acknowledge, I have also defended the central importance of the record in archival conceptualizations; see, among others already cited, "It's Ten O'Clock: Do You Know Where Your Data Are?" *Technology Review* (January 1995), pp. 48–53.
- 55 This point is made explicitly by one of the few published case studies of applying diplomatics, whose author notes "that it will be necessary to employ other tools of the archivist's trade in order to corroborate the discoveries of diplomatics and to address questions left unanswered by diplomatics." Among such tools are the "History" of administration, law, and organizational culture (ideas, societal forces, etc.) and "Archival Theory," which I presume would encompass the wider provenance-based insights that the history of the record approach offers into the juridical context of creation. See Turner, "Experimenting with New Tools," p. 101. With billions of records to appraise, modern archivists should reverse Turner's formula, simply because no one can possibly undertake modern appraisal by performing diplomatic analyses on individual documents (which in some electronic and audio-visual environments do not even exist at the time of appraisal). Her formula would then read "that diplomatics can be usefully

employed to corroborate the discoveries and answer any questions left unanswered by the functions-based, provenance-driven macroappraisal." Diplomats becomes, then, not unlike Rick Brown's suggested use of an archival hermeneutic, a means to corroborate macroappraisal analyses and hypotheses.

- 56 This point about recognizing, celebrating, and merging the two traditions, rather than either ignoring or denigrating the other tradition, has also been made by Heather MacNeil, in "Archival Theory and Practice: Between Two Paradigms," pp. 17–18; however, she sometimes does not practise what she advocated: see her one-sided "Archival Studies in the Canadian Grain: The Search for a Canadian Archival Tradition," *Archivaria* 37 (Spring 1994), pp. 134–49; and the corrective offered by Tom Nesmith, "Nesmith and *The Rediscovery of Provenance* (Response to Heather MacNeil)," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994), pp. 7–10.
- 57 The danger has been suggested by Joan M. Schwartz, in "'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats." There is nothing, in my view, in the application of diplomats or neo-Jenkinsonian methods that inherently favours institutional over private archives, or indeed the administrative over the cultural perspective on archives. It is more a question of emphasis and lack of balance. The examples used by the principal authors involved and the history of the evolution of these methods certainly lead in these directions, as does the assumption of either positive institutional compliance with the related archival perspectives, or at least strong juridical and societal sanctions being readily imposed for non-compliance. Neither assumption is true for many late twentieth-century North American institutions, and are almost completely irrelevant for the targeting and appraisal of papers and related media of private individuals, and many private associations and groups. From these unrealistic practical assumptions comes the danger rather than from any logical fault in the ideas or theory.
- 58 See notes 39 and 40 above.
- 59 Bureau of Canadian Archivists, Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards, *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards* (Ottawa, 1985); Wendy M. Duff and Kent M. Haworth, "The Reclamation of Archival Description: The Canadian Perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (Winter 1990–91), pp. 26–35; Eastwood, ed., *The Archival Fonds*; and numerous articles in the two thematic issues on descriptive standards of *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992) and 35 (Spring 1993), especially those by Hugo Stibbe and Cynthia Durance. These two issues also contain articles by David Bearman, Kathleen Roe, and Terry Cook challenging some of the assumptions and implementation strategies of the Canadian effort, particularly some *RAD* (*Rules for Archival Description*) definitions of the nature of the fonds, but there is no serious challenge to its provenance-enhancing intentions and contextualizing purposes.
- 60 The two best articles on the substance of graduate education are Terry Eastwood, "Nurturing Archival Education in the University," *American Archivist* 51 (Summer 1988), pp. 228–52; and Nesmith, "Hugh Taylor's Contextual Idea for Archives and the Foundation of Graduate Education in Archival Studies," which outline the approaches at the University of British Columbia and the University of Manitoba, respectively. For a general framework, see Association of Canadian Archivists, *Guidelines for the Development of a Two-Year Curriculum for a Master of Archival Studies* (Ottawa, 1990).
- 61 The European re-examination of provenance is often in the context of the electronic record or the voluminous records of large organizations. For examples, see Claes Granström, "Will Archival Theory Be Sufficient in the Future?," pp. 159–67; and Bruno Delmas, "Archival Science and Information Technologies," pp. 168–76, both in Angelika Menne-Haritz, ed., *Information Handling in Offices and Archives* (München, 1993). The same affirmation is made by many of the European authors in Bucci, *Archival Science on the Threshold*; in Abukhanfusa and Sydbeck, *The Principle of Provenance*; and in Judith A. Koucky, ed., *Second European Conference on Archives: Proceedings* (Paris, 1989). The same argument was well presented at

- the Montreal ICA by Angelika Menne-Haritz, "Archival Education: Meeting the Needs of Society in the Twenty-First Century," plenary address offprint, XII International Congress on Archives (Montreal, 1992), especially pp. 8–11.
- 62 The best exposition of the Australian Series System (including a significant reconceptualization and updating of Scott's ideas) is in Piggott and McKemmish, *The Records Continuum*, especially the essays by Sue McKemmish and Chris Hurley. For his own statement, see Scott, "The Record Group Concept," pp. 493–504; and his five-part series, with various co-authors: "Archives and Administrative Change – Some Methods and Approaches," *Archives and Manuscripts* 7 (August 1978), pp. 115–27; 7 (April 1979), pp. 151–65; 7 (May 1980), pp. 41–54; 8 (December 1980), pp. 51–69; and 9 (September 1981), pp. 3–17. Scott's breakthrough was the product of a lively debate within the Commonwealth Archives Office (now Australian Archives), with Ian Maclean, the first Commonwealth Archivist, also having a very significant role, especially in terms of taking the series concept out of the archival cloisters and applying it to current records in agencies, and thus helping to mend the Schellenbergian split between records managers and archivists, and between "current" records and "old" archives. Yet it was Scott who primarily articulated the concept in theoretical writing for the broader profession.
- 63 See Chris Hurley, "What, If Anything, Is A Function," *Archives and Manuscripts* 21 (November 1993), pp. 208–20; and his "Ambient Functions: Abandoned Children to Zoos," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), pp. 21–39.
- 64 The best summary of the fonds concept is by one of the leading archival thinkers of Europe: see Michel Duchemin, "Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science," *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983), pp. 64–82 (originally 1977). For these maximalist-minimalist distinctions, see Cook, "Concept of the Archival Fonds," pp. 54–57.
- 65 Indeed, the rethinking of descriptive paradigms for archives in a postcustodial framework by North Americans is explicitly due to Scott's inspiration: see Max J. Evans, "Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept," *American Archivist* 49 (Summer 1986), pp. 251–53, 256, 259, and *passim*; Bearman and Lytle, "Power of the Principle of Provenance," p. 20; and Cook, "Concept of the Archival Fonds," pp. 52, 67–68. Scott's large influence in his own country helps explain the Australian leadership in much postcustodial thinking, especially regarding revitalized records management and descriptive practice. For postcustodial thinking generally, and references to other postcustodial work, see Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Postcustodial and Postmodernist Era."
- 66 For the Australian interpretation and implementation of the records continuum instead of the life cycle approach, see many of the authors (especially Frank Upward) in McKemmish and Piggott, *Records Continuum*. For France, and its long-standing "pré-archivage" work within the government ministries which also reflects the continuum concept, see Jean Favier, ed., *La Pratique archivistique française* (Paris, 1993). The Canadian case has been stated in Atherton, "From Life Cycle to Continuum."
- 67 McKemmish and Upward, *Archival Documents*, pp. 1, 22, and *passim*.
- 68 Glenda Acland, "Managing the Record Rather Than the Relic," pp. 57–63. She has been one of the key movers towards an accountability framework; see her testimony to government bodies cited in McKemmish and Upward, *Archival Documents*, pp. 13–15.
- 69 See the revealing title of Acland's "Archivist – Keeper, Undertaker or Auditor?," in which she argues for the last role.
- 70 Upward and McKemmish, "Somewhere Beyond Custody," pp. 145–46, and Frank Upward in *Archival Documents*, p. 43. For an interesting attempt to break out of this mode, see Sue McKemmish, "Evidence of Me," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24 (May 1996), pp. 28–45.
- 71 Regarding the latter, a great number of strategies and practices have evolved, or at least are being recommended to archivists, to deal with electronic records, although there is no space to discuss them in this essay devoted to conceptual discourse rather than practical methodologies–

- which is not to say that those methodologies do not generate their own controversies, such as whether archives need acquire physically all electronic records in order to ensure their authenticity or the appropriate linkage of creator metadata and archival contextualized authority files. The best single source for strategic approaches to electronic records remains Margaret Hedstrom, ed., *Electronic Records Management Program Strategies* (Pittsburgh, 1993), which offers case studies, with analyses of critical factors of success and failure, of electronic records programmes at international (2), national (4), state (4), and university (1) levels, with an overall assessment, and an extensive (59 pages) annotated bibliography compiled by Richard Cox for readers to continue their explorations. See also David Bearman, "Archival Strategies," paper discussed at the SAA 1994 conference, and forthcoming in the *American Archivist*.
- 72 For a sample, see David Bearman's works cited throughout these notes; ten of his essays are now collected into David Bearman, *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organizations* (Pittsburgh, 1994); and a wide range of his commentary and analysis appears throughout all the issues of *Archives and Museum Informatics*, which he edits. The other principal American voice has been Margaret Hedstrom: see her ground-breaking SAA manual, *Archives and Manuscripts: Machine-Readable Records* (Chicago, 1984); and more recently "Understanding Electronic Incunabula: A Framework for Research on Electronic Records," *American Archivist* 54 (Summer 1991), pp. 334–54; "Descriptive Practices for Electronic Records: Deciding What is Essential and Imagining What is Possible," *Archivaria* 36 (Autumn 1993), 53–62; and with David Bearman, "Reinventing Archives for Electronic Records: Alternative Service Delivery Options," in Hedstrom, *Electronic Records Management*, pp. 82–98. An early pioneer for electronic archiving was also American: Charles M. Dollar; see his "Appraising Machine-Readable Records," (originally 1978), in Daniels and Walch, *Modern Archives Reader*, pp. 71–79; and, more recently, *Archival Theory and Information Technologies: The Impact of Information Technologies on Archival Principles and Methods* (Macerata, Italy, 1992); and "Archival Theory and Practices and Informatics. Some Considerations," in Bucci, *Archival Science on the Threshold*, pp. 311–28. An early Canadian voice was Harold Naugler, *The Archival Appraisal of Machine-Readable Records: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris, 1984).
- 73 Cook, "Easy to Byte, Harder to Chew: The Second Generation of Electronic Records Archives," pp. 203–8.
- 74 For a stimulating discussion, see Sue McKemmish, "Are Records Ever Actual?," in McKemmish and Piggott, *The Records Continuum*, pp. 187–203.
- 75 This is the provocative argument of David Bearman and Margaret Hedstrom in "Reinventing Archives for Electronic Records," pp. 82–98, especially p. 97. Bearman's other key articles on strategic reorientation, differing tactics suitable for varying organizational cultures, and risk management is "Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records," in McKemmish and Upward, *Archival Documents*, pp. 215–27; and his "Archival Strategies." For tactics addressing the archivist's traditional functions and principles, see Dollar, *Archival Theory and Information Technologies*, chapter four.
- 76 David Bearman, "Multisensory Data and Its Management," in Cynthia Durance, ed., *Management of Recorded Information: Converging Disciplines* (München, 1990), p. 111; and "Archival Principles and the Electronic Office," in Menne-Haritz, *Information Handling*, p. 193.
- 77 For a more detailed critique of the biases of electronic records archiving as it has been evolving, as well as an analysis of its strengths in affirming archival relevance in protecting thinking in context, see Terry Cook, "The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 11 (1997), pp. 15–37. On the issue of metadata and archival description, see Heather MacNeil, "Metadata Strategies and Archival Description: Comparing Apples to Oranges," *Archivaria* 39 (Spring 1995), pp. 22–32; with the countering case put by David Wallace, "Managing the Present: Metadata as Archival Description," in *Ibid.*, pp. 11–21; and originally by David Bearman,

- notably in "Documenting Documentation," *Archivaria* 34 (Summer 1992), pp. 33–49. An attempted reconciliation is David Bearman and Wendy Duff, "Grounding Archival Description in the Functional Requirements for Evidence," *Archivaria* 41 (Spring 1996), pp. 275–303.
- 78 See James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989), pp. 10–25, for an important analysis. O'Toole is also exploring the continuing relevance of the usually unquestioned concept of "uniqueness" in archival theory and practice, in a forthcoming article.
- 79 Ketelaar, "Archival Theory and the Dutch Manual," p. 36.
- 80 For a discussion of these categories and related circumstances that permit an archives to leave records with their creators for an open-ended period of time without threat, see Terry Cook, "Leaving Archival Electronic Records in Institutions: Policy and Monitoring Arrangements at the National Archives of Canada," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 9 (1995), pp. 141–49. The footnotes in that article refer readers to the original 1990 debate, subsequently published in David Bearman, ed., *Archival Management of Electronic Records* (Pittsburgh, 1991), between David Bearman and Ken Thibodeau, moderated by Margaret Hedstrom, on the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy, a debate enjoined again by the contrasting conclusions of the projects at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of British Columbia on electronic records, and articulated anew by Luciana Duranti, Terry Eastwood, Frank Upward, and Greg O'Shea and David Roberts, in a special theme issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* 24 (November 1996).
- 81 For a very provocative analysis of archivists' understanding and assumptions—many being false and misleading—about "order" and about the nature of their own work in establishing, re-creating, and defending original and other "orders," as well as the first major postmodernist analysis of the archival enterprise, see Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991), pp. 78–100.
- 82 The "postcustodial" term was first coined by F. Gerald Ham, in "Archival Strategies for the Postcustodial Era," *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981), pp. 207–16. Ham broached many of the same ideas without the label even earlier, in his ground-breaking "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* 38 (January 1975), pp. 5–13, reprinted in Daniels and Walch, *Modern Archives Reader*, pp. 326–35. While the term "postcustodial" appears increasingly in archival literature, and certainly *implicitly* lies behind much recent thinking around electronic records and documentation strategies, its implications for the profession and for actual daily practice by the archivist have not been directly or systematically addressed by many writers—always with the already noted, although somewhat different, exception of the work of Australians Ian Maclean and Peter Scott decades ago and all of David Bearman's work. For more recent Australian discussion, see McKemmish and Upward, "Somewhere Beyond Custody," especially pp. 137–41, and their own essays and introductory pieces throughout their volume *Archival Documents*, as well as Frank Upward's work on the records continuum (notes 8 and 20 above). For an example of postcustodial appraisal thinking combined with actual work experience, see Greg O'Shea, "The Medium is *not* the Message: Appraisal of Electronic Records by Australian Archives," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22 (May 1994), pp. 68–93. Outside Australia, for suggested practical applications for appraisal and description of postcustodial thinking, see again Cook's "Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal," and "Concept of the Archival Fonds;" and Hedstrom and Bearman, "Reinventing Archives." The fullest explicitly postcustodial analysis to date is Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Postcustodial and Postmodernist Era." *I wish to underline here that "postcustodial" does not mean "non-custodial." The postcustodial paradigm is a overarching conceptual mindset for the archivist applicable whether the records are transferred to the custodial care of an archives or left for some time in an distributed or non-custodial arrangement with their creator.*

- 83 On this point and explicitly criticizing “postcustodial” assumptions that can, admittedly, be asserted too blithely as a radical break from the past rather than a difference of emphasis, see the fine essay by Heather MacNeil, “Archival Theory and Practice: Between Two Paradigms,” pp. 16–17. She argues for good reasons that the substance of archives centred around “the protection and safeguarding of evidence” should be retained, even if our means and strategies to accomplish this end may have to change fundamentally. That has been also my perspective for some time and in this article.
- 84 Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, p. 260.