Toward the Archival Multiverse: Challenging the Binary Opposition of the Personal and Corporate Archive in Modern Archival Theory and Practice

SUE McKEMMISH and MICHAEL PIGGOTT

RÉSUMÉ Cet article montre les oppositions binaires qui caractérisent la théorie archivistique moderne et plusieurs pratiques professionnelles dans le monde archivistique anglophone, en se penchant surtout sur la façon dont elles se manifestent dans le contexte australien. À une époque quand les amalgamations des bibliothèques et des archives deviennent de plus en plus communes, il importe de considérer en particulier l'impact d'une construction binaire spécifique : d'un côté, la tradition manuscrite dans les bibliothèques, et de l'autre, l'accent placé par la plupart des archives nationales et étatiques sur les archives gouvernementales. Dans cet article, nous contestons l'opposition binaire des archives personnelles et corporatives, en nous inspirant du continuum des documents d'archives, des théories archivistiques postmodernes et des théories allant au-delà de la théorie traditionnelle de la garde des documents (« post-custodial ») développées en Australie et ailleurs, les façons autochtones de savoir, et les pensées émergentes autour de la co-création, de la provenance multiple et simultanée des documents d'archives, et de multivers archivistiques. Nous montrons le besoin de recherche en archivistique et en construction de la théorie qui sont liées à la pluralité des pratiques et des cultures de gestion des documents d'archives personnelles et corporatives, dans un contexte d'interdépendances complexes entre « la preuve du moi » et « la preuve du nous » dans ce continuum, et dans les cultures en ligne et les espaces partagés de nos mondes numériques. En conclusion, nous offrons quelques suggestions par rapport aux excellentes possibilités de recherches plus poussées en gestion des documents privés dans ces contextes.

ABSTRACT This article points to the binary oppositions that characterize modern archival theory and much practice in the English-speaking archival world, with particular reference to the way they are manifest in the Australian context. At a time when mergers of library and archives institutions are increasingly an option, it is appropriate to consider in particular the impact of the binary construct of the manuscripts tradition in libraries on the one hand, and the focus of most national and state archives on government records on the other. In this article, we challenge the binary opposition of the personal and corporate archive, drawing on records continuum, postmodern, and postcustodial archival theory as developed in Australia and elsewhere; Indigenous ways of knowing; and emergent thinking on co-creation, the multiple simultaneous provenance of records, and the archival multiverse. We point to the need for archival research and theory building relating to the plurality of personal and corporate record-

keeping behaviours and cultures in the context of the complex interrelationships between "evidence of me" and "evidence of us" in the continuum, and in the online cultures and shared spaces of our digital worlds. We conclude with some suggestions about the rich possibilities for further research on personal recordkeeping in these contexts.

Introduction

Every professional discourse has its special focuses and changing concerns; so too archival science. If asked for an example, most archivists would nominate the challenge of digital records, which has been acknowledged as critical for more than a generation. But as a sampling of some of the leading English-language journals over recent decades reveals, there has also been strong interest in business records, archival description, archives and medicine, archives and records management education, queer archives, archives and community engagement, archives and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and archives and Indigenous human rights. Issues of the International Council on Archives (ICA) publication *Comma* over the past decade provide a different sampling, unsurprisingly favouring a geographical focus, and the journal has also published issues on university and research archives, sport, and architecture. Coincidentally, as this article was being drafted, the December 2012 edition of *Archival Science* appeared. It was a special issue dedicated to genre studies in archives.[1]

Now, from among a myriad of potential topics, personal archives have been accorded special theme status by *Archivaria*, which previously presented something of a mini-theme with the same label in the Fall 2001 issue. The call for papers for this issue invited authors to consider the diversity of personal archives as well as the transition to born-digital records. By using the telling words "as opposed to" in its definition of personal archives as "those archives created by individuals or family groups (as opposed to archives created by organizations)," the call has highlighted what we regard as a binary opposition of the personal and corporate archive – an "either/or" view of the archival world. This paper is framed by a pluralist view, which challenges binary constructs and champions the inclusive concept of the multiverse. In 2009, at the first meeting of the Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), Ally Krebs[2] drew attention to the concept of the multiverse and the possibili-

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1   See *Archival Science* 12, no. 4 (December 2012), accessed 5 Sept. 2013, http://link.springer .com/journal/10502/12/4/page/1. The guest editors were Gillian Oliver and Wendy M. Duff. Given our interest here, one article in particular might be noted: Pamela J. McKenzie and Elisabeth Davies, "Genre Systems and 'Keeping Track' in Everyday Life," 437–60.

2   Allison Boucher Krebs of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, walked on 26 January 2013. Ally, also known as Chi-Gaumee-Kwe, was an adventurer and scholar. She had returned to academics later in life and was completing her PhD in Indigenous information ecology at

ties of an archival multiverse. The concept was subsequently explored for the first time in the archival literature in a paper written by the Pluralising the Archival Curriculum Group, which was made up of a large number of international scholars engaged in AERI. They define the archival multiverse as encompassing

the pluralism of evidentiary texts, memory-keeping practices and institutions, bureaucratic and personal motivations, community perspectives and needs, and cultural and legal constructs with which archival professionals and academics must be prepared, through graduate education, to engage.[3]

In this construct, evidentiary texts are inclusive of "records as they exist in multiple cultural contexts" and all forms of recordkeeping, including the institutional/bureaucratic and the personal. In this article, we take a broad continuum-based view of the archive of today as encompassing personal and corporate records, a physical and a digital entity that exists "in a complex socio-technical ecosystem" and is "a source of legal and cultural evidence and community memory and identity." We use the terms "archival" and "recordkeeping" throughout to include all aspects of the creation, management, use, and social embeddedness of records as articulated in the records continuum model.[4] Within this frame, from the perspective of the individual, we define the personal archive in the broadest sense to include all forms, genres, and media of records relating to that person, whether captured in personal or corporate recordkeeping systems; remembered, transmitted orally, or performed; held in manuscript collections, archival and other cultural institutions, community archives, or other keeping places; or stored in shared digital spaces.

At times a variant of the government/private, the corporate/personal duality emerged in a paper world, and it is associated with other dualities embedded in modern archival theory; for example, records versus archives embodied in life cycle approaches, and the orality/literacy duality that underpins the formation of the archive in ways that can exclude records transmitted through story, dance, performance, and ritual, thus privileging the written record of a colonizer over the oral tradition of a colonized people. This latter duality is particularly implicated in the exclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing in Australia and elsewhere:

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the University of Washington in Seattle. Her wisdom and insights are greatly missed by her friends and colleagues in the archival community in Australia.

3   AERI Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), "Educating for the Archival Multiverse," *American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 73.

4   Anne Gilliland, Andrew J. Lau, and Sue McKemmish, "Pluralizing the Archive," in *Proceedings of the 40th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology, Delhi, India, 2012*, accessed 24 September 2013, http://homepage3.nifty.com/fjosh/Delhi/ProceedingsDelhi2012.pdf, 1-5.

As Indigenous and settler communities in various countries and regions have jointly reflected on their engagement with archives, there has been a growing recognition that western archival science and practice reflect and reinforce a privileging of settler/invader/colonist voices and narratives over Indigenous ones, of written over oral records. Further, the conventional positioning of individuals as the subjects of the archival record has had a particularly disempowering effect on Indigenous peoples whose lives have been so extensively documented in archives for the purposes of surveillance, control and dispossession.[5]

Binary mindsets have persisted into our networked digital worlds. The recently published Society of American Archivists (SAA) monograph *I, Digital*, which was designed to fill a gap in the archival literature by providing guidance to archivists when thinking about personal digital collections, defines these as "born-digital materials generated and kept by individuals," *as opposed to* "electronic records that are generated within and managed by formal organizational recordkeeping systems" (emphasis ours).[6] In his introduction to *I, Digital*, editor Christopher Lee points to continuing distinctions between institutional records and manuscripts in the US literature, and contrasts this with the holistic use of the term *personal recordkeeping* in Australia to refer to integrated records and archival processes. It was noteworthy, he thought, that in 1996 the Australian journal *Archives and Manuscripts* produced a theme issue on personal recordkeeping broadly defined, which explicitly challenged the archives and manuscripts duality of the journal's title and sought to redress the paucity of papers relating to personal archives in the journal.[7] Lee references another duality embedded in modern archival theory, also present in *Archivaria*'s special issue announcement, when he compares Australian definitions of archives as all records of continuing value, "regardless of where they reside," with the North American distinction between records and archives, the life cycle view that records become archives when they cross the "archival threshold" into the physical custody of professional archivists.

Lee contrasts the continuing distinction between manuscripts and institutional records, and records and archives in the US, with the holistic concept of

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5   Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, and Lynette Russell, "Dis-trust in the Archive: Reconciling Records," *Archival Science* 11, no. 3 (2011): 218. Referencing Shannon Faulkhead's doctoral thesis, "Narratives of Koorie Victoria" (Monash University, 2008), this paper discusses the use of this problematic dichotomy in the "othering" of the Indigenous peoples of Australia, pointing to "the way in which written sources are often based on orality and modern orality is itself saturated with writing" (p. 226). It also reports on the findings of a major Australian Research Council project that explored the archival needs of Indigenous Australians in Victoria, particularly in relation to oral records.

6   Christopher A. Lee, ed., *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 1.

7   *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996). This special issue, titled *Personal Recordkeeping Issues and Perspectives*, was edited by Adrian Cunningham.

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the record espoused by Australian continuum theorists. However, in Australia there is also a long-standing archives and manuscripts tradition that persists alongside continuum perspectives and practice. In this article, we explore the emergence and evolution of that tradition. We examine its theoretical underpinnings and discuss its impact on practice, drawing on close analyses of historical sources and related literature, and the archival discourse in Australia and North America, as well as our own immersion in the Australian archival community for over thirty years. We then move the discussion beyond the binary opposition of the personal and corporate archive with reference to the writings of records continuum, postmodern, and postcustodial archival theorists around the world; Indigenous ways of knowing; and emergent thinking on co-creation, the multiple simultaneous provenance of records, and the archival multiverse. We also synthesize and build on our own contributions to the archival discourse, particularly relating to Australian archival history, personal recordkeeping, societal provenance, and Indigenous communities and the archives. In the final sections of the article, we explore the possibilities of the archival multiverse, arguing for a liberation from binary mindsets. We conclude with some suggestions about the rich possibilities for further research on the plurality of personal and corporate recordkeeping behaviours and cultures.

We bring to the telling of the Australian story perceptions and understandings based on deep reflection on our own experiences, careers, and professional and research contributions, which span the key decades of sharp debate about the differences between and essential unity of personal and corporate archives, and the development of postcustodial, continuum, and related approaches. Our confidence to speak authoritatively about the Australian discourse and experience derives from knowledge gained by contributing to the discourse, from serving as former editors of *Archives and Manuscripts*, from managing, processing, and describing personal and corporate archives, and from operating within a range of institutions in the higher education and cultural heritage sectors.[8]

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8   Editorship of *Archives and Manuscripts* (Piggott, 1991–96; McKemmish, 1997–98) provided us with a perspective on the Australian archival discourse at a critical juncture, when old custodial/life cycle mindsets were being challenged. During the 1990s, we co-edited *The Records Continuum: Australian Archives First Fifty Years* (Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1994) and then collaborated on papers concerning recordkeeping and reconciliation. Piggott's career, begun at the National Library Manuscripts Department in the 1970s, included processing large collections of politicians' papers, followed by a decade at the Australian War Memorial, during which time he published *A Guide to the Personal Family and Official Papers of C.E.W. Bean* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1983). Later interests included the papers of academics, composers, and diary keepers. McKemmish's career has spanned government archives and twenty-five years as an educator and researcher. She has a long-standing interest in theoretical frameworks that underpin the contesting of binary perspectives. Her key continuum-based writings on personal archiving and recordkeeping

Perspectives on the Archives and Manuscript Tradition in Australia

As has been widely noted, the classic archival texts barely acknowledge that personal documentation might actually achieve archival status.[9] The emergence within Western archival theory of a range of binary oppositions underpins the management of personal manuscripts and corporate archives in much of the English-speaking practice. Although there are varying implementations from country to country, parallel arrangements are the norm. Taking our cue from Lee's introduction to *I, Digital*, a broader understanding of Australian perspectives and practice on the personal archive may indeed be valuable and relevant to this special issue. The arrangements and practices we have inherited and engaged with have featured the contrasting philosophies of Jenkinson and Schellenberg; a professional journal named in the mid-fifties *Archives and Manuscripts*, a title retained to this day; an archival landscape featuring silo-like government and manuscripts traditions; debates about binary and pluralizing theories; and strong records continuum–based theoretical contributions concerning personal recordkeeping and the personal archive, which are repeatedly cited in the archival literature outside Australia.

Though we have not identified an Australian equivalent to the "historical manuscripts tradition" that Richard Berner discerned in the US,[10] there are parallels and comparable influences. A "personal archives" focus developed almost by default sixty years ago as a diffident "fellow traveller" accompanying the rise of an independent archives profession. In turning now to briefly examine that history, we note that a review of the Australian literature yields no compelling justification for according the archives of the creator individual an essential difference, a uniquely special status. However, the consequences of practice, built on that very assumption, have been far-reaching.

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include "Evidence of Me…," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 28–45; a defence with Frank Upward of the 1996 article and a response to Verne Harris's critique in "In Search of the Lost Tiger, by Way of Sainte-Beuve: Re-constructing the Possibilities in 'Evidence of Me,'" *Archives and Manuscripts* 29, no. 1 (May 2001): 22–42; and a revisiting of the 1996 article in the context of new technologies in "Evidence of Me … in a Digital World" in *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era*, ed. Christopher A. Lee (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011).

9   See, for example, Caroline Williams, "Personal Papers: Perceptions and Practices," in *What Are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader*, ed. Louise Craven (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 58. The key reference is, of course, Rob Fisher, "In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited," *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 1–24.

10   Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983). For the definition of "historical manuscripts tradition," see Society of American Archivists, "A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology," comp. Richard Pearce-Moses, accessed 10 March 2013, http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/h/historical-manuscripts-tradition.

This practice takes place within an Australian archival landscape divided between government and non-government sectors. The former has its own peak body representation, the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (www.caara.org.au/). Its member archives exercise authority over current and historical government recordkeeping, including access and appraisal, and have adopted series-based documentation methodologies and a common approach to digital recordkeeping. The latter ranges across library manuscript departments, university-based collecting archives and prime ministerial libraries, historical societies, and archives and records units within business firms, religious institutions, schools, and community organizations. Professional practice varies markedly across all collection management functions; work and thinking are coordinated only between national and state libraries' manuscripts curators; and even then the focus is primarily on more efficient processing of large deposits of personal and organizational papers, and on supporting the National Library's Trove gateway (http://trove.nla.gov.au/) as a de facto national gateway to personal and private archives. In short, there is no single unified approach to discovery embracing the government and non-government sectors. There are many gaps in the record, particularly relating to the records of private sector organizations, communities, and individuals that fall outside the jurisdiction of government archives and beyond the scope of the collecting policies of major manuscript collections. McKemmish's 2001 judgment that there is "no coherent, collaborative, nationally coordinated, encompassing fourth dimension collection policy framework for the whole of Australian society" remains accurate.[11] How did it come to this?

An archival identity emerged in 1951 with the creation of an Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia. Almost immediately stress lines appeared. Government archivists in particular began to imagine a professional identity of their own, separate from librarianship, and professional employment free of library managements. The visit in 1954 of a Fulbright lecturer and senior member of the US National Archives, T.R. Schellenberg, stiffened their resolve, building on – if occasionally differing from – their grounding in Jenkinsonian fundamentals.[12] All were, however, in accord about

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11   Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 1, no. 4 (December 2001): 351. In the absence of an overarching description and analysis of the Australian archives and records scene, see Michael Piggott, "The Australian Archival System, 1971–2008: A Valedictory Appraisal," *Archives and Manuscripts* 36, no. 2 (November 2008): 189–207.

12   The standard references on the reception of Jenkinson's ideas in Australia are Ian Maclean, "Australian Experience in Record and Archives Management" (1959) and "An Analysis of Jenkinson's 'Manual of Archive Administration' in the Light of Australian Experience" (1962), both reproduced in Peter Biskup et al., eds., *Debates and Discourses: Selected Australian Writings on Archival Theory, 1951–1990* (Canberra: Australian Society of Archivists, 1995), 30–52, 53–78.

personal archives and historical manuscripts, with Schellenberg's post-tour
book reinforcing his 1954 teaching.[13] Archives arose from a "regular func-
tional activity" and were thus created in a systematic manner, while historical
manuscripts were usually the product of "a spontaneous expression of thought
or feeling," and were thus created in a haphazard manner. To this now seem-
ingly quaint thinking, Schellenberg added a proviso:

Whenever textual records that might otherwise be classed as historical manuscripts
are created in consequence of organized activity – such, for example, as that of a
church, a business, or, even, an individual – they may be referred to as archives.[14]

This small concession paled by comparison with the unavoidable message that
librarians' methods were not archival and their materials – including historical
manuscripts following the American tradition – were not archives. For a long
time, Australian librarians were not sure how to react.

    The first concrete sign of archival professional independence was the
publication in 1954 of a *Bulletin for Australian Archivists*, produced by an
informal group of government archivists inspired by the national seminars
Schellenberg ran during his visit. The bulletin quickly became unsustainable.
Its rescue by the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia
(LAA) revealed the first concrete sign of professional division. According to
its first two editors, "part of the price paid for this transfer was a change of
name." Mainly at the urging of Phyllis Mander Jones, the Mitchell Librarian
at the Public Library of New South Wales and the doyenne of personal and
historic manuscripts at the time, in 1955 the bulletin became *Archives and
Manuscripts*. Mander Jones "believed that the journal had something to offer
too for manuscript librarians."[15] Opinion remained divided, with some govern-

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13   T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire,
     1956). Something of the Australian visit and its impact is discussed in Michael Piggott,
     *The Visit of Dr T.R. Schellenberg to Australia, 1954: A Study of Its Origins and Some
     Repercussions on Archival Development in Australia* (master of archives administration
     thesis, University of New South Wales, 1989); and Michael Piggott, "Schellenberg in
     Australia: Meaning and Precedent," in *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian
     Essays* (Cambridge, UK: Chandos Publishing, 2012).
14   Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 18. Schellenberg reworded "organized activity" as "organic
     unity" in his later text, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press,
     1965) so that any manuscript collection that came from a particular organic source had
     archival quality (see, for instance, p. 174).
15   H.J. Gibbney and R.C. Sharman, "Happy Birthday: Notes on the 20th Anniversary of
     Archives and Manuscripts," *Archives and Manuscripts* 6, no. 5 (November 1975): 194. On
     the journal's history more generally, see Sigrid McCausland, "*Archives and Manuscripts*:
     A Window into Australian Archival Writing, 1955–2011," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40,
     no. 3 (November 2012): 122–35. The coupling of "archives" and "manuscripts," familiar
     in some university research library settings in North America, along with rare books and
     special collections, had (and has) little currency in Australasia. Our journal title aside, the

ment archivists even seeking to abandon the LAA altogether in 1958 and to establish a records association or archives institute.[16] However, it took another twenty years for an independent professional society to emerge and replace the librarians' special section with the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) in 1975.

The ASA development benefited from the establishment two years previously of Australia's inaugural university-based archives program at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. Its foundation lecturer, Peter Orlovich, was fiercely against library control of archives and the inclusion of library subjects in his curriculum, and he influenced the first genera- tion of Australia's formally qualified archivists. The first published output of his students to appear in *Archives and Manuscripts* was an article titled "What Are Archives?" It adopted a very hard line on definitions, arguing that archives were records created by a body in the performance of administrative functions; because libraries collected, by definition their manuscripts were not archives.[17]

The gradual removal of national and state government archives authorities from library control beginning in the early 1960s revealed a further duality, but one with exceptions. The new archival authorities, while they concentrated on managing large series of official records, also occasionally took in the records of politicians, senior officials, judges, and others closely related to government administration. By contrast, the national and state libraries, as well as a number of university collecting archives, began to concentrate on manuscripts ranging from the rare individual document, such as an explorer's journal, the colonist's diary, and a First World War soldier's letters, to large collections, such as the personal papers of writers, politicians, and others.

This division of national documentary labour was not reflected in the membership of the new ASA, whatever its inherited journal title, *Archives and*

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only formal use known to the authors is in R.S. Hill and M.D.W. Hodder, eds., *Archives and Manuscripts: A New Zealand Seminar* (Wellington: New Zealand Library Association, 1977).

16 Frank Upward, "Association amongst Archivists during the 1950s," in *Peopling a Profession: Papers from the Fourth Forum on Australian Library History, Monash University, 25 and 26 September 1989*, ed. Frank Upward and Jean P. Whyte (Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1991), 97.

17 Peter Orlovich, "Some Basic Assumptions Underlying the Education and Training of Archivists," *Archives and Manuscripts* 6, no. 6 (February 1976): 204–25. His students' essay appeared later in the same issue: J.L. Burke and C.M. Shergold, "What Are Archives?": 235–40. For the subjects offered in the first year, see "The Postgraduate Course in Archives Administration at the School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales," *Archives and Manuscripts* 3, no. 2 (February 1973): 38–40. On Orlovich generally, see Sigrid McCausland, "Educating Archivists in Australia and Beyond: The Contribution of the University of New South Wales Archives Course, 1973–2000," *Comma: International Journal on Archives* 1 (2011): 79–87, especially 81–82.

Manuscripts, implied. From the start, the society mostly comprised government archivists, beginning a pattern of (at most) limited professional engagement by manuscript librarians in the archives sector, which sadly has typified the local archival landscape ever since.[18]

For the reasons outlined, if personal archives had a professional advocate in Australia, it was the librarian specializing in "historical manuscripts." None has ever successfully prosecuted a genuine theoretically grounded case asserting that personal archives are significantly special, although for a moment in 1976 it seemed the debate had been joined. The head of manuscripts at the National Library of Australia (NLA), Graeme Powell, presented an argument that "there are some significant differences between archives and personal papers." A single forceful rejoinder by Chris Hurley, who was at the time in charge of the Commonwealth Archives Office's (CAO) personal papers program, quickly ended it.[19]

There had been a provocative tone in Powell's article; he quoted a Schellenbergian comment that archival principles should not be "ridden to death," and he imputed the rigid application of original order to "archival purists." In his view, manuscript librarians were different from archivists, and personal papers were different from archives, the latter essentially of organizational and especially government origin, while personal papers were not always the product of activities that generated series. They were collected, and should be arranged and described with only the historian in mind. Their order, even when it was discernible, should be retained only if judged significant and useful. Significant order meant "if it reveals or suggests the thoughts and ideas of the person who assembled the papers."[20]

Hurley's rejoinder placed the debate in a larger setting of a common universe of "archives material (including personal papers)." He challenged assumptions Powell made about what historians wanted and the right of manuscript librarians to decide whether or not discernible original orders were significant. There was a serious consequential danger to evidential value. As for original order generally, it "may not be the best way of satisfying the needs of some users," but it was "the only way of satisfying (albeit sometimes less than perfectly) the needs of all users." There was even a hint of Hurley's later interests in what he called "shared provenance" – coincidentally highlight-

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18 According to the minutes of the ASA inaugural general meeting of 5–6 April 1975, only two of about eighty present were from libraries, and only four others were from university-based collecting archives, two of them manuscript librarians (copy in Piggott's possession).

19 See Graeme Powell, "Archival Principles and the Treatment of Personal Papers," *Archives and Manuscripts* 6, no. 7 (August 1976): 257–68; and Chris Hurley, "Personal Papers and the Treatment of Archival Principles," *Archives and Manuscripts* 6, no. 8 (February 1977): 351–65.

20 Powell, "Archival Principles and the Treatment of Personal Papers," 263.

ing the instability of binary oppositions – in his example of the papers of an individual who has run a family property, been a minister of state, and become secretary of the local golf club.[21]

It was not just a professional debate: as Hurley has explained, "Graeme and I were writing in an environment of poisoned relations between our respective employers," because at the time, the NLA was lobbying to prevent archives legislation then being drafted to allow a new national archives to seek the personal and official papers of politicians and relevant others.[22] The profession's reaction, if we can regard the text *Keeping Archives* as encapsulating a broad cross-section of opinion, including manuscript librarians, was to see personal papers as archives to which orthodox principles should apply.[23] Powell and other leading manuscript librarian colleagues continued to promote and write about personal papers but confined themselves to describing individual collections, surveying the patterns of their collection and their value to scholars.[24] While Hurley's interest in archival description grew in addition to

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21 Hurley, "Personal Papers and the Treatment of Archival Principles," 364, 362.

22 See Bob Sharman, "Australian Archives in Lamb's Clothing," *Archivaria* 2 (Summer 1976): 27. This had been recommended by W. Kaye Lamb in a report following a commissioned visit to Australia in 1973, which, as Sharman put it, "disturbed a hornet's nest." For the reminiscence of a Commonwealth Archives Office staff member, see Chris Hurley's new introduction to his 1977 article (see note 19) at http://www.descriptionguy.com/description.html#23; and the "Powell/Hurley Debate" section of his posts at RIM Professionals Australasia Forums, "Open Letter to Michael Piggott, 13–18 August 2008, http://forums.rimpa.com.au/showthread.php?t=632 (both accessed 21 March 2012).

23 See Ann E. Pederson, ed., *Keeping Archives* (Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists, 1987). Pederson's team of authors included Paul Brunton, at the time head of manuscripts at the Mitchell Library. Brunton wrote the chapter on arrangement and description, which included advice on the application of archival principles to personal papers. The only other contemporary discussion, a paper to the ASA's 1989 biennial conference by a city corporation archivist, Peter Crush, was similarly orthodox and concluded that the phrase "archives and manuscripts" might be best changed to "archives public and private." See Peter Crush, "Archives and Manuscripts," in Peter Biskup et al., eds., *Debates and Discourses: Selected Australian Writings on Archival Theory, 1951–1990* (Canberra: Australian Society of Archivists, 1995), 204–17.

24 See, for example, John Thompson, "The Australian Manuscripts Collection in the State Library of Victoria: Its Growth, Development and Future Prospects," *The La Trobe Library Journal* 21 (April 1978): 8–14; Graeme Powell, "The Collecting of Personal and Private Papers in Australia," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 62–77; John Thompson, "'Let Time and Chance Decide': Deliberation and Fate in the Collecting of Personal Papers," in Peter Cochrane, ed., *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library's First 100 Years, 1901–2011* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001); Graeme Powell, "The First in the Field: Prime Ministers' Papers in the National Library of Australia," *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 36, no. 1 (March 2005): 54–64; Marie-Louise Ayres, "'My MSS Are Destroyed...': The Patrick White Collection," in *National Library of Australia News* 17, no. 6 (March 2007): 3-6; and Kevin Molloy, "An Irish Radical and His Nephew: The Papers of John Mitchel and Sir William Hill Irvine," *The La Trobe Library Journal* 84 (December 2009): 34–47.

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many other professional issues, he continued to challenge those who collected personal and other private archives.[25]

The application of an intense narrow view of personal papers is not without consequence. In the 1970s, the NLA and CAO displayed "bitterness and pig-headed obstinacy" in their turf dispute concerning political papers. Hurley has written about being explicitly instructed to physically "split" a series of papers belonging to a former prime minister's press secretary who had served four PMs: one portion to join the personal papers of one former prime minister at the NLA, the other to form a diminished series of the Prime Minister's Office. As Gideon Haigh has recounted, similar splitting happened less than a decade ago when the University of Melbourne Archives received the personal papers of Malcolm Fraser, Australian prime minister between 1975 and 1983; his official papers remained with the National Archives. Finally, narrowness can blind documentation too, as evidenced by the NLA's acquisition in 2006 of a large collection of Patrick White's personal papers (accessioned, following a method little changed from that Powell described in 1976, as MS 9982). Such was the intense focus on White that condolence letters and other correspondence received by his lifelong partner, Manoly Lascaris, after White's death were sorted and described as just another series within the White collection.[26] The impact of these types of decisions is, in the first example, a fragmentation of Fraser's archive as evidence of all aspects of his life and, in the second, a denial of Lascaris's agency. There are consequences relating to accessibility in

25 See, for example, Chris Hurley, "Beating the French," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 12–18. In addition to his views of personal archives, Hurley has advanced related arguments that question collecting models of preserving archival evidence, including business archives. See, for example, "Issues, Hardships and Opportunities: Why a Company Should be Interested in Maintaining an Archive," *Limited Addition* 16 (May 2004): 2–10.

26 See Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (2) When Something Is *Not* Related to Everything Else," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 2 (November 2005): 88, n18; Gideon Haigh, "The Rise and Rise of the Prime Minister," *Meanjin* 72, no. 1 (March 2013), accessed 24 March 2013, http://meanjin.com.au/articles/post/the-rise-and-rise-of-the-prime-minister/; and National Library of Australia, "Manuscripts: Finding Aids," "Guide to the Papers of Patrick White," accessed 24 March 2013, http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms9982. At the level of national documentary landscape, within institutions and indeed between fonds, the impact of the binary mindset was not without consequence. There is certainly nothing equivalent here to "total" or holistic approaches across the archival sector. The story of the treatment of prime ministerial papers in Australia provides a telling case study of evolving arrangements beset by competing institutional agendas, variable depositor wishes, and disagreements about appraisal outcomes. While there are now half a dozen so-called prime ministerial libraries in Australia, none could be described as a personal public archive (such as that of Nelson Mandela in South Africa). With our prime ministers' archives, structural issues take second place to accessibility, the usual compromise solution being a print and online guide that both reconstitute the fonds and direct attention to related collections. For the Malcolm Fraser guide, see Elizabeth Masters and Katie Wood, *Malcolm Fraser: Guide to Archives of Australia's Prime Ministers* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia and University of Melbourne, 2012), accessed 18 August 2013, http://guides.naa.gov.au/malcolm-fraser/.

terms of discoverability and contextualization. In the case of the Fraser papers, access terms and conditions are governed by the different access regimes and policies associated with the government archives and library sectors.

In the mid-1990s, Adrian Cunningham – an archival generalist but, at the time, a manuscripts librarian at the National Library – started thinking about these issues at the point where the Powell/Hurley debate had abruptly ended. He began wondering about the cultural and professional reasons for the seeming tension between what he called the Australian profession's "sub-tribes." He was almost a lone voice in seeking a coordinated national documentation strategy for collecting archives and in applying macro frameworks of analysis to identify gaps and possible solutions. He explored how postcustodial and recordkeeping ideas might benefit electronic personal archives. He wrote prolifically about these challenges, guest edited and contributed to the special issue of *Archives and Manuscripts* on personal recordkeeping, and contributed widely on other fronts, always focusing on what united archivists.[27] To his mind, the human urge to document one's achievements and activities was universal, and he saw the results, though they may take many forms, as "broadly speaking ... archives" that would "remain so for as long as groups and individuals are motivated to maintain and preserve them."[28]

Cunningham returned to familiar territory for the 2011 anthology *I, Digital,* in which his suggestions for making and keeping digital personal records are heavily based on the ICA's 2008 *Principles and Functional Requirements for Records in Electronic Office Environments*.[29] With "some tweaking," he demonstrates how the document's twelve principles could "easi-

27 See, for example, Adrian Cunningham, "The Archival Management of Personal Papers in Electronic Form: Some Suggestions," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 1 (May 1994): 94–105; the May 1996 special issue of *Archives and Manuscripts (Personal Recordkeeping: Issues and Perspectives)*, which Cunningham guest edited and for which he wrote the following: "Editorial: Beyond Corporate Accountability" (pp. 6–11); "Beyond the Pale? The 'Flinty' Relationship between Archivists Who Collect the Private Records of Individuals and the Rest of the Archival Profession" (pp. 20–26); and the review article "The Mysterious Outside Reader" (pp. 130–44). Then followed his paper to the 1997 annual conference of the ASA, "Collecting Archives in the Next Millennium," accessed 21 April 2013, http://www .nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/nlasp/article/viewArticle/1028/1296. Though in the new century his interests turned to issues such as macroappraisal, descriptive standards, and the series system, his championing of and interest in personal archives, always originating from a broad recordkeeping perspective, never waned, as evidenced in Adrian Cunningham, review of *Electronic Records in the Manuscripts Repository*, by Elisabeth Dow, in *Archives and Manuscripts* 38, no. 2 (November 2010): 119–21.
28 Adrian Cunningham, "The Postcustodial Archive," in *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader,* ed. Jennie Hill (London: Facet Publishing, 2011), 184.
29 International Council on Archives, *Principles and Functional Requirements for Records in Electronic Office Environments – Module 2: Guidelines and Functional Requirements for Electronic Records Management Systems* (2008), accessed 21 April 2013, http://www.adri .gov.au/products/ICA-M2-ERMS.pdf.

ly be made relevant to the personal recordkeeping context." The implications for those who still subscribe to the difference case were impossible to miss. Significantly, he begins his chapter by conceding that his efforts across almost twenty years, collectively aimed at unifying the sub-tribes and applying fundamental archival thinking to personal archives, drew almost no response from his manuscripts colleagues.[30]

The differing approaches to managing manuscripts and archives in Australia, the lack of cross-sectoral frameworks encompassing collecting and archiving, the binary opposition of personal and corporate recordkeeping, and the failure to develop, at national or state level, unifying frameworks relating to appraisal, description, or access result in significant gaps in the archive. As a result, some sectors and communities are largely absent from collective memory stores, there is a fragmentation and scattering of records, and many users have major difficulties accessing archival records that are managed in discrete silos.

In the following sections, we explore the rationale for the manuscript and archives tradition and challenge the case for sharp differences between personal and corporate archives. We then discuss the possibilities of personal recordkeeping in the archival multiverse, with reference to ways in which the archival needs of individuals to access and manage their personal archive in the broadest sense might be addressed by a transformed practice.

The Case for Sharp Differences

The last Australian to seriously argue that personal archives are significantly different was Powell in 1976. In recent times, the case for sharp differences has instead been drawn from beyond Australia. The writings of two North American archival thinkers in particular, Frank G. Burke and Catherine Hobbs, have impressed us for their clarity of intent and force of argument; Hobbs has also attracted favourable notice from Australian literary scholars.[31]

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30 See "Ghosts in the Machine: Towards a Principles-Based Approach to Making and Keeping Digital Personal Records," in Christopher A. Lee, ed., *I, Digital; Personal Collections in the Digital Era* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 78–89.

31 See Piggott's review of *Research and the Manuscript Tradition*, by Frank G. Burke, in *Archives and Manuscripts* 26, no. 2 (November 1998): 421–24; and McKemmish's review of *Currents of Archival Thinking*, ed. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (with its chapter by Hobbs) in *Archives and Manuscripts* 39, no. 1 (May 2011): 231–35. On Hobbs's favourable citation in Australia, see Maryanne Dever, Sally Newman, and Ann Vickery, *The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Lives* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2009), 4; and their "The Intimate Archive," *Archives and Manuscripts* 38, no. 1 (May 2010): 94–137, n20 and n55; as well as Dever's review of *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace: Explorations in Canadian Women's Archives,* ed. Linda Morra and Jessica Schagerl, which specifically notes Hobbs's chapter "Personal Ethics: Being an Archivist of Writers," in *Archives and Manuscripts* 41, no. 2 (2013): 161–63.

Frank G. Burke was a manuscripts librarian and later a member of the US National Archives, including two years as acting archivist, although since the late 1980s he has been best known as an archival educator at the University of Maryland, where he remains a professor emeritus.

In *Research and the Manuscripts Tradition* (Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1997), Burke set out to educate and advise researchers, but he had an axe to grind, too. In his opening chapter, he contrasted "manuscripts, or personal papers," with "archives – corporate or government records." They were separate genres whose clear differences had been obscured, and attempts to subject them to a single system of arrangement, description, and the application of standards had led to complications affecting education and the preparation of manuals as well. These differences included the rationale for keeping, methods for handling, access, and legal implications. On original order, his arguments were similar to those of Graeme Powell, and he highlighted personal papers' frequent disorder or meaningless order. The fundamental differentiator for Burke, however, was the rationale that brought the two genres into being:

Archives are methodical, organized and structured, stretching over many generations, and pragmatic in their subject matter and intent of their creation. Personal papers are subjective, idiosyncratic, emotional, contemporary and narrow by focus.[32]

A more sustained exploration of personal archives was offered by Canadian Catherine Hobbs in 2001 and further developed in 2010.[33] Her views were informed by extensive familiarity with numerous personal archives fonds, particularly those of novelists and poets, as well as by the key North American and Australian writing on the subject.

Hobbs followed Burke in stressing how different the personal is from the corporate. She highlighted the autonomous interior person as the key to a re-envisioned theory. She stressed the individuality, character, freedom, and psychology behind motives for making and keeping records, arguing for links to the inner needs, mental maps, desires, feelings, predilections, and impulses of the personal creator. What she opposed was the representation of personal archiving only in terms of social roles, maintaining narratives-of-self and urges-to-witness. In her conception of personal archives, the corporate world's formal recordkeeping systems were irrelevant and ideas from mainstream

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32 Burke, *Research and the Manuscript Tradition,* 11. Readers unfamiliar with the book will find an even-handed review by Marianne McLean in *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 187–89.

33 See Catherine Hobbs, "The Character of Personal Archives: Reflections on the Value of Records of Individuals," *Archivaria* 52 (Fall 2001): 126–35; and Catherine Hobbs, "Reenvisioning the Personal: Reframing Traces of Individual Life," in *Currents of Archival Thinking,* ed. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2010), 213–41.

theory, such as transactionality, recordness, and evidence, were inappropriate. In short, she called for a theory "more nuanced toward personal archives," one that could account for "how and why the individual functions in a certain way and how this, in turn, affects documenting."[34]

Previously, writers contrasted archives with historical manuscripts or personal papers. Powell, for instance, had written of archives and archivists on the one hand and personal papers and manuscript librarians on the other. Though subsequently the labels for the creator entity changed, the purpose held. Thus, Hobbs repeatedly contrasted personal archives with the archives of corporate bodies. Opening her 2010 essay, she wrote that personal archives "are formed because of the needs, desires, and predilections of their creators to create and keep documents," and then she added as an aside "(not for an administrative purpose or because of a legal requirement)," thus arguing the case from a particularly narrow and simplistic view of what motivates corporate recordkeeping behaviour.[35]

In Hobbs's 2001 essay, corporate archives were presented as the creations of large corporate or government entities with formal structures. They were places where the freedom and choice regarding records creation was highly regulated; they had business efficiency agendas, computer-dominated environments, and formalized recordkeeping systems; and they employed anonymous bureaucrats and records managers. Compared with this generalized construct, the individuals behind personal archiving unsurprisingly were "far different" and even "radically different." But only one of these opposed creator types enjoyed a matching theory; "archival theory has done a terrible job of accommodating the particular needs of individual people's archives."[36] As noted above, Hobbs's goal was a theory more sympathetic to personal archives, needed because historically our theory had a bias toward government and corporate settings, and, she argued, it remains so today. Thus, the records continuum model, described by Terry Cook in 2000 as "the world's most inclusive model for archives," Hobbs saw a year later as just "developed for institutional record-keeping."[37]

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34 Hobbs, "Reenvisioning the Personal," 220, 231.

35 Ibid., 213.

36 Catherine Hobbs, "Personal Ethics: Being an Archivist of Writers," quoted in Maryanne Dever's review of *Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace: Explorations in Canadian Women's Archives,* ed. Linda Morra and Jessica Schagerl, in *Archives and Manuscripts* 41, no. 2 (2013): 161.

37 Hobbs, "The Character of Personal Archives," 132, 130n4. Terry Cook, "The Records Continuum and Archival Cultural Heritage," in Lucy Burrows, ed., *Beyond the Screen: Capturing Corporate and Social Memory – ASA Conference 2000* (Melbourne: Australian Society of Archivists, 2000), 16.

Diversity in Personal and Corporate Recordkeeping
Behaviours and Cultures

Undeniably, one of modern archival theory's core dualities *is* corporate bodies/persons. It sits at the heart of modern definitions of the core concept: records. Typical of most available definitions, the ICA definition states that a record is "information in any form or medium, created or received and maintained by an organization *or* person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs" (emphasis ours).[38]

The argument for personal archives' essential difference directs attention to what they differ from. Can anything safely be said about record-creating corporate bodies *on the one hand* and record-creating persons *on the other*? When one focuses on the variety of human society, organizational types, and personal and corporate recordkeeping cultures that they each subsume, any attempt to generalize seems doomed. Think of the vast variation within personal archives. Even in modern archival literature, and in related scholarship such as biographies, exhibition catalogues, and collection guides, the details of extraordinary variety abound. It is evident in the personal documentation resulting from professional roles (e.g., photographers, composers, scientists, soldiers, politicians, writers, poets, and storytellers), from participation in events (e.g., immigrant voyages, fighting in war, the experiences of settlement/invasion), and from many other factors (e.g., gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity).

Some may think they can identify elements common to all instances of personal records, drawing on knowledge of the minute and inevitably skewed sample of individuals' documentation represented in the collections they manage, but this is hardly a fair representation of the majority who created but were not collected. Richard Cox, who has directed attention to the documentary university of the real world of everyday citizen archivists, has acknowledged that personal and family archives have emotional and cultural origins. In the end, however, the "challenges of maintaining personal archives mimic those facing every organization and government agency."[39] Of course, a truly international perspective on personal archives would embrace the many forms of evidence and memory texts in the emerging archival multiverse, which have been excluded from the concepts of records espoused in modern archival theory. Little wonder that, at the 2007 I-CHORA conference on personal recordkeeping, "some commented upon the frustrations of trying to codify personal papers and practices to craft comprehensive definitions."[40]

38 International Council on Archives, *ISAAR (CPF): International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families,* 2nd ed. (Paris, 2004), 10.
39 Richard Cox, *Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling: Readings, Reflections and Ruminations* (Duluth: Litwin Books, 2008), 185.
40 Barbara L. Craig, "Introduction," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 44, no. 1 (2009), 4.

The case for an essential difference between personal and corporate archives also ignores the fact that it is individuals who perform recordkeeping in corporate settings.[41] It deploys a model of corporate bodies in which record-keeping behaviour is impersonal, controlled by professional warrants, legal requirements, and administrative rules, and not influenced by organizational psychology, values, or culture, or by the technologies available to support them. It asserts that the records arising from the rules are inevitably the product of obedient, consistent, routine practice, overlooking the many areas of discretionary action in corporate settings. It is a caricature that ignores the diverse recordkeeping behaviours and cultures evident in the many different organizational and institutional settings across government, industry, not-for-profit, and community sectors, and the vast differences in scale. Psychological factors involved when individuals make and keep and destroy documents do not suddenly disappear in corporate settings. Financial journalist Trevor Sykes's comment that "a company is only a paper entity," which "has life and ideas only through the people who work for it," has wide implications.[42] People in any organizational setting can have remarkable "personalized" record-keeping consequences. Although in government agencies staff are the target of advice and training about proper recordkeeping behaviour, in all sectors "personalized" recordkeeping is often evident, particularly so within the offices of a dominate chief executive and in small-scale businesses and not-for-profit entities.

The multiverse concept linked to Native American ideas about the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of archiving, which Ally Krebs shared with AERI participants in 2009, points to another dichotomy that informs the case for the essential difference between personal and corporate recordkeeping.[43] Western archival theory and practice since the Dutch *Manual* and Jenkinson have privileged and celebrated the physical and intellectual dimensions of recordkeeping, and have been blind to the emotional and the spiritual. Some might be tempted to see the former two dimensions

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41   In Australia, at least, the traditional big three categories are government, business, and community. This latter sector, also called the charities and not-for-profit sector, is the most elusive. It does need to be broad enough to include religious organizations, a range of public-private entities, co-operatives, childcare centres, and educational bodies. All create records to one degree or another, but few operate archives programs as such, which is why for the US, for instance, Richard Cox has identified only business, college and university, museum, religious organizations, and labour unions as sectors where one finds institutional archives. See Richard Cox, *Managing Institutional Archives: Foundational Principles and Practices* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 12–18.

42   Trevor Sykes, *The Bold Riders: Behind Australia's Corporate Collapses* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 575.

43   First Archivists Circle, "Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, 2007," accessed 22 April 2013, http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/index.html.

as relevant to corporate recordkeeping and the latter two relevant to personal recordkeeping. Considering how those four dimensions are present in all forms of recordkeeping and archiving in the archival multiverse could paint a richly layered picture of interconnected corporate and personal recordkeeping behaviours and cultures, and thereby inform an enriched and more inclusive recordkeeping and archival practice.

Only when the personal is added back to the corporate can we explain, for example, the Australian War Memorial's files through the personality of John Treloar, its legendary director between 1920 and 1952. He had a natural talent for administration, organization, information gathering, and recordkeeping. A diarist during World War I, he produced "a prodigious amount of administrative correspondence," although as Anne-Marie Condé explained, "it took nothing less than the call to keep a record on behalf of the Australian nation to absorb and tame his personal recordkeeping urge."[44] Only when the personal is added back to the corporate can we fully explain Australia's corporate collapses of the 1980s. This was an era when accounting and auditing processes were compromised, when loan guarantee documentation once covering fifteen pages was truncated to a single page, when younger bank employees "became contemptuous of what they considered red tape," and when the psyche of the typical corporate raider entrepreneur was that of an aggressive juvenile delinquent, incapable of accepting anyone else's rules. It was also an era when the overlapping personal and corporate worlds were literally personified by the remembrancer recordkeeper, an example of Heather MacNeil's "transaction witnesses." In Australia, corporate high flyers used them for their absolute discretion and excellent memories and called them "archbishops."[45]

Corporate bodies have a long tail. With increasingly small-scale operations, recordkeeping systems become more varied and individualistic; in short, a legal person can readily have a natural person's personality. Of Australia's 2.1 million businesses, for example, 95 percent are classified as small businesses, i.e., employing between one and nineteen people. A high proportion are microbusinesses involving a "sole trader" working from home. Similarly, of its estimated 600,000 not-for-profit entities, the majority are small unincorporated neighbourhood groups or associations. In businesses that perhaps rely on family members or employ only one or two people, any recordkeeping done in addition to what is legally required can reflect the quirks, previous experi-

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44 Anne-Marie Condé, "John Treloar, Official War Art and the Australian War Memorial," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53, no. 3 (September 2007): 454.

45 Such corporate behaviours are covered in Sykes, *passim*, but see also pp. 14, 16, 186, and 575. See also Heather MacNeil, *Trusting Records: Legal, Historical and Diplomatic Perspectives* (Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 6; and Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, "The Archival Document: A Submission to the Inquiry into Australia as an Information Society," *Archives and Manuscripts* 19, no. 1 (May 1991): 26.

ences, and anxieties of the owner-manager and, in the case of small clubs and societies, of the secretary.

Clearly then, a strict dichotomy of the personal and the corporate is unsustainable. The differences between their archives carry at best second-order significance. Ultimately, there are just records and recordkeeping; anything more is detail. Caroline Williams has noted that "personal papers comprise an important archival genre," and in wholeheartedly agreeing with her words we would simply add, "nothing more."[46] A compelling case that argues otherwise has not been made in Australia, and the diversity and interdependence of personal and corporate recordkeeping behaviours and cultures explain why.

Now, however, we want to take the argument further, toward the archival multiverse, which, as discussed above, "encompasses the pluralism of evidentiary texts, memory-keeping practices and institutions, bureaucratic and personal motivations, community perspectives and needs, and cultural and legal constructs with which archival professionals and academics must ... engage."[47] Set against new expanded understandings of the world of records and recordkeeping, which embrace this archival multiverse, the limits and consequences of the traditional personal archives perspective is fully revealed.

Personal Recordkeeping in the Archival Multiverse

Earlier in this article, we pointed to the impact of the binary oppositions of public versus private, orality versus literacy, records versus archives, and personal archive versus corporate archive that underpin the very different approaches to defining and managing archival records in the manuscript and archival traditions in Australia. Problems associated with the differing approaches are compounded by the lack of intra- and cross-sectoral frameworks encompassing collecting and archiving. In our view, the evolution of separate manuscript and archival traditions in Australia, and the binary opposition mindset associated with them, have been contributing factors in the failure to develop, at national or state level, unifying frameworks relating to appraisal, description, or access for all archival records wherever they are stored or managed. In this section, we discuss how ideas drawn from

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46   Caroline Williams, "Personal Papers," 66.
47   AERI Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), "Educating for the Archival Multiverse," 73. We are indebted to our late colleague Ally Krebs for introducing us to the idea of the archival multiverse. Ally challenged us to explore what an archival multiverse might be like. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term "multiverse," which was originally coined in 1895 by psychologist William James, is now used to refer to the hypothetical set of multiple possible universes. It has been explored in the context of many different disciplines, including cosmology, physics, astronomy, psychology, and literature. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Multiverse," last modified 2 Sept. 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiverse.

records continuum, postmodern, and postcustodial archival theory developed in Australia and elsewhere, Indigenous ways of knowing, and emergent thinking on co-creation, the multiple simultaneous provenance of records, and the archival multiverse, might provide conceptual frames of reference for building overarching, inclusive, and unifying frameworks for transformed practice. We make particular reference to the possibilities of personal recordkeeping in the archival multiverse, including ways in which to better address a more extensive set of personal rights in records and the archival needs of individuals to access and manage their personal archive in the broadest sense.

The lack of holistic, unifying frameworks, the significant gaps in the archive in Australia, with some sectors and communities largely absent from collective memory stores, the relegation of personal records to the margins of many mainstream archival institutions, and the fragmentation of the record of many communities and individuals present major difficulties for users trying to access archival records that are managed in discrete silos. For individuals who belong to communities that experience identity, memory, and accountability crises, problems associated with accessing critical records can be particularly acute. Examples include the Stolen Generations of Indigenous children, who were removed from their families under government policies designed to breed out Aboriginality,[48] and the Forgotten Australians,[49] who experienced neglect and abuse in childcare institutions. A series of reports from government inquiries and research papers point to the major problems and re-traumatizing effects experienced by members of these communities when searching for archival sources of information to establish their identity, enable family link-ups, account for their treatment, and provide evidence for redress. The reports recommend a range of actions to address ongoing operational and systemic problems in Australia's archival frameworks and practice, which would in turn address the needs of members of these and other communities in crisis, and the archival user community more generally. The findings also indicate ongoing issues with the implementation of the recommendations of preceding reports. The problems identified include the fragmentation of

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48 From 1910 to 1970, up to 50,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families. For their stories, see Australian Human Rights Commission, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997), accessed 6 Sept. 2013, http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications /bringing-them-home-report-1997.

49 "Forgotten Australians" is the name given to the many generations of children who have suffered abuse and neglect in out-of-home care, in government, church, and charitable orphanages, and in homes around Australia. In 2013, a royal commission into systemic issues relating to the sexual abuse of children in institutional care was launched after twenty-five years of lobbying by care leavers and their advocacy groups.

records relating to individual Stolen Generation members and child-care leavers, major gaps in the record particularly in non-government sector organizations that provided much of the care, differences in or absence of access policies and processes within and across the sectors, the lack of uniform rights of access across jurisdictions, and difficulties with discovering relevant records linked to poor or inconsistent descriptive systems and the lack of contextual metadata.[50] Members of the Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians are also pushing for more extensive rights in their records. Beyond having access and discovery rights, they want to play a part in decision making about the management and accessibility of their records, and to be able to add their own stories to the institutional records relating to them.

In the most acute cases, the phenomenon of a corporate archive harbouring the only extant documentation of an individual is widely known. Thus Soviet Union security files, by incorporating as a by-product of repression the manuscripts of more than a thousand writers, critics, composers, playwrights, and poets, in effect now stand as these individuals' personal archive.[51] A more innocuous Australian instance is the so-called copyright collection preserved in the National Archives. In numerous cases, examples of poetry, literary scripts, musical scores, artworks, and photographs lodged with applications for

50   Australian Parliament, Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Forgotten Australians: A Report on Australians Who Experienced Institutional or Out-of-Home Care as Children* (Canberra: Senate Printing Unit, 2002); Australian Parliament, Senate Community Affairs References Committee, *Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians Revisited: Report on the Progress with the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Lost Innocents and Forgotten Australians Reports* (Canberra: Senate Printing Unit, 2009); Australian Department of Communities, *Snapshot of Consultations with Forgotten Australians* (Brisbane, QLD: Department of Communities, 2004), accessed 27 April 2013, http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/forgotten-australians/documents /snapshot-consultations.pdf; C. O'Neill, "Accessing the Records of the Forgotten Australians: Learning from the Human Rights Context to Improve Archival Practices and Restorative Justice," in *A Climate of Change: International Council on Archives Congress, Brisbane, 2011,* accessed 27 April 2013, http://www.ica2012.com/files/pdf/Full%20papers%20upload/ ica12Final00354.pdf; C. O'Neill, V. Selakovic, and R. Tropea, "Access to Records for People Who Were in Out-of-Home Care: Moving Beyond 'Third Dimension' Archival Practice," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 29–41; S. Swain and N. Musgrove, "We Are the Stories We Tell About Ourselves: Child Welfare Records and the Construction of Identity among Australians Who, as Children, Experienced Out-of-Home Care," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 1 (2012): 4–14; Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce and Victorian Department for Victorian Communities, *Wilam Naling: Knowing Who You Are: Improving Access to Records of the Stolen Generations: A Report to the Victorian Government from the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce* (Melbourne: Department for Victorian Communities, 2006), accessed 27 April 2013, http://prov.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/ WilamNalingReportJune2006.pdf.

51   Highly readable introductions to this vast subject are available from Jonathan Brent's research travelogue, *Inside the Stalin Archives* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2009), and Travis Holland's novel *The Archivist's Story* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007).

copyright by people unknown then and now as successful creative figures have come to stand as their only extant personal archive.[52]

Over ten years ago, Verne Harris eloquently expressed the power of moving beyond binary oppositions:

there is extreme danger in a reason which gives no space to mystery, in the archon unchallenged by the anarchontic, in a globalising allowed to destroy the local, the indigenous. Equally there is a danger in the mystery which gives no space to reason, the anarchontic without archontic rein, in the local excluding the global. In other words, I am arguing against the binary opposition and the either/or. It is in the both/ and, the holding of these apparent opposites in creative tension, that there is *liberation*. For instance, a liberation for the indigenous in being open to engagement with the dynamics of globalisation. A liberation for the global in respecting the indigenous.[53]

Records continuum, postmodern and postcustodial theory, Indigenous ways of knowing, and emergent thinking on co-creation, multiple simultaneous or parallel provenance, and the archival multiverse hold out the possibility of liberating archival theory and practice from the either/or approach. The archival multiverse's view of evidentiary texts as inclusive of "records as they exist in multiple cultural contexts" and all forms of recordkeeping, together with continuum-based views of the archive that encompass both records and archives as defined in life cycle thinking, as well as personal and corporate records, support broad definitions of a personal archive. A virtual personal archive could include all forms, genres, and media of records relating to that person, whether captured in personal or corporate recordkeeping systems; remembered, transmitted orally, or performed; held in manuscript collections, archival and other cultural institutions, community archives, or other keeping places; or stored in shared digital spaces. Consideration of Indigenous views of the emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual dimensions present in all forms of recordkeeping and archiving in the archival multiverse could inform richly layered understandings of interconnected corporate and personal recordkeeping behaviours and cultures, and an enriched and more inclusive recordkeeping and archival practice.

Archival ideas are positioned within broader intellectual and philosophical movements, which can also provide deeper understandings of the archive in society. The influence of postmodern thinking is evident in continuum approaches to recordkeeping as "a continually interacting and evolving set of contingent activities with individual, institutional and societal aspects,"

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52 A comprehensive guide to the collection is Merilyn Minell, *A Nation's Imagination: Australia's Copyright Records, 1854–1968*. Research Guide No. 18 (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 2003).

53 Verne Harris, "Law, Evidence and Electronic Records: A Strategic Perspective from the Global Periphery," *Comma, International Journal on Archives* 1–2 (2001): 42.

encompassing and moving beyond narrower ideas about the archive influenced by modern, scientific thinking, which characterize archives as "unconscious and therefore objective by-products of bureaucratic activity."[54] From the perspective of critical theory, the binary constructs in modern archival theory underpin an archival apparatus that sustains particular power configurations in our society. The "othering" of "oral forms of records, literature, art, artefacts, the built environment, landscape, dance, ceremonies and rituals" and the "hard boundaries ... drawn between personal and public recordkeeping, between the private and the public"[55] can result in a privileging of government and institutional perspectives in mainstream archives because other voices are absent or muted.[56] From a post-colonial perspective, binary oppositions in modern archival theories support the privileging of a singular corporate records creator and the treatment of individual participants in transactions and interactions as subjects of the records. Particularly in post-colonial, post-trauma and post-conflict societies, institutional archives can thereby perpetuate the victimization of formerly oppressed and abused people, and can play a role in continuing to silence their voices.[57]

Records continuum theorists highlight the multiple contexts of recordkeeping and the need for archival frameworks and systems that enable multiple points of view:

In order to use the records continuum model as an analytical tool to explore features of virtual and physical recordkeeping landscapes, it is necessary to adopt a single point of view, e.g. the broader context or ambience of one of the parties to the activities and transactions documented in the records. Adopting the point of view of another party to the transaction gives a different reading as that party's purposes and functions differ from those of other participants. Pursuing this approach teases out what Chris Hurley has termed the simultaneous multiple provenances of records – including the ambient

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54 Anne Gilliland and Sue McKemmish, "Archival and Recordkeeping Research: Past, Present and Future," in *Research Methods: Information, Systems and Contexts,* ed. Kirsty Williamson and Graeme Johanson (Prahran, VIC: Tilde University Press, 2013), 93.

55 McKemmish, "Evidence of Me ... in a Digital World," 123.

56 In colonial and post-colonial societies, orality has been constructed as an inferior form of evidence and knowledge transmission. See Shannon Faulkhead, *Narratives of Koorie Victoria* (PhD diss., Monash University, 2008). Faulkhead's thesis explores how the orality/ literacy dichotomy underpins Australian legal systems today and is manifest in much of the writing of Australian history; it is also found in historical and current recordkeeping practice, perpetuating the oppression of Aboriginal peoples. See also Adele Perry, "The Colonial Archive on Trial: Possession, Dispossession and History in Delgamuukw v. British Columbia," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History,* ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). Perry refers to a similar dichotomy that emerged in Canada in the nineteenth century and continues to influence mainstream relationships with First Nations.

57 Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001): 14–35, especially 30–31.

context of the individual or organization that set the records aside, as well as the ambient contexts of other participants in the processes of records creation, accumulation, management and use.[58]

Most modern archival appraisal and description policies and practice privilege the context in which a single "records creator" operates. Appraisal decisions are taken within that context with little or no consultation with the other parties involved. Descriptive systems capture the context of the singular creator, and not the contexts of others who participated in the activities or events documented in the record as parties to the transactions. The single records creator also exercises a more extensive set of rights in the records than those of other participants. Chris Hurley challenges these approaches with reference to the concepts of simultaneous multiple provenance and parallel provenance. According to the concept of multiple simultaneous provenance, all direct participants in the activities documented in the record are considered co-creators, not just the person or organization who captured the record into their personal or corporate recordkeeping system or archive. Implementing this concept requires the development of archival metasystems that can describe records from the perspectives of all the "co-creators" of the records, with reference to their different purposes and functions. In Hurley's concept of parallel provenance, multiple provenances are described in parallel systems in the absence of such a metasystem.

Archival description must necessarily be grounded in a point of view (an ambience). Often, the ambience is unstated – implicit rather than explicit. Different points of view establish an alternative context. Archival theory can be developed to allow the simultaneous documentation of these alternative (parallel) points of view in a single descriptive system or statement. A [meta]system is to be preferred because it allows for on-going management of collective knowledge. Post-modernist critics have challenged archival theory to provide for an articulation of different voices in the way records are preserved and described. Parallel provenance provides an acceptable method for meeting this challenge without disturbing the traditional respect for provenance.[59]

He illustrates these concepts with reference to the records of Australia's Stolen Generations of Indigenous children, held by national and state government archives. Hurley argues that the government files documenting child removal for the purposes of assimilation into white society simultaneously exist in the context of the government of the day and in the context of Indigenous Australians who experienced this activity as human rights abuse and child stealing: "Those records belong to the narrative of the people upon whom the

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58 McKemmish, "Evidence of Me ... in a Digital World," 123.
59 Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (2) When Something Is *Not* Related to Everything Else," 81–82.

policies were applied as well as the narrative of those who wrote them and set them aside."[60]

In these circumstances, archival descriptive systems that document single provenance, or at best sequential multiple provenance, give agency to government organizations but not to Indigenous people. The Australian series system, with its separation of content and context description, potentially supports the documentation of multiple provenance, but ideas about simultaneous multiple or parallel provenance cannot be realized through this technique alone. In the manuscript tradition in Australia, records of Indigenous Australians are most likely to be found in the collections of anthropologists and non-Indigenous organizations, including the orphanages and missions where the Stolen Generations were taken after removal from their families. Such collections may contain records and artefacts originally created by Indigenous Australians (according to archival definitions of singular provenance), audio and visual recordings of Indigenous language, ceremonies, dance and stories about the country, as well as documents created by the donor person or organization. They are described in library manuscript systems that focus on describing and indexing content, and their access and use are managed according to agreements with the donor. Indigenous Australians are increasingly challenging curatorial practices in cultural institutions that support what they see as a misappropriation of their knowledge and heritage. In Australia, the 2007 UN Declaration on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples has provided a framework for asserting the rights of Indigenous people to become active, participating agents in recordkeeping and archiving practice that pertains to all records relating to them, rather than the passive, disempowered subjects of records created and maintained by non-Indigenous institutions and organizations.

Tom Nesmith points to the emergence of a multifaceted view of provenance and a move away from "the idea that provenance is above all a single person or institution – expressed largely in the central act of literally inscribing records."[61] Nesmith discusses the need for a more complex and broader conception of provenance in light of how Aboriginal knowledge was misappropriated and incorporated by colonizing recordkeepers, and he proposes the concept of societal provenance. According to this view:

60 Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (1) What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1 (May 2005): 138.

61 Tom Nesmith, "The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal-European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 352. For writing by others of similar mind, see, for example, Eric Ketelaar, "Access: The Democratic Imperative," *Archives and Manuscripts* 34, no. 2 (November 2006): 63; and Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (1) What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?" and "Parallel Provenance: (2) When Something Is *Not* Related to Everything Else."

records have a back story and an afterlife; they have breadth and depth. They lead a double social life; they 'reflect and shape societal processes'. It broadens the traditional understanding of the context of records creation to embrace aspects such as the means of creation; co-creation, especially involving inter-cultural settings; the silences of non-creation; and archiving and use too. The traditional understanding is also extended to examine the people and organisations involved, including archivists and archive administrations.[62]

Chris Hurley and Eric Ketelaar have highlighted the centrality of individuals (and their families and descendants) to, and their identification with, the formal provenance of official records. Our own example, from among many possibilities, is the personal provenance entity Laurie Aarons (1917–2005), one of the best-known and longest-serving Australian Communist Party leaders; his personal and political papers are held at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. Given Hurley and Ketelaar's point, he can also be seen as the co-creator of the eighty-five volumes of surveillance assessment and source reports about him created by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation and its predecessors, which are held in the National Archives of Australia. Yet this extensive view of the Laurie Aarons personal archive is not accommodated by the descriptive systems of these two institutional repositories.[63]

By expanding the definition of record creators to include everyone who has contributed to a record's creative process or has been directly affected by its action, the notions of co-creation and parallel or simultaneous multiple provenance reposition "records subjects" as "records agents." They support a broader spectrum of rights, responsibilities, and obligations relating to the ownership, management, accessibility, and privacy of records in and through time.

The records continuum and related theoretical approaches provide a conceptual framework for exploring the plurality of personal recordkeeping forms, behaviours, and cultures in the context of the complex interrelationships between "evidence of me" and "evidence of us." At the same time, digital technologies open up new possibilities of personal and corporate recordkeeping behaviours and enable corporate and social interaction and activity to be recorded in vast networks of interconnected social networking sites. Digital technologies and social media enable the formation of a public personal

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62 Michael Piggott, *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012), 3.
63 For details of Laurie Aarons' papers, see http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged .aspx?itemID=877013 (accessed 22 April 2013). See also Mark Aarons, *The Family File* (Melbourne: Black, 2010), especially the introduction (ix–xviii), in which the author explains, without realizing it, how parallel provenance applies to the four generations of some thirteen members of his family.

archive in networked spaces, potentially linked to personal data files via government agency, private company, and community sites. Eric Ketelaar characterizes personal public records that are born digital in web environments as a new "social and cultural phenomenon of co-creatorship" between individuals and organizations.[64] Online business activities such as Internet banking, airline and accommodation booking, account management, tax return submission, and vehicle licensing directly engage individuals in the co-creation of shared records of online transactions.[65] Although we would argue that the concept of co-creation is equally applicable in the paper world, digital technologies and social media "enable the co-existence of different perspectives in shared, networked spaces in which all parties are considered co-creators of records and co-formers of the archive."[66] They readily support the online engagement of all parties in capturing content and contextual metadata, negotiating mutual rights and protocols for decision making about appraisal and access, annotating existing records and archives, and contributing new perspectives.

Within the conceptual frameworks discussed above, digital technologies could link recordings of oral narratives and memories to written records created in many different contexts and held in many different institutional repositories. They could provide views of these linked records from multiple perspectives; for example, a view of the extensive personal archive of an individual, made up of his own personal records, and records of his business and social interactions kept by other people and organizations, or stored in shared digital spaces. Digital networks and archival metasystems could connect many different archives, organizations, and individuals via suites of web pages collaboratively built by organizations, communities, individuals, families, government and community archives, libraries, museums, art galleries, and historic sites. They could enable shared control and the exercise of negotiated rights in records. They could accommodate records of many different genres, forms, and media. The Australian series system and related metadata schema, with their powerful relational features, could potentially be extended to accommodate alternative readings of the records, represent multiple simultaneous provenance, and provide individual, community, corporate, and societal perspectives. Social media and other digital technologies are already supporting new integrated personal and corporate recordkeeping and archiving behaviours beyond custody. They enable individuals to interactively document their lives in shared spaces in many different forms, and to link to and interact with records relating to them in government, business and community archives, libraries, and other cultural institutions. The digital age also opens up new

64   Eric Ketelaar, "Archives as Spaces of Memory," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29, no. 1 (2008): 14.
65   Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (2): When Something Is *Not* Related to Everything Else."
66   McKemmish, "Evidence of Me ... in a Digital World," 133.

possibilities for the way archival and recordkeeping services are structured and delivered, the networking of existing institutions, and the emergence of new structures for managing records and archives. This may involve separate management of and responsibility for the physical record, as well as shared responsibility for its intellectual, spiritual, and emotional dimensions through unified frameworks and systems.

Records continuum, postmodern, and postcustodial archival theory as developed in Australia and elsewhere, Indigenous ways of knowing, emergent thinking on co-creation, the multiple simultaneous provenance of records, and the archival multiverse provide conceptual frames of reference for building the overarching, inclusive, and unifying frameworks that are absent in Australia. Within these frameworks and using digital technologies, a transformed archival practice might emerge. Holistic approaches to the appraisal, description, and accessibility of personal and corporate archives, along with a more extensive set of personal rights in records, might enable archival systems that better meet the needs of individuals to access – and even participate in the management of – their personal archive in the broadest sense.

In the next section, we point to the need to address the significant historical gaps in the archival literature relating to personal archives and personal recordkeeping, and the need for further research and development to underpin the transformation of practice we are envisaging.

Addressing the Gaps in the Literature and Research

In Australia, there has been relatively little exploration of particular types of personal recordkeeping and archiving behaviour, narrowly defined, and the documentary forms that written records take (for example, the documentation activities of photographers, diarists, the universal auto-archivist, and politicians),[67] and there are many areas that have not attracted much interest (most notably, perhaps, personal recordkeeping roles within families). As discussed earlier, the Australian manuscripts tradition has not produced the kind of robust discourse that usually develops around a distinctive theory and practice. Within the literature in Australia and elsewhere, the perhaps inevitable corollary of the binary constructs of records/archives and the personal/corporate archive has been a general failure to examine (i) personal recordkeeping and

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67 Instances of exceptions are Graeme Powell, "Prime Ministers as Recordkeepers: British Models and Australian Practice," in *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years,* ed. Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Clayton, VIC: Ancora, 1994); Joanna Sassoon, *An Archaeology of Memory: A Biography of Photographs Taken by E.L. Mitchell 1908–1930* (PhD diss., University of Western Australia, 2001); and Michael Piggott, "Towards a History of Australian Diary Keeping," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 145–66.

archiving behaviour within organizations and communities and the role of individuals in the co-creation of corporate records, and (ii) the sense in which personal archiving is never just personal.

In his introduction to the 1996 special issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*, Adrian Cunningham called for the Australian recordkeeping and archiving community to "put personal recordkeeping back on the agenda":

Ultimately, it would be my wish to have a fully integrated discourse in the literature, one in which most if not all issues were considered in relation to both the organisational and personal records dimensions.[68]

Unfortunately, the call fell on deaf ears, with some notable exceptions. The exceptions include the writings of Cunningham, Hurley, Ketelaar, and Upward, which are referenced earlier in this article; the articles in the special issue itself, including Sue McKemmish's "Evidence of Me..."[69]; a passionate exchange of views, provoked by "Evidence of Me...," between Verne Harris, Sue McKemmish, and Frank Upward in the May 2001 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*[70]; and Michael Piggott's explorations of human behaviour and recordkeeping – from Grainger, the auto-archivist, to the documentation of prime ministerial lives.[71]

As has been noted elsewhere, the paucity of research and writing about the personal records dimension is particularly marked in the burgeoning archival discourse on electronic and digital recordkeeping and archiving. The need to fill this gap was an impetus for the SAA monograph *I, Digital*, and no doubt for this special issue of *Archivaria*. In his introduction to the former, Lee references the "few scattered journal articles and project web sites," and the monograph's extensive bibliography bears witness to the point he is making.[72]

Until recently, even within continuum, postmodern, and postcustodial scholarship, recordkeeping behaviour in general remains poorly researched

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68   Adrian Cunningham, "Introduction," *Archives and Manuscripts* 24, no. 1 (May 1996): 7.
69   McKemmish, "Evidence of Me...," 28–45.
70   See Verne Harris, "On the Back of a Tiger: Deconstructive Possibilities in 'Evidence of Me,'" *Archives and Manuscripts* 29, no. 1 (May 2001): 8–21; and Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, "In Search of the Lost Tiger by Way of Saint-Beuve: Reconstructing the Possibilities in 'Evidence of Me…,'" *Archives and Manuscripts* 29, no. 1 (May 2001): 22–43.
71   See, for example, Michael Piggott, "Australian Prime Ministerial Libraries – Comments and Reflections," *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* 36, no. 1 (March 2005): 74–83; "Grainger the Autoarchivist," in *Facing Percy Grainger*, ed. David Pear (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2006), 39–45; and "Human Behaviour and the Making of Records and Archives," *Archival & Social Studies: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 1, no. 0 (March 2007), accessed 22 April 2013, http://archivo.cartagena.es/files/36-170-DOC_FICHERO1/12-piggott_human.pdf.
72   Lee, ed., *I, Digital*, 1, 307–62.

territory, and it is daunting to contemplate since by definition it resides within the vast domain of human behaviour in general. Within the rapidly evolving field of archival research and theory building, there is great potential for research on the plurality of personal recordkeeping behaviours and cultures in the context of their complex interrelationship with corporate recordkeeping in the continuum, and in the online cultures and shared spaces of our digital worlds. There are rich possibilities for further research on personal recordkeeping in these contexts, which could contribute to a transformed practice.

A recent survey of the landscape of recordkeeping and archival research between 1988 and 2012 maps major shifts in thinking about "the archive": from professional constructs of archives as "records that have crossed the archival threshold into archival custody, the repository that manages them, and the practices associated with their management," toward conceptualizations of "the archive" that "encompass broad philosophical and cultural notions of the archive in society and its societal functions, particularly in archival research framed by records continuum and postcustodial theories."[73] It also highlights how interpretivist researchers increasingly work with this expansive concept of the archive, subscribe to the notion of records as "always in a state of becoming,"[74] and focus on the contingent nature of records, their diverse and changing contexts, and the partial role played by recordkeepers and archivists. Interpretivist research in the recordkeeping and archiving field is also informed by:

anthropological thinking about records as cultures of documentation, and the way in which the archive, the recordkeeping and archiving processes that shape it, and the worldviews made manifest in its systems of classification, reflect the power configurations of particular times, places, and worldviews, and associated memory and evidence paradigms.[75]

It is linked to postmodern and post-colonial discourses in disciplines like anthropology, literature, and history, as well as ethnic, gender, queer, and indigenous studies, which have explored the archive as a societal construct and its association with "asymmetrical power, grand narratives, nationalism, surveillance, and the omission, diminution or silencing of alternate narratives as well as subaltern, non-normative, or non-conforming voices."[76] Within

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73 Gilliland and McKemmish, "Archival and Recordkeeping Research," 81.

74 Sue McKemmish, "Are Records Ever Actual?" in *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years,* ed. Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Clayton, VIC: Ancora Press, 1994), 200.

75 Gilliland and McKemmish, "Archival and Recordkeeping Research," 91; referencing Ann Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1–2 (2002): 87–109.

76 Gilliland and McKemmish, "Archival and Recordkeeping Research," 86.

these broad and rich frames of reference, researchers have explored archival practices as both instruments of colonialism and oppression, and instruments of human rights, truth and reconciliation, and social justice,[77] as well as non-traditional archival forms, including oral and performative records.[78] Within these broader trends, there is also an emergent discourse reporting research that uses ethnographic, participatory action research, and second-generation grounded theory methods to explore personal recordkeeping and archiving in the archival multiverse.[79] Grounded theory, which involves building theory from the ground up, is a particularly useful approach in areas where there has been a paucity of theorizing.

Conclusion: Rich Possibilities for Future Research

It is likely that, in the future, rapidly mutating digital technologies and social media will have an impact on Derrida's "possibility of archiving"[80] in the archival multiverse, and will contribute to a transformation of our archival frameworks, structures, and practice. This will be linked to a resetting of relationships that cedes agency to all who are engaged in or affected by a record's

77 See, for example, Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archive and Found Its History* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003); J. Blanco-Rivera, "The Forbidden Files: Creation and Use of Surveillance Files against the Independence Movement in Puerto Rico," *American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2005): 297–311; and "Truth Commissions and the Construction of Collective Memory: The Chile Experience," in *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory,* ed. Ben Alexander and Jeannette A. Bastian (London: Facet, 2009); Michelle Caswell, "Khmer Rouge Archives: Accountability, Truth, and Memory in Cambodia," *Archival Science* 11 (2011): 25–44; Eric Ketelaar, "Recordkeeping and Societal Power," in *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society,* ed. S. McKemmish, M. Piggott, B. Reed, and F. Upward (Wagga Wagga, NSW: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, 2005): 277–98; Ally Krebbs, "Native America's Twenty-First-Century Right to Know," *Archival Science* 12, no. 2 (June 2012): 173–90; Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, and Lynette Russell, "Distrust in the Archive: Reconciling Records," *Archival Science* 11, nos. 3–4 (November 2011): 211–39; and Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense (*Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

78 For example, Kelvin White explored the recordness of the mestizaje, songs performed in Afro-Mexican communities of the Costa Chica in "The Dynamics of Race and Remembering in a 'Colorblind' Society: A Case Study of Racial Paradigms and Archival Education in Mexico" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2009).

79 See, for example, Kalpana Shankar, "Recordkeeping in the Production of Scientific Knowledge: An Ethnographic Study," *Archival Science* 4, nos. 3–4 (2004): 367–82; Karen Gracy, "Documenting Communities of Practice: Making the Case for Archival Ethnography," *Archival Science* 4, nos. 3–4 (2004): 335–65; and Leisa Gibbons, "Testing the Continuum: User-Generated Cultural Heritage on YouTube," *Archives & Manuscripts* 23, no. 2 (November 2009): 89–112.

80 Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever in South Africa," in *Refiguring the Archive,* ed. Caroline Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers), 46.

ongoing process of becoming. In Australia, we hope that this would lead to a repositioning of the personal archive and address major gaps in the record, particularly relating to marginalized communities and individuals who experience critical identity, memory, and accountability crises.

We have argued that records continuum and postcustodial archival thinking, within the broader contexts and movements explored above, provide a robust and sophisticated approach to recordkeeping and archiving in this imagined future. In the Australian context, we would also argue that liberation from binary opposition mindsets is an essential prerequisite to building the overarching, inclusive, and unifying frameworks that are currently absent, and to developing holistic approaches to the appraisal, description, and accessibility of personal and corporate archives that better meet the archival needs of individuals to access – and even participate in the management of – their personal archive in the broadest sense.

In concluding, we emphasize the need for further archival research and theory building relating to the plurality of personal recordkeeping behaviours and cultures in the context of the complex interrelationships between "evidence of me" and "evidence of us" in the continuum, and in the online cultures and shared spaces of our digital worlds. There are many rich possibilities for further research, including those suggested by Sue McKemmish in *I, Digital* – the interactive forms that storytelling, witnessing, and memorializing take in a digital world, including the specific role personal recordkeeping might play in witnessing our lives individually and collectively, and in forming personal and collective memory; emergent forms of public and personal recordkeeping behaviour and interaction and the potential multiple forms of personal records; and the relationships between personal and public recordkeeping, the personal and the public archive, and the co-existence of "evidence of me … and us" in shared digital spaces.[81] Areas of particular focus might include anything from understanding digital communities of records, "imagined as the aggregate of records in all forms generated by multiple layers of actions and interactions between and among the people and institutions within a community,"[82] in networked spaces, to documentation of society's two universal life events: birth and death, and archiving via fiction/memoir, via grieving memorialization, and via scrapbooking.

In terms of professional agendas relating to transformed practice, we would add exploration of the possibilities of archiving that the new technologies of our digital worlds bring when combined with maturing records continuum, archival postmodern and post-colonial thinking, and understandings drawn from Indigenous ways of knowing, in particular addressing the key questions

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81   McKemmish, "Evidence of Me … in a Digital World," 129.
82   Bastian, *Owning Memory*, 5.

of how to transform appraisal, descriptive, and metadata practices to represent multiple perspectives and parallel or multiple provenances; how to give agency to individuals in their interactions with public and community archives; and how to provide and sustain shared, collaborative archival spaces.

Sue McKemmish, *PhD, is director of the Centre for Organisational and Social Informatics at Monash University, Australia. Her research and writing relates to the records continuum, recordkeeping in society, recordkeeping metadata, smart information portals, and Indigenous archives. She leads the Monash postgraduate program in archives and recordkeeping, and is a laureate of the Australian Society of Archivists.*

Michael Piggott, *master of archives administration, is a semi-retired archivist, researcher, and consultant. He was employed from 1971 to 2008 at the National Library of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, the National Archives of Australia, and the University of Melbourne Archives. In 2012, he published with Chandos* Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays.