

**REMAPPING ARCHIVES: CARTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES IN THEORY AND
PRACTICE AT THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA**

BY

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A Thesis
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MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

Canadian map archival programmes have traditionally adopted a content-oriented approach to cartographic records, emphasizing the informational value and subject-matter of maps in core archival functions. Such an approach has not kept stride with the broader field of archival studies which has exercised a provenance-based, contextual approach in its theory and practice. Because of this, the archival perception of the mapping record has accentuated content over context, discrete over organic, practice over theory and product (published map) over process (map creation). While existing literature has played a legitimate and meaningful role in forming a body of practical cartographic knowledge, it is essential to probe the theory behind map archiving in order to understand maps as archival records.

Postmodernism, a major intellectual force in our times, can serve as a useful tool in the construction of a new framework for map archival theory. Modern society regards cartographic records as objective, scientific representations of a spatial reality. This modernist faith in the authority and accuracy of maps is derived from their technical origins. Maps have become naturalized in contemporary life, perceived as agents in their own right and held up as the source of their attributes. The subject content of cartographic records has often been incorrectly equated with their message. The challenge for the archival profession is to develop a more balanced approach to map archival theory, one which understands cartographic records not only as statements of

technologies, but also as value-laden products of human activity with rich contextual information.

This thesis outlines general trends in the historical development of cartographic archives in Europe and North America which have influenced the content-based approach to Canadian map archives. It then suggests how postmodernism can reinterpret traditional assumptions about map archiving, particularly in regard to notions of the archival map as socio-cultural text, the relationship between author, audience and text and the role of the cartographic archivist as co-creator of the mapping record. Using the map programme at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba as a case study, the thesis concludes by examining how a postmodern perspective might influence the development of policy in the archival functions of appraisal, acquisition, arrangement/description and public service of a contemporary map archives.

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Kara Quann
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Chapter 1

General Trends in the Development of Map Archival Theory and Practice in Canada

The growing volume and importance of cartographic archives have not been reflected in contemporary archival theory. Archival theory has been traditionally based on the study of textual records, such as filing systems of correspondence and memos, rather than cartographic materials. Archival literature has emphasized the content, nature and production of this type of textual material. Discussion of cartographic records in archival literature has focused narrowly on the implications of their different physical format. Overall, archival administration of these specialized holdings has been done mainly according to the general precepts and methodology for textual records.

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century, in Canada, for example, with the reaffirmation of the "total archives" concept, the influence of Marshall McLuhan's ideas on mass communication and the coming of the computer age, that archivists began to acknowledge the distinct qualities of maps and other non-textual holdings. The archival profession has begun to study records from a perspective which acknowledges the distinct forms, functions and creation processes of media archives. Specialized media archivists have incorporated a more contextual analysis of their holdings into all archival functions and, as the broader archival community has done, are looking to wider intellectual trends, such as postmodernism, for inspiration and insight into their own work. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of the

development of map archival theory, from a perspective which juxtaposes the broader principles of archival scholarship with the limited conceptual interpretation of cartographic records as archives.

Modern archival theory has its roots in the intellectual, democratic, and nationalist movements arising from the European Enlightenment. The French Revolution was, in some ways, a catalyst. It precipitated enormous political changes across Europe, sweeping away long-entrenched monarchical regimes to establish new nationalist, democratic systems. Although initial popular sentiment demanded the destruction of all documentation which was seen to memorialize the deeds of the *ancien regime*, the rise of nationalism in many European countries led to widespread appreciation for history.¹ Archives became one of the instruments through which "the nation's historical identity gradually took shape . . . [and] came to be considered an absolute and inalienable heritage."² Numerous governments passed legislation acknowledging state responsibility for the preservation of their documentary legacy and for improving accessibility to archives for all citizens.

With the transformation of the European political landscape and the awakening of popular interest in history, the nature of archives changed. Archives had once been kept by the wealthy and powerful primarily for administrative and legal purposes, but were now seen as places of historical study and academic scholarship. In the case of maps, historian of cartography R.A. Skelton noted that throughout the eighteenth century, it was "less as specimens of the art of cartography than as historical documents that early maps

were esteemed. The scholars most actively and perceptively interested in them were antiquaries and historians, who used them to reconstruct the geography of the past."³

With this shift in the focus of archives, archivists identified themselves as members of the emerging academic history profession. The professional expertise of these archivists was largely based on knowledge of the information contents of archival documents for scholarly use. These historian-archivists developed an approach which combined the historian's and the librarian's focus on subject information content, with the skills needed to interpret medieval textual documents.⁴ Documentation, including cartographic material, was maintained for its research value and was organized along alphabetical, chronological, geographical or subject matter lines devised by archivists, in order to extract the information content of the records. Archivists generally remained isolated from their sponsoring institutions, working with older archival collections of extinct administrative bodies.

Not all archivists, however, were satisfied with this approach. Some reasoned that the intellectual links connecting archival records to their corresponding administrative sponsors should be preserved. Records of a particular creator should be kept separate from those of other creators and archival collections should also be maintained in the original arrangement determined by the creator. In 1850, P.J. Vermeulen, a Dutch archivist, noted the importance of maintaining these key features of the provenance of archives:

Archives are more than a simple collection of historical manuscripts which have no other link than having been put together in the same room [and] which, relating to the same or related subjects, can be catalogued by serial numbers Instead it seemed to me that in an archives catalogue *an outline of the composition of the earlier administrations could and should be visible* . . . [as] one of the prerequisites for the scientific arrangement and inventorization [is] . . . to restore *the original order which once had been the most practical* and which . . . surely can not be replaced profitably by any other.⁵ (emphasis added)

This new way of thinking about archival work gathered strength across nineteenth-century European archives, particularly in France and Germany. Though widely discussed across the continent, these ideas were given influential summation and elaboration by three Dutch archivists in 1898 – Samuel Muller, Johan Feith and Robert Fruin. Their *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*⁶ represented the new consensus on the nature of archival theory. Espousing the principle of provenance, and its corollary original order, the *Manual* provided one hundred rules for archival arrangement and description. It maintained that an archival fonds constituted “the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received by an administrative body”⁷ and was “an organic whole.”⁸ The records of a particular creator were to be kept “carefully separate”⁹ from those of other creators. This further corollary of the concept of provenance was known as respect des fonds.

Arrangement of archives was to be based on “the original organization . . . of the administrative body that produced it.”¹⁰ The *Manual* made the protection of the record as evidence of the actions of its creator the primary focus of archival work. In doing so, the Dutch archivists placed a premium on understanding the

administrative context in which records were created, largely because it was written with state archives in mind. While the *Manual* had limitations, particularly its static, positivist conceptualization of provenance (according to contemporary standards) and in confining its purview to the archival functions of arrangement and description of government archives, it was instrumental in codifying modern archival principles.

In nineteenth-century European archival repositories, discussion of map holdings was rare. These records, which the *Manual* classified with "drawings", were to be administered according to the general rules devised mainly for textual documents. Only the distinctive requirements of their physical format received much attention. Muller, Feith and Fruin stated that maps "should be arranged according to their form or external character"¹¹ and should be "stored separately, because they should be kept in a different manner from other archival documents"¹² for their better preservation. While the size or fragility of maps might have necessitated their removal from the larger collections to which they 'organically' belonged, it was imperative that intellectual order and control of cartographic items within fonds be maintained: "maps which like other documents are received by an administrative body . . . [can be] removed from the places where they belong so that they should not be damaged . . . but in the inventory the maps should resume the places which . . . belong to them."¹³ It is important to note that cartographic records were viewed as intrinsic components of the organic whole of a fonds, although up to this point, little consideration was given to the particular structural, technical and contextual characteristics of maps.

With the development of modern bureaucracies in the twentieth century, many governments were faced with growing quantities of public records. They often chose to transfer the non-current portion of these records to public archival repositories much sooner than had been done in the past. Archives were challenged to move beyond their traditional historical focus, to take responsibility for the administration of more contemporary public sector records. Archivists began to stress the administrative role of their institutions and to re-establish closer relationships with their sponsoring administrative bodies. They were expected to take custody of inactive records, to accept regular transfers and to claim a stake in the selection of what records should be preserved.¹⁴ Archivists were also required to provide public access to government records and to play a role in holding governments accountable through sound archiving and record keeping practices. The management of such government records became one of the most important challenges facing the archival profession in the twentieth century.

Hilary Jenkinson, a leading archivist with the British Public Records Office, tackled the problems of public records management in 1922 in his renowned *A Manual for Archival Administration*¹⁵. The importance of his work lies in its promotion of archival records as the impartial and authentic evidence of acts and transactions of records creators.¹⁶ Archives were “used in the course of administrative or executive transactions (whether public or private)”¹⁷ and were “not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity.”¹⁸ Jenkinson argued that the primary role of archivists was preservation of the intellectual and

physical integrity of archives. Archivists had to be removed from the influence of historical scholarship in order to guarantee the impartiality of their work and thus to preserve the evidential value of their holdings. For Jenkinson, appraisal decisions regarding the selection of records for permanent retention were to be left to the discretion of records creators. The archival profession was to keep, not select, records -- a belief that would become entrenched in Britain with the designation of its archivists as "keepers" of records.¹⁹ While Jenkinson's views on appraisal were not shared by many outside Britain, his defence of the evidential character of records remains a primary concern of the archival profession.²⁰

Jenkinson referred briefly to the proper archival arrangement and description of maps in his writings. Like Muller, Feith and Fruin, his primary concern was the proper handling and storage of maps to preserve their physical format. As well, his stress on the importance of protecting the evidential nature of archival records carried over into the realm of maps. In referring to the treatment of a printed map of North America outlining Native American territories in ink and pencil, Jenkinson argued that the archivist must not impair the integrity of the record. He noted, for example, that the validity of the map would be brought into question if any notes by an archivist were carelessly written on the document.²¹

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a time of more sophisticated and intensive effort in the retrieval, recording and preservation of cartographic material in Europe. National map collections were established

and/or expanded in government libraries and archives, universities and geography societies -- formed in part from past royal and private collections.²² European archival theory recognized the evidential value of maps as intrinsic components of the archival fonds and argued for the protection of the provenance and original order of cartographic holdings. While European archivists recognized the need for specialized procedures for dealing with the physical format, research into the distinct intellectual properties of cartographic holdings would not develop for some time.

The North American archival scene, during this period, began to change significantly with the establishment of national archives and libraries which, for the most part, had significant cartographic holdings. With the launch of a national archival collection in 1872 as a result of the formation of the Archives Branch of the Department of Agriculture, the Canadian government undertook an international acquisition and copying programme for archival records, including maps, in an attempt to shape a new Canadian national identity through better historical knowledge. In 1907, the Archives Branch (by then known as the Public Archives) established a separate maps and plans section. The archives began the process of classifying and indexing the maps and publishing guides to the map holdings.²³

The American National Archives was not established until 1934. It also had a separate division for maps and charts.²⁴ While the growth of interest in study of the history of cartography increased the profile of maps in academic scholarship, the administration of maps in both libraries and archives remained a

relatively low institutional priority due in part to a lack of trained staff, national standards and proper research tools. Most map librarians and archivists were educated in geography, history or library studies, but were largely self-educated in the care of maps. Few articles were written about the care of cartographic records. And map curators, always few in number, generally worked in isolation.²⁵

In terms of a developing map archival theory, cartographic records were generally viewed as oversized paper-based records which European tradition maintained could be administered according to the same general principles developed for textual holdings. In European state archives, however, maps were not a major aspect of the holdings and received little specific attention. Where they were more prominent, in specialized libraries, they were viewed as large books which could be catalogued and indexed according to standard library techniques, rather than the archival principle of provenance. The European provenance-based approach to archives did not catch on immediately in North America. Thus, provenance was not only a low priority in libraries with cartographic holdings but also in archives. Subject content description dominated, as maps were largely treated as individual items, like books, rather than parts of larger bodies of interrelated recorded evidence.

In response to the depression and Second World War, government bureaucracies, and the volume of their records, expanded significantly. Given the growing amount of records being transferred from governments to public archives, archivists recognized that only a small portion of the records could be

preserved permanently and that the archival profession had to shift emphasis from records preservation to records selection or appraisal. In this context, Theodore Schellenberg, an archivist at the American National Archives in the mid-twentieth century, became an influential voice in North American archival appraisal. He asserted that records had primary and secondary values. Primary value reflected the importance of records to their original creator while secondary value denoted their value to others, mainly academic researchers. Records of secondary value were divided into those which had either evidential or informational value. The evidential value of records emphasized their importance as the evidence of the actions and decisions of their creators. Informational value was derived from the subject matter content of records, for example, about people, places and events.²⁶ According to Schellenberg, the secondary value of records was of importance to archivists and made records 'archival.' Schellenberg insisted that archivists should be responsible for the determination of what records should be preserved permanently as archives. This idea rejected the Jenkinsonian model which reasoned that appraisal decisions should be made by records creators.²⁷ As subject-matter specialists, archivists would decide which records had secondary value for users, based on a knowledge of academic history, research methodology and record keeping systems.²⁸

Schellenberg's approach to appraisal, which still strongly influences North American archival practice, emphasized detailed knowledge of the information contents of records and the subject interests of researchers. And while Schellenberg acknowledged that the concept of provenance, borrowed from the

European archival tradition, was the only means of protecting the integrity of the record, he believed that its purpose failed to serve the needs of researchers, who were more interested in obtaining access to subject matter. Arrangement and description of records by provenance were not readily or widely accepted in North America until the mid-twentieth century and, even then, they were thought to present barriers to the primary purpose of archives -- providing direct access to the information contained in archival documentation.²⁹ Archival functions concentrated on the "end-product" of records creation, that is, the record and the information it conveyed, rather than on its contextuality. Appraisal and descriptive work, while acknowledging provenance, evaluated the content of record for potential research purposes.³⁰

While writing on the arrangement and description of maps in 1963, Schellenberg observed the distinct attributes of maps: organizational origins or provenance, functional origins, physical attributes, subject matter and publication information (including title, date, edition and place of publication). For the most part, Schellenberg viewed government cartographic records as being truly archival in nature as they contained "evidence of the organic activities"³¹ of their creating agencies. As well, they were generally organized into series or record groups according to the archival principles of provenance and original order. Most private sector map collections consisted of discrete, published maps with no organic relationship to other holdings. Their contents reflected more of a library reference collection. Because of the character of these records, Schellenberg stated that they would best be described according to map

librarianship methodologies, arranged by area and subject matter. Original order in these cases was flexible. He stated that the "factor of organizational origins or provenance is of major importance only in large repositories with organized cartographic archives."³² While provenance was to be upheld whenever possible, he conceded that "[t]he principle of original order may be applied with considerable latitude".³³ As the majority of map archives consisted of discrete, published items, archivists often adopted a subject content approach to administering their cartographic records, based on map librarianship.

Schellenberg's contemporary, Herman Friis, map archivist at the American National Archives, noted in 1950 that the volume and diversity of cartographic material produced since the depression "almost defies imagination".³⁴ He thought that this had been caused, in part, by the rapid progress made by society in understanding and exploiting the physical landscape.³⁵ As well, the war precipitated a boom in the production of maps for military and defence purposes and, at its cessation, many agencies transferred their cartographic records to libraries and archives.³⁶ Public interest in maps and cartography, sparked during the war, continued in peacetime. Map librarianship made numerous advances during this period and was influential in shaping the administrative practices of cartographic archives. Formal training at the university level was instituted, literature devoted to the issues of map librarianship proliferated, efforts were made to standardize classification, cataloguing and indexing practices and professional associations were established throughout the 1960s and 1970s.³⁷

Friis recognized that maps were often collected by archives as "heterogeneous masses of records of numerous different sizes and shapes"³⁸ and were generally managed according to characteristics of their physical format, not for their content. With little standard policy in describing and identifying maps and almost no discussion accorded to cartographic records in archival literature, maps were viewed as "fugitive records" or "step-children" in archives and libraries.³⁹ Friis argued, instead, that maps should be viewed as distinct archival records with their own legal, administrative, historical and research value.⁴⁰ Policies and procedures for managing cartographic holdings were to be based on their content and method of preparation, not on their physical size or format.⁴¹ Friis, borrowing heavily from Schellenberg, adopted a content-oriented, 'qualified' provenance approach to administering map archives. He envisioned the "geographer-archivist" in the latter half of the twentieth century working cooperatively with records managers, situated in the map creating/using agencies, to make decisions about the permanent retention of cartographic records. Records managers would evaluate records "in terms of the needs of the agency"⁴² while archivists would judge the "over-all legal, administrative and research value"⁴³ of records, based on their broad knowledge of the information content of cartographic records produced across the federal government and its agencies.

By the late 1980s, it became apparent that Schellenberg's approach to appraisal was unsustainable as the volume and variety of records expanded and the needs of researchers moved beyond those of academic historians. The

traditional basis of the archival profession could not guide archival decisions in the new archival environment. Subject interests of archival users broadened, along with the variety of the types of users, and archivists found it impossible to remain knowledgeable in every field of interest. Although many in the international archival community sought to provide more direct access to the informational content of records through the study of the subject needs of researchers and through more in-depth subject indexing and guides in automated formats, a re-orientation of the problem occurred during the 1980s when the principle of provenance was reconsidered as a viable method of content extraction.⁴⁴ Americans Richard Lytle and David Bearman promoted the application of the principle of provenance in traditional archival environments as an effective information retrieval tool. By gathering added contextual knowledge of records, especially information about their functions and forms, archivists could translate a researcher's subject query into information about organizational functions. Then, the records generated by such functions could be searched for information pertinent to the subject query, using archival inventories and the file classification manuals created by the originating office. Lytle and Bearman argued that this approach could be most effective if provenance information in archival finding aids was greatly increased and, then, indexed and automated, to allow access to the subject matter of holdings.⁴⁵ With the publication of this article, archival literature began to reiterate the importance of the principle of provenance in theory and practice. As Terry Cook argued, "Archivists specialise in safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of records in context. That is

provenance."⁴⁶ This 'rediscovery' of provenance shifted the focus of professional thought to a more contextual outlook.

Archival theorists now argued for an intellectual perspective which more strongly emphasized that archival documents be understood "in context, or in relation to their origins and to other documents, not as self-contained, independent items".⁴⁷ They reasoned that greater contextual knowledge of the origins and history of the records would allow archivists to assist archival users to locate information content in the records, without archivists necessarily knowing the subject matter interests of users in great depth. In addition, this increased awareness of the relevance of contextual knowledge extended to all archival functions. It also pointed to an important but often undervalued Jenkinsonian insight into archival records: that records serve as evidence of the activities and functions of their creators, not just as carriers of other varied pieces of information, valuable as that is, and that it is their evidential value which also makes them archival. The context-oriented approach to archives argued for a holistic understanding of archives and their creation:

The contextual approach is concerned in the first instance with acquiring knowledge of the context in which information is recorded rather than knowledge of the information contents of records. It begins with study of the creators of records, their contemporary activities, and their histories – administrative or personal, as the case may be. The contextual analysis moves on to enquire about the records: the characteristics of their media and of types of records within each medium, the immediate circumstances of their creation, their uses prior to entering archives, organization in records-keeping systems, and relationships with other records and systems. The analysis turns then to the archival theory, functions, and

institutional structures required to appraise, arrange, describe, make available for use, and preserve these records.⁴⁸

The principle of provenance (expressed in respect des fonds and original order) embodied the intellectual foundation of this archival framework. Often, past attempts at grouping archival records ignored these concepts. As Terry Cook explained: "Schemes to classify archival records by subject or some other artificial system, whether alphabetical, geographical, or chronological, are considered quite unarchival. They destroy utterly the evidential value represented by the original order of records and render arrangement and description of large bodies of material virtually impossible."⁴⁹ Archival records should not be valued merely for their informational or aesthetic significance. To fully comprehend and gain access to the depth and wealth of archives, one must study the context in which the records were created.

The rising importance of provenance in the contextual approach to archives was foreshadowed by developments and debates over the Canadian "total archives" approach in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, the "total archives" concept focused new attention on non-traditional media housed in archival repositories, including photographic, cartographic, film and sound archives. Canadian public archives usually had responsibility for preserving the documentary heritage of society from both the public and private sectors and in all media formats. Wilfred Smith, Dominion Archivist of Canada from 1968 to 1985, noted four cornerstones of the "total archives" concept: all sources of archival material appropriate to the jurisdiction of the archives are acquired from

both public and private sources; all types of material (i.e. all media) are acquired; all subjects of the human endeavor should be covered by a repository in accordance with its jurisdiction and there must be a commitment from the creators of records and archivists to ensure efficient management of records throughout their life cycle.⁵⁰

While the majority of Canadian public archives adopted "total archives" as the intellectual cornerstone of their mandates, its implementation stimulated debate about the kind of contextual information needed for archival records, particularly in media archives. In the early 1980s, a war of words was waged in the pages of the Canadian archival journal, *Archivaria*, regarding the application of the "total archives" concept at the National Archives of Canada (NAC).⁵¹ As previously noted, the NAC has always shown a commitment to media records, including cartographic records, as demonstrated in the establishment of a section dedicated specifically to the care of maps and plans early in the twentieth century. Terry Cook, an NAC textual archivist, supported by other textual and sound archivists, agreed with "total archives" in principle, but feared that its implementation at the National Archives favoured the physical format or medium as the sole criterion for administration of archival records. Cook stressed the importance of knowing the administrative context, functions and organic relationships of specialized media to other records. Collections and repositories divided along media lines disregarded the contextual origin or provenance of records and performed archival functions in isolation from other related media. This fragmentation of archival work resulted in the "concentration on media type

at the expense of the functional unity of the original record."⁵² Cook maintained that it was the principle of provenance, seen as "the essence of the record and the context of its creation by the original agency, rather than the medium in which it is cast . . . [which] must remain paramount to the archivist."⁵³ All records, regardless of format, had an evidential or documentary nature, recording the functions and activities of their creators. Media archivists, therefore, should not attempt to acquire records merely for their aesthetic or informational value.

Andrew Birrell, a photographic archivist at the National Archives, responded to Cook. He reasoned that media archives were not transparent conveyors of information, that their distinctive characteristics made them containers of more information than may appear on the surface, and that the specialized knowledge required to understand these media characteristics required separate media units at the NAC.⁵⁴ Media archivists often emphasized the importance of technical, media-specific context of creation of their holdings, such as the history and technology of the medium itself. In her analysis of the debate, Lorraine O'Donnell critiqued Cook for valuing "the intellectual content of graphic records over their physical appearance and form."⁵⁵ She reasoned that archivists must also be aware that the "historical context in which the technology and thus the extrinsic form of [archives] developed affected their intrinsic form or intellectual content".⁵⁶ While both sides of the debate raised important points about specialized media archives, they effectively focused new attention on the management of non-textual archives and, in particular, the contextual information needed to do so.

New insights into communication, sparked by Marshall McLuhan and the birth of the computer age, prompted leading Canadian archival thinkers, such as Hugh Taylor, who presided over the creation of separate media units at the NAC in the 1970s, to re-examine the traditional view of the archival record. The transformation from the paper-based office to the electronic environment forced archivists to reassess their traditional literate, textual-based view of archival records and of recorded communication. As Terry Cook noted, archivists had "paper minds trying to cope with electronic realities."⁵⁷ Hugh Taylor suggested that the "intense effort by archivists across North America to redefine their role in an electronic multimedia environment is giving rise to a close look at the physical and technological nature of the record as a means of communication. Meaning is no longer seen as being limited to content within the context or provenance and fonds, but must be sought also in the technology of the medium which has, since earliest times, had a profound effect on society as a whole."⁵⁸

Influenced by the writings of Marshall McLuhan on mass communication, Taylor asserted that archivists could no longer merely preserve the physical nature of archival documentation or view records as passive conveyors of information. He challenged his contemporaries to "learn the 'languages' of media without the benefit of syntax and with the grammar still uncertain."⁵⁹ The 'rediscovery' of provenance by the North American archival community and the reexamination of the evidential nature of archives were fueled, in part, by the rapid transition from paper-based to electronic record keeping. In turn, these developments focused new attention on the nature and characteristics of

specialized media archives and prompted a more provenance-based approach to administering these documents in archival repositories. A small number of media archivists contributed to this movement by studying the forms, functions, processes, purposes and physical attributes of their holdings, in order to obtain a more contextualized understanding of their creation.⁶⁰

Cartographic archives enjoyed greater attention in the 1980s, thanks to intellectual developments occurring in the Canadian archival and library communities. In a 1979 report entitled, *The Future of the National Library in Canada*, the National Library recommended that the National Map Collection, housed at the National Archives of Canada, be transferred to the Library, as maps, being published material, fell under the definition of 'library matter'. The report went on to say that a small collection of maps, deemed to support historical research on Canadian subjects, would sustain the Archives.⁶¹ The National Archives asserted that maps, as an integral part of the "total archives" experience, could not be removed from the context of their larger fonds without destroying their provenance.⁶² Greater analysis of the cartographic perspective in archives began to occur. Publication of articles and manuals dealing with the history of institutional cartographic archival programmes and with map archival methodology increased. As well, throughout the 1980s, the National Archives of Canada sponsored annual workshops for map archivists from around the country and sponsored an informal cartographic archivists' newsletter to keep map archivists in touch with new developments in the field.⁶³ Map archivists, like Edward Dahl, of the National Archives of Canada, challenged colleagues to

develop their knowledge of the history of cartography, inspired them to learn and share ideas through professional development opportunities and fostered a genuine passion for the medium. These events were significant in the growth of Canadian map archives because they marked a burgeoning professional self-identity and affirmed cartographic records as part of the evidential, documentary heritage of the country.

While traditional stereotypes dictated that archives were old and dusty and that cartographic archives were comprised of rare, antique manuscript maps, a 1985 survey revealed that the majority of map collections in Canadian archives consisted of discrete, published items.⁶⁴ As with all published material, the importance of the document is derived from its subject content and informational value. Thus, acquisition of published cartographic documents focused on discrete items rather than organic groupings of records, and emphasized the extraction of the information contents of holdings.⁶⁵ As records management programmes were established in provincial and national governments throughout the 1980s, archives began to receive transfers of organic bodies of more current cartographic records, which were preserved by public sector archives, as evidence of the activities of their administrative sponsors.⁶⁶ Many cartographic archives programmes, therefore, had a combination of discrete, published items, often administered by library science methods, and organic bodies of records which were best managed according to the provenance-based archival model. In the case of governmental map collections, their organic grouping made it easier to administer their maps in an archival manner. Private sector archives generally

applied library methods to their holdings, which were overwhelmingly published material from disparate sources. While most archivists acknowledged that maps, as archives, should be administered according to archival principles, they also understood that the actual composition of their holdings produced a contradiction between the theory and practice of cartographic archives administration.

The arrangement and description of maps in archives depended upon their physical format and provenance. Most archives, that had intact fonds relating to map creation and production, arranged and described their records according to archival principles, while collections consisting largely of published, discrete items were usually arranged and described according to library standards. Because of their subject content, literature dealing with the management of cartographic archives focused on subject-based, content analysis and subject indexing as the principle means of information retrieval. A working group struck to study the feasibility of national archival descriptive standards in Canada confirmed that repositories had not completely adopted library or archival descriptive models due to the "volume and itemized nature of cartographic materials as well as inadequate staffing levels [which] have meant that rough and ready descriptive techniques have been adopted of necessity."⁶⁷

Given the published, discrete character of most archival map holdings, the Working Group on descriptive standards recommended the adoption of the 1982 *Cartographic Materials*, an expansion of chapter three in the library manual *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2*. This manual provided standardized terminology for describing maps and gave advice on how to catalogue maps,

although its authors noted that the rules did not cover in detail the description of early or manuscript materials.⁶⁸ Canadian descriptive standards for maps, articulated in the *Rules for Archival Description*, adopted AACR2 rules for cataloguing and classification of maps or map series. Organic bodies of records were arranged and described according to rules prescribed for all fonds-level descriptions, regardless of media format.

Appraisal and acquisition components of modern cartographic programmes were still underdeveloped in the 1980s. NAC archivist, Nadia Kazymyra-Dzioba, commented on the "sad state of map collecting by Canadian archives"⁶⁹ when it was revealed at a 1980 map archives seminar that four provincial map archives sections had no active acquisition programme and that the remaining participants had limited budgets for new acquisitions. The main barrier to active acquisition strategies was "lack of funding, but also little time, no staff, low priority, and sometimes insufficient training."⁷⁰ Acquisition generally focused on the subject content of maps rather than their contextuality. American Ralph Ehrenberg, one of the most prolific writers on cartographic archives in the last quarter of the twentieth century, asserted that the acquisition and appraisal of maps required "some familiarity with the primary producers of these records, the characteristic types of records that are prepared, and their informational, aesthetic, and artifactual values."⁷¹ He stated that, whenever possible, maps should be appraised as organic bodies and in connection with other related textual material. Most important was their interrelatedness with other records as "their value is normally derived from the associated papers and reports rather

than from their individual content. The assessment of separable items and files of maps and drawings, however, should be based on a careful analysis of their evidential, informational, and intrinsic value."⁷² Ehrenberg cautioned that "[e]vidential and legal values are seldom the sole criteria used for assessing the significance of maps and architectural drawings, since textual records generally document individual or collective policies and activities more thoroughly. More important are informational and intrinsic value."⁷³ For the most part, most small and medium archives would not have had cartographic fonds and, therefore, acquired maps based on their informational value.

In her 1986 University of British Columbia Master's thesis, Margaret Hutchison called for a greater recognition of the evidential value of map archives, in short, an understanding of the "totality of the record".⁷⁴ As maps serve as the evidence of the functions and activities of their creating agency, archivists should seek to acquire the full range of cartographica documenting the entire mapping process, from field surveying to publication. She also recommended the construction of cartographic information networks which would link archivists, users and mapping agencies. After all, it was the creating institutions which best knew why and how decisions were made regarding the production of maps.⁷⁵

In the 1990s, efforts have been made to incorporate a more provenance-based approach to administering map programmes. In 1994, Carolyn Gray, of the Archives of Ontario, wrote in the *Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives Bulletin* about the changes occurring at her institution. Since the late 1980s, a systematic evaluation of cartographic records had been conducted for

all archival functions. A comprehensive acquisition strategy was created, which involved significant steps in reappraisal and deaccessioning of non-archival and non-Ontario material.⁷⁶ As records were traditionally treated as discrete items, arrangement and description largely ignored the provenance and original order of map holdings. Through an evaluation process, Gray noted that "provenance was identified wherever possible, and fonds were re-constituted intellectually whenever possible. Experience shows that standardized descriptions and formats result in better reference tools for researchers and promote access; consequently, descriptive work is a priority in the collection."⁷⁷

From an archival perspective, as Terry Cook notes, it is the provenance-based approach to archives which "distinguishes us *now* from librarians, gallery and museum curators, and antiquarian manuscript collectors. Individual stray items removed from their context, no matter how great their informational value, cannot be 'a fit inmate'"⁷⁸ for archival repositories. Today, most cartographic archives programmes have a combination of discrete, published items, often administered by library science methods, and organic groupings of records which can be best managed according to context-oriented archival practice. The challenge in writing this thesis is to develop an approach that, while acknowledging the informational and aesthetic value of maps, encourages the development of a map archival theory which explores the contextual knowledge of cartographic records.

As Margaret Hutchison concluded in her 1986 Master's thesis, "[t]he concept of cartographic archives implies an interest in more than the subject

content of discrete maps; and that is an interest in how the map came to be, information which the published map alone cannot provide."⁷⁹ Maps are not pesky, oversized paper-based archival records which can be managed like their textual counterparts, nor are they big books which merely can be classified and catalogued according to prescribed library methodology. Maps have their own distinct structure, content and context. Their physical attributes differ markedly from other media, and their distinct intellectual properties demand a more rigorous investigation by cartographic archivists. Because subject matter generally has been the focal point of maps, archival work has often over-emphasized individual documents or sets of documents, instead of focusing on series or fonds. The medium for communication in map-making is more graphic than written and the mode of expression employed is largely visual, not verbal. Maps have mathematical scale and, as such, are prepared according to precise measurements and calculations. Any alterations introduced during their reproduction or preservation may alter or distort their information. As well, the creation, selection and production processes of cartographic records differ significantly from other media and reflect/propagate societal values and beliefs. For too long, archivists have left cartographic records and other specialized media on the periphery of their theoretical discussions and have neglected to infuse their writings with interdisciplinary cultural studies from other fields. Fundamental questions about the nature, production and purpose of maps as archival records must be pondered and disseminated. As well, the ramifications

of bringing map archives administration in line with the more widespread provenance-based, contextual approach to archives must be discussed.

Endnotes

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- ³ R.A. Skelton, *Maps: A Historical Survey of their Study and Collecting* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 51.
- ⁴ Duchein, 17.
- ⁵ P.J. Vermeulen quoted in Marjorie Rabe Barritt, "Coming to America: Dutch *Archivistiek* and American Archival Practice," *Archival Issues* 18, no. 1 (1993): 44.
- ⁶ S. Muller, J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1968 edition).
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- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 156-157.
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- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 144.
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²⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

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³¹ T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 308.

³² *Ibid.*, 304.

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³⁴ Herman Friis, "Cartographic and Related Records: What are They, How Have They been Produced and What are Problems of their Administration?," *The American Archivist* 8 (January-October 1950): 137.

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³⁶ Helen Wallis, "Map Librarianship Comes of Age," in *The Map Librarian in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Walter W. Ristow*, ed., Helen Wallis and Lothar Zogner (Munich: New York: London: Paris: K.G. Saur, 1979), 107-108.

³⁷ Walter Ristow, 275-279. See also Wallis, 107-111.

³⁸ Friis, 138.

³⁹ Friis, 138. These terms were common metaphors used in the literature of both map librarianship and archival studies to describe the low institutional priority accorded to map holdings in libraries and archives. The challenges associated with administering map collections are shared across cultural institutions.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 147.

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⁴⁴ Nesmith, "Archival Studies in English-Speaking Canada," 5-8.

⁴⁵ David Bearman and Richard Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-1986): 14-27.

- ⁴⁶ Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds: The Revolution in Information Management and Archives in the Post-Custodial and Post-Modernist Era," *Archives and Manuscripts* 22, no. 2: 312.
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- ⁴⁸ Nesmith, "Hugh Taylor's Contextual Idea for Archives," 16.
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- ⁵⁵ Lorraine O'Donnell, "Towards Total Archives: The Form and Meaning of Photographic Archives," *Archivaria* 38 (Fall 1994): 107.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.
- ⁵⁷ Terry Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds," 302.

⁵⁸ Hugh Taylor, "'My Very Act and Deed': Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, ed., Tom Nesmith (Metuchen, New Jersey and London: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993), 251.

⁵⁹ Hugh Taylor, "The Media of Record: Archives in the Wake of McLuhan," *Georgia Archive* 6, no. 1 (1978): 9.

⁶⁰ See Joan Schwartz, "We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomatics," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): 40-74; O'Donnell, 105-118; Debra Elaine Barr, "Analyzing Photographs in Archival Terms," Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985; Terry Cook, "'A Reconstruction of the World': George R. Parkin's British Empire Map of 1893," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, ed., Tom Nesmith (Metuchen, New Jersey and London: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993).

⁶¹ Margaret Hutchison, "Cartographic Records in Archives: A Shared Resource" (Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1986), 60-61.

⁶² Cook, "Media Myopia," 153.

⁶³ Nadia Kazymyra-Dzioba, "Building a Map Collection: A Look at Transcripts and Printed Reproductions," *Archivaria* 13 (Winter 1981-1982): 67.

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- ⁶⁸ Sarah Tyacke, "Describing Maps," in *The Book Encompassed: Studies in Twentieth-Century Bibliography*, ed., Peter Davison (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 135-136.
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- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.
- ⁷¹ Ehrenberg, "Archives and Manuscripts," 9.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 16.
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- ⁷⁴ Hutchison, 69.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-43.
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- ⁷⁹ Hutchison, 59.

Chapter 2

Remapping Archives: A Postmodern Perspective On Map Archival Theory

Cartographic scholarship has traditionally defined itself as an empirical 'science', based on sound observation, mathematical calculations and deductive reasoning. As such, map scholars, curators and society, as a whole, have generally "defined and judged maps by the information they hold."¹ The archival profession shares this understanding, having thought little about the contextual qualities of cartographic holdings. Archivists' research pertaining to map archives has generally been practical in nature, focusing on the 'basics' for archivists new to the field. Publications often showcase the history, mandate and holdings of institutional cartographic programmes or articulate the technical production of a map or map series, often without reference to cultural context. Prescribed methodologies, rooted in the library science tradition, have accentuated the informational value of map archives and have focused archival activity on the discrete, published character of cartographica.

While provenance and original order are judged axiomatic to archival work, map archivists have acknowledged that these concepts are often only applicable to public sector archives with large, organic bodies of holdings. The majority of repositories, with smaller collections consisting of a melange of manuscript and published, discrete and organic, often adopt or adapt library methodology. While existing literature has played a legitimate and meaningful role in forming a body of practical cartographic knowledge, it is essential to probe

the theory behind map archiving. In doing so, archivists must seek to understand cartographic records in *archival* terms.

Archives are cultural products with an evidential or documentary nature. Archival records serve as evidence of the decisions, activities and attitudes of record creators. This notion extends beyond the content of the record to include the context of its creation. Archival documents are not mere transmitters of information; they are created by an authoring process to convey a message for a purpose to an audience.² They were used by institutions and individuals to convey official policy, to construct national identity, to shape collective memory and forgetting, to establish symbolic/sacred space and to define the concept of the Self and the cultural Other.³ While the informational content of holdings plays a crucial role in interpreting their meaning, archivists and archival users should not assume that the explicit information content of a record is the message, which is often the case with specialized media. When discussing photographic archives, Joan Schwartz, photographic archivist at the National Archives of Canada, notes that too often "subject content is erroneously conflated with their message, issues of representation are ignored, and informational value is equated only with the visual fact."⁴ The same argument holds true for maps.

Modern society views cartographic records as objective, scientific representations of a spatial reality. This positivist faith in the authority and accuracy of maps is derived from their mathematical and technical origins. Maps have become naturalized in contemporary life, perceived as agents in their own right and held up as the source of their various attributes.⁵ The human factor has

vanished in the face of technological progress and scientific objectivity. As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, such assumptions in the archival field have led to an emphasis on content over context. Archivists have denied cartographic records a rightful place in their institutions as *archival documents*. The challenge for the archival profession is to understand cartographic holdings not only as "statements of geographical fact . . . produced by neutral technologies",⁶ but also as value-laden products of human activity. A more balanced approach to map archiving is required, one which recognizes both the technological attributes contributing to the content found on the map and the social/cultural context in which the map was created and participated.

Postmodernism, a major intellectual force of our times, can serve as a useful tool when constructing a new framework for map archiving. Within the parameters of archival studies, the history of cartography and geography, postmodern perspectives dismantle the technocentric, positivistic narrative of modern cartography, recasting maps as products of human activity, influenced by and representative of their surrounding culture. The chapter will argue for a postmodern reformulation of map archival theory by, first, questioning the traditional modernist approach which has limited our contextual understanding of maps as archival documents and, second, by offering an alternative reading of the modernist 'truth claims' of the map as mirror of reality, the stability of author-audience-text relations and the objectivity of the archival profession. Exploratory in nature, this chapter endeavours to 'remap' old territory in the hopes of offering

a new perspective on the monuments and pathways of traditional map archiving. Such reflections can revitalize our understanding of maps as archival records.

Modernism and postmodernism are terms used liberally in contemporary society, often with very little appreciation of their philosophical foundations. While this thesis does not pretend to exhaust either subject, it will attempt, at the risk of oversimplification, to define briefly the basic premises of these ideas. Both modernism and postmodernism find their intellectual origins in the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment. Enlightenment philosophers aimed at liberating humanity from religion, superstition and the forces of nature through the "progressive operations of a critical reason."⁷ The judicious application of reason in society could bring about human progress, emancipation and happiness through the scientific domination of nature, the development of rational social organization and thought and the demystification of knowledge.⁸

Throughout the surrounding turmoil of class struggle, economic unrest, political upheaval and warfare of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many searched for new universal truths, for a new sense of purpose. The pursuit of grand myths and narratives to legitimize and to give meaning to life persisted.⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, there was widespread belief in the West that scientific rationalism could master the secrets of the universe through the use of scientific objectivity and observation. Society, with the growth of science, technology and bureaucracy, became increasingly "positivistic, technocentric, rationalistic", concerned with "linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders and standardization of knowledge and

production."¹⁰ Faith in technological progress particularly evoked hope for an ordered, rational society which could bring about human emancipation. Out of the post-World War II period, the myth of the "scientifically grounded technical-bureaucratic rationality" of corporate, state and other institutionalized powers emerged.¹¹ The modern era, while mistrusting Enlightenment ideals, searched for new universal metanarratives to undergird human experience. Enlightenment reason became a tool for defining social conformity and normativity, often setting up binary systems of the Self and the Other.¹²

Ideas about administering cartographic archives have been influenced by the disciplines of archival studies, history of cartography and geography. The history of cartography emerged as a professional academic field over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It has been shaped by the scientific rationalism arising from the Enlightenment. It favoured "Enlightenment beliefs in disinterested observation, scientific calculation and objective representations as markers of universal rationality and progress."¹³ As the authority of cartography was derived from its technological and mathematical origins, historical study of the subject focused primarily on the technical production of maps and mapmaking, scrutinizing the linear progression of scientific accuracy in Western cartography. Historians of cartography rarely embraced cultural theories about the nature of cartography.¹⁴

Modern archival studies is rooted in similar nineteenth-century positivist ideas. Positivism, advocated by August Comte and heavily grounded in Enlightenment values, was a system of philosophy based on empirical

knowledge of natural laws. It claimed reality is knowable through rational observation and the application of empirical methods. Comte believed that science, therefore, would perpetuate human progress.¹⁵ Epitomized by the Jenkinsonian archival model, archivists too have held that the objectivity of their holdings, work and profession is self-evident. Until recently, this view has been largely uncontested. Archival records have been seen as organic and passive physical objects, documenting the activities and decisions of their creators in a readily knowable manner. Archivists were seen as custodians or guardians, equipped with the unfailing neutrality that an aspiring new profession had to have. Archival theory, embodied in provenance (and its corollaries, respect des fonds and original order) sought to recreate physically the stable, fixed structures of the Weberian model of institutional hierarchies and functions. These archival concepts were positivist as their exponents held that truth was singular, or that there is one best or true way to conceptualize reality. In archival terms, this meant that a document's author is, above all, a particular individual or institution, its meaning is its recorded content alone and its archival audience is the historical/academic researcher.¹⁶

A metanarrative evolved for modern cartographic archives within this ideological framework. As discussed in the previous chapter, maps were seen as neutral transmitters of spatial information and valued for their technical accuracy and objectivity. Map content was equated with informational or illustrative value and understood within a narrow conceptualization of authorship and authorial

intent. Thus, cartographic records, like other non-textual media, were relegated to "a lower level in the hierarchy of archival documentation."¹⁷

Postmodern theory, first formulated in art and architecture, has influenced the writings of almost every academic discipline in the latter half of the twentieth century. While some scholars have accused postmodernism of being nihilistic and anarchistic in its reaction to modernism, it is more concerned with denaturalizing the self-legitimizing truth claims of established systems and institutions. Postmodernism is kaleidoscopic in its intent to offer alternative narratives and perceptions about modern life. Postmodernists assume a position of "ironical doubt, of trusting nothing at face value, of always looking behind the surface, of upsetting conventional wisdom."¹⁸

Why has this distrust emerged? Many of the religious, political, economic and social establishments and ideologies prominent in the last century have faltered in their claims to truth and the path to human fulfillment and progress. The rise of modes of mass communication, including television, film and the World Wide Web, have altered our understanding of space and time, disrupted our notions of image and reality and dissolved political-cultural-territorial borders. The linear progression and objectivity of academic disciplines are now widely disputed; the possibility of access to a concrete reality and stable meaning has been seriously challenged. Notions of absolute truth based on scientific rationalism, objective knowledge and deductive reason have been dispelled. Postmodernists reject the totality of metanarratives by exposing their underlying instabilities and contradictions. Instead, they favour the plurality and

fragmentation of mini-narratives. Postmodernists believe society has become virtual, fluid and fragmented. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the midst of such radical ideological upheaval, our understanding of the nature of maps, both in the context of society and more specifically in the context of archival thought, requires re-evaluation. As geographer Denis Cosgrove writes:

For a politically, economically, technically and culturally globalizing world in which visual images have an unprecedented communicative significance, much is at stake in matters of space and its formal, graphic representation. The dissolution of an imperial, 'eurocentric' geopolitics and the end of the Cold War have not only reconfigured the political map of the globe . . . but rendered enormously more visible the individual difference between regions formerly subordinated to simple East-West and North-South global divisions; differences most clearly revealed by representing them cartographically. Economic change, driven by technical advances in information processing and communication and by new and highly flexible financial and industrial production systems, has reworked the experience and meanings of space. . . . An implicit claim of mapping has conventionally been to represent spatial stability, at times to act as a tool in achieving it. In a world of radically unstable spaces and structures, it is unsurprising that the idea of mapping should require rethinking.¹⁹

Can the modernist tradition of archival studies be married with the postmodern era? Jacques Derrida, one of the most prominent postmodernist philosophers of our time, has written extensively about the paradox of archiving. In the postmodern era, all modes of communication, be it writing, photography, art or cartography, are considered 'text' and, therefore, can be analyzed in the context of their temporal/spatial positioning to reveal the underlying motivations and power structures in which they were created and participated. While the notion of text has traditionally been associated with the written word, non-verbal

systems can be considered 'written' in the sense that they express ideas in a documentary and syntactic form. They are created for the purpose of both fixing and conveying meaning, "prompted by an act of will to produce consequences,"²⁰ and participate in the action of their inscription, reception and interpretation. With respect to cartography, maps can be considered texts in the same manner. While they "do not possess a grammar in the mode of written language . . . they nonetheless are deliberately designed texts, created by the application of principles and techniques, and developed as formal systems of communication by mapmakers."²¹ Modern cartography has developed its own metanarrative which seeks to establish the image of scientific objectivity, technical accuracy and linear progression. Postmodernism provides a tool for archivists to question these long-held 'truths' about mapping, thus reorienting their theoretical analysis to focus on maps as human acts of construction/practice.²²

Postmodernism postulates certain commonalities regarding the nature of texts which can be applied to cartographic records. Perhaps most important, texts do not mirror reality exactly. Reality eludes humanity as it is always mediated through our interpretations, be it language, writing, cartography or art. Texts, then, are considered value-laden representations created by an author for a purpose to convey a message to an audience. Through time, the original intent or purpose of an author often becomes increasingly harder to discern, or is lost completely, as each generation puts its own 'spin' on the text, mediated through the lens of its social and cultural beliefs. Texts borrow from and are influenced by other texts in their construction of reality. This 'intertextuality' of texts throws

even greater suspicion on 'the text as mirror' metaphor, as our understanding of that reality is arbitrated by further interpretation.²³

Derridean deconstruction defines these attributes as the 'textuality' of records. Records are 'hyper' or 'virtual'; they are imbued with a measure of excess energy which cannot be contained within structured boundaries. Texts are intimately linked with other texts in the past, present and future and their meaning changes over time with each new interpretation. As such, the need to discern original individual authorial intent becomes much less definitive in establishing documentary meaning in a vast sea of textuality. What is important is the dismantling of and playing with the traditional metanarratives of texts in order to provide new readings of their meaning and to better understand their intertextuality.²⁴

In seeming contradiction to the aims of postmodernism, archival work contrives to obtain intellectual control over records by preserving their 'recordness'. The 'recordness' of archival documents is embedded in provenance, original order and context. Attention to context stems from a responsibility to exclude or minimize the possibility of alternative interpretations of a text by permanently preserving the intent of the author (provenance) in a physically structured order (the author's original ordering of the records). By doing so, archivists impose a single context on the content, thereby silencing or eliminating alternative perspectives. Derrida, explains archivist Brien Brothman, sees this taming of the 'hyperness' of texts as "eliminating textual ambivalence, halting the operation of difference, and stanching the multiplication of

interpretations."²⁵ Archiving seeks to preserve the 'recordness' of archives for all time, only to have users release the records' 'textuality' through reinterpretation. The text and postmodernism, therefore, can be seen as always threatening the stability of traditional archival ends.

While doubting the 'truth claims' of history, while seeing archives as perpetuators of structuralist forces, postmodernists, ironically, depend upon historical analyses and the archival record to shape their arguments. Archives and archival institutions provide the very texts, discourses and systems which postmodernists dismantle. Should archivists remain in their ivory towers, taking comfort in the fact that while their modernist outlook is slightly outmoded, it nevertheless fulfils their obligations to all ideological mindsets? The answer is no. Archivists cannot and should not choose to 'opt out' of one of the key intellectual currents of the twentieth century. Instead, they should engage it and take up Terry Cook's call to create a new archival studies, one which builds upon relevant insights from any legitimate intellectual approach.²⁶

Map archival theory benefits from a reorientation of the theoretical focus of its discourses, systems and metanarratives. While this chapter can only begin to scratch the surface of a new outlook for map archiving, it does hope to offer a preliminary framework for such a postmodernist reconceptualization. Map archivists must first abandon their traditional mode of interpretation which has "emphasized the factual or literal statements maps make about an empirical reality."²⁷ Academic study of maps represents more than a technical and practical history of the physical object. It denotes "the social significance of

cartographic innovation and the way maps have impinged on the many other facets of human history they touch."²⁸ As such, cartographic archivists should view their records "as signifying practices that are read, not passively, but, as it were, rewritten as they are read."²⁹ Archivists must understand the socio-cultural nature of cartographic records through in-depth contextual analysis. In the age of computer mapping and global information systems, map archivists must also be particularly conscientious of preserving structure, content and context through metadata.³⁰ Map archivists must be encouraged to understand how "new forms of cartographic representation" can express "the liberating qualities of new spatial structures . . . [and] also the altered divisions and hierarchies they generate".³¹ Again, contextual analysis should ascertain underlying uses of maps by institutions and individuals for economic, political, cultural, religious or intellectual aims and understand their symbolic significance in society. Cartographic archivists must also reflect upon their role as active *human* participants in the act of archiving. Archivists assign value to their holdings by granting them the 'status' of archives and they make such decisions based on their own values which are reflective of their place, time and society. Postmodernism effectively strips away the apparent shell of objectivity which once legitimized map archiving. Far from being threatened, map archivists should take up the challenge of introspection to explore a new framework in which to develop their theory and practice.

Modern archival analysis has offered a limited contextual knowledge of cartographic records. Appraisal and acquisition strategies often do not grasp the complexity of the map creation process or fail to properly situate cartographic

records within their functional context. Instead, there remains a reliance on the informational value of maps and a belief in the infallibility of cartography. Descriptive practices often capture only the basic bibliographic and subject cataloguing elements of author, date of creation, publication information, biographical or administrative history of donor, physical description of records, provenance (details of donation to archival repository) and scope and content (often limited to the subject matter of the map). While this furnishes the archival researcher with information about map content, it does little to illuminate the rich context of map production, usage and interpretation. Postmodernism, with its focus on the context of text, power-knowledge discourses and the textuality of records, rejects the modernist certainty that archival theory sufficiently documents the contextuality of archival maps. While imparting the appearance of technological accuracy, cartographic knowledge remains a subjective human practice, contextualized through the rhetoric, power relations and truth claims of the social systems from which it arises. Map archival theory, therefore, must adopt a socio-cultural perspective in the analysis of its holdings.

Such a cultural study can benefit from an interdisciplinary approach which incorporates the knowledge of other historical disciplines into its discussion and encourages scrutiny of its own literature by other scholars. Our investigation of maps as social texts can gain from the significant contributions of the history of cartography. J. B. Harley was one of the first scholars to call for a cultural focus for the history of cartography. Recognizing the socio-cultural nature of maps, he first examined power inherent in cartography, as posited by postmodernist

historian, Michel Foucault. Foucault analyzed the power-knowledge relations inherent in localized systems. Knowledge is a form of power, a way of presenting one's belief under the guise of authority. Conversely, power is omnipresent in all knowledge, even though the power may be invisible or implied. Foucault examined the legitimization of power through the categorization of normative codes and behaviours and through subsequent resistance to these systems by the marginalized members of society. Within this binary system of power/powerless, normal/abnormal, sane/insane, Foucault recognized the propagation of the Self and the cultural Other.

Harley argued that cartography is both a form of power and of knowledge and, as such, knowledge-power discourse is embedded in maps.³² Cartographic discourse of power can be categorized by power external to maps, that is, power exerted on cartography by society, and power internal to maps, or how cartographers manipulate techniques and processes for a particular purpose.³³ As cartography evolved throughout the centuries, maps became tools of legitimizing agencies -- created to validate a particular worldview in society and, in turn, through their technical authority, were seen as self-evident in their assertions.³⁴ It is important to note that the power of maps was also used to substantiate economic, political, religious, ethnic, gender and racial values in mapping cultures. Derridean deconstruction highlighted the rhetoricity or persuasiveness of texts, searching for metaphor and rhetoric in records.³⁵ Cartographers, through their modes of communication, are quite effective at conveying their message to a targeted audience with the aim of achieving

specific consequences. Postmodernism endeavours to provide a more complex and broader definition of the map as a tool of power and rhetoric which legitimates and participates in the dynamics of society through the invocation of its technical authority.

Armed with this new concept of the map, archivists can begin to examine the contextuality of social texts. We will begin our discussion by reviewing societal forces impacting on the meaning of maps (or power external to maps). When studying the hierarchical systems and beliefs of a particular social order, we must seek to understand the particular time and space in which a culture is situated.³⁶ Knowledge of the historical context, beliefs and systems of mapping of societies aids in our understanding of the values perpetuated by and exerted on the map.³⁷ The interplay between map author, authorial intent and targeted audience can provide insight into the rhetoricity and metaphors of archival maps. As cartography is rooted in a visual culture of the society, archivists must also learn those codes -- geometric, chromatic, figurative, and aesthetic -- which framed that visual culture.³⁸

One of the more difficult tasks in uncovering social context is the examination of cartographic literacy, as most individuals do not leave clues as to how they created, perceived and interpreted maps. Yet, knowledge of map diffusion and the social practices of users can provide insight into how society perceived the world and how it chose to represent and categorize such perceptions in its cartographic artifacts. Map archivists and users must explore who in society used maps, who controlled the production and dissemination of

maps, the purposes of map usage and the symbolic significance of cartographic records in a society. Learning about how a map is perceived and utilized in mapping cultures can tell us how and why value was assigned to certain maps and not to others. Such enquiry can also benefit map archivists as they assign value to cartographic records through their work, often with little knowledge of the meaning that they and society have imposed on their records. It is important for map archivists to be aware of map literacy in their own society so that they understand how their own time, place and culture affect their cognition of mapping.

The mapping process requires cartographers to limit content and manipulate data in order to produce a readable two-dimensional 'representation' of a three dimensional 'reality'.³⁹ While this task is difficult in itself, mapping tools, including projection, scale, symbolization, colouring, typography and artistic work, are used quite effectively by mapmakers in their efforts to persuade their audiences.⁴⁰ A general knowledge of cartographic processes and techniques in the surveying, compilation, selection, omission and production of maps can provide evidence of how cartographers (un)consciously shaped the meaning of the map text through the orchestration, inclusion and exclusion of informational content. What follows is a brief discussion of how these techniques can perpetuate cultural conventions.

Many societies have considered themselves to be at the centre of the universe. They have represented this perspective in social constructions, including maps. The notion of ethnocentricity in cartography situates the

mapping culture's territory at the centre of their world maps, thus setting up concepts of the Self and the Other.⁴¹ Cartography can also be used to reinforce rules of social order prevalent in a society. Signs, codes and symbolization often depict hierarchies of space, as Harley explains, 'the more powerful, the more prominent'. It is often the case that institutions of authority in Western society are also the sponsors of cartographic pursuits. For example, civic buildings on a government map are given more prominence than private sector structures. In a religious state, buildings of the dominant religion are likely to be featured more prominently than those of other religious groups. Such cartographic manipulation serves to validate and perpetuate notions of power and authority in the broader society.⁴²

Cartographic communication can be used not only to advertise power but also to silence the marginalized and to distort map content.⁴³ Cartographic silence, the (un)conscious exploitation of certain features on maps while excluding others, and cartographic distortion, the intentional misrepresentation of data, invoke the power in maps to propagandize/legitimize social values and to reinforce notions of cultural inclusivity/exclusivity and remembering/forgetting. Map archivists must undertake careful readings of their maps for, as geographer Mark Monmonier warns, "[c]artographic license is enormously broad."⁴⁴ By reclaiming information which is excluded from or distorted on a map, archivists can learn much about the social circumstances which contribute to functional context or authorial intent. They can also uncover the metanarratives of the ruling power structures and the mini-narratives of the silenced voices. Whether

creating societal context within the map or within the mapping culture, map archivists should maintain a healthy suspicion of what can be found on, off and behind the map.

Through postmodernist analysis, map archivists can redefine modernist notions of author, text and audience and investigate how the interplay of these components influences the socio-cultural context of cartographic records. Modern archival theory imbues an intellectual singularity in its conceptualization of the authoring of map texts. While recognizing that cartography is an interactive process, involving multiple authors, there is still a perceived need, on the part of the archivist, to identify, assign and fix individual and institutional responsibility. This framing of creatorship, through provenance, guarantees the clear and undisputed origin and proper starting point of the archival narrative assigned to map holdings. Postmodernists reject the central significance of the record creator in textual analysis, contending that the context of original authorial intent is not the only or even primary factor influencing documentary meaning. Texts, therefore, assume new meaning and significance as they are shaped and reshaped in cultural circuits.⁴⁵ The concept of author, refashioned as broad formative context, rather than single inscribing person or institution, is an important component in postmodern considerations. It sheds light on the ideological, intellectual and historical origination of the text and, in doing so, informs the reader's interpretation. Postmodernism, then, can offer map archival theory an expanded reading of the relationship between author or context and text.

The complexity of creative forces involved in the cartographic process suggests numerous layers of authorship and audience. At times, we are able to identify individuals central to authorship and can extrapolate information about these record creators. Most cartographic enterprise will involve a patron or sponsoring agency, which, in effect, becomes the institutional author of the map. When uncovering the motivations for map creation, the institutional authorial intent will generally be better documented and will often, although not always, be of more significance than that of individual cartographers in its employment. As Harley explains, the individual cartographer is often “a puppet dressed in a technical language” whose “strings” are pulled by the overarching bureaucracy.⁴⁶ As has been discussed earlier, society forms the structures and hierarchies which shape the beliefs and practices of its members and, therefore, can also be seen as a participatory force in the authoring of its cartographic representations.⁴⁷ With the postmodernist notion of intertextuality, human ideas and scholarship are fluid; texts shape and are reshaped by other textual interpretations. As such, map archivists must be aware of the accumulative mapping knowledge which has influenced the construction of archival maps. It represents a larger intellectual creatorship and, therefore, another level of authoring. Map archivists must be aware of the multi-layered tapestry of individual, sponsorial, societal and scholarly authoring of cartographic records and must understand the various factors influencing record creators.

Terry Cook has suggested that behind the record and the record creator is the “need to *record*, to bear evidence, to hold and be held accountable, to create

and maintain memory.”⁴⁸ This “need to record” on the part of the author is key to comprehending the socio-cultural context of archival records because it alludes to the underlying motivations of communication. Authorial intent can convey official policy and ideology, legitimize cultural inclusivity and exclusivity, define sacred/symbolic space and shape cultural memory. Modernist archival theory, at its very core, attempts to preserve and document intentions of record creators in their purist forms, through the application of a rather limited conception of context. As Derrida has noted, archivists seek to present a single, fixed interpretation of archival texts. The postmodernist perspective rejects this assumption, arguing that the intercourse of author, text and audience elicits innumerable interpretive possibilities of meaning. As the map codifies many perspectives of the world, its message is often directed at more than one audience and mapping technique/design can skillfully disguise and subvert underlying agendas in technical and aesthetic language.⁴⁹ To determine the *raison d’être* of archival maps, archivists must uncover levels of authorship, levels of audience, societal circumstances, cartographic processes and previous scholarship influencing the making of a map.

Like authorship, the postmodern view of audience is pluralistic and seamless. When exploring the context of record creation, usage and interpretation, map archivists must be cognizant of the (un)conscious influence that the primary and secondary audiences exert on the authoring process. We can distinguish audiences as primary, referring to a group targeted by an author, and secondary, individuals who study texts for their own purposes beyond the

original authorial intent. We will first discuss the notion of primary audiences. The author often has specific readers in mind when constructing the text's message to fulfil an agenda. Knowing about the intended audience(s) allows map archivists to better understand authorial intent and why an author framed a map text in a particular manner. These audiences may be visible or invisible to the archivist, depending upon an author's desire to have his or her intentions known. For example, a new official highway map, with its extensive artwork, bright colouring, enthusiastic text and user-friendly layout depicting historical, recreational and scenic sites is assumed to be created for tourists and local residents. However, this particular map is part of a marketing campaign aimed at government bureaucrats and private sector business to illustrate the financial viability of the services of a governmental mapping office. Map content will often suggest the visible audience; map context can reveal invisible addressees.

Study of cartographic content and context can also reveal marginalized audiences (who was purposely left off the map?) and unintentional audiences (what were alternative uses for the map?). Continuing with the above example, the archivist, through contextual analysis, can discover that the mapmakers intentionally decided to exclude controversial toxic waste sites from the map, much to the displeasure of environmentalists. The environmentalists then use the map as a propaganda tool in the media to publicize the government's poor environmental record. In terms of the secondary audience, map archivists must understand how individuals have interpreted and reinterpreted the documentary meaning of texts over time, for their own purposes. Archivists, too, can be

considered members of the 'audience' as their representations of map texts influence other people's perceptions. Each user offers his or her own interpretation of the map, based on his or her own place, identity and beliefs.

Analyzing the constant interchange between author, text and audience can be a challenge for map archivists. The concepts of authorship and audience are multifaceted and highly subjective. Mapmakers always have a targeted group (or groups) in mind when attempting to get their message across. Mapmakers, purposely or not, exclude certain factions when constructing their texts, or find that others have appropriated cartographic tools for other uses. Audiences, when reading texts, may be interested in authorial intent but will always reinterpret text through an infusion of the values of their own time and place. In a sense, the researcher becomes both author and audience, adding another voice to the context of the social text which, in archival terms, 'never closes'.⁵⁰ Map meanings, therefore, must be understood as being framed by both internal/external motivations and perceptions. Map archivists must recognize the interplay of these forces when studying their records and remember that cartographic creation and interpretation are subjective, fluid practices.

While many perceive archivists as impartial guardians of equally impartial documents, the postmodern view does not overlook the participation of archivists in the 'authoring' of archival records. Brien Brothman extends the context for understanding records from the conventional focus -- their initial inscription -- to include the influence of the actions of the archivist on the records and archives.

He dismisses the objectivity of the archivist and the record through his discussion of the impact of the archivist and the act of archiving on shaping the selection, availability, understanding, and use of archival documents through all archival functions. Assigning a record the status of 'archive' is a defining moment in itself, as a particular significance is assigned to that record, singling it out for special attention. Archivists *create* and *perpetuate* value through the designation of permanence.⁵¹ In doing so, they become 'authors' of the archival records by fixing records in 'context'.⁵² When archivists seek to define and debate the contextuality of their records by means of archival theory, practice and principles, they further shape documentary meaning and project their own representations of the archival profession, records and institutions onto the broader society.⁵³ They, therefore, must evaluate how their values and beliefs mediate their representation of the meaning and context of archival records.⁵⁴

As active participants in the creation of archival value and in the construction of documentary meaning, archivists must take responsibility for their part in perpetuating a content approach to map archives. For too long map archivists have believed in the truthfulness of archival maps, represented content as archival meaning and institutionalized informational value as the intellectual thrust of map theory. Cartographic records must be re-contextualized through the development of a critical map archival theory which understands the nature of cartographic records as archival documents. An interdisciplinary approach can only increase our knowledge of the history and technology of cartography as a mode of communication and provide insight into the technological attributes,

socio-cultural context, authorship and audience of maps. Archival functions, policies and procedures must be reoriented to emphasize a more contextual approach to map holdings. The intellectual gap which has separated cartographic archivists from their professional colleagues must be closed. Cartographic archivists must stay abreast of developments in archival thinking and, in turn, must encourage the archival profession to participate in map archival theorizing. Finally, cartographic archivists must learn how their attitudes and beliefs about map archiving influence archival users and, in turn, how societal perceptions about cartography affect their own experiences.

Postmodernism can be viewed as intent on recasting our perceived notions about reality, our communications and ourselves. Its purpose is to probe the truth claims, discourses and structures of societal systems in order to debunk their apparent stability. It encourages us to look behind the making of our myths, to acknowledge the subjectivity of all human representations and to explore alternative (re)interpretations of texts. It is in this spirit that I have attempted to rework some of the traditional modernist assumptions of map archival theory. In regard to our records, we can look beyond the 'recordness' of map texts to explore their 'textuality'. Archival maps, while studied for their technical and mathematical attributes, can also be understood as social texts embodying qualities of knowledge-power, rhetoric and subjectivity. An interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of cartographic socio-cultural context can help us to better comprehend how society creates, uses, perceives and interprets maps to further its own aims and how cartographers utilize internal cartographic

processes and techniques to persuade audiences of a message for a purpose. Postmodernist insights into the relationships between author, audience and text demonstrate the fluidity of perception, knowledge and intent in the construction, use and interpretation of cartographic records and can offer more dynamic definitions of provenance, original order and context. It is only through contextual analysis that we can uncover the often veiled and elusive meaning(s) of maps. Map archivists, thus, are challenged to see themselves as active participants in creating archival value for cartographic records and in (re)shaping the meaning of these texts. Postmodernism can be used as a tool to develop a critical map archival theory which recontextualizes cartographic records.

In closing, I suggest the metaphor of a house of mirrors to characterize postmodernism. You walk into a house of mirrors with a preconceived notion of yourself based on previous glances. As you walk through, you are confronted with other representations of your appearance. Which one is correct? How do you determine reality when each mirror offers a *different* interpretation of your image? The idea of 'remapping' cartographic archives does not involve rejecting entirely one approach for another. It recognizes the merits of both the modernist and postmodernist approaches to map archiving, while encouraging map archivists to embrace postmodernism as a tool that allows a broader understanding of their records, their theories and themselves.

Endnotes

¹ Matthew Edney, "Theory and the History of Cartography," Selected paper from the 16th International Conference on the History of Cartography (Vienna 1995), *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996): 187.

² Schwartz, 42.

³ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵ Edney, 188.

⁶ Edney, 187.

⁷ Thomas Docherty, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 5.

⁸ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1989), 12.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32-34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38

¹² Docherty, 14.

¹³ Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1999), 8.

¹⁴ Edney, 186.

¹⁵ Verne Harris, "Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positivist Formulation on Archives in South Africa," *Archivaria* 44 (Fall 1997): 132-133.

¹⁶ Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds," 302-303.

¹⁷ Schwartz, 58.

¹⁸ Terry Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts," delivered at *What's It all About?: 'Postmodernism' and Archives*, Association for Manitoba Archives Symposium (February 19, 2001): [3].

¹⁹ Cosgrove, 4-5.

²⁰ Schwartz, 43.

²¹ J.B. Harley, "Text and Contexts in the Interpretation of Early Maps," in *From Sea Charts to Satellite Images: Interpreting North American History Through Maps*, ed., David Buisseret (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 5.

²² Catherine Delano Smith, "Why Theory in the History of Cartography?," Selected paper from the 16th International Conference on the History of Cartography (Vienna 1995), *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996): 200.

²³ Trevor Barnes and James Duncan, ed., *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 2. See also Cosgrove, 13-14.

²⁴ Brien Brothman, "Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction," *Archivaria* 48 (Fall 1999): 77.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁶ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism." Cook calls upon the archival profession to examine how the postmodernist world can provide a new theoretical and practical reformulation of archival science.

²⁷ Harley, "Texts and Contexts," 4.

²⁸ J. B. Harley, "The Map and the Development of Cartography," in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 1, ed., J.B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5.

²⁹ Barnes and Duncan, 5.

³⁰ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," [11].

³¹ Cosgrove, 5.

³² J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge and Power," in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past*

Environments, ed., Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 279.

³³ J.B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, ed., Trevor Barnes and James Duncan (London: Routledge, 1992), 243-245.

³⁴ Harley, "Maps, Knowledge and Power," 282-285.

³⁵ Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 233.

³⁶ Barnes and Duncan, 3.

³⁷ Christian Jacob, "Toward a Cultural History of Cartography," Selected paper from the 16th International Conference on the History of Cartography (Vienna 1995), *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996):193.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁹ Mark Monmonier, *Drawing the Line: Tales of Maps and Cartocontroversy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 1.

⁴⁰ Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 242.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴³ Harley, "Maps, Knowledge and Power," 287-292.

⁴⁴ Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

⁴⁵ Cosgrove, 13-14.

⁴⁶ Harley, "Text and Context," 7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁸ Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds," 302.

⁴⁹ Harley, "Text and Context," 6-7.

⁵⁰ Harris, 136.

⁵¹ Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991): 81-82.

⁵² Tom Nesmith, "Comments on 'The 'Postmodern' Archive: The Archivist in the 'Postmodern' Era'," delivered at *What's It all About?: 'Postmodernism' and Archives*, Association for Manitoba Archives Symposium (February 19, 2001).

⁵³ Tom Nesmith, "Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the 'Ghosts' of Archival Theory," *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999): 146.

⁵⁴ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," [12].

Chapter 3

Reflections on the Implementation of a Postmodern Map Archival Theory: The Provincial Archives of Manitoba as a Case Study

Chapter 1 attempts to outline general trends in the historical development of cartographic archives in Europe and North America. While archival studies has adopted a provenance-based, contextual approach to its theory and practice, map archival scholarship has generally fostered a content-based methodology, emphasizing the informational value and the features of the end product of cartographic communication. Public sector archives exhibit elements of both approaches due, in part, to the widespread development of government records management and archival programmes in the 1980s. These programmes sought to standardize the treatment of all archival media at the fonds and series levels whenever possible, while still focusing on the end product of map creation. Archival perception of the mapping record still emphasizes content over context, discrete over organic, practice over theory and product (published map) over process (map creation). To furnish a better understanding of the rich contextuality of cartographic records, chapter 2 encourages the introduction of a postmodernist examination of established assumptions about maps and map archives, in order to encourage a new and broader framework for map archival theory.

The purpose of this final chapter is to explore the feasibility of applying postmodern thought to the archival functions of appraisal, acquisition,

arrangement/description and public service as pertaining to map archives. How might these ideas play out in the 'real world'? Using the situation of the cartographic records programme at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM) as a model, this chapter will examine how a postmodern perspective might be incorporated into the policy development of a contemporary map archives.¹ Any rethinking of how PAM manages its holdings must be tempered with the realities of the workplace, availability of resources and institutional priorities, for example, and with the understanding that the PAM map programme has still not automated finding aids. The ramifications of map archiving in a fully automated setting will only be addressed briefly in the descriptive and public service components of the chapter. While I do not believe that any one theory can resolve all the practical problems of a profession, it is my hope that postmodernism can provide insight into why and how archivists do their work, and how they might do it differently and perhaps better. The articulation of a map archival theory, prompted by postmodern ideas, can inspire a more balanced treatment of archival maps as both technological statements and socio-cultural products. While this chapter will likely pose more questions than it answers, such reflections can generate renewed interest in cartographic archival theory.

The map collection of the Government of Manitoba was first established within the holdings of the Legislative Library of Manitoba. Founded (in principle) in 1870 by an Order-in-Council which authorized payment for books which would form the nucleus of a provincial library, and given legal status in 1885 with *An Act Respecting the Library of the Legislature of Manitoba*, the Library has functioned

as a source of information for members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, provincial government personnel and the general public since its inception.² The early annual reports of the Legislative Library do not reveal much about the scope and content of the map collection except that, by 1939, the Librarian foresaw a need for proper physical equipment for the filing and preservation of map holdings.³ Although small, the map holdings were eclectic in content, consisting of a mix of manuscript and published items. According to a 1980 survey questionnaire, a staff librarian was assigned to manage the map collection in 1949.⁴ The librarian began organizing and cataloguing the collection according to the popular Boggs and Lewis map classification system.⁵ The Boggs and Lewis system was an alpha-numeric system which allowed relatively easy retrieval and access to a discrete reference map collection through the codification of geographic, subject matter and date data elements.⁶ A subject indexing system by title, geographic location and author was also started.⁷

Although an archival component had always been part of the Library, the first archivist, James Jackson, was hired on a part-time basis in 1946 to oversee the archives programme. His first task was calendaring and indexing the growing public and personal papers which had accumulated over the lifetime of the Library.⁸ As noted in the 1946 annual report, "The greater part of the large collection of letters, papers, maps, photographs and other miscellaneous archival material have been sorted, processed, repaired and partially catalogued."⁹ Hartwell Bowsfield was appointed the first Provincial Archivist in 1952 and continued work on the archives.¹⁰

The year 1967 proved to be significant in the growth of the archival programme. Passage of the amended *The Legislative Library Act*, with its section on Public Records and Archives, provided the Archives with a legislative mandate and legal authority to acquire public and private records of Manitoba. A new Provincial Archivist, John Bovey, was appointed along with two new archivists, Barry Hyman and Elizabeth Blight.¹¹ Care of the map collection was transferred to the archives, in part because of the archives' responsibility for other non-textual media including photographs, fine art and architectural plans and because of the historical nature of the map holdings.¹² Blight, an archivist and junior staff member at the time, took on the responsibility of reorganizing the archival map collection, noting that she 'fell into' the job.¹³ Given the small size of the collection (which fit into one map cabinet) and the discrete and published nature of the holdings, the archives continued to use a modified Boggs-Lewis map library classification system. Blight adapted the system to reflect more specifically the geographical/historical features of Manitoba.¹⁴

The collection remained very much a reference library throughout the 1970s. Its primary users were academics. In 1977, 1500 maps, received by the Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, were rehoused and reorganized, while about 400 maps were catalogued. The 1977 annual report noted that "[a]s maps were until the past year the least organized and controlled of the Provincial Archives' collections, the accomplishment of the summer of 1977 can be judged very significant, even if long overdue."¹⁵

In 1974, the archives moved to its current location in the old Civic Auditorium (now the Manitoba Archives Building) and received on deposit the records of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. These records were officially donated to the Province of Manitoba by the company in 1994, one of the conditions being that the Hudson's Bay Company Archives be maintained as a distinct division of the Provincial Archives with its own storage, operating space, and staff.¹⁶ As a result, the cartographic collections of the company and of the province have very distinct origins, mandates, holdings and sponsorial obligations and are thus administered separately.

The appointment of a new Provincial Archivist, Peter Bower, in 1980 brought about a period of expansion in the programmes at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. With the development of a government-wide records management programme in the early 1980s, organizational structure and functions at the archives changed. The Provincial Archives was officially divided into Government Records and Historical Archives units, along with the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Conservation unit.¹⁷ Government Records oversaw the management of all records created by the government and administered all public sector archival material of the Government of Manitoba. The mandate of Historical Archives was to acquire the documentary heritage of Manitoba in the private sector.

The mandate of the PAM cartographic records programme at this time was to collect all maps related to Manitoba. Given the responsibility of managing photographic, cartographic and architectural records and other administrative

duties, the map archivist dedicated about 1 percent of her time to maps. Having no formal geographic or cartographic training, knowledge was obtained through on-the-job experience and by reading secondary publications. Volunteers were recruited for special projects. At that time, the collection was comprised of approximately 5006 maps, 50 books, 2 journals and research files, with the majority of the records dating from 1850 to present.¹⁸ Given the limited staff and resources allotted to the map programme, there was no formal acquisition policy and no depository agreements existed with the federal, provincial or municipal branches of government.¹⁹ While the majority of the holdings were discrete, published items, government cartographic records were being accessioned as organic groupings or bodies. The modified Boggs and Lewis classification system was still in use and the cataloguing system was comprised of internal finding aids indexed by author, subject and geographic area. Approximately 50 percent of the collection was catalogued.²⁰ The map collection shared space with the photographic records until renovations in 1984, when the map collection received its own area adjacent to the Archives Research Room.²¹

With growing quantities of non-textual holdings, the archives also underwent reorganization by media. The map programme was organizationally situated within the Historical Archives section, although the cartographic archivist managed both public and private cartographic holdings. Cartographic Records faced an enormous backlog of unprocessed government map holdings transferred from the Surveys and Mapping Branch of the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources. Federal Department of the Interior records relating to the

settlement of Manitoba were also in this material. This valuable body of records, consisting of early surveyor's notebooks, township/parish plans, and homestead/parish files and other administrative records, had been transferred to the province's Department of Natural Resources from the Public Archives of Canada in the 1950s. The archives hired Tim Ross as a full-time cartographic archivist in 1982 to develop the map programme and to help deal with this backlog of records. Given past practice, it was decided that the cartographic records programme would continue to be administered according to library methodology.

In 1981, an initiative within the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation called for the creation of a five-year plan within its branches. The map archivist targeted several areas for development within the map programme. The adapted Boggs and Lewis classification was once again revised. Cataloguing methodology was restructured to match more closely the contemporary model prescribed in *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules 2: Cartographic Material* and a large percentage of the records related to Manitoba were described.²² The backlog of unprocessed cartographic material was reduced by 75 percent.

Another area targeted for development was relations with provincial government mapping departments and agencies. In 1989, a depository agreement was signed between the Surveys and Mapping Branch and the Provincial Archives which deposited in the archives one copy of each printed map or map-related publication produced by the Branch.²³ Planning was

undertaken to acquire private sector, commercial, municipal and federal cartographic records relating to Manitoba. The need to publicize and promote the services of the map collection were also apparent. As Ross stated, "The Cartographic Archivist will have to identify contacts with key personnel in mapping agencies to inform them of our specialized services."²⁴ A professional cartographic library was begun and numerous research tools and brochures promoting the map programme were created. Ross participated in educational seminars and tours, published articles on the holdings and history of the collection and provided on-site and remote reference services. He considered professional development to be an essential component of his work: "The literature of cartographic archives is still skimpy and there is little formal training in this field. In order to keep abreast of development in other provinces and to eliminate the feeling of professional isolation, it is essential that cartographic archivists attend these conferences."²⁵ By 1984, the collection had grown to over 20,000 items. Equipment was purchased or constructed in 1975, 1982 and 1984, including cabinets and a map trolley. Shelf lists, index sheets, card index and card catalogue were updated and created.

The cartographic archivist position was reduced in 1988 to part-time status. Tim Ross departed soon after. Alex Ross, followed by Ken Reddig, assumed responsibility for the part-time administration of the map programme along with other archival duties. Upon Reddig's departure in 1997, the position was left vacant. I was hired in February 1998 as a Private Records archivist. I work jointly with two other archivists in the textual records section and have sole

responsibility for cartographic and architectural records. Currently, the PAM cartographic records programme is at a point in its evolution where the re-evaluation of its mandate and policies would be a useful exercise. Postmodernist analysis can serve as a useful tool in this attempt.

Appraisal theory involves examination of the beliefs, ideas and circumstances which shape archivists' determination of the value of archival records. Archivists attempt to assign value to records through the identification of societal functions and activities which create records deemed worthy of permanent preservation. As soon as a record is granted the status of 'archive', its meaning is rewritten and the physical artifact becomes almost sacred. Appraisal, which provides the framework for determining archival value, plays an important role in how archivists and archives shape societal memory. No matter how innocent archival records may appear and no matter how hard the archival profession attempts to remove its signature from the end product, archives create documentary meaning and value. Postmodernism challenges archivists to look beyond the apparent objectivity of their work in order to understand their underlying motivations and beliefs and to acknowledge their co-creation of documentary meaning.

The PAM map programme has lacked intense introspection regarding its appraisal practices. Traditionally, appraisal has been reactive and based on content analysis undertaken case by case at the item or series level. Appraisal involves a combination of the content, structure and context attributes of records including subject content, geographic area, scale, physical format, physical

condition, provenance and date. As noted previously, appraisal of the mapping record at PAM has resulted in a collection resembling that of a reference library, due to an emphasis on discrete, published items. Appraisal of more recent government cartographic record series, like all public sector records, is based on the identification of record series and the establishment of records authority scheduling and protocol determined by the Government Records section at PAM. Because the cartographic records archivist position has always been situated in Private Records, its appraisal methodology has tended to reflect the more fragmentary nature of private sector records appraisal, which often has little control over the record in the records lifecycle continuum. Government archives, on the other hand, generally work under a legislated mandate which requires active involvement in the establishment of procedures to ensure that records as 'evidence' are properly managed and identified from records creation through to their transfer to archival custody. Thus, government archives, theoretically, can seek to implement appraisal criteria from the moment of records creation.

While the PAM cartographic records programme has often focused on microappraisal in its evaluation of records for their content criteria, postmodernism requires that we appraise maps according to what lies beneath the surface of the map -- the contextuality of the record. An appraisal strategy, while acknowledging the significance of map content, should also investigate the socio-cultural and technological context of map compilation, creation and usage. The macroappraisal strategy, developed at the National Archives of Canada (NAC), focuses research at the fonds and series levels on "records creators and

those citizens and organizations with whom they interact and this interaction represents the collective functioning of society. This new view of provenance is more conceptual and functional and whereby the contextual circumstances of record creation are again made the centre of the archivist's universe of activities."²⁶

The macro-appraisal strategy attempts to eliminate the need to appraise all records within a fonds by undertaking in-depth analysis of the organization, its records keeping systems, functions and structures in order to discover those areas or series of records which best document the functional context of the organization. The various series of records are then investigated to determine the validity of the research and, if the strategy is deemed appropriate, those records which best document the functionality of records creators are then considered archival. Terry Cook argues that archives must not merely document the activities of their sponsoring institutions, the act of governing, but must also record the relationship between the sponsoring institution and its constituency, the act of governance.²⁷ Such an approach is not only applicable to governments, it can relate to private sector organizations and groups and to their relationships with their clients. PAM might adapt such a strategy for its cartographic records programme through analysis of public and private sector donor organizations and their record keeping systems, processes and activities. While administration of the map collection has emphasized the final step in map creation, efforts can be made to capture the full cartographic process by valuing function over structure, process over product and context over content.

Archivists often differentiate archives from records by alluding to their 'permanent value'. This notion of permanency suggests that the physical artifact, and the value and meaning assigned to it by the archivist, are timeless and unchangeable. As a result, archival educator Tom Nesmith argues that archivists mediate reality through their distinctive commitment to the indefinite retention of archives.²⁸ As societal attitudes and beliefs change, archivists must be aware that "each generation writes its own history and that the efforts of our generation will never be definitive and will in turn be rewritten."²⁹ The archival attempt to fix documentary meaning, and to protect it through the consignment of permanent value, is misguided. Archivists should acknowledge the human subjectivity of their appraisal work and recognize that notions of significance are transient. This is not to suggest that archivists should abandon efforts to develop a theory of appraisal or simply attempt to acquire everything in the hope that something might be valuable in the future. Instead, archivists can document the rationale of their appraisal decisions so that future archivists and users might better understand past notions of value and meaning. At its core, appraisal involves determining the significance of records and the criteria used to determine such judgements. When archivists assign value to their records they give them the status of 'archival' and 'permanent'. It is important to question who is determining what is valuable, to whom archives will have value and why particular records have importance. Terry Cook has suggested that archivists should provide listings of what they keep, but also of what they throw away, when appraising archival fonds. Doing so might make archivists scrutinize more

thoroughly their established procedures and practices in order to better understand why they form and make appraisal decisions. PAM cartographic staff, therefore, must begin to document their rationale for their appraisal criteria and decisions, to verbalize their own culturally embedded values and to think about the theory behind their practice.

If appraisal provides answers as to why archivists assign value and meaning to records, then acquisition determines how they go about obtaining records which reflect those values. The official mandate of the PAM map programme is to acquire cartographic records from both the public and private sectors which reflect the history of Manitoba. Secondary acquisition areas include the Prairie Provinces, northwestern Ontario, Canada and adjacent American states. Government cartographic records are acquired through scheduled transfers from departments and agencies. While there is no formal agreement between the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Provincial Archives regarding acquisition of cartographic records, the sections work cooperatively when overlaps in acquisition mandates occur. Acquisition of cartographic records from the private sector is generally reactive to public inquiries regarding the donation of records or to map dealers' solicitation. Time and staff constraints have afforded little time to strategize about the intellectual nature of cartographic records acquisition, yet the devising of such a plan would provide more guidance and uniformity in the daily operations of the map archives. A records acquisition strategy assumes "the existence of a pre-defined, clearly delineated information universe or jurisdiction, and proposes a research agenda to facilitate the

appraisal of its constituent documentation based on strains of archival-historical value in relation and reference to provenance.³⁰

The postmodernist perspective encourages a multiplicity of voices and the representation of mini-narratives in the archiving of societal memory. An acquisition strategy for the PAM cartographic records programme should endeavour to embrace mapping as a mode of communication and, as such, should acquire records which document cartographic literacy in our society. Cartographic literacy implies not only records creators in both the public and private sectors, but also the audiences who use, diffuse and interpret maps. Map archivists can also attempt to document notions of cultural cartographic illiteracy, that is, understanding which individuals and groups did not create, use and understand maps (and their reasons for not doing so). Such analysis can contribute to our knowledge of the impact of cartography in society and seek to capture the marginal or silenced voices of map communication.³¹ As well, partnerships with community groups and organizations can help to further document the silent voices in cartography through the study of its non-traditional forms, for example, Aboriginal mapping.

The Provincial Archives is not alone in its attempts to document cartographic literacy in Manitoba society. Records creators have a stake in preserving the cartographic memory of the province and archival staff must form ongoing relationships with mapping agencies, individuals and organizations and seek to understand the language of their established and potential donors, in order to communicate effectively regarding the importance of the mapping record. As

co-creators of cartographic records, archivists not only must acknowledge their role in (re) shaping meaning but must also understand the importance of records creators maintaining links with their documentary heritage. Records creators have a stake in the archival attempt to place records in context and archival/donor relations must be viewed as dynamic and continuous; perpetually redefining our concepts of map archives. PAM staff must also foster ties with archives, libraries, museums, university geography departments and other collecting institutions to better understand their vision statements, acquisition mandates, clientele, values and activities so that they can cooperatively attempt to acquire the full spectrum of cartographic literacy.

As the majority of the map collection at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba is of a discrete and published nature, holdings have been catalogued and classified according to library science methodology. Thus, the character of the collection conforms to that of a reference library. The adapted Boggs-Lewis classification system imposes an artificially constructed arrangement at the item or series level, based upon dimensional, geographic, subject matter and chronological components. AACR2 descriptive cataloguing traditionally has been used to produce map descriptions and map catalogues are arranged by subject and author according to Library of Congress subject headings. At this time, the catalogues are available in paper format only and are limited to post-1870 Manitoba holdings. Staff can search for map holdings electronically in a spreadsheet which provides the title, date, classification and location of each item or series.

Realizing the need for standardization in its research tools, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and Provincial Archives of Manitoba cartographic programmes have undertaken a joint revision of cartographic descriptive tools to reflect better the institution's adoption of Canada's national *Rules for Archival Description* (RAD) standards. The Provincial Archives map collection's descriptions capture all mandatory data elements required by RAD, which, in turn, follows AACR2 descriptive standards closely. However, the proposed revisions would harmonize the physical layout of the descriptive tools of both map collections and would provide the more detailed elements of classification number, title, date of creation, publication information, physical description, mathematical data, administrative history/biographical sketch, custodial history (prior to deposit at archival repository), scope and content (generally lists physical and cultural features of map) and miscellaneous notes. Along with the development of descriptive standards, the cartographic records programme is keeping abreast of the development of an automated database for the description function of archival work at PAM. Still in the preliminary design phase, the database will serve as a foundation for add-on functionality to enhance core archival, administrative and client service tasks including acquisition, accessioning, registration, circulation, preservation management and statistical reporting.

Postmodernism challenges our traditional understanding of authorship and authorial intent and reiterates that archivists are writing their finding aids for an audience, archival users. Traditional PAM map descriptions offer little

information about the records creator, focusing instead on record content. It is only recently that we have begun to incorporate more provenancial information about creators into our map finding aids through the addition of an administrative history or biographical sketch of the records creator. At this time, such detail can only be provided at the fonds and series level. Scope and content notes in PAM description tools have been used to provide a subject listing of cultural and physical features depicted on the cartographic record. Recent revisions to the fonds and series level description of map finding aids have required more detailed information regarding the functions or activities which produced the records, the period of time covered and the geographical area represented. Automation will assist in making research easier as all access points will become searchable.

Armed with a more elastic and conceptual understanding of provenance and context, we can begin to rethink the type of information provided in our finding aids regarding records creators, their information systems, activities, motivations and the socio-cultural context which framed their decisions. In doing so, our emphasis changes from the physical end product to the processes which contributed to the production of a map and their corresponding bodies of records. Our finding aids, at the fonds and series levels, must attempt to convey in context the history of mapping institutions and individuals, the complexity of authorship, technical development, targeted audiences, relevant societal forces and authorial motivations.

The revised PAM map finding aids now present a custodial history of records, although this information is limited to the circumstances of the actual donation to the Archives. The custodial history of records prior to deposit at the archives can be found in the administrative history or biographical sketch of the map description. This is an improvement over the older descriptions, based on AACR2, which restricted custodial information to an accession number, a temporary number assigned by the Private Records section of the archives prior to processing to indicate the date of donation. This number provided no information to the archival user and was intended for the archivist's use. A postmodern perspective removes the artificially imposed boundaries which differentiate the contextual circumstances of a record before and after it arrives at an archival repository. For example, custodial history could be expanded to include the history of the records once at the archives. Map descriptions could include how long a record sat in backlog, the circumstances which precipitated its processing, a biographical note on the individual who processed the material, their rationale for arrangement and description, dates that the record and its metadata were made publicly available and any other information regarding the movement of or changes to the record.

In order to provide such informative finding aids, the map archivist requires a knowledge of the historical, geographical and cartographic development of the province of Manitoba and a grounding in interdisciplinary scholarly writings on the mapping record. As well, the archivist should attempt to stay abreast of broader intellectual trends shaping society. Such knowledge

would permit a wide-ranging examination of the functional context of cartographic records in order to capture the creative interplay, exchange of ideas and extensive cartographic processes evident in map production (I hesitate to do such detailed research at the item-level unless the information is readily available, given the tremendous amount of time such research necessitates.).

Whenever possible, archivists should attempt to form connections with records creators and donors of maps, not only because they are knowledgeable about the cartographic process but because many of the records documenting map-making still remain in their custody. Margaret Hutchison notes that the map-creating agency can "play a greater role in the interpretation of the records. It can also become, and be recognized as, part of the cartographic information network together with archives and libraries."³² Too often, donor organizations become isolated from their records when they are transferred to an archives and, in doing so, lose their collective memory. Similarly, archivists lose contact with a precious link in understanding the records creation process. As a result, archival descriptions are often written from information derived from the records themselves and from related secondary sources. Postmodernism, which revels in the textuality of records, argues that documentary meaning and knowledge exist in a fluid state, which means that we should be open to the constant flow of information and understanding from various directions. Record creators, particularly in the manufacturing of maps, can supplement information on techniques, procedures and authorial intent, for example, and archivists can help record creators remember their origins through the archival record. Donor and

archival relations should not be seen only as a function of acquisition and appraisal but as a necessity in all archival work.

Postmodernism firmly situates the archivist in the archiving process, as one who shapes documentary meaning and who, therefore, co-creates the record. PAM map descriptive tools attempt to provide an objective account, to eliminate personal judgement from the archival narrative in order to present 'just the facts'. Dutch archival educator Eric Ketelaar, at an introductory session on postmodernism, suggested that biographical information of archivists could be included in archival finding aids as a way for archival users to be able to judge for themselves the social forces influencing archival narratives.³³ While archivists might shudder at the thought, Ketelaar's intention is to make more overt the role of archivists in shaping the record, the highly subjective nature of archival work and the need for more transparency in our descriptive tools. The archival profession often seeks to eliminate the humanity in its writings, with the hope of presenting a truthful representation of the facts. Yet, archivists do not have to eliminate themselves as authors in the descriptive process. Instead they can seek to create more contextually rich archival descriptions that are understood to be one of many interpretations of the creation process. Yes, archivists must be cognizant of their own values and beliefs when writing archival descriptions. Yes, they must endeavour to be objective and fair, to see the big picture, in their mediation of the accounts of the actions of records creators. But they should do so knowing that the archival narratives they write, which seek to solidify documentary meaning, will only be revised in another time and place.

Should archival finding aids involve more collaborative efforts on the part of the archivist and the archival user? Ketelaar has persuasively argued that each time researchers use archives, they contribute a new interpretation of the archival text. How can archivists incorporate the user's voice into the archival narrative? Ketelaar has suggested that space should be made available in our finding aids to users, so that they may be permitted to write their own comments on and suggestions about the records and archival descriptions. While some might consider this extreme, it is not very different from user surveys which try to obtain an understanding of public perceptions and preferences in the presentation of archival finding aids. It is important to stress that this suggestion is not meant to support a client-based approach to archives in all archival functions. Instead, it proposes that archivists write research tools primarily for our clients, not our colleagues. The need for user-friendly and concise research tools becomes particularly apparent in the on-line Internet environment where the archivist cannot mediate meaning in person. The challenge is to provide good contextual information which assists researchers and to explain the importance of context to the user.

Although PAM has begun to examine the management of electronic records and information management systems, the administration of cartographic archival records remains based in a paper reality. What happens when we are confronted with archiving the electronic mapping record? Terry Cook foresees the archival record of the future (i.e. an electronic future) as "a conceptual data 'object', controlled by metadata, that virtually combines content, context, and

structure to provide evidence of some creator or activity or function."³⁴ Archival records will be stored "randomly, without physical meaning . . . and recombined intellectually or functionally, in different ways, for different purposes, in different times and places, in varying types of orders, for different users" while their context and corresponding metadata will be constantly rewritten as uses change over time.³⁵ The postmodern world beckons archivists to recognize records and record keeping practices in a computer age as transient and ever-changing. The PAM map programme will have to contend with issues of global information systems, digital mapping, media obsolescence, migration, authenticity and metadata in the not-too-distant future.

Postmodernism deconstructs the modernist archival metanarrative and power-knowledge relations inherent in archives, particularly through the archival function of access. The archival experience can be intimidating to the user. Consider, for example, first-time archival users who want to research maps for a community history. As they walk into the archival building, they are immediately disarmed – physically, through the removal of coats and jackets, purses and bags – and intellectually, through having to hand over their personal information and state the 'purpose' of their visit. Users must rely on archival staff to familiarize them with procedures and holdings. They must look at finding aids before looking at records, which is another way that archivists 'present' their interpretations. After waiting for records to arrive, users find that archival material is presented in a particular order and must be kept in that order. Request for copies must be made through archival staff. The entire research

process places the user in a state of deferral and vulnerability, and the archivist in a position of power. As a reading of Foucault suggests, archivists must be aware of the power-knowledge relationship inherent in their institutions which preserve and shape individual, community and societal memory and in their relationships with archival users.

Cartographic archives imply an even greater power-knowledge hierarchy because both their content and context often require mediation by the map archivist. While maps are viewed as natural objects and people are able to 'read' the spatial information on maps, most recognize that there are many layers of map language, meaning and, therefore, interpretation. Cartographic literacy is not sophisticated in contemporary society. The map archivist must, then, develop the historical and cartographic knowledge needed to frame text in context and to help translate the map for the user. This is a crucial role for archivists – to offer 'interpretive contextualizing' in order to better understand the authorial intent and process behind cartographic communication. Map archivists must attempt to be transparent in their dealings with archival clients and convey to them that content does not equate to message, that archivists can offer an interpretation of authorial intent by suggesting how the text may be set in context and that, in the end, archivists are, after all, only human and fallible.

With all its shortcomings, the PAM map programme has attempted to adopt (perhaps unwittingly) a postmodernist mindset in its access and outreach services. Staff members are more comfortable suggesting as opposed to dictating, they offer the researcher alternative sources, interpretations and

research options rather than charting the one true way. New map archivists must strive to be more conversant with the history of cartography and the development of the media, as such knowledge aids tremendously in framing archival context for subject-based research queries. As well, archivists must seek to develop new research tools, electronic metadata and information systems which capture the 'conceptual-provenance' information needed by researchers.³⁶ Perhaps, most challenging of all, map archivists must emphasize the importance of context to researchers who are often only interested in looking at content, as map content has too often been associated with documentary meaning.

As archival institutions move on-line in their efforts to provide more efficient and improved public service, the archival profession is faced with a radical shift in the way it perceives and does its work. Terry Cook offers a vision of our institutions in the future as "virtual 'archives without walls,' existing on the Internet to facilitate access by the public to thousands of interlinked record-keeping systems, **both** those under the control of the archives **and** those left in the custody of their creators or other archives."³⁷ As electronic mapping and global information systems become the dominant format of mapmakers in the twenty-first century, map archivists will have to redefine archival functions to keep pace with the changing technology and 'hyperness' of the mapping record. As the archival clientele slowly recedes into a virtual world where digitization disrupts our notions of "the original" and "the copy" of archival records, where archival users have relatively free reign in manipulating on-line research tools and images to suit their needs, where our 'instant' society demands archival services and

records yesterday, map archivists must remember that context becomes even more important in protecting documentary evidence in a formless sea of digital data and in allowing researchers to transform information into knowledge.

At times, the task facing cartographic archival programmes seems formidable. Limited personnel, staff time, financial resources and technological capabilities present an uphill battle for the map archivist, who often considers himself/herself lucky to meet the challenges of the day, much less to be able to cope with the intellectual and technological advancements of a new millenium impacting on cartographic archives. Yet, this is exactly what cartographic archivists should be doing. The need to step back and outside the routine of daily administration, to question why we do what we do and how we might do it better, keeps our vision of cartographic archives in the forefront of archival theory and practice, encourages other academic disciplines to explore and question our reflections, firmly roots society and archival users in our activities and encourages us to surpass what we ever imagined was possible.

The intent of this chapter is to examine how a postmodernist perspective might be applied to and might improve policy development at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba cartographic records programme. It is reflective in nature, suggesting how the appraisal, acquisition, arrangement/description and public service of cartographic archives might be enriched. Postmodernism will not solve all the problems facing map archivists, but it can offer an alternative perspective on our traditional assumptions about map archiving. Map archival theory does not necessarily have to concentrate on the informational value or

subject content of holdings, nor does it have to analyze maps in only technological terms. Instead, we can understand how a more socio-cultural contextual understanding of maps, map archiving and map archivists can contribute to an awareness of how we perceive and manage cartographic records.

Endnotes

¹ The opinions expressed in this chapter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

² Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Legislative Library and Provincial Archives*, 1970.

³ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Provincial Library*, 1939.

⁴ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Special Library Division, Geography and Map Libraries Section, *World Directory of Map Collections*, Second Edition, Directory Questionnaire, 1980 (Elizabeth Blight).

⁵ Elizabeth Blight, Head, Still Images, Private Records, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 23, 2001.

⁶ Ristow, 85. The Boggs and Lewis system, devised by Americans Dorothy Lewis and Samuel Boggs, was first made available in 1945.

⁷ Elizabeth Blight, Head, Still Images, Private Records, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 23, 2001.

⁸ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Legislative Library*, 1946.

⁹ Elizabeth Blight, Head, Still Images, Private Records, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 23, 2001.

¹⁰ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Legislative Library*, 1952.

¹¹ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Legislative Library and Provincial Archives*, 1967.

¹² Elizabeth Blight, Head, Still Images, Private Records, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 23, 2001.

¹³ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Special Library Division, Geography and Map Libraries Section, *World Directory of Map Collections*, Second Edition, Directory Questionnaire, 1980 (Elizabeth Blight).

¹⁴ Elizabeth Blight, Head, Still Images, Private Records, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 23, 2001.

¹⁵ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Legislative Library and the Provincial Archives*, 1977.

¹⁶ Tammy Hannibal, Cartographic Archivist, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, interview by author, tape recording, Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 25, 2001.

¹⁷ Manitoba, *Annual Report of the Manitoba Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources*, 1981.

¹⁸ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Special Library Division, Geography and Map Libraries Section, *World Directory of Map Collections*, Second Edition, Directory Questionnaire, 1980 (Elizabeth Blight).

¹⁹ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, Association of Canadian Map Libraries Survey, April 1981 (Elizabeth Blight).

²⁰ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Special Library Division, Geography and Map Libraries Section, *World Directory of Map Collections*, Second Edition, Directory Questionnaire, 1980 (Elizabeth Blight).

²¹ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Questionnaires, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Division of Special Libraries, Section of Geography and Map Libraries Map Collection Equipment and Space Management Manual Questionnaire, May 1984 (Tim Ross).

²² PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Planning, Five Year Plan for PAM Map Collection, Tim Ross, October 12, 1982.

²³ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Surveys and Mapping Branch, Alex Ross, Head, Textual Records and Public Service, PAM to Gerald Holm, Provincial Toponymist, Surveys and Mapping, Manitoba Natural Resources, Memo, April 20, 1989.

²⁴ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Planning, Five Year Plan for the PAM Map Collection, Tim Ross, October 12, 1982.

²⁵ PAM, Cartographic Archivist's Records, Travel, Tim Ross, Cartographic Archivist, to Barry Hyman, Associate Provincial Archivist and Head, Historical Archives, Memo, April 11, 1983.

²⁶ Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 31.

²⁷ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," [9].

²⁸ Tom Nesmith, "Comments on 'The 'Postmodern'."

²⁹ Delano Smith, 200.

³⁰ Richard Brown, "Records Acquisition Strategy and its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics," *Archivaria* 33 (Winter 1991-1991): 36.

³¹ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," [12].

³² Hutchison, 42-43.

³³ Eric Ketelaar, *What's It all About?: 'Postmodernism' and Archives*, Association for Manitoba Archives Symposium (February 19, 2001).

³⁴ Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism," [11].

³⁵ *Ibid.*, [11].

³⁶ *Ibid.*, [12].

³⁷ *Ibid.*, [12].

Conclusion

Canadian archival repositories traditionally emphasized the informational value of their cartographic material. This gave rise to administrative policies and practices which sought to extract the subject contents of maps for research purposes. While archives generally were considered repositories of manuscript maps, collections were mainly comprised of discrete, published items. Map archivists tended to equate their records with published material and administered them according to library science methodologies, which paid little attention to the complexities of their functional context. It should be noted that in addition to the subject matter emphasis of this library-based approach, maps were often treated as 'fugitive' records in archives because their large physical format made handling awkward and because archivists and archival users generally lacked the skills needed to comprehend fully their technical characteristics. Literature dealing with the management of cartographic archives focused on subject-based, content analysis and subject indexing as the principal means of information retrieval. The post-Second World War era witnessed the rise of records management and the expansion of governmental agencies devoted to surveying and mapping. Cartographic materials, as organic bodies of records, began to be preserved by public sector archives as evidence of the activities of their administrative sponsors. The importance of their evidential and documentary nature was also more widely acknowledged.

Today, most cartographic archives programmes have a combination of discrete, published items, often administered by library science methods, and

organic groupings of records, which can best be managed according to context-oriented archival practice. The challenge in writing this thesis was to develop an intellectual framework that addressed this dichotomy and encouraged a more provenance-based, contextual approach to map archiving. And while the significance of the informational content and aesthetic qualities of maps should not be dismissed in archival administration, it was important to determine in what ways a provenance-based approach might furnish a more comprehensive cartographic archival theory.

Media archivists have long argued that archival theory has focused too narrowly on textual records. However, debate since the late 1970s in Canada about the "total archives" concept and its alleged concentration on media type at the expense of the functional unity of the archival record, Hugh Taylor's discussion of the power of the media to shape our society and the North American "rediscovery of provenance" focused much greater attention on non-textual media archives. These ideas also prompted an intellectual reorientation of the study of such media toward a more contextual approach than previously witnessed. A small number of media archivists contributed to these developments by studying the forms, functions, purposes and technologies of their holdings in order to obtain a more contextualized understanding of records creation. Few efforts, however, have been made to address the intellectual significance of cartographic holdings in archives or to examine the nature of maps as archival documents. To paraphrase Terry Cook, we have paper minds trying to cope with cartographic realities.¹ As with all other archival media, maps

are records created by a will to convey a message to an audience. By analyzing their functional context, we can better understand their role as the evidence of their creators' actions and of society as a whole.

The advent of postmodernism in the last twenty years has played a valuable role in this analysis. Various academic disciplines, including archival studies, geography and the history of cartography, have provided new insights into cartographic communication by examining how recorded evidence was used as a product of and a force within the societies which created it. Scholars, like J.B. Harley, were pivotal in reshaping our understanding of maps as rhetorical, symbolic and power-knowledge devices, intent on eliciting certain outcomes for the purposes of map creators. Not just technological by-products, maps are socio-cultural texts embodying human values and motivations. Postmodernism allows archivists to look beyond a narrow view of the 'recordness' of maps to see their qualities of 'textuality'. Records are hyper; they are intrinsically connected to a vast array of knowledge and interpretation from the past, present and future. As such, their meaning cannot be confined to the original intentions of records creators, as each generation reinterprets documentary meaning based on its own spatial-temporal-cultural situation. Archivists must be aware of the relationships between author, audience and text which influence and shape cartographic literacy, that is, how cartographic records are created, used and interpreted in society. It is only through contextual analysis that the meanings of maps are recovered (although never completely). Map archivists must acknowledge their

role in attempting to fix documentary meaning, in shaping archival value through their attitudes and in co-creating map archival texts.

While map archivists need not wholeheartedly embrace all postmodernist thought, they should seek to develop a map archival theory which understands more fully the societal, functional and archival context in which their records were created and used. Map archivists can reformulate archival functions in a postmodern light to elicit more transparency in their theory, practice and activities, to acknowledge the human subjectivity in their work and to appraise/acquire records which are reflective of the broader societal interpretation of the cartographic endeavour. Remapping archives thus entails viewing cartographic records in archival terms and envisioning a map archival theory which provides insight into the nature of archivists, their values and their activities.

Endnotes

- ¹ Cook, "Electronic Records, Paper Minds," 302.

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