"Treat Them with the Reverence of Archivists"

Records Work, Grief Work, and Relationship Work in the Archives

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ABSTRACT In this article, we take up Geoff Wexler and Linda Long's call to explore the ways in which records and recordkeeping are "bound up" in experiences of loss and grieving. Drawing on theoretical and clinical literature on bereavement, we introduce the concept of grief work and investigate some ways in which grief work can be performed through the creation, use, organization, and preservation of records. We illustrate our study of records work as grief work with examples from the Hamilton Family Fonds at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, the Sylvia Plath collections at Smith College and Indiana University, and the Lara Gilbert Fonds at the University of Victoria Archives. Finally, we suggest some impacts – especially the ethical impacts – a grief work perspective might have on the ongoing development of archival theory and methodology. This article lays the conceptual groundwork for a larger, ongoing study on recordkeeping, grief work, and the concept of archival care.

RÉSUMÉ Dans cet article, nous répondons à l'appel lancé par Geoff Wexler et Linda Long à explorer comment les documents et la gestion des documents sont imprégnées des expériences de perte et de deuil. Puisant dans les études théoriques et cliniques sur le deuil, nous présentons le concept de travail de deuil et explorons des façons par lesquelles le travail de deuil peut s'effectuer par la création, l'utilisation, l'organisation et la préservation de documents. Des exemples du fonds Hamilton Family aux *University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections*, des collections Sylvia Plath au *Smith College* et à l'*Indiana University* et du fonds Lara Gilbert aux *University of Victoria Archives* servent à illustrer notre étude du travail avec les documents comme travail de deuil. Enfin, nous évoquons certaines retombées, particulièrement au niveau éthique, qu'une perspective du travail de deuil pourrait avoir sur le développement de la théorie et de la méthodologie archivistiques. Cet article pose les bases conceptuelles de l'étude plus large et continue de la gestion des documents, du travail de deuil et de la notion de traitement archivistique.

Her absence is like the sky, spread over everything.[2]

Your absence has gone through me
Like thread through a needle.
Everything I do is stitched with its color.[3]

Prologue (by the First Author)

Grief – my personal grief – transformed me. It changed how I see the world, how I relate to other people, how I understand and envision my work. In 2012, I experienced a profound personal loss when my daughter died just before she was born. In 2013, I began to talk at professional and academic conferences about that grief and how it affected my understanding of archival theory, practice, and ethics.[4] I spoke and spoke about grief in these venues but found it difficult to write. When I first began to talk about how my personal experience, my personal emotions, impacted my work and my ideas about archives, the archival literature on affect had not yet begun to appear. It was terrifying to speak my feelings but also impossible not to as I was so deeply engulfed in grief I could think and talk of little else. Now, it is easier to talk about grief and feelings in this field. A great deal of work has been done in the last six years to clear the way for this type of discussion.[5] Though much of what I have presented and published on grief and archives has been intensely personal, recounting and incorporating my own story of loss, this article takes a different path; here, I and two

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2   C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1961), 13.

3   W.S. Merwin, "Separation," in *The Moving Target: Poems* (New York: Atheneum, 1963), 9.

4   Jennifer Douglas, "They Were Still Here: Archives and Online Grief Communities," paper presented at Association of Canadian Archivists Annual Conference, Winnipeg, MB, 13–15 June 2013; "Aspiring and Conspiring: Archiving the Stillborn Online," paper presented at Association of Canadian Archivists Annual Conference, Victoria, BC, 26–28 June 2014; "They Were Still Here: Archives and Online Grief Communities," paper presented at Personal Digital Archiving, New York, NY, 24–26 April 2015; "'Treat them with the Reverence of Archivists': Recordkeeping and Online Grief Communities," poster presented at iConference, Philadelphia, PA, 20–23 March 2016; "Online Grieving and Intimate Archives: A Cyberethnographic Approach," paper presented at Personal Digital Archiving, Palo Alto, CA, 29–31 March 2017.

5   See footnote 14 for examples of some of the types of discourse emerging in the archival field, especially since the 2016 publication of a special issue on affect and archives in *Archival Science*, edited by Marika Cifor and Anne Gilliland.

of my research assistants seek to document the development of a conceptual framework in which to explore the relationships between archives and grief. As part of a larger project exploring these relationships,[6] this article lays the theoretical groundwork necessary for fully incorporating a focus on grief into our archival theory and praxis. While this article takes a step back from my personal experience, I want to acknowledge how that experience allowed me to see things in archives I might otherwise not have seen. Grief transformed me; now, I want it to transform how we think about archives, our roles as archivists, and the archival work that we perform.

Introduction

Applied psychologist Thomas Attig describes grief as a "centrally important human experience,"[7] and Nina Jakoby notes that "As long as there are social and intimate relationships, friendships, and love, there is grief,"[8] meaning that no one is fully immune to the experience. Psychologist Paul Rosenblatt goes so far as to argue that, "after one's first major loss, one will never be completely free of grieving."[9] However, despite its near universality, grief has not been seriously attended to in archival studies. Archives are – at some basic level – predicated upon the deaths of their creators, but this fact is rarely acknowledged in the archival literature; for the most part, experiences of bereavement and grieving and their impacts on archives and archivists remain underexplored. In one of the few articles written by archivists that explicitly acknowledges the impacts of death and grieving on archival work (and on archivists themselves), Geoff Wexler and Linda Long suggest both the reluctance to recognize these impacts

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[6] The larger project, Conceptualizing Recordkeeping as Grief Work: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice, is ongoing and involves working with bereaved record creators; with archival bereavement collections, which we define as archival collections created and/or accumulated (at least in part) during a grieving process; and with archivists who care for records of the bereaved and/or the people who create, keep, use, and/or are subjects of them. More information can be found on the project website: https://blogs.ubc.ca/recordkeepinggriefwork/about-the-project/. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

[7] Thomas Attig, *How We Grieve: Relearning the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xii.

[8] Nina R. Jakoby, "Grief as a Social Emotion: Theoretical Perspectives," *Death Studies* 36, no. 8 (2012): 680.

[9] Paul C. Rosenblatt, "Grief that Does Not End," in *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*, ed. Dennis Klass, Phyllis R. Silverman, and Steven L. Nickman (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 54.

and the necessity of doing so: "Aging, dying, and death are subjects imbued with such negative connotations that we often surround them with euphemism, metaphor, and plain avoidance. However, as archivists we must acknowledge that our profession is intimately bound up with these events."[10]

Taking up their call, in this article, we seek to explore some of the ways in which archival work might be "bound up" in experiences of bereavement. In particular, we consider the roles that record-making[11] and recordkeeping can play in grieving processes and specifically as a means of continuing a type of relationship with a lost loved one. We begin by recounting the roots of our current research in Jennifer Douglas's earlier studies of online grief communities as aspirational archives to demonstrate how we began to think about recordkeeping as a form of *grief work*. We ground this recounting in a review of literature on grief and bereavement, focusing in particular on theories that emphasize grief as a continuing relationship between the deceased and the bereaved. Next, we explore potential ways in which recordkeeping facilitates this type of relationship, illustrating different modalities of what we will call *records work as grief work* through a series of case studies. Finally, we outline some of the many possible implications for archival theory and practice that our conceptualization of records work as grief work suggests.[12]

Defining Grief and Bereavement

Although – and indeed, because – they are commonly used in everyday discourse, the terms *bereavement*, *grief*, and *grieving*, which we use frequently throughout this paper, need to be defined more precisely in the context in which we use them in this article. Attig distinguishes the three terms in the following way:

10   Geoff Wexler and Linda L. Long, "Lifetimes and Legacies: Mortality, Immortality, and the Needs of Aging and Dying Donors," *American Archivist* 72, no. 2 (2009): 478. Tonia Sutherland also engages death and grieving directly in her scholarship on digital remains and black bodies. See, for example, Tonia Sutherland, "Making a Killing: On Race, Ritual, and (Re)membering in Digital Culture," *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture* 46, no. 1 (2017).

11   On the use of the term *record-making*, see Rebecka Sheffield, "Facebook Live as a Record*making* Technology," *Archivaria* 85 (Spring 2018): 96–123.

12   As already mentioned, this article is part of a larger project on conceptualizing recordkeeping as grief work; here, we focus on laying out a conceptual framework and only begin to suggest implications and next steps, which are the ongoing focus of the project and will be discussed in more depth in future publications.

bereavement is a *condition* of being deprived or dispossessed of a loved one; grief is an *emotion*, or how we feel the loss; and grieving is a *process* through which we respond to or cope with the loss.[13] Similarly, Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Hank Schut define bereavement as "the objective situation of having lost someone significant," grief as "a primarily emotional (affective) reaction to the loss of a loved one through death," and grieving as the "social expressions or acts of expressive grief that are shaped by the practices of a given society or cultural group."[14]

Grieving, as a process, can involve the bereaved in grief work, a concept which we discuss in more detail below, but which Margaret S. Stroebe defines as "a cognitive process involving confrontation with and restructuring of thoughts about the deceased, the loss experience, and the changed world within which the bereaved must now live."[15] In other words, grief work is part of the process of grieving whereby the bereaved adapt to and integrate their experiences of grief and loss into their lives. Though the term *grief work* is used in specific ways in the literature on bereavement therapy and counselling, it also refers to a capacious concept that is adapted by different communities for their own needs and can be practiced in a number of different ways.

In acknowledging that grief work can be understood differently in different contexts, it must also be acknowledged that grief itself – despite the suggestion that it is a universal emotion – is not experienced in the same way across cultures or through time, or even by individuals within a common cultural and

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13   Attig, *How We Grieve*, 32–33.

14   Margaret S. Stroebe, Robert O. Hansson, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Henk Schut, "Introduction: Concepts and Issues in Contemporary Research on Bereavement," in *Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping and Care*, ed. Margaret S. Stroebe, Robert O. Hansson, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Hank Schut (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001), 6. As this definition indicates, grief is an affective or emotional state. We situate our work within the ever-expanding research focus on affect and archives and are influenced by the research and writing of various scholars working in this area, including but not limited to Marika Cifor, "Affecting Relations: Introducing Affect Theory to Archival Discourse," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 7–31; Marika Cifor, "Aligning Bodies: Collecting, Arranging, and Describing Hatred for a Critical Queer Archives," *Library Trends* 64, no. 4 (2016): 756–75; Jamie A. Lee, "Be/longing in the Archival Body: Eros and the 'Endearing' Value of Material Lives," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 33–51; Hariz Halilovich, "Re-imaging and Re-imagining the Past After 'Memoricide': Intimate Archives as Inscribed Memories of the Missing," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 77–92; Maryanne Dever, Sally Newman, and Ann Vickery, *The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Papers* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2009).

15   Margaret Stroebe, "Coping with Bereavement: A Review of the Grief Work Hypothesis," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* 26, no. 1 (1993): 33.

temporal context.[16] J. William Worden emphasizes that while grief is an experience humans have in common, the "grief experience" is also unique; he suggests that "each person's grief is like *all* other people's grief; each person's grief is like *some* other person's grief; and each person's grief is like *no* other person's grief."[17] In this article, we draw on grief research in the Western traditions of psychology and death studies to attend to the intimately personal experience of loss. We acknowledge that this is a relatively narrow perspective to take; and although it is outside the scope of this particular article, the larger project seeks to also explore other traditions of, attitudes toward, and deployments of grief, bereavement, and grief work.[18]

Arriving at a Grief Work Perspective on Recordkeeping: Context and Background Research

The conceptual framework for understanding recordkeeping as grief work that is outlined in this article initially developed out of Jennifer Douglas's research on memory work in online grief communities. This research focused, in particular, on memory work taking place in communities created by and for bereaved parents of babies who were stillborn or who died neonatally and considered the ways in which parents created "aspirational archives"[19] as a means of maintaining a type of parenting relationship with their babies.[20] The grief experienced

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16   Margaret S. Stroebe, Mary M. Gergen, Kenneth J. Gergen, and Wolfgang Stroebe, "Broken Hearts or Broken Bonds: Love and Death in Historical Perspective," *American Psychologist* 47, no. 10 (1992): 1205–12; Tony Walter, "How Continuing Bonds Have Been Framed across Millenia," in *Continuing Bonds in Bereavement: New Directions for Research and Practice*, ed. Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Stefan (New York: Routledge, 2018), 43–55; also see chapters in the "Continuing Bonds in Cultural Contexts" section of *Continuing Bonds in Bereavement: New Directions for Research and Practice*, ed. Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Stefan (New York: Routledge, 2018).

17   J. William Worden, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 4th ed. (New York: Springer, 2009), 8.

18   An interesting perspective on grief as an activist practice is explored in Cindy Millstein, ed., *Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017).

19   Arjun Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," in *Information Is Alive: Art and Theory on Archiving and Retrieving Data*, ed. Joke Brouwer, Arjen Mulder, and Susan Charlton (Rotterdam: V2_Publishing/NAI Publishers, 2003). Online communities as aspirational archives are discussed in more detail in later sections of the article.

20   See citations in footnote 4 and Jennifer Douglas, "Letting Grief Move Me: Thinking through the Affective Dimensions of Personal Recordkeeping," in *Moving Literary Papers*, ed. Linda M. Morra (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, forthcoming).

by parents whose babies are stillborn or die neonatally is often categorized as "disenfranchised grief." Ariella Lang et al. explain that "compared to other types of mourning, like the loss of a parent or a sibling, the loss of a child is associated with a grief experience that is particularly severe, long-lasting, and complicated"; however, in cases where children die at birth or shortly after, this experience is often not recognized, and parents experience disenfranchisement resulting from "the juxtaposition of personal feelings of extreme grief with society's dismissal of such a short-lived" life.[21]

Anthropologist Linda L. Layne acknowledges these feelings of dismissal and explains that one way parents counter such feelings is by collecting things associated with the baby "to make the claim that a 'real' child existed and is worthy of memory"; things collected might include hospital ID bracelets, locks of hair, photographs, toys, items of clothing, or anything else that can attest to the identity and physical existence of the deceased baby.[22] In an autoethnographic study, another anthropologist, Marcus Weaver-Hightower, further explores the "critical role" that things perform for parents of stillborn babies. He argues that "things function as the tangible, earthly connections these parents have with their babies, a means of creating memories of and social identities for their children since the corporeal child no longer exists and often goes socially unrecognized." In his article, Weaver-Hightower includes a "catalog of [his daughter] Matilda's things," stressing that "the things she touched, that were a part of her, are *sacred*" and are therefore treated "with the reverence of archivists."[23] Other studies likewise explore the importance of things in bereavement, confirming the roles things play in asserting realness[24] and acting as the material traces of

21 Ariella Lang, Andrea R. Fleiszer, Fabie Duhamel, Wendy Sword, Kathleen R. Gilbert, and Serena Corsini-Munt, "Perinatal Loss and Parental Grief: The Challenge of Ambiguity and Disenfranchised Grief," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* 63, no. 2 (2011): 184. See also Kenneth J. Doka, *Disenfranchised Grief: Recognizing Hidden Sorrow* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1989); Kenneth J. Doka, *Disenfranchised Grief: New Directions, Challenges, and Strategies for Practice* (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 2002); Thomas Attig, "Disenfranchised Grief Revisited: Discounting Hope and Love," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* 49, no. 3 (2004): 197–215.

22 Linda L. Layne, "'He Was a Real Baby with Real Baby Things': A Material Culture Analysis of Personhood, Parenthood and Pregnancy Loss," *Journal of Material Culture* 5, no. 3 (2000): 324.

23 Marcus Weaver-Hightower, "'Waltzing Matilda': An Autoethnography of a Father's Stillbirth," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 41, no. 4 (2012): 475.

24 See, for example, Margaret Godel, "Images of Stillbirth: Memory, Mourning and Memorial," *Visual Studies* 22, no. 3 (2007): 253–69; Gordon Riches and Pamela Dawson, "Lost Children, Living Memories: The Role of Photographs in Processes of Grief and Adjustment among Bereaved Parent [sic]," *Death Studies* 22, no. 2 (1998): 121–40; Denise Côté-Arsenault, "Weaving Babies Lost in Pregnancy into the Fabric of the Family," *Journal of*

memory that mediate between the living and the deceased.[25]

As more and more of our daily lives have moved online in past decades, so too has the experience of grieving, and sharing online has become another way for bereaved parents to assert realness.[26] Grieving online has been discussed in a variety of disciplinary contexts, and studies have progressed from the analysis of whether grieving online is somehow less legitimate than grieving offline[27] to the analysis of the specific affordances of online environments and their facilitation of different modes of grieving.[28] In the online grief communities discussed by Douglas, parents share stories and experiences and often – through the creation and circulation of digital surrogates – the *things* they have collected. Douglas explains how this type of sharing contributes to collective remembering within the community.[29] In an article published in 2007, Margaret Godel suggested that "there is no collective memory" of the life of a stillborn baby,[30] but Douglas argues that, though this may have been true when bereaved parents felt compelled to keep their loss private and were unable to find and access collective fora such as the online communities discussed here, this is no longer necessarily the case; "when things are shared and realness is asserted in [an online] community, remembering is not only a solitary activity, but also a social one,

Family Nursing 9, no. 1 (2003): 23–27.

25   Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001).

26   Douglas, "Letting Grief Move Me"; Louis Bailey, Jo Bell, and David Kennedy, "Continuing Social Presence of the Dead: Exploring Suicide Bereavement through Online Memorialisation," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21, no. 1–2 (2015): 72–86; Jed R. Brubaker, Gillian R. Hayes, and Paul Dourish, "Beyond the Grave: Facebook as a Site for the Expansion of Death and Mourning," *The Information Society: An International Journal* 29, no. 3 (2013): 152–63; Elaine Kasket, "Continuing Bonds in the Age of Social Networking: Facebook as a Modern-Day Medium," *Bereavement Care* 31, no. 2 (2012): 62–69.

27   For an overview of how this discussion has been framed, see Miriam Moss, "Grief on the Web," OMEGA – *Journal of Death and Dying* 49, no. 1 (2004): 77–81; Tony Walter, "New Mourners, Old Mourners: Online Memorial Culture as a Chapter in the History of Mourning," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21, no. 1–2 (2015): 10–24; Tony Walter, Rachid Hourizi, Wendy Moncur, and Stacey Pitsillides, "Does the Internet Change How We Die and Mourn? Overview and Analysis," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* 64, no. 4 (2012): 275–302.

28   See, for example, Brubaker, Hayes, and Dourish, "Beyond the Grave"; Kasket, "Continuing Bonds in the Age of Social Networking"; Bailey, Bell, and Kennedy, "Continuing Social Presence of the Dead"; Jocelyn M. DeGroot and Heather J. Carmack, "'It May Not Be Pretty, But It's Honest': Examining Parental Grief on the Callapitter Blog," *Death Studies* 37, no. 5 (2013): 448–70; Avril Maddrell, "Online Memorials: The Virtual as the New Vernacular," *Bereavement Care* 31, no. 2 (2012): 46–54.

29   Douglas, "Letting Grief Move Me."

30   Godel, "Images of Stillbirth," 263.

shared between members of the community."[31] Douglas shows how parents in online communities both "perpetuate the memories of their children and create evolving identities for them" and how these memories and identities are then accepted, circulated, and extended by other members of the community.[32]

Lisa Mitchell et al. reach similar conclusions regarding the affordances of online grief communities. They refer to the role of online grief communities in "maintaining an 'on-going' presence of and relationships with the deceased."[33] In online spaces, bereaved parents "can not only 'create' and 'grow' their child in images and text, but also maintain a relationship with that child, communicate with the child, encourage others to do the same, and even establish connections between deceased children."[34] Mitchell et al. studied online communities of parents whose children had died by suicide and found that parents on these sites developed relationships not only with other parents, but also with other parents' deceased children, and that they created relationships between their own children and others' children. In this way, online grief communities are one place where the social existence of the deceased continues after death.

Other studies have similarly identified the ways in which online communities support "deathwork"[35] and bereavement practices and continue the social presence of the deceased.[36] Like Mitchell et al., Louis Bailey, Jo Bell, and David Kennedy explore ways that parents use online sites "as a way of keeping the deceased 'alive'" – of staying connected to the dead;[37] both articles stress that, in online communities, "memories and relationships [are] still evolving as an

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31   Douglas, "Letting Grief Move Me."

32   Ibid.

33   Lisa M. Mitchell, Peter H. Stephenson, Susan Cadell, and Mary Ellen Macdonald, "Death and Grief On-Line: Virtual Memorialization and Changing Concepts of Childhood Death and Parental Bereavement on the Internet," *Health Sociology Review* 21, no. 4 (2012): 417.

34   Ibid.

35   Tony Walter, "Mediator Deathwork," *Death Studies* 29, no. 5 (2005): 383–412.

36   See for example Dorthe Refslund Christensen and Stine Gotved, "Online Memorial Culture: An Introduction," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21, no. 1–2 (2015): 1–9; Dorthe Refslund Christensen and Kjetil Sandvik, "Death Ends a Life Not a Relationship: Timework and Ritualizations at Mindet.dk," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia* 21, no. 1–2 (2015): 57–71; Jocelyn M. DeGroot, "Maintaining Relational Continuity with the Deceased on Facebook," *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying* 65, no. 3 (2012): 195–212; Kasket, "Continuing Bonds in the Age of Social Networking."

37   Bailey, Bell, and Kennedy, "Continuing Social Presence of the Dead," 75.

active process and in the present" rather than being treated as part of the past.[38] As Mitchell et al. put it, online grief communities provide "a way to construct the deceased child as existing in a kind of on-line afterlife."[39]

Continuing Social Presence and the Continuing Bonds Model of Grief

Mitchell et al. note that, in online grief communities, the idea that the bereaved can continue the social presence of the deceased breaks a long-standing taboo in Western understanding of the "correct" way to grieve.[40] The origins of a Western modernist concept of bereavement can be traced to Freud's early psychoanalytic work around loss, in which he theorized that grief and the *work* of mourning freed the ego from its attachment to the deceased. In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud framed love as the attachment, or *cathexis*, of libidinal energy to a mental representation of the loved one; upon the death of the loved one, the energy remained tied to memories and thoughts of the deceased. Hypothesizing that the availability of libidinal energy was limited, Freud proposed that the psychological function of grief was to allow the bereaved to withdraw that energy – to *decathect* – so that it might be transferred to a new relationship.[41]

Freud's decathexis thesis was more fully developed in the second half of the 20th century by John Bowlby, a British psychiatrist and proponent of attachment theory. For Bowlby, grief was a form of separation anxiety from the attachment figure; in order for the bereaved to "recover," bonds with the deceased had to be relinquished.[42] Practice aligned with the theoretical model suggested by attachment theory, and grief counselling and therapy focused on helping patients let go of past attachments in order to form new ones. As Robert Neimeyer and Louis

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38   Ibid., 79.

39   Mitchell et al., "Death and Grief On-Line," 422.

40   Ibid., 413.

41   Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *Collected Papers*, vol. IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 154. Several good introductions to the history of mourning since Freud explain his impact on ideas about grief and how it has been treated. See, for example, Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, and Stroebe, "Broken Hearts or Broken Bonds"; Robert A. Neimeyer and Louis A. Gamino, "The Experience of Grief and Bereavement," in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), e-book, n.p.

42   Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, and Stroebe, "Broken Hearts or Broken Bonds," 1206; John Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Volume 3: Loss, Sadness and Depression* (London: Hogarth Press, 1980).

Gamino point out, Freud's "concept of emotional detachment or decathexis as the natural end point of mourning had an enduring impact on both professional and public understandings of bereavement";[43] by the late 20th century, the idea that normal grief – and successful grief work – involved severing attachment with the dead was firmly entrenched in Western psychology.[44]

In the 1980s and '90s, however, after decades of research and counselling grounded in decathexis, qualitative research studies on grief began to challenge this dominant narrative. In 1996, in a groundbreaking book titled *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*, Dennis Klass, Phyllis Silverman, and Steven Nickman argued that the prevailing view of grief work promoted the pathologization of prolonged grief, was incompatible with findings from studies of actual experiences of grief, and neglected to account for the cognitive and emotional work of grieving. They argued, based on their research and clinical experience, that "the resolution of grief involves continuing bonds that the survivor maintains with the deceased," and characterized this bond as "healthy" and enduring.[45]

Klass's new understanding of continuing bonds in bereavement developed out of his longitudinal ethnographic work with the Compassionate Friends, a support group for bereaved parents. Klass found that deceased children continued to play roles in the lives of individual parents and of the family; he noted that, "even parents with several surviving children report that there is a specific part of their self that is devoted only to parenting the dead child," just as "there are parts of themselves that are devoted only to parenting each of their living children."[46] Instead of seeing this type of continuing relationship as pathological, continuing bonds theorists understand it as part of a "cognitive process of coming to terms with a loss through confronting the loss and restructuring thoughts about the deceased, the events of the loss, and the world as it is without the deceased."[47]

43   Neimeyer and Gamino, "The Experience of Grief and Bereavement."

44   Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, and Stroebe, "Broken Hearts or Broken Bonds," 1207.

45   Phyllis R. Silverman and Dennis Klass, "Introduction: What's the Problem," in *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*, ed. Dennis Klass, Phyllis R. Silverman, and Steven L. Nickman (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 22.

46   Ibid., 18. See also Dennis Klass, *Parental Grief: Solace and Resolution* (New York: Springer, 1988); Dennis Klass, "Solace and Immortality: Bereaved Parents' Continuing Bond with their Children," *Death Studies* 17, no. 4 (1993): 343–68.

47   Paul C. Rosenblatt, "Grief That Does Not End," in *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*, ed. Dennis Klass, Phyllis R. Silverman, and Steven L. Nickman (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 52.

In the introduction to a more recent book on the continuing bonds model of grief, published in 2017, which considers both the impact of the continuing bonds model and ways in which it could be extended, editors Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Steffen describe the commonly agreed-upon characteristics of continuing bonds. They explain:

> Phenomena that indicate active continuing bonds are a sense of presence, experiences of the deceased person in any of the senses, belief in the person's continuing active influence on thoughts or events, or a conscious incorporation of the characteristics or virtues of the dead into the self. . . . After they die, roles change, but the dead can still be significant members of families and communities. Continuing bonds are, then, not simply mental constructs – that is, they are not just an idea, or a feeling.[48]

Briana L. Root and Julie Juola Exline describe this model in similar terms. The most important contribution of the continuing bonds model, they explain, is its recognition that the "deceased's influence in the bereaved's life is not viewed as static; instead, mourning represents an evolving process of adaptation and construction of a transformed connection."[49]

Klass and Steffen's collection also recognizes that the evolution of the bond between the living and the deceased does not occur in a social vacuum; a major focus of its various chapters is the way in which bonds are enacted in communities and through social networks.[50] In this way, more recent theorizing about continuing bonds connects to the idea of continuing social presence in online grief communities; continuing social presence can be seen as a means of moving the work of continuing bonds into a public – or more public – sphere. In her

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48   Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Steffen, "Introduction: Continuing Bonds – 20 Years On," in *Continuing Bonds in Bereavement: New Directions for Research and Practice*, ed. Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Stefan (New York: Routledge, 2018).

49   Briana L. Root and Julie Juola Exline, "The Role of Continuing Bonds in Coping with Grief: Overview and Future Directions," *Death Studies* 38, no. 1 (2014): 2. See also Jeanne W. Rothaupt and Kent Becker, "A Literature of Western Bereavement Theory: From Decathecting to Continuing Bonds," *Family Journal* 15, no. 1 (2007): 6–15.

50   See for example the following chapters: David E. Balk and Mary Alice Varga, "Continuing Bonds and Social Media in the Lives of Bereaved College Students," 303–16; Melissa D. Irwin, "Mourning 2.0: Continuing Bonds Between the Living and the Dead on Facebook – Continuing Bonds in Cyberspace," 317–29; Elaine Kasket, "Facilitation and Disruption of Continuing Bonds in a Digital Society," 330–40.

book *Bereaved Parents and their Continuing Bonds: Love After Death*, counsellor Catherine Seigal explains that "One of the ways we strengthen connections with our children is through our relationships with others who know them."[51] We also seek to form new relationships: through personal websites or group sites, "parents safely place their child where, despite them no longer having a physical presence, others still meet and want to know about them."[52]

Continuing Bonds and Grief Work

Continuing bonds and continuing social existence involve the bereaved in particular processes of grieving. Beginning with Freud, these processes have been discussed using the concept of grief work, though the continuing bonds model of grieving and the recognition of the social dimensions of continuing bonds suggest different modes of grief work than those promoted by Freud. In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud used the term *Trauerarbeit* to refer to the work performed through mourning, which permits the bereaved to decathect.[53] In 1944, Erich Lindemann drew on Freud's decathexis thesis to define "the process of grief work in three stages," the first of which was "emancipation from emotional bondage to the deceased."[54] In subsequent stage-based approaches to grief, such as those suggested by John Bowlby[55] and Colin Murray Parkes[56] or by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross's stages of dying,[57] grief work is conceived of as a more-or-less linear progression through a series of states. Worden suggests that phase- or stage-based approaches "imply a certain passivity" and prefers a task-based approach to mourning, which he argues is "more consonant with Freud's concept of grief work" in that it "implies that the mourner needs to take action

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51   Catherine Seigal, *Bereaved Parents and their Continuing Bonds: Love After Death* (London, Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017), 47.

52   Ibid., 70.

53   Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia."

54   Erich Lindemann, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 101, no. 2 (1944): 143.

55   Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Volume 3*.

56   Colin Murray Parkes, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life* (New York: International Universities Press, 1972).

57   Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: MacMillan, 1969).

and can do something." This type of grief work, Worden argues, "can give the mourner some sense of leverage and hope that there is something that he or she can actively do to adapt to the death of a loved one."[58] Worden's four tasks include (1) accepting the reality of the loss, (2) processing the pain of grief, (3) adjusting to a world without the deceased, and (4) finding an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life.[59]

Stroebe calls attention to a significant distinction between earlier ideas about grief work and ideas like those expressed by Worden. As Stroebe explains, "basic to [the earlier] formulation is the notion that one needs to confront, to work through, grief in order to gain detachment."[60] Later models – including Stroebe's own contributions – refigure the work of grieving, describing grief work as a "cognitive process" through which the grieving individual learns to adapt to and integrate their experience of loss and the changes loss brings to their world.[61] Stroebe notes the centrality of grief work to clinical understandings of grief and to grief therapy, explaining that "counseling and therapy programs for the bereaved, whatever the underlying philosophy or particular method employed, share a common goal: in one way or another, they all aim to facilitate grief work and thereby help the bereaved to adapt to life without the loved person."[62]

Although grief work has this specific context and lineage in psychology and counselling, it is also a term used by the bereaved for their own purposes: to describe an ongoing process of work in and of itself and not necessarily aimed at resolution. In the online communities studied by Douglas, bereaved parents often use the term *grief work* to connote the different types of activities they perform to help themselves process their grief, remember their children, and especially, connect with their children – *parenting* them. The type of grief work they describe can take many forms, including visiting the cemetery with gifts, writing in journals or on blogs, putting together scrapbooks of photographs and mementos, sorting through clothing and other items bought for the babies, and writing poetry or letters to their babies. Grief work is recognized in these communities as being difficult but necessary, and it is acknowledged as a way

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58   Worden, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*, 38.

59   Ibid., 38–53.

60   Stroebe, "Coping with Bereavement," 21.

61   Ibid., 33.

62   Ibid., 22.

to retain a connection to the deceased child – to continue a relationship and act as a parent. For our purposes in this project, we draw on both literature on grief work and the colloquial use of the term by bereaved parents to define grief work as a means of processing and adapting to loss and bereavement. For some parents, grief work is also a potential method of continuing bonds and retaining a connection to the deceased. In our work, and for the remainder of this article, we are particularly interested in how this form of grief work – the maintenance and development of ongoing relationships with the deceased – is performed and/or mediated through records and recordkeeping.

Grief Work and Records

In her writing about the types of relationship bereaved parents seek to maintain with their deceased children, Seigal explains that "few parents would say, 'I am doing this, writing this, joining this, speaking about this . . . because I want to strengthen the continuing bond with my lost child.'" She continues:

> The stories I have shared have been of parents who have found ways of doing this that, although terribly painful, have been as natural as breathing. Their instincts have been to transform the relationship from one that has been based on a physical presence to one that is psychological, emotional and often spiritual.[63]

Seigal stresses the unselfconscious nature of continuing bonds work; in a similar vein, we do not suggest that parents – and other bereaved people – are consciously creating and keeping records and archives in an effort to continue bonds (or at least not always), but rather that records may be created and kept as part of the "instinct" to "transform" relationships with the deceased.

The use of materials that archivists would recognize as records as part of grief work is discussed widely in the literature on bereavement. For example, Bobo H.P. Lau, Candy H.C. Fong, and Celia H.Y. Chan discuss the ways in which items that they refer to as "artifacts" but (at least some of) which archivists might understand as records – including "photographs, ultrasound pictures, locks of hair, and name tags" – are used as a "sensory" means of continuing bonds and

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63   Seigal, *Bereaved Parents and their Continuing Bonds*, 98.

to "provide living proof of the deceased child."[64] Gordon Riches and Pamela Dawson consider the role that photographs play in bereaved parents' efforts to continue relationships with their deceased children and to "introduce" those children to people who had not known them during their lifetimes.[65] The critical role of photographs to the parents of babies who are stillborn is explored by Cybele Blood and Joanne Cacciatore, who note that photographs can help to "validate the baby's worth and existence, support parents' expression of grief and mourning, assist in meaning-making, and improve parents' ability to cope with the death."[66] Weaver-Hightower's catalogue of his daughter Matilda's things (mentioned above) includes a "pink hospital information card," a hospital arm band, "hand and foot prints on card, black ink; surprisingly large," a baby book "containing writing, photographs, and ultrasounds," and videotape of Matilda's memorial service; all of these materials constitute "proof of life for our daughter" and "tie Matilda to the world." Weaver-Hightower also explains how, in addition to collecting and "protecting the mementos they already have," parents of stillborn children also "often actively *create* memories" through the accumulation of new things made or received following the baby's death; of course, Hightower reminds us, things "are not *just* things"[67] and it is the value imbued in them through parents' use of them that creates them as records, as evidence of their babies' lives and of their own enduring status as parents.

In our project, we define *records* broadly to encompass the different ways communities of the bereaved – including researchers like Weaver-Hightower – understand the record concept.[68] For example, for bereaved parents, records

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64 Bobo H.P. Lau, Candy H.C. Fong, and Celia H.Y. Chan, "Reaching the Unspoken Grief: Continuing Parental Bonds during Pregnancy Loss," in *Continuing Bonds in Bereavement: New Directions for Research and Practice*, ed. Dennis Klass and Edith Maria Steffen (New York: Routledge, 2018), 158.

65 Riches and Dawson, "Lost Children, Living Memories," 121.

66 Cybele Blood and Joanne Cacciatore, "Best Practice in Bereavement Photography after Perinatal Death: Qualitative Analysis with 104 Parents," *BMC Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2014). See also Cybele Blood and Joanne Cacciatore, "Parental Grief and Memento Mori Photography: Narrative, Meaning, Culture, and Context," *Death Studies* 38, no. 4 (2014): 224–33; K.L. Capitulo, "Evidence for Healing Interventions with Perinatal Bereavement," *American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing* 30, no. 6 (2005): 389–96. Godel also discusses the critical role photographs play for parents in continuing their relationships with their babies and maintaining a parenting role.

67 Weaver-Hightower, 476–77.

68 At the time of writing, Douglas is conducting interviews with bereaved parents, who discuss their recordkeeping habits; though the findings from those interviews are not included in this article, we do draw on the ways in which participants define and understand *records* in our open interpretation of what constitute records in the

might include any document or object that is made or kept to perpetuate the memory of a lost child or as part of their grief work; they might include more traditional items such as photographs, letters, emails, and hospital records but could also include items such as blogs, Facebook pages, artworks created by parents or family members, objects such as items of clothing or stuffed animals, and even living things such as a tree planted as a memorial. We also define *record-keeping* broadly to refer to a suite of actions: from the creation of a record to its use and alteration over time, its inclusion in a larger aggregation of records, and its treatment, including in an archival institution. As such, we view record-keeping as an ongoing process in which a variety of actors – creators, custodians, archivists, researchers, and others – play a part.[69]

Within this broad conceptualization of records and recordkeeping, we use the term *records work* to denote what people – in this case the bereaved – do with records. In adopting this term, we are implying the same iterative and process-based labour as is implied by the term *grief work*. As a concept, records work acknowledges an active approach to recordkeeping and highlights the different types of actions that can be included in making and keeping records, including using and re-using records, creating and re-creating them, annotating them, working in and with them, and even imagining records[70] or destroying them. The term *records work* foregrounds the active roles of both people and records; it considers how people work with records as well as how records themselves work (i.e., what work they perform and what they accomplish or do). In the context of grief work, for example, we can think about how bereaved people work with records as part of the processes involved in continuing bonds and about how records act both to document these processes and to actualize continuing bonds and continuing social presence.

context of bereavement.

69   Here, we acknowledge the influence on our thinking of the Australian records continuum model and its emphasis on recordkeeping as a continuous action.

70   On imagined records, see Anne J. Gilliland and Michelle Caswell, "Records and their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 53–75.

Grief Work and Records Work in Three Modalities

In this section, we introduce some of the ways in which grief work and records work might overlap and combine. We suggest three different modalities of records work as grief work and illustrate these through different case studies.[71] In each modality, we consider how recordkeeping or records work – including making, using, organizing, and preserving records – participates in grief work and the work of continuing bonds and continuing the social presence of the deceased. At the outset, it is important to note that we do not consider these three modalities to be the only modalities of records work as grief work, nor do we consider the modalities to be mutually exclusive; records work can occur across modalities, and those engaging in it may employ several modalities at a time to serve their own needs.

First Modality: Creating Records

In this first modality, grief work and records work overlap as the bereaved create records as a means of continuing bonds and continuing social presence. As noted by Seigal, this work may not be a conscious attempt to continue bonds, nor does it have to be a conscious attempt to create records, though in many cases it will be as the bereaved seek to imprint upon the world the memory and presence of their loved ones.

Examples of this type of records work as grief work, and as a means of continuing bonds and/or continuing the social presence of the deceased, can be seen in the online grief communities discussed already. For example, some parents who participate in these communities maintain personal blogs dedicated to their children and to their own experience of grieving. As parents write about their babies – their memories of their pregnancies, their labour and delivery, their hopes about who their children might have been and what they might have done – and as others read and sometimes comment, ongoing identities for the deceased children are in some ways being created. This phenomenon – the creation of imagined identity – is discussed by Dorthe Refslund Christensen and Kjetil Sandvik, who suggest that, in online communities "parents, though their

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71   The three case studies – Lara Gilbert/Carole Itter, the Hamilton family, and Sylvia Plath/Aurelia Plath – are the subjects of our continuing work in this area; each of the three modalities outlined in this section, and their expression in the case studies, will be more fully discussed in future work.

grief work, . . . actually perfor[m] the child into being as a subject" and provide the child with "a continued existence after death."[72] Bailey, Bell, and Kennedy look at how mourners maintain active Facebook profiles for individuals who died by suicide and explain that, as new posts and photographs continue to be posted to the profiles of the deceased, "memories and relationships" continue to evolve "as an active process in the present rather than something that occurred in the past."[73] In online communities, they argue, "the use of social media converges with an increasing acknowledgment of a continuing bond between the deceased and the bereaved."[74] In some key ways, online grief communities function as what Arjun Appadurai calls "archives of aspiration." Appadurai describes the archive not only as a commemorative space but also as a "continuous and conscious work of the imagination."[75] In online grief communities, the work of the imagination (i.e., "performing the child into being" through writing out and sharing memories and speculations) coincides with grief work and records work to establish the child's ongoing presence in the lives of the bereaved parents and in their various social circles.

The Hamilton Family Fonds, housed at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, is not aspirational in precisely the same sense as the online communities described above, but its existence is certainly linked to the desire to maintain a connection with a lost loved one, and one can see how the fonds functions as a particular means of asserting realness. The Hamilton Family Fonds documents the psychic research and experimentation carried out by T.G. (Thomas Glendenning) and Lillian Hamilton in their home in Winnipeg, Manitoba, between 1918 and 1945. The Hamiltons began to experiment with spiritualism and psychic research following the death of one of their sons in 1918, and the fonds includes séance attendance records and registers, scrapbooks documenting different psychic experiments and research, correspondence with other psychic researchers, reports and papers detailing their findings, and a large number of photographic prints and negatives depicting psychic phenomena.[76]

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72   Christensen and Sandvik, "Death Ends a Life Not a Relationship," 61, 67.

73   Bailey, Bell, and Kennedy, "Continuing Social Presence of the Dead," 79.

74   Ibid., 82.

75   Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," 23.

76   University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Hamilton Family Fonds (online finding aid), accessed 15 May 2019, http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/collections/complete_holdings/ead/html/Hamilton.shtml#series5.

In her study of spiritualism, child death, and grief in Ontario between the two World Wars, Jane Nicholas explains that "spiritualism provided an emotional community for parents who had lost a child, offering them a place to reconnect and exchange experiences of maintaining parent-child relationships beyond death." Nicholas notes that parents who participated in spiritualist practices could "feel their children as they heard about play, education, and fun in the afterlife," and could "continue to care for" them and "ensure their health and well-being." In this way, "spirit children were still their children," and parents could "continue their roles as mothers and fathers."[77] Nicholas stresses that "the dead child's body continued to change in the afterlife, which meant that parents' final interaction with the dead child's body were moments of transition, not an ending," and she explains how "séance records" document parents' ongoing interactions with their children as well as how the children change over time.[78]

The Hamilton Family Fonds includes many such records; the "Psychic Experimentation 1921–1985" section of the fonds includes séance registers and transcriptions as well as records of other types of psychic experimentation, including research on teleplasmic and other materializations.[79] A striking feature of the fonds is the sheer amount of photographic material documenting these experiments; the fonds includes over 700 images, many of which depict spirit manifestations, as for example in cases where the face of a spirit appears in a "teleplasmic mass" on the face or body of a spirit medium (see figure 1).[80] The creation of these images and their careful preservation as records can be seen as attempts to assert the realness of both the spirit and the psychic phenomenon of its manifestation, as well as to demonstrate the existence of a continuing relationship between spirits in the afterlife and the living.[81] The bulk of the Hamilton fonds and the variety of

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[77] Jane Nicholas, "The Children's Séance: Child Death, the Body, and Grief in Interwar Ontario," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 11, no. 2 (2018): 202.

[78] Ibid., 195.

[79] See the online finding aid for the Hamilton Family Fonds: "Hamilton Family: An Inventory of Its Papers at the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections," University of Manitoba Libraries, accessed 15 May 2019, http://www.umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/collections/complete_holdings/ead/html/Hamilton.shtml#series5.

[80] Many of these images can be accessed online through the University of Manitoba Digital Collections: "Hamilton Family Fonds," University of Manitoba Libraries, accessed 15 May 2019, https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm:hamilton_family.

[81] In the more recent edited collection on continuing bonds, a chapter is devoted to the role of mediums in the continuation of bonds between the living and the deceased as spirits. See Julie Beischel, Chad Mosher, and Mark Boccuzzi, "The Potential Therapeutic Efficacy of Assisted After-Death Communication," in *Continuing*

record types it includes evidence an intense labour on the part of its creators to produce and care for records that document the "realness" of the spirit world and the continuing bonds between the living and the deceased; the amassing of an archive – and its eventual placement in an archival repository – may have been seen as one means of validating both realness and continuing bonds.

Second Modality: Working with/through Records

In this modality, we consider how, as part of their grief work, the bereaved people might work with and through the records their loved ones leave behind; this type of records work as grief work might involve reading, sorting, re-sorting, weeding, annotating, and preserving records as well as any number of related activities. This type of records work is commonly performed when, for example, family members sort through the papers of a deceased loved one, determining what materials to keep, how to organize them, and what to do with them in the long term. An acute example of this type of records work as grief work is seen in Aurelia Plath's treatment of her daughter Sylvia Plath's archives.

American poet Sylvia Plath's published works include the novel *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel*, the book of poems that made her famous. *Ariel* was published posthumously, and the circumstances surrounding her death, combined with *Ariel*'s striking voice and style, have contributed to a prolonged interest in both her poetry and her biography. Plath, who had separated several months previously from her husband, the British poet Ted Hughes, died by suicide in February 1963, leaving behind her two small children, her completed draft of *Ariel* in a black spring binder, a "sheaf of nineteen additional poems"[82] written since the completion of *Ariel*, and a trove of correspondence, draft materials, journals, and scrapbooks. Plath died intestate, and Hughes had control over the papers Plath left behind in England. In addition to these materials, many hundreds of letters, additional journals, and juvenilia remained in her mother's possession.[83]

Aurelia Plath's role in curating this collection has been well documented; she is best known for editing and publishing *Letters Home: Correspondence 1950–1963*, a selection of letters Sylvia Plath had written to her and to other family

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Bonds in Bereavement: New Directions for Research and Practice (New York: Routledge, 2018).

82 Dan Chiasson, "Sylvia Plath's Joy," *New Yorker*, 12 February 2013, accessed 15 May 2019, https://www.newyorker .com/books/page-turner/sylvia-plaths-joy.

83 Tracy Brain, "Sylvia Plath's Letters and Journals," in *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*, ed. Jo Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
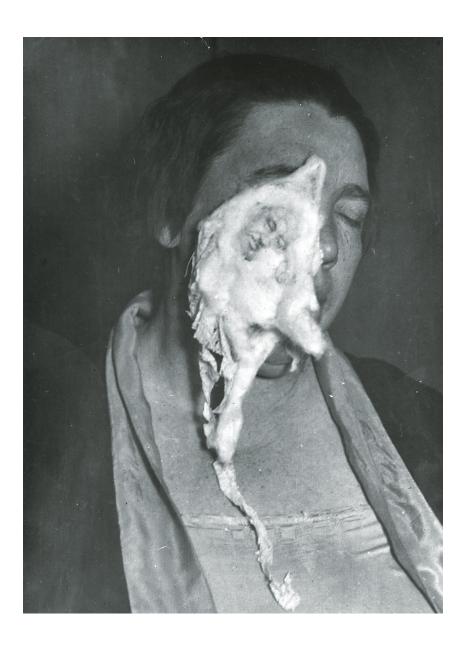
members. Many critics have understood *Letters Home* as an effort on Aurelia's part to correct views of Plath's personality and of their mother-daughter relationship after Sylvia's death and the publication of *Ariel*. As Janet Malcolm writes in *The Silent Woman*, Aurelia Plath intended *Letters Home* to "show that Plath was not the hateful, hating ingrate, the changeling of *Ariel* and *The Bell Jar*, but a loving, obedient daughter."[84] Malcolm's language is particularly strong, but her point of view regarding Aurelia Plath's purposes in publishing her daughter's letters is widely shared.[85]

In addition to publishing *Letters Home*, Aurelia Plath ensured that the originals of these letters, along with a good deal of other material, were placed in a research library, negotiating an initial deposit at the Lilly Library at Indiana University and later donating more materials to a collection begun after Hughes sold the manuscripts in his possession to Smith College Libraries Special Collections.[86] The letters and other materials that had been in Aurelia Plath's possession bear traces of her use and custody of them over time. Prior to placing them in the archives, Aurelia had worked through the materials, often adding annotations to the letters – many in shorthand. These annotations are sometimes clearly related to her work in compiling and editing the letters for publication, while others seem more personal, documenting Aurelia Plath's reactions to the contents of the letters both when she first received them and sometimes again shortly following Sylvia Plath's death. In some places, Aurelia Plath used a thick marker to strike out words and passages she evidently did not want others to read, and her notes often read like attempts to guide a reader or to "set the record straight," especially as it concerned Plath's relationship with Hughes. Aurelia Plath's work with the letters and other materials has been read as an attempt to control her daughter's posthumous reception and reputation; indeed, she noted on some of the letters her plan to place the archives somewhere where the public could have access to them and – therefore – to the true story.[87]

84 Janet Malcolm, *The Silent Woman: Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 33.

85 See, for example, Jacqueline Rose, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (London: Virago, 1991); Brain, "Sylvia Plath's Letters and Journals"; Marianne Egeland, *Claiming Sylvia Plath: The Poet as Exemplary Figure* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013); Jonathan Ellis, "'Mailed into Space': On Sylvia Plath's Letters," in *Representing Sylvia Plath*, ed. Sally Bayley and Tracy Brain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 13–31.

86 For more on Aurelia Plath's role in the compilation of the Sylvia Plath archives, see Jennifer Douglas, "The Archiving I: A Closer Look," *Archivaria* 79 (Spring 2015), 53–89.

87 For detailed discussion of Aurelia Plath's work in the archives of her daughter, see Brain, "Sylvia Plath's Letters

For the most part, Aurelia Plath has been portrayed as an interloper in the archive and a corrupting influence on it, especially by those who have shared Malcolm's understanding of Aurelia's desire to use the archives to shape and control readers' continued perception of Plath as a poet and as a daughter – and herself as a mother.[88] In our project, however, we ask what we might discover if we consider Aurelia Plath's treatment of her daughter's archives – her records work – through the lenses of continuing bonds and grief work. This perspective suggests a new way of thinking about Aurelia Plath's relationship to her daughter's archives. For example, some of Aurelia Plath's annotations are dated shortly after Plath's death; these show her making what Tracy Brain calls "loving references."[89] In one example, she expresses her regret for having behaved in a certain manner, and in another, a short, exclamatory phrase clearly conveys her love and sense of loss.[90] Aurelia Plath annotated materials other than the letters. Special Collections at Smith College Libraries holds copies of journals in which Plath's poems appeared, and many of these include marginal notes in Aurelia's hand; the notes are not dated, but since many of the poems were published posthumously, we know these notes were added by the grieving Aurelia. Usually providing context and adding biographical detail, the notes are frequently wistful in tone, for example, recalling moments when Plath was especially happy and enjoying her children, or remembering more painful events, such as the miscarriage Plath experienced between the births of her two children.[91]

While Aurelia Plath clearly did use some of her annotations to "set the record straight," i.e., to tell her version of the story, many of the annotations also stand as testaments to her love for her daughter and to her sense of loss. Looking at the archives through the lens of the continuing bonds theory of grief, we might understand these annotations as one means by which Aurelia Plath continued a relationship with her dead daughter, speaking to her through – and speaking

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and Journals"; Tracy Brain, *The Other Sylvia Plath* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2001); Douglas, "Archiving I."

88 Brain, "Sylvia Plath's Letters and Journals"; Malcolm, *The Silent Woman;* Rose, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*; Egeland, *Claiming Sylvia Plath*; Brain, *The Other Sylvia Plath*; Douglas, "Archiving I."

89 Brain, "Sylvia Plath's Letters and Journals," 149.

90 See letters in Lilly Library, Sylvia Plath Collection, MSS II, Box 6, file 21, and Box 6a, File 4.

91 See, for example, Smith College Libraries Special Collections, Sylvia Plath Collection, Boxes 6 and 7, files for "Letter in November" and "Parliament Hill Fields."

back to – her archival traces. Further, Aurelia Plath's desire to sell the letters and other materials in her possession in order to make them publicly accessible, while usually interpreted as part of her impulse to "set the record straight," can also be compared to the impulse common to bereaved parents in online grief communities to have their grief acknowledged and their children remembered.[92] In these ways, the archives, and the records work that goes into compiling them, serve as a vehicle through which Aurelia Plath continues her own relationship with her daughter and continues her daughter's social presence.

Third Modality: Co-Creating Records

The Lara Gilbert Fonds held by the University of Victoria's Special Collections and University Archives possesses a similar dual character as both documentary evidence of the life of the named creator and, as we read it, an archive of a mother's grief work. Lara Gilbert graduated from the University of British Columbia with an honours degree in biochemistry and was an aspiring and prolific writer who died when she was 22, by suicide. Gilbert suffered from depression and, in her late teens and early twenties, began to experience the resurfacing of suppressed memories of sexual abuse by family members. From a young age, Gilbert had diligently kept journals, often three or four at a time, and filled them with the types of things a young girl might write about; there are pages (and pages) devoted to Michael Jackson, pages about boys and crushes, about grades, about friends, and about the future. Her later journals chronicle her memories of abuse as well as her efforts to help herself during periods of depression through therapy, medication, and sometimes, through self-medication and self-harm. When Gilbert died, her mother, the Vancouver artist Carole Itter, wanted the journals to be published but struggled to find a publisher due to the raw honesty – and sheer volume – of Lara's words. Finally, Itter donated her daughter's journals – along with other materials related to her daughter's life, illness, and death, including correspondence, school work, and medical and legal records – to the University of Victoria archives.[93] Itter later self-published an edited compilation of Gilbert's journal entries.[94]

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92   This impulse is also discussed in Douglas, "Letting Grief Move Me."

93   See the finding aid for the Lara Gilbert Fonds, accessed 16 May 2019, https://www.memorybc.ca/lara-gilbert -fonds.

94   Lara Gilbert, *I Might Be Nothing: Journal Writing by Lara Gilbert*, ed. Carole Itter (Victoria: Trafford, 2004).

The Lara Gilbert Fonds evinces different ways in which records and records work provide a means for Gilbert's bereaved mother to maintain a bond to her daughter, as well as to ensure Lara's ongoing social presence. Like Aurelia Plath, Carole Itter gathered together her daughter's records, read and re-read them, organized them, annotated them in places, and arranged for their preservation where the public would have access to them. In some ways, Itter continued Gilbert's own records work and recordkeeping practice; there is evidence throughout the fonds of the ways in which Gilbert revisited, indexed, annotated, added to, and reused materials over time. After Gilbert's death, Itter performed similar types of records work, often annotating Gilbert's records with notes that provided context for understanding Gilbert's life, personality, and relationships. Itter's notes also pertain to her efforts to find a publisher for Gilbert's journals.

In addition to making notes on Gilbert's records in her efforts toward publication, Itter amassed a significant amount of material herself, which is included in the fonds. The first accrual to the fonds, compiled by Itter, stands as a memorial to her daughter and consists of Gilbert's journal, school assignments, juvenilia (including a dictionary for Gilbert's made-up language Kawiakee), and cards and letters (mostly between Itter and Gilbert). The second accrual includes more material created and accumulated by Itter both in her efforts to publish the journals and as part of her grief work for her daughter. The records in this accrual document Itter's work to seek legal justice and recourse for her daughter's death as well as her attempt to understand Gilbert's experiences, illness, and death. Along with these implicit traces of Itter's grief work, the second accrual, which is currently closed to researchers as it awaits processing, contains materials that provide more explicit documentary evidence of activities typically associated with grief work, including materials related to Itter's research on depression and suicide and her attendance at grief support groups. In the afterword to the version of Gilbert's journals that was eventually published, Itter notes, "I have not been idle";[95] the Lara Gilbert Fonds attests to that statement as the depository for the notes, research, legal and support documentation Itter amassed in her attempts to cope with the death of her daughter and to seek justice for the events she felt might have played a part in that death.

Lara Gilbert's archives are like Sylvia Plath's in that both are *both* records of the individuals after whom they are named *and* records of the individuals who

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95   Carole Itter, afterword to Lara Gilbert, *I Might Be Nothing*, 254.

compiled them and arranged for their donation or sale to an archival repository. As all archives should, the Sylvia Plath collections and the Lara Gilbert Fonds document the activities carried out by Plath and Gilbert during their lifetimes; through the records work performed by Plath and Gilbert's mothers (organizing, annotating, preserving, disseminating, etc.), each archives also stands as a record of a mothers' grief work, her attempts to process and make sense of her loss, and her desire to maintain a connection to and continue the social presence of her daughter. In this sense, the archives – as records of grief work – can be seen as having been created by the grieving mothers. As documents of relationships, both before and after the deaths of the daughters, the Lara Gilbert Fonds and the Sylvia Plath archives might also be seen as co-creations of mothers and daughters.

In her capacity as a visual artist, Carole Itter engages in a very explicit act of co-creation through her installation art work, *The Pink Room: A Visual Requiem* (figure 2). Although Itter had previously created large-scale assemblages using found materials from the beaches, forests, and streets of Vancouver, *The Pink Room* was a departure for the artist in that her primary source materials for the installation were personally and affectively charged objects used by, created by, and documenting her daughter Lara (i.e., Gilbert's records). Itter describes the installation, which was first staged at Vancouver's grunt gallery in 1999, as a "walk-in doll house loaded with memories" meant to evoke the "impact of deep grief and irreconcilable loss."[96] Immersed in a pink hue from gels on the gallery windows, the installation at grunt consisted of pieces of altered furniture (including a dresser, on which Gilbert's childhood collection of tiny objects sat), fabric creations and sculptures, and a wall of framed photographs of Lara throughout her life. The conceptual centrepieces of the exhibition were two low-relief comforters, hung like tapestries on facing gallery walls. In one, entitled *The Document*, Itter carefully stitched together panels made up of fabric copies of Gilbert's official documents (diplomas, report cards, letters). In the other, entitled *Lara's Land of Kawiakii*, Itter created a quilt out of fabric copies of photographs, taken by Gilbert, of the imaginary world she called Kawiakee[97] and which she had brought to life in dioramas staged with her stuffed animals. Itter

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96   Carole Itter, Statement accompanying slides to grunt gallery, grunt gallery Archives, 1998.

97   The name of the secret language Gilbert created is spelled in different ways at different times by Itter; in this article, we use Gilbert's most frequent spelling unless the name appears in a formal title of one of Itter's artworks.

FIGURE 2   *Carole Itter,* The Pink Room: A Visual Requiem, *1997–2004, mixed media (additional photographs by Michael de Courcy, E. Rausenberg and Cheryl Sourkes), dimensions variable. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of the Artist*
Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

also carefully tucked some of these stuffed animals, as well as some of Gilbert's other tiny objects, into fabric nooks throughout the quilt. In later installations, Itter added a third quilt, entitled *O Good Mother*, made primarily of fabric copies of Gilbert's drawings, with quotes from her diaries, some of her original childhood artwork, and letters between mother and daughter tacked on.[98]

Like the Lara Gilbert Fonds, *The Pink Room* is an archive of Itter's grief work, displaying documents created and amassed through Itter's attempts to make sense of her daughter's experiences of sexual assault, mental illness, and suicide. Itter later added another component to the artwork, compiling statements about sexual assault, suicide, and grief and bereavement (particularly maternal bereavement) drawn from literary, academic, and activist sources, as well as from her conversations and correspondence with other bereaved parents and family members. She typed these on cards, which she laminated in pink and hung from a dowel, allowing the gallery visitor to flip through them. Entitled *Artist Statement*, this component of *The Pink Room* suggests the methodology of the artwork as grief work, with documents and objects – what we call records – created and kept by Gilbert, by Gilbert and Itter together, and by Itter alone as the material through which this work is undertaken and represented.

Implications for Archival Theory and Practice

The three modalities of records work as grief work discussed above suggest different ways in which records participate in and result from the work of grieving. Positioning the Sylvia Plath archives as also a record of Aurelia Plath's grief work demonstrates how looking at the records through the lens of grief work helps us to think differently about Aurelia Plath's motivations for treating the records as she did, and it also provides a way to more fully understand and describe the records' custodial history and how they came to take their current shape.

A grief work perspective can also affect how we see the Hamilton Family Fonds. The biographical sketch for the fonds focuses on the life and work of T.G. Hamilton, describing his occupation as a doctor and the roles he played in the community; it says very little about his wife, Lillian Hamilton, other than to say that she helped him with his experiments and carried them on after he

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98   *The Pink Room* is now housed in the permanent collection at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

died. However, Lillian's presence is deeply felt by anyone looking through the archives. It appears to have been Lillian who was responsible for keeping many of the registers and scrapbooks, in which some séance descriptions mention their son as having appeared as if he were a regular visitor, an ordinary part of these experiments.[99] After T.G. died, Lillian carried on their work, and there is a good deal of her correspondence, with other spiritualists and with her family, where she gives news of spirit activities and appearances. There are also references to her efforts to create, organize, and keep a record – deliberately building up an archive – and eventually to place this record of the family's work at the University of Manitoba.[100]

Lillian Hamilton was a bereaved mother who referred to missing her dead son throughout her lifetime. Viewing this fonds through a grief work lens can help to expose both the means by which it was put together and the individuals who shaped it in ways that the biographical sketch does not suggest.[101] Looking through a grief work lens, we might understand the fonds discussed in our case studies as deliberately constructed records of communication, love, loss, connection, hope, and aspiration. The case studies sketched out in the previous section clearly demonstrate some roles that records and records work can play in grief work, in ensuring the ongoing connection between the deceased and the living, and in providing the deceased with an ongoing presence in a community or social group. These case studies suggest to us some implications for archivists' understanding of the nature and value of archival material and of their ethical responsibilities toward that material and to the people involved in its creation, donation, and use. In this final section, we explore potential ways that a grief work perspective might contribute to the development of archival theory and methodology.[102]

99 University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Hamilton Family Fonds, Psychic Experimentation 1921–1985 series.

100 University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Hamilton Family Fonds, Hamilton Family – Correspondence, 1919–1986 series,

101 James B. Nickels discusses the influence of grief on the Hamiltons' involvement in psychical research in "Psychic Research in a Winnipeg Family: Reminiscences of Dr. Glen F. Hamilton," *Manitoba History* 55 (June 2007), accessed 19 June 2019, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/55/psychicresearch.shtml.

102 Due to the stage we are at in the research process and to space constraints, we present here only initial suggestions about how ideas about records work as grief work can transform archival theory and practice; our ongoing research continues to explore the effects of a grief work perspective on recordkeeping, and we hope that others

"Doing Right By"

In the first place, we argue that the idea of records work as grief work, and as a means of continuing bonds and continuing social presence, requires that archivists think carefully about our ethical orientation to archives and our responsibilities to different stakeholders. Catherine Hobbs talks about what it means to "do right by"[103] an archives and its creator, identifying an "unwritten ethical imperative that permeates all aspects of archival activities," which is to "do justice to the fact that the archives are linked to a life."[104] Hobbs describes this as an unwritten imperative because she thinks it is something archivists intuitively understand, but which is not acknowledged in our literature or training. A respect – and even reverence for – the way a person lived their life, carried out activities, and created records underpins ideas about original order;[105] but should there be more to our idea about what it means to "do right by" a person and their archives? Does thinking about concepts like continuing bonds and continuing social presence – and more broadly, the relationships contained in and maintained by records – suggest that we have a broader and deeper responsibility as keepers of archives?

For the Hamiltons and other spiritualists, the purpose of spiritualism is to prove "the continuity of life,"[106] to "affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death."[107] In some ways, archives serve a similar purpose: just as the spiritual afterlife provides a space in which the dead and the living can continue a relationship, the archival institution – its reading room and website – should be understood as a space in which bonds are continued and the dead exert a continuing social presence.

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in the field will also take up this work.

103 Catherine Hobbs, "Personal Ethics: Being an Archivist of Writers," in *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace: Explorations in Canadian Women's Archives*, ed. Linda M. Morra and Jessica Schagerl (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 181.

104 Ibid., 184.

105 Consider Muller, Feith, and Fruin's assertion that the archives has its own personality and identity, and the moral dimension of Jenkinson's arguments for preserving original context. See also Jennifer Douglas and Heather MacNeil, "Arranging the Self: Literary and Archival Perspectives on Writers' Archives," *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 25–39; Heather MacNeil, "Archivalterity: Rethinking Original Order," *Archivaria* 66 (Fall 2008): 1–24.

106 Charles F. Emmons, "The Spiritualist Movement: Bringing the Dead Back," in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), e-book, n.p.

107 National Spiritual Association of Churches, "Declaration of Principles," accessed 16 May 2019, https://nsac.org/what-we-believe/principles/.

The archivist might even join the ranks of what Tony Walter calls "deathwork mediators": those individuals with "privileged access" to the dead and to "sources of knowledge about the death and/or the dead." Deathwork mediators are tellers of tales, "mediums, mediators, passing on information about the dead," and Walter includes in their ranks coroners and funeral directors as well as obituarists, biographers, and museum curators.[108] As professionals responsible for preserving and giving access to the documentary traces of individuals, families, and communities, what might it mean to consider the archivist as a deathwork mediator, and how would it impact our professional responsibilities and practices? If archivists are understood to perform this type of mediating role between the dead and the living, part of which is to facilitate the continuation of bonds and social existence, then we argue that archivists have ethical responsibilities related to their representation of the lives they mediate as well as to the kind of care they provide to the deceased, to their archival traces, and to the living who interact with them.

Archival Interfaces and Contact Zones

One of the opportunities for such mediation is archival description, which is both a representational act – in that it creates a representation of the archivist's understanding of the nature of an aggregation and its parts – and a communicative act – in that it shares that representation as a means of providing access to the records. What happens to our understanding of the ethics of representation and communication when we position the archivist as a "deathwork mediator"? How does description "do right by" a creator? What is – or should be – its role in continuing that creator's social existence? How can description acknowledge the different types of emotional needs people might bring with them when they encounter an archival finding aid or an archival web access system? And how can a focus on these types of access needs be extended to the design of archival access systems more broadly: for example, how we design reference spaces, on site and online, and how we conceive of the reference role for archivists (or build one into our websites)?

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108 Walter, "Mediator Deathwork," 387.

"Treat Them with the Reverence of Archivists":

   Relationship Work in the Archives

Weaver-Hightower refers to the reverence with which archivists treat records, while Wexler and Long consider archivists to have a "sacred" responsibility to the dead who create and/or are represented in records as well as to those who will interact with the records, with the archivist, or with the archival institution in some way.[109] Other archivists have similarly argued for the need for greater acknowledgement of the various types of responsibilities and relationships their work involves them in. Judith Etherton has suggested that archivists can learn from social workers how to respond to the various emotional and psychological needs of their patrons,[110] while more recently, Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor have employed the concept of "radical empathy" to explore the relationships (and responsibilities) archivists have to creators, subjects, and users of records.[111] Echoing these calls for a more explicit focus on the caring aspects of archival work, we suggest that archivists and records professionals should be seen as "relational workers."[112]

Ellen Ramvi and Linda Davies explain that relational workers include "occupational groups like social workers, nurses, and teachers . . . i.e., professionals who work in close personal contact with other people and for whom empathy and the ability to build relationships are crucial,"[113] while Anne Edwards argues that "most professional interactions involve relational work, sometimes visibly and sometimes hidden."[114] For archivists, this work has arguably remained more hidden than it should have, though it is beginning to be more fully explored in some contexts.[115] When records and recordkeeping are understood as signif-

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109   Wexler and Long, "Lifetimes and Legacies," 484.

110   Judith Etherton, "The Role of Archives in the Perception of Self," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 27, no. 2 (2006): 227–46.

111   Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives," *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016): 23–43.

112   Ellen Ramvi and Linda Davies, "Gender, Mothering and Relational Work," *Journal of Social Work Practice* 24, no. 4 (2010): 445.

113   Ibid.

114   Anne Edwards, "Revealing Relational Work," in *Working Relationally in and across Practices: A Cultural-Historical Approach to Collaboration*, ed. Anne Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.

115   See, for example, the work by archivists and others who have been involved in furthering understanding of the impacts of recordkeeping on children in out-of-home care and in developing more sensitive recordkeeping

icant means through which individuals (e.g., records creators, donors, and users) perform grief work and as materials through which bonds are continued and social existence is asserted, the need for archivists to accept the relational dimensions of their work is clear; our arguments in this article strengthen the arguments of others before us to see archival work as care work and to call for radical empathy as a central value of the archival discipline. Andrea Foster suggests that some "helping professions" have a "statutory 'duty to care.'"[116] Ours may not be a statutory duty, but it must be recognized as fundamental to the ethical performance of our work.[117]

Conclusion

This article has introduced a new conceptual framework for thinking about how and why people create, keep, and use records and archives, drawing on ideas about grief and grief work that are well established in the fields of death studies

protocols. See for example, Shurlee Swain and Nell Musgrove, "We Are the Stories We Tell about Ourselves: Child Welfare Records and the Construction of Identity among Australians Who, as Children, Experienced Out-of-Home 'Care,'" *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 4–14; Cate O'Neill, Vlad Selakovic, and Rachel Tropea, "Access to Records for People Who Were in Out-of-Home Care: Moving Beyond 'Third Dimension' Archival Practice," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 29–41; Margaret Kertesz, Cathy Humphreys, and Cathy Carnovale, "Reformulating Current Recordkeeping Practices in Out-of-Home Care: Recognising the Centrality of the Archive," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 42–53; Heather MacNeil, Wendy Duff, Alicia Dotiwalla, and Karolina Zuchniak, "'If There are No Records, There is No Narrative': The Social Justice Impact of Records of Scottish Care-Leavers," *Archival Science* 18, no. 1 (2018): 1–28.

116 Andrea Foster, "The Duty to Care and the Need to Split," *Journal of Social Work Practice* 15, no. 1 (2001), 81. As archivists begin to explore and expand a relational or care-work approach to archival practice, it will be important to be alert to the gendered expectations of such work and to the effects of neoliberalist institutions and management to expect "more for less" from employees. On these expectations and tendencies, see, for example, Nancy Fraser, "Contradictions of Capitalism and Care," *New Left Review* 100 (July–August 2016), accessed 16 May 2019, https://newleftreview.org/issues/II100/articles/nancy-fraser-contradictions-of -capital-and-care; Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012).

117 Though there is not room to explore them here, the implications for reconceptualizing archival work as care work will need to be considered as well; for example, implications may relate to the gendered perceptions of care work and especially, to the impact doing care work can have on archivists. The emerging literature on archives and secondary trauma and archives and emotional labour suggests some of the emotional impact archivists experience. See for example Jennifer Douglas, Katie Sloan, and Jennifer Vanderfluit, "Not 'Just My Problem to Handle': Emerging Themes on Secondary Trauma and Archivists," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 6, no. 1 (2019); Nicola Laurent and Michaela Hart, "Emotional Labor and Archival Practice – Reflection," *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists* 15 (2018): 13–22.

and grief counselling. It asks readers to consider how thinking about the relationships between grief work and archives – and about archival work as caretaking or relational work – can help archivists to rethink how we preserve and provide access to records and to rethink our ethical orientation, not only to the records we have always cared for but also to the people who work with, in, and through those records. In the work that we continue to do in this area, we are further exploring the three modalities of records work as grief work discussed above, as well as uncovering and examining other modalities not discussed here. This work will suggest ways to begin to answer the questions posed in our final section and to situate the work of archivists and records professionals as work that is fundamentally defined by relationships and care. In doing this work, we are both responding to Wexler and Long's call to "acknowledge that [the archival] profession is intimately bound up" with death and dying and expanding it. Rather than imbuing the subjects of death and dying with "negative connotations,"[118] we are showing how these subjects suggest positive, caring approaches to our work and define the role of the archivist as one that should be characterized by our duty to care.

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118   Wexler and Long, "Lifetimes and Legacies," 478.

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