

**Exploring Archival Value: An Axiological Approach**

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I, Elaine Samantha Marston Penn, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## Abstract

The proposition of this thesis is to explore a key concept in archival theory and practice, namely the value of archives. The underlying principle is that by drawing upon ideas from outside of the archival discipline – from axiology – this concept can be examined in an innovative and reflective manner. The evaluation of archives is a core activity for archivists. Archivists make value judgements when they decide what to keep and what to destroy, and in how they choose to arrange and describe archives. However, although the term ‘value’ appears frequently in the professional archival literature, often linked with other qualifying terms, including ‘historical’, ‘evidential’, ‘legal’ and ‘informational’, these terms are contested, often ill-defined, and frequently misleading. This thesis critically examines the theoretical concepts behind such terms and their use within the archival profession.

The application of Theory Derivation methodology, which employs analogy or metaphor to transpose and redefine a concept or theory from one context to another, enables the author to find new insight and explanations for archival value from the field of axiology (the study of value and value judgements). This thesis explores questions about what sort of property or characteristic of an object gives it value, whether having value is an objective or a subjective matter, and whether value can be measured. Philosophical concepts of value, in particular concepts of intrinsic value – as exemplified in the work of G. E. Moore (1873-1958) – are explored. The re-interpretation of key tenets of archival theory, including appraisal, provenance and *respect des fonds*, through the particular framework of Moore’s Principle of organic unities will demonstrate that the concept of value has a wider resonance in the archival field than has been previously considered.

## Table of contents

	Page no.
Declaration	2
Abstract	3
Table of contents	4
Acknowledgements	8
List of abbreviations	9
Editorial conventions	10
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b>	<b>11-38</b>
1.1 Chapter summary	12
1.2. Justification of topic	12
1.3. Research questions	20
1.4. Some definitions: life cycle and records continuum	21
1.5. Methodology	28
1.6. Thesis outline	35
<b>Chapter 2. A chronology of the development of archival appraisal theory</b>	<b>39-86</b>
2.1. Chapter summary	39
2.2. The early twentieth century	39
2.2.1. Introduction	39
2.2.2. 1920s-1960s (UK)	40
2.2.3. 1930s-1960s (US)	45
2.2.4. Influence of Jenkinson and Schellenberg in US, UK and Australia	50
2.2.5. Concluding remarks	54
2.3. The late twentieth century	54
2.3.1. Introduction	54
2.3.2. 1970s and 1980s (US)	55
2.3.3. 1980s (Canada)	60
2.3.4. 1990s	64
2.3.5. Concluding remarks	77
2.4. Twenty-first century approaches to appraisal	77
2.5. Concluding remarks	85

<b>Chapter 3. Value and the archival principle of provenance</b>	<b>87-114</b>
3.1. Chapter summary	87
3.2. Introduction	87
3.3. Historical origins of the principle of provenance	90
3.4. Interpretations of provenance	92
3.4.1. Provenance = <i>respect des fonds</i>	92
3.4.2. Provenance = record context(s)	96
3.5. The archival <i>fonds</i>	100
3.5.1. <i>Fonds</i> as organic whole	100
3.5.2. The record group concept	104
3.5.3. The ‘conceptual fonds’	108
3.6. Concluding remarks	112
<b>Chapter 4. The evolution of archival theory: influences, impacts and underlying assumptions</b>	<b>115-149</b>
4.1. Chapter summary	115
4.2. Introduction	115
4.3. The value of archives as cultural resources	119
4.4. Economic and social measurements of archival value	128
4.5. The value of archives as information assets and evidence of good governance	137
4.6. Concluding remarks	147
<b>Chapter 5. Value in axiology literature</b>	<b>150-175</b>
5.1. Chapter summary	150
5.2. Introduction to axiology	150
5.2.1. The Austro-German school of value theory	151
5.2.2. The English school of value theory	153
5.2.3. The US school of value theory	156
5.3. Main concerns of axiology	157
5.3.1. Objectivism and subjectivism	158
5.3.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic and instrumental value	163
5.3.3. (In)commensurability of value	168
5.4. Concluding remarks	174
<b>Chapter 6. Moore’s Principle of organic unities</b>	<b>176-201</b>
6.1. Chapter summary	176

6.2. Introduction	176
6.3. Biography of G. E. Moore and <i>Principia Ethica</i>	178
6.4. Outline of the Principle	183
6.5. Critiques of the Principle	189
6.5.1. By Moore himself	190
6.5.2. By Moore's contemporaries	191
6.5.3. By later philosophers	192
6.6. Concluding remarks	200
<b>Chapter 7. Archival value: a re-interpretation</b>	<b>202-238</b>
7.1. Chapter summary	202
7.2. Introduction	202
7.3. Transposition of the strong interpretation of the Principle of organic unities to the archival context	204
7.3.1. Analogy with the archival theory of Hilary Jenkinson	205
7.3.2. Analogy with the archival theory of Luciana Duranti	209
7.3.3. Analogy with the archival theory of Theodore R. Schellenberg	212
7.3.4. Analogy with the archival theory of Hans Booms	217
7.3.5. Analogy with the archival theories of David Bearman, Terry Cook and Helen Samuels	221
7.4. Transposition of the weak interpretation of the Principle of organic unities to the archival context	224
7.4.1. Analogy with the archival theories of Tom Nesmith and Brien Brothman	226
7.4.2. Analogy with the archival theories of Lawrence Dowler, Theodore R. Schellenberg and Terry Eastwood	230
7.5. Concluding remarks	235
<b>Chapter 8. Conclusion</b>	<b>239-249</b>
8.1. Chapter summary	239
8.2. Reflections on research methodology	239
8.3. Summary of thesis	241
8.4. Reflections on research questions	244
8.4.1. Is there something intrinsically valuable about archives? Does such a thing as 'archival value' exist?	244
8.4.2. Can we define archival value?	245

8.4.3. Can we measure archival value?	246
8.5. Reflections on findings	246
8.5.1. The intrinsic value of archives ‘on the whole’	247
8.5.2. The complexity of archival value concepts	247
8.5.3. The continuing relevance of ‘traditional’ archival theory	247
8.5.4. The benefits of an interdisciplinary approach	248
8.5.5. The role and relevance of professional archival practice	248
8.6. Areas for further research	249
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>250-310</b>

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## List of abbreviations

AA	<i>The American Archivist</i> (Journal of the Society of American Archivists, 1938-)
ACA	Association of Canadian Archivists
Add. MSS	Additional Manuscripts (Archival collection)
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK
AM	<i>Archives and Manuscripts</i> (Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia, 1955-1975; Australian Society of Archivists, 1976-)
ARA	Archives and Records Association UK and Ireland (formerly, the Society of Archivists UK and Ireland)
AS	<i>Archival Science</i> , 2001-
Ch.	Chapter (of book)
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
Cm.	Command Paper (1986-)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council, UK
edn.	Edition
ed.	Editor
eds.	Editors
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office, UK
ICA	International Council on Archives
IRM	Information Resource Management
ISAD(G)	<i>General International Standard on Archival Description</i> , ICA
JSA	<i>Journal of the Society of Archivists UK and Ireland</i> , 1955-2012
LAC	Library and Archives Canada (formerly, the National Archives of Canada)

MLA	Museum, Libraries and Archives Council, UK
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, US
nd	No date (of publication)
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , H. G. C. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Available online: <a href="http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/online">http://www.oup.com/oxforddnb/info/online</a>
PRO	Public Record Office (now The National Archives, UK)
<i>RAD</i>	<i>Rules for Archival Description</i> , Bureau of Canadian Archivists
rev.	Revised (edition)
SAA	Society of American Archivists
Sect.	Section (of book)
SHL	Senate House Library, London
TNA	The National Archives, UK
transl.	Translator
UBC	University of British Columbia, Canada
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US	United States of America
vol.	Volume (of book)

### **Editorial conventions**

The citation system used in this thesis is MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) style.

Selection, like management, is not an exact science; if it were then the archivist might have exact criteria and theorems to guide him. Nor is selection solely an art. It can be argued as more of an art than a science, but it is preferable to consider selection as a craft, practiced to achieve certain ends with suitable criteria or guidelines to meet these ends.<sup>1</sup>

The process of sound philosophizing, to my mind, consists mainly in passing from those obvious, vague, ambiguous things, that we feel quite sure of, to something precise, clear, definite, which by reflection and analysis we find is involved in the vague thing that we started from, and is, so to speak, the real truth of which that vague thing is a sort of shadow.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Helen H. Harrison and Rolf F. Schuurmsma, *The Archival Appraisal of Sound Recordings and Related Materials. A RAMP Study with Guidelines* (Paris: General Information Programme and UNISIST, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 1987), 27.

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Russell, 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', *The Monist*, 28.4 (1918), 495-527, (497-8).

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Chapter summary**

The proposition of this thesis is to explore a key concept in archival theory and practice, namely the value of archives. The underlying principle is that by drawing upon ideas from outside of the archival discipline – from axiology – this concept can be examined in an innovative and reflective manner. Ideas about the value of archives underpin archival theories about appraisal, arrangement and description; they also inform wider perceptions about the importance of recordkeeping and the significance of a society's culture.

This chapter introduces the main themes of this study and details the rationale behind it. The importance of theory to inform practice is outlined, followed by an explication of the research questions of the study. This chapter also presents an analysis of differing views about archives and records terminology as exemplified in the Life Cycle and Records Continuum approaches to recordkeeping, as well as an overview of developments in archival theory, which have been in response to its problematizing by postmodernism and technological developments. This chapter describes the methodological approach and literature review undertaken by the author, and concludes with a summary of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

### **1.2. Justification of topic**

The evaluation of archives is a core activity for archivists. Archivists make value judgements when they decide what records to keep and what to destroy, and in how they choose to arrange and catalogue those records. These judgements, or evaluations, lie at the very heart of what archivists do; the attribution of value upon archives determines, to a very large extent, their survival and facilitates their access for future generations. Unsurprisingly, therefore, within the professional archival literature can be found a proliferation of usage of the term 'value'.<sup>3</sup> The word is often linked with other qualifying terms, including 'historical', 'legal', 'evidential' and 'informational'. However, meanings for all of these terms remain at best ill-defined and, at worse, confusing. Few writers critically examine the theoretical

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, "'Nothing Is The Same As Something Else": Significant Properties and Notions of Identity and Originality', *AS*, 10.2 (2010), 85-116, (100).

concepts behind such terms and their use within the archival profession. To give one example, in the 1950s, American archivist, William D. McCain, recognized that archivists have a ‘blind spot’ when it comes to thinking about the value of records.<sup>4</sup> McCain added that it is seen as a waste of time to debate the issue because they regard it as self-evident and elementary. He was one of the first archivists to publicly question what is meant by ‘historical value’, stating: ‘if we expect men to consider records of value because we say that they have “historical value”, we must have men who know what history is, why history is useful and that history is interesting’.<sup>5</sup>

Studying one of the authoritative Glossaries available to archivists illustrates the problem: ‘**value**’ is defined in terms of records as ‘The usefulness, significance, or worth of something to an individual or organisation’, with a list of narrower terms as follows: ‘administrative value, archival value, artifactual value, associated value, continuing value, enduring value, ephemeral value, evidential value, fair market value, fiscal value, historical value, informational value, intrinsic value, legal value, monetary value, operational value, permanent value, primary value, secondary value’.<sup>6</sup> Each of these so-called ‘narrower’ terms has a separate entry in the *Glossary*; some are synonyms, others antonyms, and many are explained with further reference to other terms or *definientia*.<sup>7</sup> For example, if the archivist looks up ‘**archival value**’ she is told that synonyms include ‘**permanent value, continuing value, enduring value**, and, mostly outside the United States, **indefinite value**’; related terms include ‘primary value’ and ‘secondary value’; and the definition itself reads: ‘The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain,

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<sup>4</sup> William D. McCain, ‘The Value of Records’, Presidential Address read at the Annual Society of American Archivists’ Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, 27 October 1952, published in *AA*, 16.1 (1953), 3-12.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. Twenty years later, Maynard Brichford implored the American archival profession to undertake the same self-reflection as historians, stating ‘We know what the archivist does and how he does it but are only dimly aware of the rationale behind many of his activities’, Maynard Brichford, ‘Historians and Mirrors: A Review Essay’, *AA*, 36.3 (1973), 397-402, (402). Later archivists have continued to comment on the lack of critical self-examination in the profession at large, notably, Terry Cook, ‘What is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future of the Paradigm Shift’, *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 17-63 and Richard J. Cox, ‘Professionalism and Archivists in the United States’, *AA*, 49.3 (1986), 229-47, *inter alia*.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: SAA, 2005), 398. Use of bold in the original.

<sup>7</sup> In linguistics, a *definiens* (pl. *definientia*) is a word used to define another word. Every *definiens* used here is a term whose meaning is already commonly understood, therefore one tends to arrive at a vague lexicon definition, leading to circularity and misinterpretation.

justifying their continued preservation'.<sup>8</sup> To go a step further and try to identify the meaning of one of these explanatory terms, the archivist looks up 'historical information' but finds that this is not an entry in the *Glossary*; however, '**historical value**' is, and it is defined as: 'The importance or usefulness of records that justifies their continued preservation because of the enduring administrative, legal, fiscal, or evidential information they contain; archival value'.<sup>9</sup> The lack of a clear distinction between 'historical information' and 'historical value' implies that the terms are used synonymously; 'historical value' is defined both in terms of, and contrasted with, the other types of value (administrative, legal, fiscal and evidential).<sup>10</sup> Rather than clarifying the terminology, the *Glossary* thus adds further confusion as the archivist ends up in an infinite regress of definitions and is none the wiser as to what any of these concepts really mean.<sup>11</sup> Not to mention the inconsistent use of other terms such as 'usefulness', 'significance', 'quality', 'worth' and 'importance' – none of which are further articulated in the *Glossary*. Another archivist has commented, 'the terms "historical value", "research value", and "archival value" mean practically nothing, because in fact all three just add an adjective to the word "value" without in any way illuminating it'.<sup>12</sup> The archival profession, whilst acknowledging the importance of conceptions of value within archival practice and theory, fails to explain coherently what such conceptions denote.<sup>13</sup>

The archival literature focuses on the concept of archival value in terms of archival appraisal; appraisal theory is therefore a natural starting point for this thesis.

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<sup>8</sup> Pearce-Moses, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>10</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 2, this is especially problematic as some appraisal theories specifically draw a distinction between 'information' and 'evidence' as a basis for archival evaluation.

<sup>11</sup> The *Glossary* obfuscates further by pointing out that 'historic', meaning 'significance', should be distinguished from 'historical' which 'implies nothing more than age'. Pearce-Moses, 191.

<sup>12</sup> Terry Eastwood, 'How Goes It With Appraisal?', *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 111-21, (115).

<sup>13</sup> The problems of nomenclature have long been recognized by some writers, including Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Early attempts by the International Council on Archives to formulate a *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* in 1964 were furiously debated and questioned by some British archivists who accused the ICA of attempting to make the usage of certain terms 'sound grander or a little more professional and technical than they are' and of attempting to 'normalize' terminology, *Archives*, 7 (1965), 93, 58. More recently, the general difficulty of definitions has been explored by Geoffrey Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations', *AA*, 70.2 (2007), 315-43 and 'Rising to the level of a record? Some thoughts on records and documents', *Records Management Journal*, 21.1 (2011), 8-27. See also Bjorn Lindh, 'Accomplishing the Unfeasible: Defining and Describing Concepts in Archival Theory', in *The Principle of Provenance. Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993*, ed. by Kerstin Abukhanfusa and Jan Sydbeck (Sweden: Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Riksarkivet 10, 1993), 25-32.

Anne J. Gilliland has commented that appraisal 'is one of the most prominent examples in the archival field of how conceptual frameworks can and should both inform and develop out of practice'.<sup>14</sup> Yet, perhaps reflecting a continuing dichotomy between theory and practice within the professional archival community, many articles that discuss value tend to do so within the limited practical concerns of appraisal programmes with a focus on processes and operational models.<sup>15</sup> If theory appears at all, it is usually in the form of an unquestioning quotation from the writings of archival luminaries such as Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1882-1961) or Theodore R. Schellenberg (1903-1970). The practice of archival appraisal varies greatly from institution to institution and can often vary between individual archivists at a single institution. There is a whole range of possible appraisal methodologies to choose from, including Jenkinsonian Integrity of the Evidence Approach, Schellenberg's Informational and Evidential Model, Functional Analysis, Documentation Strategy, Content Analysis, Macro-appraisal, Use Analysis and The Minnesota Method.<sup>16</sup> Each methodology is underpinned by a different theoretical approach, or at least, a different interpretation of the particular theoretical approach, to archives. These various approaches have resulted from attempts to deal with the challenges of archival appraisal, notably concerns from the mid-twentieth century about the sheer volume of modern records and, into the twenty-first century, trepidation about the advent of digital records. This thesis will not detail the various

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<sup>14</sup> Anne J. Gilliland, 'Archival appraisal: practicing on shifting sands', in *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*, ed. by Caroline Brown (London: Facet Publishing, 2014), 31-62, (43).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Margaret J. Dixon, 'Beyond Sampling: Returning to Macroappraisal for the Appraisal and Selection of Case Files', *AS*, 5 (2005), 285-313; Catherine A. Bailey, 'Turning Macro-appraisal decisions into Archival Holdings: Crafting Function-based Terms and Conditions for the Transfer for Archival Records', *Archivaria*, 61 (2006), 147-179; Doris J. Malkmus, 'Documentation Strategy: Mastodon or Retro-Success?', *AA*, 71.2 (2008), 384-409; Courtney C. Mumma, Glenn Dingwall and Sue Bigelow, 'A First Look at the Acquisition and Appraisal of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Fond: or, SELECT \* FROM VANOC\_Records AS Archives WHERE Value = "true"', *Archivaria*, 72 (2011), 93-122.

<sup>16</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London: Lund Humphries, 1937); Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1956); Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Lanham, MD: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1998); Helen Willa Samuels, 'Who Controls the Past', *AA*, 49.2 (1986), 109-124; Gerald F. Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: SAA, 1993); Terry Cook, 'Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal', in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. by Barbara L. Craig (Ontario: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38-70; Mark A. Greene, '"The Surest Proof": A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal', *Archivaria*, 45 (1998), 127-169; Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels, 'Documentation With Attitude: A Pragmatist's Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records', in *The Records of American Business* ed. by James M. O'Toole (Chicago: SAA, 1997), Ch. 7.

methodologies on offer but will instead examine the, often competing, theories that support them. The author takes an opposite stance to writers such as John Roberts or Lester Cappon who believed ‘high-falutin’ archive theory’ to be a ‘rather superfluous and unpromising diversion’.<sup>17</sup> Instead, the author follows the approach of Preben Mortensen by linking theory and practice together as co-dependents.<sup>18</sup> The author agrees with Mortensen that although it is possible to carry out the practice without articulating its supporting theory, this can result in ‘blind engagement’.<sup>19</sup> Rather, it is the aim of this thesis to explore ‘[the] self-conscious reflection on a particular practice in order to bring to light the presuppositions unconsciously assumed in that practice’.<sup>20</sup>

Gilliland asserted that appraisal is ‘an example of the ways in which the archival field, consciously and subliminally, has responded to wider intellectual and social movements and the value systems they have promoted’.<sup>21</sup> In this thesis the author will examine the intellectual frameworks in which appraisal theories have developed, in an attempt to better understand and articulate the different influences that have shaped professional archival theory. However, the author will not limit her study to appraisal theory. Archival appraisal is one of several examples which will be used to illustrate the issues surrounding the concept of archival value. The author will also explore other areas of the archival literature that involve concepts of archival value, namely: archival arrangement and description theory. In doing so, she will demonstrate that, although the term ‘value’ is rarely used explicitly in these theoretical areas, they are nonetheless implicitly shaped within an evaluative framework.<sup>22</sup>

A number of recent writers have begun to question and challenge established archival theory, particularly in the areas of appraisal and value conceptions of archives and records.<sup>23</sup> Two writers in particular, Shauna McRanor and Brien

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<sup>17</sup> John W. Roberts, ‘Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving’, *AA*, 50.1 (1987), 66-75, (75).

<sup>18</sup> Preben Mortensen, ‘The Place of Theory in Archival Practice’, *Archivaria*, 47 (1999), 1-26.

<sup>19</sup> Mortensen, 17.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Gilliland, 43.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Terry Cook, ‘Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts’, *AS*, 1.1 (2001), 3-24; Richard J. Cox, ‘The End of Collecting: Towards a New Purpose for Archival Appraisal’, *AS*, 2.3-4 (2002), 287-309; Robyn Sloggett, ‘Valuing Significance or Signifying Value? Culture in a Global Context’, *AM*, 33 (2005), 110-229; Keli Rylance, ‘Archives and the



Brothman, have drawn upon ideas from the philosophical discipline of axiology to explore notions of archival value.<sup>24</sup> Their work, together with genuine concerns as a practitioner about which records should be kept, led the author to believe that the potential interplay between the two disciplines merits a more substantial exploration.

Axiology is a sub-branch of Ethics and deals specifically with notions of value and value judgements, or evaluations. The basic premise of axiology is that there might be something different going on when we talk about something as being good (in the sense of ‘being valued’), as compared to a type of descriptive or factual statement such as ‘it is raining’.<sup>25</sup> Axiology is concerned with trying to answer the following questions:

- what sort of property or characteristic of something means that it ‘has value’ or ‘is of value’?;
- is having value an objective or a subjective matter – does the value reside in the object or is it about how we feel about it?; and
- what things have value or are valuable?<sup>26</sup>

These are also pertinent questions to ask about records because they help to inform the processes behind the creation of archives. Archives are not formed by accident, there is a purpose and a design behind the formation (whether it is articulated or not); and the decision to keep (or destroy) records is justified by the responses to these questions.<sup>27</sup>

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Intangible’, *Archivaria*, 62 (2006), 103-20; Mark A. Greene, ‘The Power of Archives: Archivists’ Values and Value in the Postmodern Age’, *AA*, 72.1 (2007), 343-57; Jennifer Meehan, ‘The Archival Nexus: Rethinking the Interplay of Archival Ideas About the Nature, Value and Use of Records’, *AS*, 9.3-4 (2009), 157-64.

<sup>24</sup> Brien Brothman, ‘Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice’, *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 78-100 and Shauna McRanor ‘A Critical Analysis of Intrinsic Value’, *AA*, 59 (1996), 400-11. Additionally, Geoffrey Yeo refers to axiological approaches in “‘Nothing is the same as something else’: significant properties and notions of identity and originality”, *AS*, 10.2 (2010), 85-116. Joy Thomas also discusses axiological concepts of value in her unpublished MA thesis, *What is the value of archives?* (UCL: School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> A more detailed examination of axiological notions of goodness and value will follow in Chapter 5. Here, the author will also discuss the so-called ‘fact-value distinction’ which is crucial to understanding moral theories of the mid- to late-twentieth century.

<sup>26</sup> Prof Nicholas Dent, ‘Value’, in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 895.

<sup>27</sup> This statement should not be read as an outright rejection of Jenkinson’s concept of the ‘natural accumulation of archives’, but instead that the author believes that a nuanced approach, which acknowledges the role of individual agency, is more appropriate. These different approaches will be explored further in Chapters 2 and 3.

Ideas about who might be responsible for the formation of archives are also linked to philosophical questions about value. There are several roles that can be identified as having the potential responsibility for forming archives. For example, archivists may practice appraisal but records creators originate the record in the first place and can determine whether or not the record survives. These two roles can have different objectives and priorities that underpin their appraisal choices, and dilemmas can arise when they disagree. Which, if either, should make the final decision? Jenkinson believed it was the responsibility of the records creator alone, whilst other archival theorists have argued that is the archivist who is best-placed to do appraisal.<sup>28</sup> Others also have a role to play – one researcher using certain archives for a particular research project may regard them as valuable, whereas another individual may have no regard for them whatsoever. Decisions about whether or not to keep archives may therefore be influenced by the perceived value that users will make of them. Society itself may also have a large part to play, in the sense that all of these positions (archivist, creator and user) exist within a social context with all its contingency.

Conceptions of a wider, public value of archives also give a broader context to the issue of archival value. In the twenty-first century it has become commonplace to talk about the value and significance of a society's culture, and especially about the perceived public value of such culture.<sup>29</sup> The term 'culture' is not itself without difficulties and contested meanings,<sup>30</sup> but it is generally recognized within a Western context to include things like library and museum collections, performing arts such as theatre and ballet, historic buildings, and archives. In the last thirty years justification for the public subsidy of these types of cultural activity in the UK has shifted from a democratization of culture – access for all and the civilizing effect of

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<sup>28</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*; Maynard J. Brichford, *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning* (Chicago: SAA, 1977)

<sup>29</sup> The term 'significance' has recently come to the fore in allied fields such as archaeology and built heritage; it is the preferred term used by UNESCO to judge the importance of world heritage sites and has more recently been used in connection with the Memory of the World Programme which seeks to preserve the world's documentary heritage collections, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/> [accessed 4 August 2013] Moreover, the terms 'significance' and 'value' are often used synonymously in the archive literature, see for example, Pearce-Moses; and *Intrinsic Value in Archival Materials*, National Archives and Records Service Staff Information Paper 21 (Washington DC: NARS, 1982). See also Chapter 4, section 4.3.

<sup>30</sup> Dave O'Brien, *Measuring the Value of Culture: A Report to the Department of Culture Media and Sport* (UK: AHRC, ESRC and DCMS, 15 Dec 2010), 11. Report available online: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7660.aspx> [accessed 4 August 2013].

culture – to a progressive attempt to justify culture on economic grounds.<sup>31</sup> Archives have increasingly been viewed by some as being part of a larger public cultural policy that can be measured in terms of social and economic impact. Whilst this thesis will not examine issues of UK public policy in detail, the author nonetheless acknowledges that such issues form an important background context to this study and, in particular, have contributed to the formation of a concept of archival value that can be defined, and in which the value can be measured. This thesis will investigate whether such a concept is valid.

The discussion so far has implied that there is something valuable about archives, but that different groups of interested parties may disagree on exactly what it is. There is an implicit assumption that keeping archives is a good thing to do because the archives have intrinsic value, even if there are different methods that can be applied to discover what that value is.<sup>32</sup> However, the assumption that there is something intrinsically valuable about archives is not without its critics in the archival literature.<sup>33</sup> Equally, some philosophers have argued that there is no such thing as intrinsic value.<sup>34</sup> The phrase commonly used is that ‘value is in the eye of the beholder’ – in other words, that there may not be anything intrinsically valuable about the object, the value may not reside in the object itself, but instead be a projection onto the object by an individual or a community. Value is thus viewed as an individual’s subjective opinion, or, in the words of the philosopher David Hume

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<sup>31</sup> Examples include: Charles Landry, Lesley Green, Francois Matarasso and Franco Bianchini, *The Art of Regeneration: Urban Renewal Through Cultural Activity* (Stroud, UK: Comedia, 1996). Report available online: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/indonesia-charleslandry-artofregeneration.pdf>; Michelle Reeve, *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts* (UK: Arts Council, 2002). Report available online: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/measuring-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-the-arts/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/measuring-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-the-arts/) and John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value. How Culture Has Become A Tool of Government Policy* (London: Demos, 2004). Report available online: <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/CapturingCulturalValue.pdf> [all accessed 4 August 2013]. Although the UK is the focus for this particular aspect of the study, reference will also be made to similar developments elsewhere (see Chapter 4).

<sup>32</sup> For example, *Intrinsic Value in Archival Materials*, National Archives and Records Service Staff Information Paper 21; Harrison and Schuursma. In the philosophy literature there are also writers who advocate concepts of intrinsic value including G. E. Moore, W. D. Ross, Franz Brentano, John O’Neill, and Thomas Hurka. Some of their work will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Brien Brothman, ‘Orders of Value’ and Verne Harris, *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa* (Pretoria: National Archives of South Africa, 2000).

<sup>34</sup> For example, the works of John Dewey, William James, A. J. Ayer, Charles L. Stevenson and R. M. Hare.

(1711-1776), ‘a matter of sentiment and taste’.<sup>35</sup> This view contends that attempts to search for value should not seek to discover what is special about the particular object of value, but rather should try to understand the motivations of those doing the valuing. Following Hume, other philosophers have put forward competing theories that discount notions of intrinsic value, however, there remains little consensus within the field.<sup>36</sup> In the author’s view some of the most persuasive arguments attempt a middle-ground, admitting that whilst everything, including value, is ultimately shaped by social contingency, there can still be an objectivity, which makes value judgements capable of being right or wrong; and that there can be such a thing as intrinsic value.<sup>37</sup> One possibility is that evaluation may be a form of social behaviour as human beings behave variably but within fixed frameworks of reference or social mores.<sup>38</sup> These differing accounts of the possible loci of value will be explored further in the later chapters of the thesis.

### 1.3. Research questions

In the light of the issues discussed in section 1.2., the primary research questions of this study are:

- is there something intrinsically valuable about archives? Does such a thing as ‘archival value’ exist?;
- if so, can we define what this value is?; and
- can we measure it?

In considering whether a concept of archival value really exists, and in what form, further questions will also be considered regarding how and when value is ascribed to archives, and by whom. Using axiology as a framework, the thesis will explore what sort of property or characteristic of archives gives value and will consider

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary’. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Appendix 1 Concerning Moral Sentiment, Section 1. Reprint of the 1777 edition, available online: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) [accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2013].

<sup>36</sup> Michael J. Zimmerman, ‘Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2010 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/> [accessed 3 August 2013].

<sup>37</sup> This is a view held by Hilary Putnam and Risieri Frondizi, and will be explored further in Chapter 5.

<sup>38</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1988); Robin Attfield, *A Theory of Value and Obligation* (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd., 1987).

whether archival value resides in the records, or in the subjective judgement of the valuers, or, perhaps, somewhere in-between.

#### **1.4. Some definitions: life cycle and records continuum**

As section 1.2. has indicated, the issue of terminology in archival theory is problematic. Nuanced differences in meaning between terms such as ‘record’ and ‘archive’ can be significant and can affect the way in which we might consider the value of such terms. In order to evaluate something one has to understand what that something is and be able to distinguish it from another thing. To facilitate the exploration of a conception of archival value one must be able to define exactly what archives are, and what they are not. One commentator has noted that, ‘though many archival concepts may be approximately the same, the terms used to represent the various concepts differ from one language area and administrative context to another’.<sup>39</sup> This can be evidenced through two distinct approaches, which developed in the twentieth century: the Life Cycle Model<sup>40</sup> and the Records Continuum Model.<sup>41</sup> These models have affected not only the management of records and archives, but also the ways in which the terms are defined.

The Life Cycle Model was developed by the US National Archives in the 1940s, based on the work of Emmett J. Leahy and Philip C. Brooks; and subsequently reinforced by the writings of Theodore R. Schellenberg.<sup>42</sup> The model represents the life of a record as analogous to that of a living organism, with distinct stages from creation to final disposition. Different models of varying complexity exist, but all include phases of creation, use and disposition.<sup>43</sup> When studying to become an archivist, the author was taught to think of the model in terms of a Christian life-journey, whereby the records are born, live the first stage of their life being used by the records creator and then are appraised by the archivist for the next stage of their existence: to go either to heaven (the archival repository), to hell

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<sup>39</sup> Lindh, ‘Accomplishing the Unfeasible’, 25.

<sup>40</sup> Philip Coolidge Brooks, ‘The Selection of Records for Preservation’, AA, 3.4 (1940), 221-234.

<sup>41</sup> Jay Atherton, ‘From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship’, *Archivaria*, 21 (1985/86), 43-51; *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and the Australian Archives First Fifty Years* ed. by Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Victoria, Australia: Ancora Press, Monash University, 1994).

<sup>42</sup> Emmett J. Leahy, ‘Reductions in Public Records’, AA, 3.1 (1940), 13-38; Brooks, ‘The Selection of Records’; Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*.

<sup>43</sup> Pearce-Moses, 232.

(destruction) or to purgatory (the records centre and ongoing review). As well as identifying who was responsible for the records at each stage, the separate stages also defined the records themselves as being current, semi-current or archival. In comparison, the Records Continuum Model emphasizes the whole extent of a record's existence. The earliest continuum concepts were promoted by Australian National Archivist, Ian Maclean in the 1950s and the label 'continuum' was applied retrospectively by Canadian archivist Jay Atherton in 1985.<sup>44</sup> But it was not until the mid-1990s that the Records Continuum Model was formally articulated by Australian archival theorist, Frank Upward.<sup>45</sup> In the Records Continuum Model the various characteristics of a record are seen as overlapping so that recordkeeping and archiving activities are combined rather than viewed as separate activities that take place at different times. There are no separate phases in a record's existence, but rather creation, use and appraisal are seen as recurring and integrated processes.<sup>46</sup>

Both models continue to have supporters and critics within the archival community. Some archivists have argued that the Life Cycle Model is ill-suited for twenty-first century recordkeeping as it cannot deal satisfactorily with digital records which challenge notions of fixed stages in a record's existence.<sup>47</sup> In response, other archivists have re-conceived the Life Cycle Model as being essential for the control and maintenance of digital records and archives. The most well-known example is the work undertaken by the InterPARES Project, at the University of British Columbia in Canada.<sup>48</sup> Although some archivists have questioned whether

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<sup>44</sup> Atherton, 43-51.

<sup>45</sup> *The Records Continuum* ed. by McKemmish and Piggott. See also Frank Upward, 'Structuring the Records Continuum – Part One: Postcustodial Principles and Properties', *AM*, 24 (1996), 268-85 and 'Structuring the Records Continuum – Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping', *AM*, 25 (1997), 10-35.

<sup>46</sup> Sue McKemmish, 'The Archives', in *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society, Topics in Australasian Library and Information Studies No. 24*, ed. by Sue McKemmish, Frank Upward, Barbara Reed and Michael Piggott (Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, 2005), 159-95.

<sup>47</sup> For example, Angelika Menne-Haritz, 'What Can Be Achieved With Archives?' in *The Concept of the Record*, ed. by Erik Norberg (Stockholm: Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 4, 1998), 11-25; David Bearman, 'An Indefensible Bastion: Archives as a Repository in the Electronic Age', in *Archival Management of Electronic Records*, ed. by David Bearman (Pittsburgh: Archive and Museum Informatics, 1991), 14-24; Greg O'Shea, 'The Medium Is Not The Message: Appraisal of Electronic Records by Australian Archives', *AM*, 22.1 (1994), 68-93.

<sup>48</sup> Heather MacNeil, 'Providing Grounds for Trust: Developing Conceptual Requirements for the Long-Term Preservation of Authentic Electronic Records I', *Archivaria*, 50 (2000), 52-78 and 'Providing Grounds for Trust: Developing Conceptual Requirements for the Long-Term Preservation of Authentic Electronic Records II', *Archivaria*, 54 (2002), 24-58. See also *Authentic Records in the*

traditional archival theory and practice applies to digital records, an increasing majority have argued that it remains more relevant than ever, albeit perhaps in need of minor tweaking in some areas to meet the new challenges.<sup>49</sup> Many authors have argued that what technology has done is broaden the concept of archives and records and the ways in which they are created, selected and preserved.<sup>50</sup>

Another challenge to traditional archive and recordkeeping has been postmodernist theory. Postmodernism is a late twentieth-century set of critical practices, which have pervaded many aspects of society, yet is also extremely difficult to define with certainty.<sup>51</sup> One commentator perhaps speaks for many when he described how:

The more I try to tie down post-modernism, the less coherent it seems. I see 'it' happening all around me – in architecture, art, literature, philosophy, fashion and music. There is, of course, a growing literature by cultural analysts seeking to capture the new essence and create a theory out of the disparate events. [...] Yet somehow the growth of the style seems bigger than any individual analyst's attempts to characterize it. Ultimately it engulfs any attempt to fix it.<sup>52</sup>

Although the term 'postmodernism' was in use in the field of architecture from the 1950s, where it designated a move away from the 'modernist' design style, it first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition* by Jean-François Lyotard.<sup>53</sup> Linked with other concepts such as deconstructionism, hyperreality, post-structuralism and *différence*, postmodernism is often defined in the negative, as a phenomenon in which established concepts of coherence, meaning, authenticity, and truth are dissolved and what remains is a plurality of meanings, narratives, truths, where there is no certainty or stability, only

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*Electronic Age. Proceedings from an International Symposium* ed. by Luigi Sarno (Vancouver: InterPARES Project/Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> See Luciana Duranti, 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science, Part VI', *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 6-24; Terry Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Postmodern Era', *AM*, 22.2 (1994), 300-29; David Bearman, *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organisations* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1994).

<sup>50</sup> See Sarno; Norberg.

<sup>51</sup> Gary Aylesworth, 'Postmodernism', in Zalta (Summer 2013 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/postmodernism/> [accessed 3 August 2013].

<sup>52</sup> Ian Hodder, 'Post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-processual archaeology', in *The Meaning of Things. Material Culture and Symbolic Expression*, ed. by Ian Hodder (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 65.

<sup>53</sup> Aylesworth. See also *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*, ed. by J. O. Urmson and Jonathan Ree (London: Routledge, 1992).

flux.<sup>54</sup> As a result, postmodernism questioned the traditional approach to archive and recordkeeping that viewed truth, authenticity and integrity as being tangible concepts against which archives could be judged and evaluated.<sup>55</sup>

The impact of postmodernism on the archival profession can be seen in the writings of several archival theorists who have viewed postmodernist thinking as an opportunity to revitalize the profession and its mission. Some believe that postmodernism can provide a framework for archivists to deconstruct records and understand them as the cultural products of society;<sup>56</sup> others see it as an opportunity for ‘celebrating difference, multiple narratives, personal and local’;<sup>57</sup> and yet others as a source of power.<sup>58</sup> Whatever the varying views of individual thinkers towards specific aspects of postmodernist theory, there has nonetheless been a recognition by most that we cannot escape its general implications; in particular, that what and how we record is influenced by socio-cultural factors. Archivists, records creators and users are all part of society and therefore our behaviour is, to one extent or another, influenced by that society. No one and no thing exists in a vacuum. In the words of Eric Ketelaar, this means that ‘archiving is a “regime of practices” which varies in any given time and in any given place. People create, process, appraise and use archives, influenced consciously or unconsciously by cultural and social factors’.<sup>59</sup> This thesis will explore ideas about how archival value might be mediated, and even created, by social and cultural interaction with archives and records.

Although the Continuum Model was not developed as a result of postmodernism, many of its proponents argue that it works successfully within a postmodern paradigm because it allows for a broad conception of archives. At the core of the divergence between the two models is a distinction about the nature of archives. The Life Cycle approach distinguishes clearly between ‘records’ and

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<sup>54</sup> Aylesworth; Urmson and Ree; *Life After Postmodernism: Essays on Value and Culture*, ed. by John Fekete (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1988).

<sup>55</sup> As exemplified in the writings of Jenkinson in particular, but also others including J. L. Burke, Margaret Cross Norton and Ernst Posner. See also Rachel Hardiman, ‘Under the Influence: the impact of philosophy on archives and records management’, in Caroline Brown, ed., *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice* (London: Facet Publishing, 2014), 171-226.

<sup>56</sup> Carolyn Heald, ‘Is there room for archives in the postmodern world?’, *AA*, 59.1 (1996), 88-101.

<sup>57</sup> Terry Cook, ‘Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives’, *Archivaria* 51 (2001), 14-35 (31-2).

<sup>58</sup> Eric Ketelaar, ‘Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection’, *AS*, 2.3-4 (2002), 221-38; Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability and Social Justice* (Chicago: SAA, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> Eric Ketelaar, ‘Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives’, *AS*, 1.2 (2001), 131-41, (136).



‘archives’ – a distinction that can be traced back to US archivist Theodore R. Schellenberg. Schellenberg believed that in order to be archives, records ‘must have been created or accumulated to accomplish some purpose’ and ‘must be preserved for reasons other than those for which they were created or accumulated’.<sup>60</sup> Schellenberg’s views contrasted with the ideas of English archival theorist, Sir Hilary Jenkinson, who had laid the emphasis instead on preservation for the creator’s own information and in his own custody.<sup>61</sup> In Jenkinson’s view, the chief responsibility of the archivist was to ensure the line of unbroken custody, with any subsequent needs of researchers being secondary. Jenkinson thus defined archives as records that had the archival quality of the integrity of this unbroken custody, whose features of impartiality and authenticity were integral to the circumstances of their creation and care.<sup>62</sup> Writing some twenty years later, Schellenberg discounted the reliance on custody, arguing that it was a futile exercise when dealing with the bulk and variety of modern records. He instead emphasized research use as an essential characteristic of archives.<sup>63</sup> Schellenberg established two distinct types of value – primary value, which is the use made of records by the creator – and secondary value, which is the use made of archives by researchers.<sup>64</sup> As a result, it can be argued that Schellenberg created a distinction between records and archives which was based on these different values. Whereas Jenkinson can be perceived as locating the establishment of value as solely during current use, before a record reached the archival repository, Schellenberg allowed that value could be attributed after current use, thus projecting it into the possibilities of future use.<sup>65</sup> The resulting dualism of archives (and/or records) – their use for administrative and legal purposes and their use for historical, cultural and scholarly purposes – continues to be a sustaining concept upon which much contemporary archival theory is constructed. As will be explored further in later chapters, this perceived dualism also has a significant impact on the search for a concept of archival value.

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<sup>60</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-3

<sup>63</sup> Richard Stapleton, ‘Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison’, *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 75-85; Reto Tschan, ‘A Comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal’, *AA*, 65.2 (2002), 176-95.

<sup>64</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 133.

<sup>65</sup> Ciaran B. Trace, ‘On or Off the Record: Notions of Value in the Archive’, in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, ed. by Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, ABC-Clio, 2010), 47-68, (56).

In comparison, the Continuum Model makes no strict division between 'archives' and 'records'. In fact the various elements in the Continuum are by definition indeterminate, as Sue McKemmish, a leading proponent of the model, explained:

In Australia and North America, the use of the terms 'records' and 'archives' to refer to current archival documents and archival documents selected for preservation respectively has created a distracting division within the recordkeeping profession between records managers and archivists. The unifying concept of the archival document encompasses both records and archives. It directs attention to the continuum of processes involved in managing the record of a transaction so that it retains its evidentiary quality. [...] The effective creation and management of archival documents are critical to their use and the role they play in governing relationships in society over time and space.<sup>66</sup>

By introducing an all-encompassing term of 'archival document', the Continuum Model attempts to transcend the strict boundaries adhered to by the Life Cycle Model. The Continuum Model thus allows for a broad conception of archives, which is particularly in tune with postmodern notions about the plurality of meanings and narratives.<sup>67</sup>

However, despite this seeming advantage of the Continuum approach, some contemporary archivists have sought to make the Life Cycle Model successfully work for twenty-first century archives. Although much of the inspiration behind the Life Cycle Model can be found in the work of Schellenberg, many contemporary supporters of the approach have revisited the theories of Jenkinson in an attempt to bridge the dualistic gap of primary and secondary values and to successfully manage records of all formats in a postmodern world.<sup>68</sup> For example, Terry Cook, has argued that 'post-modern sensibilities do not mean we are abandoning archival principles,

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<sup>66</sup> Sue McKemmish, 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A Continuum of Responsibility', originally published in *Proceedings of the Records Management Association of Australia 14<sup>th</sup> National Convention, 15-17 September 1997* (Perth: RMAA, 1997). Online version available: <http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuum-smckp2.html> [accessed 4 August 2013].

<sup>67</sup> Tom Nesmith, 'Re-Exploring the Continuum, Rediscovering Archives', *AM*, 36.2 (2008), 34-53; *Currents of Archival Thinking*.

<sup>68</sup> For example, Luciana Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', *AA*, 57.2 (1994), 328-44; Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds'; Richard J. Cox, *Managing Records as Evidence and Information* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2001); Tschan; Jonathan Furner, 'Conceptual Analysis: A Method for Understanding Information as Evidence and Evidence as Information', *AS*, 4.3-4 (2004), 233-65; Frank Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: SAA, 2005), 23-36.

but [are] rather reconceiving our traditional Jenkinsonian guardianship of evidence from a physical to a conceptual framework'.<sup>69</sup>

It is against this problematic background of the various conceptions of archives and records that the author has undertaken her exploration of notions of archival value. This brief discussion has demonstrated that terms such as 'archive' and 'record' are not simply empty labels but convey explicit and implicit meanings depending on how they are used, and by whom, within the archival literature. There is an additional problem because the noun 'archive' in the English language is unusual as both the singular and plural forms can mean the same thing.<sup>70</sup> 'Archive(s)' can commonly mean (i) a collection of documents or records; (ii) the place where they are kept; or (iii) the institution responsible for keeping them.<sup>71</sup> The author prefers to use the plural 'archives' throughout this thesis, and it should be understood in the sense of (i) above. Where senses (ii) or (iii) are intended, this will be made explicit. It is the aim of the author to explore conceptions of archival value in a way that transcends any particular approach to archive and recordkeeping. The author does not hold that there are strict boundaries between records and archives, as might be followed by a Life Cycle approach, but nor does she hold that records and archives are exactly the same. Many records are created but not all of these records are retained as archives.

Archival theorist Geoffrey Yeo has discussed the difficulties of definition, and has explored alternative terminology, in several articles.<sup>72</sup> Yeo has defined records as 'persistent representations of activities', whereby 'representations' are "things that stand for something else" and are usually assumed to have some kind of correspondence to the things they represent' and 'persistent' signifies a 'capacity to

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<sup>69</sup> Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds', 320.

<sup>70</sup> See *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*, ed. by Joyce M. Hawkins and Robert Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Similarly, the related adjective can also take two forms: 'archive' or 'archival'. Throughout this thesis, preference has been given to the latter, to avoid unnecessary confusion with the noun; except in cases of a direct quotation.

<sup>71</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*; see also Pearce-Moses. The author will use the term 'records' in preference to 'documents' throughout the thesis. However, both terms should be understood in their broadest possible sense, as components of archives. If a different sense is intended by a particular writer this will be noted.

<sup>72</sup> See in particular, Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (1)'; Geoffrey Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects', *AA*, 71.1 (2008), 118-43; Yeo, 'Nothing is the same as something else'; Geoffrey Yeo, 'Rising to the Level of a Record?'.

endure beyond the immediate circumstance leading to its creation'.<sup>73</sup> The author perceives two advantages of Yeo's definition – firstly, it avoids any reference to either the reasons for creating or for keeping the records, and, secondly, it is equally applicable to all types of record media. Therefore, the author's use of the term 'archives' throughout this thesis should be understood in a broadly similar sense; namely, as those persistent representations of activities that are capable of being preserved beyond the activity itself.

## 1.5. Methodology

The methodology employed in this thesis is Theory Derivation. Theory Derivation is based on the fairly straightforward proposal that ideas and concepts in one discipline can be used through a process of analogy to give new insight and explanations for phenomena in another discipline. Derivation employs analogy or metaphor in transposing and redefining a concept, statement or theory from one context to another; and can be applied to areas where no theory base exists or where existing theories are felt to have become outmoded, and new innovative perspectives are required.<sup>74</sup>

The methodology originates in Education Theory in the US in the 1960s.<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Steiner Maccia, George S. Maccia and Robert E. Jewett worked on several projects to develop value-open empirical theory for American education practice. Their method began with exploring concepts from other fields, in a process described as 'retroductive', and defined as 'the utilization of a point of view as a model for devising (education) theory'.<sup>76</sup> Maccia et al explained that there is no completely *a priori* way of knowing whether a given theory in another discipline can be used to solve problems in the discipline of interest, and they detail how 'the

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<sup>73</sup> Yeo, 'Concepts of Record (1)', 334, 337.

<sup>74</sup> Lorraine Olszewski Walker and Kay Coalson Avant, *Strategies for Theory Construction in Nursing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Connecticut: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1988), 25.

<sup>75</sup> *Construction of Educational Theory Models, US Department of Health, Education and Welfare Cooperative Research Project No. 1632*, ed. by Elizabeth Steiner Maccia, George S. Maccia and Robert E. Jewett (Ohio: The Ohio State University Research Foundation, 1963) and Elizabeth S. Maccia and George S. Maccia, *Development of Educational Theory Derived from Three Educational Models, Project No. 5-0638* (Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1966).

<sup>76</sup> Maccia et al, *Construction of Educational Theory Models*, iv. As far as the author is able to discover, the usage of the term 'retroduction' in this specific sense was invented by Maccia and has not been used in this way by subsequent theorists. Maccia's use of the term differs slightly from typical usage in the fields of logic and philosophy where the term is used interchangeably with 'abduction', to mean reasoning that accepts a conclusion on the grounds that it explains the available evidence.

formal theory as is may not be utilizable as a model. We may have to change it, and so construct what will be a model'.<sup>77</sup> Maccia et al described the technical stages of the process: 'Through retroduction, one devises characterizations – statements or theory about objects. Through deduction, one clarifies and completes such characterizations. Finally, through induction, one determines the objects falling within the range of the characterization. Retroduction devises, deduction explicates and induction evaluates'.<sup>78</sup>

The authors gave an example of this process as they explained that 'through the point of view from within the discipline of physiology, a theory of eye blinking, a conjecture or characterization of certain phenomena of the educational process, a theory of learning, was devised'.<sup>79</sup> The authors considered various physiological statements concerning eye blinking, e.g. that either the eyes are or are not covered by lids, and that blinking may be either reflexive or non-reflexive; and then they transposed these statements into an education context: either the student is distracted or attentive and the distraction may be either voluntary or involuntary.<sup>80</sup>

In the UK, Theory Derivation has been used primarily within Nursing Theory where it was extensively applied in the 1980s, at a time when the nursing profession was coming of age both as a practice-based profession and as a scholarly discipline.<sup>81</sup> In 1983, Lorraine Walker and Kay Avant adapted the work of Maccia et al, arguing that Derivation is a particularly useful means of building theory.<sup>82</sup> Walker and Avant described the methodology at length and gave practical examples of its application within the nursing milieu. According to Walker and Avant, the advantage of the methodology is that it is a relatively quick and easy way to obtain formal theory in the areas of interest; furthermore: it is an 'exciting exercise that requires the theorist to use creativity and imagination in seeing analogies from one field and modifying them for use in a new field'.<sup>83</sup> However, Walker and Avant identified two

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 43-5.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 33. See also Walker and Avant, 187.

<sup>81</sup> For example, E. H. Condon, 'Theory Derivation: Application to Nursing', *Journal of Nursing Education*, 25.5 (1986), 156-9; M. E. Wewers and E. R. Lenz, 'Relapse Among Ex-smokers: An Example of Theory Derivation', *Advanced Nursing Science*, 9.2 (1987), 44-53; P. Chally, 'Theory Derivation in Moral Development', *Nursing & Health Care*, 11.6 (1990), 302-6.

<sup>82</sup> Walker and Avant, 25.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 189.

disadvantages of the methodology, which must be taken into account. They stated that there is a danger that ‘novice theorists become so excited about their new generalizations that they fail to take into account any dissimilarities or dis-analogies present in the parent theory’.<sup>84</sup> Consideration must be given to these dis-analogies as they may also provide useful information for the new theory. The second disadvantage is more of a challenge, in that it requires the theorist to be familiar with other disciplines or fields of interest other than her own, as well as requiring a thorough understanding of her own field to be able to choose appropriate boundaries for the new theory.<sup>85</sup>

Although nursing theory may not immediately be one that is usually or naturally associated with archival theory, on examining the work of Walker and Avant, and other nursing theorists, it became apparent to the author that the differences between the two disciplines might not be so great as at first imagined, and even that there are arguably many parallels between them. For example, Walker and Avant wrote of the need for theory development within nursing as the profession came of age, not only as a practice-based profession but also as a scholarly discipline. They firmly believed in the benefits of a theoretical foundation for nursing and argued that a ‘commitment to practice based on sound reliable knowledge is intrinsic to the idea of a profession and practice discipline. Theories integrate aspects of practice and aid in making new and important discoveries to advance practice’.<sup>86</sup>

This statement is equally true for the archival profession. Since the 1980s, in the archival literature several writers have expressed a similar belief in the linkage between theory development and the establishment of the archival profession. For example, Frederick J. Stielow wrote about archivists requiring ‘a grander vision of archival theory as essential to professionalization, the building of a distinct knowledge base, and the unlimited prospects of a new Information Age’.<sup>87</sup> Heather MacNeil has also commented on the need for the debate and discussion of new ideas,

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>87</sup> Frederick J. Stielow, ‘Archival Theory Redux and Redeemed: Definitions and Context Toward a General Theory’, *AA*, 54.1 (1991), 14-27, (15). See also Mortensen.

especially conflicting ideas about archival theory, because such discussions ‘are constructive as a means of moving the profession forward’.<sup>88</sup>

A key aspect of Theory Derivation is its application in areas where current theory is thought to have become outmoded and new ideas and perspectives are required. In nursing practice in the 1980s, the traditional division between the concepts of medical, surgical, obstetrical, paediatric and psychiatric nursing began to break down as more became known about how developmental, environmental and psychological factors interact with the human body to produce disease and health. Walker and Avant argued that, as a result, a new perspective was required to classify nursing specialties.<sup>89</sup> A comparison can be drawn with archival practice which has undergone its own evolutions as practitioners fought to establish it as a discipline in its own right alongside history and librarianship.<sup>90</sup> The phrase ‘handmaiden to history’ was first coined in reference to the archaeology profession in the 1960s,<sup>91</sup> but since then there have been many debates within the archival community as to whether the phrase also applies to archivists. Early attempts to define an archivist’s role often compared and contrasted the role with either that of historians or librarians. The account is too rich to include in detail here, but a few illustrations should suffice: in the US the formation of an independent association for archivists in 1935, as a replacement for the specialized section within the American Historical Association, was a result of the acknowledgement that ‘there is somewhat of a conflict of interest between what historians want and archivists need’.<sup>92</sup> Hilary Jenkinson commented that ‘the Profession of Archivist may be said to have arrived’ in his inaugural lecture for a new course in Archive Administration at UCL in October 1947.<sup>93</sup> In the lecture, Jenkinson acknowledged the debt archivists owed to librarians and historians, before giving a lengthy description of all the different skills required by this new professional which included book-binding, palaeography,

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<sup>88</sup> Heather MacNeil, ‘Archival Theory and Practice: Between Two Paradigms’, *Archivaria*, 37 (1994), 6-20, (17).

<sup>89</sup> Walker and Avant, 65.

<sup>90</sup> See Elizabeth Shepherd, *Towards Professionalism? Archives and Archivists in England in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (UCL: School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, PhD in Archive Studies, 2004) for details of the establishment of the UK archive profession.

<sup>91</sup> The phrase was first used by archaeologist Ivor Noel Hume in an article entitled ‘Handmaiden to History’ in the *North Carolina Historical Review* (1964).

<sup>92</sup> Margaret Norton (1935), quoted by William F. Birdsall, ‘The Two Sides of the Desk: The Archivist and The Historian, 1909-1935’, *AA*, 38.2 (1975), 159-73, (169).

<sup>93</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *The English Archivist: A New Profession* (London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1948).

Medieval Latin, chemistry, architecture, engineering and fire-fighting, among others. In Canada too there was a recognition that the archival professional required ‘areas of knowledge and skills far beyond the traditionally allotted confines’.<sup>94</sup> The desire to create a separate, expanded skill-set for archivists, which set them apart from allied professions, continued through the twentieth century, often emphatically expressed such as in Felix Hull’s provocatively titled article ‘The Archivist Should Not Be A Historian’.<sup>95</sup> More recently, technological developments and postmodernist theory have challenged traditional archive and recordkeeping practice. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, these developments have led many to re-examine and challenge established archival theory.<sup>96</sup>

The final similarity identified by the author between archiving and nursing concerns the appropriateness of seeking inspiration from other disciplines. Much of the theory and practice in nursing overlaps with that of other disciplines, therefore looking outside of nursing to other fields is a logical step for the advancement of nursing theory. This view is substantiated by the work of other nursing theorists, for example, Barbara J. Stevens: ‘As an applied science, much of nursing’s theory is ‘borrowed’ from other disciplines’, and Suzie Hesook: ‘Nursing [...] has the responsibility to bring forth theories and knowledge developed in other fields’.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, Walker and Avant emphasized several times in their work that Derivation ‘is not limited to any discipline or phenomenon’.<sup>98</sup> They cited various examples of the cross-disciplinary possibilities of Theory Derivation, including the use of an analogy with submarine design and the concept of compartmentalizing to explain inconsistencies within mothers regarding parenting functions; and the application of the design and use of maps in geography to patients in primary care situations, where the patient is seen as the traveller and the nurse as a travel

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<sup>94</sup> Gordon Dodds, ‘The Compleat Archivist’, *Archivaria*, 1.1 (1975/76), 80-85.

<sup>95</sup> Felix Hull, ‘The Archivist Should Not Be A Historian’, *JSA*, 6.5 (1980), 253-259.

<sup>96</sup> See David Bearman, *Archival Methods, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 9* (Pittsburgh: Archive and Museum Informatics, 1989); Hugh A. Taylor, ‘Chip Monks at the Gate: The Impact of Technology on Archives, Libraries and the User’, *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 173-80; Steve Bailey, ‘Taking the Road Less travelled By: The Future of the Archives and Records Management Profession in the Digital Age’, *JSA*, 28.3 (2007), 117-24; Cook, ‘Mind Over Matter’; Francis X. Blouin Jr., ‘The Evolution of Archival Practice and the Origins of the Archival Divide in the Late Twentieth Century’, *COMMA*, 2005.1 – Wien 2004, (2005), 1-6; Yeo, ‘Concepts of Record (1)’.

<sup>97</sup> Barbara J. Stevens, *Nursing Theory Analysis, Application, Evaluation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1984) and Suzie Kim Hesook, *The Nature of Theoretical Thinking in Nursing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 2000).

<sup>98</sup> Walker and Avant, 126, 185.



information source, with both trying to get to a specific destination.<sup>99</sup> Another example is direct derivation from systems theory which was applied to several theories about nursing process in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>100</sup> Coincidentally, systems theory thinking about functions and processes has also been used by several archival theorists in recent years.<sup>101</sup> In parallel with nursing, the act of drawing upon other disciplines has been consistently practised by the archival profession; examples include law,<sup>102</sup> communications,<sup>103</sup> literary theory,<sup>104</sup> and archaeology.<sup>105</sup>

There is an existing precedent of the use of Theory Derivation within the archival field. Pekka Henttonen's 2007 published thesis from the University of Tampere used Theory Derivation as the methodology by which he explored how concepts in Speech Act Theory can elucidate discussions about the nature of records and archives.<sup>106</sup> Henttonen cited Walker and Avant as the basis for the methodology, which he described as 'an interdisciplinary framework to open up concepts in archival theory, to give new insight into what records and archives are and to provide new concepts for analysing them'.<sup>107</sup> Henttonen quoted directly from Walker and Avant to outline his methodological approach:

Theory derivation is the process of using analogy to obtain explanations or predictions about a phenomena in one field from the explanations or predictions in another field. Thus a theory (T<sup>1</sup>) from one field of interest (F<sup>1</sup>) offers some new insights to a theorist who

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 67, 71.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 185. Examples include the Adaptation Model conceived by Callista Roy and the Betty Neuman Health Care Systems Model.

<sup>101</sup> For example, Fiorella Foscarini, 'Understanding the context of records creation and use: 'Hard' versus 'Soft' approaches to records management', *AS*, 10.4 (2010), 389-407; Angelika Menne-Haritz, *Business Processes: An Archival Science Approach to Collaborative Decision Making, Records and Knowledge Management* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004); Mats Burell, 'Appraisal and Information Theory', *COMMA*, 2004.1 (2004), 55-61. See also Jenny Bunn's unpublished PhD thesis, *Multiple Narratives, Multiple Views: Exploring the Shift from Paper to Digital Archival Description* (UCL: Department of Information Studies, 2011); and Jenny Bunn, 'Questioning autonomy: an alternative perspective on the principles which govern archival description', *AS*, 14.1 (2014), 3-15.

<sup>102</sup> Heather MacNeil, 'Trusting Records in a Post Modern World', *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 36-47; Jennifer Meehan, 'Towards an Archival Concept of Evidence', *Archivaria*, 61 (2006), 127-46.

<sup>103</sup> Clark C. Elliot, 'Communication and Events in History: Toward a Theory for Documenting the Past', *AA*, 48.4 (1985), 357-68.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Brown, 'Records Acquisition Strategy and its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics' *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 34-56; Rachel Hardiman, 'En Mal d'archive: Postmodernist Theory and Recordkeeping', *JSA*, 30.1 (2009), 27-44.

<sup>105</sup> Hugh A Taylor, '"Heritage" Revisited: Documents as Artifacts in the Context of Museums and Material Culture', *Archivaria*, 40 (1995), 8-20.

<sup>106</sup> Pekka Henttonen, *Records, Rules and Speech Acts, Academic Dissertation University of Tampere Department of Information Studies* (Finland: University of Tampere Press, 2007).

<sup>107</sup> Henttonen, 25.

then moves certain content or structural features into his own field of interest (F<sup>2</sup>) to form a new theory (T<sup>2</sup>).<sup>108</sup>

Henttonen detailed the five steps in the Theory Derivation methodology, outlined by Walker and Avant, and which he also employed as subsections in his thesis structure: 1. becoming familiar with literature on the topic of interest, 2. reading widely in other fields for ideas, 3. selecting a parent theory for use in derivation, 4. identifying what content and/or structure from the parent theory is to be used, and 5. developing or redefining new statements from the content and/or structure of the parent theory in terms of the phenomenon of interest to the theorist.<sup>109</sup> Henttonen further explained that the methodology is an iterative process and that some or all of the steps can be repeated until an acceptable level of sophistication is attained. Henttonen also explained the difference between Theory Derivation and simply borrowing a theory, quoting again from Walker and Avant:

In theory derivation a whole set of interrelated concepts or a whole structure is moved from one field to another and modified to fit in the new field. When a theory is “borrowed” it is moved unchanged from one discipline to another.<sup>110</sup>

The cross-disciplinary approach of Theory Derivation is reflected in its migration from Education Theory to Nursing Theory, and more recently, to Archival Theory.

The methodological framework for this thesis is based on reading literature in both the fields of interest: archives, and the field from which the parent theory is derived: axiology. The literature consists primarily of published works in the English language, although some non-published sources have also been consulted. The personal knowledge of the author as a professional archivist for over sixteen years provided background information and a useful starting point for research into the archival literature. Professionally-recognized monographs and journals were supplemented by citation index searches on keywords (e.g. appraisal, value) and authors.<sup>111</sup> Philosophy Encyclopaedias and Dictionaries identified ‘classic’ works in

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<sup>108</sup> Walker and Avant, 163.

<sup>109</sup> Henttonen, 27; Walker and Avant, 165-6.

<sup>110</sup> Walker and Avant, 163-4.

<sup>111</sup> Additionally, the Australian Research Council – Excellence in Research in Australia Initiative has produced an internationally-recognized ranked listing of journals in the field of information and library studies: [http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era\\_2012/era\\_journal\\_list.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/era/era_2012/era_journal_list.htm) which the author used to identify key journals [accessed 1 May 2012].

the field of axiology. The author browsed monographs in the subject area for citations which led to specific works and authors. The author also undertook a systematic search of citation indexes for philosophical journal articles on keywords (e.g. intrinsic value, organic unity, commensurability, Moore) and authors.<sup>112</sup>

Henttonen stated that he had a kind of revelation, when he read the work of media theorist John Fiske relating to communication models, which led to his study.<sup>113</sup> In his justification for the relevance and application of speech act theory to archival theory, Henttonen cited other examples of references made to speech act theory within the archival literature before detailing which specific speech act theorists he planned to concentrate on for his study and the various ways in which their work can be applied to archival theory. In much the same way the author of this present thesis underwent a similar revelatory experience, when reading the work of philosopher G. E. Moore (1873-1958) and his ideas about intrinsic value. The author has been an archivist and records manager since 1997 and during her career has faced the practical challenges of archival appraisal and records selection. Ideas about the value of archives seem to go hand in hand with appraisal theory, and as has been previously discussed, this is reflected in much of the professional archival literature. Appraisal theory was therefore the starting point of this study. As the author began to read the archival literature extensively, it became apparent to her that there is a general lack of clarity about what is meant by the term 'value'. A desire to try to understand the concepts behind the term, led the author to philosophical concepts of value and to axiology. It was through exploring some of these concepts that the author realized that there are philosophical ideas about value that relate not only to appraisal but to other key tenets of archival theory, including provenance and *respect des fonds*. This thesis will seek to demonstrate that the concept of value therefore has a wider resonance in the archival field than has been previously examined.

## **1.6. Thesis outline**

### **Chapter 2. A chronology of the development of archival appraisal theory**

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<sup>112</sup> For example, the European Reference Index in Humanities (ERIH) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI).

<sup>113</sup> Henttonen, 28.

Chapter 2 represents the first step in Theory Derivation methodology, namely, becoming familiar with the literature in the topic of interest.<sup>114</sup> The chapter details the main approaches toward the valuation of archives taken by archival appraisal theorists, and follows a chronological exposition to demonstrate the influence and development of ideas. Each significant development, as widely discussed in the literature, and, arguably, accepted by the profession at large, is detailed including the context within which a given theory developed, its immediate impact and the subsequent evolution of the theory. The chapter is split into three sections – the early twentieth century, the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century. Within this chronological structure, it will be shown how key periods of development in archival appraisal took place within specific countries at different times, concentrating particularly on the UK and US, but also with reference to Canada and Australia. The chapter also shows how wider society impacts upon archival appraisal theory, often influencing the nature and direction of debates about archival value. The chapter argues that over the course of nearly one hundred years archival appraisal theory has shifted from a single dominant approach within a positivist frame of reference towards a multiplicity of appraisal theories that both reflect, and respond to, a postmodernist frame of reference.

### **Chapter 3. Value and the archival principle of provenance**

Chapter 3 continues the exploration of literature in the topic of interest by expanding the review of archival literature to include wider discussions about archival value other than appraisal. The chapter explores the archival principle of provenance, together with the related principles of *respect des fonds* and original order. The theorization and application of the principles have been primarily in approaches to archival arrangement and description, and this chapter examines the various interpretations of provenance taken by these approaches, and their implications for concepts of archival value. The chapter discusses in particular an interpretation of provenance which focuses on a concept of the archival *fonds* as an organic whole and explores some ideas about wholes and parts which have been influential in archival theory.

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<sup>114</sup> Henttonen, 27; Walker and Avant, 165-6.

## **Chapter 4. The evolution of archival theory: influences, impacts and underlying assumptions**

This chapter continues the first step of Theory Derivation methodology and begins to widen the perspective by considering the literature in other fields, including the cultural and built heritage, records management and information management.<sup>115</sup> Ideas from these fields are discussed with a particular focus on the evolution of archival theory as a whole, concentrating in particular on the ‘paradigm shift’ in archival thinking which took place at the end of the twentieth century. The author argues that a coalescence of specific factors during this period led to the opening-up of the archival profession to new ideas and theories from other disciplines. As a result, influences from different sectors began to significantly impact and contribute to ideas about the value of archives which informed archival theories of appraisal, description, and arrangement. The chapter explores some of the dominant theories of influence including perceptions of archives as giving an instrumental value to society through social and economic regeneration; the intrinsic value of archives as evidence for accountability and good governance; and the value of information as a commodity.

## **Chapter 5. Value in axiology literature**

This chapter develops the second step of Theory Derivation methodology: reading widely in other fields for ideas; and lays the foundations for step three in the methodology: the selection of a parent theory for use in derivation.<sup>116</sup> This chapter presents an overview of the philosophical discipline of axiology and outlines some of the main areas of debate within the discipline. Whilst it is impossible to describe all of the different theories and approaches that exist or have existed within axiology, this chapter summarizes those which have been particularly influential or long-standing within the discipline, and which have a particular relevance to discussions about archival value. A brief introduction to the historical development of axiology is followed by a more detailed exploration of several key themes within axiology, namely: objectivism and subjectivism; intrinsic, extrinsic and instrumental value; and the commensurability of value.

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter 6. Moore's Principle of organic unities**

Chapter 6 represents step three in Theory Derivation methodology, namely the selection of a parent theory for use in derivation.<sup>117</sup> The chosen parent theory is the Principle of organic unities, defined by G. E. Moore as holding that 'the intrinsic value of a whole is neither identical with nor proportional to the sum of the values of its parts'.<sup>118</sup> This chapter outlines the Principle in detail, including the context in which Moore wrote and the influences on his work. Moore's aims and objectives in devising the Principle are discussed as well as its implications for value theory. An analysis is made of how successful Moore was in his aims by exploring critiques of the Principle by other contemporary and later philosophers.

## **Chapter 7. Archival value: a re-interpretation**

This chapter consists of the two final steps in Theory Derivation methodology, namely: identifying what content and/or structure from the parent theory is to be used, and developing or redefining new statements from the content and/or structure of the parent theory in terms of the phenomenon of interest to the theorist.<sup>119</sup> The axiological Principle of organic unities – in both its strong and weak interpretations – will be considered in application to various concepts of archival value. The application of both interpretations of the Principle allows the author to explore the ways in which different writers have defined 'parts' and 'wholes' in relation to archives; and the ways in which they have ascribed values to parts and/or wholes.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusions**

This chapter reflects on the research methodology and considers the advantages and limitations of the approach. A summary of the thesis and its main findings is presented, together with recommendations for further research.

The next chapter will present an overview of the development of archival appraisal theory by the English-speaking archival profession from the late nineteenth century to the present.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, rev. edn., ed. by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Ch. VI, Sect. 111, 233.

<sup>119</sup> Henttonen, 27; Walker and Avant, 165-6.

## **2. A chronology of the development of archival appraisal theory**

### **2.1. Chapter summary**

Chapter 2 represents the first step in Theory Derivation methodology, namely, becoming familiar with the literature in the topic of interest.<sup>1</sup> This chapter presents a narrative chronology of the development of archival appraisal theory as published in the English-language archival literature. The style of presentation is a deliberate attempt by the author to describe archival appraisal theory in as neutral a manner as possible and to avoid the attribution of categories or labels, which may be misleading to the reader. Each significant theoretical development, as widely discussed in the literature and, arguably, accepted by the profession at large, is detailed including the context within which a given theory developed and its immediate impact. Subsequent evolution of the theory is also shown, together with any perceived relationships or links between different theories and ideas.

The chapter is split into three sections – the early twentieth century, the late twentieth century and the twenty-first century. The narrative follows a chronological structure, but, as will be shown, key periods of development in archival appraisal theory took place within specific countries at different times. In particular, the influence of UK archival theory, which was prominent in the early twentieth century, began to recede as American and Canadian theorists came to the fore in the second half of the century.

The chapter also shows how wider society impacts upon archival appraisal theory, often influencing the nature and direction of debates about archival value. Towards the end of the twentieth century in particular, postmodernism led to a questioning of many of the traditional concepts and ideas about archive and recordkeeping.

### **2.2. The early twentieth century**

#### **2.2.1. Introduction**

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed two significant publications relating to archival appraisal theory. These publications dominated the professional

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.5.

literature and thinking on appraisal during much of the twentieth century and both remain on core reading lists for twenty-first century archivists-in-training. The publications are Hilary Jenkinson's *A Manual of Archive Administration*<sup>2</sup> and Theodore R. Schellenberg's *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*.<sup>3</sup> Written over forty years apart in two different countries both books are a response to the practical challenges of recordkeeping faced by each author at the time. Yet whilst they address the immediate particularities of each situation, both also suggest a universality of principle that transcends the specificity of the period.

### 2.2.2. 1920s-1960s (UK)

Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1882-1961) is regarded by many archivists as the founding father of English archival theory. Oft-quoted, his ideas have dominated archival practice particularly in the UK, and he has been variously described as 'one of the most influential archivists in the English-speaking world', a 'giant' of his profession, and an 'archival pioneer'.<sup>4</sup> Jenkinson's 1922 publication, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, set out his theory for archive and recordkeeping and is 'indisputably part of the archival canon'.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of three years military service with the Royal Garrison Artillery during the First World War, and secondment to the War Office during the Second World War, Jenkinson spent his entire career at the Public Record Office in London.<sup>6</sup> He worked on the medieval records of the exchequer, and the reorganization of the repairing department and the repository, before rising to the rank of Deputy Keeper in 1947. In addition to his considerable experience working with central government records, Jenkinson was also instrumental in the creation of a university diploma course for the training of

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<sup>2</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration. The problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F W Cheshire, 1956). Although the date of publication is strictly speaking outside the first half of the twentieth century, the author will argue that the publication is a consolidation of theories which first arose in the 1930s and 1940s.

<sup>4</sup> Terry Eastwood, 'Jenkinson's Writings on Some Enduring Archival Themes', *AA*, 87.1 (2004), 31-44, (31); Richard Stapleton, 'Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 75-85, (75); Terry Cook, 'Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms', *AS*, 13.2-3 (2013), 95-120.

<sup>5</sup> Verne Harris, 'Concerned with the Writings of Others: archival canons, discourses and voices', *JSA*, 25.2 (2004), 211-20, (212).

<sup>6</sup> Since 2003, The National Archives, Kew, London.



archival professionals in the UK, and in the establishment of local record offices throughout the UK after 1945.<sup>7</sup>

Jenkinson's *Manual* was published as part of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Series of Works on the Economic and Social History of the World War, and the first edition included the subtitle: *the problems of War Archives and Archive Making*. The *Manual* was written as a response to the increasing volume of records being produced in the First World War period and the corresponding need for archivists to appraise and select archives.<sup>8</sup> In his book, Jenkinson attempted to provide a definition of archives and the selection criteria for their long-term preservation in order to assist archivists dealing with modern records. In fact, Jenkinson was not the first English archivist to attempt a formal archival theory, as a colleague, Charles Johnson, had published a small booklet entitled *Care of Documents and Management of Archives* four years previously.<sup>9</sup> Jenkinson acknowledged the debt owed to Johnson (among others) in the introduction to his *Manual* and commented that he was attempting to fill a gap as he believed Johnson's work to be 'limited by its format – it runs to only 47 pages'.<sup>10</sup> Jenkinson's publication in comparison ran to over 200 pages and became the de-facto guide for the English archival profession. A second edition of the *Manual* was published in 1937, and was re-issued again nearly 30 years later, in 1965. In the second edition, Jenkinson stated that his views 'upon matters of principle' had not changed and that the revisions applied primarily to 'small practical matters' only.<sup>11</sup> The author has read both editions of his text closely and confirms that this statement is correct. The

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<sup>7</sup> H. C. Johnson, rev., 'Sir (Charles) Hilary Jenkinson (1882-1961)', *ODNB*.

<sup>8</sup> The *Public Record Office Act of 1877* had included a provision for the destruction of public records that were deemed 'not of sufficient public value to justify their preservation'. The Act also established date as a criteria for preservation, stating that no records before 1715 could be destroyed. This was amended to 1660 by the *1898 Public Record Office Act*. Although therefore the principle of appraisal and selection had existed in the UK from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it can be argued that it was the huge volume of records created during the First World War, and the temporary nature of many of the creating departments, that brought the issue to the fore in the 1920s.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Johnson, *Care of Documents and Management of Archives* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919). See also Margaret Procter, 'Life Before Jenkinson – the Development of British Archival Theory and Thought at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', *Archives*, 33.119 (2008), 140-161, who detailed the other developments already underway which influenced Jenkinson's own thinking. Another example was the work of British archivist, George Herbert Fowler (1861-1940), who published *The Care of County Muniments* (London: County Councils Association) in 1923 and who was instrumental in the establishment of Bedfordshire Record Office and the British Records Association.

<sup>10</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, Preface to Second Edition, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London: Lund Humphries, 1937), re-issued in 1965.

second edition included some updated citations and greatly expanded on the technical developments available to archivists in the areas of conservation and preservation. A few sections had been substantially re-written (for example, Secondary Duties of the Archivist), but the overall sense and meaning of the text had not changed. The only sections that are missing from the second edition are an entire fifth chapter on War Archives and two appendices, one on examples of rules for an archival repairing department, and the other on rules for transcribing records.<sup>12</sup>

In the *Manual* Jenkinson described what constitutes archives as follows: they are the facts of a transaction of which they are themselves a part; they are set aside for a use which is different to that for which they were created; and they are preserved in official custody.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, he explained that archives can be artefacts as well as records made of paper or parchment; and they can be created by both private and public individuals and businesses. Throughout his text, Jenkinson referred to what he termed ‘archive quality’ – that which distinguishes archives from other records. Although he did not offer a neat definition of this concept, we can attempt to infer what Jenkinson meant by examining the way in which he used the concept. Jenkinson explained archive quality with reference to two further notions: impartiality and authenticity, stating that these are necessary characteristics of archives. He argued that the first characteristic of impartiality results from his definition of archives as evidences of administrative transactions. Jenkinson stressed that ‘archives were not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity’.<sup>14</sup> Jenkinson contrasted what he saw as the natural accumulation of archives as a result of their creation and preservation for administrative purposes with the conscious selection of records practised by museums.<sup>15</sup> He believed that ‘provided, then, that the student understands their administrative significance, [archives] cannot tell him anything but the truth’.<sup>16</sup>

The second characteristic of authenticity results from their preservation in official custody. Jenkinson explained that archive quality is ‘dependent upon the

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<sup>12</sup> As the second edition is more readily accessible, and the changes from the first edition only minor, the author has quoted extensively from the second edition throughout this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 4-11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-3. See also Chapter 3, section 3.4.1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

possibility of proving an unblemished line of responsible custodians'.<sup>17</sup> In Jenkinson's ideal world-view records are transferred, from the government department in which they are created and used, directly to the archival repository; the only possible detour en route being a departmental records centre for semi-current records. Jenkinson believed that this lineage of official custody guaranteed that archives would be free from the suspicions of prejudice or of having been tampered with.<sup>18</sup> He believed that from these strict guidelines relating to the 'evolution of Archives and the stages by which they have reached us [can be] discovered therein the foundation of those qualities which give to Archives their distinctive character and value'.<sup>19</sup>

Jenkinson's greatest concern, indeed his reason for writing the *Manual*, was to ensure that future archives – resulting from the appraisal of modern records – would equally possess archival qualities and values. Jenkinson believed that the task of appraising records based on the interests of historical research was one that neither an archivist nor an historian could undertake as he asked, 'who can project himself into the future and foresee its requirements?'.<sup>20</sup> He argued that an archivist would not be able to avoid 'personal judgement' and that an historian's subjectivity could damage 'the archives' reputation for impartiality in the future'.<sup>21</sup> The solution presented by Jenkinson was that destruction should take place before the records reached the archive. He argued that the only end that the preservation of records should fulfil was that of 'a convenient form of artificial memory', which serves the business or administration that has created the records in the first place.<sup>22</sup>

Although Jenkinson wrote prolifically throughout the rest of his life, he did not radically revise his appraisal theory. As has been discussed already, the second edition of his *Manual* was minimally updated despite the passing of 15 years; and later, in an inaugural lecture for a new course in Archive Administration at UCL in October 1947,<sup>23</sup> Jenkinson repeated his definition of archives as being 'an actual part

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>23</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *The English Archivist: A New Profession* (London: H K Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1948).

of the activities which gave them birth, material evidences surviving in the form of writing'.<sup>24</sup> He also re-iterated the importance of official custody, re-stating that:

the impartial quality which we have seen in Archives, being due to the circumstances of their preservation in the custody of persons not concerned with the interests which they eventually serve, is dependent on there being a reasonable presumption that this custody has been continuous and undisturbed.<sup>25</sup>

In his last public speech, a Presidential Address to the Annual General Meeting of the UK Society of Archivists which was delivered on 7 December 1960, five weeks before his death; and which was subsequently published in the *Journal of the Society of Archivists* the following year, Jenkinson was forthright in his defence of his original ideas.<sup>26</sup> Referring to the definition of archives, which he had propounded forty years earlier, Jenkinson stated:

I still believe that the Essentials and First Principles of which I have spoken are expressed or inherent in that Definition: with its insistence on *Natural Accumulation* (as opposed to artificial collection), *Administrative Basis*, *Preservation primarily for Office Reference*, and *Custody*; and on the *Applicability of this Definition to Documents of all Kinds and Dates*.<sup>27</sup>

Jenkinson further concluded that 'I will make bold to say that there is nothing in my old Definition which the nature of Modern Archives will compel me to withdraw or qualify'.<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Shepherd has noted how this failure to evolve archival practice beyond his early thinking, together with Jenkinson's sheer force of personality, essentially stunted the theoretical development of the UK archival profession.<sup>29</sup>

Margaret Procter wrote that the pre-eminence of Jenkinson in the UK was principally a result of circumstances – the coincidental publication of the second edition of the *Manual* at a time when the UK archival profession was being formalized, together with a lack of other contemporary archival writing.<sup>30</sup> As a result, Jenkinson acquired iconic status and his theories became the orthodoxy against which others were measured.

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<sup>24</sup> Jenkinson, *The English Archivist*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Sir Hilary Jenkinson, 'Roots', *JSA*, 2.4 (1961), 131-138.

<sup>27</sup> Jenkinson, 'Roots', 131. Italics and capitals in original.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 136. Capitals in original.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Shepherd, *Toward Professionalism? Archives and Archivists in England in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, PhD Thesis, (University College London: SLAIS, 2004), especially Ch. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Procter, 'Life Before Jenkinson', 159.

Through the writings of Jenkinson we are thus presented with a discussion of archival quality that relies on the characteristics of impartiality and authenticity which reside in the archival record and which are themselves a result of a specific process of creation and custody. This viewpoint was to be challenged by a younger contemporary of Jenkinson's in the US.

### 2.2.3. 1930s-1960s (US)

Theodore R. Schellenberg (1903-1970) worked in the US National Archives<sup>31</sup> from 1935-1963. During the Second World War he was Chief of the Division of Agricultural Department Archives, before becoming Director of Archival Management, and later Assistant Archivist of the US. Schellenberg formulated procedures for scheduling records for disposal and his experience led him to introduce an appraisal programme to cope with the large volume of new government records.<sup>32</sup> Schellenberg has been described as 'the great American writer on appraisal'.<sup>33</sup> His 1956 publication, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, remains an influential work, both in the US and abroad, and suggests a different approach to that of Jenkinson, with whom Schellenberg is often compared and contrasted.

Although it was the publication of *Modern Archives* that made Schellenberg a household name amongst archivists, much of the content of his book is prefigured not only in earlier pamphlets and articles he produced for the US National Archives, but also in the work of many of his colleagues.<sup>34</sup> Schellenberg's archival theory did not appear in a vacuum, instead the 1930s and 1940s in the US witnessed several important developments in the formation of an archival profession: the US National Archives was founded in 1934, and the Society of American Archivists was created a

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<sup>31</sup> Since 1985, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington DC, US.

<sup>32</sup> Wayne C. Grover, Archivist of the United States, Foreword to T. R. Schellenberg, 'The Appraisal of Modern Public Records', *Bulletins of the National Archives* No. 8, (Washington DC, National Archives and Records Administration, October 1956).

<sup>33</sup> Terry Eastwood, 'Reflections on the Goal of Appraisal in Democratic Societies', *Archivaria*, 54 (2002), 59-71, (61).

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Philip Coolidge Brooks, 'The Selection of Records for Preservation', *AA*, 3.4 (1940), 221-234; Philip G. Bauer, *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records*, *Staff Information Circular No. 13*, June 1946 (Washington DC: The National Archives, 1946); Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Disposition of Federal Records: How to Develop an Effective Program for the Preservation and the Disposal of Federal Records*, *National Archives Publication No. 50-3* (Washington DC: General Services Administration, The National Archives, 1949); Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Archival Principles: Selections from the Writings of Waldo Gifford Leland*, *Staff information Paper No. 20* (Washington DC: The National Archives, 1955).

year later. The newly-fledged profession was keen to create a professional national identity with an emphasis on training and standards.<sup>35</sup> Many American archivists were also keen to establish their own archival theory, believing that existing European theory needed to evolve to meet their specific needs and challenges. For example, in January 1940, Emmett J. Leahy presented a summary and comparison of various European approaches to appraisal in *The American Archivist*.<sup>36</sup> His article, whilst acknowledging some of the beneficial elements of these approaches, concluded that the US National Archives could improve upon them by formulating its own disposal policy. Schellenberg was more explicit in his rejection of some of the long-standing existing theory; writing to a friend in July 1954, he stated:

In my professional work I'm tired of having an old fossil cited to me as an authority in archival matters. I refer to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, former Deputy Keeper at the British Public Record Office, who wrote a book that is not only unreadable but that has given the Australians a wrong start in their archival work.<sup>37</sup>

Schellenberg had spent time giving a lecture tour in Australia as the recipient of a Fulbright Award in 1954 and had witnessed at first hand some of the challenges facing modern recordkeepers. *Modern Archives* was based on his lecture series, and was published in Melbourne, leading one Australian commentator to proclaim that 'the book can perhaps claim to be Australia's first important contribution to the world's archival literature'.<sup>38</sup> Schellenberg was probably influenced by his Australian trip, but *Modern Archives* presented an archival appraisal theory which was rooted in his US experience.

In *Modern Archives* Schellenberg attempted to define archives by first critiquing various definitions given by other archivists, including Muller, Feith and Fruin, Jenkinson, Casanova and Brenneke.<sup>39</sup> Schellenberg summarized these definitions as including tangible and intangible elements. He stated that the tangible

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<sup>35</sup> See *The American Archivist*, (Washington DC: Society of American Archivists), 1938-1960.

<sup>36</sup> Emmett J. Leahy, 'Reductions in Public Records', *AA*, 3.1 (1940), 13-38.

<sup>37</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg to Albert C. Schwarting, 7 July 1954. Personal Letters File, T.R. Schellenberg Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, cited in Jane F. Smith, 'Theodore R. Schellenberg: Americanizer and Popularizer', *AA*, 44.4 (1981), 313-26, (319).

<sup>38</sup> Ian Maclean, 'Review of *Modern Archives* by Dr T. R. Schellenberg', *AM*, 1.3 (1956), 23.

<sup>39</sup> S. Muller, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, transl. Arthur H. Leavitt (New York: H. W. Wilson & Co., 1940); Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922); Eugenio Casanova, *Archivistica* (Siena: Stab. Arti Grafiche Lazzeri, 1928); Adolf Brenneke, *Archivkunde: ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Geschichte des europäischen Archivwissens* (Leipzig: Koehler & Arnelang, 1953).

elements, such as form, source and place of preservation, were not essential to archival quality as the elements could be various in nature. In comparison, he felt that the intangible elements were indispensable. Schellenberg believed that there were only two such elements – reasons for creation and values for preservation – which could be found in all the definitions.<sup>40</sup> Importantly, he dismissed Jenkinson's belief in a third intangible element – that of custody – noting that this view differed from the other archival theorists and concluding that whilst it might be applicable to the medieval records with which Jenkinson was so familiar, 'in dealing with records produced under modern conditions of government, proof of an "unblemished line of responsible custodians" or of "unbroken custody" cannot be made a test of archival quality'.<sup>41</sup>

Schellenberg concluded that:

It is obvious, therefore, that there is no final or ultimate definition of the term "archives", that must be accepted without change and in preference to all others. The definition may be modified in each country to fit its particular needs.<sup>42</sup>

Schellenberg believed that any definition of archives that was applicable in the US should implicitly involve an element of selection.<sup>43</sup> In doing so, he drew a distinction between 'records' and 'archives' which had not previously been formalized.

Schellenberg defined records as:

All the papers, maps, photographs or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution or its legitimate successor as evidence of its functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities or because of the informational value of the data contained therein.<sup>44</sup>

He defined archives as 'those records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archive

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<sup>40</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 13.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

institution'.<sup>45</sup> Schellenberg thus introduced the notion of two different types of value in public records: what he called the 'primary values' to the originating department or creator, and the 'secondary values' to others outside of the originating department, including researchers.<sup>46</sup> Schellenberg further divided the secondary values into two categories: 'evidential' and 'informational'. The first he defined as 'the value that inheres in public records because of the merit of the evidence they contain'.<sup>47</sup> Schellenberg made explicitly clear that he did not mean a sanctity of evidence in the sense of 'unbroken custody' as proffered by Jenkinson, but that instead he referred to a value 'that depends on the importance of the matter evidenced, i.e. the organization and functioning of the agency that produced the records'.<sup>48</sup> Informational values, in contrast, were derived 'from the information that is in public records on persons, places, subjects and the like with which the public agencies deal'.<sup>49</sup> Unlike evidential values, the appraisal of informational values was not concerned with how and why the records were created, but only with the information contained within them.<sup>50</sup>

Schellenberg believed that the primary values of records could be easily judged, by examining the position of the creating department in the administrative hierarchy, and by understanding the functions and activities performed by the creator.<sup>51</sup> However, he believed that judging secondary values was less straightforward, depending on a knowledge of research needs and resources, and could never be based on absolute standards. Schellenberg argued that not only were such judgements likely to be relative to time and place but that this was also desirable, suggesting that 'diverse judgments will spread the burden of documentation of a country among its various archival institutions, making one preserve what another may discard. Diverse judgments, in a word, may well assure a more adequate social documentation'.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Schellenberg believed that archivists were ideally placed to make such judgements, due to their training as historians.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 17; 133;140-159.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 150.



Through the work of Schellenberg we arrive at a very different notion of appraisal to that proposed by Jenkinson. Schellenberg held that the appraisal of records should be based on certain characteristics, which are established in the record during current use (the primary values), and in characteristics which can be attributed to the record later during research use (the secondary values).

Schellenberg republished his ideas in *The Appraisal of Modern Records, Bulletin of the National Archives, No. 8* in October 1956.<sup>54</sup> This pamphlet made explicit his view that whilst the primary values are of importance, it is the secondary values which are the reasons why public records are preserved in an archival institution: 'because they have values that will exist long after they cease to be of current use, and because their values will be for others than their current users'.<sup>55</sup> Schellenberg also expanded on his theory of secondary value, suggesting that there were a number of tests that might be applied to judge the evidential and informational values of records. Schellenberg suggested that a practical test was required to judge the evidential value in records, describing the test as 'an objective approach' that depended on thorough knowledge of the source of the records and their relation to the activity for which they were first created.<sup>56</sup> In order to judge the informational value of records, Schellenberg suggested that three tests could be applied; that of uniqueness, form, and importance.<sup>57</sup> In the first two tests, consideration should be given to both the information contained in the record and the record itself, with judgement being seemingly straightforward; but Schellenberg admitted that in the test of importance the archivist 'is in the realm of the imponderable, for who can say definitely if a given body of records is important, and for what purpose and to whom?'.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless he believed that such evaluation was possible by an archivist who had a 'specialized knowledge of subject-matter fields

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<sup>54</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *The Appraisal of Modern Archives, Bulletin of the National Archives No. 8* (Washington DC: NARA, 1956).

<sup>55</sup> Schellenberg, *The Appraisal of Modern Archives*, 4. Interestingly, Schellenberg's creation of a hierarchy of values in this way contrasted with an earlier viewpoint he had held which implied a neutral grouping of different record values, each equally important. In 1949, Schellenberg had listed four types of value in records as follows: 1. Values for administrative, legal, and fiscal uses by the Government; 2. Values for the protection of the civic, legal, property, and other rights of the citizen; 3. Values for purposes of functional documentation, and; 4. Values for research purposes. He further noted that 'the various types of values constitute four aspects of a single problem and that all must be taken into account in any appraisal. Records may have sufficient value to justify their permanent retention if only one type of value is attached to them', *Disposition of Federal Records*, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Schellenberg, *The Appraisal of Modern Archives*, 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

pertinent to the records’ and ‘a general knowledge of the resources and products of research’.<sup>59</sup>

Schellenberg provided several examples of the different types and series of records, which should be preserved, before acknowledging that ‘the standards should never be regarded as absolute or final. At best they will serve merely as guidelines to steer the archivist through the treacherous shoals of appraisal’.<sup>60</sup> He concluded that appraisal standards must be applied with ‘moderation and common sense’ and must be based on thorough analyses of ‘the documentation bearing on the matter to which the records pertain’.<sup>61</sup> Schellenberg also argued that the archivist should seek the advice of scholars, but must assume ‘a role of moderator’ in making the final decision.<sup>62</sup> The text of Schellenberg’s pamphlet continues to be published on the NARA website, accessible in the ‘Archives and Records Management Resources’ section.<sup>63</sup>

Although Schellenberg did not radically alter his views on values, he did later revise some of his initial theory. In 1965 Schellenberg published another book, entitled *The Management of Archives*.<sup>64</sup> In this volume Schellenberg traced the development of the archival profession in the US.<sup>65</sup> He determined that his principles and techniques, borne out of his experience at the US National Archives, were equally applicable to private records as they were to public records.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the publication Schellenberg also drew specific comparison and contrast with the methodology and techniques applied by the library profession.

#### **2.2.4. Influence of Jenkinson and Schellenberg in US, UK and Australia**

English-language archival appraisal theory during the first half of the twentieth century was dominated by the ideas of Jenkinson and Schellenberg. Their

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>63</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, US: [www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/appraisal-of-records.html](http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/appraisal-of-records.html) [accessed 18 November 2012].

<sup>64</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

<sup>65</sup> Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, especially Ch. 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 65.

theories had an impact in non-English-speaking countries<sup>67</sup> and support was not confined to the theorist's own country of origin. For example, in the US, Margaret Cross Norton (1891-1984) echoed many of Jenkinson's views. In 1922 Norton became the first head of the Illinois State Library, a position she held until retirement in 1957. Norton agreed with Jenkinson that the interests of history and research should be of secondary concern to the archivist. In her view the archivist's primary duty was as a public official, as a 'custodian of the legal records of the state'.<sup>68</sup> Norton defined archives as 'business records of a government, a business firm, an ecclesiastical body or even of an individual, preserved as a memorandum of business transactions, and particularly because they are potential evidence for any court or other legal proceedings'.<sup>69</sup> Whilst she acknowledged that these same archives often held significant value for the historian, she believed that this was not the primary purpose for keeping such records. Norton warned archivists of 'consciously created' history, which she viewed as being 'dangerously close to propaganda'.<sup>70</sup> She believed that 'historians of the future will be best served if the records are well organized and present a true representation of the administrative purposes they served'.<sup>71</sup>

Like Jenkinson, Norton talked about 'archive quality', as well as the uniqueness and authenticity of archival records. She also viewed official custody as an important condition for the existence of this archival quality, stating that 'the value of the original [...] is impaired if it has been out of the custody of its own archival agent and therefore may have been tampered with or without his knowledge'.<sup>72</sup> Norton also agreed with Jenkinson about the importance of provenance and the preservation of the archival *fonds*. Although she used different

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<sup>67</sup> Jenkinson published journal articles in France and Italy, and Schellenberg's books were translated into several languages, including Spanish and Portuguese.

<sup>68</sup> Margaret Cross Norton, 'The Archives Department as an Administrative Unit in Government', in *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management*, ed. by Thornton Mitchell (Carbondale & Edwardsville, US: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 3-12, (4-5); first published in *Papers and Proceedings of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of the National Association of State Libraries*, Los Angeles, 23-27 June 1930.

<sup>69</sup> Norton, 'Services of An Archives to Business', in *Norton on Archives*, 81-5, (81); first published as 'What the State Archives Can Do for the Business Man', *Chicago Filing Association Official Bulletin* No. 9, November 1920.

<sup>70</sup> Norton, 'Records Disposal', in *Norton on Archives*, 231-46, (244); first published in *Illinois Libraries*, No. 26, March 1944.

<sup>71</sup> Norton, 'Records Disposal', 244.

<sup>72</sup> Norton, 'Comparison of Archival and Library Techniques', in *Norton on Archives*, 86-105, (88); first published as 'Archives and Libraries', *Illinois Libraries*, No. 21, March 1939.

language to Jenkinson, her views on the natural accumulation of archives are similar in content as she stated that ‘the records systems of most government offices, like Topsy, “just grewed”. Records have come into existence as a by-product of governmental activity rather than as planned activities’.<sup>73</sup>

Norton was writing at a time when the volume of documentation produced by the US Government was dramatically increasing and she recognized that there was a need to apply selection criteria to determine what records to keep as archives. Norton believed that a democracy enabled the process of archive-keeping by embedding within its laws the rights of its citizens to their records; that government officials ‘do not own the records that result from their activities but merely act as custodians of the records on behalf of the people’.<sup>74</sup> Norton viewed the primary purpose of preserving archives as that of facilitating business administration. She also regarded appraisal as a relatively straightforward matter, commenting that ‘it is comparatively easy to select records of permanent value [and] relatively easy to decide on those of no value’.<sup>75</sup> However, she also acknowledged that many records were ‘borderline’. Norton also recognized that whilst historical research was a secondary concern for archivists, it nonetheless played a role in archival appraisal and often presented the archivist with the most difficult decisions about which records to keep.<sup>76</sup> Norton suggested that one possible solution to assist the archivist was to select an arbitrary date prior to which all records must be kept.<sup>77</sup> Norton believed it was the archivist who was best placed to make appraisal decisions, ‘though he will of course be guided by advice from the responsible records officials of the departments’.<sup>78</sup>

In the UK, articles in the two professional journals of the period – the *Journal of the Society of Archivists* and the British Records Association’s *Archives* – suggest a lack of professional debate about archival appraisal theory; at least in terms

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<sup>73</sup> Norton, ‘Record Making’, in *Norton on Archives*, 132-43, (132); first published in *Illinois Libraries*, No. 27, February 1945.

<sup>74</sup> Norton, ‘Record Making’, 134.

<sup>75</sup> Norton, ‘Records Disposal’, 240.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 242. In Illinois, 1870 was chosen because this date marked the beginning of the new State constitution.

<sup>78</sup> Norton, ‘The Duties of an Archivist’, in *Norton on Archives*, 52-69, (57); first published as ‘What Does An Archivist Do?’ in *Illinois Libraries*, No. 29, May 1947.

of published work.<sup>79</sup> Many articles reinforce support of Jenkinson's theories; some on nationalistic grounds, with one archivist dismissing articles in the International Council on Archives' new journal, *Archivum*, introduced in 1952, because they appeared to regard 'archives neither as documentary arsenals of the administration nor as national shrines, but simply as granaries for the historian'.<sup>80</sup> The sense that the English profession knows better comes across strongly; for example, debate occurred later in the 1960s about attempts by the ICA to publish a *Lexicon of Archival Terms*. Contributors complained about 'bowdlerization' as they protested that the accepted English usage of certain terms like 'archives' and 'records', based on Jenkinson's sense of the words, differed to the definitions presented by the ICA.<sup>81</sup> Jenkinson was a regular contributor to both journals and appears to have cast a long shadow among his UK contemporaries.

Australian archival theory and practice in the early twentieth century is influenced by both Jenkinson and Schellenberg in turn. Unsurprisingly perhaps, given their shared history, British archival practice was easily applied to Australian recordkeeping and there were regular international exchanges as Australian archivists undertook placements at the PRO in London.<sup>82</sup> However, compared to the UK journals, articles in the Australian *Archives and Manuscripts* give the impression of a very outward looking profession, with regular reviews of foreign language literature and reports from international conferences.<sup>83</sup> Schellenberg's visit to Australia in 1954, and the subsequent publication of *Modern Archives* based on his lecture series there, cemented his influence in the development of Australian archival theory. However, perhaps due to a comparative lack of urgent need to reduce large

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<sup>79</sup> See *JSA* (London: Society of Archivists UK and Ireland), 1955-1965; *Archives* (London: British Records Association), 1949-1965.

<sup>80</sup> G. R. C. Davis, 'Archive-keeping in England: Some home thoughts for the English archivist from abroad?', *Archives*, 4.23 (1960), 176-7, (176).

<sup>81</sup> A. E. B. Owen, 'The Terminology of Archives: A Review of the Lexicon', *Archives*, 7.33 (1965), 57-58; Robert Somerville, Letter to the Editor, 10 August 1965, Correspondence, *Archives*, 7.34 (1965), 93-94; Editor, Correspondence, *Archives*, 7.34 (1965), 94; Peter Walne, Correspondence, *Archives*, 7.35 (1966), 163-165.

<sup>82</sup> For example, Keith Penny, 'The Problem of Local Records', *AM*, 1.1 (1955) 2-8; Miss J Hine, 'The Public Record Office', *AM*, 1.6 (1959), 1-11.

<sup>83</sup> See *AM* (Canberra: Australian Society of Archivists), 1955-1965.

volumes of records, the Australian archival profession made no further significant contribution to archival appraisal theory until the mid 1990s.<sup>84</sup>

### **2.2.5. Concluding remarks**

Archival appraisal theory in the early twentieth century was dominated by British archivist, Sir Hilary Jenkinson, whose theories were in turn challenged by American archivist, Theodore R. Schellenberg. The two archivists had different views on the nature of archives, on selection and on the role of the archivist.<sup>85</sup> Their differing approaches to appraisal greatly influenced the archival profession, both in their own countries and elsewhere; and provided the foundations for profoundly distinctive methods of archival appraisal that were to develop later.

## **2.3. The late twentieth century**

### **2.3.1. Introduction**

The last forty years of the twentieth century can be split into two halves in terms of the development of archival appraisal theory. The decades from the late 1960s through to the early 1980s can be characterized as seeing the development and consolidation of existing theories as archivists, particularly in the US, began to apply the theories of Schellenberg and Jenkinson to non-central government records.<sup>86</sup> Taxonomic approaches to archival appraisal came to the fore, with attempts to provide criteria to identify the intrinsic value of archives. In Canada, a new approach following the theories of German archivist, Hans Booms, developed. The last decades of the twentieth century, however, witnessed significant changes in archival theory in general, and in thinking about appraisal in particular. The word ‘paradigm’ has perhaps become over-used in recent archival literature but several writers have

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<sup>84</sup> Luciana Duranti has suggested that the widespread adoption of American appraisal methodology also explains the absence of Australia from the body of literature on appraisal. See Luciana Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’, *AA*, 57.2 (1994), 328-44, (329).

<sup>85</sup> Stapleton; Reto Tschan, ‘A Comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal’, *AA*, 65.2 (2002), 176-95.

<sup>86</sup> For example, Maynard J. Brichford, *Scientific and Technological Documentation: Archival Evaluation and Processing of University Records Relating to Science and Technology* (Urbana-Champaign, US: University of Illinois, 1969); Thornton Mitchell, ‘New Viewpoints on Establishing Permanent Values of State Archives’, *AA*, 33.2 (1970), 163-74; *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance*, ed. by Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1984); Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, ‘Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records’, *AA*, 48.2 (1985), 121-40. There is little evidence of an equivalent phenomenon in the UK.

used this term to describe the perceived shift which took place during this later period.<sup>87</sup> Developments in archival theory have, of course, taken place within a much wider context and have therefore been influenced by critical thinking in the fields of philosophy, literature and history, most notably by postmodernist theory.<sup>88</sup> Influenced by new thinking in other fields, archival theorists began to question their traditional approaches and sought alternative appraisal theories that could work within a postmodern paradigm. The advent of new technologies and the proliferation of digital records in the later twentieth century also impacted on the archival profession. Appraisal theories had to work in practice not only for traditional paper-based records, but also for electronic records. In particular, the writings of a non-archivist, David Bearman, were to have a significant impact on thinking about archival appraisal in North America and Australia.

### 2.3.2. 1970s and 1980s (US)

In the 1970s and early 1980s many appraisal theories, especially in the US, were based on a taxonomic approach. In 1977 University of Illinois archivist, Maynard J. Brichford, authored the first manual to be published by the Society of American Archivists (SAA), entitled *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning*.<sup>89</sup> Brichford expanded Schellenberg's appraisal theory, arguing that the archivist's role was to appraise records by analyzing their 'functional, evidential and informational characteristics'.<sup>90</sup> Brichford suggested various criteria for this analysis including the age, volume, and form of the records; administrative, legal and fiscal value; and research value – which could be judged by attributes such as uniqueness, credibility, understandability, time span, accessibility, frequency of use and type and quality of use.<sup>91</sup> Brichford argued that any determination of 'archival value', which he defined as 'the lasting value in records', had to take into consideration the

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<sup>87</sup> For example, Terry Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts', *AS*, 1.1 (2001), 3-24; Mark A. Greene, 'The Power of Meaning: The Archival Mission in the Postmodern Age', *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 42-55; John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books LLC., 2009); Ciaran B. Trace, 'On or Off the Record: Notions of Value in the Archive', in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, ed. by Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, ABC-Clio, 2010), 47-68.

<sup>88</sup> William G. Rosenberg, 'Historiographical Origins of the Archival Divide', *COMMA*, 2005.1 – Wien 2004 (2005), 1-11. See also Chapter 4.

<sup>89</sup> Maynard J. Brichford, *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning, Basic Manual Series* (Chicago: SAA, 1977).

<sup>90</sup> Brichford, 2.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-9.

relationship with other records.<sup>92</sup> Referencing the earlier work of Philip Bauer, Brichford argued that any such evaluation also had to include the costs of processing, preservation and storage.<sup>93</sup>

In the 1980s a Committee on Intrinsic Value was set up by the US National Archives with the specific aim to write a comprehensive definition of intrinsic value – to define the qualities and characteristics of records that, in the Committee’s opinion, had inherent value and therefore should be preserved. Against the background of large-scale microfilming programmes, which claimed to provide a cost-effective solution to the long-term retention of originals, the Committee aimed to demonstrate the applicability of the concept of intrinsic value in appraisal decision making. The Committee reported its findings in September 1980, published as *Intrinsic Value in Archival Material, Staff Information Paper No. 21* in 1982.<sup>94</sup> The definition of intrinsic value proposed by the Committee stated that ‘intrinsic value is the archival term that is applied to permanently valuable records that have qualities and characteristics that make the records in their original form the only archivally acceptable form for preservation’.<sup>95</sup> It continued to state that these qualities could be both physical (relating to the physical form or the means by which information is recorded on the record) and intellectual (relating to the information contained in the record, or the purposes for which the record might be used). The Committee set out a list of nine criteria for establishing intrinsic value, stating that for a record to have intrinsic value it must possess at least one of these criteria; and the more criteria possessed, the greater the archival value it is likely to have, although the Committee established no explicit hierarchy among the criteria. The criteria were:

1. Physical form that may be the subject for study if the records provide meaningful documentation or significant examples of the form;
2. Aesthetic or artistic quality;
3. Unique or curious physical features;

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 9. See also Philip G. Bauer, *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records, Staff Information Circular No. 13, June 1946* (Washington DC: The National Archives, 1946).

<sup>94</sup> National Archives and Records Service, *Intrinsic Value in Archival Material, Staff Information Paper No. 21* (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1982), p. 1. Online version: <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/archival-material-intrinsic-value.html> [accessed 19 November 2012].

<sup>95</sup> *Intrinsic Value in Archive Material*, 1.



4. Age that provides a quality of uniqueness;
5. Value for use in exhibits;
6. Questionable authenticity, date, author, or other characteristic that is significant and ascertainable by physical examination;
7. General and substantial public interest because of direct association with famous or historically significant people, places, things, issues, or events;
8. Significance as documentation of the establishment or continuing legal basis of an agency or institution;
9. Significance as documentation of the formulation of policy at the highest executive levels when the policy has significance and broad effect throughout or beyond the agency or institution.<sup>96</sup>

The Committee admitted that whilst it believed the concept of intrinsic value to be absolute, it believed that the application of the concept was relative and that 'opinions concerning whether records have intrinsic value may vary from archivist to archivist and from one generation of archivists to another'.<sup>97</sup> The report concluded with three examples that applied the criteria for intrinsic value to particular series of records in the US National Archives. The approach taken by the Committee remained popular within the archival profession both in the US and elsewhere as archivists developed and expanded their own lists of criteria for appraising archives.<sup>98</sup>

The development of archival appraisal theory in the US in the 1980s was affected by a wider discussion about the relevance and interaction of theory in archival practice, led by a polemical debate in *The American Archivist* journal between several archivists including Frank G. Burke, Harold Pinkett, Lester J.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 2-4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>98</sup> For example, William H. Leary, *The Archival Appraisal of Photographs: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris: UNESCO, 1985); Helen H. Harrison and Rolf F. Schuursma, *The Archival Appraisal of Sound Recordings and Related Materials: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris: UNESCO, 1987); Chris Hurley and Sue McKemmish, 'First Write Your Disposal Schedule...', *AM*, 18.2 (1990), 191-201. A related attempt to determine intrinsic value in archives was made in Germany in 1996 by a research project at Marburg Archive School. However, the stated goal of the Marburg project was not to assist appraisal decisions but, rather, preservation decisions in determining whether records should be preserved in their original formats or not. See Angelika Menne-Haritz and Nils Brübach, *The Intrinsic Value of Archive and Library Materials*. Available online: <http://archivschule.de/DE/publikation/digitale-texte/the-intrinsic-value-of-archive-and-library-material.html> [accessed 4 April 2014].

Cappon and John W. Roberts.<sup>99</sup> On one side, Roberts commented that ‘with so much to work on, high-falutin’ archival theory seems a rather superfluous and unpromising diversion’.<sup>100</sup> On the other side there was agreement that archival theory was of benefit to the profession, but disagreement as to the state of American archival theory. Burke argued that contrary to popular belief Schellenberg did not develop a theory but instead merely ‘developed a series of lectures that were practical and reportorial rather than contemplative and theoretical’.<sup>101</sup> In contrast, Pinkett defended Schellenberg and others, and contended that US archival theory was real and was characteristic of American thought in general, being ‘tentative, fragmented, directed at the immediate objective and intense practicality’.<sup>102</sup> Cappon, for his part, firmly defended the European tradition, arguing that it was the theory of Jenkinson, with his emphasis on distinguishing between ‘archival truth’ and ‘historical truth’, that was fundamental to the development of the American archival profession.<sup>103</sup>

The call for American archival theorists did not go unheeded as several new models for appraisal theory were published in the 1980s. In 1985 university archivists Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young produced an appraisal model for institutional records which followed earlier taxonomic approaches.<sup>104</sup> Boles and Young developed the theories of Schellenberg, arguing that this was necessary due to the narrow context of central government records in which he had worked. They argued that Schellenberg’s ideas about the primacy of evidential values over informational values reflected the legal priorities of NARA and therefore were not necessarily applicable outside a government context.<sup>105</sup> Instead Boles and Young believed that ‘archivists mix together a variety of values and record characteristics and pull from the box a determination of the records’ value’.<sup>106</sup> The model they produced took into consideration several components including the value of the

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<sup>99</sup> Frank G. Burke, ‘The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States’, *AA*, 44.1 (1981), 40-46; Harold T Pinkett, ‘American Archival Theory: The State of the Art’, *AA*, 44.3 (1981) 217-222; Lester J Cappon, ‘What Then, Is There To Theorize About?’, *AA*, 45.1 (1982) 19-25; John W. Roberts, ‘Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving’, *AA*, 50.1 (1987) 66-75; John W. Roberts, ‘Archival Theory: Myth or Banality?’, *AA*, 53.1 (1990) 110-120.

<sup>100</sup> Roberts, ‘Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving’, 74.

<sup>101</sup> Burke, 41.

<sup>102</sup> Pinkett, 217.

<sup>103</sup> Cappon, 23.

<sup>104</sup> Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, ‘Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records’, *AA*, 48.2 (1985), 121-140.

<sup>105</sup> Boles and Young, 123.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

information, the costs of retention and the implications of the appraisal recommendations. Importantly, Boles and Young argued that appraisal decisions were cumulative, with no components standing alone but instead each interacting with the others.<sup>107</sup>

A new approach to archival appraisal was proposed the following year by Helen Willa Samuels, archivist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who published an influential article entitled ‘Who Controls the Past’.<sup>108</sup> In the article Samuels argued for a co-operative approach to archive-keeping, suggesting that complex relationships between institutions and individuals in modern society mean that records are increasingly integrated and therefore cannot be treated separately by single archival institutions.<sup>109</sup> Samuels urged that archivists must widen their concept of ‘collection’ beyond the boundaries of their own institution and should co-operate in acquisition strategies and planning.<sup>110</sup> Samuels called this new proposed programme of co-operative appraisal, ‘Documentation Strategy’, and explained that it consisted of four activities:

1) choosing and defining the topic to be documented, 2) selecting the advisors and establishing the site for the strategy, 3) structuring the inquiry and examining the form and substance of the available documentation, and 4) selecting and placing the documentation.<sup>111</sup>

Samuels detailed how each activity might be carried out by partnerships or networks of archival institutions and concluded that such activities would enable ‘each collection and each repository [to become] a part of a larger collection – our nation’s collection’.<sup>112</sup>

Samuels’ theory was a response to the ‘*GAP Report*’ of the SAAs’ task force on identifying goals and priorities for the profession, of which she was a member. The report named the first priority to be ‘the identification and retention of records of enduring value’.<sup>113</sup> Two years later, as part of two special issues of *The American Archivist* devoted to the US archival research agenda, Samuels and Richard J. Cox,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>108</sup> Helen Willa Samuels, ‘Who Controls the Past’, *AA*, 49.2 (1986), 109-24.

<sup>109</sup> Samuels, ‘Who Controls the Past’, 111.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 113-4.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>113</sup> *Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the Society of American Archivists’ Task Force on Goals and Priorities* (Chicago: SAA, 1986), 8-13.

archivist in New York State Archive and Records Administration, published an article that reiterated the principles of the documentation strategy approach.<sup>114</sup> Cox and Samuels defined what they called ‘enduring value’ as information that documents modern society, and they argued that records cannot be evaluated in isolation but that archivists must see beyond the traditional notion of appraisal tied to single institutions and the collecting of historical records.<sup>115</sup> They outlined several research projects, which they believed were necessary to improve theory in the area of archival appraisal, including an exploration of the nature of the documentary record and the interrelated nature of archival records, automated records, and automated record systems. The article cited Samuels’ earlier definition of documentation strategy:

a plan formulated to assure the documentation of an ongoing issue, activity or geographical area [...] carried out through the mutual efforts of many institutions and individuals influencing both the creation of the records and the archival retention of a portion of them.<sup>116</sup>

Cox and Samuels argued that documentation strategy provided an important tool in acting as the nexus to undertake this work. They emphasized an holistic approach, aimed at ensuring that what is preserved in archival institutions are records that are adequate to document modern society.<sup>117</sup>

### **2.3.3. 1980s (Canada)**

The 1980s also saw developments in appraisal theory in Canada. Although a professional archival body had existed under the auspices of the Canadian Historical Association since the 1950s, in 1975 the archival profession came of age with the formation of the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA). Like their American counterparts some thirty years earlier, Canadian archivists were keen to create a professional national identity with an emphasis on training and standards.<sup>118</sup> Former British archivist, Hugh A. Taylor, who emigrated to Canada in 1965, identified some of the unique features of Canadian archival practice, noting that the Public Archives

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<sup>114</sup> Richard J. Cox and Helen W. Samuels, ‘The Archivists’ First Responsibility: A Research Agenda to Improve the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value’, *AA*, 51.1 (1988), 28-42.

<sup>115</sup> Cox and Samuels, 30.

<sup>116</sup> Samuels, ‘Who Controls the Past’, 115; cited in Cox and Samuels, 39.

<sup>117</sup> Cox and Samuels, 33-9.

<sup>118</sup> See *Archivaria*, (Ottawa: Association of Canadian Archivists), 1975-1990.

of Canada<sup>119</sup> was founded on the concept that the national archives should have custody of both public records and private manuscripts – a concept that became known as ‘Total Archives’.<sup>120</sup> Taylor also commented that in comparison to the UK and US, it was archives that led the historical profession in Canada and not vice versa.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless a debate about the relationship between archivists and historians took place in the ACA’s journal *Archivaria* in the 1980s. The debate arose against a background of technological developments within society at large, which led to a multiplicity of records media and an increase in non-paper records, as well as posing challenges to the archival profession from newly-developing professions such as records management and information science.<sup>122</sup> It can be argued that at the core of the debate is a disagreement about the nature and value of archives.

George Bolotenko, an archivist at the Public Archives of Canada, began the debate by challenging and rejecting Norton’s theories which prioritized the legal and administrative value of records over their historical value.<sup>123</sup> Bolotenko also questioned Schellenberg’s perceived alliance with library science, arguing that such an alliance was futile given the vital component of historical context within archival theory. Bolotenko argued that archivists must remain rooted in historiography and should not become administrators, technicians or bureaucrats.<sup>124</sup> Anthony L. Rees argued against Bolotenko, alternatively proposing that the first duty of an archivist is to provide administrative services to his parent body.<sup>125</sup> Brian S. Osborne took issue with Rees’ viewpoint, suggesting that Rees ‘appears to be motivated more by economic pragmatism and an implicit belief in the old adage “whoever pays the piper calls the tune”’.<sup>126</sup> Osborne questioned the ownership rights over archives,

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<sup>119</sup> Founded 1872, renamed National Archives of Canada in 1987.

<sup>120</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, ‘Canadian Archives: Patterns From a Federal Perspective’, *Archivaria*, 1.2 (1976), 3-19, (6).

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, 7.

<sup>122</sup> For example, Gordon Dodds, ‘Back to Square One: Records Management Revisited’, *Archivaria*, 1.2 (1976), 88-91; R. Scott James, ‘ACA Annual Meeting 1977: A Personal View’, *Archivaria*, 5 (1977/78), 188-91; Wilcomb Washburn, ‘The Archivists’ Two-Way Stretch’, *Archivaria*, 7 (1978), 137-43; Jay Atherton, ‘From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship’, *Archivaria*, 21 (1985/86), 43-51; T. M. Campbell, ‘Archives and Information Management’, *Archivaria*, 28 (1989), 146-50; Catherine Bailey, ‘Archival Theory and Electronic Records’, *Archivaria*, 29 (1989/90), 180-96.

<sup>123</sup> George Bolotenko, ‘Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well’, *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 5-25.

<sup>124</sup> Bolotenko, ‘Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well’, 24.

<sup>125</sup> Anthony L. Rees, ‘Masters in our Own House?’, *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 53-59.

<sup>126</sup> Brian S. Osborne, ‘Masters in our Own House – A Commentary’, *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 60-1, (60).

which are implied by Rees, and argued that it is society as a whole that has the right to heritage and that the archivist's true sponsor is the general public.<sup>127</sup>

The debate about the different perspectives on the value of archives sparked more discussion and analysis than ever before in the journal and the following issue of *Archivaria* included a special feature containing several articles on the subject, written from a variety of viewpoints.<sup>128</sup> The articles demonstrate the range of opinion that existed at this time within the Canadian archival profession, with some praising Bolotenko and commenting that his article 'should serve as a clarion call to those archivists who are being pushed into the abyss of "information management"';<sup>129</sup> whilst others argued that being a good archivist did not necessitate being an historian.<sup>130</sup> Subsequent articles continued to illustrate what appeared to be a growing rift within the Canadian archival profession.<sup>131</sup> Richard J. Cox demonstrated the extent of the close links between the Canadian and American archival professions when he contributed an article to *Archivaria* in Winter 1984/85.<sup>132</sup> Cox added his views to the debate, presenting a viewpoint from the US which argued against Bolotenko and praised Lester Cappon who, whilst acknowledging the links between archives and history, also saw the need for an alliance with records management theory. Cox argued that both the administrative and historical values of records should be acknowledged.<sup>133</sup>

Much of the discussion about archival theory in Canada throughout this period makes reference to, and is based on interpretations of, the existing appraisal

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<sup>127</sup> Osborne, 61.

<sup>128</sup> Patrick A. Dunae, 'Archives and the Spectre of 1984: Bolotenko Applauded', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 286-90; Carl Spadoni, 'No Monopoly for Archivist-Historians: Bolotenko Assailed', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 291-5; Thomas T. Spencer, 'The Archivist as Historian: Towards a Broader Definition', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 296-300; Anthony L. Rees, 'Bolotenko's Siege Mentality', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 301-2; R. Scott James, 'A Wearisome Issue', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 302-3.

<sup>129</sup> Dunae, 287.

<sup>130</sup> Spadoni, 291-5.

<sup>131</sup> For example, Cynthia G. Swank, 'Archivists' Lib: A Response to "Whose Handmaiden?"', *Archivaria*, 18 (1984), 16-7; Mark Hopkins, 'Records and Record Keepers Judicially Considered: Credibility or Convenience', *Archivaria*, 18 (1984), 154-65; Rodney Young, 'The Evidentiary and Probative Value of Trade Union Records', *Archivaria*, 18 (1984), 202-13; George Bolotenko, 'Of Ends and Means: In Defence of the Archival Ideal', *Archivaria*, 18 (1984), 241-7; Terry Cook, 'From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives', *Archivaria*, 19 (1984/85), 28-49; George Bolotenko, 'Instant Professionalism: To the Shiny New Men of the Future', *Archivaria*, 20 (1985), 149-57.

<sup>132</sup> Richard J. Cox, 'Archivists and Historians: A View from the US', *Archivaria*, 19 (1984/85), 185-90.

<sup>133</sup> Cox, 'Archivists and Historians', 187.

theories of Jenkinson and Schellenberg.<sup>134</sup> Richard Stapleton presented a detailed critique of the two theorists, demonstrating the differences between them (i.e., their definitions of archives) but also the common ground between them (i.e., their shared emphasis on provenance).<sup>135</sup> However, in 1987, an alternative approach toward archival appraisal was presented through the publication of a translated article by German archivist, Hans Booms.<sup>136</sup> Booms, President of the Federal Archives of West Germany, believed that archives must be appraised for their value as a record of society and that archivists have an explicit social responsibility:

The importance of archives in helping to resolve the question of sources makes it clear that the writing of history is possible only because of the existence of a documentary heritage in material form, and that the documentary heritage is the material source of a society's historical consciousness.<sup>137</sup>

Booms argued that the selection of documentary heritage should be based on the importance that the creating society gave to the particular social phenomena:

Archivists must not follow the value concepts of their own time period, but rather, those of the time from which the material originated. [...] Measuring the societal significance of past facts by analysing the value which their contemporaries attached to them should serve as the foundation for all archival efforts towards forming documentary heritage.<sup>138</sup>

Booms believed that despite the inherent bias, which necessarily exists within any appraisal process, an interaction between archivists, scholars and administrators can lead to the creation of a documentary heritage that evidences the entire spectrum of social phenomena. He argued that although absolute objectivity in appraisal is unachievable, nonetheless his approach will enable archivists to 'distance themselves from their subjectivity to the greatest possible extent'.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> For example, Terry Cook and Andrew Birvell both cite Schellenberg to support their opposing views about the concept of 'Total Archives': Andrew Birvell, 'The Tyranny of Tradition', *Archivaria*, 10 (1980), 249-52; Terry Cook, 'Media Myopia', *Archivaria*, 12 (1981), 146-57.

<sup>135</sup> Stapleton.

<sup>136</sup> Hans Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources', *Archivaria*, 24 (1987), 69-107. Originally published as 'Gesellschaftsordnung und Überlieferungsbildung: Zur Problematik archivarischer Quellenbewertung' in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 68 (1972), 3-40. The English translation is by Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhower.

<sup>137</sup> Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage', 80.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

Hans Booms' ideas were already known outside Germany; for example, in 1976 Ake Kromnow gave a conference paper at the Eighth International Congress on Archives in Washington DC which made reference to Booms' theories.<sup>140</sup> Kromnow noted that there was an inherent difficulty in Booms' method of judging records according to standards contemporary with the records because certain phenomena are noticed later, or after the passage of a considerable length of time.<sup>141</sup> A 1980 workshop on appraising contemporary collections, held in Boston's JFK Library, also included reference to Booms and formed the basis of Nancy Peace's 1984 publication, *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance*.<sup>142</sup> Nonetheless, the publication of Booms' translated article in *Archivaria* in 1987 directly inspired the development of a new approach to archival appraisal in Canada, called macro-appraisal, which was to be advanced by the National Archives of Canada and Canadian archivists including Terry Cook in the 1990s.

#### **2.3.4. 1990s**

One archivist has described the 1990s as a period of 'appraisal wars' – a period in which contradictory ideas appeared, appraisal theory was fractured and there was a lack of consensus on what 'good' selection meant.<sup>143</sup> Faced with challenges from new technology and postmodernist theory, archivists began to question traditional appraisal methodologies. Attempts to find appraisal solutions led to divergent approaches that highlighted fundamental differences in the ways in which archives, records, and notions of value were conceived.

A re-interpretation of existing archival theory initially came from an unexpected source – from David Bearman, a specialist in designing and implementing IT systems for libraries, archives and museums.<sup>144</sup> In Spring 1987,

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<sup>140</sup> Ake Kromnow, *The Appraisal of Contemporary Records, Proceedings of the VIII International Congress on Archives, 27 September-1 October 1976, Washington DC* (ICA, 1976).

<sup>141</sup> Kromnow, 14.

<sup>142</sup> *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance*, ed. by Nancy E. Peace (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1984).

<sup>143</sup> Frank Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts, Archival Fundamental Series II* (Chicago: SAA, 2005), xiv.

<sup>144</sup> See Richard H. Lytle, 'About the Author', *Archivaria*, 21 (1985). Bearman had previously worked at the Smithsonian Institution as Head of Policy and Planning in the Office of Information Resource Management, and in the early 1980s he had spent two years heading up the National Information



Bearman established a consultancy business and a new quarterly journal entitled *Archives and Museum Informatics*.<sup>145</sup> The aim of the journal was to conduct research and publish. Bearman explained that he used the term ‘informatics’ to ‘express a philosophy of looking at the cultural information missions of archives and museums broadly in order to address a range of new approaches, techniques, and technologies that can enhance an organization’s profile and achieve its mission’.<sup>146</sup>

Bearman contributed articles to both *Archivaria* and *The American Archivist*; and through his own publishing venture, which included a series of *Technical Reports*, his views on archival appraisal reached a wide audience. Bearman noted the challenges faced by archivists, particularly the growing volume and variety of records compared to the lack of resources available to deal with them.<sup>147</sup> Bearman argued that traditional approaches to archival appraisal, based on attempts to identify and classify values, had ‘serious shortcomings’ as tools for making appraisal decisions within a given institution, and were ‘fatally flawed in helping to make broader decisions’.<sup>148</sup> Bearman criticized the implied cost-benefit analysis of many appraisal theories, commenting that it was impossible to calculate a ‘value’ of archives in this way. Instead Bearman proposed a methodology based on a risk management approach. He commented that ‘instead of asking what benefits would derive from retaining records, [archivists] should insist on an answer to the probability of incurring unacceptable risks as a consequence of disposing of records’.<sup>149</sup> Bearman argued that efforts to create a “‘representative” record” were doomed to failure because of the inherent bias in the process. He suggested that the only way to ensure an adequate documentation that truly represented the whole of society was to shift the focus from the records themselves to the business functions of which the records were evidence:

In the place of vague General Records Schedules based on media characteristics and types of records series, the archivist can require

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Systems Task Force of the SAA. [www.archimuse.com/consulting/bearman.html](http://www.archimuse.com/consulting/bearman.html) [accessed 25 November 2012].

<sup>145</sup> *Archives and Museum Informatics* (Pittsburgh: David Bearman), 1987-1996; continues as *Archives and Museum Informatics* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers), 1997-1999; and as *Archival Science* from 2001.

<sup>146</sup> David Bearman, ‘What are/is Informatics?’, *Archival Informatics Newsletter*, 1.1 (1987), 8.

<sup>147</sup> David Bearman, *Archival Methods*, *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 9* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989), 6-9.

<sup>148</sup> Bearman, *Archival Methods*, 9-10.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

that a record of a stated activity or event be kept that is adequate to reconstruct what happened and why.<sup>150</sup>

Bearman argued that such an approach would allow appraisal judgements to be made prior to records creation as the archivist would work with the creating departments to ensure that they documented certain activities and functions.<sup>151</sup>

In order to cope with the challenges and costs of preserving electronic records, Bearman also suggested that archivists replace the concept of 'permanent retention' with 'the more realistic concept of "retention for period of continuing value"'.<sup>152</sup> Bearman was aware of the threats posed by new technologies which, through the physical volatility of the format, might prevent the communication of information over time. As a result he believed that it was vital to preserve the 'evidential context of information creation'; to preserve not only the records but the systems in which the records were created.<sup>153</sup> Bearman argued that it was not sufficient to merely keep or store records; but rather that the professional role of the archivist should be to make sense of the documentation and to make it accessible to future generations.<sup>154</sup>

Bearman has been described by some as a 'neo-Jenkinsonian' because he reinterpreted provenance, or the place from which archives originate. Bearman applied it to records' functions rather than the records themselves, which has been viewed by some archivists as an updating of Jenkinson's approach to appraisal.<sup>155</sup> By basing selection on risk management principles with a primary concern for the creation of records for organizational accountability, Bearman removed the need for archivists to appraise individual records.

Writing in 1997, Terry Cook argued that David Bearman 'is the most important figure in contemporary archival thinking' and that as a 'destablizer, a questioner, a leader in challenging the old and envisaging the new', he had 'revolutionalized thinking in archival circles around the world'.<sup>156</sup> Bearman's

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 26-7.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>155</sup> See Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*. See also Chapter 3.

<sup>156</sup> Terry Cook, 'The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique', *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 11.1 (1997), 15-37, (15, 18).

approach to appraisal, laying the emphasis on evidence of business functions, was taken up by many archivists, including Richard J. Cox. Bearman and Cox worked on what became known as the Pittsburgh Project, which sought to define the functional requirements for preserving digital records. The requirements were based on law, customs and best practice, and focused on the preservation of evidence rather than on application requirements for specific archive or recordkeeping systems.<sup>157</sup> The research undertaken at the University of Pittsburgh had a significant influence on the appraisal policies of many US and international archival institutions.<sup>158</sup>

Another archivist who placed an emphasis on records as evidence of business transactions was Luciana Duranti, professor of archival studies at Canada's University of British Columbia. Duranti presented a history of the development of European archival appraisal theory based on Roman Law and rooted in concepts of perpetual memory and public faith.<sup>159</sup> Duranti argued that the archival mission is a by-product of administrative actions and that the role of the archivist is to preserve archives 'uncorrupted, that is, endowed with the integrity they had when their creators [...] set them aside for continuing preservation'.<sup>160</sup> Using the writings of Jenkinson as a framework, Duranti argued that although the evaluation of content was an unavoidable element in appraisal judgements, it should always remain secondary to considerations of record origin, structure and function in order to minimize as much as possible the biases of archivists.<sup>161</sup> Duranti believed that the 'moral defence of archives', as promoted by Jenkinson and Norton, had been undermined by Schellenberg who instead promoted 'the cultural identity of archival repositories and the role of archivists as appraisers of records'.<sup>162</sup> Duranti stressed that 'if what qualifies documents as archival is their nature – as Jenkinson believed –

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<sup>157</sup> The Functional Requirements for Evidence in Recordkeeping Research Project, also known as The Pittsburgh Project, was run by the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, 1992-96. A recovered project website can be found at [www.sis.pitt.edu/~bcallery/pgh/index.htm](http://www.sis.pitt.edu/~bcallery/pgh/index.htm) [accessed 8 December 2012]. See also Chapter 4, section 4.5.

<sup>158</sup> For example, David J. Olson, "'Camp Pitt' and the Continuing Education of Government Archivists 1989-1996', *AA*, 60.2 (1997), 202-14; Howard P. Lowell, 'Building a Public Archives in Delaware for the Twenty-First Century', *AA*, 60.2 (1997), 152-65; Philip C. Bantin, 'Developing a Strategy for Managing Electronic Records – The Findings of the Indiana Electronic Records Project', *AA*, 61.2 (1998), 328-64; Wendy M. Duff, 'Evaluation Metadata on a Metalevel', *AS*, 1.3 (2001), 285-94.

<sup>159</sup> Duranti 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory' and 'Archives as Place', *AM*, 24.2 (1996), 242-55.

<sup>160</sup> Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', 336.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 336-7.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

the idea of attributing values to them is in profound conflict with archival theory'.<sup>163</sup> Duranti argued that in order to ensure the integrity and impartiality of archives, there must be no attribution of 'externally imposed values', but instead, there should be a careful definition 'of archival jurisdictions and acquisition policies'.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, Duranti insisted that 'archivists are mediators and facilitators, custodians and preservers of societal evidence, not documenters and interpreters, or even judges, of societal deeds'.<sup>165</sup>

Duranti believed that the solutions to appraising modern paper and digital records could be found in the discipline of diplomatics, detailing her views in a series of articles published in *Archivaria* from 1989-1991.<sup>166</sup> Diplomatics theory, grounded in business processes and transactions, informed the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems project, known as InterPARES, led by Duranti.<sup>167</sup> Presenting an alternative model to that proposed by the Pittsburgh Project, the InterPARES research linked the determination of a record's value with the notion of whether or not the record is authentic.<sup>168</sup> InterPARES made a significant contribution to archival appraisal theory and, as an ongoing project, continues to influence approaches to the appraisal of electronic records both in Canada and internationally.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 343.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 343.

<sup>166</sup> Luciana Duranti, 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science Part I', *Archivaria*, 28 (1989), 7-27; 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science Part II', *Archivaria*, 29 (1989/90), 4-17; 'Diplomatics: New Users for an Old Science Part III', *Archivaria*, 30 (1990), 4-20; 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science Part IV', *Archivaria*, 31 (1990/91), 10-25; 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science Part V', *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 6-24; and 'Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science Part VI', *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 6-24. Diplomatics is defined as 'the study of the creation, form, and transmission of records, and their relationship to the facts represented in them and to their creator, in order to identify, evaluate and communicate their nature and authenticity' in Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: SAA, 2005), 120. See also Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.

<sup>167</sup> The InterPARES project initially ran at the University of British Columbia from 1994-97 and sought to establish the means for assessing and maintaining the authenticity of electronic records once they become inactive and are selected for permanent preservation. InterPARES 2 took place in 2002-06 and aimed to develop a theoretical understanding of experiential, interactive and dynamic records. InterPARES 3 (2007-2013) aimed to translate the theory and methods of digital preservation developed by InterPARES into concrete action plans for small and medium-sized archival institutions. InterPARES 4 is ongoing and focuses on digital records entrusted to the internet. See [www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org) See also Chapter 4, section 4.5.

<sup>168</sup> Trace, 'On or Off the Record', 61-2.

<sup>169</sup> For example, Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, 'Testing Our Truths: Delineating the Parameters of the Authentic Archival Electronic Record', *AA*, 65.2 (2002), 196-215; Glenn Dingwall, Richard Marciano, Reagan Moore and Evelyn Peters McLellan, 'From Data to Records: Preserving the

Despite the influence of the theories of Bearman and Duranti which reinterpreted Jenkinson for the digital age, some archivists began to question whether their approaches focused too narrowly on evidence of business transactions at the cost of a wider archival mission that included cultural and social dimensions. For example, Terry Cook, praised Bearman for his revolutionary thinking, but also suggested that his theories had significant weaknesses when it came to considering private sector and governmental archives, and that greater focus was needed on the actual record.<sup>170</sup>

As has been previously noted, the National Archives of Canada<sup>171</sup> had long followed a policy known as 'Total Archives' which meant that unlike many other National Archives its holdings included both public records and private archives and manuscripts.<sup>172</sup> Terry Cook worked at the National Archives of Canada from 1975-1998, his last position there was as a senior manager responsible for directing the institution's appraisal and records disposition programme for all formats of record.<sup>173</sup> A prolific contributor to the professional literature, Cook criticized typically North American approaches to appraisal that focused on establishing value taxonomies and attempted to systematize various 'values' such as evidential, informational, legal, primary and secondary.<sup>174</sup> Instead, Cook proposed a shift in focus 'from the appraisal of the record to the conceptual context of its creation, from the physical artifact [sic] to the intellectual purpose behind it'.<sup>175</sup> Cook developed Bearman's ideas about the business functions of records and applied them more broadly to include wider societal-cultural functions of records and recordkeeping.<sup>176</sup>

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Geographic Information System of the City of Vancouver', *Archivaria*, 64 (2007), 181-198; Filip Boudrez, 'Digital Signatures and Electronic Records', *AS*, 7 (2007), 179-93; Livia Iacovino and Barbara Reed, 'Recordkeeping Research Tools in a Multi-disciplinary Context for Cross-jurisdictional Health Records Systems', *AS*, 8.1 (2008), 37-68; Erin O'Meara and Meg Tuomala, 'Finding Balance Between Archival Principles and Real-Life Practices in an Institutional Repository', *Archivaria*, 73 (2012), 81-103.

<sup>170</sup> Cook, 'The Impact of David Bearman', 15-37.

<sup>171</sup> In 2004, the National Archives and the National Library were united as Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

<sup>172</sup> See section 2.3.3.

<sup>173</sup> [www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/history/archives/arch\\_faculty.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/history/archives/arch_faculty.html) [accessed 10 December 2012].

<sup>174</sup> Terry Cook, 'Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal', in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor* ed. by Barbara L. Craig (Ontario, Canada: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38-70; see also Terry Cook, 'Documentation Strategy', *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 181-91.

<sup>175</sup> Cook, 'Mind Over Matter', 38.

<sup>176</sup> Cook, 'The Impact of David Bearman', 29-30.

Cook's self-named 'macro-appraisal' approach involved 'researching, understanding and evaluating the degree of importance of the functions, mandates, programmes, decision-making processes, internal organisation and structure, and activities of the records creator'.<sup>177</sup> Cook argued that such an approach was applicable to all media types as it avoided issues connected with the physical nature of records, which had challenged those archivists dealing with electronic records.<sup>178</sup>

The macro-appraisal approach was a top-down approach that looked for values not in the records themselves but in the functions and structures that created the records. Underpinning Cook's theory was a belief that these structures were 'a manifestation of societal functions'.<sup>179</sup> Cook was greatly influenced by the work of Hans Booms and Hugh A. Taylor, and believed that archives 'should reflect more globally the society that creates them'.<sup>180</sup> In Cook's view, the goal of archival institutions was not merely to preserve the records of government, but was to 'preserve recorded evidence of governance'; in which 'governance' is broadly defined as 'the interaction of the citizens with the state, the impact of the state on society, and the functions or activities of society itself'.<sup>181</sup> Cook's theory attempted to integrate notions of evidential and informational values by emphasizing the role records played as a nexus of activity (function), agency (structure) and citizen.<sup>182</sup>

Cook enthusiastically embraced postmodernist theory, arguing that it provided an opportunity to re-examine traditional concepts and approaches in archival theory and to refresh and enlighten thinking about appraisal.<sup>183</sup> As previously detailed in Chapter 1, postmodernism is a late twentieth-century set of critical practices which have pervaded many aspects of society, and have challenged ideas about narrative, meaning and truth.<sup>184</sup> The work of postmodernist theorists

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<sup>177</sup> Terry Cook, *An Appraisal Methodology: Guidelines for Performing an Archival Appraisal*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft (Ontario: Government Archives Division, National Archives of Canada, 1991) 4.

<sup>178</sup> Cook, 'Mind Over Matter', 39.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>180</sup> Terry Cook, 'What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future of the Paradigm Shift', *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 17-63, (30).

<sup>181</sup> Cook, 'What Is Past Is Prologue', 34.

<sup>182</sup> Cook, 'Mind Over Matter', 55.

<sup>183</sup> Terry Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Postmodern Era', *AM*, 22.2 (1994), 300-29.

<sup>184</sup> Gary Aylesworth, 'Postmodernism', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2013 edn.): <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/postmodernism/> [accessed 1 March 2012]; John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of*

such as Jacques Derrida, in particular, raised questions about the nature of archival creation and preservation. Derrida argued that 'the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event'.<sup>185</sup> Archival theorists began to draw inspiration from postmodernist theory and apply its critiques to archival theory.<sup>186</sup>

In the mid-1990s a fierce debate took place in the pages of *Archivaria*, about the implications of postmodernism for archival theory and practice. The main protagonists were Brien Brothman, Terry Eastwood and Terry Cook, and the main point of contention centred on notions of archival value. Drawing heavily on the work of postmodernist theorists such as Michel Foucault and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Brothman posited that archival institutions were bounded spaces that reflected cultural and social values.<sup>187</sup> Brothman argued that 'individuals are not the ultimate source of value and order creation. The point is that social communities create and destroy value'.<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, he believed that in their efforts to process archives, to sort and catalogue archives, archivists actually create value:

Archival appraisal, for example, is not merely a process of value identification but of value creation or destruction. It entails more than simply identifying archival or historical value that already exists in a document before archivists encounter it. As they make decisions about archival or historical value, archivists in effect create, initiate or perpetuate an axiological commitment which is manifested in the permanence of the order that emerges.<sup>189</sup>

Brothman argued that the archival profession needed to question its traditional assumptions, particularly in the face of advances in information and communications technology.

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*Archival Theory* (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books LLC, 2009), 120; *Life After Postmodernism: Essays on Value and Culture*, ed. by John Fekete (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1988).

<sup>185</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever – A Freudian Impression*, transl. by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 16.

<sup>186</sup> For example, Brien Brothman, 'Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice', *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 78-100; Brien Brothman, 'The Limits of Limits: Derridean Deconstruction and the Archival Institution', *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 205-20; Carolyn Heald, 'Is There Room for Archives in the Postmodern World?', *AA*, 59.1 (1996), 88-101; Brien Brothman, 'Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction', *Archivaria*, 48 (1999), 64-88;

<sup>187</sup> Brothman, 'Orders of Value', 82.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

Terry Eastwood published a highly critical retort to Brothman, suggesting not only that his writing was opaque and confusing, but, more importantly, that his ideas were leading archivists in entirely the wrong direction.<sup>190</sup> Eastwood argued that whilst archives were indeed socially determined, it was from the original context in which they were generated, and not as historical sources. Eastwood argued that:

the purpose of the archivist [...] is to preserve the integrity of the archival documents as faithful and trustworthy evidence of the actions from which they originated. It is precisely the value of the documents as established before they come to the archives which the archivist is entrusted to protect.<sup>191</sup>

Referring to the writings of Jenkinson and Norton, Eastwood defined this value as ‘a general value which all the documents possess. It pertains to no single purpose for which they may be used but equally to all purposes’.<sup>192</sup> Eastwood expanded on this idea in a second article that emphasized the primary value of records as evidence:

Archival documents do capture a moment in time, fix and freeze it as it were, in order to preserve some sense of it for future use, some sense of the unique character of the actions and events from which the documents arose. [...] Archival documents are thus evidence first and information second.<sup>193</sup>

Eastwood further suggested that the evaluation of archives should be based on provenance, pertinence, and use. Despite acknowledging the ‘abstract’ nature of all of these concepts, he nonetheless argued that, in particular, a determination of the use-value of records was both possible and desirable.<sup>194</sup>

Cook weighed in on the argument in the following issue of *Archivaria*, commenting that he found Eastwood’s refusal ‘to acknowledge that archivists are agents, conscious or unconscious, willing or unwilling, of the historical process in which they find themselves incomprehensible’.<sup>195</sup> In 1997 Cook wrote another article that firmly defended his ‘macro’ approach to archival appraisal.<sup>196</sup> Cook acknowledged the importance of postmodernist thought in helping archivists to

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<sup>190</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies’, *Archivaria*, 35 (1993), 232-252.

<sup>191</sup> Eastwood, ‘Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies’, 237.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>193</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘How goes it with Appraisal?’, *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 111-21, (112).

<sup>194</sup> Eastwood, ‘How goes it with Appraisal?’, 117-118.

<sup>195</sup> Terry Cook, ‘Another Brick in the Wall’: Terry Eastwood’s Masonry and Archival Walls, History and Archival Appraisal’, *Archivaria*, 37 (1994), 96-103, (102).

<sup>196</sup> Terry Cook, ‘What is Past is Prologue’, 17-63.



recognize their role as ‘active shapers of the archival heritage’.<sup>197</sup> He argued that this shift in thinking, which took place during the second half of the twentieth century, coupled with the proliferation of multi-media records that required appraisal to begin at the point of records creation, had led to an overthrowing of traditional notions about the impartiality and passivity of the archivist.<sup>198</sup> Debates about the changing perception of the archivist’s role, particularly in appraisal, would continue into the twenty-first century.

Another strand in the development of archival appraisal theory during this period was ‘functional analysis’. Functional analysis demonstrates the interconnectedness of archival appraisal thinking in the 1990s as it can be seen to incorporate some of Cook’s macro-appraisal ideas within the function-based approach of Bearman.<sup>199</sup> Functional analysis can be defined as ‘a technique that sets priorities for appraising and processing materials of an office based on the relative importance of the functions the office performs in an organisation’.<sup>200</sup> It was a broad approach, whose application varied. Helen Willa Samuels was a main protagonist of the approach in the US. Samuels’ *Varsity Letters*, first published in 1992, established functional analysis methodology by arguing that archivists should focus on activities and functions rather than on structures and hierarchies in any given organization.<sup>201</sup> Samuels argued that whilst the latter can change considerably over time, the former remain relatively constant and are therefore a better basis on which to make appraisal decisions.<sup>202</sup> Samuels situated her work within the context of the work of Bearman and his demands for a necessary revision in archival appraisal approaches; and in the work of Cook, Taylor and F. Gerald Ham and their calls for informed selection decisions based on an analytic process centred on contextual information.<sup>203</sup> Although written specifically about university archives, Samuels suggested that her

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 45-6.

<sup>199</sup> Whilst some have defined macro-appraisal simply as one form of functional analysis, for example, Barbara Craig, *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice*, (Munich, Germany: K. G. Saur, 2004); others, including Cook himself, argue that the two are different approaches which, whilst containing some common elements, should be considered as separate appraisal theories in their own right, i.e. Terry Cook, ‘Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives’, *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 14-35; Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*.

<sup>200</sup> Pearce-Moses, 180.

<sup>201</sup> Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Lanham, MD., SAA & Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998).

<sup>202</sup> Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 5.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 3.

approach was equally applicable to any modern institution. She also viewed the approach as complementary to the documentation strategy approach, which she had earlier promoted, arguing that functional analysis can reveal ‘common patterns that permit comparison across traditional institutional boundaries’.<sup>204</sup> The functional analysis approach was influential not only within the US higher education sector but it also transferred to a variety of applications. For example, Victoria Lemieux applied it to organizational models to explore how functions worked within an organization.<sup>205</sup> Other archivists used it to assist in the design of classification schemes or applied it to other contexts including medical and local government archives.<sup>206</sup>

The extent of the influence of Bearman’s ideas is underlined by their promulgation in Australia, where they enhanced existing strategies at the Australian National Archives to formulate the ‘records continuum model’ in the mid-1990s.<sup>207</sup> Frank Upward, a lecturer in librarianship, archives and records management at Monash University, developed the model in 1995 in an attempt to provide a multi-dimensional, layered approach to recordkeeping centred at the point of records creation.<sup>208</sup> Upward published two articles in *Archives and Manuscripts* in 1996 and 1997 that outlined the model in detail.<sup>209</sup> Responding to the challenges of multimedia records, and drawing upon the work of Bearman, the Pittsburgh Project, Terry Cook and postmodernist theorist Jean François Lyotard among others, Upward suggested three principles for the model: (1) that the concept of ‘records’ should be inclusive of ‘archives’, defined as ‘records of continuing value’; (2) that archivists

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 4. See also section 2.3.2.

<sup>205</sup> Victoria Lemieux, ‘Applying Mintsberg’s Theories on Organizational Configuration to Archival Appraisal’, *Archivaria*, 46 (1998), 32-85.

<sup>206</sup> For example, Paul Sabourin, ‘Constructing a Function-Based Records Classification System: Business Activity Structure Classification System’, *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 137-154; Joan D. Krizack, ‘Hospital Documentation Planning: The Concept and the Context’, *AA*, 56.1 (1993), 16-34; Jim Suderman, ‘Appraising Records of the Expenditure Management Function: An Exercise in Functional Analysis’, *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 129-142.

<sup>207</sup> Bearman’s influence can also be seen in the development of AS4390 Australian Standard: Records Management in 1996 which used functional analysis and the records continuum concept in a risk management approach to identify and capture the evidential value of electronic records within the Australian government recordkeeping systems.

<sup>208</sup> Frank Upward, ‘Modelling the Continuum as a Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes, and Beyond: A Personal Reflection’, *AS*, 10.3 (2000), 115-39.

<sup>209</sup> Frank Upward, ‘Structuring the Records Continuum – Part One: Postcustodial Principles and Properties’, *AM*, 24 (1996), 268-85 and ‘Structuring the Records Continuum – Part Two: Structuration Theory and Recordkeeping’, *AM*, 25 (1997), 10-35. Both articles viewed online at: [www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications](http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications) [accessed 10 December 2012].

needed to re-focus on records ‘as logical rather than physical entities’; and (3) that recordkeeping should ‘be integrated into business and societal processes and purposes’.<sup>210</sup> The resulting records continuum model was continuous and constructed in space/time: ‘no separate parts of a continuum are readily discernible, and its elements pass into each other’.<sup>211</sup> The model comprised four dimensions which, whilst not being strictly bounded, could be analysed as: creation; capture; organization; and pluralization. Upward argued that the different dimensions allowed the model to work for paper and electronic records, and enabled it to support both an evidence-based approach and a societal-collective memory approach to recordkeeping.<sup>212</sup>

One commentator described the importance of the exchange of ideas between archivists in Australia and colleagues in North America and Europe, and noted how these exchanges re-invigorated Australian archival theory in the 1990s.<sup>213</sup> Sue McKemmish argued that the records continuum model shifted the viewpoint from ‘positivist notions about the existence of immutable, autonomous [principles]’, that were associated with ‘ideas about the objective and fixed nature of records and the impartial and neutral roles played by archivists in their preservation’.<sup>214</sup> In her view, such notions had been replaced with postmodernist ideas that viewed records ‘as dynamic objects that are fixed in terms of content and meaningful elements of their structure, but linked to ever broadening layers of contextual metadata that manages their meanings and enables their accessibility and usability as they move through “space/time”’.<sup>215</sup>

A different archival appraisal approach was formulated within the context of the appraisal of business records in the US. The approach became known as the Minnesota Method.<sup>216</sup> Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, both archivists

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<sup>210</sup> Upward, ‘Structuring the Records Continuum – Part One’, 9-10 (online version).

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 12 (online version).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 14-16 (online version).

<sup>213</sup> Sue McKemmish, ‘Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice’, *AS*, 1.4 (2001), 333-59, (340-1).

<sup>214</sup> McKemmish, ‘Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice’, 349.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 349.

<sup>216</sup> The Minnesota Method resulted from a collaborative research project: The Records of American Business Project, led by the Hagley Museum and Library in Delaware and the Minnesota Historical Society in the late 1990s. The project’s aim was ‘to refine and redefine the appraisal and use of corporate records’. See *The Records of American Business*, ed. by James O’Toole (Chicago: SAA, 1997).

at the Minnesota Historical Society, attempted to develop a pragmatic approach for the selection of modern business records for permanent preservation, based on the assumption that ‘all archival appraisal is local and subjective’.<sup>217</sup> Nonetheless, the authors argued that by carefully analysing the records’ creators, appraisal criteria could be established that was ‘rational and efficient relative to a specific repository’s goals and resources’.<sup>218</sup> Greene later summarized the methodology, stating that one of the primary reasons why the Minnesota Method was developed was as a response to the overwhelming volume of business records requiring appraisal at the Minnesota Historical Society.<sup>219</sup> Greene explained that the large volume meant that appraisal had to take place on a series level rather than at an individual record level. In order to evaluate which records should be preserved the method analysed current holdings, took account of current and predicted staffing resources, studied the needs of users and considered institutional priorities and goals.<sup>220</sup> The method categorized the various businesses (the record creators) into sectors and ranked them according to economic impact, extant documentation, identification with the state and the degree to which the particular sector was unique to Minnesota. These rankings in turn enabled Greene and his colleagues to determine which series of records should be preserved and actively collected by the Society.<sup>221</sup> The Minnesota Method was applied to archival appraisal by other institutions, both corporate and non-corporate.<sup>222</sup>

Greene further developed the Minnesota Method by shifting the focus from records creators to the actual records, through the application of a concept of utilitarian value. Greene believed that an evaluation of records based on their use-value was effective as an appraisal criterion and defended this view in a 1998 article in *Archivaria* entitled: “‘The Surest Proof’: A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal’.<sup>223</sup> Greene argued that use was ‘the only empirical measurement’ of the value that an

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<sup>217</sup> Mark A. Greene and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, ‘Documentation With Attitude: A Pragmatist’s Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records’, in *The Records of American Business*, ed. by O’Toole, 162.

<sup>218</sup> Greene and Daniels-Howell, 162.

<sup>219</sup> Mark A. Greene, “‘The Surest Proof’: A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal’, *Archivaria*, 45 (1998), 127-69.

<sup>220</sup> Greene, ‘The Surest Proof’, 132.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-4.

<sup>222</sup> For example, Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan and Christine Weideman, “‘Though This Be Madness, Yet There Is Method in ’t’: Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy’, *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 56-69.

<sup>223</sup> Greene, “‘The Surest Proof’”.

institution or society may have of its archives.<sup>224</sup> He acknowledged that whilst an evaluation of use may not be entirely free of bias or wholly scientific, nonetheless, he regarded such an approach as ‘a step toward making more rational and thoughtful choices’.<sup>225</sup>

### **2.3.5. Concluding remarks**

The 1990s was an extremely productive period in the development of archival appraisal theory. The cross-fertilization of ideas across international boundaries, aided by technological advances in international communications, led to a proliferation of related appraisal theories, many building upon and developing from others. Yet simultaneously greater divisions appeared within the archival community at large as fundamental differences in perceptions about archives, records and notions of value emerged. These differences were to inform archival appraisal theory in the twenty-first century as archivists sought to find ways to mend the divisions.

### **2.4. Twenty-first century approaches to appraisal**

Broadly speaking, as yet, archival appraisal theory has not undergone any substantial revisions during the twenty-first century; however, it has been impacted by several wider-reaching phenomena including new ideas about memory, accountability and power, and developments such as community archives. Postmodernist theory has continued to shape archival theory – whether its influence is overtly embraced as a welcome catalyst;<sup>226</sup> or whether it is regarded as a challenge against which traditional archival theory must be defended.<sup>227</sup> In this context, the myriad of possible archival appraisal theories available can be seen as a series of adaptable guidance that provide different solutions for different situations.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>226</sup> See for example the writings of Terry Cook; Verne Harris, *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa* (Pretoria: National Archives of South Africa, 2000); Rachel Hardiman, ‘En Mal D’archive: Postmodernist Theory and Recordkeeping’, *JSA*, 30.1 (2009), 27-44.

<sup>227</sup> See for example, Heather MacNeil, ‘Trusting Records in a Post-Modern World’, *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 36-47; Terry Eastwood, ‘Reflections on the Goal of Archival Appraisal in Democratic Societies’, *Archivaria*, 54 (2002), 59-71.

<sup>228</sup> Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts; Currents of Archival Thinking*. See also Chapter 1, section 1.4.

Existing archival appraisal theories continue to be consolidated and applied to a variety of archival institutions.<sup>229</sup> The consolidation of existing theories has been reinforced by the publication of several compendiums detailing the development of archival appraisal theory from various different viewpoints; for example: Richard J. Cox's *No Innocent Deposits: Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal*, bringing together several of his previously published articles into one monograph, emphasized the value of records as evidence;<sup>230</sup> Barbara Craig's *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice* promoted a Canadian perspective, comparing it with American and British approaches to appraisal;<sup>231</sup> Frank Boles' *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* summarized the development of appraisal theory in North America;<sup>232</sup> John Ridener's *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* presented a US-focused discussion of several perceived paradigm shifts that have shaped appraisal theory;<sup>233</sup> Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil's edited volume of essays, *Currents of Archival Thinking*, explored various aspects of archival theory under a broad theme of changing trends and approaches;<sup>234</sup> and *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions* presented a series of essays in honour of Helen Willa Samuels, edited by Terry Cook, that favourably critiqued the documentation strategy approach.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> For example, InterPARES approaches : Courtney C Mumma, Glenn Dingwall and Sue Bigelow, 'A First Look at the Acquisition and Appraisal of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Fond: or, SELECT \* FROM VANOC\_Records AS Archives WHERE Value = "true"', *Archivaria*, 72 (2011), 93-122; and Bonnie Mak, 'On the Uses of Authenticity', *Archivaria*, 73 (2012), 1-17; Documentation strategy approaches : Doris J. Malkmus, 'Documentation Strategy: Mastodon or Retro Success?', *AA*, 71.2 (2008), 384-409 and Cathy Williams, 'On *The Record*: Towards a Documentation Strategy', *JSA*, 33.1 (2012), 23-40; Macro-appraisal approaches: Torkel Thime, 'New Approaches to Appraisal in Norway', *COMMA*, 2004.1 (2004), 63-65 and Catherine A. Bailey, 'Turning Macro-Appraisal Decisions into Archival Holdings: Crafting Function-based Terms and Conditions for the Transfer of Archival Records', *Archivaria*, 61 (2006), 147-79; Functional analysis approach: Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, 'The Functional Approach to Appraisal: The Experience of the National Archives of Australia', *COMMA*, 2002.1-2 (2002), 57-62; Continuum approaches: Frank Upward, Sue McKemmish and Barbara Reed, 'Archivists and Changing Social and Information Spaces: A Continuum Approach to Recordkeeping in Online Cultures', *Archivaria*, 72 (2001), 197-237 and Margaret Kertesz, Cathy Humphreys and Cathy Carnovale, 'Reformulating Current Recordkeeping Practices in Out-of-home Care: Recognising the Centrality of Records', *AM*, 40.1 (2012), 42-53.

<sup>230</sup> Richard J. Cox, *No Innocent Deposits: Forming Archives by Rethinking Appraisal* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2004).

<sup>231</sup> Barbara Craig, *Archival Appraisal: Theory and Practice* (Munich, Germany: K. G. Saur, 2004).

<sup>232</sup> Frank Boles, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*, *Archival Fundamentals Series II* (Chicago: SAA, 2005).

<sup>233</sup> John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books LLC., 2009).

<sup>234</sup> *Currents of Archival Thinking*.

<sup>235</sup> *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions. Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*, ed. by Terry Cook (Chicago: SAA, 2011).

The advent of the twenty-first century also brought a sense of nostalgia and looking back to the previous century with the publication of the selected works of Hugh A. Taylor,<sup>236</sup> Lester J. Cappon,<sup>237</sup> and Ernst Posner.<sup>238</sup> Journal articles also contributed to this sense of reviewing the past, with several articles presenting critical reviews of the theories of Jenkinson and Schellenberg.<sup>239</sup> However, the new century also brought new ideas as interdisciplinary approaches came to the fore and archivists began to draw inspiration from theories in other disciplines including information theory,<sup>240</sup> conceptual analysis,<sup>241</sup> speech act theory,<sup>242</sup> and genre theory.<sup>243</sup> Changing theories about memory and identity, in particular, have also been used by several archivists to inform their approach towards archive and recordkeeping.

For much of the early part of the twentieth century memory had been regarded by many archivists as ‘unreliable’ and ‘fragile’ and the primary purpose of archives was to counter this fragility.<sup>244</sup> M. T. Clanchy’s influential work, *From Memory to Written Record* reinforced this common perception as he described the shift from orality to written records in Medieval England.<sup>245</sup> Archives were regarded as providing the necessary vehicles for recollection, supplying the facts from which past events were revealed. The prevailing historiographical and archival discourse for much of the early twentieth century was that the actions and experiences of people in the past could be understood through the traces that those people left

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<sup>236</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, *Imaging Archives: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Gordon Dodd and Terry Cook (US: SAA and Association of Canadian Archivists, in Association with the Scarecrow Press Inc., 2003).

<sup>237</sup> Lester J. Cappon and the Relationship of History, *Archives and Scholarship in the Golden Age of Archival Theory*, ed. by Richard J. Cox (Chicago: SAA, 2004).

<sup>238</sup> Ernst Posner, *Archives and the Public Interest – Selected Essays*, ed. by Ken Munden (Chicago: SAA, 2006).

<sup>239</sup> Reto Tschan, ‘A Comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal’, *AA*, 65.2 (2002), 176-95; Terry Eastwood, ‘Jenkinson’s Writings on Some Enduring Archival Themes’, *AA*, 67.1 (2004), 31-44; Margaret Procter, ‘Life Before Jenkinson – the Development of British Archival Theory and Thought at the Turn of the Twentieth Century’, *Archives*, 33.119 (2008), 140-61; Robert Fisher, ‘In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited’, *Archivaria*, 67 (2009), 1-24.

<sup>240</sup> Mats Burell, ‘Appraisal and Information Theory’, *COMMA*, 2004.1 (2004), 55-61.

<sup>241</sup> Jonathan Furner, ‘Conceptual Analysis: A Method for Understanding Information as Evidence and Evidence as Information’, *AS*, 4.3-4 (2004), 233-65.

<sup>242</sup> Peter Monteith, ‘Can Records Speak For Themselves?’, *JSA*, 31.2 (2010), 119-33; Geoffrey Yeo, ‘Representing the Act: Records and Speech Act Theory’, *JSA*, 31.2 (2010), 95-117.

<sup>243</sup> Hea Lim Rhee, ‘Genres and Genre Repertoires of User and Use Information Services in US State Archival and Records Management Appraisal Practice’, *AS*, 12.2 (2012), 461-83.

<sup>244</sup> For example, Fritz Morstein Marx, ‘The Role of Records in Administration’, *AA*, 10.3 (1947), 241-8; William D. McCain, ‘The Value of Records’, *AA*, 16.1 (1953), 3-11.

<sup>245</sup> M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

behind in the present. The historian sought out these traces – the records and archives – in order to re-enact the past, to get inside the mind of the traces’ originators and attempt to see what really happened through their eyes.<sup>246</sup> In the later twentieth century, notions about memory, especially collective memory, were re-evaluated in postmodernist terms by some philosophers, historians and sociologists who posited that such concepts were social constructs.<sup>247</sup> The writings of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Paul Ricoeur, among others, had a profound influence on many archivists. One of the earliest articles published in the archival literature that re-examined traditional concepts about memory was by Kenneth Foote in 1990.<sup>248</sup> A geography academic at the University of Austin, Texas, Foote introduced the notion of the ‘cultural effacement of memory’.<sup>249</sup> Foote drew parallels with the built heritage and described how society often chooses not to remember certain difficult or tragic events by the ‘active effacement of buildings’ connected to those events; examples given by Foote included the site of the execution of witches in Salem, Massachusetts, and the former Gestapo headquarters in Berlin.<sup>250</sup> Foote commented that the memorialization of certain events is often done through ‘sanctification’ (the construction of a memorial) or by ‘rectification’ (whereby a place or building is ‘put right’ and reused).<sup>251</sup> Foote explained that ‘all these cases show how social pressures shape landscape into an acceptable representation of the past’.<sup>252</sup> Foote argued that there were parallels in archive and recordkeeping, that such shaping occurs to archives too as ‘attitudes toward the past, as well as visions of the future, can sometimes condition collecting policies’.<sup>253</sup> Foote concluded that the challenge for archivists is to recognize the active role that appraisal can play in both preserving and effacing social memory.

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<sup>246</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press-Galaxy Press, 1956).

<sup>247</sup> For example, Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7-24; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

<sup>248</sup> Kenneth Foote, ‘To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory and Culture’, *AA*, 53.3 (1990), 378-93. Foote’s article is often cited as a seminal text in exploring this subject area, although many of his ideas about archives being ‘a valuable means of extending temporal and spatial range of human communication’ were prefigured in the earlier writings of Hugh A. Taylor.

<sup>249</sup> Foote, 379.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.



Footnote inspired the publication of many other articles in the archival literature on the theme of memory.<sup>254</sup> The subject gained further prominence in the twenty-first century with articles about memory and archives regularly appearing in all the archival journals, culminating in a special issue of *Archival Science* in March 2011 entitled 'Archives and the Ethics of Memory Construction'. Many archivists increasingly noted the apparent tension between concepts of memory and evidence in archival appraisal.<sup>255</sup> This tension can be summarized as evolving from the different approaches to appraisal that can be traced back to Schellenberg and Jenkinson respectively. The first emphasizes the cultural role of archives in society to foster memory and understanding of the past; whilst the second is concerned with preserving record integrity and impartiality as evidence of past actions.<sup>256</sup> Attempts to reconcile the perceived dichotomy between archives as memory and archives as evidence also dominated the archival literature in the twenty-first century as archivists sought unifying theories to heal the divisions within the profession. Macro-appraisal, as 'an assertion of society as the origin of value in records', was seen by some to provide a 'third-way'.<sup>257</sup> An alternative solution was suggested by Laura Millar who drew on the theories of contemporary sociologists about collective memory.<sup>258</sup> Millar argued that archives were not in fact memories, but were rather the 'triggers or touchstones that lead to the recollection of past events'.<sup>259</sup> Ascribing a significant and quasi-political role to archives, Millar noted that the relationship between the two was complex, as archives provided a framework, but not necessarily

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<sup>254</sup> For example, Richard J. Cox, 'The Concept of Public Memory and Its Impact on Archival Programming', *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 122-35; James O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', *AA*, 56.2 (1993), 234-55; Judith M. Panitch, 'Liberty, Equality, Posterity? Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution', *AA*, 59.1 (1996), 30-47; Tim Cook, 'Tools of Memory', *Archivaria*, 45 (1998), 194-204; Robert McIntosh, 'The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory', *Archivaria*, 46 (1998), 1-31.

<sup>255</sup> For example, Danielle Wickman, 'Bright Specimens for the Curious or the Somewhat Imponderable Guided by the Unfathomable: Use, Users and Appraisal in Archival Literature', *AM*, 28.1 (2000), 64-79; Tony Newton, 'Will the Tension Ever End? Some Observations and Suggestions from an Appraisal Archivist', *AM*, 29.1 (2001), 86-97; Brien Brothman, 'The Past That Archives Keep: Memory, History and the Preservation of Archival Records', *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 48-80; Mark A. Greene, 'The Power of Meaning: The Archival Mission in the Postmodern Age', *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 43-55.

<sup>256</sup> Eastwood, 'Reflections on the Goal of Archival Appraisal in Democratic Societies', 60-1.

<sup>257</sup> John W. Roberts, 'One Size Fits All? The Portability of Macro-Appraisal by a Comparative Analysis of Canada, South Africa and New Zealand', *Archivaria*, 52 (2001), 47-68. See also articles by Terry Cook, including most recently, 'Evidence, Memory, Identity and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms', *AS*, 13.2-3 (2013), 95-120.

<sup>258</sup> Laura Millar, 'Touchstones: Considering the Relationship Between Memory and Archives', *Archivaria*, 61 (2006), 105-126.

<sup>259</sup> Millar, 114.

the complete picture for memory formation.<sup>260</sup> Millar wrote that although archives and records ‘are not memories, and by themselves they do not imbue us with knowledge [...] they are a means by which we gain knowledge of ourselves and our society, leading ultimately, one hopes, to greater understanding, compassion and wisdom’.<sup>261</sup>

Jeannette Bastian attempted to reconcile postmodernist ideas, which dismiss the notion of a linear historical narrative, with ideas about collective memory by arguing that archives ‘provide the continuity of a narrative as it moves from the actual event into the fluid space of its remembrance. Through this continuum of event and memory, the past can be recalled in the ever-changing present’.<sup>262</sup>

Other writers suggested a re-thinking of the concept of evidence. For example, in an article calling on archivists to re-examine their use of definitions, Geoffrey Yeo asserted that evidence might be better thought of as an ‘affordance’, or as a property or function that is provided by the records.<sup>263</sup> Jennifer Meehan suggested that a re-interpretation of evidence as the relation between the record and the event it recorded, rather than viewing evidence as inherent in the record itself, might provide an alternative solution.<sup>264</sup>

The twenty-first century also saw the appearance of new phenomena impacting on the archival profession, notably community archives and freedom of information. Community archives is generally understood to refer to collections of materials relating to a specific community of people and which is created, held and managed primarily within that community rather than by a professional heritage organization.<sup>265</sup> Such collections have long existed but it has only been in the last thirty years or so that there has been formal recognition of them by cultural policy-makers and professionals. New technology, particularly the use of social media, has

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 114-6.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>262</sup> Jeannette Bastian, ‘Flowers for Homestead: A Case Study in Archives and Collective Memory’, *AA*, 72.1 (2009), 113-32, (131).

<sup>263</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, ‘Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations’, *AA*, 70.2 (2007), 315-43.

<sup>264</sup> Jennifer Meehan, ‘The Archival Nexus: Rethinking the Interplay of Archival Ideas About the Nature, Value and Use of Records’, *AS*, 9.3-4 (2009), 157-64.

<sup>265</sup> Community Archives and Heritage Group, [www.communityarchives.org.uk](http://www.communityarchives.org.uk) [accessed 23 December 2012]; Andrew Flinn, ‘The impact of independent and community archives on professional archival thinking and practice’, in *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader*, ed. by Jennie Hill (London: Facet Publishing, 2011), 145-67.

contributed to the sense that everyone is now their own archivist.<sup>266</sup> Terms like ‘archiving’ have taken on new meanings as they have become part of common parlance within the digital environment. Anne J. Gilliland has suggested that the new digital age might render obsolete traditional notions of appraisal, commenting that ‘we exhibit much hubris in thinking we can actually eliminate all traces of networked digital material’.<sup>267</sup> Concerns about the proliferation of de-contextualized records in cyberspace and society’s increasing inability to forget have led some archivists to re-examine provenance and context and their roles in appraisal decisions.<sup>268</sup>

The growth of the use of the internet and other digital tools by society at large has coincided with concerns that the records held in many publicly-funded archival institutions are not representative of those marginalized by society.<sup>269</sup> Many community groups established their own archival collections outside of the professional heritage sphere to challenge this perceived under-representation.<sup>270</sup> Whilst some archivists have felt threatened by the proliferation of community archives, many more have embraced the movement’s core ideas about the democratization of archives and have sought to evolve archival practices to encompass other perspectives and narratives outside of the mainstream.<sup>271</sup> Eric Ketelaar has called for public archives to re-connect with people’s stories, for archives to be re-cast as ‘spaces of memory, where people’s experiences can be

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<sup>266</sup> See for example, Catherine O’Sullivan, ‘Diaries, On-Line Diaries, and the Future Loss to Archives: Or, Blogs and the Blogging Bloggers Who Blog Them’, *AA*, 68.1 (2005), 53-73; Daniel J. Caron and Richard Brown, ‘The Documentary Movement in the Digital Age: Establishing New Value Propositions for Public Memory’, *Archivaria*, 71 (2011), 1-20; Richard N. Katz and Paul B. Gandel, ‘The Tower, the Cloud, and Posterity: Documenting in a Digital World’, in *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions*, ed. by Terry Cook, 217-40.

<sup>267</sup> Anne J. Gilliland, ‘Archival appraisal: practising on shifting sands’, in *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*, ed. by Caroline Brown (London: Facet Publishing, 2014), 31-62, (54).

<sup>268</sup> See, for example, Geoffrey Yeo, ‘Trust and Content in Cyberspace’, *Archives and Records*, 34.2 (2013), 214-34. See also Chapter 3, section 3.6.

<sup>269</sup> Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd, ‘Whose memories, whose archives? Independent community archives, autonomy and the mainstream’, *AS*, 9.1-2 (2009), 71-86.

<sup>270</sup> Heather MacNeil, ‘Trust and Professional Identity: Narratives, Counter-narratives and Lingering Ambiguities’, *AS*, 11.3-4 (2011), 184-5; see also *Community Archives and Identities: Documenting and Sustaining Community Heritage* AHRC-funded project, UCL, 2008-9 [www.ucl.ac.uk/dis/icarus/research-areas/community-archives](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/dis/icarus/research-areas/community-archives) [accessed 23 December 2012].

<sup>271</sup> Andrew Flinn, ‘An Attack on Professionalism and Scholarship? Democratising Archives and the Production of Knowledge’, *Ariadne*, 62 (2010) [www.ariadne.ac.uk](http://www.ariadne.ac.uk) [accessed 23 December 2012]. The broad shift in thinking can be seen in the publication of a special issue of *Archivaria* on Queer Archives in 2009 and also in 2009, *AS* devoted an entire issue to papers from the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the History of Records and Archives, held in Perth, Western Australia in August 2008, on the theme of *Minority Reports: Indigenous and Community Voices in Archives*.

transmitted into meaning’.<sup>272</sup> Ketelaar believed that archivists should embrace Web 2.0 technology as a means of facilitating the process and creating ‘communities of records’ with various layers of activity, meaning and relationships.<sup>273</sup> The challenge for archivists is to allow space for these multiple meanings and to support the creation of opposing or complementary forms of record and remembrance.

Freedom of information legislation has also contributed to a growing sense of awareness by the general public about the value and potential power of archives. The public’s right to know, enshrined in Access to Information laws in many countries, has raised demands from the public for greater accountability and transparency about how and why institutions hold records, including archives.<sup>274</sup> Archivists and other information professionals have been forced to justify acquisition and disposal policies against accusations that they are wilfully destroying history or covering up wrongdoing by governments or corporations.<sup>275</sup> Sue McKemmish first gave voice to a growing belief held by society at large that records *about* me are *owned* by me in an article entitled ‘Evidence of Me’, published in 1996.<sup>276</sup> Modern legislation, such as the *UK Data Protection Act 1998*, acknowledges that the record subject has certain rights with regard to the record including the right that the information contained in the record is accurate.<sup>277</sup> Archivists have realized that the boundaries between private and public records have blurred as the individual past becomes the collective present.<sup>278</sup> Archivists recognized the role they play as ‘active agents of political accountability, social memory and national identity’<sup>279</sup> with the publication

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<sup>272</sup> Eric Ketelaar, ‘Archives as Spaces of Memory’, *JSA*, 29.1 (2008), 9-27, (21).

<sup>273</sup> Ketelaar, ‘Archives as Spaces of Memory’, 17.

<sup>274</sup> The *UK Freedom of Information Act 2000* followed similar legislation in the US (*FOIA 1966*), Australia (*FOIA 1982*) and Canada (*Access to Information 1983*).

<sup>275</sup> Some examples include: Nicholson Baker, *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* (New York: Random House, 2001); The Heiner Affair in Queensland Australia and Enron in the US, see Chris Hurley, ‘Recordkeeping, Document Destruction and the Law’ (Heiner, Enron and McCabe), *AM*, 30.2 (2002), 6-25; Hilda Kean, ‘Whose Archive? Whose History? Destruction of Archives at Ruskin College, Oxford’, *History Workshop Online*, 4 October 2012 [www.historyworkshop.org.uk](http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk) [accessed 23 December 2012].

<sup>276</sup> Sue McKemmish, ‘Evidence of Me’, *AM*, 24.1 (1996), 28-45.

<sup>277</sup> *UK Data Protection Act 1998*, Principle 4. [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents) [accessed 23 December 2012].

<sup>278</sup> Verne Harris, ‘On the Back of a Tiger: Deconstructive Possibilities in ‘Evidence of Me’’, *AM*, 29.1 (2001), 8-21; Anne-Marie Condé, ‘The Symbolic Significance of Archives: A Discussion’, *AM*, 33.2 (2005), 92-108.

<sup>279</sup> Terry Cook, ‘“A Monumental Blunder”: The Destruction of Records on Nazi War Criminals in Canada’, in *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, ed. by Richard J. Cox and David A. Wallace (Westport, US: Quorum Books, 2002), 37-65, (38).

of a series of collected essays on the theme of *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society* in 2002.<sup>280</sup>

Thus far, the twenty-first century has seen the wider application of existing archival appraisal theories, with nuanced tweaks being made to the theories rather than any major revisions. Influences from outside of the archival discipline, notably theories about collective memory, the impact of community archives and the access to information agenda, have all shaped approaches to archival appraisal. The multiplicity of perspectives on history and society – one result of the prevailing postmodernist paradigm – has been mirrored by the archival profession. In seeking an appraisal approach that is more inclusive and democratic, archivists have tried to find a balance with traditional notions of authority and control. Wider society has realized the potential power of archives for public accountability and personal history; this has led to a greater spotlight being cast on the archival profession than ever before. Knowing why archivists keep archives, understanding their appraisal decisions, has become important to the general public and has led to a quest for greater transparency, and greater insight, within the archival profession as a whole.

## **2.5. Concluding remarks**

Archival appraisal theory has come a long way since the end of the nineteenth century. Initially dominated by one specific approach, the archival profession today has a whole range of different appraisal theories and techniques from which to choose. These theories include, variously, concepts like impartiality, authenticity and uniqueness; ideas about administrative value and research value, cost of preservation and use; and views about memory and evidence. Advancements in technology have both challenged traditional principles about recordkeeping and have helped to disseminate new theories more widely. In practical ways the international archival community has never been closer, yet the divisions between archival theorists have never been more pronounced. The broader dynamic shift from a positivist to a postmodernist frame of reference during the second half of the twentieth century significantly impacted on archival theory, leading archivists to question not only their ideas about records but also their roles as recordkeepers.

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<sup>280</sup> *Archives and the Public Good: Accountability and Records in Modern Society*, ed. by Richard J. Cox and David A Wallace (Westport, US: Quorum Books, 2002).

Views about archivists as custodians of evidential records are juxtaposed with views about social responsibility as documenters of society and culture. There has been a recognition of the importance of archives – as sources of public and corporate accountability, of power – but also an acknowledgement that there is not just one story but multiple stories, multiple narratives and perspectives, multiple histories. The histories of ordinary citizens, of marginalized individuals and communities, are being told as never before. The archival profession, in response to the various challenges and opportunities, continues to evolve, to question its core tenets and principles, and to explore the nature and value of archives.

This chapter has presented a chronological summary of the principal developments in archival appraisal theory of the twentieth and twenty-first century. The next chapter will continue the exploration of the archival literature and will consider concepts of archival value that can be found in discussions about the principles of provenance, *respect des fonds* and archival order.

## Chapter 3. Value and the archival principle of provenance

### 3.1. Chapter summary

Chapter 3 continues the exploration of literature in the topic of interest by expanding the review of the archival literature to include wider discussions about archival value other than appraisal. The chapter explores the archival principle of provenance, which has been linked to concepts of archival value, together with the related principles of *respect des fonds* and original order. The theorization and application of the principles have been primarily in approaches to archival arrangement and description, and this chapter examines the various interpretations of provenance taken by these approaches, and their implications for concepts of archival value. The chapter discusses in particular an interpretation of provenance that focuses on a concept of the archival *fonds* as an organic whole and will explore some ideas about wholes and parts that have been influential in archival theory.

### 3.2. Introduction

One of the challenges that must be faced when attempting to explore the nature of value concepts is that such concepts are all-pervasive. Archivists' ideas about value naturally tend to focus on archival appraisal theory and practice; however, discussions of value concepts can be found elsewhere in the archival literature. Archival arrangement and description are core activities for the archivist, which involve value judgements at some level, whether explicitly stated or not. Once appraisal decisions have been made, the archivist is responsible for ensuring that archives are arranged and described in order to facilitate access and interpretation by present and future generations of users. Many archivists increasingly acknowledge that their decisions in how to arrange and what to describe necessarily involve a choice or selection, which is essentially an evaluative judgement about the archives concerned.<sup>1</sup> Whilst some archivists suggest that the archival activities of

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, for example, gave examples of descriptive practice which can ignore the presence of extraneous materials added by later custodians, in 'Custodial History, Provenance, and the Description of Personal Records', *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, 44.1 (2009), 50-64. See also Terry Cook, 'What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future of the Paradigm Shift', *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 17-63; Geoffrey Yeo 'Debates about Description', in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, ed. by Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara, US: Libraries Unlimited/ABC Clio, 2010), 89-114, (99-100).

arrangement and description can reveal the value and meaning of the archives,<sup>2</sup> others argue that these activities actually contribute to its creation. For example, Wendy Duff and Verne Harris argued that ‘the power to describe is the power to make and remake records and to determine how they will be used and remade in the future’;<sup>3</sup> whilst Brien Brothman argued that the ordering of archival records constitutes a ‘ministering gesture’ that both creates and destroys value.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the term ‘value’ is infrequently used in discussions about archival arrangement and description; however, writers regularly refer to how such activity impacts on archives’ ‘meaning’, ‘significance’, and ‘importance’, arguably using these terms in a sense synonymous with ‘value’. Furthermore, it is the author’s contention that even when such terms are not explicitly used, the discussions are nonetheless implicitly shaped within an evaluative frame of reference.

Archival arrangement and description are often treated as separate activities; even where archivists have acknowledged them as interrelated, they have tended to focus on one aspect rather than the other.<sup>5</sup> However, the author takes the view of several writers in regarding ‘arrangement and description [as]... a linked process for establishing control over archival and manuscript collections’, and moreover, that ‘arrangement is the basis of description, in fact the description is of the arrangement’.<sup>6</sup> Therefore this chapter will consider both arrangement and description theories together in relation to ideas about archival provenance and value.

Archival arrangement and description can be broadly defined as a systematic scheme or process that is fundamental for the administrative and intellectual control of archives, ‘which together provide the foundation for effective retrieval of and intellectual access to archival documents’.<sup>7</sup> In 1964, Oliver W. Holmes first

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Theodore R. Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, *AA*, 24.1 (1961), 11-24.

<sup>3</sup> Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, ‘Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings’, *AS*, 2.3-4 (2002), 263-85, (272). Similar claims have been made by Elizabeth Yakel, ‘Archival Representation’, *AS*, 3.1 (2003), 1-25; and Heather MacNeil, ‘Picking Our Text: Archival Description, Authenticity and the Archivist as Editor’, *AA*, 68.2 (2005), 264-78.

<sup>4</sup> Brien Brothman, ‘Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice’, *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 78-100.

<sup>5</sup> Richard C. Berner and Uli Haller, ‘Principles of Archival Inventory Construction’, *AA*, 47.2 (1984), 134-55, (135).

<sup>6</sup> Berner and Haller, 154; see also Jennifer Meehan, ‘Making the Leap from Parts to Whole: Evidence and Inference in Archival Arrangement and Description’, *AA*, 72.1 (2009), 72-90.

<sup>7</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘Putting the Parts of the Whole Together: Systematic Arrangement of Archives’, *Archivaria*, 50 (2000), 93-116, (95).



enunciated what has been held to be true by many archivists ever since, namely that: ‘arrangement is the basic internal activity of an archival establishment. All other [...] activities depend on its proper accomplishment’.<sup>8</sup> However, whilst most archivists might agree on the importance and purpose of arrangement and description, there is a great deal of disagreement about how it should be done. This disagreement stems primarily from different interpretations of the underlying principle on which most archival arrangement and description theory is based, namely the principle of provenance.<sup>9</sup>

Provenance is a word that often appears in the archival literature, with many associated terms including ‘context’, ‘relationship’, ‘*fonds*’, ‘hierarchy’, ‘natural’ and ‘organic’. One difficulty in pinning down an exact meaning of provenance is the multiple and varied use by different writers of these terms as synonyms or *definientia*.<sup>10</sup> As has been previously indicated, a lack of critical analysis and clarity when it comes to the definition of concepts and the use of specific terminology is a particular problem within the archival literature as a whole. It is an issue of importance for this thesis because the author contends that the principle of provenance, together with the related principles of *respect des fonds* and original order, serves as a conceptual framework for understanding and creating the context(s) that give a body of records its meaning and value.<sup>11</sup> The different interpretations of provenance underlie different concepts of archival value – for some archivists value is embedded in the nature and context of record creation; for others it is to be found in the multiple relationships between a record and its creator(s), custodians, archivists and users. The different interpretations of

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<sup>8</sup> Oliver W. Holmes, ‘Archival Arrangement – Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels’, *AA*, 27.1 (1964), 21-42, (41).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Max J. Evans, ‘Authority Control: An Alternative to the Record Group Concept’, *AA*, 49.3 (1986), 249-61; Chris Hurley, ‘Parallel Provenance (If these are your records, where are your stories?)’, published originally in two parts in *AM*, Part 1 (What, If Anything is Archival Description?) in 33.1 (2005) and Part 2 (When Something is *Not* Related to Everything Else) in 33.2 (2005) [www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications/parallel-provenance-combined.pdf](http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/research/groups/rcrg/publications/parallel-provenance-combined.pdf) [accessed 5 April 2013]; Heather MacNeil, ‘Archivalterity: Rethinking Original Order’, *Archivaria*, 66 (2008), 1-24; Eastwood, Putting the Parts of the Whole Together; Yeo, ‘Debates about Description’.

<sup>10</sup> In linguistics, a *definiens* (pl. *definientia*) is a word used to define another word. A common problem in the archival sphere is the use of a *definiens* whose meaning is already commonly understood, thus resulting in a vague lexicon definition. See Chapter 1 for similar vagueness in archival definitions of ‘value’. In this thesis, the author will use the terms as employed by the particular writer, but will give further explanation where necessary in an attempt to make the intended sense more explicit.

<sup>11</sup> Meehan, ‘Making the Leap’, 76.

provenance also present differing views of the archive itself: as a closed, organic whole, or *fonds*, with a significance that can be discovered through an analysis of its constituent parts, or as open, ever-evolving archival entities with multiple meanings, narratives and counter-narratives.<sup>12</sup>

This chapter will present the main arguments that have been put forward in support of the various interpretations of provenance. The next section will set the historical context for these arguments by detailing how the principle of provenance was first established.

### 3.3. Historical origins of the principle of provenance

The English word ‘provenance’, meaning ‘origin’ or ‘source’, has its roots in the Latin *provenire* and the French *provenir*, both meaning ‘to come from’.<sup>13</sup> There is a certain amount of debate and disagreement in the archival literature about the exact historical origins and development of the principle of provenance, and the related principles of *respect des fonds* and original order.<sup>14</sup> Most writers seem to agree that the first enunciation of a theory of archival provenance can be dated to early nineteenth century France.<sup>15</sup> In 1841, archivist Natalis de Wailly authored a circular on behalf of the French Ministry of the Interior that gave instructions for the classification of Departmental archives ‘to assemble the different documents by *fonds*, that is to say, to form a body, an organization, a family or an individual, and to arrange the different *fonds* according to a certain order’.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> An example of the first interpretation can be found in Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London: Lund Humphries, 1937), first published in 1922 and re-issued in 1965; an example of the second can be found in Duff and Harris.

<sup>13</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*, ed. by Joyce M. Hawkins and Robert Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); *Petit Larousse en couleurs* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Raimo Pohjola, ‘The Principle of Provenance and the Arrangement of Records/Archives’, in *The Principle of Provenance. Report from the First Stockholm Conference on Archival Theory and the Principle of Provenance 2-3 September 1993*, ed. by Kerstin Abukhanfusa and Jan Sydbeck (Sweden: Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Riksarkivet 10, 1993), 87-101; Shelley Sweeney, ‘The Ambiguous Origins of the Archival Principle of ‘Provenance’’, *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, 43.2 (2008), 193-213; Jennifer Douglas, ‘Origins: Evolving Ideas About the Principle of Provenance’, in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, 23-43.

<sup>15</sup> There is evidence to suggest that provenance-based practices of archival arrangement long-preceded this date but the specific terminology and formal theory only emerged at this point. See Sweeney, 195; Pohjola, 87-9; *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice*, ed. by Terry Eastwood (Canada: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Natalis de Wailly, ‘Instructions pour la mise en ordre et le classement des archives départementales’ first published 24 April 1841, re-published by Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, *Manuel d’Archivistique* (Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1970), cited in Nancy Bartlett, ‘Respect des

The classification of archives by their origin, as prescribed by de Wailly, broke with the previous tradition in France of arranging archives for the benefit of the historical researcher – often into subject or chronological series. The new method became widely known in both France and abroad as the principle of *respect des fonds*. However, although the French circular has been viewed by many archivists as a significant development in the theory of archival provenance,<sup>17</sup> in 1992, Nancy Bartlett argued that far from being a theoretical tour de force, de Wailly's circular was instead based on the practical assumption that this method of arrangement and description 'was easier than any other method, the material in any one *fonds* was limited, older inventories could be followed, and interpretive re-classification was beyond the capabilities of the archivists'.<sup>18</sup> As a result, Bartlett affirmed that much of the 'intellectual mystique' later assigned to the principle of *respect des fonds* is undeserved.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, the principle gained widespread acceptance as an appropriate and efficient method of arranging archives.

In 1898, Dutch archivists Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin published their seminal work: *Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven* which was translated into several languages, including English in 1940 as *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*.<sup>20</sup> The Dutch Manual outlined in detail the authors' principle of *herkomstbeginsel* ('provenance'), which comprised two separate principles – the principle of *respect des fonds* and the principle of original order.<sup>21</sup> The Dutch introduced an additional element to their theory of archival provenance – the principle of original order, basing their approach on that of Prussian archivists. Nearly twenty years earlier, Heinrich von Sybel, Director of the Prussian Privy State Archives, had issued a Regulation that stated the

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Fonds : The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance', *Bibliographic Foundations of French Historical Studies : Primary Sources and Original Works*, 1.1-2 (1992), 107-15, (107).

<sup>17</sup> For example, Ernst Posner, 'Some Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution', *AA*, 3.3 (1940), 159-72; Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1956); Michel Duchein, 'Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science', *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 64-82.

<sup>18</sup> Bartlett, 111.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>20</sup> S. Muller, J. A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven* (Groningen: Erven B. Van der Kamp, 1898). English translation: *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, transl. by Arthur H. Leavitt (New York: H. W. Wilson & Co., 1940), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., with new introduction by Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar, Theo Thomassen and Marjorie Rabe Barritt (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), hereafter referred to as the Dutch Manual.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Horsman, 'Taming the Elephant: An Orthodox Approach to the Principle of Provenance', in Abukhanfusa and Sydbeck, 51-63; Douglas, 27.

rules for the arrangement and description of archives according to what he termed *Proviienzprinzip*, which comprised a similar notion to the French *respect des fonds*, together with respect for original order (*Registraturprinzip*).<sup>22</sup> This second principle, which states that records should be maintained in the order in which they were kept by the records' creator, has also been termed *Strükturprinzip*,<sup>23</sup> but it is more commonly referred to as *Registraturprinzip* – so-named after the Prussian Registry system of recordkeeping.<sup>24</sup> The Prussian and Dutch approaches to arrangement and description thus allowed less flexibility than that of the French approach, by insisting that archival provenance entailed both respect for the original *fonds* and for the creators' original order within that *fonds*.

### 3.4. Interpretations of provenance

By the end of the nineteenth century there was thus formulated a principle of provenance with related concepts of *respect des fonds* and original order, but already there was some disagreement about the exact definition of provenance. As it moved into the twentieth century, the archival profession was to further question the nature of provenance, leading to significant differences of interpretation and application of the principle in archival theory.

#### 3.4.1. Provenance = *respect des fonds*

The principle of provenance as it was articulated in the early twentieth century decreed that 'records originating from the same source should be kept together and not interfiled with records from other sources'.<sup>25</sup> This interpretation of provenance was usually linked with the two related principles of *respect des fonds*, which defined archives in terms of *fonds* – an 'organic whole' – whose boundaries were determined in relation to the context of its creator; and original order, which held that the 'original' arrangement of records (normally that of the creator) should be retained. Theodore R. Schellenberg described how this classical interpretation of provenance came to be regarded as the '*summum bonum*' for the classification of

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<sup>22</sup> Douglas, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Duchein, 68, 75. Duchein argued that *respect des fonds* amounted to respect for the 'external' integrity of the archives (the *fonds*), whilst *Strükturprinzip* amounted to respect for the corresponding 'internal' integrity of the archives.

<sup>24</sup> Pohjola, 89; Douglas, 26.

<sup>25</sup> *The Wilson Report* (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1980), cited in Laura Millar, 'The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time', *Archivaria*, 53 (2002), 1-15.

archives,<sup>26</sup> and as such, it underpinned the theory and methodology of many influential archivists from the end of the nineteenth century onwards.<sup>27</sup> However, despite its wide acceptance there was not universal agreement, with some archivists questioning aspects of the interpretation, particularly in respect to original order.<sup>28</sup>

Hilary Jenkinson drew heavily on the Dutch Manual in his 1922 publication, *A Manual of Archive Administration*. Jenkinson's book preceded the first English translation of the Dutch Manual by nearly twenty years and greatly influenced the adoption of many of its authors' ideas by British archivists.<sup>29</sup> Jenkinson explicitly cited the Dutch authors in arguing that both *respect des fonds* and original order should be the basis of archival arrangement and description, insisting that it was necessary to 'put ourselves in the position of the men who compiled them [the archives]; our object will clearly be to establish or re-establish the original arrangement; even if, when we look at it, we think we could have done better ourselves'.<sup>30</sup>

However, other archivists disagreed with Jenkinson's approach. For example, Schellenberg interpreted archival provenance in the narrower sense, as comprising only *respect des fonds*. In his 1956 publication, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, Schellenberg detailed the various principles of arrangement for archives and concluded that records 'should be kept in separate units that correspond to their source in the government agency'.<sup>31</sup> However, whilst Schellenberg agreed that records 'should be maintained in the order given them by agencies creating them', he also allowed that 'records preserved for informational content should be maintained in whatever order will best serve the needs of scholars and government officials'.<sup>32</sup> For Schellenberg, the provenance-based arrangement of archives followed the

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<sup>26</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, 'The Principle of Provenance and Modern Records in the United States', *AA*, 28.1 (1965), 39-41, (39).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, the Dutch Manual; Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*; Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Schellenberg, 'Archival Principles of Arrangement'; Graeme T. Powell, 'Archival Principles and the Treatment of Personal Papers', *AM*, 6.7 (1976), 259-68; Frank Boles, 'Disrespecting Original Order', *AA*, 45.1 (1982), 26-32; Jennifer Meehan, 'Rethinking Original Order and Personal Records', *Archivaria*, 79 (2010), 27-44.

<sup>29</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, Part II especially.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>31</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 187.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 187, 193.

principle of *respect des fonds* but the principle of original order was a flexible option depending on the nature and use of the archives.<sup>33</sup>

The influence of Schellenberg's writings, together with what Terry Cook has suggested is the result of a linguistic confusion of terminology, has led to the promulgation of equating 'provenance' with only *respect des fonds* among many English-speaking archivists, particularly in North America.<sup>34</sup> This is a view that has been reinforced by the professional literature; for example, the Society of American Archivists' *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, defined provenance as follows:

Provenance is a fundamental principle of archives, referring to the individual, family, or organisation that created and received the items in a collection. The principle of provenance or the *respect des fonds* dictates that records of different origins (provenance) be kept separate to preserve their context.<sup>35</sup>

This approach was also favoured by 1930s German archivist Adolf Brenneke who rejected the broader interpretation of archival provenance that included original order.<sup>36</sup> Brenneke objected to a strict adherence to the *Registraturprinzip* on the grounds that modern archives 'lacked the strict, ordered quality of the past'.<sup>37</sup> In his view, archivists should be 'creative' in arranging the internal order of the archival *fonds* rather than merely preserving 'error-ridden, misfiled, or inaccurate' filing systems.<sup>38</sup> Brenneke's critique of archival provenance has remained influential in modern German archival theory. However, archival practice in much of the rest of Europe, particularly in Scandinavia, Italy and the Netherlands, continues to be based primarily on the Prussian and Dutch articulations of provenance.<sup>39</sup> The dominance of a concept of archival provenance that comprises both *respect des fonds* and original order was reinforced by the International Congress on Archives in 1910. At a meeting in Brussels that year the ICA endorsed a definition that, in the words of Dutch archivist, Peter Horsman, 'is essentially a condensed summary of the most

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 193; Douglas, 29. See also Schellenberg, 'Archival Principles of Arrangement'.

<sup>34</sup> Terry Cook, 'The Concept of the Archival Fonds', in *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice*, 31-86, (4). See also Sweeney, 202.

<sup>35</sup> *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, ed. by Richard Pearce-Moses (Chicago: SAA, 2005), 317.

<sup>36</sup> Pohjola, 89; Peter Horsman 'The Last Dance of the Phoenix, or the De-discovery of the Archival Fonds', *Archivaria*, 54 (2002), 1-23,(2).

<sup>37</sup> Horsman, 'The Last Dance of the Phoenix', 3.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>39</sup> Douglas, 28; Horsman, 'The Last Dance of the Phoenix', 11; Pohjola, 89-90.

important sections of the Dutch Manual'.<sup>40</sup> The ICA's definition of the principle of provenance read:

The method of archive organization by which each archival document has to be brought to the archive (fonds) to which it belongs, and within that archive to the series to which it belonged at the time the archive was still a living organism.<sup>41</sup>

This classic definition of provenance underpinned a theory of arrangement and description that held that archives had a value, which was derived directly from the way in which they were created; and that it was therefore necessary to respect the principle of provenance in order to preserve such a value.<sup>42</sup> Jenkinson described this value in archives as follows: 'They have [...] a structure, an articulation and a natural relationship between parts, which are essential to their significance. [...] Archive quality only survives unimpaired so long as their natural form and relationship are maintained'.<sup>43</sup> Although Jenkinson rarely employs the term 'value' in his writings, it is the author's contention that Jenkinson employs the terms 'significance' and 'quality' in the above quotation in a sense that is synonymous with 'value'. For Jenkinson the activity of arrangement and description of archives constituted what he termed 'the moral defence of archives'.<sup>44</sup> Jenkinson argued that the basis of arrangement and description was '*the exposition of the Administrative objects which the Archives originally served*'.<sup>45</sup> In his view, this meant the separation of records originating from one creator from those originating from another, and the retention of the original order of the records.<sup>46</sup> Jenkinson argued that if arrangement and description was accomplished on this basis, archival quality (in other words, the value of the archives) would be preserved. He asserted that 'what is to be guarded against is the alteration of anything done by the original administrator, the person or body who compiled the Archives: because what they did is a part of the Archive itself'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Horsman, 'The Last Dance of the Phoenix', 10.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>42</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*; Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*.

<sup>43</sup> Jenkinson, *The English Archivist: A New Profession* (London: H.K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1948), 4. Interestingly, Schellenberg included this citation in his own defence of the principle of provenance some twenty years later; see Schellenberg, 'Archival Principle of Arrangement', 13. See also 3.5.1.

<sup>44</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 83.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 97. Italics in original.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 97-102.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 114.

Several Italian archivists similarly linked a record's provenance and its value in this way. For example, Giorgio Cencetti argued that from the reciprocal relationships that arise in the course of the accumulation of records are derived the two essential characteristics of the record's impartiality and authenticity.<sup>48</sup> Luciana Duranti has termed this network of relationships that each record has with the other records in the same *fonds* as 'the archival bond'.<sup>49</sup> Although Duranti prefers the term 'record aggregation', arguably, her definition of the nature of the aggregation as being formed and bounded by and as a result of the original transaction which produced the records is tantamount to the traditional concept of the archival *fonds*.<sup>50</sup>

Provenance can thus be understood in terms of the relationship between the records and the nature of their creation. This approach, which understands the meaning and value of records to be inherent within the administrative context in which the records were created, is the basis of several archival arrangement and description theories which remain influential today.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.4.2. Provenance = record context(s)**

As the twentieth century drew to a close, the challenges of dealing with complex modern records and administrations, new technologies and electronic records, and the general shift from a positivist to a postmodernist framework of thinking, led some archivists to call for a new interpretation of provenance that they believed would better support their archival activity.<sup>52</sup> For many of these archivists, the key element of this new interpretation was a shift from a focus on the *fonds* to a focus on record context(s).<sup>53</sup> The practical reality of dealing with one body of

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<sup>48</sup> Maria Guercio and Kenneth E. Thibodeau, 'Principles, Methods and Instruments for the Creation, Preservation and Use of Archival Records in the Digital Environment', *AA*, 64.2 (2001), 238-69, (250). This article cites the original Italian text: Giorgio Cencetti, 'Il fondamento teorico della dottrina archivistica', *Archivi*, 2.6 (1939), 7-13.

<sup>49</sup> Luciana Duranti, 'The Archival Bond', *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 11 (1997), 213-8, (215-6).

<sup>50</sup> See Duranti, 216-7.

<sup>51</sup> For example, *Manual of Archival Description*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., ed. by Michael Cook and Margaret Procter (Aldershot, UK: Gower Publishing Co., 1989); Canadian Committee on Archival Description, *RAD*, rev. edn. (Ottawa: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 2008); ICA Committee on Descriptive Standards, *ISAD(G)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Ottawa: ICA, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> Examples include: David Bearman, 'Documenting Documentation', *Archivaria*, 34 (1992), 33-49; Chris Hurley, 'Problems with Provenance', *AM*, 23.2 (1995), 234-59; Sue McKemmish, Glenda Acland, Nigel Ward and Barbara Reed, 'Describing Records in Context in the Continuum: The Australian Recordkeeping Metadata Schema', *Archivaria*, 48 (1999), 3-37; Duff and Harris; Meehan, 'Making the Leap from Parts to Whole'.

<sup>53</sup> Hurley, 'Parallel Provenance'; Douglas.



records that has many creators, or one creator leaving records in many different physical locations, was seen by some archivists to invalidate the traditional concept of the organic unity of the *fonds* that was characterized by a one-to-one relationship between record and creator.<sup>54</sup> The complexities of the digital environment, with its fluidity of creation, alteration, transmission and deletion only added to the sense that the principle of provenance also had to become more flexible in order to remain relevant into the twenty-first century.<sup>55</sup> In addition, there was a growing recognition of the active role that archivists and others, besides records creators, play in the formation of archives which led some archivists to ‘widen’ the principle of provenance to include concepts of ‘multiple-provenance’.<sup>56</sup> In this viewpoint, ‘the provenance of a given record or body of records consists of the social and technical processes of the records’ inscription, transmission, contextualization, and interpretation, which account for its existence, characteristics, and continuing history’.<sup>57</sup> This approach is grounded in the belief that records creation is only one aspect of provenance and that ‘contextual entities may be of very many different kinds and that the relationship each has with various records entities is manifold’.<sup>58</sup> Rather than a single context of creation, or a single relationship between creator and record, the emphasis is instead on multiple contexts and multiple relationships that are multi-layered and dynamic, and which can be found in all the actions of creation, custody and interpretation that take place during the record’s entire existence.<sup>59</sup> In this interpretation, a record’s value is not regarded as being a permanent and unchanging attribute that is ‘fixed’ in the act and context of record creation, but is instead ever-evolving. In the words of David Bearman: ‘the fact of processing, exhibiting, citing, publishing and otherwise managing records become significant to

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<sup>54</sup> Cook, ‘The Concept of the Archival Fonds’; Millar, ‘The Death of the Fonds’.

<sup>55</sup> Douglas, 38.

<sup>56</sup> The concept of ‘multiple provenance’ is usually attributed to Peter Scott and the ‘Series System’ of arrangement; but as will be discussed further later in this chapter, Scott’s innovations were not so much revolutionary as evolutionary; and it was really the development of his ideas by later archival theorists that constituted a true break with traditional concepts of provenance. Hurley, ‘Parallel Provenance’, 34; See also Peter J. Scott, ‘Introduction’, in *The Arrangement and Description of Archives Amid Administrative and Technological Change. Essays and Reflections By and About Peter J. Scott*, ed. by Adrian Cunningham (Brisbane: Australian Society of Archivists, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Tom Nesmith, ‘Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the ‘Ghosts’ of Archival Theory’, *Archivaria*, 47 (1999), 136-50, (146).

<sup>58</sup> Chris Hurley, ‘The Australian (‘Series’) System: An Exposition’, in *The Records Continuum. Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years*, ed. by Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Australia: Ancora Press, 1994), 150-172, (155), cited in Duff and Harris, 269.

<sup>59</sup> McKemmish et al, ‘Describing Records in Context in the Continuum’; Duff and Harris.

their meaning as records'.<sup>60</sup> It is the author's contention that Bearman uses 'meaning' here in a sense synonymous with 'value'.

Tom Nesmith argued that postmodernism has led to an understanding of archives as 'products of open-ended processes of knowing [...] [that] participate in processes of knowing as active agents in them'.<sup>61</sup> Nesmith argued that, as a result, concepts like provenance need to be re-conceptualized. Instead of 'original order', Nesmith proposed that archivists consider 'the received order' of the records when they are received by an archival institution; and described this order as 'a snapshot of a moment in time, not the original order, but a possible approximation of it'.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, instead of the traditional concept of the *fonds*, Nesmith proposed the adoption of an alternative definition, quoting Horsman, 'a defensible grouping of records [...] which resulted from "a series of recordkeeping activities and archival interventions"'.<sup>63</sup> Linking with Eric Ketelaar's notion of 'tacit narratives' that exist through records, Nesmith insisted that provenance should be concerned with the evolution of a body of records rather than with attempts to establish an original order tied to the administrative structure of the records' initial creators.<sup>64</sup>

Another re-interpretation of provenance identified by Jennifer Douglas is the idea of provenance as 'socio-historical context'.<sup>65</sup> This interpretation has also been greatly influenced by ideas in postmodernist theory, which have led many archivists to acknowledge that all archival activity, like any other human behaviour, is socially contingent. Archivists, records creators and users are all part of society and therefore our behaviour, to one extent or another, both influences and in turn is influenced by that society. In this light, Ketelaar defined archival activity as 'a "regime of practices" which varies at any given time and in any given place'.<sup>66</sup> Nesmith argued that it is not only the creator who shapes the archival record but that multiple individuals, including archivists, custodians and users, each have a relevant role to

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<sup>60</sup> Bearman, 'Documenting Documentation', 237.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Nesmith, 'Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice', *Archivaria*, 60 (2005), 259-74, (261).

<sup>62</sup> Nesmith, 'Reopening Archives', 264.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 266; Douglas, 32. See also Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives', *AS*, 1.2 (2001), 131-41.

<sup>65</sup> Douglas, 33-7.

<sup>66</sup> Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', 136.

play.<sup>67</sup> Nesmith called for a widening of the concept of provenance in order to recognize more complex origins including ‘the societal and intellectual contexts shaping the actions of people and institutions, functions the records perform, [and] custodial history’.<sup>68</sup> Nesmith later expanded on this concept, which he titled ‘societal provenance’, with reference to a case study involving the nineteenth century archives of a Canadian fur trader.<sup>69</sup> According to Nesmith, society itself ‘is a kind of information gathering and processing phenomenon’, and so must be analysed together with the archives themselves, because how and what is recorded is shaped by society.<sup>70</sup> Nesmith argued that archivists need to acknowledge that records creators do not operate in isolation and to recognize that the ‘overall history of the record *is* the provenance of the record’.<sup>71</sup> In a similar vein, Australian archivist, Chris Hurley has posited a radical extension of Scott’s ‘Series System’ by calling for a recognition of what he termed ‘parallel provenance’ which allows two or more record creators to be identified at one and the same time.<sup>72</sup> Admitting that this represents a fundamental challenge to descriptive thinking, that is yet to be fully implemented in practical terms, Hurley nonetheless argued that parallel provenance is the only means of fulfilling postmodernist commitments to enable ‘the articulation of different voices in the way records are preserved and detailed’.<sup>73</sup>

Douglas identified that there has been an increasing interest within the archival professional literature in tracing the different narratives – especially those that have been marginalized or suppressed – that are intertwined with and part of the records themselves; citing writers such as Jeannette Bastian, Laura Millar, Eric Ketelaar, Michael Piggott, and Geoffrey Yeo in this regard.<sup>74</sup> Many of these writers explore theories about collective memory and community archiving as they look beyond the social context of record creation to explore how records’ histories have evolved, and how records’ meanings have been interpreted and re-interpreted over

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<sup>67</sup> Tom Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives’, *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 24-41.

<sup>68</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives’, 35.

<sup>69</sup> Tom Nesmith, ‘The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-century Aboriginal-European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice’, *AS*, 6.3-4 (2006), 351-60.

<sup>70</sup> Nesmith, ‘The Concept of Societal Provenance’, 352.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 359. Italics in original.

<sup>72</sup> Hurley, ‘Parallel Provenance’, 39.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>74</sup> Douglas, 34-36.

time.<sup>75</sup> Douglas noted that whilst it is important to acknowledge the complexity of archival origins, nonetheless she identified that there is a danger in viewing provenance as socio-historical context because it becomes difficult to separate the two. She concluded:

Provenance is viewed as an umbrella under which a growing list of contextual factors are gathered – its boundaries become infinite. There is an inherent difficulty in determining where context ends and therefore such an understanding of provenance has to admit the impossibility of its own endeavour.<sup>76</sup>

In attempting to re-interpret provenance to reflect the increasing complexity and fluidity of records in the twenty-first century, the question may be asked whether archivists have ended up with a definition of provenance that is so open-ended and relative as to be ultimately meaningless. Is the locus of archival value, once the relation between record and creator, as exemplified in the archival *fonds*, now so nebulous and diluted in infinite networks of context, that it is no longer capable of being determined? Against this backdrop of postmodernist angst some archivists have called for new thinking on the subject which, rather than reject the *fonds* entirely, re-instates it as an essential component of provenance, but as a *fonds* re-conceptualized.<sup>77</sup>

### **3.5. The archival *fonds***

This chapter has already sketched several definitions of the archival *fonds* as they have been formulated within the different interpretations of provenance. The next section will give a more detailed analysis of some ideas about the *fonds* that have been particularly influential by tracing the development of the shift in conceptualization from the *fonds* as an organic whole to that of a conceptual *fonds*.

#### **3.5.1. *Fonds* as organic whole**

The earliest formal articulation of the concept of the archival *fonds* can be found in the Dutch Manual of 1898. Muller, Feith and Fruin described an *archieef* as ‘an archival whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape and undergoes

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>77</sup> See Geoffrey Yeo, ‘The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection’, *Archivaria*, 73 (2012), 43-80.

changes in accordance with fixed rules. If the functions of the body change, the nature of the archival collection changes likewise'.<sup>78</sup> In 1940, Arthur Leavitt translated the Dutch word '*archief*' with the term 'archival collection'; twenty years earlier, Jenkinson translated it as '*fonds d'archives*' or 'Archive Group', which he similarly defined as:

The Archives resulting from the work of an Administration which was an organic whole, complete in itself, capable of dealing independently, without any added or external authority with every side of any business which could normally be presented to it.<sup>79</sup>

It should be noted that Jenkinson's 'archive group' should not be confused with the US National Archives' term 'record group' which, as will be discussed later, interpreted the provenance of a *fonds* in a looser sense, establishing it arbitrarily on the convenient size and character of an archival unit for the ease of arrangement and description.<sup>80</sup>

The terms used by the authors of the Dutch Manual to describe an archival *fonds* were evocative of biology and medical science. This was perhaps a deliberate use of the language of Charles Darwin to underline the difference, as the authors perceived it, between archives which naturally evolved, and artificial museum collections which were deliberately assembled.<sup>81</sup> Jenkinson employed similar language, using the analogy of 'a palaeontologist reconstructing the skeleton of a prehistoric animal' to describe archival arrangement.<sup>82</sup> He drew specific analogies with botany and zoology in comparing the scientific treatment of a specimen: 'as part of a living, or once living, organism; which is itself one of a larger family; which is in turn one unit in a yet larger division' with the task of referencing archives into groups (or, *fonds*), categories and classes.<sup>83</sup> Schellenberg also used an analogy from the physical sciences in his arrangement and description theory, arguing that

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<sup>78</sup> Dutch Manual, 19.

<sup>79</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 101. Peter Horsman has noted the difficulty of translating the original nineteenth century Dutch. To this end, he purposely translated 'archief' as 'archive', leaving it open to the reader to replace this term by 'fonds', Horsman, 'Last Dance of the Phoenix', 10.

<sup>80</sup> See Mario D. Fenyo, 'The Record Group Concept: A Critique', *AA*, 29.2 (1966), 229-39; Peter J. Scott, 'The Record Group Concept: A Case for Abandonment', *AA*, 29.4 (1966), 493-504.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar, Theo Thomassen and Marjorie Rabe Barritt, 'Introduction to the 2003 Re-issue of the Dutch Manual', 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Chicago: SAA, 2003).

<sup>82</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 105.

<sup>83</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, 'The Classification and Survey of English Archives', in *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson* ed. by Roger H. Ellis and Peter Walne (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980), 196-207, (201).

just as a chemical compound must be separated into its constituents in order to properly identify it, ‘all classification or arrangement work involves a breakdown of a whole into its parts’.<sup>84</sup>

Key to the understanding of the *fonds* as conceived by the Dutch is the notion of ‘organic’ or ‘natural’, in the sense of the records coming together and reaching their final arrangement ‘by a natural process [...] as much an organism as a tree or an animal’.<sup>85</sup> In this way, archives are not assembled for reasons of posterity or for historical research, but are instead brought together in the course of the business transaction of which they themselves form a part.<sup>86</sup> Jenkinson described this natural accumulation of records as ‘a convenient form of artificial memory’ which served the business or administration that created the records in the first place.<sup>87</sup> The resulting organic *fonds* is thus created according to ‘particular rules, laws, processes and idiosyncrasies. [...] [which] lead to a certain design, structure and classification’.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, it is as a direct result of this organic process of accumulation that, Jenkinson asserted, the value of archives is both generated and maintained.<sup>89</sup> As has been previously noted, Jenkinson rarely used the term ‘archival value’, preferring archival ‘quality’ or ‘significance’; but it is the author’s contention that he uses these terms in a sense synonymous with ‘value’ throughout his writings. Thus, Jenkinson argued that the ‘significance’ of a particular record was as ‘an essential part of the whole organism’.<sup>90</sup> Jenkinson believed that archives have:

a structure, an articulation and a natural relationship between parts, which are essential to their significance: a single document out of a Group of Archives is no more to be taken as expressing in and by itself all it has to tell us than would a single bone separated from the skeleton of an extinct and unknown animal.<sup>91</sup>

Jenkinson identified three different aspects of this ‘natural relationship’: (i) the relation of the archives to the activity of which they are a product; (ii) the relationship between the individual records in a single Archive Group; and (iii) the external relationship, ‘a kind of cousinship’, between records in independent Archive

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<sup>84</sup> Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, 11.

<sup>85</sup> Jenkinson, *The English Archivist*, 4.

<sup>86</sup> Dutch Manual, 131; Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 153.

<sup>88</sup> Horsman et al, ‘Introduction to the 2003 Re-issue of the Dutch Manual’, xx.

<sup>89</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, especially 11-13; 97-114.

<sup>90</sup> Jenkinson, ‘The Classification and Survey of English Archives’, 199.

<sup>91</sup> Jenkinson, *The English Archivist*, 4.

Groups.<sup>92</sup> For the final category, Jenkinson gave an example of a typescript letter whereby the carbon copy is retained by the sender whilst the top copy is held by the recipient. Jenkinson stated that in such a case ‘their preservation to the Group to which they naturally belong gives to each a distinctive significance: but the relationship between the two is an important factor in the value and interpretation of both’.<sup>93</sup> This view reinforced the importance of retaining original order within a *fonds* to ensure that the meaning (and therefore, the ‘value’) of the whole and of the individual parts was not destroyed.

Schellenberg also understood an archival *fonds* in the sense of an organic whole, asserting that this ‘organic character’ meant that ‘records that are the product of organic activity have a value that derives from the way they were produced’.<sup>94</sup> Schellenberg termed this value ‘evidential’, arguing that it comprised both a notion of ‘quality’, in ‘the unconscious and impartial record of the actions they record’, and ‘content’, in the information contained in the records ‘as evidence of the actions that resulted in their production’.<sup>95</sup> However, whilst Schellenberg agreed with Jenkinson that it was vital to keep records ‘in separate units that correspond to their sources in organic bodies’ in order to preserve the evidential value of the records, he departed from Jenkinson’s view in regard to the sanctity of the original order of series of records within the *fonds*.<sup>96</sup> Schellenberg argued that whilst there might exist an ‘organic value’ that could reveal the organic activity that resulted in the creation of the series, this was by no means ‘sacrosanct’.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, he argued that there was no value in the arrangement of the records that might reveal the information contained within the series: ‘in a word, the arrangement of the individual record items does not contribute to an understanding of the activity that is reflected in the series as a whole’.<sup>98</sup> Schellenberg therefore concluded that records retained purely for their informational content ‘should be arranged solely with a view to facilitating their exploitation by scholars, scientists and others without regard as to how they

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 4-5. As previously noted, by ‘archive group’, Jenkinson meant ‘*fonds*’.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>94</sup> Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, 12.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 21.

were arranged in the agency that created them’.<sup>99</sup> This reasoning supported his rejection of original order within a *fonds* as a necessary component of provenance.

### 3.5.2. The record group concept

A criticism made against the concept of the archival *fonds* as construed by the various archival theorists above-mentioned was its perceived impracticality when dealing with modern records originating from complex administrative bureaucracies. The definition of the *fonds* given in the Dutch Manual, which equated it to ‘the whole of the documents [...] officially received or produced by an administrative body’, meant that the size of a *fonds* could potentially be huge, comprising millions of records.<sup>100</sup> The US National Archives was faced with this possibility when considering the management of large volumes of records issuing from the US Federal Government during the Second World War. It therefore determined that a more practical methodology was required, which would still, nonetheless, adhere to the principle of provenance. They decided that since the records were accessioned according to provenance, namely ‘according to the administrative context in which they had been created and maintained – they were assigned for administrative purposes to various units within the archives according to record groups’.<sup>101</sup> This ‘Record Group’, based on the functions and activities of the particular government department, became the standard unit by which the archives were arranged and described. Whilst this proved to be a practical method for managing the archives, and which was actively implemented for over twenty years before it was critically examined, by the 1960s some archivists were questioning its validity as a means of preserving the ‘organic nature’ of archives.<sup>102</sup>

Mario D. Fenyo wrote the first published critique of the record group methodology of arrangement and description in *The American Archivist* journal in 1966.<sup>103</sup> In this article, he highlighted the arbitrary nature of the record group concept, arguing that its very inception was ‘established somewhat arbitrarily with due regard [...] to the desirability of making the unit of convenient size and character for the work of arrangement and description and for the publication of

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 22; see also Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 187, 193.

<sup>100</sup> Dutch Manual, 131.

<sup>101</sup> Evans, 250; See also Fenyo.

<sup>102</sup> Evans, 250.

<sup>103</sup> Mario D. Fenyo, ‘The Record Group Concept: A Critique’, *AA*, 29.2 (1966), 229-39.



inventories'.<sup>104</sup> Fenyo argued that although there was 'a general consensus' and 'a kind of tacit understanding' about what this meant, 'no one seems to have an exact idea of what constituted or should constitute a record group'.<sup>105</sup> Consequently the concept was applied inconsistently and arbitrarily, and therefore Fenyo concluded that it was time for the record group concept to be critically reviewed.<sup>106</sup> However, elsewhere, the approach had already been abandoned.<sup>107</sup> Later that same year, Peter J. Scott wrote an article in *AA* outlining how the Commonwealth Archives Office in Canberra, Australia, had, since 1964, adopted an alternative series-based approach to archival arrangement and description.<sup>108</sup> Scott argued that issues of administrative and physical complexity relating to modern archives meant that the concept of the record group was no longer practical and that it additionally violated the principles of *respect des fonds* and original order.<sup>109</sup> He cited the example of records that had been created by one agency, but had then been transferred to another in the course of changing administrative functions and responsibilities; and argued that neither the transferring agency, nor the creating agency, should be identified as the record group as this obscured the true complex nature of the records' origins. Scott's solution to this situation of 'multiple-provenance' was 'to abandon the record group as the primary category of classification and to base the physical arrangement of archives on the record series as an independent element not bound to the administrative context'.<sup>110</sup>

Scott argued that his 'series system' restored the principle of provenance to archival arrangement and description. He maintained that provided 'one respects the physical integrity of the records series and fully records its administrative context, one is in complete harmony with traditional principles'.<sup>111</sup> Scott's affirmation that the series system of arrangement supported the principle of provenance was based on an understanding of the record series, rather than the *fonds*, as a cohesive whole. In

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<sup>104</sup> Fenyo, 232-8; This is a direct quotation from *The Control of Records at the Record Group Level, Staff Information Circulars No. 15* (US: National Archives, July 1958), 2, as cited in Evans, 250.

<sup>105</sup> Fenyo, 235.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>107</sup> See Scott, 'The Record Group Concept'; Mark Wagland and Russell Kelly, 'The Series System: A Revolution in Archival Control', in *The Records Continuum*, 131-49.

<sup>108</sup> Scott, 'The Record Group Concept', 497.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 493-4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 497. Scott did not actually use the term 'multiple-provenance' in his seminal 1966 article; however, he did use the term in a response to a letter to the editor regarding his article the following year and subsequently. See also Peter J. Scott, Editor's Forum, *AA*, 30.3 (1967), 538.

<sup>111</sup> Scott, 'The Record Group Concept', 502.

his 1966 article, Scott affirmed ‘the organic unity of the series’.<sup>112</sup> Max J. Evans later also described Scott’s understanding of the series by using a biology analogy as follows: ‘the records series is an organic unit: it can be decomposed for descriptive and access purposes into ‘molecular’ (file) and ‘elemental’ (document) units, but its internal structure cannot be changed without destroying its integrity and its essential nature’.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, this definition of a record series is extraordinarily similar to one posited by Schellenberg, an advocate of the record group concept. Schellenberg wrote that:

each record item in it [the series] is thus a part of an organic whole. To separate it from the series in which it is embodied will impair its meaning, for the series as a whole has a meaning greater than its parts, that is, than the individual record items.<sup>114</sup>

It is the contention of the author that both of these approaches are based on the same underlying concept of organic wholeness in which is embodied the archives’ meaning and value. Moreover, Scott and Schellenberg define the record series in relation to an organic whole in the same way that Jenkinson (and Schellenberg) define the archival *fonds* in relation to an organic whole. Although the location of the organic whole is perceived to be at different levels in the archival entity, all the approaches concur on the very concept of an organic whole – firstly, that it can be identified by an analysis of its component parts, and, secondly, that the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts.<sup>115</sup>

The association of the archive with the concept of an organic whole has been made by many archivists, with the term ‘organic’ appearing throughout the archival literature of the twentieth century, very often without further comment or analysis. Not surprisingly, within the *fonds* or record group approaches to arrangement it can be found with frequent occurrence; for example, in 1950, Helen L. Chatfield wrote of the need to bring ‘together related material in organic fashion’ and of the enduring value of records that ‘find their place among the national archives as an organic

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 495.

<sup>113</sup> Evans, 252.

<sup>114</sup> Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, 16. This statement appears to contradict Schellenberg’s argument that original order is not a necessary condition for arrangement according to provenance; however, Schellenberg’s separation of the value of archives into evidential and informational, would seem to allow that where only informational value exists re-arrangement within *fonds*, i.e. the items within series, is permitted.

<sup>115</sup> Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, 11; Jenkinson, ‘The Classification and Survey of English Archives’, 199; See also Scott, ‘Introduction’, in Cunningham.

unit'.<sup>116</sup> Over thirty years later, Richard C. Berner and Uli Haller referred to the 'organic components of an accession' and 'a body of organic records'.<sup>117</sup> This trend has continued with more recent articles regularly using the term, although often in specific reference to the arrangement and description theories articulated by the Dutch or by Jenkinson.<sup>118</sup> The use of the term 'organic' by the series system approach to arrangement and description has also been noted by other writers; for example, Sarah Flynn commented on how the use of the series system 'resulted in [...] [the] series [...] being described as an organic whole'.<sup>119</sup>

The composition of the archival *fonds* in terms of a relationship between a whole and its parts has also informed the development of several widely-accepted international archival description standards including *ISAD(G)* and *RAD*. Various committees and working parties were formed during the last decades of the twentieth century in recognition of the need for descriptive standards that had arisen because of the opportunities presented by new technology to enable electronic data sharing.<sup>120</sup> Many of these committees placed the *fonds* at the centre of their descriptive standards, arguing that archival description should be based on the origins and context of the records.<sup>121</sup> The resultant standards reinforced a whole-part relationship in archival arrangement and description:

Documentary relationships are revealed and preserved through the identification of the levels of arrangement of the fonds and their representation in structured descriptions, while administrative

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<sup>116</sup> Helen L. Chatfield, 'The Development of Record Systems', *AA*, 13.3 (1950), 259-67, (259).

<sup>117</sup> Berner and Haller, 142, 147.

<sup>118</sup> Examples include: Elizabeth Shepherd and Charlotte Smith, 'The Application of ISAD(G) to the Description of Archival Datasets', *JSA*, 21.1 (2000), 55-86; Greg Bak, 'Continuous Classification: Capturing Dynamic Relationships Among Information Resources', *AS*, 12.3 (2012), 287-318.

<sup>119</sup> Sarah J. A. Flynn, 'The Records Continuum Model in Context and its Implications for Archival Practice', *JSA*, 22.1 (2001), 79-93, (86, 89). Flynn uses the title 'Commonwealth Records System' to refer to the 'Australian Series System' model.

<sup>120</sup> David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, 'The Power of the Principle of Provenance', *Archivaria*, 21 (1985/86), 14-27; Terry Cook, 'Easy to Byte, Harder to Chew: The Second Generation of Electronic Records Archives', *Archivaria*, 33 (1991), 202-16.

<sup>121</sup> For example, the US National Information Task Force, formed in the late 1970s, which resulted in a dictionary of data elements, later evolving into USMARC Archives and Manuscript Control (AMC); the British Archival Description Project which led to the publication of the *Manual of Archival Description (MADI)* in 1986; the Canadian Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards which developed *RAD* in 1990; the ICA's Committee on Descriptive Standards which developed *ISAD(G)* in 1992. See also Richard Dancy, 'RAD Past, Present, and Future', *Archivaria*, 74 (2012), 7-41.

relationships are revealed and preserved through the administrative history of the fonds and its parts.<sup>122</sup>

The archives are thus arranged and described in a stable hierarchical structure that is perceived to accurately reflect the whole and its component parts, and thereby reveal the archives' meaning and value.

### 3.5.3. The 'conceptual fonds'

Despite the wide acceptance of traditional conceptions of the *fonds* as an organic whole, there has been increasing discussion by archivists about the extent to which the analogy continues to work in practice. Several recent articles have questioned the concept of an organic whole in terms of whether it is an appropriate concept to apply to archives, regardless of the level at which it is applied.<sup>123</sup> Laura Millar argued that the fragmentary nature of archives is in direct conflict with the notion of an organic whole, asserting that:

the fond implies a wholeness, a completeness, a totality. I would argue that no archives now has, ever will have, or ever has had 'the whole of the records of any creating agency' [...] Archivists manage the residue, not the entirety; the remains, not the totality.<sup>124</sup>

Millar acknowledged that the Dutch Manual did allow for a *fonds* to consist of a single item or a small aggregate of records: 'if that is all that is left, then that is the fonds'; but she questioned how the same logic can be applied in situations where records from the same creator are split physically across several different archives, and where each have been treated as *fonds* according to traditional concepts of provenance.<sup>125</sup> Millar contended that 'to refer to each [...] as a fonds is to diminish the value of the parts and, ultimately, to render nonsensical of the very concept of the whole'.<sup>126</sup> This argument is similarly expressed by Geoffrey Yeo who argued that as most archives hold only 'non-current' records, whilst the 'current' records remain with the records creator, 'it seems erroneous to use the term fonds to refer to the non-current records alone, since they are not the "whole of the records"'.<sup>127</sup> Yeo's

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<sup>122</sup> Heather MacNeil, 'The Implications of the UBC Research Results for Archival Description in General and the Canadian Rules for Archival Description in Particular', *Archivi & Computer*, 6.3-4 (1996), 239-245, (246).

<sup>123</sup> See Millar, 'The Death of the Fonds'; Meehan, 'Making the Leap'.

<sup>124</sup> Millar, 'The Death of the Fonds', 6.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Yeo, 'The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection', 53.

solution to this problem is to regard the *fonds* as a conceptual rather than a physical entity, arguing that: ‘the fonds is re-imagined as a concept; its components are logically interrelated but need not be physically brought together’.<sup>128</sup>

The dangers of associating the *fonds* with a physical entity had been previously identified by Terry Cook.<sup>129</sup> Cook gave several examples in which provenance can become unclear: for example, when the functions of one part of a particular agency are devolved to another, or outsourced to a private company; when a series is particularly long-living, generated by several different creators over decades, and continuing into the future; or when agencies and functions change, or the agency changes but the function remains, or vice versa.<sup>130</sup> All these examples can be applied to traditional record formats, but Cook noted that electronic records magnified the problems of archival arrangement and description: ‘where “creatorship” is a fluid process of manipulating information from many sources in a myriad of ways rather than something leading to a static, fixed physical product’.<sup>131</sup> Cook’s solution was to regard the *fonds* as an ‘intellectual construct’; as a ‘conceptual summary of descriptions of physical entities [...] and descriptions of the administrators, historical and functional character of the records creator(s)’.<sup>132</sup>

Yeo expanded Cook’s idea of the *fonds* as an intellectual construct rather than a physical entity, and argued that this allows archivists to recognize: ‘a fonds might have non-exclusive membership’, the existence of ‘overlapping fonds’, and also ‘of varying interpretations of their borders’.<sup>133</sup> Yeo questioned the perceived dichotomy between ‘artificial’ and ‘organic’, which has become ingrained in the archival literature; reinforced by widely-accepted definitions of *fonds* as ‘natural accumulation, contrasted with the ‘collection’ as ‘artificial assembly’.<sup>134</sup> Yeo argued that because a *fonds* is rarely whole in the sense of being complete, in practice they often resemble the traditional notion of an artificial collection, with missing records as well as supplementary items inserted by third parties at a later date. Although

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>129</sup> Cook, ‘The Concept of the Archival Fonds’, 52-63. See also Terry Cook, ‘What is Past is Prologue’, 48.

<sup>130</sup> Cook, ‘The Concept of the Archival Fonds’, 58-60.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 71. Emphasis in original.

<sup>133</sup> Yeo, ‘The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection’, 65, 68.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 51-2. Jenkinson makes explicit the distinction between organically accumulated archives and artificially created museum collections – see Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Description*, 9-10.

Yeo's article argued for greater flexibility in the concept of the archival *fonds*, he cautioned, however, that 'the fuzziness of the limits of a fonds does not mean that we must see it as having no limits at all'.<sup>135</sup> Yeo concluded by proposing that relational documentation systems might present a reliable alternative to physical ordering and hierarchical description, providing a means of documenting all the contexts of a record over time.<sup>136</sup>

Millar also presented a solution to the problem of the non-wholeness of archival *fonds* by widening the definition of *fonds* to include more than just creatorship – as she rightly points out, many classic definitions of the *fonds* include the phrase: 'the whole of the documents [...] organically created and/or accumulated and used by a particular individual, family or corporate body',<sup>137</sup> yet often the two parts of the definition 'accumulated and used' have been generally ignored, despite also being elements of a record's history.<sup>138</sup> Millar drew comparisons with the uses of the term 'provenance' in the allied professions of archaeology and museum practice. She described how in archaeology the derived term 'provenience' is used, not to refer to the archaeological object itself, but rather to its 'physical, logistical and spatial context'.<sup>139</sup> In comparison, in museum art galleries, 'provenance' is 'intertwined with concepts of pedigree and authenticity' as it is used to refer to the chronological history of a work of art.<sup>140</sup> Millar proposed that archival concepts of the *fonds* should be expanded to include both archaeological provenience and artistic provenance, with the principle of provenance incorporating the history of the creator, the records and their custody over time.<sup>141</sup> Millar concluded that by re-conceptualizing the *fonds* in this way the 'value' of archives can still be revealed through provenance; by focusing on 'how the records came to be parts, not wholes', and how 'the actual parts are greater than their sum as a hypothetical whole'.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Yeo, 'The Conceptual Fonds and the Physical Collection', 69.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>137</sup> 'Glossary', *RAD*, D-4.

<sup>138</sup> Millar, 'The Death of the Fonds', 8.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 12-14.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 14. Millar does not explicitly use the term 'value' but the author believes that it is implied when she refers to the 'enriched context' of records that enables a better understanding for users.

In 2009 Jennifer Meehan also questioned the assumed relationship between a whole and its parts that is implicit in traditional concepts of the archival *fonds*.<sup>143</sup> She explored the intellectual process undertaken by the archivist in the activity of archival arrangement and description in which the archivist attempts to identify the whole from its component parts. She described how this involves both an external and an internal dimension: firstly, identifying the creator(s) of a particular series of records amounts to:

identifying and/or creating the relationships of ‘the external structure of provenance’ [...] the relationships that place the records as a whole in their specific socio-cultural, administrative and provenancial contexts;

and secondly, identifying the meaningful order of a group of records amounts to:

identifying and/or creating the relationships of ‘the internal structure of provenance’ [...] the relationships that place the records in their specific procedural, documentary and technological contexts.<sup>144</sup>

Meehan argued that in the process of archival arrangement and description the archivist does not actually identify a relationship between the whole and its parts, but instead ‘infers’ such a relationship.<sup>145</sup> Meehan argued that the process of arriving at an understanding of the contexts of the records ‘comprises a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts’ because it is necessarily incomplete.<sup>146</sup> The archivist can attempt to arrive at this understanding either by taking a top-down approach, starting with known facts about the record creator, or by taking a bottom-up approach that begins with the records themselves; however, Meehan asserted that both approaches result in an ‘intellectual assembling’ of the existing parts, from which the archivist must then ‘sense’ the whole, and which is far from being conclusive or certain.<sup>147</sup> The archivist must ‘make a leap’ from the available parts – the information in and about the records – to ‘an imagined whole’ – an ‘understanding of the contexts of records creation, maintenance, transmittal and use’.<sup>148</sup> The implication of Meehan’s argument is that a concept of archival value is not fixed in archival provenance, waiting to be discovered, but is instead created (and re-created) by the archivist

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<sup>143</sup> Meehan, ‘Making the Leap’.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 81-84.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 84.

through the very activity of arrangement and description. Meehan's arguments can be placed in counter-position to those of Schellenberg writing some fifty years earlier: for Schellenberg the objective of arrangement and description is to break down the whole into its constituent parts, whilst for Meehan it is an activity of inference from the parts to an (imagined) whole.<sup>149</sup> Yet, conversely, both writers agree that the resultant '[archival] whole is greater than the sum of its parts'.<sup>150</sup> The difference seems to be whether the archival whole is real or imagined.

### 3.6. Concluding remarks

The principle of provenance has remained a core tenet of archival theory and practice since its inception; yet varied and conflicting interpretations of the principle have been posited. From the late twentieth century in particular, the theoretical dimensions of provenance have been questioned in response to the challenges of modern recordkeeping and postmodernist theory. Broadly speaking, there has been a perceptible shift from the notion of a group of records whose boundaries are clearly delineated in relation to the context of its creator, to the view that archives are characterized within a much wider, and less strict, contextual grouping that includes multiple relationships and perspectives. Yeo has highlighted the recent changing vocabulary within the field as archival theorists have increasingly moved away from 'provenance' in favour of 'context'; although, as ever, there are differing views on whether the terms are synonymous or not.<sup>151</sup> Yeo has argued that the capability to identify and capture context is increasingly important in the digital environment where information can become 'desituated', 'de-contextualized' or 'isolated'.<sup>152</sup> The digital world allows structures to be built dynamically as and when they are needed:

The rules that seemed to determine the shaping and stabilizing of collections in earlier "orders" are absent or diminished. Hierarchies are said to be broken down, linear connections lose their monopoly, and binary choices disappear. Users make their own orderings, elect

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<sup>149</sup> See Schellenberg, 'Archival Principle of Arrangement', 11.

<sup>150</sup> Schellenberg, 'Archival Principles of Arrangement', 20; Meehan, 'Making the Leap', 89.

<sup>151</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, 'Trust and Context in Cyberspace', *Archives and Records*, 34.2 (2013), 214-34, (218). This observation is also made by Elizabeth Yakel, who described the changing emphasis on representing context in archival finding aids over the last thirty years. See Yakel, 'Archival Representation', *AS*, 3 (2003), 1-25.

<sup>152</sup> Yeo, 'Trust and Context in Cyberspace', 6. See also Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past. Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 203.



their own collections, construct their own narratives in whatever way they wish.<sup>153</sup>

This view is also one shared by commentators outside the archival field, including Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, professor of internet governance and regulation at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford. Mayer-Schönberger has written about the unforeseen consequences of digital technology, highlighting that it is impeding society's ability to forget, as nothing is ever really erased in cyberspace.<sup>154</sup> One possible response he offered to the twenty-first century reality of 'information overload' is that of 'perfect contextualization', which would enable the comprehensive collection, storage and retrieval of digital information, and thereby enable the evaluation of such information.<sup>155</sup> Archivist Jennifer Douglas has identified a similar need to be able to differentiate and delineate between different types of context;<sup>156</sup> whilst Charles Bazerman argued that the evaluative judgement required in comparing texts and data is at the very core of the 'knowledge-making' process.<sup>157</sup> It would seem, therefore, that the activity of archival arrangement and description, grounded in the principle of provenance, in all its conceptions, continues to provide a meaningful conceptual framework for understanding and creating the contexts of records – in both paper and digital formats.

Perhaps in the end it is necessary to follow the advice of Laura Millar who argued that 'we should not get hung up upon 'series' versus *fonds*'. They are both just terms'.<sup>158</sup> The author would agree that the difference of meaning between these two terms is not so great as has sometimes been implied by their leading proponents in the literature, and that, arguably, the language used in the definitions strongly suggests that the difference is merely one of the level of application. However, it does not necessarily follow that it is time for the archival profession to abandon either, or the concepts which underpin them. Although the current postmodernist framework of thinking about archives insists that our attempts to accurately identify

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<sup>153</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, 'Bringing Things Together: Aggregate Records In a Digital Age', *Archivaria*, 74 (2012), 43-91, (58).

<sup>154</sup> Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, *Delete. The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age* (New Jersey, US: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>155</sup> Mayer-Schönberger, 163-8.

<sup>156</sup> Douglas, 38.

<sup>157</sup> Charles Bazerman, 'The Orders of Documents, the Orders of Activity, and the Orders of Information', *AS*, 12.4 (2012), 377-88, (385).

<sup>158</sup> Laura Millar, 'An Unnecessary Complication: International Perspectives on the Record Group, the Series and the *Fonds*', in Cunningham, 312-245, (332).

relationships between records, creators, and users, through arrangement and description can only ever be partial, that does not mean such attempts are meaningless. Heather MacNeil acknowledged that even though ‘original order’ is only one of many possible orders of records, it still remains ‘essential as part of the records’ history’.<sup>159</sup> The existence of a value in records, which results from the circumstances of the records’ creation, remains a compelling idea, even if most archivists would not consider it to be in isolation or to the exclusion of other, many, possible values in records. This value, which, as another commentator has noted ‘Terry Eastwood pithily summarizes as the value of the documents “as a record of what occurred and how it occurred in the context in which it occurred”’,<sup>160</sup> relies on the principle of provenance. The principle of provenance provides a conceptual framework for understanding and creating the context(s) that give a body of records its meaning and value.<sup>161</sup>

The next chapter will step back from the analysis of specific theories of archival appraisal, arrangement and description, to examine some of the underlying concepts and ideas that have come from other disciplines into the archival discipline and which have been instrumental in influencing the direction and development of archival theory in general.

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<sup>159</sup> MacNeil, ‘Archivalterity’, 21.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 10. See also Terry Eastwood, ‘How Goes It With Appraisal?’, *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 111-21, (115).

<sup>161</sup> See Meehan, ‘Making the Leap’, 76.

## **Chapter 4. The evolution of archival theory: influences, impacts and underlying assumptions**

### **4.1. Chapter summary**

Building upon some of the points raised in earlier chapters, this chapter will discuss the evolution of archival theory, concentrating in particular on the ‘paradigm shift’ in archival thinking, which took place at the end of the twentieth century. It will be argued that a coalescence of specific factors during this period led to the opening-up of the archival profession to new ideas and theories from other disciplines. Influences from different sectors, including the cultural and heritage sectors, and the informatics and records management sectors, began to impact on the way archivists saw themselves, their role, and the archives they manage. They significantly contributed to ideas about the value of archives, which informed archival theories of appraisal, arrangement and description. This chapter will illustrate some of the dominant discourses that impacted upon archives and will explore the underlying value assumptions that are implicit in the discourses, and which in turn helped to shape archival thinking about value. This chapter continues to explore the archival literature; and begins to widen the perspective by considering the literature in other fields that have influenced the archival profession, namely those of the cultural and built heritage, records management and information management.

### **4.2. Introduction**

Archival theory developed as a distinctive body of principles and ideas from the late nineteenth century as archival theorists began to publish manuals and guidelines to aid archivists in their work.<sup>1</sup> John Ridener described how ‘a lack of codified professional training for archivists and a desire to create standardized archives created a need for normalization and regulation among archivists of the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, S. Muller, J. A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven* (Groningen: Erven B. Van der Kamp, 1898); Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration. The problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922); Eugenio Casanova, *Archivistica* (Siena: Stab. Arti Grafiche Lazzeri, 1928); Adolf Brenneke, *Archivkunde: ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Geschichte des europäischen Archivwissens* (Leipzig: Koehler & Arnelang, 1953); Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1956).

time'.<sup>2</sup> Although some archivists have, at times, questioned the relevancy and role of theory for archival practitioners, as the previous two chapters have demonstrated, there is significant evidence to show that 'archival theory is neither nonexistent, high-falutin', mythical, banal, nor metaphysical. It consists, rather, of organized conceptual knowledge resulting from the analysis of basic archival ideas'.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout a large part of the twentieth century, archival theory tended to be self-referential and self-contained, as archivists strove to establish clear boundaries between their professional activities and those of related fields, including librarianship, antiquarianism and history. The origins of the archival profession differ, depending on the country. In the UK, for example, the archival profession emerged from that of professional historians, asserting its independence early on and achieving it to a large extent by the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> In comparison, the American archival profession remained in the shadow of librarians until a much later period, with a great deal of debate as to the professional differences between archivists and manuscript curators regularly appearing in the pages of its journal, *The American Archivist*.<sup>5</sup> US archivist Theodore R. Schellenberg's 1965 publication, *The Management of Archives* drew specific comparison and contrast with the methodology and techniques applied by the library profession.<sup>6</sup> The Australian archival profession similarly emerged from its national Library Association in the mid-twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> In Canada, archivists sought independence from historians, forming an independent body from the Canadian Historical Association in 1975.<sup>8</sup> The nature of the relationship between archivists and historians continued to be debated by the Canadian archival profession into the

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<sup>2</sup> John Ridener, *From Polders to Postmodernism. A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, Minnesota: Litwin Books LLC, 2009), 29.

<sup>3</sup> Trevor Livelton, *Archival Theory, Records and the Public* (Chicago: Scarecrow Press/SAA, 1996), 25. See also Chapter 1, section 1.2.

<sup>4</sup> See Elizabeth Shepherd, 'Towards Professionalism? Archives and Archivists in England in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century', unpublished PhD thesis, (UCL: School of Library, Archive and Information Studies, 2004). This is also borne out in a reading of articles published in *Archives* and *JSA*.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Lester J. Cappon, 'Historical Manuscripts as Archives: Some Definitions and Their Application', *AA*, 19.2 (1956), 101-110; Robert L. Brubaker, 'Archival Principles and the Curator of Manuscripts', *AA*, 29.4 (1966), 505-10; Maynard J. Brichford, 'Historians and Mirrors: A Review Essay', *AA*, 36.3 (1973), 397-402.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> 'Report on Archives and Libraries by the Archive Section, Library and Archives Association', *AM*, 1.6 (1959), 27-35.

<sup>8</sup> See *The Canadian Archivist* (Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association), 1963-1974 and *Archivaria* (Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists), 1976-present.

late 1980s.<sup>9</sup> Although the timing of an independent archival profession varied from country to country, each was characterized by a determination to assert the uniqueness and distinctive nature of archival work, with little reference to ideas and theories in other disciplines beyond distancing themselves from those in which they originated.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 2 demonstrated how much of the archival thinking in the early twentieth century was dominated by two individuals who reinforced the idea that the archival profession was distinctive and had its own theory: Sir Hilary Jenkinson in the UK and Theodore R. Schellenberg in the US. Developments in archival theory throughout this period came about primarily as a result of archivists having to find practical ways to deal with specific types of records.<sup>11</sup> The last decades of the twentieth century, however, witnessed significant changes in the nature and development of archival theory. As has been previously noted, several writers have used the term ‘paradigm shift’ to describe the perceived transformation that took place during this period.<sup>12</sup> Although developments in archival theory, like those of any human group, have always taken place within a much wider context, the coalescence of several factors in the late twentieth century considerably affected the archival profession; including postmodernism, social policy, new technologies and the proliferation of digital records.<sup>13</sup> In 1994, Heather MacNeil argued that:

The paradigm shift that is taking place in the archival world has been provoked by a number of societal, technological, and professional developments that have thrown into question, if not crisis, some of the basic tenets concerning the nature and value of archives.<sup>14</sup>

Influenced by new thinking in other fields, archival theorists began to question their traditional approaches from a range of diverse perspectives, and to seek alternative

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<sup>9</sup> For example, George Bolotenko, ‘Archivists and Historians: Keepers of the Well’, *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 5-25; Anthony L. Rees, ‘Masters in our Own House?’, *Archivaria*, 16 (1983), 53-9; R. Scott James, ‘A Wearisome Issue’, *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 302-3. See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Waldo Gifford Leland, ‘The First Conference of Archivists, December 1909: The Beginnings of a Profession’, *AA*, 13.2 (1950), 109-20; Alan Ridge, ‘Chairman’s Letter’, *Canadian Archivist*, 1.4 (1966), 16; Library Association, ‘The Place of Archives and Manuscripts in the Field of Librarianship’, *Archives*, 9.41 (1969), 40-1.

<sup>11</sup> Ridener, 112. See also Chapter 2.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.

<sup>13</sup> William G. Rosenberg, ‘Historiographical Origins of the Archival Divide’, *COMMA*, 2005.1 – Wien 2004 (2005), 1-11.

<sup>14</sup> Heather MacNeil, ‘Archival Theory and Practice: Between Two Paradigms’, *Archivaria*, 37 (1994), 6-20, (7).

theories for all aspects of archival practice, which could work within a twenty-first century archive and recordkeeping paradigm.

Many archivists began to make explicit connections with theories in other disciplines, including archaeology, cultural studies, and museum studies, as they explored the application of concepts such as material culture and cultural significance as a means of realizing the importance of archives in understanding the past and the present.<sup>15</sup> The physical placement of many local archival services in the UK within local government departments that comprised culture, leisure and sport led to a commonly-held view among many archivists, government officials and the general public, that archives are a cultural resource.<sup>16</sup> This was not a solely British phenomenon as a similar trend was witnessed in many other countries.<sup>17</sup> Broader debates about the value of cultural heritage and the arts as a whole, which were taking place at all levels of society, began to impact on archives. These debates became intertwined with the concept of public value, funding for the arts, and attempts to measure culture both economically and socially. Unsurprisingly therefore, archivists, particularly those working in the UK public sector, began to try to demonstrate the value of archives as a cultural resource to society.<sup>18</sup>

Simultaneously, other archivists began to align themselves with developing fields such as informatics, and newly emerging disciplines like records management and information management.<sup>19</sup> The emphasis was on preserving records to support

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<sup>15</sup> Examples include: Hugh A. Taylor, 'The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage', *Archivaria*, 15 (1982/83), 118-30; Kenneth E. Foote, 'To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory and Culture', *AA*, 53.3 (1990), 378-93; James M. O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', *AA*, 56.2 (1993), 234-55; Hugh A. Taylor, '"Heritage" Revisited: Documents as Artifacts in the Context of Museums and Material Culture', *Archivaria*, 40 (1995), 8-20.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Stevens, 'Local Authority Archives: places and perceptions', *JSA*, 20.1 (1999), 85-92; Victor Gray, 'The English Regions: The archival dimension', *JSA*, 21.2 (2000), 149-57.

<sup>17</sup> In the UK, since 1997, responsibility for the National Archives has been in the Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport. In Canada, Library and Archives Canada has been in the Department for Canadian Heritage since 1995; in the Netherlands, since 1996, the Dutch National Archives have been governed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; and in France, the Archives nationales has been part of the Ministry of Culture since 1959. Australia has more recently followed this trend – the National Archives moved into the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport in 2011.

<sup>18</sup> London Archives Regional Council, *Out of the Past – into the Future. Priorities for Archive Development in London* (London: London Archives Regional Council, 2001); Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future* (UK: MLA, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Examples include: Glenda Acland, 'Archivist: Keeper, Undertaker or Auditor', *AM*, 19.1 (1991), 9-15; Charles M. Dollar, 'Archivists and Records Managers in the Information Age', *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 37-52; Philip C. Bantin and Gerald Bernbom, 'The Indiana University Electronic Records Project: Analyzing Functions, Identifying Transactions, and Evaluating Recordkeeping Systems – A

the record-creating administration rather than preserving cultural relics for historical research, as some archivists began to apply ideas from risk management and organizational theory to archive and recordkeeping.<sup>20</sup> In particular, some archivists emphasized the value of archives for accountability, good governance and corporate memory.<sup>21</sup>

This chapter will explore a selection of relevant examples that demonstrate the transfer of value concepts from an external discipline into the archival sphere.<sup>22</sup> These dominant strands of influence, with their different theoretical foundations, brought multiple conceptions of the term ‘value’ into archival theory. They drew on philosophical ideas about the characteristics and differences between intrinsic and instrumental values to broaden the debate about archival value. They also effectively reinforced a pre-existing dualism of archives – on the one hand, their use for administrative and legal purposes and, on the other, their use for historical, cultural and scholarly purposes – as a sustaining concept upon which much contemporary archival theory continues to be constructed.<sup>23</sup>

### 4.3. The value of archives as cultural resources

The terms ‘culture’ and ‘cultural heritage’ are not without their difficulties and contested meanings.<sup>24</sup> One of the earliest definitions of culture was made in

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Report on Methodology’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 10.3 (1996), 246-66; Richard J. Cox, *Managing Records as Evidence and Information* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2001).

<sup>20</sup> David Bearman, ‘Archival Strategies’, *AA*, 58.4 (1995), 380-413; Victoria Lemieux, ‘Applying Mintzberg’s Theories on Organization Configuration to Archival Appraisal’, *Archivaria*, 46 (1998), 32-85.

<sup>21</sup> Luciana Duranti, ‘Archives as Place’, *AM*, 24.2 (1996), 242-55; Heather MacNeil, *Trusting Records: Legal, Historical and Diplomatic Perspectives* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000); Chris Hurley, ‘Recordkeeping, Document Destruction and the Law (Heiner, Enron and McCabe)’, *AM*, 30.2 (2002), 6-25; Elizabeth Shepherd, ‘Why are records in the public sector organizational assets?’, *Records Management Journal*, 16.1 (2006), 6-12.

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that the author has chosen to focus on those examples which she believes resonate most strongly with a concept of archival value; arguably there are others, including perspectives that give the archivist a quasi-political role by re-conceptualizing archives as sources of power, with their unique ability to protect citizens’ rights and to support social justice. Such perspectives are exemplified in the writings of Verne Harris, Randall C. Jimerson and Eric Ketelaar among others.

<sup>23</sup> See also Chapter 1, section 1.4.

<sup>24</sup> Dave O’Brien, *Measuring the Value of Culture: A Report to the Department of Culture Media and Sport* (UK: AHRC, ESRC and DCMS, 15 Dec 2010), 11. Report available online: [www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7660.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7660.aspx) [accessed 28 February 2013]. See also J. Jokilehto, *Definition of Cultural Heritage. References to Documents in History* (ICCROM Working Group ‘Heritage and Society’, 2005). Available online: [www.cif.icomos.org/pdf\\_docs/Documents%20on%20line/Heritage%20definitions.pdf](http://www.cif.icomos.org/pdf_docs/Documents%20on%20line/Heritage%20definitions.pdf) [accessed 28 February 2013].

1871 by British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor who wrote that ‘culture [...] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’.<sup>25</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century anthropologists began to study cultural symbols, experiences, and products as they sought to establish if culture was unique to humanity and how it evolved.<sup>26</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s archaeologists began to shift their focus from merely dating artefacts as a supplement to history, to studying the people who created the artefacts and analysing the relationship between artefacts and social relations.<sup>27</sup> Artefacts were regarded as the material manifestations of cultures. Archaeologists and anthropologists used material culture as an important concept for interpreting the past through the objects and artefacts left behind in the present by individuals and societies.<sup>28</sup> It is assumed by proponents of material culture theory that such objects are created by someone and are produced to do something: ‘material culture does not passively *reflect* society – rather, it creates society through the actions of individuals’.<sup>29</sup> In the middle of the twentieth century, ‘cultural studies’ developed as a new discipline concerned with the study of culture in terms of its consumption goods and leisure activities (including art, music, film, food, sport and clothing).<sup>30</sup> By the end of the twentieth century the discipline was heavily influenced by postmodernist thinkers such as Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida, particularly in exploring the privileging of written records over non-written or oral texts, and the (re)-interpretation implicit in any reading of all text forms.<sup>31</sup> This widened the concept of ‘culture’ yet further by encompassing all meaningful artefacts as cultural ‘texts’.

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<sup>25</sup> Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (1871), cited in Jokilehto, *Definition of Cultural Heritage*, 1. The author acknowledges that this definition is from a Western-centric viewpoint and that other interpretations are possible.

<sup>26</sup> *History From Things: Essays on Material Culture* ed. by Steven Lubar and David W. Kingery (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, V. Gordon Childe, *The Danube in Prehistory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).

<sup>28</sup> Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Christopher Tilley, *Reading Material Culture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>29</sup> Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past*, 6. Italics in original.

<sup>30</sup> In the UK, cultural studies had overtly political, Marxist, origins compared to the US where it was grounded in a more liberal-pluralist tradition. See Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past*.

<sup>31</sup> Ian Hodder, ‘The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture’, in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, US: Sage Publications, 2000), 703-14.



Hugh A. Taylor was one of the first archivists to take the ideas from material culture theory and apply them to archives. In the early 1980s, Taylor wrote that archives provided ‘a powerful means of communication to the reader, providing a sense of immediacy with the past’.<sup>32</sup> Fifteen years later, Taylor argued for a widening of the definition of material culture to include archival records, commenting that these records are ‘instruments’ for the conduct of affairs or relationships in the same way as museum objects.<sup>33</sup> Taylor argued that ‘our records are more than a source for research, a means of ensuring accountability or as evidence in contradistinction to information without context’.<sup>34</sup> Instead, he regarded them as powerful ‘signs’ which reveal society’s collective memory.<sup>35</sup> Taylor blamed the failure by archivists to consider archives as material culture as being based on ‘old ideas of emphasizing content [...] based on several standards of value in the Schellenbergian tradition: a mountain of documentary ‘facts’ in evidential context’.<sup>36</sup> He argued that a shift was needed from considering ‘outputs’ (the volume of material generated by a creator and preserved by archivists) to ‘outcomes’ (the personal and social impact of the activity documented by the creator and the consequences of its accession by archivists). Taylor argued that:

all archives will then be viewed not just as legal and social evidence but as material instruments fashioned by a culture bent on the survival of the whole creative process, which will be infinitely more aware of the humans who created these materials.<sup>37</sup>

Taylor’s prolific output of published articles during his long career as an archivist in both the UK and in Canada meant that his innovative and boundary-pushing thinking reached many in the archival profession. In Taylor’s view, archives mattered because they ‘are an extension of ourselves’,<sup>38</sup> or, as another colleague expressed it: ‘By existing, archives signify’.<sup>39</sup>

Archivist Carolyn Heald also appealed to material culture theory in 1995 when she argued for the preservation of electronic records and recordkeeping

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<sup>32</sup> Taylor, ‘The Collective Memory’, 122.

<sup>33</sup> Taylor, “‘Heritage’ Revisited”, 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-12.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Terry Cook, Obituary: Hugh A. Taylor, 1920-2005’, *Archivaria*, 60 (2005), 275-82.

systems.<sup>40</sup> Heald argued that ‘information technology is just as much a cultural artefact as paper, videotape, papyrus or stone; our mission as archivists is to understand the cultural role of computer records *within* society’.<sup>41</sup> Heald re-iterated her views in another article in 1996, arguing that the task of the archivist is ‘to understand the cultural products of society, the cultural expressions that exist in concrete form, whether they be paper, film or electronic signals. We understand society from its cultural products, not vice versa’.<sup>42</sup> As Heald noted, one definition of postmodernism is: ‘the consumption of sheer commodification as a process’, in which past, present and future have lost all meaning as everything is relative.<sup>43</sup> Heald argued that postmodernism had replaced the rational positivism of the nineteenth century, which had provided the framework for much of the existing theory in the archival and history disciplines. She drew analogies with how the historical profession has had to evolve from its dependence on earlier principles ‘of order and coherence’ to cope with ‘current philosophical trends [...] towards complexity, fragmentation, and incoherence’.<sup>44</sup>

In the latter half of the twentieth century, historian Leopold von Ranke’s famous maxim that history can show ‘how things actually were’ (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), which became the guiding principle for many historians, had been overturned by the recognition that ‘History [...] is an inter-textual, linguistic construct. [...] we read the world as a text and, logically, such readings are infinite’.<sup>45</sup> In her article, Heald acknowledged this challenge, but, rather than dismiss the importance of archives as a result, she instead insisted that there can be a continuing role for archives as the sources of history if they are re-conceptualized, using postmodernist theory, as ‘sources of discourse (context) rather than as sources of value (information)’.<sup>46</sup> Heald suggested that this is what archivists have actually

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<sup>40</sup> Carolyn Heald, ‘Are We Collecting the Right Stuff?’, *Archivaria*, 40 (1995), 182-88.

<sup>41</sup> Heald, ‘Are We Collecting the Right Stuff?’, 183. Italics in original.

<sup>42</sup> Carolyn Heald, ‘Is there Room for Archives in the Postmodern World?’, *AA*, 59.1 (1996), 88-101, (100-101).

<sup>43</sup> Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, x (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1991), cited in Heald, ‘Is there Room?’, 89.

<sup>44</sup> Heald, ‘Is there Room?’, 91.

<sup>45</sup> Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), 7, 9. See also Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Richard Brown, ‘Records Acquisition Strategy and Its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics’, *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 34-56, (43), cited in Heald, ‘Is there Room?’, 93.

always done; that context has always been more important than content, whether approached top-down from the creator, or bottom-up from the records themselves.<sup>47</sup>

Heald argued that archives are not valuable because ‘they have some objective and immutable status’, but rather, they are deemed valuable by society – for guaranteeing rights and privileges and for genealogical purposes.<sup>48</sup> Heald concluded that traditional archival theories such as diplomatics remain vital for the understanding of records, provided that the archivist acknowledges that the self-conscious act of ‘reading archives’ is as much a product of society as the records themselves.<sup>49</sup>

The impact of postmodernist thinking in the late twentieth century was also felt by heritage conservation theorists who began to explore the ways in which historic buildings and sites provided a medium through which a society’s past could be better understood.<sup>50</sup> The term ‘cultural significance’ was introduced, commonly used ‘to mean the degree to which a place possesses a certain valued attribute [...] [valued] by elements of a community, by a whole community, or by our society as a whole’.<sup>51</sup> *The Burra Charter*, adopted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites in 1979, defined cultural significance as ‘aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations’ and stated that it is embodied ‘in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and objects’.<sup>52</sup> The *Charter* supported a new direction in heritage conservation, which used the idea of protecting the values embodied in cultural heritage to explain and justify its conservation.<sup>53</sup> Subsequent theorists attempted to categorize heritage values, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that:

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<sup>47</sup> Heald, ‘Is there Room?’, 93, 95.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>50</sup> *Managing Built Heritage. The Role of Cultural Significance*, ed. by Derek Worthing and Stephen Bond (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

<sup>51</sup> *Looking After Heritage Places*, ed. by Michael Pearson and Sharon Sullivan (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 17, 18. It is the view of the author that the term ‘significance’ is used here in a sense that is synonymous with the term ‘value’, in an attempt to avoid a rhetorical tautology. The author believes the attempt is ultimately unsuccessful as it can be argued that the underlying assumptions behind cultural significance still lead to value being defined in terms of value, and thus the tautology remains.

<sup>52</sup> *Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter)*, Article 1.2, Definitions. Available online: [www.Australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA-CHARTER-1999\\_charter-only.pdf](http://www.Australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA-CHARTER-1999_charter-only.pdf) [accessed 28 February 2013].

<sup>53</sup> Worthing and Bond, 47.

In the final analysis, heritage places are not significant by their nature; they are given value by human beings. Their value rests in their perception by the community. Significance is wholly a human artefact or concept; as such it is as fluid, complex and dynamic as society's multi-layered and changing value system.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the recognition that there cannot be a truly objective evaluation of cultural significance, many theorists in the field argued nonetheless that there are widely-accepted values that can be identified within cultural heritage. Proponents of this approach use a process of value assessment based on the premise that all values are equal and can be placed in a hierarchy of ascending (or descending) values in order to compare relative significance.<sup>55</sup> The author believes that parallels can be drawn between these attempts to identify and categorize value in cultural heritage theory and the taxonomic approaches to value made by some archival theorists, particularly in the 1980s US.<sup>56</sup> For example, NARA's *Staff Information Paper No. 21*, entitled: *Intrinsic Value in Archival Material*, established a list of nine criteria against which archives could be evaluated;<sup>57</sup> whilst Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young developed what they called 'the Black Box' appraisal model, in which a long list of values and record characteristics should be considered, with the archivist 'pulling from the box' a determination of the value of archives.<sup>58</sup>

The concept of cultural significance has been applied beyond the built heritage sector; for example, in 1992, UNESCO adopted the term 'significance' as an acceptance criteria in its *Memory of the World Programme*, aimed at safeguarding the world's documentary heritage, including archives.<sup>59</sup> The Programme has not yet been widely taken up by the archival sector<sup>60</sup> and some archivists have questioned its

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<sup>54</sup> Pearson and Sullivan, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Worthing and Bond, 81-2.

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

<sup>57</sup> *Intrinsic Value in Archival Material*, *Staff Information Paper No. 21* (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1982), p. 1. Online version: <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources/archival-material-intrinsic-value.html> [accessed 19 November 2012].

<sup>58</sup> Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, 'Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records', *AA*, 48.2 (1985), 121-140.

<sup>59</sup> See [www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/homepage/) [accessed 28 February 2013]. See also Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Australia: Collections Council of Australia, 2009) which is arguably the most ambitious application of the concept within the museum and archival sectors to date.

<sup>60</sup> When the author checked in June 2014, only 11 listings for the UK could be found on the International Memory of the World Register; seven for the US and four for Canada. [www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-)

basic premises.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, many of the ideas of cultural significance theory have influenced the quest by some archivists to determine the value of archives. For example, James O'Toole published several articles in *The American Archivist* in the 1980s and 1990s in which he sought to identify the value in archives that could explain and justify their preservation.<sup>62</sup> O'Toole employed the language of cultural theory, preferring the term 'significance' to describe the characteristics of archives that make them worthy of being preserved (the author argues that in doing so O'Toole used the term in a way that is broadly comparable with the term 'value'). O'Toole challenged traditional arguments that linked preservation with age, or uniqueness, and questioned why it seems to be a particularly human characteristic to keep records in as near pristine conditions as possible for as long as possible.<sup>63</sup> O'Toole suggested that before one could evaluate archives it was necessary to understand how and why human beings created the records in the first place.<sup>64</sup> He drew on ideas in the fields of history and anthropology about literacy in societies to explore the 'symbolic' nature of archives, suggesting that there are many examples of records whose 'real meaning was more symbolic than practical'.<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, O'Toole's consideration of the different types of record significance mirror those listed by *The Burra Charter* – aesthetic, historical, spiritual, and social – as he explained the importance of seals and elaborate calligraphy in making documents attractive; or how the physical solidity and durability of baptismal registers made such volumes seem more official.<sup>66</sup> The illustrations accompanying the text, as well as the examples given, indicated O'Toole's wide interpretation of the definition of 'record'. For example, in this category he included family quilts and family bibles, arguing that they are 'part record, part artefact. We make and value these records

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[world/register/](http://www.world/register/) (It should be noted that a separate listing on the UK Memory of the World Register ([www.unesco.org.uk](http://www.unesco.org.uk)) includes a total of 50 inscriptions [accessed 22 June 2014]).

<sup>61</sup> For example, Robyn Sloggett commented that whilst the *Memory of the World Programme* is laudable in principle, its methodology is problematic and the process itself is 'culturally determined self-selecting'. Robyn Sloggett, 'Valuing Significance or Signifying Value? Culture in a Global Context', *AM*, 33.2 (2005), 110-229.

<sup>62</sup> James O'Toole, 'On the Idea of Permanence', *AA*, 52.1 (1989), 10-25; O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', and James O'Toole, 'On the Idea of Uniqueness', *AA*, 57.4 (1994), 632-58.

<sup>63</sup> O'Toole, 'On the Idea of Permanence', 16; O'Toole, 'On the Idea of Uniqueness'.

<sup>64</sup> O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', 235.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-3.

because of the way they reconstruct the family across time and space [...] the power of that symbolic reconstruction of the family is substantial and often emotional'.<sup>67</sup>

O'Toole argued that the symbolic significance of many records derives 'from the act of recordmaking' and he quoted fellow archivist, Hugh A. Taylor, in arguing there is a kind of implicit hierarchy of value therein: 'handwritten, 'personalized' letters carry more weight, telegrams and telephone calls somewhat less, and preprinted postcards count practically not at all'.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, O'Toole is basing value on *how* the record has been created rather than on the record's content, or on *what* has been created.<sup>69</sup>

The influence of the ideas that emerged from material culture theory and cultural studies can be found in the archival appraisal theories of Hans Booms and Terry Cook who explicitly repositioned appraisal theory within a socio-cultural perspective.<sup>70</sup> Booms argued for appraisal based on the value of records as 'the material source of a society's historical consciousness'.<sup>71</sup> He insisted that archivists could achieve a degree of objectivity in appraisal decisions by 'measuring the societal significance of past events' through an analysis of the value which the records' contemporaries had attached to them.<sup>72</sup> Booms argued that appraisal should be based on the archival principle of provenance because he believed that it is in the values of the record creators that the value of archives resides.<sup>73</sup> In his view there is no value intrinsic in the record itself, rather archival value is found in the value systems of those who created the records.<sup>74</sup> Booms argued that by considering the value of the record creators, by analysing at a macro-level their structures and functions, the archivist can achieve some distance from her own societal value

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 238-9.

<sup>68</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, "'My Very Act and Deed": Some Reflection on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs', *AA*, 51.4 (1988), 456-69, cited in O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', 243-4.

<sup>69</sup> O'Toole, 'The Symbolic Significance of Archives', 244. Author's emphasis.

<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.3.

<sup>71</sup> Hans Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources', *Archivaria*, 24 (1987), 69-107, (80). Originally published as 'Gesellschaftsordnung und Überlieferungsbildung: Zur Problematik archivarischer Quellenbewertung' in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 68 (1972), 3-40. The English translation is by Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhower.

<sup>72</sup> Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage', 104.

<sup>73</sup> Although it is never explicitly stated, it is likely that Booms is only referring to *respect des fonds* in his definition of provenance.

<sup>74</sup> Hans Booms, 'Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity', *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 25-33, (25, 28).

system.<sup>75</sup> Terry Cook agreed that societal values should be at the heart of archival appraisal.<sup>76</sup> Like Booms, Cook's theory of 'macro-appraisal' was based on the premise that value was not to be found in the records themselves, but in 'theories of value of societal significance' which archivists could identify by focusing on the organic relationship of the record's creation.<sup>77</sup>

Some archivists took the idea of the societal value of archives a step further, arguing that appraisal can never be anything but subjective because it is a process embedded itself within a societal value system.<sup>78</sup> Heavily influenced by the theories of Jacques Derrida, archivist Tom Nesmith argued that whilst a record's value is partly 'inscribed in it by those who literally made it', most of its value lies in 'its context of interpretation'.<sup>79</sup> For Nesmith, this meant that the act of appraisal – the placing a record in the archive – adds value by giving the record 'a special status'.<sup>80</sup> Nesmith emphasized the importance of the principle of provenance in determining archival value, extending it beyond the records' creator to include the subsequent actions of archivists:

The destruction or exclusion of non-archival records 'recreates' the surviving records by repositioning them in the archives vis-à-vis related records, or by removing aspects of their context of interpretation. The records elevated to the status of archives then become the focus of the meaning-making or interpretive process, which in turn makes and remakes them.<sup>81</sup>

Archivist Brien Brothman also argued that archival appraisal creates and destroys value rather than merely identifying it.<sup>82</sup> Brothman suggested that archivists are 'not simply 'acquiring' and 'preserving' records of value; we are *creating value*, that is, an order of value, by putting things in their proper place'.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Brothman argued that the order created by archivists embodies society's values in a self-

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<sup>75</sup> Booms, 'Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity', 33.

<sup>76</sup> Terry Cook, 'Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal', in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. by Barbara Craig (Ontario: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38-70.

<sup>77</sup> Terry Cook, 'Mind Over Matter', 41, 44. See also Terry Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives', *Archivaria*, 51 (2001), 14-35.

<sup>78</sup> See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>79</sup> Tom Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives', *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 24-41, (32).

<sup>80</sup> Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', 33.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>82</sup> Brien Brothman, 'Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice', *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 78-100, (81).

<sup>83</sup> Brothman, 'Orders of Value', 82. Italics in original.

perpetuating relationship in which archivists promote society's documentary consumption.<sup>84</sup> Brothman concluded by pleading for a greater consideration of archives as objects of historical and cultural analysis as a means of examining and elucidating archival processes.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.4. Economic and social measurements of archival value

The last thirty years have witnessed an increased awareness about the wider role that archives can play in society. The 1997 UK General Election saw the British Labour Party take power for the first time since 1979. Their political manifesto included the following statement:

The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country. Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society. [...] Art, sport and leisure are vital to our quality of life and the renewal of our economy. They are significant earners for Britain.<sup>86</sup>

In the decade that followed, a new cultural agenda began to take shape as government policies directly linked cultural activities – including archives – with economic and social change.<sup>87</sup> Although this has been a global phenomenon,<sup>88</sup> it has been particularly felt in the UK where notable changes within the archival profession, including the formation of the Museums, Libraries and Archives

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 91-2.

<sup>86</sup> *New Labour, New Life for Britain* (UK: British Labour Party, 1996). Available online: [www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab97.htm](http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/lab97.htm) [accessed 14 April 2013].

<sup>87</sup> *Government Policy on Archives Cm. 4516* (London: HMSO, 1999); *Re:Source Manifesto* (London: Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, 2000); Michelle Reeve, *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts* (London: Arts Council England, 2002); Adrian Ellis, *Valuing Culture* (London: DEMOS, 2003); Sarah Horton, 'Social Capital, Government Policy and Public Value: Implications for Archive Service Delivery', *Aslib Proceedings: New Information Perspectives*, 58.6 (2006), 502-12. See also Nicky Sugar, *Why Not Burn The Stuff? Advocating for the Value of Archives to Society*, unpublished report (Clare Leadership Programme – MLA Archives Fellow 2006-7, 2008).

<sup>88</sup> International examples include: A. Finn, S. McFadyen and C. Hoskins, 'Valuing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation', *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 27.3-4 (2003), 177-92; Kevin McCarthy, Elizabeth Ondaatje, Laura Zarkaras and Arthur Brooks, *Gifts of the Muses: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2004); Ana Bedate, Luis Cesar Herrero and Jose Angel Sanz, 'Economic Valuation of the Cultural Heritage: Application to Four Case Studies in Spain', *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 5.1 (2004), 101-11; E. C. M. Ruijgrok, 'The Three Economic Values of Cultural Heritage: A Case Study in the Netherlands', *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 7.3 (2006), 206-13; J. D. Snowball and A. C. M. Webb, 'Breaking into the conversation: Cultural Value and the Role of the South African Arts Festival From Apartheid to Democracy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 14.2 (2008), 149-64.



Council,<sup>89</sup> and the National Archives,<sup>90</sup> together with political policies focusing on public value, social exclusion and community regeneration, have significantly impacted on the archival sector. Central to many of these policies was the concept of public value. Archivist Nicky Sugar has traced the origin of the concept of public value within UK archives to the publication of a Cabinet Office Strategy Unit paper entitled *Creating Public Value* in 2002.<sup>91</sup> Sugar explained that the concept was first conceived in the US in the 1990s; its originator, Mark H. Moore, defined public value as ‘initiating and reshaping public sector enterprises in ways that increase their value to the public in both the short and long term’.<sup>92</sup> The 2002 paper argued that the concept of public value could provide a useful way of thinking about the goals and performance of government policy, and a means of assessing activities produced or supported by government.<sup>93</sup> The concept of public value was seen by many policy makers as a more inclusive means to justify expenditure on the arts and culture than traditional ‘arts for art’s sake’ appeals. It was also seen as a means to demonstrate empirically its return on public investment.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, Sugar pointed out that ‘crucially, moreover, it is characterized not as a way to react to public opinion, but as a tool with which to shape it’.<sup>95</sup> The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit paper, for example, highlighted the importance of ‘public preference’ as lying at the heart of public value, and discussed the different factors in preference formation, including social relationships and behaviour.<sup>96</sup>

The concept of public value drew on philosophical ideas about value by explicitly separating two types of value: intrinsic and instrumental. The first –

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<sup>89</sup> In April 2000 the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Library and Information Commission were combined into Re:Source, later renamed the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Until May 2012 MLA was a public body that received funding from the DCMS. Its remit was to promote improvement and innovation in museums, libraries and archives and it advised government on policy and priorities for these areas in England. Its functions have been transferred to the Arts Council England and the National Archives.

<sup>90</sup> The National Archives (TNA) was created in 2003 as a result of the combining of the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission. It is a non-ministerial government department in its own right and an executive agency reporting to the Secretary of State for Justice.

<sup>91</sup> Sugar, 20; Gavin Kelly, Geoff Mulgan and Stephen Muers, *Creating Public Value. An Analytical Framework for Public Service Reform* (UK: Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, October 2002).

<sup>92</sup> Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value. Strategic Management in Government* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995), quoted in Sugar, 20.

<sup>93</sup> Kelly, Mulgan and Muers, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Sugar, 22.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Kelly, Mulgan and Muers, 6-7.

intrinsic – refers to value in itself, or for its own sake;<sup>97</sup> for example, the personal experience individuals may have when seeing a painting or discovering an ancestor in a register of births. The second – instrumental – refers to value as a means to something else,<sup>98</sup> or as one theorist described it ‘the “knock-on” effects’;<sup>99</sup> for example, the boost to tourism by increased visitor numbers coming to see a new exhibition at the Museum of London, or the health benefits to the elderly participating in reminiscence groups using archives. The debate about whether culture is intrinsically valuable or not has long existed, but the application of the concept of public value to the cultural sector made the distinction between different types of value explicit and enabled new articulations of cultural value in the intrinsic value versus instrumental value debate.<sup>100</sup>

Many aspects of the cultural sector in the UK actively embraced the concept of public value: in 2004 the British Broadcasting Corporation placed public value at the centre of its charter renewal,<sup>101</sup> and subsequently the DCMS, Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England all incorporated aspects of the concept into their service development.<sup>102</sup> Sugar argued that the desire to find ways of evidencing value was rooted in various different issues, including dissatisfaction with existing target-based approaches, a growing public demand for accountability and spending justification, and ‘the need to mark a shift away from crude instrumentalist measures for valuing culture which have alienated many professionals and only partially stand up to detailed economic scrutiny’.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Nicholas Rescher, *Introduction to Value Theory* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1969); Eric Carlton, *Values and the Social Sciences: An Introduction* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1995); John Holden, *Valuing Culture in the South East* (London: Demos, 2005), 9; O’Brien, 18.

<sup>98</sup> Rescher; Carlton; O’Brien.

<sup>99</sup> Holden, *Valuing Culture in the South East*, 8.

<sup>100</sup> For example, John Tusa, *Art Matters – Reflecting on Culture* (London: Methuen, 2000); Chris Smith, *Creative Britain* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1998).

<sup>101</sup> *Building Public Value. Renewing the BBC for a digital world* (UK: British Broadcasting Corporation, June 2004) [www.downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/policies/pdf/bvp.pdf](http://www.downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/policies/pdf/bvp.pdf) [accessed 17 April 2013].

<sup>102</sup> Sugar, 21.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 20-1. See also Sarah Horton and Jacqueline Spence, *Scoping the Economic and Social Impact of Archives* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales/MLA Yorkshire, 2006); John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value. How Culture Has Become a Tool of Government Policy* (London: DEMOS, 2004). The lack of tools with which to measure the value of cultural activities is equalled by the lack of data on which such tools might be tested. For example, the annual spend by local authorities in the UK on archival services in 2006/7 was just over £61million (CIPFA, *Archive Services Statistics Estimates 2006/7* [www.cipfa.org](http://www.cipfa.org) [accessed 17 April 2013]) but no equivalent figures exist for those services which are part of larger organizations such as HEIs or that are within

John Holden, Head of Culture at think-tank Demos until 2008, promoted the application of ideas about public value within the cultural sector by organizing the ‘Valuing Culture’ conference in June 2003 and by publishing several influential reports including *Capturing Cultural Value* in 2004 and *Valuing Culture in the South East* in 2005.<sup>104</sup> Holden argued that many of the attempts to measure the instrumental value of culture – the social and economic impact of culture on society – were ‘complicated and contested assessments of causation’; and that even the DCMS had ‘confirmed that there is no ready-made and reliable methodology in place for calculating the economic impacts of cultural institutions’.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, Holden argued that attempts to justify culture on intrinsic value grounds were similarly problematic, often leading to accusations of elitism.<sup>106</sup> He argued that:

The postmodern questioning of concepts such as beauty, truth, delight, transcendence and the like, coupled with the insight that these ideas are temporally and geographically specific, have made using them in debate an embarrassment at best, contemptible at worst. The use of the word ‘culture’ itself now begs the immediate response ‘whose culture?’. All judgements have become relative, suspect and tainted.<sup>107</sup>

Holden proposed that instead of perpetuating the intrinsic versus instrumental value dichotomy, it should be acknowledged that cultural value actually comprises *both* types of value, as well as a third type which he called ‘institutional value’.<sup>108</sup> Holden defined institutional value as relating ‘to the processes and actions that cultural organisations adopt when they interact with the public’.<sup>109</sup> Cultural value therefore, according to Holden, comprised three types of value: instrumental, intrinsic and institutional; and evaluating how these types of value worked in practice also depended on a tripartite of the different parties involved: the public (who use the

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the private sector such as business archives. There are no accurate figures for the UK archival sector as a whole.

<sup>104</sup> John Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value. How Culture Has Become a Tool of Government Policy* (London: Demos, 2004); John Holden, *Valuing Culture in the South East* (London: Demos, 2005). See also [www.demos.co.uk](http://www.demos.co.uk) [accessed: 31 January 2014].

<sup>105</sup> Kelly, Mulgan and Muers; Tony Travers and Stephen Glaister, *Valuing Museums: Impact and Innovation Among National Museums* (London: National Museum Directors’ Conference, 2004), both cited in Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value*, 17.

<sup>106</sup> Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value*, 21-2.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. Author’s emphasis.

<sup>109</sup> Holden, *Valuing Culture*, 9.

services), professionals (who manage them) and politicians (who set the legal and policy frameworks).<sup>110</sup>

Holden aimed to give power and confidence back to cultural professionals so that they are able to ‘explicitly articulate the values that they [...] promote’.<sup>111</sup> His model proposed a fundamental shift in the way that cultural institutions operate and view themselves:

[They] must articulate the broad themes of value that they wish to encourage and create, and align their ethos, practices and processes to meet those aspirations. They must then adopt ways of discovering from those they deal with and those who are affected by their decisions what value has in fact and in perception been created.<sup>112</sup>

Holden also cautioned that value creation is a subjective and unpredictable phenomenon.<sup>113</sup>

Holden acknowledged that his model still required some form of value measurement, but he argued that rather than conforming to the target- and outcome-based approaches which regarded value as a product, the new measures would recognize that ‘systemic processes themselves create value’.<sup>114</sup> His model allowed for a wider range of factors to be considered in cultural value judgements, particularly those based on qualitative measures and on public perception, in which the institutions would work in partnership with policy-makers and the public to create cultural value in society.

Robert Hewison, a colleague of Holden, developed Holden’s model further, by emphasizing the institutional value element of cultural value, which he argued could be mapped as the interaction between an institution and its stakeholders in terms of engagement, trust and service.<sup>115</sup> Hewison argued that by developing their creative purpose, embracing change, and by showing due care to their public, cultural institutions can ‘improve their professional practice, the services they deliver and the value they create’.<sup>116</sup> He argued that the end result is a cultural sector that

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 10; Horton, ‘Social Capital’, 508.

<sup>111</sup> Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value*, 25-6, 43.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 51-2.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>115</sup> Robert Hewison, *Not a Sideshow: Leadership and Cultural Value* (London: Demos, 2006).

<sup>116</sup> Hewison, 9.

‘can enhance and expand the capacity to create the ideas, images and values upon which a future economy will increasingly depend, and which business and industry will need to support’.<sup>117</sup>

The UK public archival sector naturally began to align itself with the policies of its funders and key stakeholders, with national bodies like the National Council on Archives producing publications such as *Taking Part. An Audit of Social Inclusion Work in Archives* and *Giving Value. Finding Priorities for UK Archives 2005-10*.<sup>118</sup> These reports directly linked the value of archives with key government objectives including social inclusion and community regeneration. MLA also commissioned research into how core archival activities could be articulated in terms of wider social values.<sup>119</sup> Throughout this period, articles can be found in the professional archival literature that explore how archives could demonstrate their relevance to society and gain greater public recognition and financial support by embracing a public value approach.<sup>120</sup> In March 2006, a report co-published by MLA Yorkshire and the University of Aberystwyth examined the economic and social assessments that had been adopted by the archival sector with the aim of developing a taxonomy of usages and impacts that could be used to evaluate archival services.<sup>121</sup> In the report Horton and Spence identified various measures of primary and secondary usage of archives; for example: reader visits, volume of archival records accessed, book sales, and TV viewing figures. Horton and Spence outlined various definitions of types of economic and social impacts, stating that these could be most usefully conceptualized in relation to ‘the difference made’; although they also admitted that exact definition was complex and that types were fundamentally inter-related.<sup>122</sup> The report concluded that although impact assessments for the archival sector had been limited, there was enough existing evidence to indicate that a range of impacts could

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>118</sup> *Taking Part. An Audit of Social Inclusion Work in Archives* (London: NCA, 2001); *Giving Value. Funding Priorities for UK Archives 2005-10* (London: NCA, 2005).

<sup>119</sup> John Holden and Samuel Jones, *Knowledge and Inspiration: the Democratic Face of Culture. Evidence in Making the Case for Museums, Libraries and Archives* (London: Demos/MLA, 2006).

<sup>120</sup> For example, Sarah Tyacke, ‘Government Policy on Archives’, *JSA*, 21.1 (2000), 11-26; Katie Norgrove, ‘A Seat at the Table: The Development of the English Regional Archive Councils’, *JSA*, 22.1 (2001), 25-31; Christopher Marsden, ‘Sectors and Domains: Some Reflections on Cooperation and Integration’, *JSA*, 22.1 (2001), 17-23; Victor Gray, ‘Relating into Relevance I’, *JSA*, 24.1 (2003), 5-13; Helen Forde, ‘Archives and Success – Let’s Keep Going!’, *JSA*, 24.2 (2003), 133-9.

<sup>121</sup> Horton and Spence.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

be expected; and the authors called for further work to enable greater data collection across the sector.

It was not only public sector archives that felt the impact of policy drives towards measuring the public value of archives. Strategic partnerships between private companies and publicly-funded institutions were actively encouraged, particularly to support the funding of specific cataloguing and access projects in archives, museums and libraries. For example, the Heritage Lottery Fund supported the *Pay and Power Project 2004-7* in the West Midlands, which brought together 14 archival repositories from local authorities, universities, the Roman Catholic Church and the independent sector.<sup>123</sup> The stated main objectives of the project included the development of new audiences: young people under 25 years, disadvantaged groups particularly ethnic communities, disabled people and isolated rural communities.<sup>124</sup> Other initiatives saw the inclusion of records of private businesses on the Access to Archives catalogue.<sup>125</sup> In July 2009, TNA published *The National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales)*<sup>126</sup> which presented the case for the preservation of business records in terms of public policy objectives, and stated that 'it is critical for social cohesion and cultural identity that the business legacy is neither forgotten nor captured only in transient human memory'.<sup>127</sup>

Attempts to measure the value of archives in quantifiable terms are not new. Since the early twentieth century many archivists have sought ways to appraise archives based on measurable standards. Many of these approaches focused on instrumental values of archives such as utility in a belief that instrumental values rather than intrinsic values were capable of objective measurement. One of the earliest proponents of a utility-based approach to appraisal was American archivist Phillip G. Bauer whose work greatly influenced other archivists including Maynard

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<sup>123</sup> *MLA West Midlands Evaluation of the Pay and Power Project Final Report, February 2007* (London: Creative Cultures, 2007), [www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk) [accessed 19 May 2013].

<sup>124</sup> *MLA West Midlands Evaluation of the Pay and Power Project Final Report, Executive Summary.*

<sup>125</sup> Examples include: Reckitt Benckiser Plc., The Rothschild Archive London, and the Worshipful Company of Salters, [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a) [accessed 19 May 2013].

<sup>126</sup> Katey Logan, *The National Strategy for Business Archives (England and Wales)* (UK: HMSO/TNA, 2009), [www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/materials/national\\_strategy\\_for\\_business\\_archives.pdf](http://www.businessarchivescouncil.org.uk/materials/national_strategy_for_business_archives.pdf) [accessed 19 May 2013].

<sup>127</sup> Logan, 3.

Brichford and Theodore R. Schellenberg.<sup>128</sup> In June 1946, Bauer published a Staff Information Circular at the US National Archives (NARA) entitled *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records* in which he argued that ‘a stern and true cost accounting is a prerequisite of all orderly appraisal’.<sup>129</sup> For Bauer, this meant evaluating the use that will be made of the archives. Bauer argued that ‘public value in records [...] is purely utilitarian. Future utility must appear to be probable if continued preservation is to be justified’.<sup>130</sup> Bauer was clear that the evaluation of utility should not however be merely a quantitative calculation, but that it must also be qualitative in nature, stating that ‘the question is not simply one of the number and frequency of requests for the records, but one of the character of the use that will be made of them’.<sup>131</sup> The circular presented an elaborate formula to determine the comparative value of records, suggesting four categories of use ((i) reference source for public officials, (ii) protecting the rights of citizens, (iii) historical or scientific research, and (iv) private curiosity or diversion) which could then be analysed in terms of three main elements ((i) cost of preservation, (ii) character of uses, and (iii) suitability for use). His view was not universally accepted however; the published circular was accompanied by a rejoinder by Herman Kahn, also a member of staff at NARA. Kahn questioned the basic premise of Bauer’s argument, preferring to defend the preservation of archives on intrinsic grounds, stating simply: ‘we keep records because we are civilized men and therefore must do so’.<sup>132</sup> Kahn believed that the nature of the selective process meant any attempt to ‘make a dollars and cents evaluation of records the sole criterion of their worth’ is ‘impracticable and unwise if not impossible’.<sup>133</sup>

Although many archivists felt uncomfortable with monetary evaluations of archives,<sup>134</sup> others continued to seek ways to quantify archival value against the costs of preservation and access. In the 1980s, archivist Lawrence Dowler embraced

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<sup>128</sup> See Chapter 2, sections 2.2.3. and 2.3.2.

<sup>129</sup> Phillip G. Bauer, *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records. Staff Information Circular No. 13*, June 1946, With comments thereon by Herman Kahn (Washington DC: The National Archives, 1946).

<sup>130</sup> Bauer, 5. Bauer’s use of term ‘public value’ here is coincidental as, arguably, he uses it simply to mean ‘value to the public’ in a general sense.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Herman Kahn, ‘Comments’ on Bauer, 23.

<sup>133</sup> Kahn, 25.

<sup>134</sup> For example, David Walden, ‘Stretching the Dollar: Monetary Appraisal of Manuscripts’, *Archivaria*, 11 (1980/81), 101-13.

the idea that the value of archives could be articulated through an examination of the use of archives.<sup>135</sup> Dowler argued that archival processes should be examined from the perspective of the kinds of use that might be made of the records. He believed that it was from the relationship between the use of information and the provision of information that ‘the value of records and the information they contain will be determined and archival practices defined’.<sup>136</sup> At the end of the twentieth century archivist Mark A. Greene put forward what he termed a ‘utilitarian’ approach to archival appraisal, in which he argued that an evaluation of records based on their use-value was an effective appraisal criterion.<sup>137</sup> Greene argued that use was ‘the only empirical measurement’ of the value that an institution or society may have of its archives.<sup>138</sup> The importance of utility as a measurement of archival value has also formed the basis of a processing methodology proposed by Greene as a way to deal with the cataloguing backlog of many archival institutions.<sup>139</sup>

Terry Eastwood argued that use value should take precedence over both provenance and pertinence in the appraisal of archives primarily because both concepts are, in his view, ‘abstract’ and ‘devoid of any ready empirical means of evaluation’.<sup>140</sup> Eastwood acknowledged that despite the difficulties of objectively measuring use, nonetheless, the ‘social facts of use are determinable expressions of need and therefore of value of benefit’.<sup>141</sup> Eastwood also argued that attempts to classify value into different types such as ‘evidential’, ‘informational’, or ‘intrinsic’ end up in a tautology and achieve nothing. Instead he argued that it is the relationship between the public and the records that gives them value and needs to be

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<sup>135</sup> Lawrence Dowler, ‘The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records’, *AA*, 51.1-2 (1988), 74-86.

<sup>136</sup> Dowler, 74.

<sup>137</sup> Mark A. Greene, “‘The Surest Proof’: A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal”, *Archivaria*, 45 (1998), 127-69; also Mark A. Greene, ‘Existential Archives: Looking to the Value Propositions of Archives and Special Collections’, paper presented at the ARL-CNI Fall Forum *An Age of Discovery: Distinctive Collections in the Digital Age*, 14-15 October 2009, [www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/ff09-greene-remarks.pdf](http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/ff09-greene-remarks.pdf) [accessed 20 April 2013]. See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>138</sup> Greene, ‘The Surest Proof’, 150.

<sup>139</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, ‘More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing’, *AA*, 68.2 (2005), 208-65.

<sup>140</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘How Goes It With Appraisal?’, *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 111-21, (116). See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4; Terry Eastwood, ‘Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal’, in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. by Barbara Craig (Ontario: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 71-89.

<sup>141</sup> Eastwood, ‘How Goes It With Appraisal?’, 116.



better understood.<sup>142</sup> Parallels can be drawn between Eastwood's identification of public use – past, present and future – with archival value and the ideas about the importance of public perception and partnership conceptualized by many public value theorists.

#### **4.5. The value of archives as information assets and evidence of good governance**

The idea that archives are valuable as evidence of administrative and executive decisions and business transactions was articulated by many archivists in the early twentieth century.<sup>143</sup> Sir Hilary Jenkinson viewed the evidential value of archives as an implicit element of their nature and described archives as '*Material Evidences* surviving in the form of writing'.<sup>144</sup> Central to this idea were concepts of authenticity and impartiality, as well as the view that archives were neutral records that could 'tell the truth' about what really happened in the past.<sup>145</sup> As has been argued in previous chapters, such ideas were seriously challenged in the later twentieth century as new technologies and the proliferation of digital records challenged traditional concepts of authenticity and reliability whilst postmodernist theory challenged the predominant positivist discourse, which gave meaning to terms such as 'truth', 'authenticity' and 'impartiality'. Yet, conversely, at the same time that some in the archival profession felt their evidential role to be under threat, others seized new opportunities to reinvigorate their mission by turning to new theories in the fields of information and records management.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 118-20.

<sup>143</sup> For example, Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (London: Lund, Humphries, 1937); Margaret Cross Norton, *Norton on Archive: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management*, ed. by Thornton Mitchell (Carbondale & Edwardsville, US: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975); Ernst Posner, Helen L. Chatfield and Edna B. Poeppel, *The Role of Records in Administration, Staff Information Circular No.11* (Washington DC: The National Archives, July 1941). See also Chapter 2.

<sup>144</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *The English Archivist: A New Profession* (London: H. K. Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1948), 14. Italics in original.

<sup>145</sup> See in particular, Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*.

<sup>146</sup> For example, 'Review of the *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries*, Vol. xxiv. No. 5 (Sep-Oct 1970)', *Archives*, 10.46 (1971), 59; Gordon Dodds, 'Back to Square One: Records Management Revisited', *Archivaria*, 1.2 (1976), 88-91; Jay Atherton, 'From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship', *Archivaria*, 21 (1985/86), 43-51; Charles M. Dollar, 'Archivists and Records Managers in the Information Age', *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 37-52; David Bearman, 'Archival Strategies', *AA*, 58.4 (1995), 380-413.

Records management arguably originated in the late 1940s, evolving from the US archival profession.<sup>147</sup> The term ‘records management’ was formally defined by the Hoover Commission of 1947-49, established by US President Harry S. Truman to recommend administrative changes to the US Federal Government.<sup>148</sup> Also in 1949, archivist Philip C. Brooks published *Public Records Management*, which was a guide to good administration in terms of the filing of records.<sup>149</sup> Brooks stated that ‘the basic purpose must be to preserve those [...] [records] that represent vital interests of the government or the people, and those records that adequately document the operations of government agencies’.<sup>150</sup>

Perhaps as a result of early American usage of the term records management, a clear distinction has long been made in the US between ‘records’ – which are in current or semi-current use by the administration – and ‘archives’ – which are non-current records that are no longer needed by the administration and are transferred to the custody of an archivist.<sup>151</sup> For example, the Society of American Archivists’ 2005 *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* stated that: ‘Records are not synonymous with archives. Whilst an archive collects records, not all records merit ongoing preservation’.<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, the *Glossary* cited Richard J. Cox to articulate the separate definition of ‘archives’ as follows: ‘Archives are records with evidential value to the organization and society’.<sup>153</sup> In contrast, both terms are often used interchangeably in the UK, and the national institution in which central UK government archives are kept was, until very recently, known as the Public Record

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<sup>147</sup> William Benedon, *Records Management* (Englewoods Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969); Dr. Mark Langemo, *Winning Strategies for Successful Records Management Programmes* (Denver: Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 2002), 2-3, cited in Uta Fox, ‘The History of Records Management in Canada, 1867-1967’, [www.armacalgary.org](http://www.armacalgary.org) [accessed 21 April 2013]. See also Herbert E Angel, ‘Federal Records Management Since the Hoover Commission’, *AA*, 16.1 (1953), 13-26.

<sup>148</sup> The Hoover Commission, formally, the Commission on Organization of the U.S. Executive Branch, (1947-49, 1953-55) issued 273 recommendations to Congress in 19 separate reports. It resulted in the *Reorganization Act 1949* (Public Law 109, 81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Sess.) approved on 20 June 1949.

<sup>149</sup> Philip C. Brooks, *Public Records Management* (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1949).

<sup>150</sup> Brooks, *Public Records Management*, 11.

<sup>151</sup> See Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1956). See also Chapter 1, section 1.4.

<sup>152</sup> Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: SAA, 2005), 327.

<sup>153</sup> Richard J. Cox, ‘The Record: Is It Evolving?’, *The Records and Retrieval Report: The Newsletter for Professional Information Managers*, 10.3 (1994), 1-16; cited in Pearce- Moses, 31.

Office.<sup>154</sup> Thinking on the subject appears to be divided along geographical lines within the international archival community. For example, an Australian archivist, attending an ICA conference in Paris in 1988, commented on the differences in viewpoint between archivists of different nationalities, stating that:

The distinction between archive administration and records management which Australians and Americans seem to see as fairly clear cut was difficult for Europeans to come to grips with. [...] The distinctions that a records manager will conduct his or her business to meet the daily priorities of the organisation for which he or she works, whereas the archivist will have prime concern for the preservation of records worthy of permanent preservation, appears not to deserve special attention.<sup>155</sup>

More recently, Caroline Williams concurred that ‘in many European languages the word “archives” is taken to mean both records in use for current purposes and those maintained for their continuing long-term value’.<sup>156</sup> Williams argued that ‘increasingly the distinction in definition between records and archives is blurring, and the term “record-keeping” is increasingly being used to describe and encompass the complementary disciplines of records and archives management’.<sup>157</sup> Nonetheless, she admitted that the roles of records manager and of archivist continue to be advertised as two distinct roles when it comes to employment advertisements and recruitment.<sup>158</sup>

British archivist and academic Michael Cook explained that until the early 1990s, in his view, there were two basic schools of thought with regards to what records management was: the first, particularly dominant in North America, viewed records management as a management technique, a means of increasing efficiency and reducing costs in day-to-day business; whilst the second, from an archival perspective characteristic of the UK, viewed records management as the management of current records from a standpoint of their ultimate disposal.<sup>159</sup> Cook argued that a third school of thought began to be established in the 1990s which held

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<sup>154</sup> The Public Record Office was renamed The National Archives in 2003 following a merger with the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

<sup>155</sup> Peter Crush, ‘Report on the President’s Attendance at the XIth ICA Congress, Paris 1988’, *AM*, 17.1 (1989), 18. See also Chapter 1, section 1.4.

<sup>156</sup> Caroline Williams, *Managing Archives* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2006), 4.

<sup>157</sup> Williams, 6.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>159</sup> Michael Cook, *Information Management and Archival Data* (London: Library Association Publishing, 1993), 24-5.

the view that 'records management forms part of the broader discipline of information management and, like it, should use all the technical skills available to managers'.<sup>160</sup> Cook gave as evidence of this new development in thinking: the formation of the Records Management Society of Great Britain in 1983, the publication of several new textbooks and journals on the subject, and the fact that at least one specialist consultancy firm had accepted records management as a major new programme area.<sup>161</sup>

Other commentators also identified the impact of new technology as a significant factor in the rise of information and records management in the late twentieth century as a separate and increasingly influential discipline.<sup>162</sup> Richard J. Cox, for example, argued that the advent of the information age had resulted in a shift in emphasis to:

managing vast quantities of information created from many and diverse sources and used in new and interesting ways. As more memory becomes available, attention shifts from needing to distinguish records from everything else to the technological ability to save and access everything.<sup>163</sup>

Technology changed the way organizations do business: handwritten or typed letters have been replaced by emails and word-processed records; online tools allow several individuals to edit, comment on and amend the same electronic document; electronic spreadsheets have become ever-changing entities as they link the most up-to-date information from multi-relational databases and other digital sources. Throughout the late twentieth century, information technology was increasingly viewed as a means to deliver more efficient and effective services by both the private and public sectors alike. In the 1990s, government strategies emphasized the importance of

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<sup>160</sup> Cook, *Information Management and Archival Data*, 26.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 25. The Records Management Society of Great Britain voted to change its name to the Information and Records Management Society in 2010 'to recognise developments that have taken place over the past few years in terms of the developments of information services', *IRMS Annual Report 2010*, 5, [www.irms.org.uk](http://www.irms.org.uk) [accessed 6 May 2013]. Founded in 1987, Task Force Pro Libra (TFPL) continues to recruit, train and consult for the knowledge, information and data industries, [www.tfpl.com](http://www.tfpl.com) [accessed 6 May 2013].

<sup>162</sup> For example, Ronald E.F. Weissman, 'Archives and the New Information Architecture of the Late 1990s', *AA*, 57.1 (1994), 20-34; Richard J. Cox, *Managing Records as Evidence and Information* (Westport, Connecticut: Quorum Books, 2001).

<sup>163</sup> Cox, *Managing Records*, 7.

capturing, managing and preserving digital records to support service delivery and accountability.<sup>164</sup>

Ironically perhaps, the so-called ‘paperless office’ predicted in the 1970s is still yet to materialize; instead the increased use of electronic communication and ease of record production have led to a greater volume of paper being produced than ever before.<sup>165</sup> The need to manage this volume of paper records was coupled with a recognition of the need to manage electronic records: the use of technology as a tool to deliver modernization initiatives led to a recognition of the need for electronic records management to enable the sharing and updating of information, and to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the information. Stephen Harries has argued that this recognition put records management functions at the forefront of business change.<sup>166</sup> Several papers at an ICA Symposium on Current Records in Ottawa in May 1989, entitled *Management of Recorded Information. Converging Disciplines* shared this viewpoint.<sup>167</sup> One speaker called for greater collaboration between the information science technology and industry and higher education;<sup>168</sup> whilst another argued that archivists needed to redefine their role because ‘archivists are in the information networking business’.<sup>169</sup>

The sense of professional convergence within a general information management framework has been recognized by several writers.<sup>170</sup> One writer who actively embraced the opportunities of information technology as a catalyst to

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<sup>164</sup> For example, in the UK, the *Modernising Government White Paper*, Cmd. 4310 (London: HMSO, 1999) and in the US: the *High-Performance Computing Act of 1991*, S.272, 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress (1991-2).

<sup>165</sup> The future may yet see more shifts as some argue that this trend is being reversed because the new generation of ‘digital natives’ prefer to read and distribute information online, ‘The Paperless office – On its way, at last’, *The Economist*, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2008, [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com) [accessed 6 May 2013].

<sup>166</sup> Stephen Harries, *Records Management and Knowledge Mobilisation. A handbook for regulation, innovation and transformation* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012).

<sup>167</sup> *Management of Recorded Information. Converging Disciplines. Proceedings of the International Council in Archives’ Symposium on Current Records, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa May 15-17 1989* ed. by Cynthia J. Durance (Munich, Germany: K.G. Saur, 1990).

<sup>168</sup> Ronald E.F. Weissman, ‘Virtual documents on an electronic desktop: Hypermedia, emerging computer environments and the future of information management’, in Durance, 57.

<sup>169</sup> Ralph A. Smith, ‘Management of digital geographic and computer-aided design and drafting records’, in Durance, 90.

<sup>170</sup> For example, John McDonald, ‘Managing Information in an Office Systems Environment: The IMOSA Project’, *AA*, 58.2 (1995), 142-53; Richard Kesner, ‘Information Resource Management in the Electronic Workplace: A Personal Perspective on “Archives in the Information Society”’, *AA*, 61.1 (1998), 70-87; Dan Zelenyj, ‘Archivy *Ad Portas*: The Archives-Records Management Paradigm Re-visited in the Electronic Information Age’, *Archivaria*, 47 (1999), 66-84; Maija-Leena Huotari and Marjo Rita Valtonen, ‘Emerging Themes in Finnish Archival Science and Records Management Education’, *AS*, 3.2 (2003), 117-129.

reinvigorate and re-cast the role of the archivist was David Bearman.<sup>171</sup> Bearman argued that the electronic environment forced organizations to view archives in a new light and to change their recordkeeping behaviours, providing an opportunity for archivists to reaffirm their fundamental theoretical tenets and reassert their vital role as information managers.<sup>172</sup> Bearman believed that ‘archives and records management share a simple goal: providing for organizational accountability’.<sup>173</sup> Using the language and techniques of risk management theory, Bearman proposed that ‘instead of asking what benefits would derive from retaining records, [archivists] should insist on an answer to the probability of incurring unacceptable risks as a consequence of disposing of records’.<sup>174</sup> He argued that traditional approaches to archival appraisal were based on the ability of the archivist to reconstruct paper records’ structures and thus the use of the records. By contrast, Bearman argued that:

the electronic record [...] is stored randomly and the structures which support its use by the organization are documented only in software code not accessioned with systems, so appraisal of electronic records after accessioning is typically not reasonable. While the information the records contain can be discovered through external software functions such as full-text searches, the evidence they supply is based on their link to activity which will have been lost.<sup>175</sup>

The format and nature of digital records meant that archivists could not wait to appraise records until the point of their transfer to the archives, by which point important information about the records’ provenance and context would be lost. The focus became how to manage an organization’s records as part of a compliance and risk agenda, in order to meet external demands for transparency and accountability, together with internal demands for flexible work processes and ever-increasing efficiency.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>172</sup> David Bearman, ‘Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records’, *AM*, 21.1 (1993), 14-21.

<sup>173</sup> Bearman, ‘Archival Data Management’, 15.

<sup>174</sup> David Bearman, *Archival Methods, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 9* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989), 10.

<sup>175</sup> David Bearman and Margaret Hedstrom, ‘Reinventing Archives for Electronic Records: Alternative Service Delivery Options’, *Electronic Records Management Program Strategies*, Section III – Commentary (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1993), 87.

<sup>176</sup> Nicola Convery, ‘Information management, records management, knowledge management: the place of archives in a digital age’, in *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader*, ed. by Jennie Hill (London: Facet Publishing, 2011), 191-210, (195).

Bearman drew explicitly on the ideas of US government advisors David Osborne and Ted Gaebler who published an influential book on how to transform the public sector from an inherited bureaucratic model into a flexible, creative and entrepreneurial one.<sup>177</sup> Bearman drew analogies with Osborne and Gaebler's ideas about service delivery and, employing their metaphor, suggested that archivists needed to shift the focus of their activity from 'steering' to 'rowing'.<sup>178</sup> For Bearman, this meant that archivists should be involved in providing policy direction for documentation, and in designing records systems that meet recordkeeping requirements and that conform to access, description, retrieval and preservation standards.<sup>179</sup> In Bearman's view archivists could no longer passively wait for records to be transferred to them when they were deemed no longer current by the business, instead he argued that archivists should become internal consultants, the 'ally of information systems managers, auditors, freedom of information act administrators and information security personnel' by focusing on 'identifying the metadata that is required to create records, before they are created'.<sup>180</sup> Archivists, in order to preserve future archives, needed to become proactive and manage records at the point of creation.

As detailed in Chapter 2, Bearman's approach to archival appraisal based on business processes and functions influenced other archivists to develop new approaches to the appraisal and preservation of electronic records. Bearman worked with Richard J. Cox on what became known as the Pittsburgh Project, run by the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, 1992-96.<sup>181</sup> This project attempted to define the functional requirements for the preservation of electronic records as evidence: '[the] elements guaranteeing that the integrity or substance of an archival record can be maintained'.<sup>182</sup> The Pittsburgh Project understood 'archival records' in terms of 'evidence of transactions'.<sup>183</sup> The Project

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<sup>177</sup> David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government. How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector* (US: Plume, 1993).

<sup>178</sup> Bearman and Hedstrom, 89.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>181</sup> A recovered project website can be found at [www.sis.pitt.edu/~bcallery/pgh/index.htm](http://www.sis.pitt.edu/~bcallery/pgh/index.htm) [accessed 8 December 2012].

<sup>182</sup> Richard J. Cox, 'Re-Discovering the Archival Mission: The Recordkeeping Functional Requirements Project at the University of Pittsburgh. A Progress Report', *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 8.4 (1994), 279-300, (290). See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>183</sup> Cox, 'Re-Discovering the Archival Mission', 290.

drafted recordkeeping functional requirements ‘that seek to preserve within an organizational environment [...] the sense of a record as an organizational transaction that preserves evidence of that transaction’.<sup>184</sup> Cox, in particular, argued that one of the aims of the project was to re-dress the balance, as he saw it, from an over-emphasis by American archivists on a solely ‘cultural mission’. In Cox’s view, the real archival mission ‘should be to ensure that the essential evidence of organizations will be maintained’.<sup>185</sup> From this perspective, the value of archives is not primarily as cultural heritage but as evidence for good governance and accountability.

Another research project which sought to identify and define the requirements for preserving reliable and authentic electronic records was what developed into the InterPARES Project, led by Luciana Duranti at the University of British Columbia, Canada, from 1994.<sup>186</sup> Cox described the main difference between the two projects as being one of intended applicability, stating that whilst InterPARES ‘wishes to develop a method [...] that is applicable across all juridical systems and cultures’, in comparison, the Pittsburgh Project proposed ‘a model that enables recordkeeping to be both universal and local at the same time’.<sup>187</sup> Duranti, however, claimed that the differences between the two projects stemmed from their fundamentally different theoretical standpoints. She argued that although both projects had similar aims, ‘the Pittsburgh Project’s identification of functional requirements reflects the continuum perspective’, whilst the UBC Project ‘reflects a life cycle perspective’.<sup>188</sup> Drawing heavily on the theory and techniques of diplomacy,<sup>189</sup> and differentiating between the needs of active and non-active records, the UBC Project sought to establish how the record characteristics of reliability and authenticity can be verified and maintained in electronic recordkeeping systems. The emphasis was on the value of records as by-products of administrative actions, and the need to preserve their evidential qualities within the digital environment. Duranti argued that an alliance between records management

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 293.

<sup>186</sup> [www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org) See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>187</sup> Richard J. Cox and Wendy Duff, ‘Warrant and the Definition of Electronic Records: Questions Arising from the Pittsburgh Project’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 11.3-4 (1997), 223-32, (230).

<sup>188</sup> Luciana Duranti and Heather MacNeil, ‘The Protection of the Integrity of Electronic Records: An Overview of the UBC-MAS Research Project’, *Archivaria*, 42 (1996), 46-67, (62).

<sup>189</sup> See also Chapter 7, section 7.3.2.



theory and archival theory was needed to achieve the aim of preserving ‘the authentic recorded memory of society’; and, moreover, that archival theory remained of prime importance in the face of the challenges of contemporary recordkeeping: ‘I believe that records managers and archivists need the same body of knowledge to carry out all functions affecting the records, that is, all archival functions’.<sup>190</sup>

In a parallel development to the rise of records management theory, the late twentieth century witnessed the development of information management theory which recognized the value of information as a marketable commodity.<sup>191</sup> Information became regarded as a fourth resource, after people, money and physical resources: ‘Information produced and received by an organisation during the normal course of business is now recognised as a valuable, unique resource which needs to be managed and exploited as are other resources’.<sup>192</sup> The approach towards managing information in this way is often referred to as information resource management, or information asset management, and can be defined as: ‘Principles and techniques to oversee and administer the creation, use, access, and preservation of information in an organization, founded on the belief that information is an asset comparable to financial, human, and physical resources’.<sup>193</sup>

The notion of quantifying information in economic terms was seized upon by many archivists as an opportunity to explain and defend the value of their activities to society at large.<sup>194</sup> US archivist, Richard Kesner, argued that ‘we now live in an

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<sup>190</sup> Luciana Duranti, ‘Meeting the Challenge of Contemporary Records: Does It Require a Role Change for the Archivist?’, *AA*, 63.1 (2000), 7-14, (11, 13).

<sup>191</sup> John McCall, *The Economics of Information and Uncertainty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Joseph E. Stiglitz, ‘The Contributions of the Economics of Information to Twentieth Century Economics’, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115.4 (2000), 1441-78. See also ‘What is Information Management’, Association for Information and Image Management, [www.aiim.org/What-is-Information-Management](http://www.aiim.org/What-is-Information-Management) [accessed 10 May 2014].

<sup>192</sup> Catherine E. Hare and Julie McLeod, *Developing a Records Management Programme* (London: Aslib, 1997), 7.

<sup>193</sup> Pearce-Moses, 204. See also Bruce L. Lewis, Charles A. Snyder and R. Kelly Rainer, Jr., ‘An Empirical Assessment of the Information Resource Management Construct’, *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 12.1 (1995), 199-223. Lewis et al pointed out that although the concept of IRM underpins information management there is no standard accepted definition of the term.

<sup>194</sup> For example, Charles Robb, ‘Information Resource Management in Kentucky State Government’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 5.4 (1991), 2-4; Richard M. Kesner, ‘Group Work, “Groupware” and the Transformation of Information Resource Management’, *AA*, 58.2 (1995), 154-69; Margaret Hedstrom, ‘Electronic Archives: Integrity and Access in the Network Environment’, *AA*, 58.3 (1995), 312-24; Lyn Elliott Sherwood, ‘Harnessing the Potential: Effective Access to Cultural Heritage Information’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 10.4 (1996), 352-73; Kesner, ‘Information Resource Management in the Electronic Workplace.

information economy where the producers of value are knowledge workers'.<sup>195</sup> The need for accurate, timely and cost-effective, information could be used to reinforce the professional role of the archivist, but, Kesner argued, in order 'to be relevant practitioners, [...] archivists must move with the times and deliver valued information resource management (IRM) services'.<sup>196</sup> Kesner outlined the various ways in which archivists could contribute to IRM, and explained that it is the archivist's 'unique perspective', based on their knowledge of the organization and its information assets, that 'can integrate process needs, tools and resources with the end user's right to know'.<sup>197</sup>

Access to information legislation, passed in various countries throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, reinforced a perception held by wider society that information was valuable and could be used to hold those in authority accountable.<sup>198</sup> This recognition created an opportunity for archivists to demonstrate their unique ability to decode information by identifying what the information is, where it originated and why, and who is using it. Yet the focus on governance and accountability also contributed to perceived divisions between the practices of records management and archives, as records managers were increasingly associated with the day-to-day organizational business processes: '[looking] forward at how to build on existing knowledge ... and look[ing] inward on what the business needs'; whilst, in comparison, archivists were seen to focus instead 'on past organizational practice, looking backwards into how information use shaped corporate identity [and] documented past actions'.<sup>199</sup>

Other writers perceived a danger in 'diluting' concepts of archives and records into a sea of information.<sup>200</sup> In the mid-1980s, Canadian archivist Gordon Dodds, in a review of George Orwell's classic novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* questioned whether 'archives, reaching to be kaleidoscopic, [are] in danger of severing their roots and dissolving into an enormous cauldron of informational

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<sup>195</sup> Kesner, 'Information Resource Management in the Electronic Workplace', 84.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>198</sup> See also Chapter 2, section 2.4.

<sup>199</sup> Convery, 207.

<sup>200</sup> Harries, 15. Examples include T. M. Campbell, 'Archives and Information Management', *Archivaria*, 28 (1989), 146-50; Glenda Acland, 'Managing the Record Rather Than the Relic', *AM*, 20.1 (1992), 57-63; Peter B. Hirtle, 'Archives or Assets?' Presidential Address, *AA*, 66.2 (2003), 235-47.

resources?'.<sup>201</sup> A decade later, Australian archivist Glenda Acland argued that archival institutions should not be managed as 'information outlets'; and that archivists are 'in the *understanding* business, not the *information* business'.<sup>202</sup> Information, of course, is not knowledge, and the critical difference between information management and records management can be summarized as being that the former 'focuses on information products used to support business activities, rather than the evidence of the activities themselves'.<sup>203</sup> Increasingly the purview of information technology specialists and business analysts, information management approaches to recordkeeping focused on the information contained in the records rather than on the management of those records for their value as evidence. Yet, within this context, some argued that the role of archivist was increasingly vital:

It is the very essence of the archival profession's orientation towards the past and with it, its expertise in providing context that has an important role to play in bringing information and knowledge together into a collaborative environment in which information can be shared and re-used while at the same time maintaining its contextual linkages.<sup>204</sup>

Sue McKemmish argued that the development of Australian records continuum theory arose in part as a reaction against the information management attitudes of the 1980s.<sup>205</sup> The theory posits:

a pluralist view of recorded information [...] [and] characterises records as a special genre of documents in terms of their intent and functionality. It emphasises their evidentiary, transactional and contextual nature, rejecting approaches to the definition of records which focus on their subject and informational value.<sup>206</sup>

Records Continuum theory was also seen as a conscious rejection of the life-cycle world view that had dominated records management and archival practices throughout much of the twentieth century.<sup>207</sup> McKemmish argued that Australian practice had evolved from an understanding of the nature of records and archives as

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<sup>201</sup> Gordon Dodds, 'Book Review of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell (1949)', *Archivaria*, 18 (1984), 268-72, (272).

<sup>202</sup> Acland, 'Managing the Record Rather Than the Relic', 58. Italics in original.

<sup>203</sup> Elizabeth Shepherd and Geoffrey Yeo, *Managing Records. A Handbook of Principles and Practice* (London: Facet Publishing, 2003), 18.

<sup>204</sup> Convery, 207.

<sup>205</sup> Sue McKemmish, 'Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice', *AS*, 1.4 (2001) 333-59, (335).

<sup>206</sup> McKemmish, 'Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice', 335. See also Chapter 1, section 1.4.

<sup>207</sup> McKemmish, 'Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice', 343.

evidence, with concepts of multiple provenance and an holistic, multi-dimensional approach to archive and recordkeeping that was ‘built on a unifying concept of records inclusive of archives, which are defined as records of continuing value’.<sup>208</sup>

#### 4.6. Concluding remarks

Archival theory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is not isolated, but has been, and continues to be, influenced by ideas from other disciplines and by wider trends in society as a whole. This chapter has attempted to outline some of the dominant theories of influence on archival theory and to illustrate how these theories have brought underlying assumptions about value into the archival domain. Arguments about intrinsic and instrumental value have impacted on archival theory as archivists have promulgated different types of value as justification for the appraisal, description and long-term preservation of archives. Some archivists have sought measures of the social and economic impact as a demonstration of the instrumental value of archives whilst others have emphasized the intrinsic value of archives as evidence for accountability and good governance. There is little to suggest that a definitive calculation of the value of archives has been found yet. The launch of an AHRC-funded project entitled *Cultural Value* in April 2013, seeking ‘to establish a framework that will advance the way we talk about the value of cultural engagement and the methods by which we evaluate that value’ suggests that the debates around the public value of culture, which began in the late twentieth century, remain both unresolved and relevant.<sup>209</sup> A report by Nesta, also published in April 2013, commented that:

after years of unproductive debates where cultural and economic values have been pitched against each other, it is time to accept that the arts do produce values that can be meaningfully assessed, and measured, by economists, but that they of course produce cultural value which cannot be expressed in monetary units.<sup>210</sup>

Yet it still remains to be shown exactly how that cultural value is determined.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 333-4, 341.

<sup>209</sup> [www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Funded-themes-and-programmes/Cultural-Value-Project/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Funded-themes-and-programmes/Cultural-Value-Project/Pages/default.aspx) [accessed 30 March 2013].

<sup>210</sup> Hasan Bakhshi, Ian Hargreaves and Juan Mateos-Garcia, *A Manifesto for the Creative Economy* (London: Nesta, 2013), 77. Available online: [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk) [accessed 30 March 2013].

The promotion of the value of information – as a commodity and as a legislative compliance tool – has provided an opportunity for archivists to re-cast themselves as informational professionals at the centre of organizational management. But whilst this has led to innovations in the capture and management of electronic records, it has also arguably diluted the distinctiveness and importance of archive and recordkeeping principles as archivists and records managers struggle to retain their unique professional identity alongside administrators, information technology specialists and business analysts.

The next chapter will explore the philosophical debate about value that has been taking place separately to that in the archival and cultural spheres, in which many of the same issues have been raised and debated, but from a completely different perspective.

## Chapter 5. Value in axiology literature

### 5.1. Chapter summary

This chapter develops the second step of Theory Derivation methodology: reading widely in other fields for ideas; and lays the foundations for step three in the methodology: the selection of a parent theory for use in derivation.<sup>1</sup> This chapter presents an overview of the philosophical discipline of axiology and outlines some of the main areas of debate within the discipline. Whilst it is impossible to describe all of the different theories and approaches that exist or have existed within axiology, this chapter summarizes those which have been particularly influential or long-standing, and which have a particular relevance to discussions about archival value. A brief introduction to the historical development of axiology is followed by a more detailed exploration of several key themes within axiology, namely: objectivism and subjectivism; intrinsic, extrinsic and instrumental value; and the commensurability of value.

### 5.2. Introduction to axiology

Axiology is a branch of philosophical Ethics that is ‘primarily concerned with classifying what things are good and how good they are’.<sup>2</sup> Axiology was formally articulated at the end of the nineteenth century when philosophers began to study concepts such as justice, goodness and beauty as being specific in nature and members of a new genus called ‘value’.<sup>3</sup> The discipline is also referred to as ‘value theory’, most notably in the North American philosophical literature.<sup>4</sup> The terms axiology and value theory will be used synonymously in this thesis. Axiology seeks to explore questions about what is worth pursuing or promoting, what such questions mean, and whether or how there is any way of arriving at answers to them that constitutes knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.5.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Schroeder, ‘Value Theory’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2012 edn.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/value-theory/> [accessed 13 August 2013].

<sup>3</sup> Risieri Frondizi, *What is Value?*, transl. Solomon Lipp, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1971), 3.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (US: Stanford University) <http://plato.stanford.edu>

<sup>5</sup> Joel K. Kupperman, ‘Axiological Ethics’, in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 71.

Like most philosophical disciplines, axiology consists of many differing approaches and theories. The historical development of axiology can be viewed as being based on three different schools of philosophical thought that were prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: (i) the Austro-German school of value phenomenologists such as Franz Brentano and Nicolai Hartmann; (ii) the English school of realists and objectivists, which included G. E. Moore, Hastings Rashdall and W. D. Ross; and (iii) the American school of pragmatist and subjectivist theorists including John Dewey and Ralph Barton Perry.<sup>6</sup>

### **5.2.1. The Austro-German school of value theory**

The Austro-German school of philosophical thought in the late nineteenth century took an approach towards axiology based on a ‘phenomenological’ methodology that involved an account of personal experience freed as far as possible from presuppositions and theoretical interpretations.<sup>7</sup> Phenomenology – literally the study of ‘phenomena’ – seeks to discover knowledge by distinguishing between the objects of our consciousness, and our experience or consciousness of such objects. Proponents of phenomenology such as Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)<sup>8</sup> studied various types of experiences ranging from perception, memory, imagination, emotion and desire, to embodied action and social activity, including linguistic activity. Husserl argued that the structure of these experiences typically involved what he called ‘intentionality’, that is, ‘the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that it is a consciousness of or about something’.<sup>9</sup> Husserl argued that it is through our consciousness of a thing that we experience it and find meaning in it. Husserl’s ideas were both influenced by, and

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<sup>6</sup> Barry Smith and Alan Thomas, ‘Axiology’, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. by Edward Craig (London: Routledge, 1998), 608.

<sup>7</sup> Smith and Thomas, 609.

<sup>8</sup> Born in Moravia (then part of the Austrian Empire), Edmund Husserl studied at Leipzig, the Humboldt University of Berlin and the University of Vienna. He became Professor of Philosophy at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg from 1887-1901, before teaching at Gottingen (1901-1916) and then Freiburg (1916-1929). As a Jew, Husserl was suspended from the University of Freiburg in 1933 and he resigned from the *Deutsche Akademie*. Following Husserl’s death in 1938, his manuscripts and research library were smuggled to Belgium and deposited at the University of Leuven. [www.husserlpage.com](http://www.husserlpage.com) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>9</sup> David Woodruff Smith, ‘Phenomenology’, in Zalta (Fall 2011 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/phenomenology/> [accessed 15 August 2013].

influenced, Austro-German moral philosophers of the period, particularly Franz Brentano (1838-1917).<sup>10</sup>

Brentano published his work *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* in 1889, in which he argued that the origin of all ethical knowledge lies in our personal experience of love and hate.<sup>11</sup> Brentano's theory was also grounded in the concept of intentionality, which he defined as 'the directedness of thought upon its objects'.<sup>12</sup> Brentano divided consciousness into two classes – that of physical phenomena and that of mental phenomena. The latter class comprised thinking or having ideas, judging, and willing or feeling.<sup>13</sup> He argued that such mental acts included three necessary elements: (i) the presentation of an object, (ii) a dimension of positive or negative belief in the object, and (iii) a 'phenomenon of interest' – a positive or negative preference of love or hate.<sup>14</sup> Following a similar argument to that of Descartes some three hundred years earlier, Brentano believed that any act of thinking is an object of inner perception and as such it is evident to the thinker that he is thus thinking, judging or feeling.<sup>15</sup> From this inner perception we attain the concept of correctness, and, in the view of Brentano, therefore, value judgements can be 'correct' or 'incorrect'. Brentano thus argued that 'we need not appeal to a 'realm of external values' in order to safeguard the objectivity and absoluteness of our knowledge of value from subjectivism and relativism'.<sup>16</sup>

Brentano also introduced the idea that values were commensurable – that they could be compared – and later proponents of this school, including Max Scheler (1874-1928) and Nicolai Hartmann (1883-1950), focused on the classification of

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<sup>10</sup> Franz Brentano was born in Germany and studied at Wurzburg, Munich, Berlin and Munster Universities. He was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1864 and became a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Vienna in 1874. In 1880 Brentano left the Church and married, resigning his professorship; but he continued to teach at Vienna until 1894. Brentano moved to Florence and obtained Italian citizenship. At the outbreak of the First World War, Brentano, a committed pacifist, left Florence for Zurich where he died in March 1917. Mario Puglisi, 'Franz Brentano: A Biographical Sketch', *The American Journal of Psychology*, 35.3 (July 1924), 414-9.

<sup>11</sup> Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, transl. by R. M. Chisholm and Elizabeth H. Schneewind, ed. by Oskar Kraus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), first published as *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1889).

<sup>12</sup> Smith and Thomas, 609.

<sup>13</sup> R. M. Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Smith and Thomas, 609. See also Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, 13-18.

<sup>15</sup> Chisholm, 2. The famous Cartesian formula is '*cogito, ergo sum*', 'I think, therefore I am'.

<sup>16</sup> Smith and Thomas, 609; Oskar Kraus 'Introduction to the 1934 edition' in Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, 164.



valuable objects into classes such as 'higher' and 'lower' using criteria such as permanence, fundamentality and universality.<sup>17</sup>

The Austro-German Phenomenological school declined in the early-mid twentieth century, but Anglo-American moral philosophers including J. N. Findlay (1903-1987) and R. M. Chisholm (1916-1999) revived interest in it. This, in turn, influenced work in the field of meta-ethics by contemporary philosophers such as David Wiggins (b.1933) and John McDowell (b.1942) to try to understand the nature of ethical properties, attitudes and judgements.<sup>18</sup> Independently, other late twentieth century value theorists such as Robert Nozick (1938-2002)<sup>19</sup> were inspired by Austro-German axiology. For example, in *The Examined Life*, Nozick detailed what he called the 'valuable dimensions of reality' and listed forty-eight categories, which included richness, amplitude and wholeness, echoing the earlier writings of Scheler and Hartmann.<sup>20</sup>

### 5.2.2. The English school of value theory

The British axiological tradition is based on the work of Cambridge philosopher G. E. Moore (1873-1958)<sup>21</sup> and Oxford philosophers Hastings Rashdall (1858-1924)<sup>22</sup> and W. D. Ross (1877-1971).<sup>23</sup> Moore in particular greatly admired, and was influenced by, the work of Brentano.<sup>24</sup> Both Moore and Rashdall gave

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<sup>17</sup> Smith and Thomas, 609. See also Franz Brentano, *The Foundation and Construction of Ethics*, transl. by Elizabeth H. Schneewind, ed. by Franziska Mayer-Hillebrand (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

<sup>18</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Nozick was born in New York and studied at Princeton University. He was appointed one of the youngest full professors at Harvard University in 1969 – a position he held until his death in 2002. Initially drawn to socialism he later shifted his focus towards political philosophy and the defence of the libertarian 'minimal state'. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>20</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610. See also Robert Nozick, *The Examined Life. Philosophical Meditations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 182-99.

<sup>21</sup> A biography of Moore can be found in Chapter 6.

<sup>22</sup> Hastings Rashdall studied at New College, Oxford and became an ordained priest, before taking up a fellowship in divinity and philosophy at Hertford College, Oxford in 1888. In 1895 he was elected to a fellowship in philosophy at New College, Oxford which he held for the next 22 years. He worked in the Admiralty intelligence department before being appointed Dean of Carlisle in 1917. Jane Garnett, 'Rashdall, Hastings (1858-1924)', *ODNB*.

<sup>23</sup> Sir William David Ross was educated in Edinburgh and Balliol College, Oxford. He taught at Oxford from 1900, at Oriel College then Merton College, before returning to Oriel College where he remained until 1947. Ross became Provost of Oriel in 1929 and was vice-chancellor of the University from 1941-44. Ross also served as chair of a royal commission on the press. G. J. Warnock, rev. David Wiggins, 'Ross, Sir (William) David (1877-1971)', *ODNB*.

<sup>24</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610. See also G E Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), first published in 1903.

accounts of value that rely on the concepts of moral intuition and rightness. As a result they are sometimes described as ‘consequentialists’, for whom rightness consists in the production of goodness; in other words, actions are viewed as being right in virtue of the amount of goodness of their consequences.<sup>25</sup> In his seminal work, *Principia Ethica*, Moore argued that ‘good’ was indefinable and introduced the concept of the ‘naturalistic fallacy’ as the basis for his argument that good was not a natural object, but was instead a non-natural quality that could be intuited.<sup>26</sup> Non-natural qualities are different from the objects of our ordinary sensory experience. Moore was arguing against the prevalent doctrine of ethical naturalism whose proponents argued that good was a complex natural object like ‘gold’. The ethical naturalists argued that just as gold can be defined by other natural qualities that are essentially related to it such as ‘yellow’, ‘heavy’ or ‘malleable’, the same was true of good. It was in this tradition that philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)<sup>27</sup> defined good as happiness, noting that it is happiness that men pursue and therefore the maximization of human happiness should be considered as the right goal of human endeavour.<sup>28</sup> By contrast, Moore argued that there was a fundamental difference between good and happiness because there is never an end point to the question ‘but is that good?’. Moore argued that no matter what definition of good is proposed the question always remains open and never trivial. As such, in Moore’s view, ‘when we say that a thing is good we are attributing a non-natural, simple, intuitable quality to it. And to identify this quality with any object in nature, such as happiness, would be to commit the naturalistic fallacy’.<sup>29</sup>

Moore constructed a structure of value, arranged in order of relative intrinsic goodness. He also gave an account of ‘organic unities’ in value, in which he asserted the apparent paradox of the disproportion of the values of a whole to those of its

<sup>25</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610. See also James P. Griffin, ‘Consequentialism’, in Honderich, 154-6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ethics and the Search for Values*, ed. by Luis E. Navia and Eugene Kelly (New York: Prometheus Books, 1980), 394-5; Smith and Thomas, 610. See Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 6-13, 58-69.

<sup>27</sup> John Stuart Mill was the son of an eminent philosopher, James Mill, who was a great influence on his early years. His father refused to allow him to study at Cambridge, instead preparing him for a career in the law. J.S. eventually joined his father’s department at the India Office as a junior clerk, where he continued to work for the whole of his professional career. He suffered from bouts of illness, but this did not prevent him writing and publishing on a variety of subjects including law, politics, religion and economics. He was a recognized national legend in his lifetime. Jose Harris, ‘Mill, John Stuart (1806-1873’, *ODNB*.

<sup>28</sup> Navia and Kelly, 394-5. See also John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*. Reprint of the 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1879) available online: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) [accessed 18 August 2013]. First published in 1863. See further discussion in section 5.3.3.

<sup>29</sup> Navia and Kelly, 395; see Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 8-13, 60-9.

parts.<sup>30</sup> Rashdall offered a similar account to that of Moore, in which he emphasized states of consciousness as the ultimately valuable objects of our judgement.<sup>31</sup> Ross also followed Moore's argument regarding the indefinability of good, extending it to apply also to the concept of 'right'; but by contrast, Ross ultimately concluded that values were incommensurable, that they could not be compared or measured in any meaningful way.<sup>32</sup>

Value theory was eclipsed by analytical philosophy in Britain and many other English-speaking countries in the later twentieth century as the focus shifted to an interest in the role of logic and language in thought. Analytical philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951)<sup>33</sup> and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)<sup>34</sup> dominated British philosophy from the 1920s to 1960s as they argued that the aim of philosophy was the logical clarification of thought, which could only be achieved by the analysis of the logical form of philosophical propositions.<sup>35</sup> Russell defined the basic concepts of mathematics in purely logical terms and agreed with Wittgenstein that the true logical content of complex propositions is concealed by their ordinary language and can be made clear only by reductive analysis. Importantly for moral philosophy, both held the view that any propositions that could not be analysed into

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<sup>30</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610; Navia and Kelly, 396. Moore's Principle of organic unities will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>31</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610. See also Hastings Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil. A Treatise on Moral Philosophy*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), first published in 1912.

<sup>32</sup> Smith and Thomas, 610. See also W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930).

<sup>33</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein was born in Vienna and initially studied engineering in Berlin and then Manchester. Drawn towards philosophy, he studied under Bertrand Russell in Cambridge in 1912. He wrote his philosophical work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) whilst serving with the Austrian army during the First World War. Following the war he taught as a schoolteacher and became associated with the Vienna Circle of philosophers. In 1929 he returned to Cambridge where he spent the rest of his teaching life. Dr Peter Hacker, 'Wittgenstein, Ludwig Josef Johann' in Honderich, 912.

<sup>34</sup> Bertrand Russell was brought up by his devoutly religious grandmother. However, Russell increasingly questioned his religious belief and by the time he left to read mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1889, he had lost his faith completely. At Cambridge Russell formed a close circle of friends, many of whom including G. E. Moore, were members of the discussion group, the Apostles, of which Russell also became a prominent member. In 1910 Russell took up a teaching post at Cambridge where he taught and worked with Ludwig Wittgenstein. Russell protested against the outbreak of war in 1914. In 1916 Russell lost his post at Cambridge, and his increasingly radical political stance saw him imprisoned for 6 months. By the mid 1930s Russell had achieved financial security by inheriting the family earldom. He abandoned politics and returned to academic philosophy, lecturing at Oxford and Chicago Universities, before returning to Cambridge in 1944. In his final years, Russell re-embraced radical politics. Ray Monk, 'Russell, Bertrand Arthur William, third Earl Russell (1872-1970)', *ODNB*.

<sup>35</sup> Lord Quinton, 'Analytic Philosophy', in Honderich, 29. See also Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903) and Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, 2<sup>nd</sup> reprint (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1972), first English edn. 1922.

elementary statements of fact were ‘metaphysical’ – into which category they placed morals and religion.<sup>36</sup> The logical positivist school, including A. J. Ayer (1910-1989)<sup>37</sup>, developed from Russell’s arguments the principle that empirical verifiability is the only criterion of meaningfulness, and that only scientific truths could be verified by experience as being true or false. As a result, Ayer and others argued that basic ethical statements are factually meaningless, expressing only emotional attitudes; whilst theological affirmations are at best ‘a kind of poetry’.<sup>38</sup> This was to remain the dominant philosophical discourse in Britain until a resurgence of interest in the work of Moore, in the last decades of the twentieth century and in the early twenty-first century, which was particularly focused on the centenary in 2003 of the publication of *Principia Ethica*.<sup>39</sup> Moore’s work, once disregarded, is being reassessed by contemporary value theorists who have taken a renewed interest in ethical non-naturalism and intuitionism as they explore the connections between epistemology (the study of knowledge), meta-ethics and axiology.<sup>40</sup>

### 5.2.3. The US school of value theory

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century American school of thought on value theory differed greatly from that of the British. Building on the work of US philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1859-1952)<sup>41</sup> offered an account of the world as an articulated whole that has no existence

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<sup>36</sup> Lord Quinton, 29.

<sup>37</sup> Alfred Jules Ayer studied at Eton, then Oxford University. He spent the winter of 1932-3 in Austria where he was introduced to the ideas of the Vienna circle. During the Second World War Ayer served in the Special Operations Executive. From 1946 he was chair of philosophy of mind and logic at UCL where he transformed the philosophy department into a rival of Oxbridge. In 1959 Ayer returned to Oxford University, remaining there until 1983. Richard Wollheim, ‘Ayer, Sir Alfred Jules [Freddie] (1910-1989)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>38</sup> T. L. S. Sprigge, ‘Ayer, Alfred Jules’, in Honderich, 73. See also A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., rev. and reset (London: Gollancz, 1951), first published in 1936.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Christopher Heath Wellman, ‘Introduction to Centenary Symposium on G. E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica*’, *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 465-7; *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, ed. by Susana Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Nuccetelli and Seay, 3. See also Chapter 6.

<sup>41</sup> John Dewey studied philosophy and psychology at Johns Hopkins University. His early teaching career was at the Universities of Michigan and Minnesota, before becoming head of the department of philosophy at the University of Chicago in 1894. In 1904 Dewey moved to Columbia University where he was professor until his retirement in 1930. An avowed anti-Communist Dewey attempted to create a third ‘People’s’ political party in the US. In his later years Dewey continued to remain involved in public affairs, opposing teachers’ loyalty oaths and defending US action in Korea. ‘Dr. John Dewey Dead at 92: Philosopher a Noted Liberal’, *The New York Times*, 2 June 1952.

apart from human activities.<sup>42</sup> Dewey argued that there was a vast realm of possible values, which were as broad as the subjective interests and desires that gave rise to them. He renounced the search for absolute ethical knowledge as futile, and argued that philosophers should instead seek to understand the nature of human desires.<sup>43</sup> Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957)<sup>44</sup> similarly defended a subjectivist account of value in his 1926 publication *General Theory of Value*.<sup>45</sup> Perry argued that value is defined in terms of ‘interest’, used in a sense synonymous with desire, will or purpose. He wrote: ‘that which is an object of interest is *eo ipso* invested with value. Any object, whatever it be, acquires value when any interest, whatever it be, is taken in it’.<sup>46</sup> Perry presented a psychological account of why human beings value something and determined a hierarchy of values based on the criteria of intensity, preference and inclusiveness.<sup>47</sup>

As a backlash to subjectivist accounts of value theory, the later twentieth century witnessed attempts to introduce a scientifically-based axiological methodology.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, evolutionary psychology which, based on the work of Charles Darwin, offers an account of the evolution of human moral sense without any reference to objective values, together with moral scepticism about the place of values in the world, has tended to dominate recent US philosophy.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.3. Main concerns of axiology

The various schools of axiological thought have approached the subject of values in differing ways, yet all the theorists have attempted to answer the same series of inter-connected questions about value:

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<sup>42</sup> Navia and Kelly, 365. See also John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930).

<sup>43</sup> Navia and Kelly, 367; Smith and Thomas, 609.

<sup>44</sup> Ralph Barton Perry was educated at the universities of Princeton and Harvard. He began teaching philosophy in 1899 first at Williams College, then at Smith College, both in Massachusetts. In 1902 Perry went to Harvard University, becoming a professor of philosophy in 1913. He remained at Harvard until his retirement in 1946. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) [accessed 15 August 2013].

<sup>45</sup> Frondizi, 50-58; See also Ralph Barton Perry, *General Theory of Value. Its Meaning and Basic Principles Construed in Terms of Interest* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1926).

<sup>46</sup> Perry, Ch. 5, Sect. 49, 115-6.

<sup>47</sup> Frondizi, 55-57.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Robert S. Hartman, *The Structure of Value: Foundations of Scientific Axiology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Illinois: Southern Illinois University, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> Smith and Thomas, 611. For example, Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) or J. L. Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (London: Penguin, 1977).

- what sort of property or characteristic of something means that it ‘has value’ or ‘is of value’?;
- is having value an objective or a subjective matter – does the value reside in the object or is it about how we feel about it?; and
- what things have value or are valuable?<sup>50</sup>

The main points of contention in axiology are between:

- subjective and objective values;
- instrumental or extrinsic and intrinsic values; and
- the notion of value commensurability.<sup>51</sup>

Distinctions have also been drawn between different types of value such as moral and aesthetic. The next section of this chapter will explore in more detail the dominant theoretical discourses surrounding the main points of contention in axiology.

### **5.3.1. Objectivism and subjectivism**

There are two seemingly opposing traditions within axiology: subjectivism, which holds that values are subjective states of human beings; and objectivism, which holds that values exist independently of humans. As with most philosophical ideas, the picture is not as simple as it may appear and in fact there are a wide variety of interpretations within these two traditions; for example, some subjectivists claim that value is conferred upon an object by means of our pleasure or interest in the object; whilst other subjectivists claim that rather than asserting anything about the object to which we are attributing the particular quality of value instead we are merely expressing our own emotions.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, within objectivism a moderate approach might argue that although value is an anthropocentric concept, the things that constitute a good life are valuable not because they are the components of a human life but because they are good; whilst a more extreme objectivist might argue

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<sup>50</sup> Nicholas Dent, ‘Value’, in Honderich, 895.

<sup>51</sup> Alan Thomas, ‘Values’, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 9, ed. by Edward Craig (London: Routledge, 1998), 581.

<sup>52</sup> The first subjectivist approach is exemplified in the work of Perry, whilst the second can be found in the work of Ayer.

that values like good and beauty exist independently of all human interests.<sup>53</sup> Like many philosophical ideas, the terms ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ have different meanings depending on their particular use and context; and accounts of value often blend into each other.

Austrian philosopher, Alexius Meinong (1853-1920)<sup>54</sup> is often cited as being the first to assert, in a systematic form, a subjectivist interpretation of value.<sup>55</sup> In his 1894 publication *Psychological-ethical Inquiry into Value Theory*, Meinong argued that the key to understanding values was to be found in psychology, rooted in our emotional experiences.<sup>56</sup> Although he may have been the first to explicitly state this, Meinong’s argument has a long antecedence. The phrase commonly used in English is that ‘value is in the eye of the beholder’ – in other words, that value is not a property of the particular object, but is rather a projection onto the object by an individual or a community. Versions of this phrase, which regards value as an individual’s subjective opinion, can be traced back at least as far as Shakespeare whose eponymous hero in *Hamlet* boldly proclaimed: ‘Why, then, ‘tis none to you; for there is nothing either good nor bad, but thinking makes it so’.<sup>57</sup> One of the most well-known expositions of what was later called a subjective theory of value was made in the eighteenth century by Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The moderate objectivist approach is exemplified in the work of Moore, whilst the work of Plato exemplifies a more extreme objectivist approach.

<sup>54</sup> Alexius Meinong was a pupil of Franz Brentano at the University of Vienna, before becoming professor of philosophy at the University of Graz in 1882. Meinong remained at Graz until his death, establishing the Graz School of experimental psychology. Johann Marek, ‘Alexius Meinong’, in Zalta (Summer 2013 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/meinong/> [accessed 15 August 2013].

<sup>55</sup> Frondizi, 39.

<sup>56</sup> Originally published as *Psychologisch-ethische Untersuchungen zur Werththeorie* (Graz: Leuschner u. Lubensky, 1894). Meinong later shifted from his subjectivist position to the opposite, objectivist, position but for the purposes of this thesis, his work is relevant as an early example of subjectivist value theory.

<sup>57</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, II, 2, 252-3 in *William Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. by W. J. Craig (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 882. The current form of the phrase ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ is arguably thought to date from the end of the nineteenth century, with its first appearance in print in the novel *Molly Bawn* by ‘The Duchess’ (Margaret Wolfe Hungerford) published in 1878. Gary Martin, [www.phrases.org.uk](http://www.phrases.org.uk) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>58</sup> David Hume was a child prodigy who joined his older brother to study at Edinburgh University at the age of eleven. Following an unsuccessful foray into business, Hume moved to France, returning to England to publish his *Treatise* in 1739. Despite being published anonymously, Hume’s reputation as an atheist and sceptic prevented him ever holding an academic post. Instead, he became secretary to his cousin, Lt-Gen. James St. Clair, joining him on diplomatic missions to Italy. In 1754 Hume became Librarian to the Edinburgh Faculty of Advocates but he resigned three years later. In 1763 Hume moved to Paris as the private secretary to Lord Hertford, the British Ambassador to France. Hume returned to Edinburgh’s New Town in 1769. Aware he was dying, Hume arranged for the posthumous publication of his most controversial work *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*,

In his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume argued that ‘Vice and virtue [...] may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophers, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind’.<sup>59</sup> Hume argued that morality was ‘a matter of sentiment and taste’.<sup>60</sup> He similarly viewed aesthetic value, stating that ‘beauty is no quality in things themselves; it exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty’.<sup>61</sup> In his essay *Of the Standard of Taste*, Hume sharply distinguished between judgement and sentiment, arguing that judgements can be right or wrong and true or false because they refer to something beyond human experience. In comparison, ‘a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right’ because they are all perceptions of different human minds.<sup>62</sup> In this way, Hume accounts for the differences of taste and opinion among individuals and cultures.

Hume effectively made a distinction between facts and values when he argued that no ‘ought’ can be inferred from an ‘is’:

In every system of morality [...] I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought* or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is however of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, ‘tis necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given; for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from the others, which are entirely different from it.<sup>63</sup>

Hume argued that knowledge must be based on either logic or observation, and he identified a gap between ‘is’ statements, or statements of fact, that can be known in

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which appeared in print three years after his death. William Edward Morris ‘David Hume’, in Zalta (Spring 2013 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/hume/> [accessed 15 August 2013].

<sup>59</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature. Being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects* (1739-40), Book III, Part 1, Sect. 1. Reprint of the 1777 edition, available online: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) [accessed 14 August 2013]

<sup>60</sup> ‘The hypothesis which we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary’. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Appendix 1 Concerning Moral Sentiment, Sect. 1. Reprint of the 1777 edition, available online: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>61</sup> David Hume, ‘Of the Standard of Taste’, Essay IV, in *Four Dissertations* (1757). Reprint of the 1777 edition, available online: [www.davidhume.org](http://www.davidhume.org) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>62</sup> Hume, ‘Of the Standard of Taste’.

<sup>63</sup> Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part 1, Sect. 1.



this way, and ‘ought’ statements, or value judgements, that cannot. Although this appears to suggest that there is no such thing as moral knowledge, Hume was not a sceptic in matters of morals. Instead, he believed that there was a difference between good and evil, which was derived from a moral sense founded in human sentiment.<sup>64</sup>

As has been outlined in section 5.2., subjectivist accounts of value gained favour in the early twentieth century with the dominance of philosophers such as Perry in the US and Russell in the UK who, despite taking very different approaches, both argued against concepts of objective value. For Perry, saying that ‘x is valuable’ was the same as saying that ‘interest is taken in x’;<sup>65</sup> whilst Russell’s analytical approach meant that for him, ‘when we say something has value, we do not state a fact independent of our personal feelings; we are instead “giving expression to our own emotions”’.<sup>66</sup> Russell’s doctrine led ultimately to the view that questions about value lie outside the legitimate sphere of philosophy, but despite the popularity of this view in many quarters, his was not the last word on the topic as other philosophers continued to search for an objective theory of value. In particular, some began to question the related ‘fact-value dichotomy’ that had been first established by Hume and was later promulgated by philosophers like Ayer, R. M. Hare (1919-2002) and Charles L. Stevenson (1908-1979).

The fact-value dichotomy asserts that there is something different between ‘objective’ or ‘factual’ statements such as ‘it is raining’, and ‘subjective’ or ‘evaluative’ statements such as ‘it is good’. There are three main accounts of this difference: (i) it is a difference of subject matter (i.e. facts are regarded as ordinary and natural, compared to mysterious, non-natural values);<sup>67</sup> (ii) it is a difference in the point of interest of the two types of claim (i.e. facts are statements, reports or assertions conveying information, compared to expressions or evocations of value); and (iii) it is a difference in the method of support for each type of claim (i.e. statements of fact are capable of being established by other statements of fact that

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<sup>64</sup> Justin Brookes, ‘Hume, David’, in Honderich, 380; Navia and Kelly, 189.

<sup>65</sup> Ralph Barton Perry, *Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 116, cited in Frondizi, 53.

<sup>66</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science* (New York: Hott, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1935), 230, cited in Frondizi, 78.

<sup>67</sup> This is a similar argument to Moore’s ‘naturalistic fallacy’ approach.

constitute evidence or reason, whereas value judgements cannot be conclusively established by statements of fact).<sup>68</sup>

US philosopher Hilary Putnam (b.1926)<sup>69</sup> argued that the fact-value dichotomy was a natural product of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century positivist framework of thought, and that it was necessary to think beyond these dogmas in order to genuinely embrace the postmodernism paradigm of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>70</sup> Putnam argued that the distinction between fact and value was not as absolute as suggested by Hume, particularly as many of the arguments about the nature of ‘facts’ that were put forward by Hume have since been dismissed by developments in modern science.<sup>71</sup> Putnam dismissed the argument upon which Ayer and others reinforced the fact-value dichotomy by arguing that the key philosophical terms used by the logical positivist school were ultimately self-refuting because ‘cognitively meaningful’ and ‘nonsense’ are neither terms of logic, observation nor theory.<sup>72</sup> Putnam attempted to bridge the gap between fact and value by arguing from a pragmatist position that ‘knowledge of facts presupposes knowledge of values’.<sup>73</sup> Or, as expressed another way by Nozick, ‘values enter into the process of knowing a fact; without utilizing or presupposing certain values we cannot determine which is the realm of facts, we cannot know the real from the unreal’.<sup>74</sup> More recently there has been a growing trend among philosophers to argue that such perceived dichotomies, like that of fact-value, are dubious in nature and warrant further investigation. For example, James Griffin (b.1933)<sup>75</sup> has suggested that there is a rationality that can be found in morality by accepting the interdependence of facts and values.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Kurt Baier, ‘The Concept of Value’, in *Value Theory in Philosophy and Social Science*, ed. by Ervin Laszlo and James B. Wilbur (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1973), 1-11, (8).

<sup>69</sup> Hilary Putnam studied at University of Pennsylvania, then Harvard and UCLA. He taught philosophy at MIT, where he also organized anti-Vietnam war demonstrations. He moved to Harvard in 1965 and continues to be an Emeritus professor at the university. Malcolm Thorndike Nicholson, ‘A philosopher in the age of science’, *Prospect*, 14 March 2013 [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk) [accessed 13 August 2013].

<sup>70</sup> Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (US: Harvard University Press, 2003), 9.

<sup>71</sup> Putnam, 21.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 535.

<sup>75</sup> James Griffin is an American philosopher who studied at Yale and Oxford Universities. He lectured at Christ Church, Oxford from 1960-1966, before being appointed fellow at Keble College, a post he

### 5.3.2. Intrinsic and extrinsic and instrumental value

Another apparent dichotomy in axiological debate is between ‘intrinsic’ value and ‘extrinsic’ value. In their search for an account of moral knowledge, philosophers have concentrated on identifying and defining intrinsic value. Traditionally it has been defined as value in itself or as an end; or more technically, ‘a value that depends solely on its internal properties (its qualities and inner relations) as contrasted with extrinsic value [...] that depends, wholly or in part, on its external properties (its relations to other things)’.<sup>77</sup> For example, one might argue that happiness has intrinsic value because being happy is something to be valued in itself; in contrast, possessing one million pounds is not intrinsically valuable because the money is only valuable to the extent that it can be used to obtain something else; for example, happiness. The term ‘instrumental’ value is often used instead of extrinsic value and underlines notions of the value being for, or as an instrument to, something else. All three terms are contested and their meanings can vary depending on their use and context. This section will outline some of the main philosophical issues surrounding intrinsic value and the author will use instrumental and extrinsic value synonymously to mean any value that is not intrinsic.

The perceived division between intrinsic and extrinsic value is one that has sustained axiological theory over the last one hundred years. This division can arguably be traced to the work of Moore. Prior to Moore, distinctions had been made between good as an end and good as a means, but many of these distinctions seemed to allow that good as an end could depend on other relational properties; for example, the suggestion that pleasure (a good as an end) had by a bad person was worse than the same pleasure had by a good person – in other words, the intrinsic value of pleasure could also depend on external factors, outside of the pleasure itself.<sup>78</sup> Moore, however, presented a much more restrictive view of intrinsic value by arguing that it could only depend on its intrinsic properties. Moore explicitly

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held until 1996. He is currently an emeritus professor at Corpus Christi. ‘Griffin, Prof. James Patrick’, *Who’s Who 2013* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2012) [www.ukwhoswho.com](http://www.ukwhoswho.com) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>76</sup> James Griffin, *Value Judgement. Improving our Ethical Beliefs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> Malcolm Budd, *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry and Music* (UK: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1995), 5.

<sup>78</sup> This argument is presented by Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics*, reprint of 1907 7<sup>th</sup> edn., (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1922), first published in 1874. See also Thomas Hurka, ‘Moore in the Middle’, *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 599-628.

stated his definition of intrinsic value in an essay entitled ‘The Conception of Intrinsic Value’ in 1922.<sup>79</sup> Moore believed that disputes about values, which appeared to be about whether the value was objective or subjective, were really about whether the value was intrinsic or extrinsic.<sup>80</sup> Although Moore argued that intrinsic value is something easily recognizable and ‘simple and fundamental’, he admitted that ‘the task of defining it precisely is by no means easy and involves some difficulties which I must confess that I do not know how to solve’.<sup>81</sup> Moore continued to give the following definition: ‘*To say that a kind of value is ‘intrinsic’ means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it and in what degree it possesses it depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question*’.<sup>82</sup> Moore clarified that he meant two different things at the same time by this statement, firstly:

that it is *impossible* for what is strictly one and the same thing to possess that kind of value at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and *not* to possess it at another; and equally *impossible* for it to possess it in one degree at one time, or in one set of circumstances, and to possess it in different degree at another, or in a different set.<sup>83</sup>

And secondly, that:

if a given thing possesses any kind of intrinsic value in a certain degree, then not only must that same thing possess it, under all circumstances, in the same degree, but also anything *exactly like* it, must, under all circumstances, possess it in exactly the same degree.<sup>84</sup>

In this way, Moore established a strict definition of intrinsic value whereby it is irreducible, without parts, non-natural and unanalyzable.<sup>85</sup> In Moore’s view the greatest intrinsic goods were ‘personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments’.<sup>86</sup>

Moore’s narrow definition of intrinsic value is supported by other elements of his value theory such as organic unities and the isolation method, both of which will be discussed further in Chapter 6. It remains one of the most contested areas of his value theory, and has thus helped to sustain a great deal of debate and theory

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<sup>79</sup> G. E. Moore, ‘The Conception of Intrinsic Value’, in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1922), 253-75.

<sup>80</sup> Moore, ‘The Conception of Intrinsic Value’, 259.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 260. Italics in original.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 261. Italics in original.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 261. Italics in original.

<sup>85</sup> Constantine Cavarnos, *A Dialogue on G. E. Moore’s Ethical Philosophy* (Belmont, US : Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1979), 16.

<sup>86</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. VI, Section 113, 238.

development within axiology ever since.<sup>87</sup> Moore himself also later refined his ideas about whether beauty is intrinsically valuable. He argued in chapter three of *Principia Ethica* that the existence of beauty has intrinsic value, but allowed in chapter six, that it may have little or no intrinsic value by itself. In *Ethics*, published nine years later, Moore went further and explicitly denied that beauty by itself has intrinsic value.<sup>88</sup>

The subject of the value of beauty, or aesthetic value, in particular, has been at the forefront of many philosophical debates about intrinsic value. In 1964, US philosopher Arthur Danto (b.1924)<sup>89</sup> published an article in the *Journal of Philosophy* entitled ‘The Artworld’, which posited what became known as the ‘institutional’ view of aesthetic value that remains influential to the present day.<sup>90</sup> Danto famously argued that ‘what in the end makes the difference between a Brillo box and a work of art consisting of a Brillo Box is a certain theory of art’.<sup>91</sup> For Danto, there is no intrinsic value in the object itself – the Brillo box – because if there was, both Andy Warhol’s artwork and a brillo box on a storeroom shelf would be of aesthetic value and that clearly is not the case. In this sense, Danto follows Moore’s strict definition of intrinsic value by not allowing the value to vary depending on the context. Danto coined the term ‘artworld’ to describe the cultural context that somehow stands within, and yet apart from, normal reality, and which judges an artwork to be of aesthetic value.

Many philosophers have followed Danto’s approach and argued that art is of instrumental value only, as the value is located externally to the art object in the judgements of individuals who respect the object as a product of the artist, time, talent, labour or expression.<sup>92</sup> Other philosophers have attempted to restore an

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<sup>87</sup> Examples include: Austin Duncan-Jones, ‘Intinsic Value: Some Comments on the Work of G. E. Moore’, in *G. E. Moore. Essays in Retrospect*, ed. by Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970), 304-42; Michael J. Zimmerman, ‘In Defense of the Concept of Intrinsic Value’, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 29.3 (1999), 389-410; Michela Marzano, *G. E. Moore’s Ethics. Good as Intrinsic Value* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2004); Robert Audi, ‘Intrinsic Value and Reasons for Action’, in *Metaethics After Moore*, Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons, eds., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 79-106.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Hurka, ‘Two Kinds of Organic Unity’, *The Journal of Ethics*, 2 (1998), 299-320, (300).

<sup>89</sup> Arthur C. Danto has been teaching in the department of philosophy at the Columbia University, New York, since 1951. An undergraduate and postgraduate of Columbia himself, he became a professor in 1966. <http://philosophy.columbia.edu/> [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>90</sup> Arthur Danto, ‘The Artworld’, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 61.19 (1964), 571-84.

<sup>91</sup> Danto, 581.

<sup>92</sup> David E. W. Fenner, ‘Artistic Value’, *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 37 (2003), 555-63.

intrinsic value to art by suggesting that there is an intrinsic value in the experience the artwork offers. This is an approach followed by Malcolm Budd (b.1941)<sup>93</sup> who argued that in order to understand what he calls ‘artistic value’ – value of a work of art as a work of art – it is necessary to understand both the context of the work’s creation and the spectator’s appreciation of it in equal measure.<sup>94</sup> Budd argued that although individuals may experience different reactions to an artwork, an appropriate response (one that can be justified) will be an appreciation of the work based on the nature of the work itself. Through this process, Budd believed that artistic value, which is intrinsic, whilst also being inter-subjective and anthropocentric, can be found.<sup>95</sup>

As with many other areas of philosophical debate, contemporary accounts of aesthetic value have shifted towards a postmodernist cultural framework, which has been described as being ‘not a unified axiology of a single discipline, but an emerging inter-textual discursive field in which the point of view of value orientation may disseminate’.<sup>96</sup> Many of these accounts posit alternative concepts of aesthetic value that transcend the traditional intrinsic-extrinsic division.<sup>97</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith (b.1932)<sup>98</sup> argued that although literary and artistic works possess only instrumental value, judgements of value about them can nonetheless be validated.<sup>99</sup> Smith argued that when we make a value judgement we are saying that the thing being valued is good or bad for, or as, something; and that we do so within the conventions and assumptions of our community.<sup>100</sup> As a result, she argued that

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<sup>93</sup> Malcolm Budd studied at Jesus College, Cambridge and was a research fellow at Peterhouse from 1966-1970. In 1970 he moved to UCL, holding a philosophy professorship from 1990-2001 and remains an emeritus professor at the institution. Since 1994 he has been President of the British Society of Aesthetics [www.ukwhoswho.com](http://www.ukwhoswho.com) [accessed 14 August 2013].

<sup>94</sup> Budd, 11.

<sup>95</sup> Budd, 38-9; see also Matthew Kieran, ‘Review of *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry and Music* by Malcolm Budd’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 47.187 (1997), 246-8.

<sup>96</sup> *Life After Postmodernism: Essays on Value and Culture*, ed. by John Fekete (London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1988), xiv.

<sup>97</sup> Examples include: value as a category of social metabolism, value without ‘truth-value’ and value as a product of economics, *Life After Postmodernism*. See also Barbara Herrnstein Smith, ‘Value Without Truth-Value’ and John Fekete, ‘Vampire Value, Infinite Art and Literary Theory: A Topographical Meditation’, both in *Life After Postmodernism*, 1-21 and 64-85 respectively.

<sup>98</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith studied at Brandeis University, New York and became professor of Communication, English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania in 1981. She currently divides her time between Duke University (where she has held a professorship since 1987) and Brown University (since 2003). <http://research.brown.edu/>

<sup>99</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1988)

<sup>100</sup> Barbara Herrnstein Smith, 10.

literary and artistic value is contingent, or ‘a changing function of multiple variables’<sup>101</sup> but, although it is never absolutely fixed, neither is it completely non-stable – these variables occur within ranges and exhibit patterns and constancies.<sup>102</sup> Another philosopher, Robin Attfield,<sup>103</sup> subscribed to a similar idea, suggesting that there are ‘valuational frameworks’ that determine how value is ascribed.<sup>104</sup> Contemporary philosophers like Jonathan Dancy (b.1946)<sup>105</sup> have developed Moore’s theory of intrinsic value to suggest that an object’s intrinsic value may not supervene, or depend, on its intrinsic properties alone, but that rather, it may be so open-ended as to resist generalization and may indeed vary from context to context, even changing polarity.<sup>106</sup>

Attfield sought to re-establish the concept of intrinsic value against postmodernist challenges about the nature of objectivity, within an environmental ethics approach.<sup>107</sup> Environmental ethics emerged as an academic discipline in the 1970s out of concerns about the relationship between humans and nature fuelled by worries about over-population and commercial farming practices.<sup>108</sup> It is in the discipline of environmental ethics that much contemporary value theory development has taken place.<sup>109</sup> The key focus for environmental ethicists is the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value as they question the traditional Western ethical perspective that tends to take an anthropocentric approach towards intrinsic value. This approach ranges from the strong view that only human beings are intrinsically valuable, to the weaker view that the promotion or protection of

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>103</sup> Robin Attfield studied at Christ Church Oxford and has been lecturing in philosophy at Cardiff University since 1968. He taught in Nigeria and Kenya in the 1970s and has been a professor of philosophy at Cardiff since 1992. <http://cardiff.ac.uk>

<sup>104</sup> Robin Attfield, *A Theory of Value and Obligation* (Croom Helm Ltd., Kent, 1987), 25.

<sup>105</sup> Jonathan Dancy studied at Winchester College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford before becoming a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Keele in 1971. He became head of the philosophy department at Keele before moving to the University of Reading in 1996. He retired from Reading in 2011, but continues to lecture, spending half the year at the University of Texas at Austin. <https://webspace.utexas.edu/jpd346/www/Site/Welcome.html> [accessed 15 August 2013].

<sup>106</sup> Jonathan Dancy, ‘The Particularist’s Progress’ in *Moral Particularists*, ed. by B. Hooker and M. Little (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 5, cited in Michael J. Zimmerman, ‘Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Value’, in Zalta (Winter 2010 edn.) <http://stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/> [accessed 15 August 2013]. The implications of Dancy’s theory in relation to Moore’s Principle of organic unities will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>107</sup> Robin Attfield, ‘Postmodernism, Value and Objectivity’, *Environmental Values*, 10.2 (2001), 145-62.

<sup>108</sup> Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, ‘Environmental Ethics’, in Zalta (Fall 2011 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/ethics-environmental/> [accessed 15 August 2013].

<sup>109</sup> See Brennan and Lo.

human interests is of most intrinsic value at the expense of non-human things.<sup>110</sup> By contrast, environmental ethicists attempt to demonstrate that ‘non-human beings and states of affairs in the natural world have intrinsic value’.<sup>111</sup> Some environmental ethicists set out to demonstrate this through a closer examination of the nature of intrinsic value; for example, by identifying multiple senses of the term, each with strong and weak interpretations and claims;<sup>112</sup> whilst others, like Attfield, have attempted to defend an account of intrinsic value that is both objective and biocentric.<sup>113</sup>

### 5.3.3. (In)commensurability of value

Moral philosophers have long-debated whether values are commensurable. The term commensurable comes from the Latin *comensuralis*: *co*: together and *mensuralis*: measurable.<sup>114</sup> The idea that values can be classified and a hierarchy of value created whereby some values are more ‘valuable’ than others can be found in many traditional axiological theories, particularly those associated with monism or hedonism.<sup>115</sup> One of the most influential moral thinkers, Aristotle (384BC-322BC), argued that there is a *summum bonum*, or ‘highest good’, which all humans should aim to attain.<sup>116</sup> Aristotle believed that ethics was a practical discipline that could provide a solution to differences of opinion about what is best for human beings by identifying what is the highest good, that which is desirable for itself. Central to Aristotle’s theory is the idea that virtue is essential for a good human life. Aristotle identified the highest good as *eudaimonia*, or ‘well-being’:

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> John O’Neill, ‘The Varieties of Intrinsic Value’, *The Monist*, 75 (1992), 119-137, (119).

<sup>112</sup> For example, O’Neill.

<sup>113</sup> Attfield, ‘Postmodernism, Value and Objectivity’, 158.

<sup>114</sup> Anthony Marc Williams, ‘Comparing Incommensurables’, *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 45 (2011), 267-77, (267).

<sup>115</sup> Value monists argue that all values can be reduced to one value. Hedonistic theories of value focus on pleasure and pain as being the only things which have value (or disvalue) and which motivate human beings. It should be noted that whilst not all value monists argue for commensurability, most philosophers who argue for value incommensurability are value pluralists. See Nien-hê Hsieh, ‘Incommensurable Values’, in Zalta (Fall 2008 edn.)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/value-incommensurable/> [accessed 18 August 2013]; Chris Kelly, ‘The Impossibility of Incommensurable Values’, *Philosophical Studies*, 137.3 (2008), 369-82.

<sup>116</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (350BC), Book I, transl. by W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908) available online: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachean.html/> [accessed 18 August 2013]. See also Richard Kraut, ‘Aristotle’s Ethics’, in Zalta (Winter 2012 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/aristotle-ethics/> [accessed 18 August 2013].



in view of the fact that all knowledge and every pursuit aims at some good, what is it that we say political science aims at and what is the highest of all goods achievable by action. Verbally there is very general agreement, for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy.<sup>117</sup>

Aristotle further argued that all other goods, including health, wealth and justice, are subordinate because they are sought merely because they promote well-being.<sup>118</sup>

Aristotle believed that although circumstances vary so much as to preclude a set of ethical rules that can be applied every time, nonetheless, a person can learn, through philosophical reflection, to live a virtuous life, and make good moral decisions based on practical reason.<sup>119</sup>

Another example of a monistic theory of value is utilitarianism. Utilitarian moral theories hold that the morally right action is that which produces the most good for the greatest number of people.<sup>120</sup> Classic utilitarianism, as promoted by British philosophers Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)<sup>121</sup> and John Stuart Mill, is based on the idea that values can be measured as being proportionate to each other. Mill wrote that:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility or the Greatest Happiness Principle holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain.<sup>122</sup>

Bentham tried to reconcile the view that humans are driven by pleasure or pain, with the principle of utility as a measure of virtue.<sup>123</sup> He argued that although individuals

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<sup>117</sup> Aristotle, Book I.4.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Book I.7; Kraut.

<sup>119</sup> Kraut.

<sup>120</sup> Michael Slote, 'Utilitarianism', in Honderich, 890-2.

<sup>121</sup> Jeremy Bentham was born into a family of lawyers working in the City of London and he initially intended to follow the same career. However, during his legal studies he became appalled at the current state of English law and decided that rather than practise law he would instead study what the law might be. Bentham was involved in many practical proposals including his most famous failure – the panopticon prison. After losing a considerable amount of money and time in fighting the interests of landowners whose property was adjacent to Bentham's chosen site for the prison, he was eventually compensated by Parliament. Bentham bought a house in Devon where he continued to write prodigiously on economics, politics and the law. F. Rosen, 'Bentham, Jeremy (1748-1832)', *ODNB*.

<sup>122</sup> Mill, Ch. II.2.

<sup>123</sup> Julia Driver, 'The History of Utilitarianism', in Zalta (Summer 2009 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/utilitarianism-history/> [accessed 17 August 2013]. See also Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780), Book

may not necessarily recognize the amount of good resulting from a particular action, the action is morally right, provided that the amount of good is greater than the results of any alternative course of action.<sup>124</sup> The utilitarian theory of value holds that happiness and pleasure are synonymous and constitute the only intrinsic value. All other things have only extrinsic value to the extent that they bring about happiness. According to this theory it follows that the value of all actions ‘depends on the quantity of pleasure they produce – their quantity is a function of the number of pleasures, the intensity and duration’.<sup>125</sup> It also follows that no action is intrinsically better than another, but can be instrumentally more valuable.

Bentham’s theory of value was egalitarian in nature because according to it, everyone’s happiness – including that of non-humans – was equal in value; pleasure was identified by Bentham as the highest good, but he could not account for the intuitively-held belief that although hurting a puppy and hurting a human being are both bad actions, hurting a human is worse.<sup>126</sup> This was a criticism of Bentham that his follower, Mill, attempted to resolve by introducing a qualitative difference between types of pleasure in addition to the idea of quantity. Mill famously wrote that it is ‘better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied’.<sup>127</sup> Mill claimed that certain pleasures were preferable to others, and moreover, that such preferences could be ‘competently’ judged:

If I am asked, what I mean by difference of quality in pleasure, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer. [...] If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account.<sup>128</sup>

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1. Reprint of the 1823 edition, available online: [www.constitution.org/jb.pml.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jb.pml.htm) [accessed 18 August 2013].

<sup>124</sup> Bentham, Book 2, xix; Driver.

<sup>125</sup> David Brink, ‘Mill’s Moral and Political Philosophy’, in Zalta (Fall 2008 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/mill-moral-political/> [accessed 17 August 2013].

<sup>126</sup> Driver. It should be noted that this view is contested by some environmental ethicists and animal rights activists.

<sup>127</sup> Mill, Ch. II.6.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., Ch. II.5.

Like Aristotle before them, both Bentham and Mill regarded their ethical theory as more than purely theoretical. They were social reformers who attempted to use utilitarianism to inform social policy and the law. Mill, in particular, was an advocate of women's suffrage and free speech, arguing that such rights were determined by utility.<sup>129</sup> However, because utilitarianism holds that there is no intrinsic value except pleasure, it affirms that things like law and justice are only of instrumental value. As a result, as the consequences of any given social policy may alter, so too can the moral quality of that policy.<sup>130</sup>

Thus far, the theories of value commensurability discussed all present a utilitarian or hedonistic approach to value. Moore argued against both these approaches, yet also argued in favour of the commensurability of value. Moore often used simple mathematical language and terminology in his writings, implying that comparisons of value could be expressed arithmetically.<sup>131</sup> For example, in *Principia Ethica*, Moore referred to 'the sum of the values', 'degrees' and 'proportion'.<sup>132</sup> Later, in *Ethics*, he used algebraic equations to illustrate his arguments about how quantities of intrinsic value can be calculated between a whole and its parts.<sup>133</sup> Moore's contemporary, Rashdall, also posited that values could be quantitatively measured.<sup>134</sup> Rashdall argued that 'goods of all kinds can be compared, that we can place goods of all kinds on a single scale and assign to each its value relatively to the rest'.<sup>135</sup> Rashdall explained this commensurability by asserting that there are two different senses in which the goods of different kinds could be measured: (i) a certain amount of one particular good is a sufficient substitute for another; and (ii) in a choice between a higher and a lower good, we can compare them and pronounce that one possesses more value than the other – therefore 'for the purposes of choosing between them, they are commensurable'.<sup>136</sup> Rashdall emphasized the importance of

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<sup>129</sup> Driver.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Duncan-Jones, 309.

<sup>132</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 18, 79-81, Sect. 23, 88.

<sup>133</sup> G. E. Moore, *Ethics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), Ch.7. General philosophical theories about wholes and parts, together with Moore's specific theory about the compounding of values within wholes and parts, namely his Principle of organic unities, will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

<sup>134</sup> Rashdall.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 39.

being able to measure value, arguing that without value commensurability, a concept of morality has no meaning:

If the morality of an act depends upon the value of all its consequences taken together, we must be able to say which of the two sets of consequences possesses more value; and, if different kinds of consequences are to have any weight assigned to them, we must be able to attribute more or less weight to each of them. To deny this seems to amount to the denial that there is any one fixed or consistent meaning in the word 'value' or 'worth' or 'good', and to make impossible any system of Ethics which is based upon this conception.<sup>137</sup>

He further asserted that the fact we are able to make practical value judgements implies that we can measure goods against one another and decide which has more value. Rashdall argued that in evaluating goods we take into account quantity as well as quality and therefore this means value is commensurable.<sup>138</sup> As has been mentioned, the view that values are commensurable was not limited to the writings of British philosophers during this period as it was a view also held by Brentano, who presented a hierarchical table of values, separated into two lists of 'good' and 'bad'.<sup>139</sup>

Within axiology there exists a counter-argument to commensurability, namely that values are incommensurable, that they cannot be measured in any meaningful way. Whilst influential proponents of this viewpoint can be found in the early twentieth century,<sup>140</sup> it became a popularly-held view in the late 1980s and 1990s through the works of Griffin, Wiggins, Bernard Williams (1929-2003) and Joseph Raz (b.1939) among others. It should be noted that many writers do not use the term 'incommensurable' consistently, and within the realm of incommensurability theories there are many subtle and complex variations.<sup>141</sup> One significant variation is connected to the difference between cardinal numbers (1, 2, 3 etc.) and ordinal numbers (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc.); as some writers use the term incommensurable to mean that comparisons cannot be cardinal or precise, whilst

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 48-9.

<sup>139</sup> The table was formulated in Oskar Kraus, 'Die Grundlagen der Werttheorie', *Philosophische Jahrbucher*, II (1914), 1-48, cited in Chisholm, 59.

<sup>140</sup> Ross.

<sup>141</sup> Hsieh.

others use it in a broader sense to indicate a lack of ordinal comparison or ranking.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, some writers use the term interchangeably with ‘incomparable’,<sup>143</sup> whilst others insist that they are two distinct concepts.<sup>144</sup> This thesis will not focus on the subtle and complex differences between incommensurability theories, but will instead present an overview of the main arguments in the field.

The crux of incommensurability arguments is that values are like apples and oranges, or chalk and cheese – whilst they can both be good in different ways there is no common standard to allow them to be compared meaningfully.<sup>145</sup> Incommensurability proponents argue that because of the lack of a common standard or measure, it is impossible to say that one value is better than another, or that one value is equal in value to another. They often point to moral dilemmas to demonstrate the validity of their theories. They argue that complex moral situations involve two different aspects that both support incommensurability: (i) a sense of loss and (ii) intractability.<sup>146</sup> Williams and Wiggins, for example, both argued that in a complex moral situation the choice that is made by an agent is often accompanied by feelings of regret or loss.<sup>147</sup> They argued that if values were truly commensurable then there would be no reason to regret declining the apparently lesser value in favour of the higher value. US philosopher Stephen R. Grimm<sup>148</sup> illustrated this argument by using the analogy of money; he gave the hypothetical example of listening to Mozart being worth \$200 compared to going for a jog being worth \$100 and argued that if value could be expressed in monetary terms like this, there would be no difficulty in choosing between \$100 and \$200.<sup>149</sup> In contrast to simple financial transactions, the choices faced in a moral situation are not straightforward and the gain in one value does not always cancel out the loss in the other.

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<sup>142</sup> Hsieh; Stephen R. Grimm, ‘Value Incommensurability’, *American Catholic Philosophical Association Proceedings*, 78 (2005), 221-32, (222).

<sup>143</sup> Hsieh; see, for example, Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

<sup>144</sup> Hsieh. An example of the latter approach is Ruth Chang, who argues that values may not be commensurable but that they can be comparable in the sense of ‘on a par’. See *Incommensurability, Incomparability and Practical Reason*, ed. by Ruth Chang (Cambridge, US: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>145</sup> Anthony Marc Williams, 267.

<sup>146</sup> Hsieh; Grimm.

<sup>147</sup> See for example, Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); David Wiggins, *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>148</sup> Stephen R. Grimm gained his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, in 2005. Since 2008 he has taught in the Department of Philosophy at Fordham University, New York, becoming an Associate Professor in 2012.

<sup>149</sup> Grimm, 224.

The argument of intractability is also used to support a belief in incommensurability. This argument is made by value pluralists who believe that the plurality of good things cannot be reduced to a single value.<sup>150</sup> The intractability argument entails that if all values were in fact elements of a single comprehensive value then it seems reasonable to think that in a conflicting moral situation we would be able to objectively weigh the values against one another; however, according to Grimm, reality shows us otherwise as each side in the conflict usually regards their values as ‘sacred and inviolable’.<sup>151</sup> Grimm argued that ‘on this analysis moral conflicts are so deep-seated because in the absence of a common measure reason simply has no basis for preferring one value over another’.<sup>152</sup>

Contemporary axiology has witnessed a backlash against incommensurability theories, with several writers arguing that the arguments for incommensurability simply don’t suffice, and that value comparison, whilst hard, is possible.<sup>153</sup> This contemporary school of thought rests on the assumptions of value monism and the viability of decision theory, which holds that it is possible for an agent to rank her actions objectively based on the value of the expected outcome, and that it is rational to choose the action with the highest value.<sup>154</sup> The debate about the commensurability of value is far from being categorically resolved, but it seems that the current trend in axiology holds a compromise position, with the view that ‘the absence of exact mathematical measurement with reference to value does not doom one to fumbling subjectivity and relativity, in dealing with the amount of value possessed by an entity, and in comparing amounts of value’.<sup>155</sup>

#### 5.4. Concluding remarks

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<sup>150</sup> Hsieh; Kelly, 374.

<sup>151</sup> Grimm, 224-5.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>153</sup> For example, Grimm; Stephen Ellis, ‘The Main Argument for Value Incommensurability (and Why It Fails)’, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 46 (2008), 27-43; Kelly; Anthony Marc Williams.

<sup>154</sup> Decision Theory, also known as Game Theory, is an abstract theory of rational decision-making first formalized in the 1950s, in which the decision-maker has a range of objectives, each measurable in terms of their rank order. Case studies involving interaction with other decision-makers are called ‘games’. Investigation of such ‘games’ as Prisoners’ Dilemma, Coordination and Chicken inform much recent social, political and moral philosophy. Prof Jan Narveson, ‘Decision theory’ in Honderich, 180; Kelly, 374.

<sup>155</sup> A. H. Johnson, *Modes of Value* (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1978), 14.

This chapter has shown that several competing theories exist about the nature of value, what it is and how it can be defined. In particular, there are differing theories about intrinsic value, whether value is objective or subjective, and whether values can be compared or measured. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a trend in axiological thinking to favour theories of value that were simple and fundamentally all-encompassing. The twenty-first century, however, has witnessed a shift towards the view that there exists an enormous variety of plausible intrinsic values and multiple ways of combining them, resulting in a realm of values that ‘is rich in possibilities and in subjects for debate’.<sup>156</sup>

This chapter has introduced the reader to general concepts, language and terminology of axiology. The next chapter will take a closer examination of intrinsic value and value commensurability by detailing Moore’s specific theory about the compounding of values within wholes and parts, namely his Principle of organic unities.

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<sup>156</sup> Thomas Hurka, ‘Value Theory’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Ethical Theory*, ed. by David Copp and Thomas Hurka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 357-79, (359).

## Chapter 6. Moore's Principle of organic unities

### 6.1. Chapter summary

Chapter 6 represents step three in Theory Derivation methodology, namely the selection of a parent theory for use in derivation.<sup>1</sup> The chosen parent theory is the Principle of organic unities, defined by G. E. Moore as holding that 'the intrinsic value of a whole is neither identical with nor proportional to the sum of the values of its parts'.<sup>2</sup> The author was first attracted to the Principle because the similar language of 'organic', 'parts', and 'whole' suggested a possible correlation between Moore's work and the ideas she had found in the archival literature. The author believed that there might be a similarity in the conceptual ideas underlying the Principle of organic unities and was therefore interested in exploring it further.

This chapter outlines the Principle of organic unities in detail, including the context in which Moore wrote and the influences on his work. Moore's aims and objectives in devising the Principle are discussed as well as its implications for value theory. An analysis is made of how successful Moore was in his aims by exploring critiques of the Principle by other contemporary and later philosophers.

### 6.2. Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the reader to some of the key themes and ideas in the philosophical study of value. In 1903, English philosopher G. E. Moore (1873-1958) posited a theory of value, which holds that there exists objective, commensurable intrinsic value that can be known.<sup>3</sup> Underpinning his theory is an argument about the nature of wholes and parts and their relations that Moore called the 'Principle of organic unities'. Simply put, the Principle holds that 'the value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the values of its parts'.<sup>4</sup> By this Moore highlighted the unique nature and complexity of practical moral situations – a moral actor cannot survey the 'good' inherent in the various parts of a situation, assign a value to each of them, and then simply generate a sum in order to get an idea of its total value. Instead, a moral scenario is a complex assembly of

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.5.

<sup>2</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, rev. edn., ed. by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Ch. VI, Sect. 111, 233.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 5.

<sup>4</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 18, 79.



parts, and its total value can be created by the relations between those parts, rather than by their individual values added together.

Moore was not the first philosopher to consider the nature of parts and wholes in relation to value as Franz Brentano appeared to have anticipated the Principle in a lecture given in 1889 in which he spoke about ‘pleasure in the bad’, or *Schadenfreude*.<sup>5</sup> Arguably, this an example of an organic unity in the sense implied by Moore; namely a whole that is not a mere sum of its parts.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, despite the earlier example, Moore’s exposition of the asymmetrical relationship between a whole and its parts in regard of their respective values became the basis for much of contemporary axiological thinking about wholes and parts.<sup>7</sup>

The philosophical consideration of wholes and parts has a long antecedence; the notion of the absolute perfection of the whole being derived from the relative measure and proportion of its parts can be found in Plato’s *Parmenides*, and Aristotle discusses the relationship between a city and its citizens in terms of a whole-part relationship in his *Politics*.<sup>8</sup> The relation of parts and wholes also had a prominent role in the writings of Medieval scholastic philosophers including Peter Abelard (1079-1142) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and in the late nineteenth century a formal theory was outlined by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938).<sup>9</sup> However, it is important to note that axiological interpretations of wholes and parts are distinct from ‘part-whole theory’ *per se*, which developed in the field of mathematics and logic at the turn of the twentieth century, and which led to the discovery of ‘set

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<sup>5</sup> This is an argument put forward by R. M. Chisholm, who argued that although some of Brentano’s ideas, including his ‘principle of summation’ appear to be inconsistent with Moore’s principle of organic unity, Brentano later repudiated his position, and moreover, some of his other statements, particularly in unpublished writings, support a concept of organic unity. R. M. Chisholm, *Brentano and Intrinsic Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 70-7.

<sup>6</sup> Chisholm, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Examples include: Erik Carlson, ‘Organic Unities, Non-Trade-Off, and the Additivity of Intrinsic Value’, *The Journal of Ethics*, 5 (2001), 335-60; Jonathan Dancy, ‘Are There Organic Unities?’, *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 629-50; Julie Allen, ‘G. E. Moore and the Principle of Organic Unity’, *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 37 (2003), 329-39; Michael Clark, ‘Retribution and Organic Unities’, *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 3.3 (2006), 351-8.

<sup>8</sup> E. L. Hussey, ‘Parmenides’, in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 645-6; David Charles, ‘Aristotle’, in Honderich, 53-7.

<sup>9</sup> Achille Varzi, ‘Mereology’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2012 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/mereology/> [accessed 19 August 2013]; Andrew Arlig, ‘Medieval Mereology’, in Zalta (Fall 2011 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/mereology-medieval/> [accessed 19 August 2013].

theory’.<sup>10</sup> In the later twentieth century part-whole theory broadened into ‘mereology’ – a term first coined in 1927 by Polish logician Stanislaw Leśmiewski (1886-1939), and which is used in contemporary philosophy to refer to any theoretical study of parts, wholes and the relations between them.<sup>11</sup>

Neither the terms ‘part-whole theory’ nor ‘mereology’ are used by axiologists and it would be incorrect to use either in reference to the discussions of parts and wholes in relation to value. Similarly, it should not be assumed that the language or terminology used by axiologists, which may be common to part-whole theory and mereology, is being used in a manner consistent with either of those disciplines. Nonetheless, the author believes it might be useful to outline some main definitions of the terms ‘whole’ and ‘part’ as generally debated in part-whole theory. The term ‘whole’ can be defined in one of three main ways: (i) x is a whole, in the sense that x is complete or not lacking in anything; (ii) whole x is y, in the sense that all of the parts of x taken together equal y; and (iii) a whole is a thing that is composed of some things or divisible into some things.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, although a ‘part’ is, generally speaking, any item that composes a whole, there exist a myriad of different understandings of this term as exemplified by the following statements: ‘the handle is part of the mug’, ‘the left half is your part of the cake’, and ‘the conclusion is part of the argument’.<sup>13</sup> The author suggests that Moore defined the term ‘whole’ in the most general third sense detailed above – as a thing that is composed of, or divisible into, parts; and defined ‘part’ as any item that composes a whole. This will also be the sense meant by the author in employing these terms throughout the thesis, unless it is indicated otherwise that they are being used in a different sense by a particular writer.

### **6.3. Biography of G. E. Moore and *Principia Ethica***

G. E. Moore was an eminent British moral philosopher during the early part of the twentieth century. He grew up in the south-east London suburb of South Norwood in a large middle-class family of ten; his father having been a general

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<sup>10</sup> Varzi. Set theory is a strict mathematical formula which distinguishes between membership of a given set and being a subset of the set, where all members of the subset are also members of the set.

<sup>11</sup> Varzi; E. J. Lowe, ‘Mereology’, in Honderich, 554.

<sup>12</sup> Arlig. See also Varzi.

<sup>13</sup> Varzi.

medical practitioner in Hastings prior to retirement in London.<sup>14</sup> Moore attended Dulwich College as a day-pupil, showing ‘some aptitude for Greek and Latin, and no particular preference for anything else’.<sup>15</sup> In 1892 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where, in Moore’s own words, ‘for the first time, I did form intimate friendships with extremely clever people’.<sup>16</sup> He won a Fellowship in 1898 for his dissertation on Immanuel Kant and the metaphysics of ethics. In that same year, Moore also delivered a series of lectures on the elements of ethics at the short-lived London School of Ethics and Social Philosophy, in the Passmore Edwards Settlement building at 9 Tavistock Place.<sup>17</sup> Both the dissertation and the lectures laid the groundwork for Moore’s articulation of his theory of value, which was published in 1903 under the title *Principia Ethica*.<sup>18</sup> In this, perhaps the best known of his works, Moore argued against previous ethical theories (including Utilitarianism), which he believed were guilty of what he called the ‘naturalistic fallacy’.<sup>19</sup> Moore’s own theory aimed to avoid this fallacy and included a discussion of the nature of intrinsic value, what things possessed this value and what sort of actions we ought to perform. It should be noted that in *Principia Ethica* when Moore used the term ‘good’ or ‘goodness’ he always did so in the intrinsic sense, also using other terms including ‘good in itself’, ‘good as end’, ‘intrinsic good’ and ‘intrinsic value’ interchangeably. When Moore talked of non-intrinsic good, he specified this as ‘good as means’, ‘extrinsic good’ or ‘value as means’.<sup>20</sup>

The first chapter of *Principia Ethica* outlined what Moore believed the philosophy of ethics should concern itself with – namely the study of goodness and

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<sup>14</sup> G. E. Moore, ‘Autobiography’, in *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp and G. E. Moore (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 3-39; Thomas Baldwin, ‘Introduction by Editor’, in *Principia Ethica*, xi; Thomas Baldwin and Consuelo Preti, ‘Introduction by Editors’, in *G. E. Moore, Early Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xlv.

<sup>15</sup> Moore, ‘Autobiography’, 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Moore, ‘Autobiography’, 23; Tom Regan, ‘Introduction by Editor’, in G. E. Moore, *The Elements of Ethics*, ed. by Tom Regan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), xiii-xxiv.

<sup>18</sup> Baldwin, ‘Introduction’, in *Principia Ethica*, xiii; Baldwin and Preti, xlv.

<sup>19</sup> The Naturalistic Fallacy consists of attempting to define ‘good’ by appealing to a definition which consists of natural properties such as ‘desired’ or ‘pleasant’. Moore advanced an argument that ‘good’ is an undefinable non-natural property which can still be objective through intuitive knowledge. See also Chapter 5, section 5.2.2.

<sup>20</sup> Austin Duncan-Jones, ‘Intrinsic Value: Some Comments on the Work of G. E. Moore’ (originally published in *Philosophy*, 33, (1958), in *G. E. Moore. Essays in Retrospect*, ed. by Alice Ambrose and Morris Lazerowitz (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970), 304-342; Shukla Sarkar, *Epistemology and Ethics of G. E. Moore. A Critical Evaluation* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co., 1981), 159.

how it should be defined. The chapter introduced a discussion of the naturalist fallacy, the differences between good ‘as an end’ and good ‘as a means’, and the idea that there exist complex states of affairs wherein the value of the whole is not necessarily equivalent to the sum of the values of its parts, which Moore termed his ‘Principle of organic unities’. Chapters two and three were concerned with disproving naturalistic theories of ethics, including Herbert Spencer’s ‘Evolutionist Ethics’, and Hedonism and Utilitarianism, as exemplified in the works of John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick. Chapter four continued the discussion of the metaphysics of value, critiquing Immanuel Kant (1724-1804); here Moore also introduced his ‘method of isolation’ as the process by which intrinsic value can be identified. The emphasis of the final two chapters of *Principia Ethica* shifted to a substantive ethical theory, giving in chapter five, an account of moral conduct; and in chapter six, examples of things that have intrinsic value. In the final chapter, Moore discussed aesthetic pleasure and personal affection (both of which he regarded as being of great intrinsic value). Moore also reiterated his Principle of organic unities, going into more detail about the nature of what he called ‘mixed goods’ – wholes that contain both good and evil.<sup>21</sup>

The rhetoric of Moore’s book suggested that it was a fresh start in ethical thinking and this was a view held by many of his contemporaries, most notably by fellow members of the Bloomsbury Group including Maynard Keynes, Lytton Strachey, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf. Strachey wrote enthusiastically to Moore:

I have read your book, and want to say how much I am excited and impressed. [...] I think your book has not only wrecked and shattered all writers on Ethics from Aristotle and Christ to Herbert Spencer and Mr Bradley, it has not only laid the true foundations of Ethics, it has not only left all modern philosophy bafouée – these seem to me small achievements compared to the establishment of that Method which shines like a sword between the lines. It is the scientific method deliberately applied, for the first time, to Reasoning [...] I date from Oct. 1903 the beginning of the Age of Reason.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Moore, ‘Table of Contents to the First Edition’, *Principia Ethica*, 39-52.

<sup>22</sup> Lytton Strachey to G. E. Moore, 11 October 1903, CUL, The papers of George Edward Moore (1873-1958), Add. MSS 8330, 8S/44/1. See also Paul Levy, *Moore. G. E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Moore's defence of art, beauty and friendship, in particular, appealed to the aesthetic ideals of his friends.<sup>23</sup> Fellow philosophers were impressed by his clarity. Cambridge contemporary Bertrand Russell praised *Principia Ethica* for being 'a triumph of lucidity' and 'a model of exposition'.<sup>24</sup>

Moore is cited in many reference works as having a huge, even revolutionary, influence on twentieth century ethical philosophy;<sup>25</sup> however, as has been argued by Jennifer Welchman and Thomas Hurka, many of the ideas in Moore's book were not entirely new, but rather built upon existing ethical theories by Henry Sidgwick, Franz Brentano and J. M. E. McTaggart (1866-1925).<sup>26</sup> Moore studied under both Sidgwick and McTaggart at Cambridge and cited both men as great influences on his work in his 'Autobiography'.<sup>27</sup> Although perhaps not quite a revolutionary, Moore was nonetheless an important figure in the development of modern value theory and was innovative in his style of writing and his method of questioning commonly-held beliefs and ideas.<sup>28</sup> He was also an honest reviewer of his own work, often pointing out errors and correcting earlier statements in later publications. For example, Moore believed his second major publication, *Ethics*, in 1912, to be 'much clearer and far less full of confusions and invalid arguments' compared to *Principia Ethica*.<sup>29</sup> The preface to the second edition of *Principia Ethica* noted:

I now see that the book, as it stands, is full of mistakes and confusions [...] My excuse for re-printing it at all is that the propositions, which, so far as I can gather, it chiefly emphasises and which constitute the chief part of what most readers carry away from it, are propositions which I still think to be true, in the main, and to be well worth emphasising; although, in most cases, these propositions are not expressed with sufficient precision nor distinguished sufficiently clearly from others which I now hold to be false or comparatively doubtful.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Baldwin, 'Introduction', in Moore, *Principia Ethica*, xxxii-xxxvi.

<sup>24</sup> Bertrand Russell to G. E. Moore, 10 October 1903, CUL, Add. MSS 8330, 8R/33/24.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Honderich.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (1874), Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889, first English translation 1902), J. M. E. McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (1901). Jennifer Welchman, 'G. E. Moore and the Revolution in Ethics: A Reappraisal', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 6.3 (1989), 317-329; Thomas Hurka, 'Moore in the Middle', *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 599-628. See also Chapter 5.

<sup>27</sup> Moore, 'Autobiography', 16-18.

<sup>28</sup> Welchman; Hurka, 'Moore in the Middle'; Christopher Heath Wellman, 'Introduction to Centenary Symposium on G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*', *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 465-7

<sup>29</sup> Moore, 'Autobiography', 26.

<sup>30</sup> G. E. Moore, 'Preface to the Second Edition', *Principia Ethica*, CUL, Add. MSS 8875, 15/1/1. The Preface was first published in 1993 in G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, rev. edn., ed. by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, reprinted 2000).

Moore's simple and direct style made his work immediately accessible, yet he was to be overshadowed for much of the later twentieth century by more flamboyant contemporaries like Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, as has been previously shown in Chapter 5, Moore's central theory – that moral truths are self-evident and intuitive – fell out of favour with what was to become the predominant philosophical discourse, logical positivism. Proponents of logical positivism, including A. J. Ayer and Charles Stevenson, regarded value judgements as mere expressions of feelings and emotions.<sup>32</sup> For much of the later twentieth century if Moore's theories were mentioned by other philosophers, they were primarily to be contradicted, with the majority rejecting his views outright.<sup>33</sup> However, over fifty years after Moore's death, a revisionist consensus has begun to emerge as twenty-first century philosophers have returned to Moore's texts to re-examine the relevance of his theories for contemporary ethics and epistemology.<sup>34</sup>

Moore left Cambridge in 1904 having failed to obtain a Research Fellowship. A substantial family inheritance meant that he did not need paid employment and could instead concentrate on his philosophy. In 1911, Moore returned to Cambridge University as a lecturer in Moral Science, succeeding James Ward as Professor of Philosophy in 1925. He remained at Cambridge until forced to retire aged sixty-five in 1939. Moore and his wife<sup>35</sup> travelled to the US where he held several visiting professorships in the early 1940s. In addition to his successful academic career, Moore was editor of *Mind*, the pre-eminent British philosophy journal, from 1921 to 1947.<sup>36</sup> Philosophy student Constantine Cavarnos met with Moore on three occasions in the late 1940s, when Moore was in poor health, but nonetheless

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<sup>31</sup> Consuelo Preti, 'Book Review of *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, ed. by Susanna Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (Oxford University Press, 2007)', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 59.236 (2009), 563-6.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Norman, 'Moral philosophy, history of', in Honderich, 590; *Ethics and the Search for Values*, ed. by Luis E. Navia and Eugene Kelly (New York: Prometheus Books, 1980); Brian Hutchinson, *G. E. Moore's Ethical Theory. Resistance and Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). See also Chapter 5, section 5.2.2.

<sup>33</sup> Welchman, 318; *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, ed. by Susanna Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> For example, Donald H. Regan, 'How to Be a Moorean', *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 651-77; Nick Zangwill, 'Moore, Morality, Supervenience, Essence, Epistemology', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 42.2 (2005), 125-30; Nuccetelli and Seay, 3.

<sup>35</sup> In 1916 Moore married one of his students, Dorothy Ely.

<sup>36</sup> Moore, 'Autobiography'; Bibliography written by C. D. Broad, from *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 Oct 1958, in G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Papers* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1959).

engaged in keen debate with the young student. Cavarnos wrote later that Moore was:

very humane, having a warmth that is rare among philosophers. When the conversation is non-philosophical, he is relaxed and genial. But he becomes transformed when the discussion is philosophical. He becomes tense, his features, particularly his extraordinarily bright and penetrating eyes, assume the expression of a nervous critic.<sup>37</sup>

During his lifetime Moore published only two monographs, but over twenty articles and papers.<sup>38</sup> Posthumously, compilations of published and previously unpublished articles, notes and lectures appeared during the course of the later twentieth century.

#### 6.4. Outline of the Principle

Before detailing the Principle of organic unities, it is first necessary to make clear the sense in which Moore understood the terms ‘whole’ and ‘part’. Moore believed that a complex object can be defined by its parts:

which we can substitute for it in our minds when we are thinking of it. We might think just as clearly and correctly about a horse, if we thought of all its parts and their arrangement instead of thinking of the whole.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, Moore held that ‘good’ is indefinable in this sense because ‘there is nothing whatsoever which we could so substitute for good’.<sup>40</sup> Any attempt to define good by reference to anything else simply ends up in a circular argument. Moore believed that ‘good’ was incapable of any definition because he understood the term ‘definition’ to mean a statement of the parts that compose a whole. In this sense, therefore, ‘good’ has no definition because ‘it is simple and has no parts’.<sup>41</sup> Despite his contention that ‘good’ is indefinable, Moore nonetheless held that ‘*the good*’ – that which is good – is definable.<sup>42</sup> Moore believed that the error of many other ethical philosophers had been the confusion of these two different concepts. In his view, ethics aims to discover what are the properties of things that are good, but too

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<sup>37</sup> Constantine Cavarnos, *A Dialogue on G. E. Moore's Ethical Philosophy* (Belmont, US: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1979), 44.

<sup>38</sup> Bibliography of the Writings of G. E. Moore in Schilpp, 689-91.

<sup>39</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 8, 60.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. 10, 61.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. 9, 60. Emphasis in original.

often when identifying those properties, philosophers thought they were defining good itself. This, Moore said, is the basis of the naturalistic fallacy.<sup>43</sup>

In chapter one, 'The Subject-Matter of Ethics', of *Principia Ethica*, Moore explained that the investigation of intrinsic value is complicated by the fact that '*the value of a whole must not be assumed to be the same as the sum of the values of its parts*'.<sup>44</sup> Moore continued to detail how a given whole (which may be either intrinsically good, intrinsically bad or indifferent) can be made up of several parts, which independently may be intrinsically good, intrinsically bad, or indifferent respectively. Whilst it might be assumed that the value of the whole must equal the sum of its parts, Moore denied this, instead asserting the apparent paradox that '*the value of such a whole bears no regular proportion to the sum of the values of its parts*'.<sup>45</sup> Moore illustrated his point by using the example of 'consciousness of a beautiful thing'. Moore argued that whilst the whole is of great intrinsic value, neither of its individual parts, namely, consciousness, and a beautiful object, are of great intrinsic value in themselves.<sup>46</sup> Moore asserted that:

There are, then, wholes which possess the property that their value is different from the sum of the values of their parts; and the relations which subsist between such parts and the whole of which they form a part have not hitherto been distinctly recognised or received a separate name.<sup>47</sup>

Moore proposed to call these relations 'organic' and to call the complex state of affairs in which they exist an 'organic whole'. But he cautioned that he was using the terms in a very specific sense. Moore stated that he was not using the term 'organic' to imply 'any causal relation between parts of the whole or that the parts are inconceivable except as parts of that whole'.<sup>48</sup> Moore was especially keen to avoid any confusion with usage of the term 'organic' influenced by Georg Hegel (1770-1831), which held that the whole was itself a part of the relation, that 'the whole is

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<sup>43</sup> It was this aspect of Moore's philosophy – his sense of definition and the resulting naturalistic fallacy - which caused most criticism and debate by contemporary reviewers of his work. See reviews by Bernard Bosanquet, *Mind*, 13.1 (1904), 254-61 and J. S. MacKenzie, *International Journal of Ethics*, 14.3 (1904), 377-82.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 18, 79. Italics in original.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. 18, 79-80.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. 19, 80.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. (D)22, 85.



always a part of its part'.<sup>49</sup> Moore wrote at greater length on the issue in an article in *Mind* also published in 1903, in which he emphatically dismissed Hegel's notion that 'two distinct things both are and are not distinct'.<sup>50</sup> Moore concluded rather archly:

In this, as in other matters, Hegel's main service to philosophy has consisted in giving a name to and erecting into a principle, a type of fallacy to which experience had shown philosophers, along with the rest of mankind, to be addicted. No wonder he has followers and admirers.<sup>51</sup>

In the series of lectures originally delivered at the London School of Ethics and Social Philosophy in 1898, Moore discussed Kant's earlier use of the term 'organism' or 'organic whole', (Moore uses both terms interchangeably).<sup>52</sup> Moore argued that the sense employed by Kant rested upon 'the confusion of "end" as good and "end" as effects, mediated by that third meaning of "end" as purpose'; adding that 'later writers have not done anything to clear up the confusion'.<sup>53</sup> Moore made it clear that his use of 'organic whole' was not synonymous with a scientific sense of the term, having no meaning in application to the human or social organism. Instead, Moore specified that his definition of an organic whole applied only 'to what is good – a work of art for instance'.<sup>54</sup> In *Principia Ethica*, Moore emphasized again that he used the term organic whole solely to denote the fact that 'a whole has an intrinsic value different in amount from the sum of the values of its parts'.<sup>55</sup>

The Principle of organic unities can be expressed thus:

(OU1) A whole is an organic whole if and only if it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Ch. I, Sect. (D)22, 85. See also Bernard Bosanquet, 'Hegel's Theory of the Political Organism', *Mind*, 7.25 (1898), 1-14, in which he discussed Hegel's use of the term 'organic', meaning 'a whole in itself'.

<sup>50</sup> G. E. Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1922), 1-30, (15), originally published in *Mind*, 12 (1903).

<sup>51</sup> Moore, 'The Refutation of Idealism', 16.

<sup>52</sup> G. E. Moore, 'Lecture X – General Conclusions', in *The Elements of Ethics*, ed. by Tom Regan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 178-94.

<sup>53</sup> Moore, 'Lecture X – General Conclusions', 186-7.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>55</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 22, 87.

<sup>56</sup> This is a style of expressing philosophical principles as a declarative sentence in formal language. The idea is that 'since a declarative sentence can represent the world as being a certain way, the meaning of a sentence can be given by stating the conditions the world has to meet for things to be as the sentence says they are', Barry C. Smith, 'Formal semantics', in Honderich, 287-8, (287). The abbreviation indicates the particular principle, in this case OU standing for organic unities, and the

However, through his denial of a Hegelian sense of ‘organic’, which held that the relation between the parts and the whole is such that neither would be what they were but for the existence of the other, Moore introduced a further element to his Principle. Moore denied that a part can have a different value outside the whole from that which it has inside the whole;<sup>57</sup> in other words, he insisted that the value of a part remains constant regardless of the particular complex state of affairs it might be part of. The implications of this constancy, or universality, will be discussed later in the chapter, particularly with regard to the work of twenty-first century philosophers Jonathan Dancy and Thomas Hurka. The Principle must therefore be reformulated to include this additional condition:

(OU2) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of each part is the same as the value it would have apart from the whole.

Moore believed that the greatest errors in ethics had been made because of a failure to recognize both aspects of the Principle of organic unities.<sup>58</sup>

In the final chapter of *Principia Ethica*, Moore returned to the Principle of organic unities. The chapter discussed the concept of ‘The Ideal’ – by which Moore primarily meant something that is of a great good in itself.<sup>59</sup> Earlier, in chapter four of *Principia Ethica*, Moore had proposed a specific method – the method of isolation – as the means by which one might determine what things have intrinsic value.<sup>60</sup> The method is reaffirmed in chapter six, where Moore explained that by considering things as ‘if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good’.<sup>61</sup> Moore asserted that this method would enable an observer not only to discover what things have intrinsic value but also to what

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number indicates the first formulation of the principle. This allows for subsequent reformulation as the philosophical theory develops.

<sup>57</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 22, 87.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 110, 233. Moore admitted that there were two other senses of ‘The Ideal’ – firstly, the best state of things conceivable or Absolute Good; and secondly, the best possible state of things in this world or a utopia. Moore believed that finding the answer to the third sense of the Ideal – what was of great good in itself - would provide the answers for identifying the Ideal in the other two senses.

<sup>60</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. IV, Sect. 55, 144-5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 112, 236. Italics in original.

degree, as absolute isolation allowed consideration of ‘the comparative value attached to the isolated existence of each [intrinsic good]’.<sup>62</sup> Moore believed that this method would guard against two errors; the first being that of mistaking ‘good as a means’ for ‘good as an end’ by ‘supposing that what seems necessary here and now for the existence of good is therefore good in itself’.<sup>63</sup> The second error is to neglect the Principle of organic unities by ‘supposing that if one part of a whole has no intrinsic value, the value of the whole must reside in the other parts’.<sup>64</sup> Moore argued that it is only by considering the part in isolation and then comparing it with the whole, of which it forms a part, that the true extent of intrinsic value of the part existing by itself becomes clear. And of course, according to Moore’s Principle of organic unities, this value of the part by itself may be less (or more) than the value of the whole.<sup>65</sup>

Moore again gave an example to illustrate his theory by comparing the value of pleasure existing by itself with the value of certain enjoyments that contain the same amount of pleasure. Moore commented that in some cases the enjoyment could be better than the pleasure, whilst in others it might be worse. Moore explained that this was because:

the ‘enjoyment’ does *not* owe its value *solely* to the pleasure it contains, although it might easily have appeared to do so, when we only considered the other constituents of the enjoyment, and seemed to see that, without the pleasure, they would have had no value. It is now apparent, on the contrary, that the whole ‘enjoyment’ owes its value quite equally to the presence of the other constituents, *even though* it may be true that the pleasure is the only constituent having any value by itself.<sup>66</sup>

In *Principia Ethica* Moore asserted that things having great intrinsic value included aesthetic appreciation and personal affection. He defended this assertion by appealing to the Principle of organic unities. Moore believed that the organic whole which is aesthetic appreciation consists of two parts – the consciousness of beauty,

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. Other philosophers have questioned whether Moore’s method of isolation is truly viable. For the purposes of this thesis, it is merely shown to provide support for the principle of organic unities as the method by which organic unity is itself established.

<sup>66</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. VI, Sect. 112, 237. Italics in original.

together with the emotion appropriate to it.<sup>67</sup> If the emotion is judged in isolation, one might consider that the emotion by itself has little, if any, intrinsic value (or indeed might be intrinsically bad if directed towards a different object). So whilst the presence of emotion is necessary for the intrinsic value of a state of aesthetic appreciation, the emotion, in itself, may have little or no value; in other words, the emotion gives to the whole of which it forms a part a value far greater than that which it itself possesses.<sup>68</sup>

Moore also used the Principle to explain what he called ‘mixed evils’ (‘those evil wholes which nevertheless contain, as essential elements, something positively good’); and ‘mixed goods’ (‘those wholes, which, though intrinsically good *as wholes*, nevertheless contain, as essential elements, something positively evil’).<sup>69</sup> Moore divided ‘mixed evils’ into three classes: (i) those which include the enjoyment of or admiration for things which are themselves evil, i.e., cruelty; (ii) those which include a cognition of what is good but are accompanied by an inappropriate emotion, i.e., a love of what is evil or a hatred of what is good; and (iii) the class of pains. Moore held this final class to be an exception to the rule that applies to all other great evils and great goods – namely, ‘that they are all organic unities to which *both* a cognition of an object *and* an emotion directed towards that object are essential’.<sup>70</sup> Moore argued that pain differs from pleasure in that the mere consciousness of pain, by itself, may be regarded as a great evil. In this way the relation of pain to intrinsic evil is not analogous to that of pleasure to intrinsic good.<sup>71</sup>

In chapter six of *Principia Ethica*, Moore introduced the notions of value ‘*as a whole*’ and value ‘*on the whole*’.<sup>72</sup> He explained the differences between them with reference to the mixed evil whole of retributive punishment (in which an individual commits a crime and is then punished for it). The whole involves two ostensibly bad things – the original crime, and the punishment (causing pain), and is therefore intrinsically bad. However, many might argue that this scenario is better than one in which the criminal had not been punished. So although it comprises two bad things,

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 114, 238.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 114-5, 239.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 124, 256. Italics in original.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 127, 261. Italics in original.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 127-8, 261-2. Italics in original.

overall the whole might comprise more good than either one of those bad things by themselves. The whole is not merely a sum of the parts, and the parts themselves are not valued in proportion to the whole. Whilst the scenario ‘as a whole’ may be evil (because it comprises two bad parts), ‘on the whole’ it might be better (despite comprising two bad parts) than a scenario that only comprised one bad part – the crime.<sup>73</sup> Moore formally defined value *on the whole* as that which is ‘equivalent to the sum of the value which [the whole] possesses *as a whole, together with* the intrinsic values which may belong to any of its parts’.<sup>74</sup> Moore thus believed that it was possible for organic wholes that contained some bad parts to be nonetheless intrinsically good ‘on the whole’, and cited as examples: compassion, courage and virtue, which each involve the cognition of something which is intrinsically evil.<sup>75</sup>

Moore concluded the final chapter of *Principia Ethica* by justifying the lack of neat symmetry in his theory of intrinsic value, commenting that ‘to search for ‘unity’ and ‘system’, at the expense of truth, is not, I take it, the proper business of philosophy, however universally it may have been the practice of philosophers’.<sup>76</sup> He held that there were ‘many and various things’ that were intrinsically good or intrinsically bad and that judging the value of such things was a complicated matter. Moore ended the chapter by criticizing existing value theory and the approach taken by other ethical philosophers:

the practice of asking what ought to be here and now without distinguishing whether as a means or end [...] the search for one single *criterion* of right or wrong, without the recognition that in order to discover a criterion we must first know what things *are* right or wrong; and the neglect of the principle of ‘organic unities’ – these sources of error have hitherto been almost universally prevalent in Ethics.<sup>77</sup>

Moore believed that his method eliminated such errors and enabled one to truly judge what is of intrinsic value.

## 6.5. Critiques of the Principle

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 128-130, 262-5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 129, 263. Italics in original.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 131, 265; Sect. 132, 267.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 134, 270.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Ch. VI, Sect. 134, 271.

Moore's work made an impact at the time of its publication and was reviewed in several prominent philosophical journals. The following section will explore some of the critiques of his work, focusing on the Principle of organic unities, both contemporary and subsequent to its first publication.

### 6.5.1. By Moore himself

As previously discussed, Moore often revised his own theories. It has already been noted that Moore refined his ideas about whether beauty has intrinsic value.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Moore did not make any distinction in *Principia Ethica* between 'intrinsic good' and 'ultimate good', or 'good for its own sake'. In his later publication, *Ethics*, he suggested that good things can be divided into two classes, 'intrinsic goods' and 'ultimate goods', both of which 'apply to things whose existence would be good, even if they existed quite alone'.<sup>79</sup> But he included a revision to his theory to hold that whereas a whole that is intrinsically good may have parts that are not intrinsically good, a whole that is ultimately good contains no such parts.<sup>80</sup>

Moore made no such alterations or amendments to his Principle of organic unities which is simply restated in *Ethics*.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, in *Ethics*, he expounded a theory of moral action which is ultimately reliant upon the Principle:

It seems to me quite self-evident that it must always be our duty to do what will produce the best effects *upon the whole*, no matter how bad the effects upon ourselves may be and no matter how much good we ourselves may lose by it.<sup>82</sup>

In 'A Reply to My Critics', written in 1942, Moore again affirmed his commitment to the Principle of organic unities. In a response to a critique of 'the alleged independence of goodness', Moore re-iterated the difference between value 'on the whole' and value 'as a whole' and emphasized the constancy of the intrinsic values of the parts of a whole, stating that 'it is from this whole combination of facts, which we admire and think good; and *this whole combination* is something which

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<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.

<sup>79</sup> G. E. Moore, *Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 42.

<sup>80</sup> Moore, *Ethics*, Ch. 2, cited in Alan R White, *G. E. Moore. A Critical Exposition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 121; and in William H. Shaw, *Moore on Right and Wrong. The Normative Ethics of G. E. Moore* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 17.

<sup>81</sup> Moore, *Ethics*, 7.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

would have been equally good under *whatever* circumstances it occurred'.<sup>83</sup> The Principle of organic unities, central to Moore's theory of value, remained similarly constant in his subsequent work.

### 6.5.2. By Moore's contemporaries

In 1989, Jennifer Welchman conducted a survey of responses to *Principia Ethica* published during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>84</sup> Welchman noted that the publication was reviewed in most of the professional philosophical periodicals of the day, including *Mind*, *International Journal of Ethics*, and *Philosophical Review*; and was additionally discussed or noted in several articles between 1903 and 1906.<sup>85</sup> The reviews were decidedly mixed. In 1904, one reviewer, Evander McGilvary, commented that many of the points made by Moore 'seem to be extremely questionable and the arguments employed to support them are often more ingenious and subtle than convincing',<sup>86</sup> whilst J. S. MacKenzie agreed that 'Mr. Moore's book is not free from blots'.<sup>87</sup> In the same year, another reviewer, Bernard Bosanquet, concluded that whilst 'there is undoubtedly something attractive and stimulating in the novelty of Mr. Moore's attack; there is also something genuinely high-minded in his devotion to his subject, in the tendency of his ethical estimates, and in his carelessness of orthodoxy'.<sup>88</sup>

Unfortunately for the purposes of this thesis, Moore's contemporary reviewers did not concentrate their critiques on his Principle of organic unities. Bosanquet's only specific mention of the Principle was to comment that although he agreed that 'the doctrine of organic membership is always the better for being overhauled [...] Mr. Moore's criticisms do not seem to me to make any impression on it, resting as they do on the non-modifiability of subjects by relations'.<sup>89</sup>

The reviews of *Principia Ethica* were not wholly negative, however. In addition to praising Moore's lucid style and clear exposition, MacKenzie also wrote

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<sup>83</sup> Moore, 'A Reply to My Critics', in Schilpp, 620.

<sup>84</sup> Welchman, 317.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>86</sup> Evander Bradley McGilvary, 'Review of *Principia Ethica* by G. E. Moore', *The Philosophical Review*, 13.3 (1904), 351-8, (351).

<sup>87</sup> J. S. MacKenzie, 'Review of *Principia Ethica* by G. E. Moore', *International Journal of Ethics*, 14.3 (1904), 377-82, (382).

<sup>88</sup> B. Bosanquet, 'Review of *Principia Ethica* by G. E. Moore', *Mind*, 13.1 (1904), 254-61, (261).

<sup>89</sup> Bosanquet, 261.

that Moore's conception of organic unity was treated 'in a striking and original way' and demonstrated one of the strengths of his argument, by successfully moving beyond the theory of Sidgwick.<sup>90</sup>

In 1942, Paul Arthur Schilpp edited a compilation of expository and critical articles on Moore written by leading exponents and opponents of the philosopher's thoughts.<sup>91</sup> The volume included a reply to the commentators by Moore, an autobiography and a bibliography of Moore's works. One of the articles was written by Herbert James Paton (1887-1969), an Oxford scholar and Professor of Logic at Glasgow University.<sup>92</sup> In his article Paton questioned whether Moore's Principle of organic unities 'is right in what it denies' and argued that it is not self-evident and involves several difficulties.<sup>93</sup> Contrary to what Moore had argued about the sense in which he was using the term 'organic', Paton agreed with the Hegelian notion that the goodness of a whole cannot be separated from the goodness of the parts, stating that: 'a whole is a whole of parts and cannot be separated from the parts'.<sup>94</sup> As a result, Paton suggested that the goodness of a thing might depend partly 'on the relation of the whole to its parts, or at least on the relation of its parts of one another'.<sup>95</sup> Paton further suggested that it is the circumstances of a particular whole, which can determine its value and, implicitly, allow for the altering of the values of the parts depending on the particular circumstances. Moore gave a forthright response to Paton's criticisms, even arguing that the examples used by Paton showed the very opposite of what Paton intended.<sup>96</sup>

### 6.5.3. By later philosophers

As has been previously shown in the preceding chapter, there is little consensus on most philosophical topics or areas of debate, and Moore's Principle of organic unities is no exception. Recent scholarship on Moore's value theory has

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<sup>90</sup> MacKenzie, 379.

<sup>91</sup> *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp and G. E. Moore (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968). First edn. published Evanston, US: Northwestern University, 1942.

<sup>92</sup> H. J. Paton, 'The Alleged Independence of Goodness', in Schilpp, 113-134. Paton was an expert on Kant. He published what became the definitive English translation of Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* in 1947. W. H. Walsh, 'Obituary: H. J. Paton, 1887-1969', *Kant-Studien*, 61.1-4 (1970), 427-32.

<sup>93</sup> Paton, 125.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>96</sup> Moore, 'A Reply to My Critics', in Schilpp, 618.



included a focus on some aspects of Moore that were previously ignored, including his Principle of organic unities.<sup>97</sup> Only a sample of the many different arguments for and against Moore can be included here in the interests of brevity, and the author has chosen those critiques that seem to best exemplify the range of opinion.

Writing in 1990, philosopher Thomas Baldwin (b. 1947)<sup>98</sup> feared that the Principle of organic unities ‘engenders a form of moral scepticism’.<sup>99</sup> Baldwin argued that all actions are part of the total history of the universe, and as such, may have value as parts of this history regardless of the intrinsic or instrumental value in themselves. Baldwin suggested that this causes a problem because we cannot know the value as a part of the history of every possible universe of each course of action, and we are therefore unable to know which course of action is the best overall.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, he contended that by this same argument, that it might be the case that a particular course of action, which is very evil, is ‘nonetheless an essential constituent of the best possible universe and therefore the best course of action, all things considered’.<sup>101</sup> The problem is that we can never know for sure. Baldwin believed that the Principle of organic unities could not therefore be sustained without a commitment to Absolute Idealism.<sup>102</sup> Baldwin suggested that ‘the intrinsic value of a whole as a whole seems to be a *deus ex machina* which is liable to interfere with the evaluation of situations in a random fashion’.<sup>103</sup> Baldwin argued that the Principle’s defence of retributive punishment reinforces this conclusion by insisting that something which is intrinsically evil – the infliction of pain – can produce an outcome that is intrinsically better than an outcome without it. Baldwin admitted that the Principle worked better in certain situations than others, for example in the

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<sup>97</sup> Nuccetelli and Seay, 20.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas Baldwin is professor of philosophy at the University of York. He studied at Cambridge and has taught in Uganda. Baldwin has been editor of *Mind* since 2005 and is currently the deputy chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. Baldwin edited a new edition of Moore’s *Principia Ethica* in 1993, based on his extensive research of Moore’s unpublished papers and correspondence. [www.york.ac.uk](http://www.york.ac.uk) [accessed 20 August 2013].

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Baldwin, *G. E. Moore. The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1990), 127.

<sup>100</sup> Baldwin, *G. E. Moore. The Arguments of the Philosophers*, 127.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>102</sup> Idealism holds that what is real is confined to the contents of our minds. Absolute Idealism construes reality in terms of some interpersonal consciousness. In this theory, the distinction between one self and another tends to be blurred, leading to a form of monism where there is only one thing, distinctions within which are simply appearance. D. W. Hamlyn, ‘Idealism’, in Honderich, 386-388.

<sup>103</sup> Baldwin, *G. E. Moore. The Arguments of the Philosophers*, 127. Italics in original.

consideration of aesthetic value; but nonetheless concluded that it was still a bad fit even to this type of complex whole.<sup>104</sup>

In the 2000s Jonathan Dancy<sup>105</sup> wrote several articles in which he critiqued Moore's Principle of organic unities.<sup>106</sup> In these, Dancy argued that there are two ways of understanding organic unities: Moore's approach, which he termed 'intrinsicism' and the approach favoured by Dancy, termed 'variabilism'.<sup>107</sup> According to Dancy, 'intrinsicism' holds that individual parts retain their intrinsic value as they move from whole to whole; they do not increase or decrease in value when they enter a whole, yet their presence can increase or decrease the intrinsic value of the whole. Dancy illustrated this with an example of a recipe which is much improved by the addition of a pinch of salt, whereby the salt adds more value to the recipe than it itself has.<sup>108</sup> Dancy held that such consistency of value is unreasonable. He argued that the 'most natural way of understanding intrinsic value is as that part of the value of an object which is grounded in the intrinsic properties of that object'.<sup>109</sup> Since the intrinsic properties include an object's shape and size, it follows that just as these properties are, in Dancy's view, capable of change, so too is intrinsic value.<sup>110</sup> As a counter proposal to Moore's intrinsicism, Dancy thus advanced a theory of variabilism which holds that parts can change in value when they move from whole to whole.<sup>111</sup> To support this theory, Dancy argued that Moore's division of value into two sorts – intrinsic and instrumental – is oversimplified. In addition to suggesting that there is a difference between 'instrumental' and 'extrinsic' value, with the first actually being a type of the second, Dancy also proposed that there exist things like 'symbolic value' and 'sentimental value' which are other types of extrinsic value. Therefore, he surmised that there might also exist an extrinsic value type defined as 'value-as-a-part'.<sup>112</sup> Dancy argued that 'value-as-a-part' can 'change as the bearer moves from whole to whole. It gives

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 5 for a brief biography.

<sup>106</sup> Jonathan Dancy, 'Are There Organic Unities?', *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 629-50; Jonathan Dancy, 'What Do Reasons Do?' in *Metaethics After Moore*, ed. by Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 39-59; and Jonathan Dancy, 'Moore's Account of Vindictive Punishment: A Test Case for Theories of Organic Unities', in Nuccetelli and Seay, 325-42.

<sup>107</sup> Dancy, 'Moore's Account of Vindictive Punishment', 326.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 327.

us constant intrinsic value, supposedly, and variable extrinsic value'.<sup>113</sup> Dancy believed that his theory avoids the seemingly irrational suggestion that parts can contribute value which they themselves do not have:

Any differences between the value contributed to one whole and to another will be explained by appeal to differences in the extrinsic values enjoyed by that part in those two wholes – that is, by appeal to the differences between its value as a part of one whole and its value as a part of the other.<sup>114</sup>

Dancy supported his variabilist theory with what he held to be 'the *essential link* between values and reasons'.<sup>115</sup> Briefly, this view holds that value entails reasons – if something has value there are reasons to preserve, protect or admire it, and if there are such reasons, it must follow that the object in question has value. Dancy contended that having reasons to value an object necessarily includes the 'features' (parts) of the object and that it would therefore be incoherent to value features which have no intrinsic value in themselves.

Dancy examined specifically the case of retributive punishment, (although he preferred to use the term 'vindictive'), which Moore argued can be justified by the Principle of organic unities. Dancy outlined Moore's justification, and admitted that his approach is 'rather clever' as Moore based his argument on the appropriateness of the punishment to the crime rather than 'in terms of hope for social or other consequences of inflicting punishment'.<sup>116</sup> Dancy contended that although it is difficult to explain vindictive punishment within the variabilist approach, it is not impossible. He continued to argue that by recasting the argument in terms of reasons a variabilist can successfully claim that in the context of a particular crime, a particular punishment is less bad.<sup>117</sup>

Thomas Hurka<sup>118</sup> disagreed with Dancy, arguing that no such account of retributive punishment is available to the variabilist.<sup>119</sup> Like Dancy, Hurka argued

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 327.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 330. Italics in original.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 338-41.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas Hurka is a Canadian philosopher who has been professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto since 2002. He studied at the University of Toronto before gaining a DPhil at Oxford. From 1989-92 he wrote a weekly ethics column for the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, a national Canadian daily. <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca> [accessed 20 August 2013].

that there are two interpretations of Moore's Principle of organic unities but rather than regarding them as incompatible, he argued that both are equally valid and each is appropriate to different situations.<sup>120</sup> Hurka defined his two interpretations as (i) 'holistic' interpretation: parts retain their value on entering a whole and can contribute to the intrinsic value of the whole a value which they themselves do not have (in other words, Moore's classic Principle); and (ii) 'conditionality' interpretation: parts change their values when they enter wholes. According to Hurka, in the holistic interpretation an additional value results from the combination of the parts and the whole. Returning to Moore's example of the consciousness of a beautiful thing, Hurka stated that the 'additional value is an intrinsic property of the contemplation-plus-beauty-plus-causal-relation that it involves those elements in that way'.<sup>121</sup> In comparison, the conditionality thesis holds that the additional value is not located in the relation but in the beauty itself, whose value has changed when it became part of the whole, which included the consciousness or contemplation of the beautiful thing.<sup>122</sup>

Hurka admitted that there is a possible objection to the conditionality interpretation, namely that it results in a value that is not strictly intrinsic value – because it is not necessarily determined by intrinsic properties but can depend on relations to other states, or its place in larger wholes.<sup>123</sup> In response to this Hurka contended that things like knowledge and beauty actually possess what he called 'mixed value' by which their intrinsic properties mean that 'when they stand in certain relations they are good'.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, he argued that this mixed value plays the same role as strict intrinsic value in that it contributes to the overall value of the world and as such is something that should be pursued in and for its own sake.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', *The Journal of Ethics*, 2 (1998), 299-320; 'Moore in the Middle', *Ethics*, 113 (2003), 599-628; and *Drawing Morals. Essays in Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>120</sup> Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', 299.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 302. Hurka uses the term 'contemplation' synonymously with Moore's preferred term of 'consciousness'.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

Importantly, Hurka argued that despite the apparently fundamental differences between the holistic and the conditionality interpretations of the Principle of organic unities, there is actually no practical significance as both interpretations can agree on the overall intrinsic value in a given whole.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, he argued that the differences make one interpretation more appropriate than the other in a particular situation. For example, in aesthetic appreciation it can be argued that the conditionality interpretation is more apt because the holistic thesis would hold the irrational idea that the admirer's attitude (in the contemplation of beauty) is directed not at a good thing but only at something 'that though part of a good, is itself intrinsically neutral'.<sup>127</sup> Because the conditionality thesis locates the value in the beautiful object itself rather than in the whole, it allows that the admirer's attitude is directed towards something intrinsically good.<sup>128</sup> In comparison, the holistic interpretation is more appropriate in a situation such as retributive punishment. According to the holistic thesis this situation comprises three intrinsic values: (i) the initial evil of the crime, (ii) the evil of punishment (pain), and (iii) the good of retribution in the whole composed of these two evils as a whole.<sup>129</sup> If the punishment is to be on balance worth inflicting, the goodness of (iii) must be greater than (ii), but must not be so great that the combination of (i) plus (ii) plus (iii) is better than if there had been no (i) at all.<sup>130</sup> Hurka contended that this situation involves a 'mixed attitude', as an observer would experience pleasure at the (just) retributive outcome, but pain at the pain. The holistic interpretation thus provides an explanation as to why retribution involves a 'subdued tone' and is 'suffused with regret'.<sup>131</sup> This mixed attitude cannot be explained by the conditionality interpretation. However, Hurka claimed that the same does not hold true for the mirror-opposite situation: that of undeserved pleasure. He argued that many people would deny that there is any good in a situation where an evil person derives pleasure. Accordingly, the conditionality interpretation, rather than the holistic one, would allow that pleasure

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>128</sup> Hurka does admit that Moore's views on the intrinsic value of beauty varied during his lifetime. Accordingly, the holistic interpretation would be applicable to Moore's early view that beauty did indeed possess intrinsic value in itself.

<sup>129</sup> Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', 309.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 310. See also Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. VI, Sect. 128-130, 262-5.

<sup>131</sup> Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', 310.

loses its value when combined with a moral vice and therefore explains the lack of a mixed attitude in this situation.<sup>132</sup>

Hurka republished his 1998 article in a 2011 compendium of essays.<sup>133</sup> In the later version, he added a section on the ‘asymmetry of value’, which is reminiscent of Moore’s own concluding remarks in *Principia Ethica* about the lack of symmetry in his own philosophical theories. Hurka concluded that there is ‘no single pattern amongst pairs of intrinsic values. The truth is more complicated than symmetry or any one type of asymmetry alone’.<sup>134</sup>

In contrast with both Dancy and Hurka, Noah Lemos<sup>135</sup> defended both Moore’s Principle of organic unities, and specifically what he termed the ‘universality’ interpretation of the Principle.<sup>136</sup> Lemos quoted directly from Moore to reiterate the universality thesis:

The part of a valuable whole retains exactly the same value when it is, as when it is not, a part of that whole. If it had value under other circumstances, its value is not any greater, when it is part of a far more valuable whole; and if it had no value by itself, it has none still, however great be that of the whole of which it now forms a part.<sup>137</sup>

In his defence of Moore’s Principle, Lemos outlined five possible states of affairs, (his preferred term for ‘wholes’), that contain intrinsic value as follows:

- (i) A is pleased that someone is happy
- (ii) A is pleased that someone is suffering
- (iii) A is pleased and A is wicked
- (iv) A is pleased and A is virtuous

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>133</sup> Hurka, *Drawing Morals*.

<sup>134</sup> Hurka, *Drawing Morals*, 135.

<sup>135</sup> Noah Lemos is professor of philosophy at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia – the second-oldest college in the US dating back to 1693. He studied at Brown University before holding teaching positions at Virginia Tech, Texas and DePauw universities. [www.wm.edu](http://www.wm.edu) [accessed 20 August 2013].

<sup>136</sup> Noah Lemos, *Intrinsic Value. Concept and Warrant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). It is the author’s contention that Lemos uses the term ‘universality’ in a sense synonymous with Dancy’s ‘intrinsicist’ and Hurka’s ‘holistic’.

<sup>137</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. I, Sect. 19, 81.

(v) A is pleased<sup>138</sup>

Lemos held that (v) is a part of wholes (i)-(iv), but that if the Principle of organic unities is correct, all five states are not of equal intrinsic value; for example, it is reasonable to believe that (i) is better than either (ii) or (iii). However, the thesis of universality holds that (v) has the same value as (i)-(iv) – in other words, the intrinsic value of ‘A being pleased’ is the same regardless of whether A is wicked or virtuous. Lemos argued that the Principle of organic unities holds that (v) is an intrinsically good part of each of the other states of affairs; and (ii) and (iii) are examples of organic unities because they are intrinsically bad wholes, which contain a good part (namely (v)) and a bad part. Therefore (v) has the same intrinsic value that it is intrinsically good, even when it is part of a whole that is intrinsically bad.<sup>139</sup>

Lemos continued to defend the thesis of universality by considering the arguments of W. D. Ross<sup>140</sup> who, despite concurring on many issues with his friend Moore, had nonetheless rejected the universality thesis. In the 1930s, Ross argued that pleasure was ‘conditionally or *prima facie* good’ and that pain was ‘conditionally or *prima facie* bad’.<sup>141</sup> In Ross’s view, therefore, (iii) is a ‘total’ fact which includes the simpler fact of (v); and moreover, the total fact overrides the *prima facie* goodness of the simpler fact so that ‘the goodness of (v) is mere *conditional* goodness in so far as (v) is good provided that certain other conditions do not obtain’.<sup>142</sup> In other words, according to Ross’s position, the value of (v) can alter depending on whether or not it is a part of (iii). Lemos contended that ‘the chief difficulty of Ross’s view is that it misses what apparently makes so offensive the prosperity of the wicked and states of affairs such as (iii)’.<sup>143</sup> In a similar vein to the argument put forward by Hurka, Lemos argued that what makes (iii) so offensive is that a wicked man apparently has a good that he does not deserve.<sup>144</sup>

Moore’s Principle of organic unities has been expressed as follows:

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<sup>138</sup> Lemos, 40.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>140</sup> See Chapter 5 for a brief biography.

<sup>141</sup> Lemos, 41; W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), 138.

<sup>142</sup> Lemos, 42.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

(OU2) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part is the same as the value it would have apart from the whole.

The work of philosophers, Dancy, Hurka and Lemos indicates that there may be two different interpretations of Moore's Principle: a strong interpretation, which has variously been called 'intrinsicalism', 'holistic' and 'universality'; and a weaker interpretation called 'variabilism' or 'conditionality'. These different interpretations focus on whether parts of a whole can change their intrinsic value or not as they move from whole to whole. According to these strong and weak interpretations of Moore's Principle, we arrive at two different formulations of the Principle. The strong interpretation can be expressed as follows:

(OU2-S) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part is the same as the value it would have apart from the whole.

The weak interpretation can be expressed as follows:

(OU2-W) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

Both interpretations will be considered in analogy with concepts of archival value in Chapter 7.

## **6.6. Concluding remarks**

This chapter has described Moore's Principle of organic unities, together with his related theories on the indefinability of good and the method of isolation, by which intrinsic value can be determined. The presentation of several critiques of Moore's Principle has highlighted the lack of consensus within the field of philosophy regarding the validity of his ideas. It has also suggested that twenty-first century philosophers regard Moore's work as relevant and applicable to modern value theory. Two possible interpretations of Moore's Principle of organic unities



have been proposed that focus on the nature of the parts and their ability to change in value upon entering a whole.

The next chapter takes an analytical approach as the author explores through analogy the possible application of Moore's Principle (in both interpretive senses) to theories of archival value.

## **Chapter 7. Archival value: a re-interpretation**

### **7.1. Chapter summary**

This chapter consists of the two final steps in Theory Derivation methodology, namely: identifying what content and/or structure from the parent theory is to be used, and developing or redefining new statements from the content and/or structure of the parent theory in terms of the phenomenon of interest to the theorist.<sup>1</sup> The axiological Principle of organic unities will be considered in application to various concepts of archival value – in both its strong and weak interpretations. The application of both interpretations of the Principle allows the author to explore the ways in which different writers have defined ‘parts’ and ‘wholes’ in relation to archives; and the ways in which they have ascribed values to parts and/or wholes.

### **7.2. Introduction**

Chapter 6 identified the parent theory for use in derivation, namely G. E. Moore’s Principle of organic unities, and offered two possible interpretations of the Principle; a strong interpretation and a weak interpretation as follows:

(OU2-S) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part is the same as the value it would have apart from the whole.

(OU2-W) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

The final two steps in Theory Derivation methodology comprise ‘identifying what content and/or structure from the parent theory is to be used, and developing or redefining new statements from the content and/or structure of the parent theory in terms of the phenomenon of interest to the theorist’.<sup>2</sup> Nursing theorists, Lorraine

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.5.

<sup>2</sup> Pekka Henttonen, *Records, Rules and Speech Acts, Academic Dissertation University of Tampere Department of Information Studies* (Finland: University of Tampere Press, 2007), 27; Lorraine

Walker and Kay Avant noted that these final steps involve more than simply ‘borrowing’ the parent theory: ‘Theories cannot be moved unchanged from one field to another [...] True Theory Derivation requires that at least some modifications [...] be made’.<sup>3</sup> They insisted that creativity and imagination were required by the theorist in order to redefine the concepts of the parent theory and transpose them into a new field: ‘more is required than simply applying an existing concept to a phenomenon. The meaning of the concept must be developed and changed to fit a new phenomenon’.<sup>4</sup> Archival theorist Pekka Henttonen also emphasized the need to modify a theory’s concepts or structure as part of the derivation process:

When a new theory is derived the whole parent theory may not be needed. Only those elements that are analogous and therefore relevant have to be used. In theory derivation one also may – and often needs to – modify the concepts or structure borrowed in such a way that it becomes meaningful in the theorist’s field.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter develops and modifies the axiological Principle of organic unities in order for it to become meaningful in an archival context. Both interpretative senses of the Principle will be developed. In doing so, the author aims to create a framework of ideas that ‘may serve as a basis for developing hypotheses for examination of different archival phenomena’.<sup>6</sup> The framework will enable a consideration of the various ideas about value in archival theory that have been detailed in earlier chapters of the thesis, as the author re-interprets these ideas through the lens of the derived theory. This process involves the translation of the language, terminology and ideas of the archival theorists into the author’s language and terminology as used in the derived theory. The level of interpretation will vary according to the theorist, and it should be noted that the archival theories ‘fit’ into the derived theory in varying degrees of success, with some not fitting at all. This variance will enable a discussion of why some of the archival theories work better in analogy than others. The author will also discuss the extent to which the aptness of a particular archival theory is contingent on the particular frame of reference in which it is situated; whether it is framed within a positivist or postmodernist paradigm.

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Olszewski Walker and Kay Coalson Avant, *Strategies for Theory Construction in Nursing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Connecticut: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1988), 165-6.

<sup>3</sup> Walker and Avant, 184.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 64-5.

<sup>5</sup> Henttonen, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 31.

Consideration will be given to those which don't necessarily fit but how, by not doing so, they nonetheless contribute something of interest to the discussion.

The application of both strong and weak interpretations of the Principle will allow the author to explore the ways in which different theorists have defined 'parts' and 'wholes' in relation to archives; and the ways in which they have ascribed values to parts and/or wholes. As has been discussed previously in Chapter 3, a variety of possible aggregations of archives are presented in the archival literature, including, for example, '*fonds*', 'series', 'subfonds', and 'record group'. It is not the aim of the author to establish any firm differentials between these options, but rather to explore how each might be conceived as an organic whole applicable to the derived theory. The author is not concerned with where things might sit within a multi-level hierarchy but rather in how things can be conceived in relation to each other within a part-whole dynamic. The author acknowledges revisionist approaches to the *fonds*<sup>7</sup> but will focus on the conventional acceptance of archival aggregations for the purposes of this thesis.

### **7.3. Transposition of the strong interpretation of the Principle of organic unities to the archival context**

The strong interpretation of Moore's Principle of organic unities has been expressed as follows:

(OU2-S) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part is the same as the value it would have apart from the whole.

In summary, this interpretation emphasizes the disproportion of the value of the whole and the values of the parts, together with what Noah Lemos termed 'a universality thesis' of value;<sup>8</sup> or, as Moore himself wrote: 'The part of a valuable whole retains exactly the same value when it is, as when it is not, a part of that

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 3, section 3.5.3.

<sup>8</sup> Noah M. Lemos, *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8-11; See also Thomas Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', *The Journal of Ethics*, 2 (1998), 299-320. See Chapter 6.

whole’.<sup>9</sup> As has been discussed, some philosophers have wrestled with this interpretation, which demands a constancy in the value of the parts of the organic whole.<sup>10</sup> The strong interpretation of the Principle of organic unities entails that the intrinsic value of the organic whole depends on some additional value that results from the combination of the unchanging value of the parts and the value of the whole as an organic whole. This approach is underlined by Moore’s distinction between value ‘as a whole’ and value ‘on the whole’, which asserts that value ‘on the whole’ is ‘equivalent to the sum of the value which [the whole] possesses *as a whole*, *together with* the intrinsic values which may belong to any of its parts’.<sup>11</sup> In other words, there is something valuable about the arrangement of the organic whole and its parts that contributes a separate value to the parts and the whole and thus results in the intrinsic value of the organic whole ‘on the whole’.

The concept of the intrinsic value of an organic whole needs to be transposed into the archival context to create a framework in which ideas about archival value can be examined. Taking the two key components of the concept and modifying them to be meaningful within the archival context, a formulation might be expressed as follows:

(AV-S) Archival value entails that (i) archives ‘on the whole’ have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the values of the parts are constant.<sup>12</sup>

This formulation of the Principle of archival value in its strong interpretation thus contains two components: (i) a disproportion between the value of the archives ‘on the whole’ and the values of the parts as they compose the archives as a whole; and (ii) a universality of the values of the parts whereby such values are unchanging in value irrespective of whether or not they are part of the archives.

### **7.3.1. Analogy with the archival theory of Hilary Jenkinson**

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<sup>9</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, rev. edn., ed. by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Ch. I, Sect. 19, 81.

<sup>10</sup> See Hurka, ‘Two Kinds of Organic Unity’, 302-3; Jonathan Dancy, ‘Are There Organic Unities?’, *Ethics*, 113.3 (2003), 629-650.

<sup>11</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. VI, Sect. 129, 263. Italics in original.

<sup>12</sup> As previously explained the Principle is expressed as a declarative statement in formal language; See Chapter 6 for details. In this case, AV stands for Principle of archival value and S for the strong interpretation.

This section will explore the analogies between the Principle of archival value (AV-S) and the archival theory of Hilary Jenkinson, and will demonstrate considerable alignment between the two. The section will first examine the second of the Principle's components – the universality of the values of the parts – because this unchanging intrinsic value determines to a great extent the characteristics of the first component, the disproportion between the value of the whole 'on the whole' and the sum of the value of its parts as a whole.

In the early twentieth century, Jenkinson argued that archives were made up of certain types of records that had particular characteristics, which distinguished them from other records: 'Archives are *documents which formed part of an official transaction and were preserved for official reference*'.<sup>13</sup> He detailed the characteristics as impartiality and authenticity, and argued that these characteristics were derived from the nature of the records as evidence of business transactions and from their preservation in official custody.<sup>14</sup> Jenkinson was explicit in stating that the part-whole relationship between records and archives was dependent on these characteristics, arguing that 'while all Archives are Documents, not all Documents are Archives'.<sup>15</sup> The necessary characteristics of the parts of archives thus defined by Jenkinson are arguably analogous to the values of the parts in an organic whole as interpreted by Moore, in that they are intrinsic (i.e. according to Jenkinson, they arise from the nature of the records themselves and not from any external source) and constant (i.e. according to Jenkinson, they are fixed characteristics of the record). Jenkinson argued that the characteristics of impartiality and authenticity residing in the 'archival document' were the result of a specific process of creation and custody, and he described the primary role of the archivist as one which safeguards these characteristics.<sup>16</sup> By definition, therefore, such characteristics are fixed, identifiable qualities that are capable of being defended or attacked. Terry Eastwood similarly expressed this idea as follows:

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<sup>13</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London: Lund Humphries, 1937), 4. Italics in original. See also Chapter 2, section 2.2.2.

<sup>14</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 4-11.

<sup>15</sup> Hilary Jenkinson, *The English Archivist: A New Profession* (London: H K Lewis & Co. Ltd., 1948), 4.

<sup>16</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 15. The term 'archival document', as used by Jenkinson, is interpreted by the author to mean those records (or documents) that are archives.

The purpose of the archivist [...] is to preserve the integrity of the archival documents as faithful and trustworthy evidence of the actions from which they originated. It is precisely the value of the documents [...] which the archivist is entrusted to protect.<sup>17</sup>

Through this approach, the value of the records satisfies the second component of the Principle (AV-S): ‘the values of the parts are constant’. The characteristics of records as evidence, engendered by their nature as the by-product of business transactions, remain fixed in the records, regardless of any subsequent administrative, historical or research uses to which they might be put.<sup>18</sup>

Although Jenkinson’s theory as above-outlined appears to support a part-whole relationship between records and archives, the author believes that there is evidence to suggest that he was not altogether consistent in this approach. In his *Manual of Archive Administration*, Jenkinson began by defining the parts of which archives are comprised; in other words, the ‘documents which are material survivals of certain administrative or executive transactions in the past, preserved for their own reference’, and indicated that an extensive range of records might be so identified: ‘*all manuscript in whatever materials made, all script produced by writing machines, and all script mechanically reproduced [...] all other material evidences, whether or no they include alphabetical or numerical signs*’.<sup>19</sup> Yet he also referred to an instance-class relationship between records and archives within the same text, stating that:

A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which *was drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successor*.<sup>20</sup>

By employing two different logical relations – part-whole and instance-class –, it seems that Jenkinson used the term ‘archives’ simultaneously to mean an

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<sup>17</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies’, *Archivaria*, 35 (1993), 232-252, (237). It is the contention of the author that Eastwood uses the phrase ‘archival documents’ in the same sense as Jenkinson, simply meaning those documents that are archives.

<sup>18</sup> This is also an approach supported by Margaret Cross Norton. See Margaret Cross Norton, ‘Comparison of Archival and Library Techniques’, in *Norton on Archives: The Writings of Margaret Cross Norton on Archival and Records Management*, ed. by Thornton Mitchell (Carbondale & Edwardsville, US: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975), 86-105.

<sup>19</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 4, 6. Italics in original.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. Italics in original.

aggregation (of records) as well as to mean any or all records with certain characteristics. It is unclear whether Jenkinson realized he was confusing two different logical relations. It is the contention of the author that Jenkinson meant to define archives in terms of an aggregation as this correlates with his emphasis on the natural accumulation of archives and the importance of retaining original order and arrangement.<sup>21</sup> In addition, in his later writings, the term ‘class’ is not applied to ‘archives’ but rather to the ‘structural subdivisions’ within archives.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the lack of clarity or explanation on this point in Jenkinson’s writings mean that an alternative interpretation is possible.

Thus far, it has been argued that Jenkinson’s archival theory supports the second component of the Principle (AV-S), namely that ‘the values of the parts are constant’. A further analogy can be made with Jenkinson’s archival theory, which satisfies the first component of the Principle, concerning the disproportion of the value of the organic whole to the sum of the values of its parts. This has been expressed as follows: ‘(i) archives ‘on the whole’ have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts’. In order to safeguard the evidential characteristics of records, Jenkinson insisted on the maintenance of the ‘natural form and relationship’ of the records.<sup>23</sup> Jenkinson argued that ‘[archives] have [...] a structure, an articulation and a natural relationship between parts which are essential to their significance’.<sup>24</sup> Jenkinson’s classic definition of archival provenance entailed the existence of an archival *fonds* – what he called ‘an organic whole’, whose boundaries were determined in relation to the context of its creator; and original order, which held that the ‘original’ arrangement of the records (normally that of the creator) should be retained.<sup>25</sup> According to Jenkinson, in order to preserve the value of the archives, provenance must be respected by maintaining and protecting the boundaries of the *fonds* and the order of its components.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 97. See also Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> Jenkinson, *The English Archivist*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 4. As has previously been discussed in Chapter 3, the author contends that Jenkinson’s use of the term ‘significance’ is synonymous with her use of the term ‘value’ – see Chapter 3, section 3.4.1. especially.

<sup>25</sup> See Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*. For an earlier rendition of this definition of provenance see also S. Muller, J. A. Feith and R. Fruin, *Handleiding voor het ordenen en beschrijven van archieven* (Groningen: Erven B. Van der Kamp, 1899). English translation: *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, transl. by Arthur H. Leavitt (New York: H. W. Wilson & Co., 1940), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., with new introduction by Peter Horsman, Eric Ketelaar, Theo Thomassen and Majorie Rabe Barritt (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003).



It should be noted that Jenkinson and Moore would not have understood the term ‘organic whole’ in the same way despite the identical terminology employed by both. Jenkinson used the term to imply a natural accumulation in the sense of a living organism as contrasted with an artificial grouping; Moore used the term in a unique sense to distinguish a particular type of whole that ‘has an intrinsic value different in amount from the sum of the values of its parts’.<sup>26</sup> However, it is the contention of the author that irrespective of the different origins, nonetheless both approaches lead to the same premise that there is a separate value, which results from the arrangement or combination of the (unchanging) value of the parts and the value of the whole in that specific way.

According to Jenkinson, the separation of records originating from one creator from those originating from another, and the retention of the original order of the records, constituted ‘the moral defence of archives’.<sup>27</sup> Using the framework of the derived theory, Jenkinson’s approach can be understood to place the value of the records as determined and fixed within the administrative context in which the records were created; and, furthermore, it is the combination of the relationship between the records and the activities of which they are a product, and the relationship between an individual record and the *fonds* to which it belongs, that together constitute archival value. These essential relationships add value to the archives ‘on the whole’. The archival principle of provenance, as interpreted in this way to include both *respect des fonds* and original order, thus supports a theory of archival value whereby such value is ‘equivalent to the sum of the value which [the whole] possesses *as a whole, together with* the intrinsic values which may belong to any of its parts’.<sup>28</sup> Jenkinson’s archival theory can therefore be interpreted to support a theory of archival value developed from the strong interpretation of the Principle of organic unities:

(AV-S) Archival value entails that (i) archives ‘on the whole’ have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the values of the parts are constant.

### 7.3.2. Analogy with the archival theory of Luciana Duranti

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<sup>26</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 105; Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch.1, Sect. 22, 87.

<sup>27</sup> Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, 97-102, 83.

<sup>28</sup> Moore, *Principia Ethica*, Ch. VI, Sect. 129, 263. Italics in original.

The work of Italian archival theorist Luciana Duranti can also be interpreted to support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value. Using Jenkinson as a framework, Duranti argued that there are essential and determined characteristics in ‘archival documents’.<sup>29</sup> Duranti defined these characteristics as ‘reliability’ and ‘authenticity’ and argued that ‘the authority and trustworthiness of the records as evidence [...] is provided to a record by its form and procedure of creation’.<sup>30</sup> In her writings Duranti employed multiple terms to describe the constituent parts of archives, including ‘document’, ‘archival document’ and ‘record’. It is the contention of the author that Duranti used these terms interchangeably to define those individual items that constitute the aggregation of ‘archives’.<sup>31</sup> More confusingly, Duranti also often referred to ‘archives’ as a whole as possessing the same characteristics as its constituent parts; for example, a subsection of one of her articles is titled: ‘The Characteristics of Archival Documents and the Attribution of Value’ but the proceeding text detailed what she termed ‘the characteristics of archives’.<sup>32</sup> Duranti had previously identified a lack of clarity in the archival literature:

Modern archivists use terms such as “medium”, “form”, “logical relations” [etc.] [...] in a very inconsistent way, and keep creating arbitrary terms every time they encounter an entity which appears slightly different from those with which they are familiar. Failure to recognize the substance of things leads to the false impression that the reality is changing fundamentally.<sup>33</sup>

Arguably Duranti is guilty of the same lack of clarity which she hoped her work would elucidate.

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<sup>29</sup> Luciana Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’, *AA*, 57.2 (1994), 328-44, (334); Luciana Duranti, ‘Reliability and Authenticity: The Concepts and Their Implications’, *Archivaria*, 39 (1995), 5-10.

<sup>30</sup> Duranti, ‘Reliability and Authenticity’, 6.

<sup>31</sup> *The InterPARES Glossary* distinguished between the term ‘document’ which is defined as ‘recorded information’ and the term ‘record’ which is defined as ‘a document made or received and set aside in the course of a practical activity’; but for the purposes of this study this difference in the nature of the parts is irrelevant. There is no separate definition provided for ‘archival document’, despite the term being used elsewhere in the *Glossary*. The InterPARES Taskforce, *The InterPARES Glossary* (December 2001), available online: [www.interpares.org](http://www.interpares.org) [accessed 6 April 2014].

<sup>32</sup> Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’, 334, capitals in original; 335-6. *The InterPARES Glossary* offered three definitions of ‘archives’: an aggregation of records; the physical place where such records are preserved; and the institution responsible for their preservation.

<sup>33</sup> Luciana Duranti, ‘Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science, Part VI’, *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/2), 6-24, (8).

Duranti described how ‘archival documents [...] accumulate naturally, progressively and continuously’.<sup>34</sup> Her focus on the ‘natural’ character of records stemmed from her perspective as a diplomatist. She believed that the application of diplomatics theory,<sup>35</sup> with its formal method of analysis and definitional role in identifying and naming the elements of records, helped to prevent the ‘corrupting’ of the records by attributing values to them in archival appraisal judgements.<sup>36</sup> In an attempt to counter the probable biases by archivists introduced during the appraisal process, Duranti argued that the archivist should instead seek to identify the ‘inherently truthful’ characteristics of the records.<sup>37</sup> These characteristics are by their very definition, fixed within the records and are constant and enduring. Duranti disliked the term ‘value’, and argued that ‘if what qualifies documents as archival is their nature [...] the idea of attributing values to them is in profound conflict with archival theory’.<sup>38</sup> Yet, Duranti’s description of the characteristics of records is what defines them as archival, as being parts of the whole of archives. The author interprets this through the framework of the derived theory as being analogous to saying that these characteristics contribute to the records’ value as parts of archives. Therefore, following this approach, it can be argued that the parts (records) have values (characteristics) and the values of the parts are constant, thus satisfying the second component of the Principle (AV-S).

Duranti’s approach can also be interpreted to satisfy the first component of the Principle (AV-S) through her description of what, (following Italian archival tradition), she termed ‘the archival bond’, defined as ‘the network of relationships that each record has with the records belonging in the aggregation’.<sup>39</sup> Duranti emphasized the importance of these relationships, arguing that ‘the characteristic of unique-in-context of each document makes its meaning unique and its existence

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<sup>34</sup> Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’, 335.

<sup>35</sup> *The InterPARES Glossary* defined ‘diplomatics’ as ‘the study of the genesis, inner constitution, and transmission of archival documents, and of their relationship with the facts represented in them and with their creator’.

<sup>36</sup> See Duranti, ‘Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science, Part VI’. See also Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’.

<sup>37</sup> Duranti, ‘The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory’, 334.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>39</sup> Luciana Duranti, ‘The Archival Bond’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 11 (1997), 213-18, (216).

necessary to the meaning of the archives in which it belongs'.<sup>40</sup> Duranti identified the concept of 'the archival bond' in her work in order to apply traditional archival theories of diplomatics and provenance to electronic records. She defined the 'bond' as being '*originary*', '*necessary*' and '*determined*'.<sup>41</sup> Duranti believed that the 'bond' is more than just external context, being an essential part of the record itself that can be revealed through the physical order or classification of records.<sup>42</sup> The author argues that Duranti's theory of 'the archival bond' implicitly expresses the idea that the particular arrangement of the parts in the whole – the relationship that links the records of a similar activity together in a specific way – necessarily contributes to an archival value 'on the whole' (i.e. of the aggregation) that is separate from, and additional to, the values of its individual records.<sup>43</sup> In this way, therefore, Duranti's approach fully supports the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-S).

### 7.3.3. Analogy with the archival theory of Theodore R. Schellenberg

The theories of mid-twentieth century US archivist, Theodore R. Schellenberg have often been contrasted with those of Jenkinson. In Chapter 2 of this thesis the author outlined the distinct approaches taken by Jenkinson and Schellenberg and the resultant divergence in thinking about archival appraisal that took place during the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>44</sup> However, the author also identified similarities between their work, most notably in their understanding of archives comprising an 'organic whole'.<sup>45</sup> The framework of the author's derived theory also presents an opportunity to re-interpret Schellenberg and to find commonalities with Jenkinson which, whilst initially appearing to support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-S), ultimately oppose it.<sup>46</sup> One

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<sup>40</sup> Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', 336. The author contends that the term 'meaning' is employed here as a synonymous alternative to the term 'value'.

<sup>41</sup> Duranti, 'The Archival Bond', 216. Italics in original.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>43</sup> See also Luciana Duranti, 'The Impact of Digital Technology on Archival Science', *AS*, 1.1 (2001), 39-55, (48).

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>45</sup> See Jenkinson, *The English Archivist*, 4-5; Theodore R. Schellenberg, 'Archival Principles of Arrangement', *AA*, 24.1 (1961), 11-24. See also Chapter 3, section 3.5.1.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Stapleton argued that despite the strong criticism each made of the other's theories, the differences between Jenkinson and Schellenberg were often merely 'ones of emphasis'; see Richard Stapleton, 'Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A comparison', *Archivaria*, 17 (1983/84), 75-85, (80-1). Conversely, Reto Tschan argued that the two men 'held strikingly different opinions' which have sustained much of the ongoing debate about the appraisal of archives within the archival profession;

of the challenges in analysing Schellenberg's theory is the inconsistencies often found in his use of terminology and sometimes in his clarity of meaning. In Chapter 3 the author outlined the contradictions that appear in Schellenberg's writing regarding the importance of original order. This chapter will also show that a lack of clarity in his writing when exploring ideas about parts, wholes and archival value can significantly obscure the theory he sought to put forward.

Schellenberg defined archives as having two intangible qualities: reasons for creation and values for preservation.<sup>47</sup> Although Schellenberg spoke about 'reasons', he chose to term these 'primary values' and 'secondary values' respectively.<sup>48</sup> Schellenberg argued that archives were composed of records that had been created as part of a transaction, describing them as 'the organic material product of activity, of purposeful action'.<sup>49</sup> He also argued that what made the records 'archival' was the fact that they had been set aside for permanent preservation for reasons different from those of their creation, namely for the purposes of reference and historical research.<sup>50</sup> Schellenberg's definition of archives asserted that archives are composed of not just any records but of the records of purposeful transactions; and moreover, not all such records are archives, but only those which additionally have historical or research values that mean they should be permanently preserved. Implicit in this definition is a process of selection and transfer – the records' value is identified and, in Schellenberg's own words, these are records that 'have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archive institution'.<sup>51</sup> Arguably, Schellenberg has introduced an element of confusion into his writings as he seemed to shift chameleon-like between a definition of 'archives' meaning records that have been judged archival, and 'archives' meaning an institution holding such records.<sup>52</sup> Schellenberg offered no explanation for this variance, but the author contends that Schellenberg meant the former – archives as an aggregation – an interpretation that is reinforced by the direct comparison Schellenberg drew with library theory. He

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see Reto Tschan, 'A Comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal', *AA*, 65.2 (2002), 176-95, (176).

<sup>47</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1956), 13.

<sup>48</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 17, 133, 140-59.

<sup>49</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 66.

<sup>50</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>52</sup> See also Chapter 1 on the different meanings of the term 'archives' in the English language.

argued that archives ‘grow out of some regular functional activity [...] in a systematic manner’, compared to the ‘haphazard’ or ‘spontaneous expression of thought or feeling’ that normally creates library collections.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, he argued that it is because of their nature as coming into being in a specific way, that archivists treat records as part of a whole rather than as individual items such as the librarian might do.<sup>54</sup>

Schellenberg argued that the archivist should respect the ‘organic whole’ of the archives, but in contrast with Jenkinson, he placed the ‘organic whole’ at the level of a ‘series’ rather than at *fonds* level.<sup>55</sup> Schellenberg did not identify the aggregation at the level of an archival *fonds*, but he did identify a series as a whole with parts: ‘for the series as a whole has a meaning greater than its parts, that is, than the individual record items’.<sup>56</sup> Once again, Schellenberg’s use of terminology is problematic as he appeared to introduce a new concept of ‘record items’. However, the author suggests that when referring to ‘record items’, Schellenberg simply meant ‘records’ in the sense he had previously used it to mean components of archives, and his employment of the additional term ‘items’ was probably intended to emphasize their character as parts. Schellenberg’s use of the term ‘series’ can be regarded as analogous to the author’s use of the term ‘archives’, by identifying an organic whole composed of parts, and whose value is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

Schellenberg’s definition of archives can be regarded as satisfying the first component of the Principle (AV-S), namely: ‘that archives ‘on the whole’ have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts’. Through the framework of the derived theory, we can interpret Schellenberg’s approach as follows: the values of the individual records comprise primary values for which the records were created, and secondary values for which the records are retained in an archival institution, yet the value of the archives does not merely equal the sum of these two types of value but depends on an additional evaluation: the appraisal and selection of the records that establishes their status as part of the archives. This activity appraises the records in relation to the totality of the records produced by a

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<sup>53</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>55</sup> See also Chapter 3. Schellenberg’s use of the phrase ‘organic whole’ is consistent with that of Jenkinson, used in the sense of a natural accumulation like a living organism, rather than an artificial grouping.

<sup>56</sup> Schellenberg, ‘Archival Principles of Arrangement’, 16.

particular creator and identifies a value in the relationship: 'All records arising from a particular activity have a cohesive character and are part of one another. They have a meaning as a group rather than as single items'.<sup>57</sup> It is this value of the archives 'on the whole' which is separate from the values of the parts of the archives 'as a whole', and thus constitutes an archival value that is different from the mere sum of the primary and secondary values of the records.

Schellenberg's theories can thus be shown to satisfy the first component of the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value, but determining whether they are capable of satisfying the second, namely that 'the values of the parts are constant' is a more difficult exercise. Schellenberg identified two different types of values in records; the first, the primary values or reasons for record creation, can be defined as constant as they are established in the record during creation and can be identified by understanding the creator and the functions and activities of which the record is a product.<sup>58</sup> In comparison, the secondary values are attributed to the record later, for reference or research use.<sup>59</sup> Although Schellenberg argued that some of these secondary values are easily identifiable; for example, the evidential value of the records of the creator and its functions and activities which, he claimed, could be tested practically in an objective and definitive way; he admitted that other values, termed 'informational', were much harder to identify.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Schellenberg argued that the judgement of informational value was not based on absolute standards, but was 'relative to time and place'; stating that: 'archivists should use different criteria in evaluating records of different periods, for what is valuable in a past age may be valueless for the present'.<sup>61</sup> However, although Schellenberg appeared to have introduced an element of conditionality to the notion of informational value, he immediately countered this with the statement that archivists were competent to identify such values, and he produced appraisal guidance that comprised basic criteria under which informational values could be identified; for

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<sup>57</sup> Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives*, 67.

<sup>58</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 16, 142.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 133, 140-59.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 140-2, 148-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

example: 'all records have value when they relate to important historical personages, episodes or events'.<sup>62</sup>

These contradictory or inconsistent statements published by Schellenberg make interpretation of this aspect of his theory especially problematic. However, having examined the entirety of his published works, the author's overwhelming sense is that Schellenberg believed that it was possible to identify all values in archives through the application of specific appraisal criteria by archivists with a 'specialized knowledge of the subject-matter fields pertinent to the records' and 'a general knowledge of the resources and products of research'.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the assumption that a taxonomic approach can identify archival value has continued to form the basis of much archival appraisal activity in the US; for example, Schellenberg's 1956 article *The Appraisal of Modern Records* continues to be available on the NARA website;<sup>64</sup> and, arguably, Schellenberg's ideas provided the grounding principles on which the US National Archives developed its theory of 'intrinsic value in archival material'.<sup>65</sup> These taxonomic approaches all suggest that there are values that records possess and which are capable of being identified and judged by a competent archivist. In so far as Schellenberg believed that the act of selection for preservation of the records by an archival institution is based on the judgement of these values, it can be argued that he thought such values are constant within that judgement of archival value.

Nonetheless, whilst Schellenberg's approach supports the assertion that value(s) in records exist and can be identified, it also seems to allow that secondary value(s) may not be constant, but may only endure in terms of the assessment of value by an archivist at a given point in time, and that they may be subject to a different assessment by a different archivist at a different time. One might make an

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 150. See also Theodore R. Schellenberg, *Disposition of Federal Records: How to Develop an Effective Program for the Preservation and the Disposal of Federal Records*, National Archives Publication No. 50-3 (Washington DC: General Services Administration, The National Archives, 1949).

<sup>63</sup> Theodore R. Schellenberg, *The Appraisal of Modern Records*, *Bulletin of the National Archives*, No. 8 (Washington DC: NARA, 1956), 23.

<sup>64</sup> Schellenberg, *The Appraisal of Modern Records*, published online at: [www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources-appraisal-of-records.html](http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/archives-resources-appraisal-of-records.html) [accessed 18 November 2012].

<sup>65</sup> National Archives and Records Service, *Intrinsic Value in Archival Material*, *Staff Information Paper No. 21* (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1982). See also Shauna McRanor, 'A Critical Analysis of Intrinsic Value', *AA*, 59.4 (1996), 400-11.



argument to the effect that it could be the case that the record possesses constant values, but that they have not (or not yet) been perceived; or to express it differently, that evidential and informational values constantly exist in the record but may be identifiable at different times in the record's life. Such an argument would involve a commitment to the philosophical theory of perceptual realism and the claim that such values can exist unperceived – a claim that is by no means uncontested.<sup>66</sup>

In view of these uncertainties, the author therefore must admit that Schellenberg's theories ultimately do not satisfy both components of the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value formulated as:

(AV-S) Archival value entails that (i) archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the values of the parts are constant.

The possibility that Schellenberg's theories might instead support a weak interpretation of the Principle will be considered in section 7.4.

#### **7.3.4. Analogy with the archival theory of Hans Booms**

Thus far this chapter has considered the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value, (AV-S), in relation to the archival theories of Jenkinson and Duranti who both identified a whole-part relationship in terms of archives as an aggregation of records whose value remains constant regardless of whether they are a part of the whole or not. The discussion of Schellenberg's theories, whilst supporting a whole-part relationship, also raised questions about the constancy of the values found in individual records. The next section will consider alternative archival approaches, which satisfy both components of the Principle, but that understand the organic whole of the archives to include other parts that have (unchanging) value(s) that contribute to its intrinsic value 'on the whole'. These approaches are based on greater flexibility regarding what parts contribute value to the organic whole of archives. The approaches do not assert that records are not parts of the archives, but rather that they are parts without value. The Principle is still satisfied provided that this non-value remains constant, and therefore does not contribute to the archival

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<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Jonathan Dancy, *Introduction to Epistemology* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 144-81.

value of the organic whole. From this perspective, archival value is constituted in part by (unchanging) values found elsewhere in the organic whole of the archives. As previously detailed in Chapter 6, this approach is consistent with a definition of a ‘whole’ as a thing that is composed of or divisible into parts, where ‘part’ is defined as any item that composes a whole.<sup>67</sup>

One archival theorist whose work can be interpreted as supporting such an approach is the German archivist Hans Booms. Booms argued that archives should be appraised for their value as a chronicle of society because they constitute ‘documentary heritage in material form and [...] documentary heritage is the material source of a society’s historical consciousness’.<sup>68</sup> Booms insisted that appraisal decisions should be based on ‘measuring the societal significance of past events’ through an analysis of the value that the records’ contemporaries had attached to them.<sup>69</sup> Booms was explicit in his view that archivists could not find intrinsic value by seeking it in the records, arguing that ‘documentary sources do not possess an inherent value discernible within the documents themselves’, but rather that archivists assign value during the process of appraisal.<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, Booms believed that this assigned value could be ‘objective’, ‘universal’, and ‘concrete’.<sup>71</sup> He argued that this value was to be found in the value systems of those who created the records.<sup>72</sup> Booms believed that it was possible to identify these value systems, stating that: ‘[society] always develops its own recognizable system of coordinating norms and values, of special control and behavioural models, which influence the life and thought patterns of its members’.<sup>73</sup> As a result, Booms argued, it was possible to ‘arrange groups of records within a hierarchy of value that parallels a

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<sup>67</sup> Andrew Arlig, ‘Medieval Mereology’, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Fall 2011 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/mereology-medieval/> [accessed 19 August 2013]; Achille Varzi, ‘Mereology’, in Zalta (Winter 2012 edn.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/mereology/> [accessed 19 August 2013]. See also Chapter 6.

<sup>68</sup> Hans Booms, ‘Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources’, *Archivaria*, 24 (1987), 69-107. Originally published as ‘Gesellschaftsordnung und Überlieferungsbildung: Zur Problematik archivarischer Quellenbewertung’ in *Archivalische Zeitschrift*, 68 (1972), 3-40. The English translation is by Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhower, 80. See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.3. and Chapter 4, section 4.3.

<sup>69</sup> Booms, ‘Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage’, 104.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>72</sup> Hans Booms, ‘Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity’, *Archivaria*, 33 (1991/92), 25-33, (25, 33).

<sup>73</sup> Booms, ‘Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage’, 74.

gradient of historical events scaled according to societal significance'.<sup>74</sup> In other words, archivists could identify 'legitimate value standards' against which archives could be measured.<sup>75</sup>

Booms' theory places value not in the records themselves, but in the value systems of the records' creators, those in society who created the records for a specific purpose and as part of a specific activity. Such value is regarded by Booms as constant because it is not subject to any subsequent trends of historical research but is grounded in the context in which the records originated. Booms' theory necessarily attached a great importance to the archival principle of provenance, in arguing that the structure and context of the creation of the records was an essential component of the attribution of value.<sup>76</sup> Booms' theory can thus be interpreted to define archives 'on the whole' as comprising parts that are the values of the creators of the archives, which include both the original creators of the records and the archivists who subsequently identify value and designate the records as archives. In Booms' view, these parts are identifiable and measurable and, as such, they constitute value that is unchanging. Booms' theory does not, of course, exclude records as also being parts of the organic whole of the archives, but it does not allow that they are parts which in themselves have any value: Booms posited that at no time is there value intrinsic to the records.<sup>77</sup> The second component of the Principle of archival value (AV-S) is satisfied because the non-value of the records remains constant and, as a result, such parts are irrelevant to the Principle.

Thus far, Booms' theory has been analysed in relation to the second component of the Principle of archival value (AV-S), concerning the constancy of the values of the parts of the archival whole. It is now time to consider the applicability of his theory in terms of the first component, namely the intrinsic value of archives 'on the whole', which is different from the sum of the values of its parts. It might seem natural to consider the application of the archival principle of provenance in relation to this component as has been previously discussed in the work of Jenkinson and Schellenberg; however, Booms' position on provenance is a little confusing. In the two articles on archival theory that he published in the English

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>75</sup> Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage', 104.

<sup>76</sup> Booms, 'Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity', 32.

<sup>77</sup> Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage', 82.

language, Booms presented two different views on provenance. In the first, he outlined the implementation of ‘*provenienz* [provenance]’ in the German archival endeavour, commenting that it was an arrangement principle that became used as a selection principle because of its advantages over ‘*pertinenz* [subject classification]’.<sup>78</sup> Booms was critical of this approach, arguing that it ‘obscured the need for concrete value concepts in the appraisal process’.<sup>79</sup> He concluded the article with an argument in favour of ‘*Pertinenzprinzip* [principle of subject classification]’ which ‘requires archivists to appraise the content of individual, subject-defined groups of information regardless of provenance’.<sup>80</sup> But in the second article, published in English four years later, Booms stated that ‘Archival appraisal [...] can only be completed according to and in the context of the provenance of records’.<sup>81</sup> At first glance, Booms appears to have contradicted himself, or changed his opinion.<sup>82</sup> However, the author believes that this is not the case; that it was never the principle of archival provenance that was in question, but rather the application of it. The context of Booms’ first article is the former East Germany, where appraisal became an ideological tool to ensure the preservation of the records of the State. In these circumstances, appraisal based on the principle of provenance meant keeping all the records originating from certain records’ creators because they were judged to possess inherent value regardless of their content, and understandably Booms was critical of this simplistic approach.<sup>83</sup>

Booms believed that provenance was important, and he detailed the analysis of the administrative structures and functions of records’ creators as a necessary element of his appraisal documentation plan.<sup>84</sup> But he also argued that provenance was not to be considered in isolation, but alongside a consideration of how documentary heritage was formed as a derivative of society itself; through an analysis of the patterns of societal relationships that would reveal the societal values

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 87. Italics in original.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 101. Italics in original.

<sup>81</sup> Booms, ‘Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity’, 32.

<sup>82</sup> It should be noted that Booms’ article ‘Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage’ was written and published in German fifteen years before it was published in English. The second article to appear in English was published just four years later, but nineteen years after the original German article.

<sup>83</sup> Booms, ‘Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage’, 87-8.

<sup>84</sup> Booms, ‘Überlieferungsbildung: Keeping Archives as a Social and Political Activity’, 33.

inherent in the documentation.<sup>85</sup> The author therefore believes that Booms' view of provenance is consistent with an interpretation that it adds value to the archives 'on the whole'. The value of the archives 'on the whole' involves an analysis of the context of the records' provenance, through which societal relationship values are added to the value systems of the records' creators, contributing to an archival value that is greater than a mere sum of the parts. In this way, therefore, Booms' theory can be interpreted as fully supporting the (AV-S) formulation of the Principle of archival value:

(AV-S) Archival value entails that (i) archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the values of the parts are constant.

### **7.3.5. Analogy with the archival theories of David Bearman, Terry Cook and Helen Samuels**

In the 1980s and 1990s, the US theorist David Bearman posited an archival theory of value, which also shifted the emphasis away from the records themselves, in this case to the functions and structures of the records' creators. Bearman argued that traditional approaches to archival appraisal that attempted to create a 'representative' chronicle of society were doomed to failure because of the inherent bias in the process.<sup>86</sup> He instead contended that archivists should focus on 'selecting what should be documented rather than what documentation should be kept'.<sup>87</sup> He argued that instead of focusing on the appraisal of individual records or series of records, archivists should make appraisal judgements before the records are created, by working with the records' creators to ensure that they document certain activities and functions.<sup>88</sup> Bearman argued that value lies not in the records, but in the extent to which the records are evidence of such activities and functions; and that all archival endeavour should be focused on the creation, maintenance, preservation and accessibility of this evidence.<sup>89</sup> He argued that because functions 'exist independently', archival appraisal 'based on business function and [...] guided by

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 31. Booms, 'Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage', 101-2.

<sup>86</sup> David Bearman, *Archival Methods, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report No. 9* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1989), 12-14.

<sup>87</sup> Bearman, *Archival Methods*, 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>89</sup> Bearman, 'Archival Strategies', AA, 58.4 (1995), 380-413.

the principles of organizational risk management' would ensure the preservation of this evidence.<sup>90</sup>

Central to Bearman's theory is his re-working of the archival principle of provenance: 'content, structure and context must be joined for a record to be evidence'.<sup>91</sup> Bearman was particularly concerned that traditional archival methods were insufficient to deal with the complexities of electronic records and electronic recordkeeping.<sup>92</sup> He argued that only through an extended application of the principle of provenance, which emphasized the relationship between the creating activity and the records created, could electronic records be successfully managed and preserved.<sup>93</sup> Bearman's theory can thus be interpreted in a similar manner to that of Booms, substituting the value-holding parts of the organic whole of archives from the creators' value system (as identified by Booms) by the creators' functions (as identified by Bearman). Bearman argued that the functions of the records' creators are identifiable and assessable and, as such, it can be argued that they constitute parts whose values are constant.<sup>94</sup> This approach towards the Principle of archival value again interprets the organic whole of archives in its widest sense, to include components other than records that have intrinsic value, and which contribute to the value of the archives 'on the whole'. The value of the archives 'on the whole' also involves the provenance of the records, through which value is added, thus contributing to an archival value that is greater than the sum of the parts.

Bearman's theory influenced several other writers whose own work can also be interpreted to support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-S). For example, in the early 1990s, Canadian archivist Terry Cook developed Bearman's ideas about the business functions of records and applied them more

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<sup>90</sup> Bearman, 'Archival Strategies', 383.

<sup>91</sup> David Bearman, *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organisations* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1994), 191.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Bearman, *Archival Methods*; and David Bearman, 'Archival Data Management to Archive Organisational Accountability for Electronic Records', *AM*, 21.1 (1993), 14-21.

<sup>93</sup> David Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, 'The Power of the Principle of Provenance', *Archivaria*, 21 (1985/86), 14-27, especially 24-6.

<sup>94</sup> Bearman posited various means of assessing creators' functions including identifying positions in organizational hierarchies over time, the forms of documentary material being created, the access points available to the records, and the relationships to other records' creators. See Bearman and Lytle.

broadly to include wider societal-cultural functions of records and recordkeeping.<sup>95</sup> What Cook called his ‘macro-appraisal’ approach was a top-down approach that looked for values not in the records themselves but in the functions and structures that created the records. Also influenced by Booms, underpinning Cook’s theory was a belief that these structures were ‘a manifestation of societal functions’.<sup>96</sup>

In 1992, US archivist Helen Willa Samuels developed the ideas of Bearman and Cook into an appraisal approach, which became known as ‘functional analysis’. This approach incorporated some of Cook’s macro-appraisal ideas within the function-based approach of Bearman.<sup>97</sup> Samuels suggested that archivists should focus on the activities and functions of an organization rather than on its structures and hierarchies, arguing that there is a constancy in the former, which make them a better basis for appraisal decisions.<sup>98</sup>

All these approaches to archival appraisal locate value in parts of the organic whole of archives that are other than records: the value of such parts can be regarded as constant; and, whilst the value of the parts contributes to the value of the archives as a whole, the value of the archives ‘on the whole’ also includes a separate, additional, value that stems from the nexus of relationships between records, activities, functions, structures, creators and society.<sup>99</sup> In this way, the approaches of Bearman, Cook and Samuels can be interpreted to support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value:

(AV-S) Archival value entails that (i) archives ‘on the whole’ have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the values of the parts are constant.

However, although as interpreted thus far the theories of Cook can be viewed as supporting the strong interpretation of the Principle, his work also raises some difficulties regarding the constancy or universality of the value of the parts. Cook

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<sup>95</sup> Terry Cook, ‘The Impact of David Bearman on Modern Archival Thinking: An Essay of Personal Reflection and Critique’, *Archives and Museum Informatics*, 11.1 (1997), 15-37.

<sup>96</sup> Terry Cook, ‘Mind Over Matter: Towards a New Theory of Archival Appraisal’, in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. by Barbara L. Craig (Ontario, Canada: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992), 38-70, (49).

<sup>97</sup> Helen Willa Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Lanham, MD., SAA and Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998). First published in 1992.

<sup>98</sup> Samuels, 5.

<sup>99</sup> See Cook, *Mind Over Matter*, 5.

recognized the importance of postmodernist thought in leading archivists to acknowledge their role in shaping the archives. In 1997, he wrote:

Archivists have [...] changed over the past century from being passive keepers of an entire documentary residue left by creators to becoming active shapers of the archival heritage. They have evolved from being, allegedly, impartial custodians of inherited records to becoming intervening agents who set record-keeping standards and, most pointedly, who select for archival preservation only a tiny proportion of the entire universe of recorded information. Archivists have become in this way very active builders of their own “houses of memory”.<sup>100</sup>

Cook asserted that archivists are subject to societal and cultural influences just as the records’ creators are; and in his later work he affirmed that archivists therefore ‘are literally co-creating archives as records as we create archives as institutions’.<sup>101</sup> Or, to put it another way, as he stated in the provocative title of an article in 2011: ‘we are what we keep; we keep what we are’. Although Cook was keen to affirm that this postmodern perspective on appraisal does not undermine ‘the very desirable character of archives as evidence’,<sup>102</sup> nonetheless it raises doubts about the extent to which judgements of value made by archivists can be objective, standardized or measured. It calls into question the concept of a universality of value as it follows that if an archivist’s appraisal judgement is influenced by the society in which she lives, so will another’s in a different time and place, potentially, even likely, resulting in a different judgement. In the ever-changing social and cultural context affirmed by Cook, it seems difficult to assert that values can remain constant.

The strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value is therefore found to be both supported and challenged by several different archival theories of value. The next section will explore whether a weak interpretation of the Principle of archival value can provide an alternative option.

#### **7.4. Transposition of the weak interpretation of the Principle of organic unities to the archival context**

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<sup>100</sup> Terry Cook, ‘What Is Past Is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future of the Paradigm Shift’, *Archivaria*, 43 (1997), 17-63, (46).

<sup>101</sup> Terry Cook, “‘We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are’: Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future”, *JSA*, 32.2. (2011), 174-189, (174).

<sup>102</sup> Cook, “‘We Are What We Keep’”, 179.



The weak interpretation of Moore's Principle of organic unities has been expressed as follows:

(OU2-W) A whole is an organic whole if and only if (i) it has an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

In summary, this interpretation emphasizes the disproportion of the value of the whole and the sum of the values of the parts, together with what Jonathan Dancy termed a 'variability' of value of the parts.<sup>103</sup> Rather than regarding the value of the part as intrinsic, Dancy proposed that it is another type of extrinsic value termed 'value-as-a-part' whose value can change as the part moves from whole to whole.<sup>104</sup> Thomas Hurka similarly interpreted Moore's Principle, by suggesting that the value of parts is conditional and therefore parts change their values when they enter wholes.<sup>105</sup> Any additional value is not to be found in the relation of the part to the whole in the whole, but rather in the part itself, whose value changed when it became part of the whole.<sup>106</sup> It should be noted that it is possible to detect a subtle distinction between the interpretations of Dancy and Hurka as regards whether the nature of change in value of the part when it enters the whole is potential or essential. This distinction need not trouble the reader at present, but will become relevant later in the chapter when discussing possible analogies between the Principle (AV-W) and the theories of Terry Eastwood and Theodore R. Schellenberg.

As before, this concept of the intrinsic value of an organic whole needs to be transposed into the archival context in order to create a framework in which ideas about archival value can be examined. Taking the two key components of the concept and modifying them to be meaningful within the archival context, the formulation can be expressed as follows:

(AV-W) Archival value entails that (i) archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

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<sup>103</sup> Jonathan Dancy, 'Moore's Account of Vindictive Punishment: A Test Case for Theories of Organic Unities', in *Themes from G. E. Moore: New Essays in Epistemology and Ethics*, ed. by Susanna Nuccetelli and Gary Seay (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 325-42, (326).

<sup>104</sup> Dancy, 327.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Hurka, 'Two Kinds of Organic Unity', *The Journal of Ethics*, 2 (1998), 299-320.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

The Principle of archival value in its weak interpretation thus formulated contains two components: (i) a disproportion between the value of the archives ‘on the whole’ and the values of the parts as they compose the archives as a whole; and (ii) a variability of the values of any parts whereby such values can change in value depending on whether or not they are part of the organic whole of the archives. The author’s analyses of possible interpretations of archival theories of value using the derived theory framework in the preceding sections have indicated that the Principle (AV-W) might be best supported by archival theories strongly influenced by postmodernist thinking, due to a shared emphasis on conditionality and variation.<sup>107</sup>

#### **7.4.1. Analogy with the archival theories of Tom Nesmith and Brien Brothman**

In 2002, Canadian archivist Tom Nesmith referenced the work of French postmodern theorist Jacques Derrida in arguing that although some of a record’s value is ‘inscribed in it by those who literally made it’, most of its value lies in ‘its context of interpretation’.<sup>108</sup> Nesmith argued that records and their values evolve over time through every single activity in which they are involved; through the process Derrida called ‘archivization’.<sup>109</sup> In Nesmith’s view, ‘records survive *because* they evolve and take on ever-changing new value’.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, Nesmith argued that the act of placing a record in an archival institution adds value by giving the record ‘a special status’.<sup>111</sup> Although not explicitly identified as such by Nesmith, his viewpoint is grounded in a theory of linguistic reality, which holds that our conception of reality is affected by the structure of our language; or, as Nesmith put it: ‘what we take for granted as clear reflections of reality is never separable from our means of communicating it’.<sup>112</sup> Central to his argument is the role of the archivist as a communicator, and thereby a constructor, of archives. Nesmith argued that as a result of the act of appraisal, of selecting the record for preservation in the archives, the record ‘is circled, framed or privileged for a particular type of

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<sup>107</sup> See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4. and Chapter 4, section 4.3.

<sup>108</sup> Tom Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives’, *AA*, 65.1 (2002), 24-41, (32).

<sup>109</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives’, 29-30; See also Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever – A Freudian Impression*, transl. by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

<sup>110</sup> Tom Nesmith, ‘Re-exploring the Continuum, Rediscovering Archives’, *AM*, 36.2 (2008), 34-53, (39). Italics in original.

<sup>111</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives’, 33.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. See also Lord Quinton, ‘Linguistic Philosophy’, in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Ted Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 489-91.

viewing’.<sup>113</sup> He contended that through the ‘transformation’ into archives, not only does the context for understanding the records change, but also that the records ‘changed what they *are*’.<sup>114</sup>

We appear to be presented with the same confusion regarding the definition of ‘archives’ that was previously introduced by Schellenberg, because Nesmith seems to move without explicitly acknowledging so from the idea of archives as an aggregation of records to that of the archives as an institution. Nesmith’s argument appears to suggest that records are archives simply because they have been placed in an archival institution. Jenkinson might have argued the reverse of course, namely that they have been placed in an archival institution because they are archives. It is the view of the author that Nesmith did not intend to define archives in terms of an archival institution, but instead that he used this argument, which is reminiscent of the philosopher Arthur Danto’s ‘artworld’ theory of aesthetic value, in an effort to highlight the contingent nature of archival value.<sup>115</sup> Nesmith did not, for example, question the importance of the principle of provenance, but instead he emphasized its role in the archival endeavour by suggesting that it should be widened to allow for the many ‘societal and intellectual contexts shaping the actions of the people and institutions who made and maintained the records [...] and the custodial history of the records’.<sup>116</sup> What is clear is that Nesmith believed that acts of appraisal, transmission, preservation and interpretation of records by archivists change their values.<sup>117</sup> The author argues that this notion of a transformation affecting the value of the records can be viewed as analogous to saying that their values as parts change as they enter the organic whole of the archives.

Thus interpreted through the framework of the derived theory, Nesmith’s arguments about the values in archives support a theory of archival value as formulated in Principle (AV-W). His approach satisfies both components of the weak interpretation of the Principle by asserting that records, have no intrinsic value but instead their values are variable, changing with every action of the archivist; and that it is through the multiple contexts of ‘archivization’ that value is added to the

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<sup>113</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives’, 32.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 33. Italics in original.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.

<sup>116</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives,’ 35.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

records, contributing to an archival value of the archives ‘on the whole’. In the words of Nesmith, ascribing archival value ‘often raises records which were once thought quite ordinary to this new special status as “archives”, or [...] even [...] as archival “treasures”’.<sup>118</sup> The value of the archives ‘on the whole’, necessarily including the value of the records as archives, thus constitutes an archival value that is different from the sum of the values of the parts as mere records.

In 1991, Brien Brothman posited a similar approach to archival appraisal by drawing on the work of postmodern theorist Michel Foucault.<sup>119</sup> Brothman identified the influence that wider society asserted on archival work, and aimed to encourage ‘broader reflection about the cultural meanings of contemporary archival practice and the context within which these take shape and place’.<sup>120</sup> Brothman drew specifically on Foucault’s ideas about the grouping and ordering of things and asserted that:

archival appraisal [...] is not merely a process of value identification but of value creation or destruction. It entails more than simply identifying archival or historical value that already exists in a document before archivists encounter it. As they make decisions about [...] value, archivists in effect create, initiate or perpetuate an axiological commitment which is manifested in the permanence of the order that emerges. [...] In principle, [...] once having been judged to have permanent value, the document’s right to a place in the archives and society is irrevocable.<sup>121</sup>

Again, using the framework of the derived theory we can interpret Brothman’s approach to support a conception of archival value as an organic whole consisting (in part) of the variable values of its parts, which Brothman identified as the values of the records as they evolve with each activity of creation, processing and use. The organic whole also comprises the value of the archives ‘on the whole’ which, according to Brothman, is established in the varying cultural and social values of the ‘bounded spaces’ of archival institutions.<sup>122</sup> Brothman argued that ‘archival institutions, then, embody a social vocation to create a special space in which a

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<sup>118</sup> Nesmith, ‘Seeing Archives’, 33.

<sup>119</sup> Brien Brothman, ‘Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice’, *Archivaria*, 32 (1991), 78-100. See also Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>120</sup> Brothman, 79.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

certain order of values prevails'.<sup>123</sup> Brothman's reference to the archival institution rather than to a concept of an archival aggregation again introduces an element of confusion. But he, at least, is clearer on his intended meaning, in stating that such institutions 'embody' and 'reflect' our social and cultural values; as well as physically containing the records that constitute archives.<sup>124</sup>

The author does not believe that Brothman called into question the idea of archival aggregation, namely that archives are constituted by parts such as records, but rather, that he identified other components which together constitute the organic whole of archives. Archives do not exist in a vacuum and Brothman argued that all archival activity is contingent – both influenced by, and influencing, wider society. He disputed traditional notions of the archivist as a 'neutral catalyst', 'servant' or 'mere instrument' and instead asserted the active role taken by the archivist in 'a dynamic of negotiated social and cultural relations'.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, archives themselves are not 'culturally transparent' but are 'constituents [...] within a larger historically characterizable structure which both determines and is determined by archival practice'.<sup>126</sup> The value of the archives 'on the whole' comprises the changing values of the parts as archives together with the wider social and cultural values that are embodied within the activities (for example, selection, cataloguing, exhibition) of archival institutions.

The archival appraisal theories of both Brothman and Nesmith can thus be interpreted to support the weak interpretation of the Principle of archival value:

- (AV-W) Archival value entails that (i) archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and
- (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

It is perhaps also worth noting that both Nesmith and Brothman would likely argue that not only is the value of the part variable, but so too is the value of the whole. From the postmodernist perspective which they both adopt, the parts would be regarded as subject to constant change irrespective of any membership of the organic whole of the archives and the whole itself would not be viewed as having an intrinsic

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 91. Again, parallels can be made with Danto's 'artworld' theory of aesthetic value.

value, but would instead be subject to the same variability of value. Archival value, as constituted by each activity of archival creation, processing and use; and the wider cultural values reflected by the activities of archival institutions, is ever-evolving and variable.

#### **7.4.2. Analogy with the archival theories of Lawrence Dowler, Theodore R. Schellenberg and Terry Eastwood**

A significant strand of archival appraisal theory has focused on the use of archives as a possible measurement of their value. Chapter 2 detailed the long history of utilitarian approaches to appraisal that have been particularly prevalent in the US, notably through the writings of Philip G. Bauer, Maynard Brichford, Theodore R. Schellenberg, Lawrence Dowler and Mark A. Greene.<sup>127</sup> For example, Bauer argued that ‘Public value in records [...] is purely utilitarian. Future utility must appear to be probable if continued preservation is to be justified’;<sup>128</sup> whilst some forty years later, Dowler embraced the idea that the value of archives could be articulated through an examination of the use of archives.<sup>129</sup> More recently, Greene argued that use was ‘the only empirical measurement’ of value in archives and as such was a legitimate appraisal criterion.<sup>130</sup> Canadian archivist Terry Eastwood also highlighted the importance of use in appraisal, arguing that rather than possessing a ‘so-called intrinsic value’, instead, ‘the document is an enduring entity, its faces to the world as many as the uses conceived for it’.<sup>131</sup>

This thesis has already discussed how Schellenberg’s archival theory identified two different types of use-value: the primary values for which the records were created and maintained by the creator, and the secondary values for which the records are selected and retained in an archival institution.<sup>132</sup> The earlier discussion of Schellenberg’s theory in this Chapter raised questions about the difficulty of identifying some of these values and also challenged the notion of a constancy of

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<sup>127</sup> See Chapter 2, especially sections 2.2.3., 2.3.2. and 2.3.4.

<sup>128</sup> Philip G. Bauer, *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records. Staff Information Circular No. 13*, June 1946, With comments thereon by Herman Kahn (Washington DC: The National Archives, 1946), 5.

<sup>129</sup> Lawrence Dowler, ‘The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records’, *AA*, 51.1/2 (1988), 74-88.

<sup>130</sup> Mark A. Greene, ‘“The Surest Proof”: A Utilitarian Approach to Appraisal’, *Archivaria*, 45 (1998), 127-69.

<sup>131</sup> Terry Eastwood, ‘How Goes It With Appraisal?’, *Archivaria*, 36 (1993), 111-21, (115).

<sup>132</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 16-17, 140-59.

value in records. This led the author to acknowledge that the work of Schellenberg cannot be interpreted to fully support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-S). Similar limitations can be applied to utilitarian-led approaches because, implicitly or explicitly, they each identify the records' value to be instrumental rather than intrinsic in nature: it is value for a purpose, and that purpose may change throughout the life of a record. Use-value is potentially subject to the vagaries of administrative processes or historical research trends. The value is not constant but changes as the record is used variously as a reference tool by its creators, or to protect the legal rights of individuals, or for historical research and so forth. As such, an utilitarian approach cannot support the strong interpretation of the Principle of archival value; but it does appear capable of satisfying the second component of the weaker interpretation of the Principle of archival value, namely: '(ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole'.

But can utilitarian approaches to archival appraisal satisfy the first component of the Principle (AV-W), namely: 'archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts'? The author believes it can, although support for the component is evidenced implicitly rather than explicitly in some of the theories discussed. For example, Dowler argued that there is a specific relationship between the use of information and the provision of information, which determines the value of records and therefore defines archival practices.<sup>133</sup> Dowler also referred to the 'value-added processes' of archival activity and the means by which archivists gain physical and intellectual control over the archives (i.e. through appraisal, arrangement and description activity).<sup>134</sup> The author argues that this implies that there is additional value generated from the archival activities, similar to Derrida's notion of 'archivization'. Archival value can therefore be seen as being constituted by a combination of this value and the variable values of the parts (the use-values(s) ascribed to the records) of the archives as a whole. However, in the case of many of the other utilitarian-based appraisal theories it is difficult to draw such analogies. The author suggests that one reason for this is the pragmatic emphasis of these approaches which, largely grounded in the US manuscript tradition, tended to follow a taxonomic approach to appraising the value

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<sup>133</sup> Dowler, 86.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 86.

of archives.<sup>135</sup> This approach necessarily focuses on individual records rather than aggregations and generally has a weak conceptual understanding of concepts such as *fonds* or series.<sup>136</sup>

The utilitarian-based archival appraisal theory which appears most applicable in analogy with the Principle of archival value (AV-W) is that of Eastwood. However, Eastwood's theory of appraisal is not, strictly-speaking, based solely on utility but instead combines several quite diverse theoretical aspects. In contrast to some of his US counterparts, Eastwood clearly articulated a concept of archives as 'a complex whole, the parts of which are interdependent'.<sup>137</sup> He understood archives in terms of an aggregation comprising records, where each record has a unique place in the structure of the whole, in 'its position in relation to other documents'.<sup>138</sup> Eastwood also emphasized the importance of the context of a record's creation in understanding the value of the record as part of the archives.<sup>139</sup> Yet despite this apparent stress on the importance of provenance, Eastwood argued elsewhere that provenance cannot form the sole basis of appraisal as it is 'abstract' and 'devoid of any ready empirical means of evaluation'.<sup>140</sup> In contrast, he argued that the 'social facts of use are determinable expressions of need and therefore of value or benefit'.<sup>141</sup>

Eastwood's theory of appraisal also combined other elements; for example, in addition to use-value, he placed an emphasis on the importance of records as evidence.<sup>142</sup> According to Eastwood, the context of the record's creation is part of the value of archives because of the unique character to 'capture a moment in time, fix and freeze it' which enables archives to serve as 'an evidential window on the action-orientated past'.<sup>143</sup> Greene critiqued this aspect of Eastwood's theory, arguing that it suggests an objective definition of 'archivalness' that has nothing to do with the record's potential or actual utility, and the author would agree with this

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<sup>135</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

<sup>136</sup> This is further evidenced by the lack of US-led development in these theoretical areas compared to European, Canadian or Australian archival theorists. See Chapter 3.

<sup>137</sup> Terry Eastwood, 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal', in *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. by Barbara L. Craig (Ontario, Canada: ACA, 1992), 71-89, (72).

<sup>138</sup> Eastwood, 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal', 72.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>140</sup> Eastwood, 'How Goes It With Appraisal?', 116-7.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 112. See also Eastwood, 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal'.

<sup>143</sup> Eastwood, 'How Goes It With Appraisal?', 112.



critique.<sup>144</sup> Eastwood also emphasized the role archives play in memory formation, arguing that it is through the selection and preservation of archives that public or social memory is made; that the evidence of past actions informs the present in an ongoing dialogue.<sup>145</sup> So, although Eastwood appeared to support a utility-based approach to appraisal, his writings also suggest that use is not the only criteria for retaining archives and that considerations as to the evidential character of records and their role in forming social memory must also be made. He seemed to assert that all of these different elements are what makes records (parts of) archives.

Eastwood's multi-faceted approach requires considerable 'unpicking' as his writing shifts between different theoretical concepts and ideas with little or no analysis of how these might relate to each other in a wider conceptual framework. The author believes that this stems from Eastwood's attempt to reconcile the positivist idea that archives are 'objective' and 'exist as objects in reality independent of thought'<sup>146</sup> with postmodern notions about the socially- and culturally-dependent nature of records creation. Although the author questions the extent to which this attempt is ultimately successful, nonetheless, Eastwood's theories can be interpreted to support the weak interpretation of the Principle of archival value:

(AV-W) Archival value entails that (i) archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts and (ii) the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole.

The first component of the Principle is satisfied because Eastwood's approach identifies a relationship between the records and the activities that led to their creation, and a relationship between individual records and the aggregation to which they belong, that together contribute to the value of the archives, thus constituting an archival value of the archives 'on the whole' that is different from the sum of the values of the parts. But in order to determine whether his approach can satisfy the second component of the Principle, it is necessary to reflect on the two different senses by which the second component of the Principle (AV-W) can be understood. This is a subtle distinction which stems from the different axiological interpretations

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<sup>144</sup> Greene, 143.

<sup>145</sup> Eastwood, 'How Goes It With Appraisal?', 113.

<sup>146</sup> Eastwood, 'Towards a Social Theory of Appraisal', 83.

of Moore's Principle of organic unities as exemplified in the work of Dancy and Hurka. Dancy's variabilist interpretation allows for the *possibility* of change to the value of a part upon entering a whole, whereas Hurka's conditionality interpretation can be understood to imply the *necessity* of change.<sup>147</sup>

Using the framework of the derived theory, Eastwood's approach can be understood to identify the parts that contribute value to the organic whole of archives to include both a constant value (the evidential character of records which is intrinsic; it is determined and fixed within the context of the record's creation), and a variable value (the instrumental value of the records based on their use). Whether this approach satisfies the second component of (AV-W) depends on whether the expression 'the value of the part can vary' entails the possibility of variability as argued by Dancy, or whether it entails that the value of the part *must* vary when it enters the whole, as implied by Hurka. If it is understood in a narrow sense to entail the *necessity* of change, then Eastwood's theory does not satisfy the Principle since it includes a non-changing part-value that contributes to the value of the organic whole of archives. If, however, the expression 'the value of the part can vary' is understood in a looser sense, with the term 'can' entailing only the *possibility* of variability, then it can be argued that Eastwood's theory does satisfy the Principle because there is no compulsion for a part-value to change when it enters the whole. Therefore the value of archives 'on the whole' can be constituted by mixed parts: some parts whose value is variable and others whose value is constant.

As a final point to this section, the admittance of two possible senses of this expression can be similarly applied to the archival theories of Schellenberg and therefore also makes it possible to demonstrate his support for the weak interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-W). Earlier in the chapter the author detailed how Schellenberg's definition of archives can be interpreted as satisfying the first component of the Principle, namely 'that archives 'on the whole' have an intrinsic value different from the sum of the values of its parts'.<sup>148</sup> Schellenberg identified the parts, which contribute value to the organic whole of archives, as comprising the primary values of records (reasons for creation) that are constant, and the evidential and informational values of records (reasons for

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<sup>147</sup> See also Chapter 6.

<sup>148</sup> See section 7.3.3.

preservation) that are variable. Therefore, using the same arguments as above, if the second component of the Principle, namely that ‘the value of the part can vary when it enters the whole’, is understood to entail the possibility of variability rather than the necessity of it, Schellenberg’s theory also satisfies the second component and thus can arguably be interpreted to fully support the weak interpretation of the Principle of archival value (AV-W).

### **7.5. Concluding remarks**

This chapter has developed and modified the axiological Principle of organic unities to the archival context. The application of strong and weak interpretations of the Principle has provided a wide framework in which to consider diverse archival theories of value. Generally speaking, theories of archival value based on Moore’s Principle of organic unities are found to be supported within the archival literature, but the means by which they are supported differs greatly depending on the particular archival theory. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their shared origins within the positivist tradition at the beginning of the twentieth century, Jenkinson’s archival theory can be seen as straightforwardly analogous to the axiological theory of Moore. Less predictable, perhaps, are the analogies that can be drawn with archival theories which are based within the postmodernist paradigm, for example, those of Nesmith or Cook, to support the Principle of archival value, albeit in its weaker interpretation. Arguably, the framework of the derived theory has enabled a consideration of archival theories which, whilst acknowledging the differing paradigms in which they are based, can also partially transcend them through re-interpretation and translation into the author’s language, terminology and ideas as used in the derived theory.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, the author argues that her exploration of the archival theories in this new way has presented a better understanding of some of the traditional theorists like Jenkinson, and has suggested that some elements of these theories have a continuing resonance today.

The discussion has reflected on the different types of archival aggregations and the varied terminology used to describe them by archival theorists. The chapter has demonstrated that part-whole relationships underpin most archival theories of

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<sup>149</sup> The author is not, of course, claiming that her work sits outside of any paradigm, but rather claims that being aware of such influences and constructs can assist in avoiding obvious preconceived notions.

value, even if they are often implied rather than explicitly stated or defined. It has also demonstrated that within the part-whole dynamic is a range of possible schemas; from physical (and intellectual) bounded structures such as *fonds* or series which are made up of individual records, to more abstract concepts of archival wholes that include the activities of creators, archivists and users. In particular, the Principle has facilitated an understanding of the organic whole of archives as one which may comprise many different sorts of parts that have value(s) that contribute to its intrinsic value ‘on the whole’.

The discussion has also demonstrated support for a theory of archival value in which there is something valuable about the make-up of the organic whole and its parts that contributes a separate value to the parts and the whole, and thus results in the intrinsic value of the organic whole ‘on the whole’; in other words, the value of the whole entails more than the value of the sum of its individual parts. This allows a more tangible grasp of a concept of value ‘on the whole’, which is often expressed in the archival context in purely emotional or instinctual terms; usually along the lines that there is something about archives that makes them valuable and worthy of preservation, based on elements besides their content or their context, which is yet nonetheless seemingly incapable of definition. This concept of archival value also indicates the relevance of archival practice and the role played by archivists as professional practitioners as contributors to the value of archives. The importance of the role of the archivist is explicitly promoted in archival theories that follow in the tradition of Jenkinson.<sup>150</sup> Arguably, it is also supported in other theories which emphasize the evolution of the role of archivist from passive records custodian to active records keeper.<sup>151</sup> Alan R. Bell presented an articulation of the role of the archivist in the face of changing technology and postmodernist theory, arguing that it is a role which has been refined, and which:

acknowledges the centrality and importance of the record to the profession, to societies and to communities, and the enduring nature of the record as a conceptual construct, whilst recognizing the

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<sup>150</sup> For example, Norton, Duranti, Eastwood. See also Chapter 2.

<sup>151</sup> For example, Cook, Brothman, Nesmith. See also Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

multiple claims upon records and the need for equal and innovative access to them.<sup>152</sup>

Arguably, the whole range of professional activities undertaken by the archivist, whilst not being the only component, is nonetheless an essential component of archival value. In acknowledging the role of wider society in value formation, the author believes that there is a danger of negating, or underplaying, the professional role of archivists in the process; of proclaiming that ‘archives are valuable’ rather than ‘these archives are valuable because of archival recordkeeping’.<sup>153</sup> A comprehensive view of archival value must include the archivist and archival activities (including, for example, appraisal, cataloguing, description and exhibition). Archivists, of course, are as influenced by wider socio-cultural factors as are record creators and users. In recognizing this, the profession needs to be open and transparent in understanding and communicating the value of archives.

The author has identified a lack of rigour in many archival theories, even in the work of some archival theorists who are generally perceived as having a reputation for precision and thoroughness. In large part, the author believes this is due to the difficulty of the subject area and highlights the simplistic approaches taken by many in the archival field who have thought it straightforward to identify and judge archival value. This thesis has evidenced that the concept of value in archives is complicated, demanding and interesting; the author has discovered at first hand many of the complex theoretical issues involved and therefore applauds all those who have similarly tried to address them. However, a more rigorous approach towards the definition and explication of theoretical concepts in this area, and more generally in archival theory as a whole, would greatly benefit the archival profession. This thesis has shown that archival theory is a legitimate field of study, and the development of robust theory in the discipline would support future research.

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<sup>152</sup> Alan R. Bell, ‘Participation vs principle: does technological change marginalise recordkeeping theory?’, in *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*, ed. by Caroline Brown (London: Facet Publishing 2014), 227-52, (246).

<sup>153</sup> The author is grateful to Dr. Jenny Bunn, UCL, for these thoughts which were raised in a discussion at the ARA Section for Records Management AGM and mini conference, ‘Who do we think we are? Professional identity and career changes in Records Management’, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London, 28 March 2014.

The next chapter will conclude the thesis by reflecting on the research methodology, presenting a summary of the main findings of this study, and suggesting areas for further research.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusion**

### **8.1. Chapter summary**

This chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting on the research methodology and considering the advantages and limitations of the approach. A summary of the thesis and its main findings is presented, together with recommendations for further research.

### **8.2. Reflections on research methodology**

This thesis employs the research methodology of Theory Derivation, which aims to give new insight and explanations for ideas and concepts in one discipline, through the application of analogous ideas and concepts in another discipline.<sup>1</sup> It is a methodology that draws its primary data from the literature of the chosen disciplines. This approach has advantages over methodologies that rely on alternative data sources, such as surveys or interviews, in that the literature is readily accessible (via published books and articles); and it can encompass ideas from several different countries and different historical periods. Use of this methodology has allowed the researcher to trace the development and evolution of archival theory and axiological theory; as well as the links between theories in different times and places.

There are, however, disadvantages to this approach: with potentially a huge volume of material available to read in the field of interest it was a challenge for the researcher to limit the boundaries of her research; a challenge that was even harder in the external discipline with which she was less familiar. Her initial expectation that identifying relevant literature dealing with value within the archival sphere would be straightforward was soon replaced with the realization that she would have to look beyond the literature on appraisal and also consider writings about archival arrangement and description. Approaching the philosophical literature was a greater challenge still as the author had to gain a full understanding of the context of the theories of G. E. Moore and the place of his work within the axiological canon.

Nursing theorists Walker and Avant identified a danger that researchers using Theory Derivation methodology might fail ‘to take into account any dissimilarities

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.5 for full details of the methodology.

or dis-analogies present in the parent theory'.<sup>2</sup> This danger became clear to the author during her transposition of the axiological Principle of organic unities to the archival context and subsequent development of the Principle of archival value and consideration of it in an analogy with various theories of value found in the archival literature. It became apparent to the author that whilst some archival theories fitted well with the Principle, others were less analogous. Rather than dismiss this second group of theories as irrelevant, the author instead acknowledged their importance in providing other information of use in the development of her ideas; for example in thinking about different types of archival aggregation and the concept of an archival whole that is comprised of parts other than records.

The use of literature as the sole data source raises a question regarding the extent to which the ideas and concepts found in published literature are widely accepted by practitioners or reflect the realities of practice; and therefore the extent to which any findings based on the literature alone can be comprehensively applicable. The numbers of individual archivists who are published authors are small compared to the total number of practising archivists, thus allowing the potential for many different perspectives to exist that never appear in the professional literature. The author believes that this is a particular issue within the archival profession where beliefs about a disconnect between theory and practice are widespread, and there is a tendency for a small group of 'usual suspects' to be the dominant proponents of the published literature; although this situation is not unique to the archival profession. As a practitioner herself the author firmly believes in the co-dependency of theory and practice; and argues that the elucidation of the one advances the other. The content and direction of this thesis rests on this premise. The author has worked in archives and records management for over sixteen years and has gained practice-based knowledge of the field through attending conferences, reading grey literature, undertaking training, attending seminars and professional networking. She has brought this wealth of experience to bear on her exploration of the theoretical dimensions of archive and recordkeeping. Whilst the main consideration of this study has been archival theory, its relationship with archival practice has remained a central theme as the author has investigated debates about the relevance and

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<sup>2</sup> Lorraine Olszewski Walker and Kay Coalson Avant, *Strategies for Theory Construction in Nursing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (Connecticut: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1988), 190.



interaction of theory in archival practice.<sup>3</sup> The author is in agreement with Henttonen's view that Theory Derivation has provided an interdisciplinary framework that has opened up concepts in archival theory, given new insights into what records and archives are, and has provided new ideas for discussing them.<sup>4</sup> In doing so, the author has reflected on the ideas and presuppositions that underpin and sustain archival practice.

### 8.3. Summary of thesis

Chapter 1 set out the primary research questions which this thesis aimed to explore, as follows:

- is there something intrinsically valuable about archives? Does such a thing as 'archival value' exist?;
- if so, can we define what this value is?; and
- can we measure it?

The author began her exploration of these questions by looking at concepts of value articulated within the archival appraisal literature (Chapter 2). She has given a chronological account of the development of appraisal theories, focusing on the intellectual concepts that support the theories rather than on their practical applications, and showing the overlapping developments and links between different theories. The account indicated a broadening of appraisal theory from early domination by British archivist Sir Hilary Jenkinson, and later US archivist Theodore R. Schellenberg, to the admittance of a wide spectrum of different theories in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The impact of developments in wider society upon appraisal theory has been noted, particularly through advances in technology and the proliferation of digital records; and, at a more theoretical level, through the postmodernist shift in critical thinking. For some archivists these influential changes necessitated new approaches to appraisal, whilst for others they provided an opportunity to re-interpret traditional approaches to fit the new paradigms. The author has explored how further impact from new ideas about memory, accountability, power, and other phenomena, has continued to shape

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.2. and section 2.3.4.

<sup>4</sup>See also Pekka Henttonen, *Records, Rules and Speech Acts, Academic Dissertation University of Tampere Department of Information Studies* (Finland: University of Tampere Press, 2007), 25.

appraisal theory; and has argued that divisions emerged within the archival community as archivists sought solutions to deal with the challenges of twenty-first century recordkeeping. These divisions have resulted in a multiplicity of perspectives as archivists attempt to reconcile the traditional emphasis on authority and control with a newer focus on inclusivity and transparency.

The author continued her exploration of archival theories by examining theories about arrangement and description and the evaluative judgements they entail; from ideas about the implicit role of such activities in revealing value, to the notion that such activities explicitly create value (Chapter 3). Again focusing on the intellectual basis of the theories, the author examined the principle of provenance and considered different interpretations of the principle relating to *respect des fonds* and original order. The chapter introduced the conceptualization of an archival aggregation as a *fonds* and discussed its perceived nature as an organic whole with component parts, as well as more recent ideas about the notion of a 'conceptual fonds'. Similar themes emerged as the author traced the impact of modern recordkeeping and postmodernist theory on the development of archival arrangement and description, with a concomitant shift from the notion of an archival aggregation whose boundaries are clearly delineated in relation to the context of its creator, to the view that archives are characterized within wider contextual groupings that include multiple relationships and perspectives.

The author proceeded from the specifics of archival theory to a general discussion of some of the dominant discourses that have impacted upon the archival profession from the late twentieth century (Chapter 4). The author explored the underlying value assumptions of the cultural and heritage sectors and the information and records management sectors; and how ideas in these sectors have influenced archival thinking about value. The author argued that divergent approaches towards recordkeeping have been reinforced by theories in other related disciplines that variously emphasize the role of archives as material culture, collective memory, catalysts for economic regeneration, legal evidence or information assets. The chapter introduced the philosophical concepts of intrinsic value and instrumental value as they have been employed by other sectors and transferred into the archival discourse.

The broadening of the exploration of value continued as the author moved from her primary consideration of archival theory to focus on discussions about value in the discipline of philosophy (Chapter 5). The author presented an overview of the historical development of axiology (a sub-branch of ethics dealing with the question of value) and detailed its key themes. The author posited that although the philosophical debate about value has taken place independently of archival theory, parallel developments are visible, notably in the growing influence of postmodernism and a shift from all-encompassing theories of value to a complex web of varied concepts of value that can be combined in multiple ways. The chapter presented the predominant philosophical debates about value, centred on several inter-connected questions: is value subjective or objective?; is value instrumental or intrinsic?; and is value commensurable?. Through an exploration of the dominant discourses in axiology, the reader was introduced to the general concepts, language and terminology of the philosophy of value.

The study identified a parent theory from axiology for use in derivation and the next chapter of the thesis discussed this theory in detail (Chapter 6). The author outlined her chosen theory, namely Moore's Principle of organic unities, and explained the context of Moore's work, particularly in connection with definitions of parts and wholes, and the concept of an organic whole. The author's understanding of the Principle identified a disproportion between the value of the whole and the value of the parts and suggested a compounded value of the organic whole. The author detailed critiques of the Principle that were contemporary to the publication of Moore's theory in 1903 and explored how his work was ignored for much of the later twentieth century, before being re-considered by twenty-first century philosophers. The author explained how the lack of consensus within philosophical debate about value has led to two different interpretations of Moore's Principle: a strong interpretation, which emphasized the unchanging nature of the value of the parts in combination with the value of the whole; and a weak interpretation, which allowed the value of the parts to change when they enter the whole.

The author completed the final steps in the Theory Derivation methodology by transposing the axiological Principle of organic unities into the archival context, with the subsequent development of a Principle of archival value and consideration of it in an analogy with various theories of value found in the archival literature

(Chapter 7). An exploration of both weak and strong interpretations of the Principle of archival value enabled the author to consider the ways in which different archival theorists have defined parts and wholes, and the ways in which they have ascribed values to them. The author found that the Principle of archival value provided a unifying framework in which archival theories that are different in terms of their underlying concepts and paradigms could be considered collectively.

## **8.4. Reflections on research questions**

### **8.4.1. Is there something intrinsically valuable about archives? Does such a thing as ‘archival value’ exist?**

The author has explored the various concepts of value found in the archival literature, in theories about appraisal and selection in Chapter 2, and in theories about arrangement and description in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 she outlined several concepts of value that originated in other discourses and which have impacted upon and influenced archival thinking about value. Her exploration of the philosophical literature and axiological theories of value in Chapters 5 and 6 facilitated a re-interpretation of archival concepts of value in Chapter 7. The axiological discussion, in particular, raised the possibility of multiple concepts of intrinsic value.<sup>5</sup> The adoption of a Principle of archival value, based on Moore’s Principle of organic unities, enabled the author to interpret several archival theories in support of the idea that there is something intrinsically valuable about archives by understanding the organic whole of archives in terms of a part-whole relationship, which may comprise many different sorts of parts that have value(s) that contribute to its intrinsic value ‘on the whole’.<sup>6</sup> The discussion in Chapter 7 suggested that the theories of Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Luciana Duranti can be interpreted as identifying a part-whole relationship in terms of archives as an aggregation of records (or documents) that possess an intrinsic value and whose value remains constant regardless of whether they are part of the whole or not.<sup>7</sup> The author also suggested that the theories of Hans Booms, David Bearman, Terry Cook and Helen Samuels can be interpreted as identifying other components within the organic whole of archives that have

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 7, sections 7.3.1. and 7.3.2.

unchanging intrinsic value (e.g. activities, functions, structures, creators and society) and which contribute to an intrinsic value of the archives ‘on the whole’.<sup>8</sup>

Using the framework of the derived theory, the author interpreted the theories of Tom Nesmith and Brien Brothman to support a concept of archival value as an organic whole consisting of the variable values of its parts (e.g. the values of the records as they evolve with each activity of creation, processing and use) and the value of the archives ‘on the whole’ (established in the cultural and social values of the archival institution).<sup>9</sup> The theories of Theodore R. Schellenberg and Terry Eastwood were interpreted by the author as supporting a concept of archival value as an organic whole consisting of mixed parts (possessing both variable and constant values).<sup>10</sup> The archival theories of Nesmith, Brothman, Schellenberg and Eastwood rely on a different concept of intrinsic value to those of Jenkinson, Duranti, Hans Booms, Bearman and Cook.<sup>11</sup> By allowing a more flexible conceptualization of intrinsic value, this group of theories also support the concept of archival value by holding that there is something valuable about the make-up of the organic whole and its parts that entails that the value of the whole is more than the mere sum of its individual parts.

This study leads the author to answer the research questions affirmatively; there is something intrinsically valuable about archives (although interpretations of ‘intrinsic’ vary), and there is such a thing as ‘archival value’.

#### **8.4.2. Can we define archival value?**

The study has evidenced the problematic nature of definition within the archival literature.<sup>12</sup> It has also evidenced the lack of consensus on definitions and terminology in the philosophical literature.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that the definition of archival value has proven to be a complicated matter. Nonetheless, the author believes that she has identified a concept of archival value that is capable of meaning and explanation. The author has disentangled the abstract ideas which lie behind much of the archival theory in order to reach the fundamental basis of the

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 7, sections 7.3.4. and 7.3.5.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 7, section 7.4.1.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 7, section 7.4.2.

<sup>11</sup> I.e. one that does not depend solely on its internal properties; see Chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 1, sections 1.2. and 1.4.; Chapter 3, section 3.2.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 5; Chapter 6, sections 6.5.2. and 6.5.3.

theory. This critical approach is reflected in her own work, as, throughout the thesis, the author has been careful to use language consistently, and to explain terminology, in an attempt to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. The author has suggested a concept of archival value that relies on a part-whole relationship and which holds that there is something valuable about the make-up of the organic whole of archives and its parts, which entails that the value of the whole ‘on the whole’ is more than the sum of its individual parts.<sup>14</sup>

This study leads the author to conclude that whilst a definition of archival value is problematic, it is possible to reach an approximate concept of archival value that can be understood, if not perfectly defined.

#### **8.4.3. Can we measure archival value?**

The author has explored the varied attempts to measure the value in archives; for example, in utilitarian terms,<sup>15</sup> cultural terms,<sup>16</sup> and economic terms.<sup>17</sup> She has also discussed the philosophical issues surrounding the measurement of value.<sup>18</sup> The author discovered that, as yet, no definitive answer has been found to the question of whether or not value can be measured. The author initially thought that exploring this question would be productive, particularly given the volume of literature devoted to addressing it in both the axiological and archival disciplines. However, an answer remains elusive with comparatively little progress made in either to realize a definitive solution. Moreover, the lack of an answer has not prevented progress in the research as, by recognizing the difficulty of answering this question, the author was able to focus her attention on exploring the other research questions.

This study leads the author to conclude that, as yet, there is no definitive answer to the question of whether or not value can be measured; and to suggest that perhaps it is not the right question to ask for the purposes of progressing research in archival value.

#### **8.5. Reflections on findings**

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<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 2, section 2.3.4.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 4, section 4.3.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 4, section 4.4.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 5, section 5.3.3.

The main findings of this study are as follows:

#### **8.5.1. The intrinsic value of archives ‘on the whole’**

This study has supported a concept of archival value that regards archives as an organic whole, comprising many different sorts of parts which have value and that may contribute to its intrinsic value ‘on the whole’. This concept asserts that there is something valuable about the make-up of the organic whole of archives and its parts which is greater than the mere sum of the parts. It is supported by the concept of a part-whole relationship which allows a range of possible permutations regarding the nature and composition of the whole and its parts, but is necessarily based on the premise of added value generated by their relationship(s).

#### **8.5.2. The complexity of archival value concepts**

This study has confirmed the centrality of concepts of archival value to a wide range of archival activity, including appraisal, arrangement and description. It has also shown that these concepts are complex and challenging. The existing literature has evidenced that many archivists have falsely assumed that it is straightforward to identify and judge value. The resultant simplistic approaches, with poorly defined terminology and a lack of critical awareness of underlying assumptions, have led to clouded meanings and confused theories. More rigorous thinking and greater acknowledgement of the difficulty of the subject would assist those who have been brave enough to grapple with it, and would benefit the future development of robust archival theory in this area.

#### **8.5.3. The continuing relevance of ‘traditional’ archival theory**

Throughout this thesis the author has demonstrated that there has been considerable inter-connectedness and cross-fertilization in the development of archival theory. In response to the challenges of late twentieth and twenty-first century recordkeeping the archival profession has developed multiple theories on appraisal, arrangement and description. Yet very few, if any, of these theories are entirely new and most owe their development to concepts and principles that were laid down at the beginning of the twentieth century or earlier. Despite the many changes to the world in which archivists practice – including technological advances and the proliferation of digital records, Access to Information legislation, and the

growing influence of postmodernism, to name but a few – traditional theories have not been abandoned. On the contrary, the twenty-first century continues to witness the widening application of archival theories to support archival practice. Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Theodore R. Schellenberg may have written about archives nearly one hundred years and fifty years ago respectively, but, arguably, aspects of their work continue to be of interest and relevance to the continuing development of archival theory and practice in the twenty-first century.

#### **8.5.4. The benefits of an interdisciplinary approach**

The study of the archival literature has evidenced the impact of ideas and theories from other disciplines on archival theory, especially from the late twentieth century onwards; including theories about material culture, collective memory, public value, risk management, and the nature of information as an asset. Drawing on ideas from outside the archival discipline has enriched and broadened its theoretical development. The methodology applied in this thesis has supported this development by similarly employing ideas from an external discipline (in this case, axiology) through a process of analogy to give new insight and explanations for phenomena in the archival field.

#### **8.5.5. The role and relevance of professional archival practice**

In her exploration of archival value, the author has considered issues surrounding how, when, and by whom value is ascribed to archives. A range of archival theories of value have been presented; some argue that value resides in the records of which archives are comprised, whilst others argue that value is determined by those making value judgements, be they creators, archivists or users. The Principle of archival value put forward in this thesis can be seen as uniting these different perspectives, by understanding the organic whole of archives to comprise many different sorts of parts that potentially contribute to its intrinsic value ‘on the whole’. It suggests an holistic approach to archives in which content *and* context are regarded as components of a concept of archive value. In her attempt to answer the question of whether archival value exists, the author responds in the affirmative and contends that archival value can be found ‘somewhere in-between’ the records and the valuers, in the network of relationships and activities surrounding both.



## **8.6. Areas for further research**

In section 8.2, the author acknowledged some of the limitations of the approach and methodology applied in this study. In this regard, one potential area for further work would be to expand the data used in this study beyond published literature to include the thoughts and opinions of a wider range of archival practitioners. This could be done through a variety of means including surveys, questionnaires and interviews. The expansion of the data would provide a wider body of knowledge on which to explore the theories put forward in this thesis. The expansion of the research might also include an exploration of the practical implications of the theoretical concepts investigated in this thesis. An exploration of how the Principle of archival value might work in practical terms would build upon the research undertaken by the author and make explicit the interconnection between theory and practice.

This study identified a particular theory in axiology that the author employed through Theory Derivation as a framework to consider archival theories of value. The author argues that her study has indicated the centrality of value concepts in archival theory (and practice) and that, as a result, a better understanding of value as a theoretical concept would greatly benefit the archival profession. The range and depth of axiology as a discipline suggests that there are potentially other philosophical theories and alternative aspects of axiological theory, which might also serve as useful and interesting frameworks in which to explore archival value; for example, environmental ethics and aesthetics.

Finally, this study has reinforced the benefits of interdisciplinary research. Interdisciplinarity has been integral to archival theory development, and its centrality to the methodology of Theory Derivation opens up the possibilities for future interdisciplinary research. One possible research avenue might be to examine analogous theories in mathematics, especially part-whole theory or set theory. By bringing together different subjects in innovative ways the researcher has the opportunity to explore archival phenomena in a truly creative and reflective manner.

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