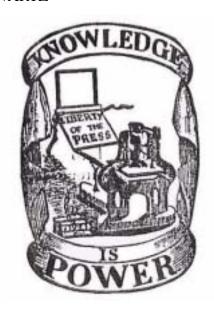# Special Section on Archives: Space and Power

## "Having New Eyes": Spaces of Archives, Landscapes of Power

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"Power is Knowledge" logo from masthead for *The Poor Man's Guardian*, published
in Britain by Henry Hetherington, 1831–1835.

**From "Knowledge is Power" to "Knowledge is Here"**

In 1831 in Britain, Henry Hetherington, a champion of universal male suffrage and founder of the London Working Men's Association, began to publish the radical newspaper *Poor Man's Guardian*. He did so in defiance of the four pence "stamp tax" on newspapers. Believing the newspaper tax to be a "tax on knowledge," he upheld freedom of the press and fought for the "unstamped press," claiming that working men needed knowledge. *Poor Man's Guardian* was "Published, in Defiance of Law, to try the Power of Right against 'Might'." He priced his weekly paper at one penny to bring it within the purchasing power of working people, and adopted a logo which bore the words "Knowledge is Power."

With this in mind, and in the context of ideas about the "knowledge/power nexus" which are central to current scholarship in the humanities and social sciences, what do we make of the banner announcing "Knowledge is Here" which flutters gently outside Library and Archives Canada (LAC) headquarters at 395 Wellington Street in Ottawa?[1] In declaring the institution a space of knowledge, must we not also acknowledge that it is a space of power? But what kind of space, what kind of power, and where, exactly, is this knowledge/power nexus located? Ignoring the obvious storehouse of "knowledge" in the books of the former National Library and in the heads of LAC employees and researchers – is it, indeed, "knowledge" or more correctly "facts" – those building blocks of knowledge[2] – that can be found in archival boxes of the former National Archives at 395 Wellington Street, its satellite facilities scattered around the nation's capital, its federal records centres across Canada, and its presence on the Web? Or does the banner allude to the knowledge which

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1 Established on 21 May 2004 by an Act of Parliament, and conceived as "A New Knowledge Institution for Canada," Library and Archives Canada takes as its Mission to serve Canada as "a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society." Despite its name, Library and Archives Canada represents not a simple "merger" but a "transformation" of the former National Archives of Canada and National Library of Canada. Ian Wilson, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, expressed his vision for the new institution, stating: "We will be building on the strong foundations of our two predecessor institutions, their collections, their traditions and, most especially, their expertise. With these we will be ready to face the challenges, possibilities and expectations of the 21st century." For more on Library and Archives Canada, go to: <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/> and click on "About Us" (accessed 1 April 2006).

2 "The quest for knowledge rather than information is the crux of the study of archives and of the daily work of the archivist. ... Quite simply, archivists must transcend mere information, and mere information management, if they wish to search for, and lead others to seek, 'knowledge' and meaning among the records in their care." Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984–85), pp. 28–49; quotation on p. 49.

underpins the work of archivists and all archival functions? If so, then can we assume that power lurks in all the same places, both physical and intellectual?

As Terry Cook and I have argued elsewhere, archives and records, in their creation and use by their makers, and in their appraisal and management by archivists, will always reflect power relationships:

Through archives, the past is controlled. Certain stories are privileged and others marginalized. And archivists are an integral part of this story-telling. In the design of record-keeping systems, in the appraisal and selection of a tiny fragment of all possible records to enter the archive, in approaches to subsequent and ever-changing description and preservation of the archive and its patterns of communication and use, archivists continually reshape, reinterpret, and reinvent the archive. This represents enormous power over memory and identity, over the fundamental ways in which society seeks evidence of what its core values are and have been, where it has come from, and where it is going.

"Archives," we proposed, "are not passive storehouses of old stuff, but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed," and by extension, "memory is not something found or collected in archives, but something that is made, and continually re-made."[3] Instead of the term "sites," we might just as well have used the term "spaces," and it is those very spaces that constitute the underlying theme of this special section of *Archivaria*.

Questions of space are traditionally the purview of geographers; present understandings of past transformations of spaces and the relationships embedded in them – the relationship between undifferentiated "space" on the ground to perceived "place" in the mind, as well as the ways in which power/knowledge is both reflective and constitutive of the relationship of people to space/place – is, more particularly, the primary concern of cultural and historical geographers. But apart from being users of archives, what do historical geographers – or the army of historians, sociologists, cultural theorists, and others who are writing on "the archive" – know about the "real world" of archives[4] and what do they have to say to archivists? "Little and much," would be my reply.

3 Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science*, vol. 2, nos. 1–2 (March 2002), pp. 1–19; Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, "Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Practice," *Archival Science*, vol. 2, nos. 3–4 (September 2002), pp. 171–85; quotations on pp. 1, 172. See also Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *American Archivist*, vol. 65, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2002), pp. 24–41; and Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June 2001), pp. 131–41. See also Carolyn Hamilton et al., eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Cape Town, 2002).
4 In her introduction to a special issue of *Visual Resources*, "Following the Archival Turn: Photography, the Museum, and the Archive," Cheryl Simon writes: "Key to the relationship

In the wake of Derrida's *Archive Fever*, interrogation of "the archive" has become a focus, one might even say an obsession, in the humanities and social sciences. Admittedly this "archive" bears little resemblance to "the real world of archives." However, it is this metaphorical space of French philosophers, and the process of "archivalization" which they describe, that demand careful consideration from archivists. Of course, the archival aspects of what has more broadly been called "the condition of postmodernity" have begun to be addressed within the archival literature – and, in this regard, *Archivaria* has been a leader on the international scene. Yet, up to this point, archivists have been noticeably absent from the scholarly discussions and disciplinary debates about the nature, power, and impact of "the archive" that have taken place at academic conferences and in scholarly journals in Canada and elsewhere. Two examples, drawn from many such occasions and publications, illustrate this point.

### History of the Human Sciences

In November 1998 and May 1999, the journal *History of the Human Sciences* ran a two-part special issue devoted to *The Archive*. Authors were primarily academics – professors of Sociology, History, Anthropology, English, French, Italian, Classics; one co-author was a coordinator of digital conversion projects at the Law Library of Congress. In the opening essay, the late Irving Velody, Lecturer in Sociology at Bristol, asserted that "A science of the archive must then include a theory of its institutionalization."[5] Archivists, with a fundamental concern for the nature of archives and their role in society, must surely ask: How does this notion of "a science of the archive" differ from "archival science"? How does "a theory of its institutionalization" differ from "archival theory"? Velody then goes on to claim, "The significance of the archive then is not bound up with its quiddities" and declares that "The problem of the archive is bound up – not so much with the methods of its accumulation – but rather its legitimacy."[6] Archivists would surely disagree, but

between power and knowledge, the archive constitutes a site – more imaginary than real – through which social relations are regulated, enacted by way of the discursive practices of specific institutions." This and other definitions of "the archive" derived from the work of Michel Foucault on the ordering and production of knowledge tend to be fluid, loose, and elusive; here I use "the archive" in this metaphorical or philosophical sense. By the "real world of archives," I refer to the universe familiar to archivists, one with its own history, institutions, and records, as well as its own set of theories, methodologies, and practices. Cheryl Simon, "Introduction: Following the Archival Turn," *Visual Resources*, vol. XVIII, no. 2 (June 2002), p. 102.

5  Irving Velody, "The Archive and the Human Sciences: Notes Towards a Theory of the Archive," in *The Archive*, the first of two special issues of *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 4 (November 1998), p. 2.

6  Ibid., p. 12.

where in the "quiddities" and how in the "methods of accumulation" does professional practice and institutional discourse govern that intellectual territory between the metaphorical archive and the material archive?

In severing ties with the discipline of history and questioning historical research as a taken-for-granted building-block of archival education and practice, has the archival profession, in fact, become too inward-looking, too "bound up" in its "quiddities" to ponder its ongoing legitimacy? And what does Velody mean by legitimacy? For Velody and others outside the profession, legitimacy refers, not to concerns addressed by legislation, diplomatics, or InterPARES, but rather foundational notions of truth, reality, and authority at the knowledge/power nexus, that is, in all the physical, intellectual, and metaphorical spaces where knowledge and power intersect.

Until very recently, when informational convergence has led to institutional merger, archives have been fundamentally different from other institutions of the information trinity – libraries and museums – in their mandates, but more importantly, in their practices – particularly, in the way records in all media are appraised, selected, acquired, stored, described, and made available to users who were perceived as "researchers" and not "patrons" or "clients" or "visitors." Predicated upon the universally accepted foundational principles of provenance and original order, archives – as institution, record, and profession – have changed over time, and vary across space and society, and yet, flying in the face of reception theory, archivists uphold, for good reason, these foundational principles that seek to preserve the meaning invested in re-corded information through an emphasis on the context of records creation.

In this two-part collection of fifteen essays, there are singularly few references to the archival literature. Even in the chapter devoted to "the making of memory: the politics of archives, libraries, and museums in the construction of national consciousness" and co-authored by Beth Davis-Brown, Digital Conversion Project Coordinator at the Law Library of Congress, there is not a single reference to an archival journal. Davis-Brown and her co-author Richard Harvey Brown, a Sociology professor, rightly assert that, "as with most forms of modern social control, the power of archivists and curators is embedded in technical–rational processes that are ostensibly non-political," and claim:

Our aim is to reveal [the] ideological or political dimension of micro-processes of archival or curatorial work. We will describe a number of central technical concerns or functions as these are understood by professional librarians and archivists in the United States, and then discuss and illustrate how they are revealed, when strongly challenged, to be also deployments of power.[7]

7 Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown, "The Making of Memory: The Politics of Archives, Libraries and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness," in *The Archive*, the first of two special issues of *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 11, no. 4 (November 1998), p. 22.

However, their list of the main areas of "professional decision-making" quietly ignores, or perhaps conflates, archival functions and library activities in their use of the terms "collection development, cataloguing and classification, circulation and access, budget and finance, and preservation and conservation." Remarkably, their detailed discussions of these institutional processes or functions, using examples involving NARA, are drawn, not from *The American Archivist* or from writings by American archivists, but rather from newspaper reports in the *Washington Post*, surely making it difficult for archivists to take their revelations seriously. Nevertheless, the contributors to these issues of *History of the Human Sciences* do have many important insights that, though clearly not aimed at archivists, require our serious consideration, if even only a thoughtful analysis of where these authors have gone wrong.

**"Archiving Modernism"**

In July 2003, an international conference entitled, "Archiving Modernism," was organized by the Department of English at the University of Alberta.[8] Plenary speakers included Hal Foster, Professor of Art and Archaeology at Princeton; Susan Howe, a "literary artist" affiliated with the Department of English at the State University of NY at Buffalo; Michael Groden, Professor of English at the University of Western Ontario; and Christopher Fletcher, a curator of modern literary manuscripts at the British Library. Not one of the plenary speakers was an archivist, nor, given that notice of the conference was posted on an electronic mailing list maintained by the English Department at the University of Pennsylvania, was it likely to attract speakers or delegates from the archival community.[9]

The Call for Papers spelled out current scholarship on "the archive":

Recent descriptions of the "archive" as a regulatory mechanism of knowledge, a psychic system of memory and forgetting, a governing figure of subjectivity, and a space of embodied experience have enlivened some of the possible ways in which we might conceive of archival systems in relation to cultural critique. At the same time, the study of twentieth-century culture in its social, political, historical, and material contexts has made increasingly important questions regarding the archive as a set of practices, as an institutional apparatus, and as a discourse network. With such intersections in mind, scholars are invited to submit proposals for an international, interdisciplinary confer-

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8  "Archiving Modernism," Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 23–26 July 2003.

9  I am grateful to Professor Colleen Skidmore in the Department of Art & Design at the University of Alberta who kindly forwarded the Call for Papers to me.

ence that will foreground engagements with the archive in relation to the study of Modernism in its many forms.

   Twenty-minute papers were solicited on a variety of suggested topics. Some – for example: politics of the archive; archiving race, class, gender, sexuality, nation; pan-archives and meta-archives; cultural studies in the archive; archival histories/historical archives; old media, new media, and inter-media archives; archival methods and archival madness – were more intelligible to archival professionals than others, such as "archival violence," or "materialist hermeneutics and textual studies," or "affect/erotics/fevers of the archive," or "the archive as labyrinth or rhizome." While most archivists are wholly unprepared to discuss the archive as "rhizome" – or, for that matter, tuber or any other root vegetable – where was the voice of the archival profession at this gathering, on either side of the podium? One is compelled to ponder what was said about archival history and methods; call me a sceptic, but I doubt very much that foundational writing by the Dutch Trio, Jenkinson or Schellenberg, or more recent work by Samuels, Taylor, Bearman, Brothman, or Cook took centre stage. Yet, here were some of the leading cultural theorists and, presumably, the next generation of scholars, debating, discussing, dissecting issues central to our profession, but with no recognition or understanding of principles or practices, history, or theory of the archival profession. Where were the archival professionals, theorists, and critics to set the record straight? Where is any citation to a now very large literature by archivists on the very same postmodern archive these scholars debate, but from inside the archives?[10]

**Venturing Across the Academic/Archival Divide**

These and other conferences, journal issues,[11] and scholarly works, such as Thomas Richards' *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* or Carolyn Steedman's *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*[12] take a metaphorical and somewhat fluid definition of "the archive" derived largely from the writings of Michel Foucault or more often Jacques Derrida. They see

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10  For a (partial and still growing) list of citations to work by archivists following the "postmodern" turn, see Schwartz and Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power," note 17, pp. 10–11, an expanded version of an earlier compilation that appeared in Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001), note 14, pp. 20–21.

11  Including *Following the Archival Turn: Photography, the Museum, and the Archive*, special issue of *Visual Resources*, vol. XVIII, no. 2 (2002); *Archival Spaces*, a theme issue of *Space and Culture: International Journal of Social Spaces*, vol. 1, no. 10 (June 2001); and Richard H. Scheln, ed., *Practicing Historical Geography*, a special issue of *Historical Geography* 29 (2001).

12  Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London and New York, 1993); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (Piscataway, NJ, 2002).

"the archive" as an accumulation of data or knowledge without a nuanced appreciation of how that accumulation takes place and is subsequently organized. They make little if any distinction between what is historical and what is archival, nor between the mandates and practices of heritage institutions of the information trinity: archives, libraries, and museums. And yet, these scholars, often recognized leaders in their respective fields, cannot simply be dismissed as outside of "the real world of archives" and therefore wrong-headed or ill-informed and generally not worth our attention. Rather, they offer archivists perceptive insights into the workings of power, and prompt serious consideration of archives as spaces of power: spaces where the archives of the powerful reside; spaces where the power of the record is preserved; but more importantly and less well recognized, spaces where archivists and their institutions exercise power – power over what is and isn't selected for permanent retention (even if programmed into digital record-keeping systems or older records schedules); power over the way records are described and over the systems of description which privilege some information and some media, and marginalize others;[13] power over what is copied, scanned, and made available on-line; power over the choice, content, and presentation of everything from finding aids to thematic guides to virtual exhibitions to children's programming. For all their misunderstanding or confusion over what goes on inside "the real world of archives" these scholars also offer archivists a valuable cautionary sign that professional archivists are failing to connect with a vast array of disciplines where discussions about our profession, our institutions, our collections, our role in society – ultimately our very worth and value – are taking place without our input.

Differing conceptions of "the archive"/"archives" are at the heart of the ironies of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial scholarship. The "disconnect" or "slippage" between "the archive" of this recent and burgeoning scholarship and "archives" where archivists live and work has a great deal to do with misunderstandings about the relationship between records and power, and the presumed role of archives as spaces of power. Literary theorists, following Walter Benjamin's notion of the "death of the author" believe that the text (read "meaning") is cut loose from its authorial moorings, that authorial intention is superseded by audience reception, that origins are of little or no consequence. It is not difficult to see why a theory which privileges the current context of use over the original context of creation would not sit well with archivists whose foundational principles are predicated on the preservation of the meaning invested by authors in documents, regardless of medium. Our cornerstone notions of provenance and original order, and the archival prac-

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13  See Joan M. Schwartz, "Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic 'Othering,' and the Margins of Archivy," *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002), pp. 142–71.

tices predicated upon them, strive to prevent the death of the author as a safe-guard of evidential value.

Yet, ultimately, what these examinations of "the archive" have to offer archivists working in the "real world of archives" is an important critique of the knowledge/power nexus which archivists occupy. Their lessons are not pointed, specific, tailored to our needs; their caveats are embedded in their observations; their suggestions are written between the lines. It is our job – nay, our duty – to attend the conferences, read the journals, learn the vocabulary, cut through the jargon, better to understand the power *we* wield and how others, in many important sectors of society, see us. The essays that follow present one such sector.

### "Geography and the Political Spaces of Archives"

This special section of *Archivaria* 61 has its roots in a double session on "Geography and the Political Spaces of Archives" organized by British cultural geographers Cheryl McEwan (University of Birmingham, now Durham University) and Alison Blunt (University of London) for the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers held in New Orleans in March 2003. The Call for Papers offered obvious disciplinary resonances for archival professionals:

Coming to terms with the past has emerged as one of the grand narratives of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Individuals and nations around the world are seeking to overcome their traumatic legacies through the establishment of historical truth and the creation of collective memory and inclusive archives. At the same time, states and powerful institutions and individuals continue to act as the gatekeepers of archives and thus of history itself. In November 2001, for example, American historians and political scientists reacted with outrage after President Bush acted to block automatic access to the archives of previous administrations (*The Guardian*, 3/11/2001). In addition, new communications technologies, such as email, and a revival in interest in memory and oral histories in a variety of contexts, pose interesting dilemmas for archiving both the past and the present. While geographers have long used archives as sources of information, there has been relatively little critical geographical analysis of archives themselves, the politics of archives, and processes of archiving. These sessions will focus on how and why geographers engage with the political spaces of archives in their research.

McEwan and Blunt correctly observed:

Archives are not merely receptacles of the past; concepts of history themselves are shaped by archives. The relationship between power and knowledge is crystallised within the material and metaphorical spaces of archives; the question of who has the power to make, record and interpret history is an important one.

Seeking to address "the international, contemporary and historical relevance of these issues," McEwan and Blunt suggested that speakers examine "the idea and politics of archives" in a number of possible thematic areas, including:

– technologies of archiving
– the metaphorical and material spaces of archives
– visual archives
– archives, memory, and oral histories
– hidden spaces of archives/invisible archives
– theoretical approaches to archives (feminist, post-structuralist, postcolonialist, Marxist)
– the politics of archives
– archiving the present
– archives and nation-building

As an historical geographer with experience as a working archivist, I was invited to participate. My paper, "Archival Truth, Historical Consequences," presented ideas elaborated in the introductory essay to the first of two, double issues of *Archival Science* on "Archives, Records, and Power," co-edited with Terry Cook.[14] In it, I pointed out that much scholarly theorizing about "the archive" ignores the very real theoretical foundations of "archives" – as records, as institutions, and as a profession – and that, in the material and metaphorical spaces of archives, where positivist principles meet postmodern theories, archival "truths" have historical consequences. The four essays that form this special section are revised versions of papers presented in New Orleans.[15] The contributors all readily acknowledge that the perspectives they bring to the discussion of "Geography and the Political Spaces of Archives" are based on their experiences as users rather than keepers of archives.

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14  Schwartz and Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power," pp. 1–19.
15  Not all papers from the sessions were available for inclusion in this collection. Several had already been promised to other journals or were being revised for inclusion in a book. Topics ranged widely over time and space, from Hayden Lorimer's exploration of  "the active presence of archives and the function of different archival acts within the context of a recent geography field-course," to Mike Heffernan's focus on the gaps between published historical narrative, competing archival evidence, and unfolding oral testimony in official American and French histories, archives, and local folk memory of the destruction of the US World War One naval memorial in the city of Brest in western France on 4 July 1941.  Drawing on the expedition archives of the American Geographical Society, Karen M. Morin posited a postcolonial and "anti-colonial" method for examining the archives of an organization which, in many ways, supported American cultural and commercial imperialism and colonialism in the nineteenth-century.

Charles Withers and Andrew Grout view their essay, "Authority in Space?" on the creation of "Charting the Nation," a digital Web-based archive of maps of Scotland, 1550–1740, as a contribution to the debates on the nature of archives as "spaces" of authority. In it, they reflect on the creation of "Charting" as a single, placeless "archive" which brings together in one virtual "space" archival material preserved and managed by geographically dispersed archival repositories. Out of the daunting scope of their exercise in institutional co-operation and digital collaboration come useful theoretical insights, practical lessons, and thorny questions for archivists engaged in collaborative digital initiatives currently underway or planned. In bringing together in cyberspace cartographic and related material by different creators, is "Charting" in fact "an archive"? Here, perhaps, it is less important to answer the question than to pose it, for the question itself exposes what one archivist has

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The session organizers' own papers added imperial and postcolonial perspectives. Sharing Karen Morin's and Matthew Kurtz's concerns for "building a postcolonial archive," Cheryl McEwan considered how exclusionary and discriminating patterns are reproduced through official attempts to construct national memory–archives and alternative measures that are being taken to create a more inclusive process of restoring collective memory in post-apartheid South Africa. Focussing specifically on a recent memory cloths archival program, she discussed the possibilities of creating a postcolonial archive, where the voices and texts of historically marginalized people can be incorporated into national projects of remembering and notions of belonging. Focusing on oral histories and recorded interviews held at the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library in London and the Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol, as well as life stories collected in her research on Anglo-Indian women, Alison Blunt sought to explore archival spaces as sites of memory and nostalgia, and to trace geographies of home and empire within various archives. Looking at ideas about the archive itself, she addressed the gendered and racialized production of memory in imperial archives, and considered the extent to which personal records can refashion collective memories of empire.

An interesting complement to Withers and Grout's paper on "Charting the Nation" project, Anne Godlewska's paper on "the politics of representation in the French military archives" focussed on the spaces of representation and authority involved in the mapping of northern Italy by Napoleon's forces from roughly 1796 to 1815, arguing that those who mapped northern Italy for Napoleon created new spaces of representation that quickly found their way into the archives where they were deemed too potentially powerful and useful to the enemies of France to be released to the public. Describing how their inclusion in a Web-based atlas moved the representations of Napoleon's cartographers and artists into the "fluid and transitory space of cyberspace," Godlewska examined their meaning within the "context of the interests and authority of an archive, a university, and a larger public domain" and concluded that the very accessibility of such a Web-based atlas, and a number of other factors including the political nature of the space of the Internet itself – in short, the spaces of its representation – all serve to undermine its authority. See Hayden Lorimer, "The Geographical Fieldcourse as Active Archive,"*Cultural Geographies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2003), pp. 278–308; Cheryl McEwan, "Building a Postcolonial Archive? Gender, Collective Memory and Citizenship in Post-apartheid South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29 (2003), pp. 739–57; Anne Godlewska, Marcus R. Létourneau, and Paul Schauerte, "Maps, Painting and Lies: Portraying Napoleon's Battlefields in Northern Italy," *Imago Mundi*, vol. 57, pt. 2 (July 2005), pp. 149–63.

recently identified as a problem: the "dilution" of the meaning of the word "archive(s)." Many professional archivists would, of course, not view "Charting" as "an archive" in the strictest "organic" sense of word; however, it is the very use of the word that points to the discomforting spectre of "two solitudes" with almost mutually exclusive bodies of professional writing: "the archive" as understood by academics, cultural critics, and computer aficionados, and the "real world of archives" as practised by archivists with their own set of principles and practices.

The second issue involves the "power" of the original in two distinct senses. On the one hand, there is the sensual, or emotional, or inspirational aspect of the original, that might, in Walter Benjamin's terms, be called its "aura." On the other hand, there are the physical attributes of the archival document, whether textual or visual, that in some way carry the burden of its meaning. Both inspiration and information are lost when interaction with the artifact itself is achieved through a digital surrogate. To a great extent, compensation can be achieved through presentation and description, but only if as archivists we recognize that, in making records visually but not physically accessible, we exercise enormous power – power over selection for digitization, power in the choice and application of on-line databases and descriptive "standards." This power, which remains largely if not wholly invisible to users, is all too often unacknowledged by those responsible for the production of virtual exhibitions. Whether we are creating virtual archives in cyberspace or virtual exhibitions on institutional Web sites, how do we ensure that archival documents are not robbed of their meaning by their presentation in dematerialized and decontextualized form? Of course, the availability of digital surrogates also precludes contact with an archivist, knowledgeable about the record, in the presence of the record.

Particularly important (and encouraging) to see, Withers and Grout engage the archival literature directly. They also warn that scholars cannot ignore the power of those who created, found, and preserved the traces and fragments of the past found in archives, and acknowledge that users of archives, contrary to Steedman's claim, are "never alone with the past." Their essay prompts us to consider "the archive of and for the digital age" and consider the virtual archive a space where we have the power, not only to bring together knowledge of the past, but also to create it, where we have the power to reconstitute fonds, link the textual and the visual, and erase the boundaries between public and private.

Withers and Grout's experience in creating "Charting" forces us to reconsider whether institutional practices derived from, created for, and appropriate to traditional "material" records can serve their purpose in the digital realm. On-line databases and, by extension, virtual archives are, of course, more than computerized catalogues. They have the power to facilitate finding, connecting, and using documents in new ways, but do they also nurture new ways of

thinking, new cognitive processes, new methods of interpretation, that in turn demand that archivists reconsider in theoretical terms, and retool in practical ways, what they do and how they do it? One hopes that future mergers of archives and libraries, follow upon the "catalytic initiatives" of Library and Archives Canada (i.e. efforts at "transformation" rather than "reorganization"), will speak to the vision of, and need for, a new kind of institution geared to the nature, flow, and use of electronic communication. Without such a vision, we risk engaging in administrative empire-building at the expense of distinct professional cultures, histories, functions, practices, and identities.[16]

Caroline Bressey's "Invisible Presence: The Whitening of the Black Community in the Historical Imagination of British Archives" points to the absence of indicators of skin colour or ethnicity in official nineteenth-century records of Black men in prison and Black women in asylums. For Bressey, these discrepancies between the visual and the textual representation of Black people in the archival record of Victorian Britain "pry open an opportunity to investigate the racialization of people in the nineteenth century." She acknowledges that her conclusions would have been very different had only the written archives been searched and emphasizes that only by consulting institutional photographic albums was she able to identify inmates listed in the written record as Black. This observation not only underscores the important relationship of visual to textual materials in archives, but also challenges the assumption that those named in (British) archival records, who were not allocated "another colour," were White.

Bressey is also quick to recognize that the larger question – why there was no "space" allocated for skin colour or race in census returns, birth certificates, prison registers, asylum files, court records, newspaper accounts – is interesting in and of itself. While her work is clearly a contribution to historical debates about the nature and understanding of race as a social construct, it offers archivists practical insights into the social and political context of Victorian records-creation as well as into the role of archives in the construction notions of identity and belonging. Her highlighting of the consequences of marginalizing or privileging information through both medium of representation and fields of classification carries caveats for archival practices: records, both those originally created and those subsequently created to describe them, are socially constructed, according to rules (whether written or unwritten, acknowledged or subconscious) which govern what we deem worthy of recording, and in what representational form. The information carried, and the meaning communicated, by the various media of record can be tautological or

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16  For a discussion of the government study of "the role of the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada" and possible consequences of a merger of the two insitutions, see Terry Cook, "The 'English Report' and Archives: A Critical Appreciation," *Archivaria* 53 (Spring 2002), pp. 115–21.

cumulative, complementary or supplementary, mutually supportive or mutually exclusive. Ultimately, Bressey's work, if read through an archival lens, contains a lesson about the importance of "total archives" as an approach. It underscores the need to recognize the logocentric nature of archival theory and practice, and acknowledge that words and images and numbers record actions and transactions in profoundly different ways and that meaning does not necessarily reside within one or another medium, but often unequally among and between them.

Bressey's detailed, empirical research is not merely a matter of historical interest, but rather takes on contemporary significance in the context of current accusations of racial profiling in police departments in cities across North America. Her observation that ethnicity is a category which has been naturalized but that is not necessarily "natural" resonates with the widely cited and important analysis by Benedict Anderson of the "census, map, and museum" as institutions of power employed to construct "imagined communities."[17] Bressey's findings are particularly interesting in view of nineteenth-century notions of the "legibility of appearances" and the popular as well as scientific embrace of phrenology and physiognomy as markers of character, intelligence, criminality, and deviance.[18] Perhaps most important from an archival perspective, it underlines the need to consider the evidential value of photographs (in files, albums, or related collections of negatives) in relation to the official written records or case files of which they are an integral, if not always a physical, part. It also points to the subjectivity and power of taxonomies of any kind, from the classification of race in nineteenth-century British state institutions, to the categorization of immigrants in twentieth-century Canadian government records,[19] to the standardization of formats for finding aids or "fields" for database creation and use in twenty-first century archives.

In musing on the irony that researchers seeking to expose ideas of race and racism embedded in nineteenth-century British archives are hampered by the absence of indicators of colour left by the Victorians they are attempting to discredit, Bressey's research also undermines the authority of the archival

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17 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991).

18 See, for example, Elizabeth Edwards, "Mr. Huxley's Well-Considered Plan," in *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 131–55; Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in Richard Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 343–88; Martin Kemp, "'A Perfect and Faithful Record': Mind and Body in Medical Photography before 1900," in Ann Thomas, ed., *Beauty of Another Order: Photography in Science* (New Haven and London, 1997), pp. 134–36.

19 See Brian S. Osborne, "Constructing the State, Managing the Corporation, Transforming the Individual: Photography, Immigration, and the Canadian National Railways, 1925–1930," in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London, 2003), pp. 162–91.

record as a basis for a historical timeline of Black history. For example, in October 2005, Professor David Divine, the James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University, Halifax, hosted "Multiple Lenses: Voices from the Diaspora Located in Canada," a national conference organized to allow "contributors from across Canada, to share ideas and research both past and present, about what it means to be Black and Canadian." The gathering was "timed to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the first recorded presence of a Black person on Canadian soil in 1605, Mathew Da Costa." In view of the way in which Bressey's findings challenge the "assumption that all those in our historical records without a given ethnicity were White," this and perhaps other, similar claims of such "firsts" based on written evidence in archives, may soon have to be revised backward in time.[20]

Where Bressey's work is part of larger efforts to recover from archives "other" voices in British history, Matthew Kurtz, in "A Postcolonial Archive? On the Paradox of Practice in a Northwest Alaska Project," problematizes the establishment of a "postcolonial" archive where "other" voices can be collected and made accessible. Kurtz takes a decidedly postcolonial and theoretical trajectory in his analysis of an oral history project to produce a public "archive" documenting the past fifty years of commercial "Eskimo tourism" in the predominantly Iñupiaq town of Kotzebue in northwest Alaska. He draws on a substantial postcolonial literature to suggest that "the production and maintenance of state and institutional archives has been critical to the process of colonization," and more particularly that "the archive has been a vital technology of knowledge and rule, key to the concept of 'the people' in modern liberal states." Underlying his analysis is the assumption that the process of archiving is always a political one "because the material chosen as 'record' (from all of that which is available) is highly selective, description is inherently subjective, and questions of access to fragile material are difficult at best." In posing the question, "Who gets to tell the stories?" he flags the new mission of many archives; in seeking to incorporate "the voices of the voiceless," Kurtz identifies the "crux of the matter" to be "how to understand and accommodate difference?"

Kurtz's discussion of colonialism as an "inability, or better, a permanent

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20  Interestingly, Bressey's analysis of the role of archival records in "the Whitening of Britishness" has resonances with research by geographer Phil Kinsman on the work of Ingrid Pollard, a photographer who expresses her discomfort as a Black woman in the English countryside in her series *Pastoral Interludes*. In Bressey's research on the absence of Blacks in nineteenth-century British archives and Pollard's work on the presence of Blacks in the twentieth-century English countryside, underlying assumptions about identity and belonging are exposed through visual means. In many ways, Pollard's challenge to the Whiteness of the British Landscape proceeds from Bressey's challenge to the Whiteness of British Archives. See Phil Kinsman, "Landscape, Race and National Identity: The Photography of Ingrid Pollard," *Area*, vol. 27, no. 4 (1995), pp. 300–310.

refusal to engage with social differences" presents colonialism as a "spatial practice ... [that] created and re-creates segregated spaces: places within which different people might be contained and controlled." Again, Benedict Anderson's interrogation of the "census, map, and museum" as instruments of imperial power makes it necessary for archivists to consider the relationship of archives to the colonial exercise of power and ask to what extent archives perpetuate a subtle form of colonialism, particularly in our efforts to be "inclusive" of native peoples, as well as immigrants, women, the poor, or other traditionally marginalized groups. How do we respond to Kurtz's suggestion that Canada, like the United States and other "break-away settler colonies," has "exercised an internal colonialism, with settlers displacing and over-ruling the indigenous populations? How do archives embody and reinforce what Kurtz sees as "different ways in which encounters were (and are) staged between societies"?

If, like "Charting," the Kotzebue oral history project raises doubts that it is technically "an archive" in the sense of an organic accumulation of records produced in the conduct of business, few archivists would quibble with Kurtz's concern that records significant to Kotzebue's past have found their way into institutional archives in Los Angeles, Seattle, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and elsewhere, or that such records should be made available in their region of origin. Most would share his concern for the way archival materials are "assembled, ordered, accessed, and circulated" even if they have certain reservations about the project as "a re-assemblage, a re-distributing and augmentation of this diaspora of local memory." Many will detect parallels between what Kurtz describes as "classic colonial strategies of compartmentalized space" and the "compartmentalization" of the physical and intellectual spaces (and control mechanisms) of knowledge (and power) in archives. How, in fact, do our archives reflect, and in subtle ways continue to support, the "emerging discourse of assimilation, equality, and liberal governance" which enabled the displacement and subjugation of native peoples across North America?

While building on Brien Brothman's "Orders of Value" and acknowledging the work of New Zealand archivist Evelyn Wareham,[21] Kurtz turns to the work of Ann Laura Stoler, a professor of anthropology and history at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for her connections between archival collection and colonialism. Stoler's aim, he informs us, "is not simply to read the process of colonial archivization 'against the grain' for its silences, marginalizations, and resistances. She suggests that ethnographers of the archive look 'along the grain' for its regularities, its conventions of categorization, and its

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21 Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991), pp. 78–100; Evelyn Wareham, "From Explorers to Evangelists: Archivists, Recordkeeping, and Remembering in the Pacific Islands," *Archival Science*, vol. 2, nos. 3–4 (September 2002), pp. 187–207.

logics of accumulation." Yet, who better than archivists to assume this task? Kurtz's foray into the role of tourism in identity formation, his exploration of "methodological issues about the practices of representation," and his critique of the limits of postcolonialism prompt me to ask whether we can profitably draw upon insights from the burgeoning literature on tourism and postcolonialism to view the powerful attraction of archives as a sort of time-traveller destination and the virtual exhibition as a form of package tour. Certainly his analysis of the centrality of "order" to colonialism should be of interest to a profession that embraces "original order" as a foundational principle. Ultimately, Kurtz's essay should serve as a reminder to contextualize the production of our archives[22] and to make the position of archivists visible in the production of archival material.

Bressey and Kurtz are not alone in their concern over "who gets to tell their stories?" At a time when archives are presenting themselves as repositories, not of "history" in some elitist, totalizing way, but of "stories" in an accessible, multivocal way, Richard Schein's "Digging in Your Own Backyard," explores the webs of power relations linking space on the ground, space in the mind, and space in the archive. Schein's "personal story" of his search for a deed to the property adjacent to his house in Midway, Kentucky, raises issues about the nature and use of municipal land records, and more generally about archives, space, and power. He uses "archive" to mean different things – "from seemingly benign repository to powerful interpretive apparatus to epistemological frame on the world" – claiming that while "some may balk" at such a fluid definition, one point of his story is that "the archive is all of these things, and often all at once." There are several important lessons in Schein's deed-tracing exercise. In examining African-American land ownership in terms of mechanisms of property transfer, he points to the relationship between record-keeping practices and racialized landscapes. While Schein may not adhere to a rigid or official definition of the archive, he does insist that the archive is "not an inert and inactive thing, but the coalescence of very real legal and social intention made manifest in material record." Surely, archivists can find some familiar ground in his notion of the archive as the embodiment of legal intention.

With clear links to Bressey's interest in the "Whiteness" of the official [government] record and obvious connections to Kurtz's postcolonial concerns, Schein alerts us to the way in which systemic silences in records-creation participate in the differential construction of citizenship according to class, race, and gender. In asking how we can "look outside the assumptions and frame-

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22  His admonition rings especially true in Canada where the concept of "total archives" must be understood to derive from historically and geographically specific circumstances. See Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, NJ, 1993), pp. 133–50.

works of American history altogether,'' Schein challenges archivists to consider the assumptions and frameworks that our institutions and our profession have naturalized, assumptions and frameworks that we do not question, but that mark archives as spaces of both knowledge and power. In performing any one of many archival fucntions, how do archivists move people, places, things, or events from the margins to the centre, granting them access to rights or giving them a place in history? As Schein so aptly warns, one of the lessons of the "post" (postmodern, poststructural, postcolonial) world is that, archivists, like academics "are ever present in our work." Equally, citing the work of feminist geographers Mona Domosh and Karen Morin, he reminds us that the study of the past has "relevance to contemporary politics of change." Where is this more clear than in the current Canadian political climate where the newly elected Conservative government of Stephen Harper is poised to reconsider universal child care, redress the Chinese head tax, revisit abortion rights, and repeal same-sex marriage – all issues involving class, race, and gender, all moving the marginalized to the centre stage of social justice?

Schein's conclusion that "we need to acknowledge basic epistemological differences in knowledge and knowledge production that may or may not come from the archive," brings us back to the banner hanging outside 395 Wellington. Its claim that "Knowledge is Here" needs to be examined – deconstructed, dare I say – elaborated, challenged, unpacked. We need not only to ask what it really means, but also to acknowledge that it is freighted with the very assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowledge production that Schein's "little story" so clearly reveals. We dismiss the lessons of his "little story" at our peril.

All four geographers reveal spaces of archives as landscapes of power. From an archival perspective, the essays can be seen to share key approaches and concerns: Bressey and Schein both use official archival records created by institutions to uncover silences in official archives; the former in prison and asylum files, the latter in municipal ledgers; the former with an interest in citizen rights and the social construction of race in Victorian Britain; the latter with a concern for property ownership and the legal rights of freed slaves in antebellum Kentucky. Withers and Grout, and Kurtz focus on the creation of what they term "an archive"; the former a "virtual archive" in cyberspace, the latter a physical space in Alaska; the former of digital surrogates of maps from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries, the latter, a "postcolonial archive" of oral histories and physical copies documenting tourism in the twentieth century. Kurtz's claim, drawn from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, that "the institutional archive marks the criminal or patient with a set of observations, measures, and coded behaviours ... largely on the basis of inscription technologies: writing, diagrams, photography," connects directly to Bressey's analysis of prison records and asylum files. Finally, where Bressey, Kurtz, and Schein all share a concern for the diversity of "voices" in the archives, Bressey seeks to recover "other" voices

in the archives, Kurtz problematizes the very collection and description of these "other" voices by archives, and Schein critiques record-keeping practices that silence "other" voices in the archival record of citizen rights.

In challenging the notion of the archive as an unproblematic collection of facts, the essays in this section offer archivists an opportunity to follow a parallel path of scholarly inquiry, one that begins with the acceptance of traditional notions of "archives" and then moves to probe the assumptions and consequences of archival principles and practices. Their examination of "the archive" as "a powerful and complicated thing, or more accurately, set of practices," is an open invitation to archivists to join in a conversation about those very practices. Why join such a conversation? Two reasons: first, to explain (not to defend or justify) those practices to scholars whose critiques of archives are based primarily on theoretical concerns on the one hand and user experience on the other; and second, to revisit, reconsider, and if necessary work to revise those practices in response to theoretical concerns and user experience. Archives have been forced to do this very thing in order to remain viable and vibrant in the age of electronic communication and digital imaging. From database structures and descriptive standards, to virtual exhibitions and institutional mergers, professional practices have had to change in response to the demands of new information technologies. Are we not equally compelled to consider and respond to theoretical and intellectual shifts as to practical and technological ones? If these essays raise more questions than they answer, this section will have served to further a potentially rich and mutually rewarding dialogue across the academic/archival divide.

## Tehutti, Whenua, and the Great Archives of Metru Nui

There is yet another reason for archivists to engage more fully with the concerns of these historical geographers and with current scholarship on, and interest in, "the archive." If authors, academics, and conference organizers have embraced a definition of "the archive" which is theoretical, metaphorical, fluid, and, to archivists, foreign, irrelevant, or wrong, their work (we can always reassure ourselves) is confined to the Ivory Tower and need not change the way we do things. However, far, far from the world of professional archivists, academic historians, cultural theorists, and information technologists, there is the Great Archives of Metru Nui, a space of power and adventure that features prominently in the immensely popular *BIONICLE Adventures*, a science fiction series of books, videos, DVDs, and a host of related official and unofficial Web sites.[23] There, bionic heroes and villains, based on LEGO

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23 For the official BIONICLE Web site, go to <http://www.lego.com/eng/bionicle/>. See also BZPower (<http://www.bzpower.com/>). For a potted explanation of plot, characters, and terms, see Reference.com (<http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/BIONICLE>) or Answers.com (<http://www.answers.com/topic/bionicle-timeline>).

action figure building toys, struggle with the forces of Good and Evil, Darkness and Light. Of course, as Ran Jimerson pointed out in his Presidential Address to the Society of American Archivists in 2005, before the Great Archives of Metru Nui, there was the Jedi Temple Archives where Archivist Madame Jocasta Nu provided reference assistance to Jedi Master Obi Wan Kenobi, seeking the location of the planet Kamino in *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. The resemblance is not coincidental. The BIONICLE universe, which made its debut in 2001 with the marketing of a new series of LEGO sets, was based on themes from the original Star Wars trilogy. An important part of this universe was the Great Archives in Onu-Metru, Earth district of Metru Nui, home to archivists and miners. Several key characters in the adventures are archivists, among them Tehutti and Whenua.[24]

Tehutti, released as an action figure in 2004, is a "Matoran" (or villager) who has "spent virtually all of his life working in the Onu-Metru Archives." He is described as "a sensible, practical, hardworking Matoran" who has "never received the recognition he felt was his due" and dreams of finding a treasure that would bring him fame and fortune." Sound at all familiar? More prominent in the *Adventures* is Whenua, an archivist who is chosen to become a "Toa" (or hero) with special elemental power. He is said to be "not as bold and confident as some of the other Toa Metru. Being a former archivist, he knows all the stories about disasters that befell Matoran who rushed into things without thinking. He believes caution, planning, and a knowledge of the past are the most important tools for a hero. Unless, of course, the exhibits in the Archives are threatened – then he takes risks of every kind to protect what he views as the most important place in all of Metru Nui."[25] Sound familiar?

Author Greg Farshtey's characterization of archivists is expressed through word and deed. Most Onu-Matoran, we are told, "work in the Archives, but they do not see it as a job. They love helping to preserve the history of Metru Nui and will brave any danger to protect the institution."[26] Sound familiar? "As an archivist, Whenua was skilled at starting from the present and working backwards ...; he was a Toa. It was his job to face danger and overcome it. And nothing – nothing! – would make him risk the safety of his Archives, or his city." In addition, several interesting tensions are built into the BIONICLE universe. One involves a feud between the inhabitants of two districts. As Farshtey explains in a guidebook to the six districts, their buildings, and the key characters in his *BIONICLE Adventures*:

24 See Randall C. Jimerson, "Embracing the Power of Archives," 69th Presidential Address, Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 18 August 2005, available at <http://www.archivists.org/governance/presidential/jimerson.asp>.

25 Greg Farshtey, *BIONICLE: Metru Nui – City of Legends* (New York, 2004), p. 75.

26 Ibid., p. 68.

Ko-Metru is the only district that actively feuds with another [Onu-Metru]. Ko-Mato-ran and Onu-Matoran have been arguing for years over which is more important: studying the past or trying to predict the future. It's gotten so bad that Ko-Matoran have gone to [the supreme authority] to argue against the expansion of the Archives.[27]

Lining the streets of the district of Ko-Metru are massive, crystalline Knowledge Towers where "hundreds of scholars study prophecies, make pre-dictions, and watch the stars looking for signs of things to come." The Towers are unusual in that they are not built, but grown.

Each Knowledge Tower features extensive library space, living quarters for scholars, observatories to monitor the stars, and special areas where valuable tablets and carvings that detail ancient prophecies are kept. It's said that once they enter the Knowledge Tow-ers, some Ko-Matoran spend their entire lives there, never setting foot outside.

The Toa of Ko-Metru "is used to working alone and not having to deal with others, so being in a team is not a comfortable situation for him." Every inhab-itant of Ko-Metru "hopes one day to work in a Knowledge Tower, so their time is spent studying and learning as much as they can. They have little patience for anyone or anything that distracts them from their studies." In addition to this tension between the Onu-Matoran keepers of the Archives who are very past-focussed and Ko-Matoran, who are all about the future, there is a tension between the idea of the Archives where "still-living exhib-its" were preserved "to be studied by Matoran scholars" and the Archives as "nothing but a monument to the dead past."[28] But, we are advised, "... even in a place devoted to the dead past, actions could have consequences."[29]

Central to the BIONICLE world is the Great Archives, described as a "mas-sive museum" filled with "artifacts and specimens" – tools, masks, disks, art objects, and strange and bizarre creatures that are captured, put into "stasis tubes" where they are held in suspended animation. The largest single institution in all of Metru Nui, "it encompasses most of the surface of [the district of] Onu-Metru and extends underground for multiple levels. After years of expansion the Archives now stretches beneath almost all of the city."[30] The Metru Nui Ministry

27  Ibid., p. 26.
28  Greg Farshtey, *BIONICLE Adventures #2: Trial by Fire* (New York, 2003), p. 17.
29  Ibid., p. 46.
30  Ironically, had it not been for decisions made and subsequently unmade or overturned, the geographical reach of the National Archives of Canada might now stretch from its (now defunct) Canadian Museum of Caricature kitty-corner to the National Gallery of Canada (and not far from its pre-1967 site) on Sussex Drive, to its (stillborn) Canadian History Centre at the intersection of Wellington and Sussex, to the (politically vulnerable) Portrait Gallery of Canada in the former U.S. Embassy directly opposite Parliament Hill, to the main building at 395 Wellington, overlooking the Ottawa River and the new developments on LeBreton Flats, including the new Canadian War Museum.

of Tourism's on-line Metru Nui City Guide describes the Archives as "open to the public every day. Visitors are restricted to the top five levels only. ... Tours are available and are highly recommended, not only because they are informative but because it is easy to get lost in the Archives. Sub-level access is permitted for archivists only, due to the number of dangerous creatures housed down below."[31] Weekly special displays on Levels 2 and 4 are advertized.

Farshtey's characterization of the Great Archives, Whenua, and Tehutti are intriguing, and there are lines, phrases, and situations with which many archivists can identify. Admittedly, archivists will not be comfortable with the description of the Archives as a "massive museum filled with artifacts and specimens," especially when, in the neighbouring district of Ko-Metru, there are the Knowledge Towers filled with scholars. But, as Farshtey has clarified, "The Knowledge Towers focus on written records, of which there are not a lot in Metru Nui, explaining why the Great Archives are so much bigger. Matoran don't use paper, they primarily carve in stone, and much of it is either legends or prophecies. Anything tangible – creatures, tools, masks, artifacts, objects – goes into the Archives (and occasionally escapes and wreaks havoc – sort of like the Museum of Natural History if the dinosaurs were still alive)."[32]

Farshtey readily admits, "I have always felt the Archives were the most fascinating aspect of the city, and the most fun to set adventures in (which is why I keep going back there)." One is tempted to ponder where, apart from Star Wars, Farshtey got his ideas about archives, how he conceives of the Great Archives of Onu-Metru as a "space of power," and how he feels about the power that archivists wield. Even the notion of placing creatures in suspended animation in stasis tubes so that they can be brought back to life suggests a certain delightful resonance between stasis tubes and archival boxes in which records are preserved in context according to archival principles so that they may, in the words of Leonard Boyle, "speak again with a full distinct voice."[33] While archives are presumed to be "organic" accumulations, the motto on my University of Toronto ring – "*Velut arbor aevo*" – reminds me that knowledge grows "as a tree with the passage of time." Are the Knowledge Towers of Ko-Metru, in fact, like the Ivory Towers of Academe? Does Farshtey offer us, in his characterization of the people and places of Ko-Metru and Onu-Metru, a metaphor for the academic/archival divide and ideas about "the archive"/"archives"?

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31 Go to <http://www.lego.com/eng/bionicle/story/2004/cityguide.aspx?id=2004> (accessed 1 April 2006).

32 E-mail communication, Greg Farshtey to Joan M. Schwartz, 24 June 2005.

33 Leonard E. Boyle, "Diplomatics," in James M. Powell, ed., *Medieval Studies: An Introduction* (Syracuse, 1976), p. 78. Boyle's notion of diplomatics as "an art by which written records from any age and of any kind are made to speak again with a full distinct voice" informs my discussion of the evidential value of photographs in Joan M. Schwartz, "'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomatics," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), pp. 40–74.

Metaphors aside, it is important to recognize that, as a result of Farshtey's fascination with the Archives, a whole generation of children – literally *tens of millions of individuals* – have been introduced to the idea of archives and archivists, young children who may never have otherwise ever heard of either archives or archivists. In 2005, the BIONICLE Official Web Site reported that more than 60 million BIONICLE sets had been sold in North America since the launch of the franchise in 2001, and that an estimated "eighty-five percent of American boys ages 6–12 know the BIONICLE property, and 45% of them own it."[34] According to Stephanie Lawrence, global director of licensing for the LEGO Company, through arrangements with such product partners as Hallmark (partyware and greeting cards), Rubie's Costume Company (Halloween costumes), Tripod (innovative footwear and backpacks), Dan River (bedding), Logotel (T-shirts and sweatshirts), Warren Industries (board games), DC Comics (comic novels), CDM Company (pens), and Clic Time (watches and clocks), the LEGO Company is, "enabling children to have a BIONICLE experience from the time they wake up in the morning to the time they go to bed each night." In 2003, Scholastic Books launched a series of BIONICLE novels that clinched five spots on the Barnes and Noble best sellers list, Colgate-Palmolive's BIONICLE power toothbrush was their topselling power brush for boys, and the success of *BIONICLE: Mask of Light* led to subsequent Miramax and Buena Vista Home Entertainment video and DVD releases. The LEGO Company reports that an increasing number of category manufacturers want to tap into the power of the BIONICLE universe, and that there are more than one million *unique* visitors per month to <www.BIONICLE.com>. When, in all of history, have archives and archivists had such widespread popular exposure? If there is "no such thing as bad publicity," then despite the stereotypes on the one hand and the inaccuracies on the other, will such exposure not have some very large, albeit indirect, impact on our profession?

**"Having New Eyes": Archives as Spaces of Knowledge, Spaces of Power**

The Great Archives of Metru Nui can be dismissed as easily as "the archive" of postmodern scholars as irrelevant to the "real world of archives." But when these 6 to 12 year-olds – raised not only on BIONICLE adventures, but also with the immediacy (and immateriality) of e-mail, chat rooms, blogs, cell phones, digital cameras, computer games, science fiction set in virtual reality, and newly merged archives and libraries (is there a name for such a beast?) – form the next generation of CEOs, bank presidents, grant officers, government legislators, and even archival educators and managers, will they recognize and look kindly upon archives as we have traditionally defined them? Is it just

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34  <http://www.lego.com/bionicle/> (accessed 21 June 2005).

possible that a generation of young children, who have embraced an archivist as a bionic action figure hero, and who understand the Great Archives as a space of knowledge and power, might just bring about a change in what archives do and the way they do it, perhaps how they are funded and how they are studied? Will the next generation of archivists, introduced to archives by Farshtey and weaned on Foucault and Derrida, reach more comfortably, perhaps even charge across the academic/archival divide to debate the differing conceptions of "the archive"/"archives" that are at the heart of the ironies of postmodern, post-structural, and postcolonial scholarship.

For all these reasons, this special section of essays by geographers has been put together for *Archivaria.* It is intended to provoke thought, discussion, action. It would be easy to regard these essays as interesting, but ultimately not about the "real world of archives." Certainly, Bressey's article on the visual evidence in police records could have been submitted to a "suitable history journal." Similarly, Withers and Grout could readily have published their essay in a journal devoted to the history of cartography. Kurtz's contribution might have appeared just as well in a journal of postmodern studies, tourism studies, or cultural geography. Schein's encounter with municipal ledgerbooks might just as easily have been snapped up by a journal of urban studies. In each case the analysis – whether of photographic, cartographic, oral, or textual sources – may be perceived as more historical than archival in nature; indeed, as one manuscript reviewer indicated, "... [the author] offers no suggestions for the archival management of such sources that might help address the issues raised." Such a comment flags a problem: the insularity of the profession. That authors from outside the profession *fail* to make recommendations (that archivists would likely dismiss as professionally ill-informed) is hardly surprising; more importantly, do their essays raise issues central to the ways in which archives work and thus are integral to the ways in which archivists see themselves, carry out their duties, and perform archival functions? Whether their essays might be more "suitable" to a journal in another field, these historical and cultural geographers have something important to say to archivists who are the keepers of the records they describe, use, and interpret, and I am grateful that they have consented to publish their work here.

In a scholarly world eagerly exploring issues of history, memory, and "the archive," the contribution of archivists to journals, books, and conferences outside our professional cloisters is conspicuous by its absence. Why are postmodern concerns with "authenticity" and "context" being explored simultaneously and earnestly in parallel, seldom intersecting academic and archival arenas? Why are landmark texts on "the archive" dismissed as so much theoretical mumbo-jumbo, written by devotees of French philosophers with little or no real experience in, or knowledge of, the "real world of archives"? Are archivists, as Velody suggests, too bound up in the "quiddities" of everyday work to stop and smell the theoretical roses? Have archival institutions

become too bound up in the "quiddities" of digital, political, and professional demands, to make attendance at scholarly conferences, subscriptions to scholarly journals, and other opportunities for cross-disciplinary intellectual fertilization an inviolable priority in their vision for the future and their budgets for today?

Ironically, in an essay entitled, "The Ordinariness of the Archive," British sociologist Thomas Osborne claims that "knowledge of the archive is a sign of status, of authority, of a certain right to speak, a certain kind of author-function."[35] However, archivists – who surely know "archives" best – continue to toil largely behind a professional veil of presumed neutrality; their practices and concerns are invisible to most users; and their literature does not even register on the radar screen of academic disciplines. Archivists are not invited to speak at scholarly conferences on "the archive" nor do they attend such conferences to wave the profession's flag and engage in serious debate, if only from the audience and over coffee. In examining "archives" between the metaphorical space of "the archive" and the fictional space of "the Great Archives of Metru Nui," let us take a lesson from Proust who famously declared: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." If archivists are to discover the new intellectual landscape of "the archive" – to seek out, expose, and address the physical intellectual, procedural, metaphorical, and functional spaces where knowledge and power intersect, to recognize spaces of archives as landscapes of power – then it will be, not only by looking for that territory from within the profession, but also by seeking it through new eyes, including those on the "outside" looking in.

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35 Thomas Osborne, "The Ordinariness of the Archive," in *The Archive*, the second of two special issues of *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 12, no. 2 (May 1999), pp. 51–64; quotation on pp. 53–54.