

Canonization, archivalization, and the 'archival imaginary'

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There has been a call to 'open the archives' both from within and outside of the archival profession. Similarly, the 'canon wars' in literary studies centered a comparable debate on the Western literary canon. Our analysis will be guided by John Guillory's sociological analysis of canon formation.¹ Central to this analysis is the understanding that the canonization of a work is an institutionally mediated, sociocultural process that defines its canonicity, an abstract set of properties that determines if work is canonical or noncanonical. In this paper, I argue that there are archival counterparts to these constructs. Using Eric Ketelaar's concept of 'archivalization,' which is the sociocultural process that determines whether something will be archived, I subsequently define the concept of 'archivicity' as the abstract set of properties of a record that determines if a record is 'archival' or 'non-archival.' We will also investigate the institutional embodiment of a holistic 'archival paradigm,' wherein archives and archivists recognize their role as preserving and potentially interpreting records as a form of cultural capital. However, as we will see, this paradigm also has a central role in the perpetuation of ideology. Finally, we will investigate ways in which to 'open the archives' by transforming and rethinking archival practice given our analysis.

Eric Ketelaar and other archival theorists recognize that archival practice is

¹ Guillory's most well-known work is *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (University Of Chicago Press, 1993); this work was based in part on previous publications including "The Ideology of Canon-Formation: T. S. Eliot and Cleanth Brooks," *Critical Inquiry* 10, no. 1 (September 1983): 173-198; "Canonical and Non-Canonical: A Critique of the Current Debate," *ELH* 54, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 483-527; and "Canon, Syllabus, List: A Note on the Pedagogic Imaginary," *Transition*, no. 52 (1991): 36-54. See also "Toward a Sociology of Literature: An Interview with John Guillory," by Jeffrey J. Williams, *Minnesota Review* 61-62 (2004), <http://www.theminnesotareview.org/journal/ns61/guillory.htm>.

influenced explicitly and implicitly by cultural and social factors. In his words, 'one should make these contexts transparent, may be [*sic*] even visible' to be able to analyze and comprehend them.² Similarly, John Guillory recognizes that 'a distinction must be made between the condition of a text's *production* and ... its *reception* in order to see the real historical relation between these conditions and the process of canon formation.'³ Acknowledging the post-custodial paradigm shift within archivy, Ketelaar believes that analysis of the cultural and social aspects of archives requires understanding 'the stage that *precedes* archiving.'⁴ He uses the word *archivalization* to describe that stage, which he defines as 'the conscious or unconscious choice (determined by social and cultural factors) to consider something worth archiving.'⁵ For Guillory, the process of canonization is fundamentally inseparable from its institutionalization in the university. He subsequently recognizes the need to study how the university mediates the political impact of canonization and canon revision.⁶

Synthesizing the analyses of Ketelaar and Guillory, I believe that we must understand the social function and institutional protocols of archives to comprehend archivalization as well as other archival processes.⁷ As such, I aim to draw a direct comparison between the processes of canonization and archivalization. However, accounting for the post-custodial approach to archivy, archivalization can occur at any point in a record's provenance. Unlike

² Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (2001): 137; see also Eric Ketelaar, "The Difference Best Postponed? Cultures and Comparative Archival Science," *Archivaria* 44 (1997): 142-148.

³ Guillory, "Canon, Syllabus, List," 42.

⁴ Eric Ketelaar, "Archivistics Research Saving the Profession," *American Archivist* 63, no. 2 (2000): 328 (emphasis in original).

⁵ *ibid.*; see also Eric Ketelaar, "Archivalization and Archiving," *Archives and Manuscripts* 27 (May 1999): 54-61.

⁶ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 8.

⁷ David Bearman identifies four core areas of archival practice: selection and appraisal, retention and preservation, arrangement and description, and access and use. See Bearman, *Archival Methods*, Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report 9 (Pittsburgh: Archives & Museum Informatics, 1989), http://www.archimuse.com/publishing/archival_methods/index.html.

canonization, archivalization therefore does not *need* to occur within an institutional context. In other words, *any* agent in contact with a record can decide if it is worth saving, regardless of the form of the agent or the record. This is merely a statement of possibility, as I do not intend to suggest that role or mandate will not impact archivalization. Obviously, role, mandate, and any other contextual aspect of the interface between agent and record will affect the decision, as well as its after effects. However, Brien Brothman remarks that ‘individuals are not the ultimate source of value and order creation ... social communities create and destroy value.’⁸

This paper, therefore, situates its analysis of archivalization as it occurs within *archival institutions as social communities*. According to Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland, the term *tradition* not only refers to ‘observable actions, objective practices, and public statements of intellectual rationale ... [but also] the subjective values and the less tangible professional awareness of identity and mission that animate and give meaning to those public actions.’⁹ Such traditions, therefore, are suitable targets for an analysis informed by Ketelaar’s methodology, as they describe the social and cultural contexts of archival practice. Richard Berner identifies two particular traditions that have informed archival discourse and practice in the United States.¹⁰ The older of these two traditions is the historical manuscripts tradition, which believed itself to be ‘a community of humanities scholars and, by extension, ... historian-interpreters of the documents they preserved.’¹¹ Those in the other tradition, which originated in public archives following models of European archival practice, ‘perceived themselves to be

⁸ Brien Brothman, “Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice,” *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 81.

⁹ Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland, “The provenance of a profession: the permanence of the public archives and historical manuscripts traditions in American archival history,” in *American Archival Studies: Readings In Theory and Practice*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 126.

¹⁰ See Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1983).

¹¹ Gilliland-Swetland, “The Provenance of a Profession,” 126.

professionals with mastery over a body of specialized theory and practice; consequently, they viewed their role as administrator-custodian of the documents they preserved.¹² In broader terms, Mark Greene notes that the conflict between the evidential value and the cultural value of records is embodied in a similar distinction in professional paradigms.¹³ The 'archival paradigm', he writes, 'uses the term "archives" to include institutional archives and collecting repositories.'¹⁴ In contrast, '[t]he recordkeeping paradigm posits that archives are records, ... that records are solely evidence of transactions, that they are kept primarily (some argue solely) for purposes of administration, law, and accountability, and they serve primarily the needs of records creators.'¹⁵ Greene views the recordkeeping paradigm as part of the archival paradigm, but many of its proponents view it 'a substitute for, rather than a part of, the archival paradigm.'¹⁶

Gilliland-Swetland notes that these two traditions or paradigms continued to compete with each other through various debates, including those concerning professionalization of the archival enterprise. Some of the most fervent parts of this debate centered around articles written by George Bolotenko, published in the mid-1980s in *Archivaria*.¹⁷ In Bolotenko's words, he sees that '[t]he archivist and historian are in fact in symbiosis.'¹⁸ In other words, archivists need to possess historical knowledge (and, arguably, historical training) to be able to interpret records; in turn, historians need to know archival principles to understand how archives mediate history. Adrian Cunningham has a similar recognition for the

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ Mark Greene, "The Power of Meaning: The Archival Mission in the Postmodern Age," *American Archivist* 65, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 42-55.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 44.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 45.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ "Historians and Archivists: Keepers of the Well", *Archivaria* 16 (1983), 5-25; "Of Ends and Means: In Defence of the Archival Ideal", *Archivaria* 18 (1984), 241-247; "Instant Professionalism: To the Shiny New Men of the Future", *Archivaria* 20 (1985), 149-157.

¹⁸ Bolotenko, "Archivists and Historians," 20.

historical and cultural responsibilities of the archivist. He notes that, within Australia, archivists responsible for corporate and governmental records often disregard issues central to those archivists responsible for personal records, thus marginalizing and stigmatizing the latter. In particular, this drive often stems from archivists demanding ‘organisational accountability,’ which leads them to ‘appear to be willing to jettison, or at the very least down play, our historical/cultural role.’¹⁹ To Cunningham, these ‘historical/cultural considerations’ are the ‘raison d’etre’ of the collecting archivist.²⁰

The discussion of the ‘opening [of] the archives’ in professional and academic literature has three interrelated, but distinct, aspects.²¹ The first aspect is the opening of archives to the public, referred to in archival jargon as ‘outreach,’ or, put in layperson’s terms, encouraging people to use archives through any sort of device to engage them (an exhibit, a tour, etc.). The second aspect is the opening of the archive to scrutiny, including the practices of recordkeeping, the contents of archives, and the history they purport to hold.²² To explain the third aspect, I claim that there is an archival corollary to the notion of canonicity, which I name *archivicity*. Like the canonicity of a text, the archivicity of a record depends on whether or not it can be treated as archival. Brothman writes that ‘regardless of whether or not a set of archival documents is ever consulted, once having been judged to have permanent value, the document’s right to a place in the archives

¹⁹ Adrian Cunningham, “Beyond the Pale? The ‘flinty’ relationship between archivists who collect the private records of individuals and the rest of the archival profession in Australia,” *Provenance* 1, no. 2 (March 1996), <http://www.provenance.ca/1995-2000backissues/vol1/no2/features/paleconf.htm>. Cunningham also suggests authors like David Bearman may have ignored ‘historical/cultural imperatives of archives’ as a reaction to the ‘mixture of anti-intellectualism and the interdisciplinary imperialism of historians ... which for better or for worse are often associated with the historical manuscripts tradition’ in the United States (ibid.).

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ While these aspects are often interrelated, I do not propose any sort of definite causal relationship between them.

²² The ‘archival turn’ in the humanities, and that which I call the ‘critical turn’ in archivistics, exemplified by the work of Eric Ketelaar, Terry Cook, Verne Harris, and others, expresses this secondary aspect.

and society is irrevocable.²³ Judy Dicken remarks that the archivalization and subsequent archiving of an author's personal papers leads to sociocultural and academic validation, and, furthermore, possible canonization. In her words, 'the archive erects a lasting monument to the writer, endorsing the validity of the work.'²⁴

Consequently, we can view both Brothman and Dicken's descriptions as a kind of absorption, leading me to invoke Geoff Bennington: 'What such a description leaves out (and in leaving it out it is doubtless true to the discourse it describes) is any notion that a body not only absorbs but also excretes.'²⁵ In a basic sense, records can be considered *non-archival* by virtue of their non-existence or non-preservation in – or, in other words, their rejection or 'excretion' from – archives. Accordingly, one can discuss the 'opening of the archives' to *non-archival* records. Such records suggest Benjamin Hutchens' notion of 'counter-memory,' which is preserved 'in direct opposition to the normative and *canonical* ("official") tradition in which it was forgotten.'²⁶ Such 'counter-memory' thus has remarkably different mnemonic and discursive characteristics than 'official' forms of memory because of its oppositional nature. In addition to the basic sense, records can thus be considered *non-archival* based upon aspects of the record itself. Hutchens' description suggests a specific class of non-archival record, one that is non-archival based upon its form. Likewise, some texts have been deemed noncanonical based upon their form, such as fairy tales.²⁷ Oral history is one particular form of record that has been deemed non-archival by various authors; in particular, Ellen D.

²³ Brothman, "Orders of Value," 81.

²⁴ Judy Dicken, "Twentieth-Century Literary Archives: Collecting Policies and Research Initiatives," in *New Directions in Archival Research* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Center for Archives Studies, 2000), 57.

²⁵ Geoff Bennington, "Demanding History," in *Poststructuralism and the Question of History*, ed. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, and Robert Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.

²⁶ Benjamin Hutchens, "Techniques of Forgetting? Hypo-Amnesic History and the An-Archive," *SubStance* 36, no. 2 (2007): 45 (emphasis added).

²⁷ See, for example, Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *Twice upon a Time: Women Writers and the History of the Fairy Tale* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Swain writes that archivists who follow the record-keeping paradigm 'do not approve of memory-based documentation as oral history is not a transactional record of evidential value and does not satisfy legal requirements of evidence.'²⁸

Guillory states that we can avoid disputes over the validity of a work by recognizing that *all forms* of cultural capital must be seen in terms of their *cultural value*, rather than their canonicity or other forms of value that they are said to contain. Accordingly, he rejects any notion of a work being 'intrinsically canonical ... or noncanonical.'²⁹ This holds particularly true when the values a work contain are said to be a reflection of a group or 'society.' This, in turn, allows us to emphasize the importance of studying 'noncanonical' works or those produced by marginalized peoples without recourse to their noncanonicity or the need for 'equal cultural representation.' Accordingly, Guillory rejects the notion that exclusion of an author from the canon can be equated with a historical act of social or political exclusion or oppression. Furthermore, this understanding expands to incorporate the importance of studying both historical and modern works by virtue of their historicity and currency rather than the expression of any other form of value. A similar argument can be made in regards to the archivacity of a record. Guillory's phrasing suggests that, similarly, we should consider all records in terms of their cultural value, rather than merely in terms of their evidential value or any other 'archival' value. Håkan Lövbld paraphrases Rolf Torstendahl, noting that 'the essential thing for the historian is not to pursue investigations of authenticity of a material, but to value the historical statements in the records.'³⁰ Related discussions of value in archival literature have also led to rethinking appraisal

²⁸ Ellen Swain, "Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the Twenty-first Century," *American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (January 2003): 147.

²⁹ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 52.

³⁰ Håkan Lövbld, "Monk, Knight or Artist? The Archivist as a Straddler of a Paradigm," *Archival Science* 3, no. 2 (2003): 145.

theory and practice to account for sociocultural factors.³¹

Guillory maintains that canon revision is merely a critique of the canon as a 'representative' medium and not a critique of the *process* of canonization, fundamentally inseparable from its institutionalization in the school. Guillory's analysis of institutional mediation subsequently focuses on what he refers to as the 'pedagogic imaginary,' a concept modeled after that which Castoriadis and Lefort identify as the 'social imaginary,' which posits 'the unity of "society" in the face of social division.'³² The pedagogic imaginary similarly projects a 'unity of the "profession" in the ideality of its self-representation, the discourse of its own being as a kind of community.'³³ Furthermore, Guillory writes that the canon only exists as 'an *imaginary* totality of works.'³⁴ In other words, the canon only works as reference to a totality that is fundamentally inaccessible since it is perpetually changing. Furthermore, the canon never exists as a concrete or whole *list* even at a particular time and place, but rather as idealized subsets or representations as lists in the form of the *constructed* syllabus. The imaginary whole that is the canon exists only through the sum of syllabi that collectively determine what literature deserves such hypothetical 'canonical' status. Although teachers can ultimately change individual syllabi to reflect greater diversity in experience and opinion, such revision cannot be a revolutionary change in the *process* of canon formation as the construction of syllabi entails that same process. Through this analysis, the 'fetishization' of the syllabus – the drive to create a course or reading list concerned with representing the totality of 'Western culture,' 'great books,' or 'women's history' – is a form of the pedagogic imaginary. According to Guillory, the form of

³¹ For example, according to Terry Cook, 'macroappraisal assesses the societal value of both the functional-structural context and work-place culture in which the records are created and used by their creator(s), and the interrelationship of citizens, groups, organizations – "the public" – with that functional-structural context.' "Macroappraisal in Theory and Practice: Origins, Characteristics, and Implementation in Canada, 1950–2000," *Archival Science* 5, no. 2 (December 8, 2005): 101.

³² *ibid.*, 35; see also *ibid.*, 353, note 54.

³³ *ibid.*, 35.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 30.

the syllabus is indicative of its beginning with selection – rather than a programmatic elimination or exclusion – of works based on social identity or status. The problem with attempting to construct such projects as a course about ‘Western culture’ or ‘literary traditions’ is that they cannot ultimately *be about* such imaginary totalities. Accordingly, when works represented in a syllabus for such a course are presented as being representative of a ‘homogenous and overarching culture,’ those works are subsequently misinterpreted.³⁵

I also suggest that there is an archival counterpart to social and pedagogic imaginaries. Verne Harris has recognized the problematic belief that archives can be ‘[a nation’s] central memory institutions, preserving (holding, keeping) the collective memory of the nation.’³⁶ If all that archives are able to retain are ‘a sliver of a sliver,’ it is impossible to suggest that archives can contain *the* memory or even memories of a nation.³⁷ More broadly, what I call the ‘archival imaginary’ involves the misconception that a repository serving a given body can preserve that body’s collective memory, regardless if that body is delineated geopolitically, socially, or ethnically. If we think as ‘the archive’ as the canon – or even archives, all archives in the world – we cannot have access to the totality, because of Guillory’s recognition of a canon never existing as a concrete whole. Laermans and Gielen characterize our information society as ‘the digital an-archive,’ which is ‘synonymous with an ever expanding and constantly renewed mass of information of which no representation at all can be made.’³⁸ Similarly, Jon Thiem invokes Borges’ aleph in his fictional essay, written from the perspective of a librarian in the mid-21st century discussing the ‘Universal Library,’ an aggregation of all published knowledge. The Universal Library ‘defies a condition wherein a maximum of

³⁵ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 33.

³⁶ Harris, “Claiming Less, Delivering More,” 133.

³⁷ See also Harris, “On (Archival) Odyssey(s),” *Archivaria* 51 (2001): 7.

³⁸ Rudi Laermans and Pascal Gielen, “The Archive of the Digital An-archive,” *Image & Narrative* 17 (2007), http://www.imageandnarrative.be/digital_archive/laermans_gielen.htm.

inclusiveness coincides with a maximum of intelligibility or accessibility ... thus comprehensiveness can lead to incomprehension.³⁹ In other words, we would never be able to access such a totality not only because it is always changing. There is also simply *too much there*; that is, there are too many records within hypothetical, all-inclusive archives to allow us to appraise, use, and interpret them.

To Guillory, there is 'no historical, social act that corresponds to the notion of the exclusion' from the canon, or even the university.⁴⁰ As with universities, social structures are reproduced by the interactions archives have with cultural capital. However, I argue that archives have a much more central role in the preservation of ideology since they are primarily responsible for the *preservation* of cultural capital (as opposed to dissemination thereof, which is the responsibility of the university). In particular, the cultural capital preserved by archives can include narratives that support ideology. John J. Doherty noted that any patron 'should consider the library as an "institution embedded in a stratified ensemble of institutions" dedicated to the "creation, transmission, and reproduction of the hegemonic ideology."' ⁴¹ By extension, one could easily say the same about archival repositories. Noting that collection development librarians require expertise and knowledge in their subject area, Doherty recognizes that they are therefore 'immersed in the canon' and 'a product of [their] discipline, with all the exclusionary and elitist limits that come with the label.'⁴² Librarians accordingly perpetuate hegemony and the canon 'through the traditional definition of the role of the academic library as a support to the academic curriculum.'⁴³

Richard Harvey Brown and Beth Davis-Brown have also established that

³⁹ Jon Thiem, "Myths of the Universal Library: From Alexandria to the Postmodern Age," *The Serials Librarian* 26 (1995): 65.

⁴⁰ Guillory, "Canon, Syllabus, List," 43.

⁴¹ John J. Doherty, "The Academic Librarian and the Hegemony of the Canon," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 24, no. 5 (September 1998): 403.

⁴² Doherty, "The Academic Librarian and the Hegemony of the Canon," 404.

⁴³ *ibid.*

cultural heritage institutions function to keep national memory, identity, and ideology self-sustaining by creating and preserving 'imagined communities.'⁴⁴ To Brown and Davis-Brown, the preservation of national memory by cultural heritage institutions therefore shapes a collective national identity. This in turn contributes to 'the *conscience collective*, the collective sense of moral solidarity ... vital to the smooth functioning of modern societies.'⁴⁵ Furthermore, since power relations within cultural heritage institutions rely on (social/economic or cultural) capital, they claim that such institutions can never be neutral guardians of memory. In their words, '[i]t is not that archivists do not tell the truth about reality. It is that they *cannot* tell it.'⁴⁶

Similarly, Verne Harris describes how apartheid ideology, bureaucracy, and culture shaped the practices and principles of South African State Archives Service, and, ultimately, the documentary history of South Africa. Harris recognizes that appraisal decisions based upon 'actual or anticipated usefulness to potential researchers' were ultimately influenced by the fact that SAS appraisal archivists 'were taught as undergraduates by establishment-aligned Afrikaner historians.'⁴⁷ Similarly, materials published in SAS' *Archives Year Book for South African History* were selected based upon ideology, wherein 'the legitimization of white rule and the exclusion of oppositional voices [were] key objectives in the selection policy.'⁴⁸ At first blush, one could only guess whether establishment-aligned archivists at the SAS considered themselves to be the 'members of a community of

⁴⁴ Richard Brown and Beth Davis-Brown, "The Making of Memory: The Politics of Archives, Libraries and Museums in the Construction of National Consciousness," *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 4 (November 1998): 19-20.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 22.

⁴⁷ Verne Harris, "The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory and Archives in South Africa," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 73. Since apartheid has been described as a 'racial capitalism,' Harris additionally warns us that we must avoid treating it solely as concerning race and recognize 'the complex interplay of identities – ethnic, social, gender, cultural, linguistic, political, and, crucially, class' (*ibid.*, 67).

⁴⁸ Harris, "The Archival Sliver," 74.

humanities scholars and ... historian-interpreters of the documents they preserved.⁴⁹ Harris's description of the SAS nonetheless suggests that repositories staffed with Bolotenko's ideal archivists – in Doherty's words, 'products of the discipline' – or even those with an appreciation for the cultural value of records, may be little more than agents that perpetuate hegemony.

Harris also writes that 'systemic barriers,' such as 'low educational standards, high rates of illiteracy, ... [and] competency in languages other than the official Afrikaans and English,' prevented most South Africans from accessing public archives.⁵⁰ These systemic barriers clearly relate to the educational system, which is the center of Guillory's critique. In addition, Harris notes that 'the heart of the issue' regarding why SAS had poor documentation on the 'struggles against colonialism, segregation, and apartheid ... was a collecting policy which quite deliberately directed archivists away from grassroots experience towards society's pinnacles, and which eschewed the documentation of orality.'⁵¹ In his discussion, Guillory states that part of the process of the creation of a *nationalized* conception of cultural literacy is that we must have access to works in the vernacular.⁵² In addition, he writes that 'to be brought into the arena of curricular conflict as "noncanonical" works,' oral literature must first be converted from a personal set of recollections to an informational commodity.⁵³ Harris notes that such commoditization of oral history and other forms of archival records ultimately destroys important aspects of their narratives, which can 'alienate the speaker from the word.'⁵⁴ Clearly, the many examples that Harris provides proves that, *pace* Guillory, there *can* be 'a historical, social act that corresponds to the notion of the

⁴⁹ Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession," 126.

⁵⁰ Harris, "The Archival Sliver," 71.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 73-74 (emphasis added).

⁵² For example, most people would not argue that Plato's *Republic* is not a 'great book,' but it remains that, unless studying Ancient Greek, students in the United States predominantly read the book in English.

⁵³ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 43.

⁵⁴ Verne Harris, "Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positivist Formulations on Archives in South Africa," *Archivaria* 44 (1997): 139.

exclusion' within archives.⁵⁵

The question remains on how we should begin to rethink archival practice. Guillory rejects the possibility of using curricula to construct either a national culture or a national multicultural ethos.⁵⁶ Accordingly, we have seen that we cannot do the same with archives. In addition, as Guillory argues, it is no longer politically strategic to demand the preservation of non-archival records or even 'non-traditionally archival' records only on account of their 'representation' of the socially disenfranchised. Archivists are socially obligated to preserve these records because they are important sources of cultural value.⁵⁷ One means by which we could achieve this is Guillory's proposal for 'research programs', since, in his words, 'the archive has always been the resource of historical scholarship.'⁵⁸ It is essential, however, that we recognize these 'research programs' as such and not only as separate repositories for separate constituencies or for the creation of a shared narrative based upon a monolithic identity. Sue McKemmish, Anne Gilliland-Swetland, and Eric Ketelaar explicitly recognize potential projects as 'archival research agendas.'⁵⁹ One such form of an archival research program are the 'discipline-based history centers,' which acquire historical records in various forms (including oral history), engage in historical research, assist in the identification and placement of collections, and provide guidance, information, and support to other historians, archivists, and institutions.⁶⁰ Documentation strategies operate somewhat similarly to discipline-based history centers but on a noticeably smaller scale. Accordingly, they must define a smaller context to make the project manageable. Overall, much of the recent work has been defined at the

⁵⁵ Guillory, "Canon, Syllabus, List," 43.

⁵⁶ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 50.

⁵⁷ Cf. Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 52.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 15-16 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁹ Sue McKemmish, Anne Gilliland-Swetland, and Eric Ketelaar, "'Communities of Memory': Pluralising Archival Research and Education Agendas," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33 (May 2005): 146-174.

⁶⁰ Helen Willa Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," in Jimerson, *American Archival Studies*, 200.

community level.⁶¹ Ruth Grossman notes that archives must compromise and be able to respond to the communities they serve. Accordingly, she writes, 'a truly active context for past documents may then be cultivated; one that permits current communities to literally, and habitually, take into account the records of their predecessors.'⁶² To achieve such an 'active context,' Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan argue for a participatory model for archival functions, which adds transparency to archival practice and elucidates the narratives expressed by bodies of records. Accordingly, participatory archival practice allows 'the creator [to] own the choices they have made, ensuring that they speak with their own voices, and empowering their representation into the future.'⁶³ This, I believe, is the best model for a transformative project in archivistics. The shared recognition of the cultural value of a record can only make the documentary environment richer and provide more sources for historical analysis.

⁶¹ See, for example, Jeanette Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

⁶² Ruth Grossman, "Our Expectations About Archives: Archival Theory Through a Community Informatics Lens," CRACIN Working Paper 17 (Canadian Research Alliance For Community Innovation And Networking, Toronto, December 2006): 2, <http://www.ccnr.net/?q=node/248>.

⁶³ Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections," *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 101.

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