Introduction

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Canadian archival repositories are memory institutions whose function is to ensure the acquisition, preservation and dissemination of the many narratives that constitute Canada. These institutions have been shaped by the country's past and defined by its present and are centrally engaged in forming its future. While these repositories, and the archives which they house, are the professional domain of archivists and scholars, their holdings are also usually made available to the interested public, either for consultation in traditional reading rooms or virtually, via the Internet. The collection we present here is the outcome of a series of conversations about archives in Canada, which began at McMaster University in 2005.[1] The first gathering in what was to become the biennial Archives in Canada Conference Series focused on literary archives. The discussion continued in 2007 at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in Ottawa, this time with a focus on Canada's radical archives.[2] And the final conference was held in 2009 at Mount Allison University.

Our first objective in establishing the Archives in Canada Conference Series was to bring together archivists, scholars and the wider community to exchange ideas and to engage in discussions about our shared passion for archives. The goal of the series, echoed in this collection, was to provide a forum for all users of archives to reflect on their practice, be it traditional or grounded in new media, and to share their ideas. It was at our last gathering, organized around the theme of archives and the Canadian narrative, that earlier versions of many of these essays were first presented. Also identified for discussion and designated as subthemes at the 2009 conference, and hence represented here, were the importance of regional archives and, inevitably, the role of new digital initiatives in framing narratives of and for Canada.

This collection reflects our engagement with the theme of narrative. Its contributions reveal scholars, archivists and all those concerned with Canada and its meanings seeking out its defining stories. While we make no claim that those stories are to be found only in written sources — indeed, we readily acknowledge that Canada's narratives may be found in its oral tradition and

even in the land itself — our primary focus is on the narratives to be found in archival collections, be they national, provincial or local. The ways in which those narratives are shaped, in both traditional and non-traditional forms, are the shared concern of the scholars and archivists whose essays appear here.

On a conceptual level, the archive may be considered as a cultural technology in the Foucauldian sense, an example of the contingent arrangements of ideals, artefacts and practices that order forms of knowledge and seek to guide practices of learning.[3] While the telling of Canada's stories is a long established and traditional activity, it is a pursuit that also demonstrates dramatic change, as techniques and technology transform familiar rituals. The time-honoured archival monologue, in which the lone voice of archival authority speaks, has become a dialogue, including its users, and, as the arc of conversation widens, it has even become a multilogue. The expanding narrative accentuates the need to chart the unfamiliar territory. This collection offers an assortment of maps for a changing landscape.

Our contributors, more fully identified in their biographies, bring a variety of perspectives to this conversation about archives. They include professional archivists at all stages of their career and young researchers alongside some of Canada's most distinguished writers and scholars. They represent archival institutions and universities from across Canada, and their essays draw upon archival resources both national, from institutions coast to coast, and international.

Section I — Overview — Mapping the Archival Landscape

In his preface, Doug Rimmer, representing Library and Archives Canada, discusses new patterns of knowledge creation and sharing as he foregrounds the country's most powerful memory institution's role in supporting "the process of formation, dissolution, change and challenge in our Canadian narratives." LAC's mandate, Rimmer observes, "rests on a narrative conception of Canadian society — not a static, fixed narrative but one composing many strands and shifting over time." Referencing the concept of conversation theory, Rimmer's opening words situate Canada's national archives firmly within an approach facilitating "knowledge-creating conversations."

Appropriately for our opening essay, Noah Richler, one of Canada's most thoughtful authors and essayists, in "Stories, Buildings, and Maps: A Canadian Archive," takes a wide and inclusive view of archives, suggesting that the landscape itself is an archival text from which Canadian narratives are constructed and that in Canada "we feel history through what is inferred." Because, he suggests, so much of Canada's history is not written, we behave as "archaeologists of the present day," divining our past from the landscape. Convinced by Robert Bringhurst's assertion that "stories are the first maps" and that "the text is already here" in the form of "the clouds,

the mountains, the rivers and the lakes," Richler invites us to honour our own songlines and enjoins us to seek out our archives, not just in books and papers and photographs but also in the land.[4]

Section II — Archives and Narratives for Canada — International, National and Regional

In our second section we shift focus to approach the archival narrative in ways that are at once more traditional, in that they deal with the more conventional archival resources of artefacts and paper, but that are also less normative, in their emphasis on archival meta-narratives — that is, narratives of the archival stories themselves rather than of the evidential stories contained in them. In their different ways, these contributions present the relationship between archives and prevailing narratives of power, past, present and future, demonstrating that archives are shaped by prevailing political and social narratives and exposing any remnant of the myth of archival neutrality.

In his historical examination of the archiving practices of Canada's National Museum, Andrew Nurse looks to recent reconceptualizations of archives, which no longer see them as neutral or apolitical repositories but rather as institutions that "embed specific narratives of understanding, conceptions of knowledge, and definitions of what constitutes evidence, while literally calling this 'evidence' into being" (Cook and Schwartz 2002). In "Archives as Narrative: The Politics of Ethnographic Archiving at the National Museum," responding to calls from archival theorists for an approach that looks at archives as a subject of study, as opposed to a site where other subjects are investigated, Nurse attempts to show, not only how the National Museum embodied the prevailing social and power relations of the time in which it was established, but how it also functioned as an agency of culture transformation and even culture creation.

Further pursuing the approach that sees significant value in the study of archives themselves, and in particular the significance of the archivist's role in shaping evidence, "Our Records, Ourselves: Documenting Archives and Archivists," by Kristan Cook and Heather Dean, examines contemporary rather than historical practices. Their concern is with institutional documentation in archives. With one of the authors based at a Canadian government institution — the Provincial Archives of Alberta — and the other at a private U.S. university — the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University — they are well placed to compare the different legislative environments and administrative practices that give rise to the varying content of administrative files. Yet, despite the significant international differences between these administrative environments and the consequent variation evident in the documentation preserved in their internal files, the authors

make the same proposal for both institutions. Indeed, it is a proposal that they apply to archives in general: that archivists provide researchers with a "complete narrative" of a donation. In keeping with current attitudes promoting accessibility and transparency beyond the world or archives, Cook and Dean suggest that the information contained in these files be made available to interested researchers. As working archivists, however, the authors recognize that such openness cannot be achieved without resolving potential obstacles, and they examine the potential legal, ethical and administrative barriers to implementing such a proposal.

Manon Brunet writes from the perspective of a researcher in yet another provincial archives. Her essay, "Les enjeux historiographiques de l'usage des archives littéraires,"[5] considers how literary historians in Quebec today are turning to archives to augment their work and to make their research more amenable to literary theory and criticism. Brunet reports that when she began conducting archival research on Quebec literature, she encountered few other scholars paying attention to the importance of archives. Like a lonely *coureur des bois,* she met mainly genealogists and a few historians. She is glad to observe that this situation has now changed, and she predicts that researchers' use of archives will continue to increase as access becomes easier via the Internet. Increased scholarly attention, Brunet suggests, will significantly assist in the ongoing work of redefining Quebec literary history.

While Cook and Dean, in comparing practices at the archives of the Province of Alberta with those at an American institution, and Brunet, in examining archives in Quebec, shift our investigations from the national archival focus of Rimmer and Nurse, Ronald Labelle's essay moves our focus still deeper into the area of regional archives, one of the two subthemes at our Mount Allison conference. Labelle's essay, "Les archives sonores dans les provinces de l'Atlantique: un patrimoine en perdition?" is an example of a less well known regional archive, located away from the centre of Canada's archival world in Ottawa (LAC). Labelle reminds us that Canada is one of the world's most decentralized nations and that we should therefore expect small regional archives to contain many of its significant stories. He estimates there is a total of some 20,000 hours of sound material contained in archives in the Atlantic Provinces, much of it residing in very small institutions such as la Société historique du Madawaska and the New Brunswick Woodsmen's Museum. While recognizing the importance of recent joint efforts between universities and community groups, Labelle makes a plea for the further development of the necessary skills to preserve this valuable material and for greater coordination of preservation and dissemination efforts at a national level.

Grant Hurley also is concerned with regional archives and the rich stories waiting there to be explored. In "Money Is Time: Case Studies in Small

Canadian Regional Archives," his focus is on the Charlotte County Archives in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick (where, as will be seen below, contributors Gwen Davies and Carole Gerson also found stories of considerable interest) and the archives of Mount Allison University. Reminding us that archives are spaces that hold an enormous amount of power over "memory and identity," Hurley argues for the vital importance of small regional archives in preserving narratives that contrast sharply with those emerging from the national, centralized collective memory. And yet, despite their significance, the two examples that he explores in some depth indicate that "while small regional archives are integral to maintaining the histories of Canada," they are, nonetheless, "under constant threat." Hurley offers some specific recommendations for strengthening small archives in the face of such dangers.

Section III Re-Producing, Re-Presenting the Archival Narrative — Mapping the Virtual World

The issue of narrative is a central theme in Martin Hand's study, *Making Digital Cultures: Access, Interactivity and Authenticity*. He argues that "dominant tropes do not simply live in the academy: they 'script' digitization in particular ways, and operate as rhetorical vehicles for institutional actors seeking to embrace and implement digitization for locally specific ends" (2008: 6). The "scripting" of digitization is the concern of all of the essays in this segment of our collection, most explicitly in the first contribution, "Marshland Memories: Constructing Narrative in an Online Archival Exhibition," by Robert Summerby-Murray. Grounding his observations in a digitization project developed using those same Mount Allison University archives used by Grant Hurley as a small archives case study in the previous section of this collection, Summerby-Murray points out that while the "construction of narrative… in the archival record has been keenly debated in the theoretical literature over the past decades," there are "relatively few examples of researchers applying these theoretical positions to a set of archival resources." Like Noah Richler, Summerby-Murray's thematic concern in his digital archive project is the physical landscape. As he makes clear, telling the stories of the Tantramar marshlands in a way that faithfully represents the archival "reality" was an elusive goal, one which led the project team to question the very nature of archival truth and to appreciate more fully the ways in which the cherished archival tenets of organization, order and accountability present only a flawed and partial meta-narrative, whether in conventional or online archival representation.

Discussion of aspects of archival "reality" continues in Ala Rekrut's essay "Connected Constructions, Constructing Connections: Materiality of Archival Records as Historical Evidence." She suggests that recent shifts,

especially in the field of history, to more theoretical and interdisciplinary approaches to analyzing sources appear to have distanced historians from records as physical phenomena. Positing that the "materiality of records is anchored in the social circumstances surrounding their physical creation" and is therefore a significant part of the reconstructive and interpretive process, Rekrut develops a tight focus on the physical aspects of two versions of a Hudson's Bay Company journal from the Moose Fort trade post, compiled between 1789 and 1791. Her finely detailed analysis of the differences in physical composition between the two artefacts is a classic example of the value of evidence provided by material analysis. As researchers increasingly use archival materials only through their digitized surrogates, we need to be cautioned by Rekrut's observation that "those who have access only to an image of a record have access to significantly less materially manifested evidence than those who can use the original records."

Rekrut's celebration of materiality and her cautionary words about the loss of evidentiary value in any form of archival reproduction find echoes in "Physicality as Apotheosis: The Changing Roles of Atoms and Bits in the Digital Age," by Melissa McCarthy. Attempting to steer a course between the practical and the philosophical and to integrate analysis of both the material and the digital in the construction of an online exhibit, McCarthy dismisses poorly planned exhibits of randomly chosen images, mounted without consideration or context, and instead suggests that any online project first define "its goal, its intended audience and, vitally, its maintenance plan." Her discussion then shifts to the question of the material versus the virtual, the real versus the fake and, following the work of Walter Benjamin, "the ways in which, in creating virtual exhibits, we are allowing many more people to see our holdings than would otherwise be the case, but at the same time, we are harming the authenticity and authority of the objects we are reproducing." Addressing the tensions between the real and the virtual, as well as the lack of consensus among archivists concerning the value of virtual exhibits, McCarthy suggests that a "properly designed exhibit with sufficient description and meta-data to clarify each item's informational content can offer enough information to most researchers, but some researchers may need to examine the physical object to gain, for instance, clues as to its method of production." Her essay also considers the varying approaches to exhibit site design implicit in Web 1.0 and 2.0 developments and, in conclusion, offers hope and even some encouragement for archives, however small, that are considering construction of virtual exhibits.

The question of constructing a virtual presence for archives is also the theme of Dean Irvine and Meagan Timney's essay "A New Build: Digital Tools for Archives, Commons and Collaboration." As architects of the Editing Modernism in Canada project (EMiC), they have been concerned

with the creation of a digital media commons and, in particular, with the development of collaborative editing tools to facilitate their own project and other such virtual initiatives. While McCarthy's essay explores some of the preliminary conceptual and practical issues to be considered in establishing an online presence for archives, Irvine and Timney's contribution, based on an already well developed project involving a number of partner institutions, considers issues arising at a considerably more advanced stage. There is also a significant conceptual shift from discussion of how best (if at all) to present online versions of archival collections, to the concept of the digital commons, a project collectively produced by and distributed among those who contribute their labour to the project. Irvine and Timney's comprehensive discussion of currently available and developing digital tools, together with examples of Canadian projects making use of them, provides a valuable "real time" snapshot of the most advanced technological approaches to shaping new archival narratives of Canada.

Completing the section on mapping archives in the virtual world, Emily Ballantyne and Zalig Pollock's essay, "*Respect des fonds* and the Digital Page," provides an inside look into their work as editors of a sophisticated digital project focused on the work of a single Canadian poet and writer, P.K. Page. Central to their discussion is an aspect of digitization present in the highly varied approaches of Summerby-Murray, Rekrut, McCarthy and even, although more tangentially, Irvine and Timney, namely the question of context. How does a virtual rendering of an archival fonds, either in whole or in part, convey the content and ordering of the archival original? And is it important that it do so?[6] The authors, carefully distinguishing the concept of fonds from that of the collection, the product of clearly defined activities from the artificial construct," align digital archives with the artificial collection and call them "in effect, anti-archives." However, they also make clear that the basic archival tenet of the fonds, with its accompanying respect for provenance and original order, has itself been the subject of interrogation in these uncertain postmodern times and, from this perspective, the fonds is as much a "conceptual principle" as a "physical entity" (Cook 1992: 33). Citing Lyotard's definition of postmodernism as "incredulity towards metanarratives," the authors follow Cook in arguing that archival principles such as *respect des fonds*, are "historically contingent, not universal or absolute. The record is now perceived as… reflecting the narrative intentions of its author and the receptivity of its contemporary audience as much as its actual informational content" (2001: 27).

Ballantyne and Pollock pursue the idea of the author's "narrative intentions" into their virtual presentation of the collected works of P.K. Page. Echoing Richler's earlier discussion of the relationship of maps to archives and the relationship of both to the land, they acknowledge that "If it is true

that the map is not the territory, it is equally true that the database is not the archive." They describe their project as a "kind of archaeological investigation" at the heart of which "will be a database whose data will be largely (though not exclusively) drawn from the Page fonds." The authors reflect upon the subjectivity inherent in the organization of a database, an element they observe to parallel that inherent in archival organization and description, and they accept the responsibility to make this subjectivity clear to users of the digital *Collected Works*: "Inevitably the editors' choice of texts to include will reflect their sense of what is artistically and biographically significant, and their focus on genesis and social context will highlight certain aspects of the texts at the expense of others. In any case, the narrativized organizations embedded in the Digital Page will be very different indeed from Page's own self-narrative embedded in her fonds." This conclusion aligns closely with Martin Hand's prediction that since "technologies are inseparable from institutional and organizational cultures then we would expect digitization to bring alternative cultural conventions and practices into being" (2008: 6). The final part of Ballantyne and Pollock's essay provides a case study example of the digital transcription of one of Page's poems, supplying both the "genetic" text as well as an example of the editor's adherence to the central doctrine of *respect des fonds*.

Section IV — Case Studies in Archives and the Canadian Narrative

Ballantyne and Pollock's paper, which closes the previous section, provides a classic example of the conversations to which Doug Rimmer's preface referred — scholars and archivists sharing their expertise in the pursuit of new ways of presenting and exploring archives. These fruitful discussions are further demonstrated and developed in this final section where we more fully explore the case study approach. As our first essayist observes: "The literary archive is a space of transaction. In this space, the producers, arrangers, describers and interpreters of texts exchange ideas about words and collaborate in the production of literary meaning." Authors in this section send what are essentially reports from the field, or, more accurately, reports from the archives, about the process and progress of their research.

Jocelyn Hallman's essay, "Titling *He Drown She in the Sea*: The Archive as Paratext," once again invokes consideration of power and control — by archivists and scholars — counterpoised in relation to authorial intent, as she considers the archival context of Shani Mootoo's work. Once again the vocabulary of mapping recurs, in this case in relation to the physical placement of Mootoo's fonds. "Does it matter," Hallman asks, "that Mootoo's fonds were placed at a Vancouver institution, in a Canadian collection, rather than in a Trinidadian or diasporic context; does this alter or insert the archive into the dialogue about an author and her 'place' according to

literary discourse?" Citing the works of both archivists and literary theorists, Hallman's analysis focuses on Mootoo's search for a title for her novel and what the archival traces of this search reveal about the novel itself. Using Gérard Genette's "peritext + epitext = paratext" equation as her starting point, Hallman makes clear that "reading the archive as epitext reveals a more fraught relationship between peritext and epitext than this equation suggests," and in tracing, through the archival evidence, the search for the novel's title, she argues that "we do not see a simple equation of peritext + epitext = paratext; instead, the epitext shapes our reading of the peritext, altering its role in interpretation." Further, Hallman argues that the case of Mootoo's search for a title can be seen as an example of a particularly Canadian search for identity — the archive considered as epitext "alters our understanding of the novel's peritexts but also our understanding of Mootoo's role in the Canadian literary canon. The discourses that locate her as an Indian, Trinidadian, Caribbean or diasporic writer are disrupted by the archival process as much as are our readings of her work."

In "The Letters of Frances Stewart; Two Centuries of Layered Representation," Jodi Aoki returns us to consideration of the concept of authenticity and the difficulties of searching for the "original" authorial voice and reminds us that these are not concerns arising only out of relatively recent attempts at digital representation of archival material. As her meticulous research reveals, the letters of early Canadian settler Frances Stewart, housed in the archives at Trent University, have been copied, edited and altered over the two hundred years since they were written, perhaps most extensively by Stewart's daughter, Ellen. Aoki observes that "Ellen unobtrusively weaves her own commentary in and out of the principal text, sometimes without distinguishing punctuation, an effect that contributes to the re-description of her mother's life." In her contextualization of these repeated editorial interventions, Aoki draws on the work of both archival and historical/literary theorists, once again providing an example of the fruitful results of such cross-disciplinary conversations. Her essay also emphasizes the continuing importance of materiality in archival research. Some contemporary scholars, primarily concerned with the interpretation of the new digital universe, question the role of the more traditional skills: in considering the archival object Martin Hand asks "what is it which remains resilient? Is it the materiality, the texture of the thing? Is it the congealed form of knowledge encased within it? Is it the form of representation presented through it? Or, is it the skill and competence required in putting it to use?" In cases such as the Frances Stewart letters considered here we should be forced to respond that it is the combined resilience of both interpretive skill and the evidence provided by materiality that is essential to the search for understanding.

Materiality is also a significant component of Gwen Davies and Carole

Gerson's essay "From Bath to Birchbark: The Peregrinations of a Marriage Poem." While they describe their quest for the origins and authorship of an eighteenth-century marriage poem as taking them "from graveyards to Google," Davies and Gerson vividly recall an archival encounter, "admiring the binding, feeling the texture of the paper, and appreciating the typesetting." The authors trace the poem, which they had first discovered written on birchbark in St. John, New Brunswick, in 1786, and considered as an authentic early Canadian "original," back to a first publication in England in the *Bath Journal* of May 25, 1752. As they recount, their research, starting with the "original" discovered in the Mowat Papers in the Charlotte County Archives in St. Andrews, New Brunswick (the same small archives that provides Grant Hurley with one of his case study justifications for the importance of small local collections), included all types of media, from birchbark through rare book repositories, old newspapers and journals to sophisticated electronic databases. And yet, as they carefully acknowledge, their breakthrough in the search for the poem's origin was finally made through personal contact with another distinguished researcher. The most stereotypically scholarly and traditional as well as the most up-to-date electronic archival sleuthing methods were both upstaged by an invaluable personal connection. The authors' comprehensive research, tracing the many iterations of their poem from New Brunswick through Pennsylvania, Scotland, London, New York, Quebec and finally to Bath, also gives this local Canadian discovery an international context and reveals how unexpectedly porous were the boundaries of the Atlantic world in the eighteenth century.

Porous boundaries, somewhat less extensive although no less engaging, are a significant element in Michael Peterman's archival quest. In his essay, "Unearthing an Erased Poet: Gathering Up the Fragments of James McCarroll," Peterman shares the fruits of his research into the life and work of a transplanted Irishman who, after arriving in North America in 1831, first made his primary living, not by his pen, but as a Customs Officer in Peterborough, Toronto and elsewhere in Canada West, before leaving to spend the last twenty-five years of his life in the United States, first in Buffalo and then in New York City. Peterman's search for traces of this erased writer, musician and poet has all of the elements of detective fiction as he describes the pursuit of this "pre-Confederation Humpty Dumpty" from a well-established creative and artistic career in Toronto to his almost total disappearance from the Canadian cultural scene after 1864. The struggle to eke out a living, following the loss of his customs position, resulted in his move to the United States in 1866. Subsequently, partly as a result of this relocation and suspicions of his Fenian sympathies, McCarroll was "dropped from the record of cultural achievement by the country in which he had done his best literary work."